Off-Road Equipment

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DIRT BIKE: Honda XR. Totally reliable. Honda stopped making the XR400 in 2006, but a good used one will still suffice.Â We have ridden a variety of motorcycles in and out of Baja. The most versatile bike on the market with the most reliability for off-road is the XR400. At 115 lbs., I ride the XR400 in tight single-track and open desert with pure confidence that my bike won't let me down. As awful as it sounds, we don't always have the option to change our oil and filters at the optimal time while basically living on our bikes during months of travel without support. Honda XR's take a beating from us and continues to award us with reliability. Take the advice - it's less expensive all the way around and a pretty sweet ride.Â Now, for those of you looking for a different answer, there are several 'other' bikes that are worthy with more maintenance: Honda CRFx and theÂ Yamaha WR handle Baja better thanÂ other models.Â The KTM EXCÂ Â is a little touchy, but with the right maintenace (a lot) are also an acceptable choice.Â These are all 4-stroke motos.Â Unless you dare to deal with breakdowns in remote locations, I do not recommend riding a 2-stroke down south; they just don't stand up to the torture.Â As for Suzuki DRZ's, make sure you take spare hoses (it is notorious for overheating and bursting hoses with bends that can't be found down south).Â Another good tip is to ride CC's based on the type of riding you will be doing down south.Â If you want to do a guidebook rating scale 3+ and above, ride a lighter bike like 450CC or less.Â I have seen some studs on tech. single track down south on 525's, but it's not as much fun unless you plan on sticking to the Beach and dry lake bed routes.

NEWER BIKE TOP CHOICE:Â Honda's CRF450X is the next best thing we've found so far in comparison to the XR.Â It has been holding up longer with a lot more power inÂ a very different place than I expected.Â The first time I got on the CRF450x, the throttle was so different IÂ jumped off anÂ 6 foot rockÂ ledge (thinking I'd land it in the soft sand wash below - NOT), instead I popped so high with unexpected zip-throttle, I spun a loop landing upside down with the bike on top of me (much lighter than StellaB's XR400 gerth!). With a few adjustments for my lack of .lbs for this meaty bike, I managed to fall madly in love with it.Â I've ridden a lot of bikes down south and the CRF450x has been the only other bike of choice 'for me & my long trips'Â next to the XR.Â Go figure it's a Honda. Ride Red.

TIRES & TUBES: Dunlop 739 A/T front & rear with Dunlop heavy duty tubes (this is the ultimate set up for Baja). We put on an average of about 8,000 miles a year in Baja (sometimes during the Summer/Spring months) and have tried other brands resulting in "Dunlop Rules". I used to ride the 606 front sometimes, but after careful examination, there is just no comparison to the 739A/T's performance and wear, no matter the type of terrain.Â I imagine a new tire will replace it soon and we'llÂ post a review here as soon as it's out.Â Tubes: I stick with Dunlop's heavyÂ duty tubes.Â I've used Moose and the new super duper thick heavy duties and quite honestly,Â it's not worth the trouble of getting those non-pliable mega thick tubes in the tire and I've had just as good wear and reliabilityÂ with Dunlop's regular heavy duty that spending less money and less time putting them in makes me one happyÂ tire changer!Â Â

LIGHTING: Baja Designs lighting kits. There are many ways you can light your bike for dual sporting or night riding and Baja Designs is the place willing to educate you. We recommend the HID (high intensity discharge) lighting system for those serious about lighting. The money is worth the superior brilliant white light vision. The HID system uses half the wattage for twice the power and will make the most novice rider comfortable riding at night.Â Â Even if you are looking for something lessÂ expensive,Â Baja Designs has the answer when it comes to lighting (they have yourÂ bike already figured out).Â Â

PROTECTIVE BODY GEAR:

Foxing Racing Gear. Torture testing isn't done on purpose! We ride 8 hour days for months at a time on budgets forcing us to camp 80% of the time. We carry a computer and electronics rather than spare clothes. We LIVE in FOX gear for months and nothing else takes a beating and keeps on completing the mission like FOX. .

Troy Lee Designs. I've been playing around with some of the Troy Lee Designs (as well as others).Â Troy Lee has a

specific flavor in design that's just down-right cool.Â The fit is comfortable and the designs are well thought out.Â I'm also a fanÂ of this clothing line.Â Â

PROTECT YOUR HEAD: Arai. I have won over a half dozen concussion awards in my life before Arai. I don't skimp when it comes to helmets. Arai Helmets offer the best protection in the most light weight form.Â We have severely torture testedÂ Arai HelmetsÂ sinceÂ 2000 and we are living/smiling proof of Arai's protection.Â Â The VX-Pro3 Emergency-Release Cheek Pad design allowsÂ for quick removal when injured andÂ it's Arai's first dirt helmet to feature its top-mount diffuser ventilation system keeping you cool, even in the Baja elements.Â Â Arai demands all their retailers to 'fit' customers so they know you are getting the best protection where you need it most.Â Â Arai thinks of everything.Â Â