



Hey Guys,

As a flat lander, there were some things I had to learn about riding in the mountains. I would like to share a few of them with you so that you can prepare now to ensure a safe and pleasurable experience. Here is a brief list of things to think about.

1. **Mountains and fat horses don't mix.** You might like giving "Sugar Foot" extra grain and just riding her 10 min a month, but imagine getting on a stair climber for three hours after eating Thanksgiving dinner. If you want to ride in the National forest you might think about putting her on a diet and start riding her 3-4 days a week to get her in shape. I'd start this at least a month before we leave.
2. **Your trail ride is a journey not a race.** The air is thin, when your horse needs to breath, stop and let it breath. It's a lot easier to let a horse catch its breath than it is for you to carry your saddle down the mountain.
3. **Colic ain't fun.** They have good alfalfa hay in New Mexico. Your horse will need the extra energy. Don't wait until you pull into camp to start feeding them alfalfa. Transition them at home before you leave.
4. **Dress for success.** Have you heard the saying "shoes make the man." They make the horse too. Old Trigger might be barefoot in your pasture, but we are going to be west of I-35. There are rocks and he needs shoes. As we talk about dressing for success, be sure to remember your blankets. You will be camping in a valley and it does get chilly at night. Especially when your pony is use to the Texas heat.
5. **We aren't in Kansas anymore Toto.** Your fine stead is going to see boogers that he has never seen before. Stay alert and be patient.
6. **Above all use common sense.** If it doesn't sound like a good idea, it's probably not. "Hey watch this" is not a good way to start a sentence.

If you follow these simple suggestions, I know you will have a wonderful time that will be safe for you and your horse. I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

Butch Boatright