

# 'Drive-n-Dine' Planning Guide V1.3

V1.1 & V1.2 Originally assembled by Pat Gould, 2009 Rally Master

While planning for a rally or funcanna can be daunting, drive-n-dines are much easier in comparison. Here are some helpful bits of information and hints to help you with your planning. Remember to keep fun in the equation and you'll do fine.

**The first thing** to plan is the route. You can use your favorite route that you enjoy when you just want to get out and drive, or you can plan a different one. An easy way to start is to just drive and record everything from where you start along with each and every turn. You can also pull out the ole map and find roads that look like fun - mostly curvy roads. (see page 4 for tips from Joyce Hill on using the Internet and Gazetteer to plan a route). I'm told the club has a copy of Gazetteer for your use if you like.

Things to think about when selecting your route:

1. where do you want to start the drive?
2. is the route all paved or is there a non-paved surface to avoid?
3. is it scenic (all in the eyes of the beholder)?
4. are there some curves (not absolutely necessary but some would be nice)?
5. and does it work well with the restaurant where you want to end the route?

Once you have an idea, reference a map that shows all county and local roads and then start driving it. Run it a couple times to ensure your directions, mileages and timings are correct. Adjust where you must (plan b/c...) if timing is too long, etc.

1. Begin at your starting point. Record everything. Zero out your odometer and record the mileage at every turn. With this info ultimately on your route sheet, it will help those who might become separated from the lead group due to traffic patterns, OTMs (other than Miatas) getting into the mix, or the myriad other reasons.
2. Having road names and mileages on the route sheet helps keep everyone on track, especially those in the latter part of the group.
3. Don't forget to record the time. We've had drives that have lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to 2, 3 or even 4 hours. The 30-minute short drives seem to be evening drives that end up somewhere like a ice cream spot or maybe they were impromptu drives announced by a member 1 or 2 days in advance. Most drives last around an hour or an hour and a half. Anything longer need "nature break" stops - plan accordingly.
4. All drives need to strictly adhere to all speed limits. A very important thing to remember is when you practice-drive your course and it takes 1 hour, the actual drive with many cars will take somewhat longer. When driving by yourself you can zip through the

route pretty fast; however; when leading many cars, you will actually need to drive slower to keep all the cars as close together as possible. Most members aren't into road racing - you don't have to creep, but if you averaged 55 MPH on your practice runs, you'll probably do well to average 45 MPH on the real drive in order for all cars to be kept together.

**The second thing** is to choose the restaurant which, logically, goes hand-in-hand with the determination of the route. Go to the restaurant you have in mind and discuss the particulars with a manager.

1. Can they accommodate a group of 20 to 30 or 40?
2. Do they require reservations/head count?
3. Do they have a separate room? Much desired.
4. Is parking safe and off the street?
5. What are their open dates?
6. Give them your name/phone and obtain the name of the person with whom you are speaking.

We've met in all types of restaurants, large, small, and everything in between, so do not feel pressured about choosing a place to end your drive. All is good as long as the establishment can handle our group, have a decent range of items on the menu and are willing to work with you. The key is communication with the establishment so there aren't any surprises. If reservations or a head count are needed, have an RSVP date posted on the web page announcement. We're used to that and it keeps problems from arising. In addition, most of the time our Webmaster is able to set up a link in the announcement, on our web page, to the restaurant's web site, and the menu is usually available through that link. This isn't required, but it's always nice for members to be able to see what is available.

With reference to planning the date, most drive-n-dines are held on Saturdays, but consult the club rally master for open dates as s/he holds the master calendar for club events. Once a date is selected (including a rain date, if applicable) with the rally master, confirm the date(s) with the restaurant. The rally master will then update the calendar and have the web site updated to include your drive. Then you'll want to write up the drive and provide that to the rally master AND the newsletter editor.

Be sure to include the following information in your write-up:

1. If this a rain or shine event; if shine only, include the applicable rain date
2. Your home and/or cell telephone numbers and email address for people to contact you with questions and RSVP's
3. If an RSVP is required, highlight the response date
4. Reminder for drivers to have their CB radios

- Once you have the route finalized, create the route sheet that you will hand out at the drivers' meeting - make plenty of copies. **At the top of your route sheet, type out "ZERO YOUR ODOMETER" and "TURN YOUR HEADLIGHTS ON".** In the left column put the mileage, *tab*, and type the direction you are turning and the name of the road onto which you are turning - you can also include, with each turn, any interesting things you might want to share about that turn or upcoming sites. Maybe there is some history at that point or something funny. Always include your cell phone number at the bottom of the sheet in order for those who don't have CBs to call you with important info during the drive.

Now that you have finalized everything, everything works to your satisfaction and you're ready to have some fun, what now? Make sure to run the route the day before the actual drive to ensure construction problems and/or any late developed hindrances don't surprise you the next day. If that happens, adjust your route. You have time. It would require correcting and printing a new route sheet if pen and ink changes won't work.

Okay, the day of the drive. Here are some details. Whatever time you want to depart from the staging location, establish a meeting time that is at least one half hour earlier. **REQUIREMENT - have a Club Waiver ready for ALL DRIVERS AND ALL PASSENGERS to sign** prior to departure. The Waiver is downloadable/printable from the Club's web site under the 'Documents' section.

Things to discuss at your drivers meeting which should be held for all attendees about 15 minutes before departure:

1. Briefly explain the general route and if there are any points of interest to watch for.
2. Review the '*pull over/pull*' out strategy to be employed when a separated-trailing group rejoins the lead group.
3. Make sure everyone has a copy of the route sheet.
4. **Safety Briefing - remind everyone to**
  - **obey all traffic laws - speed, signs, traffic lights, etc.;**
  - **turn headlights on;**
  - **drive a safe distance from each other, especially around blind curves;**
  - **keep up with the car in front of you - do not lag;**
5. Establish a CB channel to use for all communication within the group during the drive. Try to stay away from channels 9, 16-19, and 35-40; we normally use channel 22;
  - Ask for volunteers with CB radio equipped cars to space themselves evenly throughout the caravan, especially one being in the middle and one being the last car in the line, so the leader

can be informed of any problems/separations/etc. This will allow the leader to pull over in order for the trailing cars to catch up. Note: if you, the leader, don't have a CB, and since everyone now has a cell phone, be sure ***your cell number is listed on the route sheet so anyone in the drive can call you with important information.***

- Double check everyone has signed the waiver - **DO NOT START THE DRIVE UNTIL ALL HAVE SIGNED!!!!** Give a complete copy of your drive information and the completely signed Club Waiver to the Rally Master at your first opportunity. This will be kept in the Club's files.

When you've completed everything you need to say, tell everyone to saddle up, zero out their odometers, turn their headlights on and prepare for 'go'.

When the drive starts there are the usual radio checks, maneuvering through traffic and getting comfortable driving as a group. It may seem a little slow, but once you get out of main traffic and really underway, it will smooth out and everyone will enjoy the route. Don't be surprised to hear chatter on the CB because some folks might just pick a little on others but it's all in good fun.

Watch your speed - if it appears you're leaving the pack or you're getting communications that indicate you need to slow down, then slow down until all have caught up. It happens. Sometimes you may even have to stop. Do this only if the end cars are delayed at a light or by traffic that would cause the group to be separated by more than a couple minutes. If you continue to drive, do so at a slower pace. Once the end catches up, then you can increase the pace. If, however, you need to stop, do so safely as not to hamper other traffic or cause an accident. If you've pulled over to the shoulder, and the end cars have caught up, they should actually stay on the road and allow the lead group to pull out in front of them. One final note - it will probably help the restaurant if you call them around midway in the route in order to give them a better feel of your estimated arrival time.

Arriving at the destination. Hopefully everyone can park in a group, do whatever to their cars and enter the establishment. At that point your job is pretty much done.

## **Congratulations!**

You've just completed a wonderfully-orchestrated and perfect ride.

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*Great additional information provided by Joyce Hill  
MVMC Newsletter editor (2009)*

*What if I make a wrong turn on the drive? (Jerry and I did that on our first drive and got off course. It was pretty nerve wracking; we got back on the route; and everyone in the club could have cared less, they were out for a nice drive). So maybe some encouragement if things don't go as planned - detour, mistake, etc.*

*Also, Google and Yahoo maps will let you drag and drop your route any way you want to go. You select your start and end point. Let the program set the course. Then you drag and drop the course to new roads you think would be good. Sometimes I'll do a Plan A, B, and even C before we drive them. I use this each time before trying a drive. Instead of spending gas money and hours pouring over the Gazeteer, I use the Internet to get us started. Then once we drive it, I use the Gazeteer to tweak. It can also print out directions for you with total mileage and odometer readings. One tip: click and drag at the point where you would turn from the suggested route, not in the middle of the blue line, and this will keep the driving instructions more congruent. (If you click in the middle of a road to drag the road to another, the directions break at that point and total the mileage at that mid point. That could get confusing to read. .. like this tip is confusing)..*

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(V1.2 updated by Paul Haller, Rally Master 2013)