

Hit the highway

Make the most of your summer road trip with these tips

BY JILLIAN MELCHIOR
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The kid with the long legs, both feet on the hump, bickers with his sister. She sits to the left, pulling her gum out of her mouth, smacking and winding it around her fingers. On the right sits the sullen teenager, staring out the window with his headphones turned up too loud. Both parents are in abominable moods, having spent an obscene amount of money on gas. And there are still 200 miles to go.

This does not have to be you.

Brian Butko, who has been writing guides for road trippers for more than a decade, says he considers the road trip to be part of the American tradition.

"I think it's just ingrained in humans and especially Americans," he says, "the freedom of being able to get away from your everyday surroundings and experience new adventures."

So when the highway summons, be ready. With a few nifty tips from Butko, AAA of Michigan spokesperson Nancy McCain and other pros, you have all you need to make your road trip fun, safe and cheap — yes, even with gas more expensive than a latte.

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The extras

■ Keep your kids happy, peaceful and nondistracting. Lisa Orman, spokeswoman for the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association, recommends versatile games that also spark conversation. Her top picks? Think-ets and Around the Table, both about \$10.

