

These are just some general guidelines to keep in mind when you're planning a Miata trip. Speaking from personal experience of Miata outings, I've never been to a bad one. Just about anywhere you want to go and anything you want to do will keep the troops happy as long as there are some great Miata roads winding through the scenic countryside along the way.

Northcoast Miata Club Cruise Guide for Tour Leaders

Pre Tour Planning & Preparation:

- Congratulations, you've come up with a great idea, let the FUN begin!
- Plan a starting point with ample parking and easy exit for the caravan. Restrooms and gas should be nearby.
- Map out your preliminary route and write it down. Leave adequate space to write in comments, record mileage, times, etc. on your first dry run. Yes, there will probably be more than one dry run!
- Schedule adequate restroom breaks - every 1½ -2 hours. Try and avoid pit toilets (this keeps the ladies happy) and try to find places on the right hand side of the road, for easier entry and exit access.
- Be sure to allow extra time over that required for the dry run. A caravan always will take more time.
- Allow for places to regroup the caravan, especially after passing through areas where the group will likely get split up such as towns with red lights, stop signs and crossing busy highways. Again, look for places on the right side of the road, like parking lots or very wide shoulder areas where the group does not become a traffic hazard.
- Provide every tour member with written directions. Be detailed with turn by turn instructions and corresponding mileage. It's also a good idea to provide directions from the ending point of the tour to the nearest major highways. This will help tour participants get headed towards home in a quick & efficient manner. Not everyone has GPS and you may have led them to an area where they aren't familiar with the roads.
- Plan meal stops and coordinate with restaurants ahead of time. Make reservations, if accepted, and notify the restaurant of how many people to expect and at what time.
- Make sure the restaurant will do separate checks, and whether or not you will be ordering of their regular menu or a limited group menu. Find out the price range of the menu involved.

- Find out the admission price of all attractions and negotiate for reduced group rates.
- If the tour is an overnight trip, additional planning is involved for additional meals and motel accommodations. Again price shop and negotiate for favorable group rates. Get written room quotes and leverage one motel against the next one for the best deal. Remember to check on whether a free breakfast is included and how substantial is the free breakfast. Also does the motel have adequate seating for both your group and other motel guests? (does the motel have outside faucets for car washing and will that be allowed by the management? Will they provide a hose?)
- Write article to be posted in the newsletter and on the website, with all relevant information about your tour. Should be posted at least 3 months in advance if possible.
- If you desire, prepare a “Tour Preview” book to pass around at meetings in the months before the tour. This gives club members a better idea of what you have planned and what they can expect on your tour, which helps them decide if they would like to participate. This book could include pictures, brochures, menus, internet articles, a sign up list, etc. It doesn’t hurt to market your tour!
- Prepare “tour packets” which would include such items as the written driving directions, brochures from the attractions you are planning to attend, related internet articles or information the attractions or area being visited, maps of the area, tour itinerary for the day, list of all tour members to help new members with names, (also it’s a good idea to include cell phones numbers in case someone gets separated and they are out of radio range), etc.
- Follow up with all restaurants, attractions and motels no later than 1-2 weeks before the tour date, to insure that no reservations have been lost, and your group will not show up as an unexpected surprise.
- Send out a final E-mail to all tour participants reminding them of the date, meeting time and any last minute details that may have come up.

Cruise Day:

- Bring your walkie talkie radios. If you don’t have a set, get a pair. They range from \$29 to roughly \$79 depending on quality, range distance and whether they are rechargeable units or just regular

battery units. Note: If you buy the cheap ones, you'll only want to upgrade them later!

- Designate a “tail gunner” to run the “back door” of the caravan. This must be someone who is not “radio shy” and will keep the leader apprised of any problems and of the progress of the entire group. This position is very important to the overall success of the tour. For large groups of 20 cars or more, you may want to consider splitting into two smaller groups or have someone in the middle of the caravan be the “relay” person on the radio. That way if the caravan gets too stretched out or you are in hilly areas where the front car sometimes can't hear the back car, the relay person can relay information forward or backward.
- Start the tour with a brief “Drivers Meeting” where tour packets are passed out, radio channels are designated, new members are introduced, and last minute details are announced.
- Drive with your “parking lights” on while on tour. This not only makes our group more visible, but also helps discourage “outsiders” from breaking into the caravan line. Don't forget to turn your lights off when the caravan stops!
- If the tour is running ahead of schedule or behind schedule, call ahead to the places where reservations have been made to keep them apprised of any changes that are occurring.
- Watch your speed, as the tour leader; you may have to travel under the speed limit to let people catch up. Remember, you did invite them to come with you!
- Keep the group together. Slow down or pull over. It's a group outing, not an autocross.
- Observe all traffic rules and regulations. Be courteous to other drivers. Don't expect that everyone will let the entire line go at once. If they do, wave & thank them. If they don't, that's ok. They don't have to!

Tour Participants:

- If you plan to participate in a tour, sign up by the designated deadline, so your host's have accurate head counts for making reservations.
- Arrive at the starting point on time! Your tour leaders have planned a full agenda and it's important that the tour starts on time.

- Bring you walkie talkie radios. It adds to the fun and keeps things running smoothly along. If you don't have one, ask, someone else most likely, has an extra one you can borrow.
- Drive with your "parking lights on".
- Stay together. Don't let large gaps open between you and the car in front of you. This allows the dreaded "Miata Wanabee" to infiltrate the line, which wrecks the aesthetic effect of our caravan.
- You are responsible for the car behind you! If you make a turn, make sure they see you and make the turn as well. If you are the last car to make it through a red light, slow down and make sure they can keep you in sight and catch up. Also let the tour leader know if someone gets caught at a light, so he can adjust according, to try and keep the caravan together as much as possible.
- Always start the tour with a full tank of gas to avoid unscheduled stops.
- Make a pit stop before the tour starts, especially if you've been drinking coffee all morning. With reservations at restaurants and attractions, it's important that the tour stays on schedule and unscheduled stops are avoided.
- Prepare for all types of weather from hot to cold to sunny. (ear muff, blanket, rain gear, hat and sunscreen. Also bring a small cooler with water.
- If you must drop out Please notify the tour leader by radio or cell.
- Have fun! Have fun!
- Thank your tour leaders for their hard work, and just maybe they will try leading another tour next year!