



Here are a few ideas about making things easier if you're going over the hills and through the trees to grandmother's house by car.

1. Gasoline prices may no longer be the highway robbery they were last year, but you can still expect your friendly neighborhood gas station owners to jack up the price and gobble greedy profits for the holidays. Check local prices before you fill up, or go online to gasbuddy.com, where daily price changes are noted in your area and along your route. To avoid crowded highways, plan to do your driving between 11 pm and 6 am.
2. Keep tabs on the weather. In some parts of the U.S., winter started very early this year, so try to stay far away from snow, sleet and icy streets. To avoid crowded highways, don't wait until the holiday weekend to start your trek. Make sure your tires are in good shape and you have a fully-inflated spare in the trunk. Take along a repair kit, so that you won't be stuck in the middle of nowhere with a flat tire at midnight.
3. Be prepared it it will be a long drive. Make sure you have a basic medical kit, bottled water, pillows, blankets and other comfort items for the passengers. Some packages snacks, such as peanut butter sandwiches, pretzels, candy and cookies can help keep the tummies happy between pit stops.
4. Carpool if possible. You'll get to your destination in better shape if you can set up driver shifts, each about two hours long. If you're not familiar with the route, and don't have a GPS yet, invest in a global positioning system. They're getting cheaper every year, and you can buy a small one for about \$50.
5. Take along playthings for the passengers, whether they're kids, adults or seniors. Desktop computers can do anything these days: work stations, video, movies, video games and much more. A DVD or CD player with earphones can be enjoyable, too, and won't disturb the snoozing passengers.