

What's in My Rifle Pouch.

I started shooting "front stuffers" back in 1973, and even then, at the tender age of 15, I was bent on being "authentic" as far as "shooting from the bag goes, yet I had a whole lot to learn about what belongs in the rifle pouch and what did not. Today, though I still don't know everything, (and never will), the many years of experience that I have accumulated betwixt then and now in re-creating the lifestyle of the Rocky Mountain man have taught me much about what I need in my rifle pouch to keep "Ol' Meat Maker" shooting, and I'm still learning. When on a short scout or a week-long excursion, it is of my opinion that one's rifle pouch should only carry what is necessary to the maintenance and shooting of the rifle. It is not a possibles bag. That is a whole different set up all together.

After much "experimental archaeology" on my part and by observing others, I have come to be satisfied with my current set-up which seems to work pretty well for me, for the time being, as this may change down the trail.

My pouch is a pebble grain cowhide double pouch "D" shaped affair, with a flap made from a beaver plew that I trapped on the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone. The demensions of the pouch are 8 1/2" x 9". In the front pouch, is an antler 75 gr. powder measure, which I carry on a thong on my left wrist when shooting, trekking and hunting, a small brass primer flask (this is only for emergency priming, as I prime from the main powder horn), a small tin containing greased patching, 2 spare rolls of patching and a pocket sewn into the back of the front pouch that contains 35 rounds of .50 round balls. The back pouch contains everything I need to keep my Southern rifle shooting, a .50 rapine bag mold, a small folding lead ladle, a bag of flattened lead for molding into round balls, oil tin, turn screw, a bag of flints, a tin of beeswax/tallow mix, small pair of pliers, a bag of tow with a cleaning jag, worm, ball screw, and vent pick and pan brush. On the outside of the bag on the front strap is a damascus steel patch knife with a 4 1/2 inch blade. I like it this size as it serves as an all purpose knife. on the backside of the pouch is a antler handled ball starter and suspended from the main shoulder strap is a buffalo powder horn taken off a bull in the late 1870's. I also have attached to the front strap about chest level, a loading block, 5/8" thick, 1 1/2" wide and 4 1/2" long, made from a piece of Osage Orange which holds 7 greased and patched 50. caliber round balls.

The whole outfit weighs about 5 pounds. Keep in mind that this set up is not for going out to the shooting range for a day of plinking, it's for as if you were out in the pre-1840 Rocky Mountain West, on the move from one camp to the next, with everything you need to keep your most valuable tool tuned and shooting. Like I said before, this set up works well for me, but as we all know, like the mountain men of history past, we are all individuals and what may work well for one, may not work so well for another. Experimental archaeology is what it's all about, trial and error. you may find yourself adding and taking away what you may need or not need in that pouch, but it's all to your own preference and what you can stand to carry. I hope this information is helpful to the pilgrims who are new to this lifestyle as well as those seasoned hiveranos who has wintered many a year in the mountains. In the meantime, keep your powder dry and your eyes on the horizon.

YMHOS

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