

## ABOUT LLAMAS

Llamas are superior pack animals. They are quiet, courteous, curious, intelligent, strong and agile. Llamas have soft pads on the bottom of their foot like a dog. This is optimal in helping to reduce environmental impact. They have two toes that operate independently, which makes them very surefooted and easy to pack on rough terrain. They are also very clean. They tend to go to the bathroom in the same spots if they have been there before.



## Llamas Colorado LLC

# POCKET PACKING GUIDE

This little guidebook should serve as a quick reference - just in case you can't remember every detail learned at orientation.

### John & Devin

We are so pleased that you have chosen us to help make your trip enjoyable, stress-free, and environmentally harmonious.



We want you to enjoy our llamas as much as we do, and that involves knowing how to handle them on and off the trail. In this *Pocket Packing Guide* you will find the following information:

- Introduction .....1
- About Llamas .....3
- Preparing for your pack trip .....6
- General Handling .....6
- Loading the Panniers .....7
- At the Trailhead .....7
- Saddling .....8
- On the Trail .....10
- Trail Circumstances .....12
- Meetings on the Trail .....14
- Difficulties on the Trail .....14
- Camp Time .....16
- Llama on the Loose .....18
- First Aid Kit for Llamas .....19
- Do's & Don'ts quick reference list .....19
- Knots ..... 21
- Frequently asked questions ..... 23



Hello!  
Welcome  
to  
Llamas Colorado!

Many thanks to Al & Sonora Ellis, Cindy Campbell, Elisabeth Myers, MJ Myers, Denise Newberry, and Katy Thach for help with this booklet. A special thanks to my "llama buddy" Devin for years of hiking, hunting, fishing and working with llamas.

# IN CASE you are new to Llamas and Llama trekking, here are a couple of things you should know outright:

**1** You are responsible for them. They are bearing your load and are depending on you for leadership and basic care.

**2** Bullying and forcing a llama into things may seem to work temporarily. However, they will resent you and may begin to resent all humans. Of course we don't want that, so just ask nicely! Llamas are intuitive and intelligent. They know a lot more about you than you think! Body language is their game! So relax (don't tense your muscles), and most importantly, **remember to breathe!** They are also forgiving of mistakes, so please return the favor. No one is perfect (not even a llama). They all have their own unique personalities, so let them shine through!

*Please be observant & take care to notice their well being at all times!*

**3** Llamas like you to be the leader, so be clear (but kind) about what it is you want. They respond well to gentle, quiet, fluid movements. Avoid quick grabbing movements. If you follow this regimen, they will do as you ask.







*Remember  
to  
Breathe!*



**4** Llamas are very stoic animals. If they are acting unusual or “stubborn”, something needs to be adjusted. You may have to adjust their pack, lighten their load a little, change your walking pace, or increase the number of breaks you are taking. You may also need to change the order they are in as they go down the trail. It all coincides with being observant to what is happening around you.



**5** Llama trekking is much different than a marathon hiking expedition. Trekking is about enjoying the scenery and smelling the roses. The llamas will be enjoying the view just as much as you are! This is like a little vacation for them as well. So please allow the animals to graze lush vegetation at least an hour (total) a day. Find a good place to camp that accommodates you as well as them. Keep in mind that they are your companions, not your indentured servants. Think of them as friends that are nice enough to carry your gear!



# About Llamas

*As mentioned previously, llamas each have their own individual personality-just like people.*

*They are interesting creatures, and it is hard to explain llamas in a way that people will understand. The only way to know what llamas are all about is to spend some quality time with them. Here are some cliff notes about a few llama traits that may make you say “hmmmmmm?”.*

**Spitting** —Many people ask about spitting. Llamas do indeed spit, but 99% of the time they spit at each other, not humans. Their spit is not harmful, just smelly. A sign they are getting close to a spitting episode is when they put their noses way up in the air and their ears are back. So, this is your warning, that “hey, that llama is going to spit at the other llama-lookout!!” Just kidding, sometimes all they have to do is warn the other llama and the other llama will stop whatever s/he is doing. Many times an episode can be avoided by not letting anyone sniff rears. This is very offensive as you probably can guess, but llamas have this nosy little part of them that has to try. If they want to communicate to say hello, they may go face to face, but not face to rear end. Llamas have varying degrees of spit. They can just spit air, which equals a mild irritation of some sort. If they happen to be eating, they may spit what is in their mouth at the time. This can include pellets, corn, hay, grass, water, etc. The last form of spit is regurgitated cud brought up from their first stomach compartment. This means they are extremely peeved! When this one happens you will know it! It is green and has a foul odor. It has such a foul odor that the spitter (and most likely the spitee) will hang their mouths open for about 15 minutes and not be able to eat in that time. Don’t be alarmed, that is totally normal. Now that we all have a graduate degree in spit, let’s move on! (Llamas also sneeze. It sounds like they are spitting, but after they sneeze they will have a look on their face for a second saying, “what just happened?”)

**Snorting** —This may happen (especially from males) when they see something strange on the trail or if they see another llama. Don’t panic if your llama(s) starts snorting. We suggest you take your llama off the trail and let whatever it is (horse, other llamas, goats etc) pass by. If you see horses or a string of pack mules approaching, do your best to warn them that you have llamas. Some horses are comfortable with llamas - but many are not and may throw the rider. After warning the on-coming horse rider, take the llamas off the trail, preferably by going below the grade of the trail by 30-40 feet (if you are able, and it is safe to do so).



**Humming** — Some llamas will make a humming sound. Although we don't know exactly what they are "saying", we have a good idea of what they are feeling. Their tone can range from what seems like curiosity through anxiety. On some occasions it seems like they may be answering you. Sometimes it is just a reaction to being in a strange place away from home. Most of the time, you will hear humming from your llama if he is separated from his llama buddies. Llamas are herd animals, so they like safety in numbers (at least one other llama). If you and your trail mates get separated, catch up or wait up and your llama will be happier! He is most likely just talking when humming. We haven't noticed this to be a serious distress signal.

**Alarm Calling** —Speaking of seeing something strange on the trail, llamas have this funny little thing called an alarm call. Some llamas do this at every little thing, but for the most part, they do it when they see something they have never seen before, and/or if they see something that they think means to harm them and the other llamas. It is a difficult thing to describe in writing, but is a high-pitched noise almost like a horse whinny. Then little snorts/barks happen at the end as it dies off to nothing. Don't worry, you will know it if you hear it. Usually this happens when they are staked at the campsite. Always check to see what the problem is. Even in the middle of the night, if a llama alarm calls more than once, you should get up and check to see what the problem is—even if you don't feel like it.

**Tail Wagging** —Unlike dogs, when llamas wag their tails it means they are irritated about something. This is usually the first thing they will do to show that they are not happy about something that is happening.

**Kicking** —Llamas seldom kick, and because of their padded feet, it is not a serious threat like a horse kick. It is another sign of irritation. Usually if llamas kick they are trying to get a fly off their legs, or maybe the cinch is pinching their wool. They don't kick AT you and most likely won't do it at all.

**Kushing** —This is the llama word for lying down with the legs tucked up underneath. They will do this to relax in camp, or for a couple of other reasons. They will kush if a horsefly or bee is bothering them around their legs and belly. The only way in their mind to stop the insect is to deny access to those vulnerable areas. If a llama kushes for no apparent reason, there may be a problem with the pack or any number of things. Please refer to "Difficulties on the Trail" for more information.





# *About Llamas* con't

*Llamas do not like to be in close proximity to moose and may alarm call.  
If you see a moose try and make a detour if possible.*

**Handling** — Llamas are fuzzy and cute. They sincerely enjoy being in the company of humans. They are very interested and will investigate their surroundings. However, most llamas do not like to be handled excessively. Resist the temptation to hold and hug them like you would a dog or cat. They usually don't mind if you stroke them on their neck. This is their least sensitive spot when it comes to touching. Some of their MOST sensitive spots are the legs and face. Some tolerate touching better and in more places than others do. They are individuals so each will act a little differently, and it is important that you get to know your llama.

*Be Aware  
of Alarm  
Calls!*






## Preparing for the Pack Trip

- Purchase fishing or hunting license and collect appropriate gear
- Pick a destination; obtain maps and any permits required. Call the US Forest Service District Ranger Office or National Park Service Office if necessary
- Plan meals and days, make a list of food, purchase and pack food for trip in zip lock bags
- Plan travel itinerary with the USFS help based on reasonable miles each day
- Inquire about road conditions to the trailhead and any problems along the planned route
- Check and condition yourself if necessary
- Check trailer, lights, tires, and brakes
- Tell someone where you will be going and when you are coming back
- You will need to arrange transport of the llamas, i.e. delivery and pick up from the trailhead.

## General Handling

- The halters will already be on for you when you receive your llamas.

**Please do not remove the halter at any time.** 

- Whenever the llamas are tied to ANYTHING, please use the proper knots shown in class. Mostly you will use the quick release knot with the exception of picketing. It is also advisable to carry a pocketknife at all times in case of emergency, so you can cut them lose.
- Please make sure most debris is out of the llama's wool before you re-saddle. A brush will be provided for your use. Most llamas get irritated when you pluck things out of their wool with your fingers. It pulls his or her wool, just as someone would pull bubble gum out of your hair-ouch! Sometimes it can't be avoided so in that case, just be delicate. Hold the wool down and gently pull the debris out. If possible use a brush and try to brush it out of the wool using quick short strokes.
- Llamas respond to a gentle tug on the lead and then a release. When you continuously tug on the lead they tend to resist. Think of the release as a way to thank the llama for taking the steps forward.
- When llamas are picketed out for grazing they will be fine as long as you make sure there is some good old-fashioned grass they can nibble on. They seem to know the poisonous plants and will not eat them as long as they have a choice. They do eat lots of different trees, bush's and other plants to their liking.
- When leading, always leave some slack in the line (meaning that the line should not look like a "U" and should not be a tight line-a "shallow" line but instead it should be somewhere in between) so you are not pulling your llama's head all the time. Imagine if you were the llama and someone was jerking your head around, it would be uncomfortable and irritating. Please be gentle. They usually only require slight pressure on the halter to respond.
- When following another llama stay at least 8-10 feet behind the llama in front of you. If you tailgate the llama in front of you, they will most likely tailgate their human and there will be a traffic jam! An exception to this rule is if the llama in front of you is dragging along. If you step closer to his rear, he will step up a little faster.





# Loading the Panniers

Packing up the panniers can seem cumbersome, but practice makes better! The goals are to make the panniers as effective and comfortable as possible for the llamas. Here are some important guidelines for making this possible:

- Make sure the panniers are balanced to match each other within one pound, this may be challenging, but of the utmost importance.
- Do not put more than 80 pounds (total) on any llama.
- This can cause the load to shift and rock as they move along. Imagine two people of equal weight on a teeter-totter. One is sitting on the very end and the other is sitting near the center of the board. Obviously they will not balance well.

HERE ARE SOME SPECIFIC TIPS TO LOADING THE PANNIERS:

- Our panniers are water resistant, but we still recommend that you pack delicate or water sensitive items in waterproof bags or line them with garbage bags just to be safe.
- Heavy items should go in the bottom of the pack and light ones on the top.
- Try and put tents and sleeping bags (or any durable) in the front of the packs because this part of the pannier takes the most abuse on the trail from rubbing up against things.
- Inflexible items should be placed on the outside of the pack so nothing is poking the llama in the ribs.
- When weighing the packs it is easier to have two people to assist (one to hold the pack just off the ground and the other to read the weight). This must be done EVERY time the llamas are loaded for the trail-not just the first day.

**NOTE:** It may be helpful to have some method of organization as to what goes where in each pannier-especially if you have more than one llama.

*Do not put more than 80 pounds TOTAL on any Llama*



## AT THE TRAILHEAD

You've made it to the trailhead!

Congratulations! Your panniers should already be packed and weighed out by this time (if you took the class the previous day and received your panniers). Make sure your vehicle is locked and you have everything you need before embarking. I prefer to leave my ID, Wallet, cell phone, pager etc in a locked car. You can hide your car key nearby or have a magnetic key holder on the vehicle in a discreet place.





## SADDLING

*Again, this is easier with two people. It doesn't really matter from which side you saddle the llamas, but we usually do it from the left side of the llama (that is, hooking and unhooking the cinches).*

We like to fit the saddles to the llamas you will be using before the trip and label them. Make sure the proper saddle goes with the correct llama. They will be labeled with their names and each llama fits that particular saddle best. All of the llamas (the group of them) should be saddled before any panniers are put on to allow time for the wool to compress under the cinches etc.

1. Tie the llama up to a solid stationary object on a short lead while you put the saddle on the animal. This also applies to when you are re-saddling in the morning on a multi day trip. Having them on a short lead makes it easier and less likely you will get hurt.
2. Brush out and make sure no burrs are on the animals mid-section.
3. Place the saddle on the llama so that the front of the cinch falls directly behind the front leg. Be sure that the saddle is centered over the backbone of the animal. That means the "forks" of the saddle line up with the center of the llama's neck.
4. Hook the chest strap across the front of the llama. It should be centered and on the wooly part of the chest. This does not need to be snug, just enough to resist the pack weight when going uphill.
5. Then hook the middle strap that runs from the chest plate to the front cinch in between the front legs. If the hook is not centered enough to hook these together you may have to adjust the front cinch from either side to center the receiving hook. This should not be tight, but not loose enough to obstruct the llamas walking ability.
6. Hooking the cinches can be done a couple of ways. Pick whichever feels most comfortable. One person passes the cinch from one side under the animal to the other waiting person on the opposite side. Or, a person can just bend down and reach across the underside of the llama and take hold of the cinch and bring it across in a fluid motion.

*Remember to  
always use the  
Quick Release  
Knot!*





## *SADDLING* *con't*

7. Take care that no wool is pinched in the clasp. The front cinch has to be very snug. To tighten, put four fingers under the strap near the clasp and pull up (this is the strap that is around the belly of the animal). Pull down on the loose end with your free hand, this ensures that no wool will become tangled. When you have tightened the cinch, your four fingers that are under the strap should feel tight against the llama before pulling them out. Please check this cinch shortly after leaving— may need to be tightened again. Keep a loose eye on it. If you notice the pack heavily rocking on the llamas back during the day (assuming that the packs are well balanced), the cinch needs to be tightened. If you are having trouble tightening the cinch adequately or loosening it, check the other side and adjust that side to give you more or less strap to work with on the other side. Unless you are starting a steep descent, the front cinch is the only one that should need any adjusting.

8. Follow the same procedure for hooking the rear cinch. However, the rear cinch does not have to be as tight because it is on the llama's stomach. You should be able to put 4 fingers under the strap. Also be careful that the cinch is not riding on his penis sheath. It should be well in front of the sheath.

☞ **Just before loading the panniers onto the saddle, retighten the cinches as to the criteria above.**

Since the panniers have to be loaded one at a time, try to support the first one with your knee or by holding it up a little until the other pannier is put on the other side. Simply put the loops of the packs over the opposite side of the saddle. Another person may assist because the panniers may be a bit heavy.

Adjust the panniers height by the straps that go around the outside of the pack. The center of gravity of the panniers should not be higher than the llamas' back, but not lower than the bottom of the saddle. If the packs are too low they will bang into the ribs and irritate the llama. If they are too high, it will most likely throw the animal off balance too easily. After the whole process is complete, check to make sure the llama can move freely and doesn't seem to be uncomfortable. Be sure to check that the cinches are tight enough a little while after you start your trip. Make sure the cinches are tight enough so that the panniers are not rocking and sliding back and forth as this can be very irritating and uncomfortable to the animal.

*Safety Tip:  
Load Panniers  
One At A Time!*



# ON THE TRAIL

**LEADING**— There is a two-fold purpose for the leads being 12 feet long. One is to allow the llamas to graze during breaks without having to get out the picket line to tie them out. Also, this is to ensure that the llama has enough lead not to be on top of you, but not too far behind. Give the llama as much of the lead as he wants after you get a rhythm going (be sure it is not dragging on the ground). Some people like to hold the end of the line in their left hand and grasp the lead a little further up the rope with one hand. Lastly, some like to tie a knot in the very end of the lead, so that if the animal happens to balk, they have that to help stop the rope from going through their hands.

## ☞ Safety Tip:

Something very important to remember is to **NEVER** wrap the lead around your hand or tie it to yourself or your pack (if you have one). If the animal happens to get frightened by something and it is tied around your hand it is going to hurt and possibly do some damage. The same idea applies if the lead is tied to your belt loop etc.



**STRINGING**— It is quite common to string llamas together. Taking a llama's lead and literally tying it to the ring on the back of another llama's saddle using the quick release knot accomplish this. No more than 2-3 llamas should be strung together. If your llamas are strung together, make sure you unstring them before tying them out for a break. Although stringing is fine, we ask that in extremely narrow or steep parts of the trail that you lead the llamas separately. This also applies if a stream or river you are crossing is wide and/or deeper than ankle's depth.

## ☞ Safety Tip:

**NEVER tie the lead llama to something with others strung behind him.** If you do decide to string your llamas they will be fine in either order, but you might find that one order seems to work a little better than the other. One llama may be a better leader or follower, or one may set a better pace than the other. It is totally up to you – whichever order works better.





# ON THE TRAIL

*con't*



**CHECK THE LOAD**— As mentioned earlier, it is important to check the load shortly after you start to see if the cinches need to be adjusted. Another important time to check is after walking a steep incline. Especially downhill walks may cause the saddle to scoot forward onto the llamas' shoulders. This will cause chafing and discomfort. If you see this happening, stop and fix it as soon as possible. You may be able to get away with stopping on level ground and pulling it back a bit (be careful not to pull wool). If the saddle has moved significantly, you may have to unload and saddle up again. Always keep an eye on the saddle and make sure that it is centered on the llamas back perfectly—that is the “forks” of the saddle line up with the center of the llama's neck.

**COFFEE BREAKS**— Be careful not to speed along the trail leaving your loyal companion huffing and puffing carrying 80 pounds of stuff. Llamas do best (and can cover more distance in one day) walking at a medium pace. If the scenery is a blur and you are too out of breath to talk, you need to slow down. The point of using llamas with their quiet manner and loyal stewardship is not to see how many miles you can do in one grueling day. If that is the case, the llamas say, “take your own stuff!” Stop about every hour and take a break. Stop more frequently if you are gaining elevation. If you are doing long, steep hills, you may have to stop every 200-300 steps. A good rule of thumb is walk 2 minutes and rest for 2 minutes while gaining steep elevation. If your llamas are panting or seem to be labored in their breathing, you need to take more frequent breaks. This is not to say to take longer breaks, just more frequent ones.

When you take a break, tie the llamas up separately out of the other's reach. If you take a long break (more than 15 minutes i.e. lunch) take the panniers off so they can relax, munch, and lie down (kush). If there is no convenient tree or rock to tie the llama to simply tie them to the panniers using the quick release knot. This works great in meadows because they have a full circle to get the most grass in a short time. There may be poisonous plants in the area, but the llamas won't eat them if you give them a choice. That is why it is important that you pin them out where you can identify some good old-fashioned grass they can eat.





# TRAIL CIRCUMSTANCES

**ROCKS**— Be very careful about walking over loose rocks with the llamas. They are very surefooted on solid ground, but on rocks or slick surfaces, they can easily injure their legs in unseen holes. Don't take the llamas into places where you know the footing will not be solid.

**DEADFALL**— Deadfall includes items that fall across your path, blocking the way. Llamas can jump well, but we prefer them not to. Jumping can disrupt the panniers and can throw the llamas off balance. This in turn can throw you off balance. The llamas prefer to step over things. If any deadfall is more than 2 feet high, try and lead the llama around it rather than over it. Be sure to always check for sharp broken off branches that can injure the llamas or you.

It is a very good idea to take a bow saw with you for removal of deadfall. With all the beetle kill trees falling across the trail every day and you may not be able to negotiate a way around, under, or over it. That is when you give the llamas a break, pull out the bow saw and hopefully remove the obstacle by sawing through it and pushing it off the trail.

**JUMPING**— The llamas may try to jump across mud, narrow creek beds and other obstacles. Do not let them jump these things. Take a hold of their lead about 6 inches from the halter and calmly, but firmly lead the llama across whatever obstacle they want to jump. Stand to the side in case they do jump. It is a good idea to unstring the llamas from each other because if the back llama jumps, the leader will be forced to as well. As mentioned above, jumping can injure you and the llama. Jumping over something dislodges the panniers and causes the weight to shift. After all the balancing we did, we don't want to mess it up now. Also, if the llama misjudges s/he can run into you. This is why we ask you to stand to the side of the llamas.

**STREAM CROSSING**— Llamas are usually good about crossing water, but have been known to be a little hesitant at times. If this is the case, give them a second to check it out and coax them on by giving gentle tug and release signals. Make sure the stream is not too deep or rocky at the point where you are crossing. Another important factor to keep in mind is to make sure where you are crossing is not too steep an entry. The more level the better. Usually on paths that are well used and known, the streams you cross are no problem at all. If the stream is a little deeper or wider, lead the llamas across one at a time. Before crossing a stream, stop at the edge and see if your llama would like a cool drink. Let your llama have opportunities to drink, but don't be alarmed if they drink little or nothing during the day. For some reason, llamas tend to want to take a potty break while standing in water. For environmental reasons, you want to prevent this from happening. If the llama stops suddenly mid-cross, give him/her a firm pull on the lead. Pull him/her all the way across if you have to. Don't let them drink in the middle-only at the edge before you cross because if they stop in the middle this will increase their urge to go potty in the water.





# TRAIL CIRCUMSTANCES *con't*



**POTTY BREAKS**— If you are walking along and all of a sudden your llama stops and won't go for no apparent reason, or starts to walk off the trail he likely wants to take a potty break. He will spread the rear legs and crouch a little. If a male is peeing, it will take A LONG time, much longer than you would ever expect. So, just hang out and enjoy whatever is around you because you will have a couple of minutes. If one llama starts, that will most likely stimulate the others to go at that time as well. When they are done, try not to leave a lot of poop in the middle of the trail for others.

**NARROW AND OFF -TRAIL TERRAIN**— If you are making your way through a lot of trees, it is best to hold the lead closer to the llama to have more control of where he goes. Steer the turns very wide for the llamas so their packs don't rub unnecessarily on everything. If the llamas are strung, the second llama may not go the same route around objects as the first one did. It may be helpful to walk them separately through challenging places.

**BOGS**— Bogs are not a good place to be for several reasons. For one, they contain many poisonous plants. Second, it is destructive to the fragile wetlands to go trouncing through them. Lastly, the llamas can sink and get stuck. So, do not walk through bogs. Simply find a dryer place to cross or go around.

**BRIDGES**— Bridges should be about 3 feet wide in order to safely take a llama across. Handrails are definitely a plus. If there are none, lead the llamas over one at a time. Never lead llamas over logs because they can easily slip off and injure themselves and possibly you. It is better to lead them through the stream if the bridge is narrow or slick.

**TRAIL MUNCHING**— If you stop on the trail it is ok for the llamas to munch away. Llamas love pine needles and other delicacies that are not in their pastures at home. Don't let them munch when you are walking. This breaks the cadence of the trek for everyone, just pull/tug the lead so they can't snack.



**EXTREME WEATHER**— Because of their wool, llamas are prone to heat stress. The llamas have been sheared as much as possible to decrease the possibility of heat stress, but it is never eliminated. Because of Colorado's drastic temperature range during the year we cannot shear the llamas down to the skin for the summer months. They must be prepared for the possibility of subzero temperatures as early as October or November. If it is an extremely hot day rest more than usual, slow down, and pay attention to the llamas. If they are panting or being reluctant to walk take heed and rest them for a nice long break. The following are signs to watch out for: **•head down •dull eyes •wobbly knees •being non-responsive to getting up if kushed.** If your llama exhibits one, some, or all of these symptoms it is a very serious-even fatal situation. It must be attended to immediately. Find shade and take everything (including the saddle, pad and panniers) off of a heat-stressed llama. Splash some water on their chest and light-wooled areas. These, along with resting will help to cool them down.



# Meeting Other People And Animals

**Horses**— Horses **ALWAYS** have the right of way over llamas. Many horses have never seen llamas and are naturally afraid of what they don't know. Some of them will just want to get the heck out of there and some will flat out spook. If you see horses up ahead, find a place to get off the trail. Get as far off the trail as possible at least 30 yards if you can. Talk to the riders and let them know what you are doing. Get off the trail below the oncoming horses or pack mules if possible. Totally stop and let the group completely pass (and then some) and talk to the riders as they go by so the animals can hear familiar sounds and know that is it ok. It is important to maintain good relations between the llama packers and all the other packers out there.

**Other Animals**— Sometimes you will meet other animals on the trail. Perhaps a goat or domestic sheep and of course dogs. Depending on the llama, he may react differently depending on whether he has encountered the animal before. The llama will most likely just look curiously and wide-eyed at a new animal as long as it is not posing a threat. Many dogs are not leashed and may scare the llama, but try to put yourself in between the llama and the loose dog. You may want to get off the trail and let them pass avoiding any problems. If you happen to meet other llamas on the trail, be warned that the llamas may be very interested and challenge the other llamas. Be prepared to keep them apart.



**Moose** – As mentioned, llamas don't seem to like moose and may alarm call. As long as you are not in danger from the moose try to comfort the llama by talking to him saying it will be all right.

## Difficulties On The Trail

Let me preface this section by saying that our llamas are almost always very well behaved and cooperative (angelic even). However, we like to have you be aware that there is a very small chance that this may not always be the case. So these things most likely won't happen to you, but just for the sake of warning here it is.

“Stubbornness” (I like to call this dogging it) - This word is in quotes because most likely the llama is not being stubborn, instead something needs to change. This was mentioned earlier, but we will reiterate. First, use the gentle tug and release on the lead and that may convince him/her. If that fails, then here is a quick checklist to go over if your llama is still being resistant.

1. Was the load balanced properly?
2. Are the cinches tight enough and in the correct places?
3. Is wool being pinched anywhere on the apparatus?
4. Is anything poking your llama in the ribs?
5. Have you taken a break lately?
6. Is your pack and mileage within the realm of realism?

If all that is dandy, and the reluctance continues for a half hour, stop and take a nice break. Also, you may tie him/her behind another llama that is not having any problems.

Some llamas don't like to lead and changing the walking order in the string will make them comfortable moving ahead. Some llamas will even start out leading without trouble and then decide part way through the hike they don't like it any more.

You can also put a reluctant llama in front of one of your fellow campers who can encroach on the laggard or tickle his rear legs with a stick to get him going. This can work well.

If your llama **SUDDENLY** stops after going along just fine, be sure s/he is not trying to take a potty break.



# Kushing

**Kushing**—The llama word for lying down w/legs tucked up underneath their bodies—This is a more severe form of resistance (or as mentioned earlier the llama is evading a horsefly or bee). Obviously this will stop forward motion altogether. If this happens in the beginning of the day, most likely something on your checklist needs to be changed (see above). After checking everything over, it is most helpful to pull and release on the lead to his side further and further to the rear until he gets up. If it seems to be rebellion and/or nothing is wrong that you can see, have someone else take all the other llamas up the trail out of his sight. This will most likely spur the llama to get up and catch up with the other llamas. If this happens near the end of the day, your llama may just be extremely tired or battling heat stress. If the weather is too hot or you have been laboring in the sun for a long period of time, the latter is probably the case. In most cases, it would be very rare that any of our llamas would exhibit this behavior (with the exception of heat stress) unless something is wrong or they are exhausted. So, if you feel it is because of overexertion take a nice long break, lighten the load a little, walk at a slower pace (or a combination of these things), or camp sooner than was planned. Llamas are fairly stoic animals, so if all of our llamas are kushing on the trail at the end of each day, you need to take it easy with your pace and mileage. Remember that they are the ones carrying the heavy load up and down all those hills!



**Following too closely**— Some llamas have a bad habit (which is very hard to break) of tailgating you—sometimes even stepping on your heels. Find a walking stick and carry it angled towards the rear at about arms length. Wave it back and forth and this will usually keep the llama back. If he is trying to pass you (that is walking on the side of you instead of behind you) use the command “hold back” and tap his chest if he gets too close.





# Camp Time

When you are thinking about looking for places to camp, there are a few things to consider. An ideal spot would be some place that is sheltered and flat for your tent, and an adjacent meadow or grassy area with some sheltering trees for llamas. The closer the llamas are to you the better, but as long as you can see and hear them (even when they are kushing) it's ok. Another thing to consider is water. If you are camping near water, the llamas must be at least 200 feet away from a lake or 100 feet away from a stream. This is so their waste does not run into the lake, pond, etc. As far as the llama's drinking water in camp, it is the individual's llama's prerogative whether or not to drink. Some llama's drink very little on a camp trip and others drink a lot. You need to offer them water every night. It is usually easier to bring the water to them in the provided feed bucket where they can reach it without knocking it over (in other words at the very end of their lead). Some llamas drink at the same rate that they pee-very slowly! Also, they may be a bit insulted that the bucket does not contain grain/cookies but only water, Let them have some time with the water bucket to settle down and realize they are thirsty. You can alternate the bucket of water between all of the llamas. Give them at least a half hour with the bucket and the opportunity to drink.

Say you stopped at a stream right before you set up camp and collected some water. Now, you can give that to the llamas and it doesn't have to go through the water filter, but it ALWAYS does for you! It may look refreshing and great, but just make sure it is filtered or treated for you're safety and well being. Always stop at streamsides and see if they would like a drink. You may be surprised that some STILL will not drink. Don't worry about this, they know their limits- just be sure to offer it.

Now you know what to consider when for looking for a campsite. Now here are some things to do when you actually find one.

☞ First take your picket line and screw it into the ground. Try to allow the animal enough room to move in a circle without obstacles within the diameter of the circle so not to be snagged as he grazes. Then clip the grazing lead to the halter and finally (only after the grazing line is attached) remove the lead and put it with the panniers and saddles.

## 1ST PRIORITY = THE LLAMAS

*Tie them somewhere shady (preferably) and take all their equipment off.*

Here are a few things to remember about picketing the llamas:

- ☞ Make sure they cannot reach each other or get tangled in each other's tie out ropes.
- ☞ Make sure there is a comfortable dry place with in their reach to kush.
- ☞ Make sure all the llamas have a visual of at least one other llama. This will comfort them.
- ☞ Try not to tie them around a lot of brush or deadfall, because they are likely to get tangled up in anything around them.
- ☞ Put them in a place where they can reach good grazing. They love going to the mountains to eat all these yummy things! However make sure they are only eating grasses or evergreens as other plants may be poisonous to them.
- ☞ **After all that is done, give the llamas some treats and water.** They will love you for the sweet mix and the salt! Despite what they tell you, they are not starving to death, so ration your treats to last the whole trip.

# Camp Time *con't*

☞ If the bugs are bad, please apply the insecticide supplied to the llamas face and ears. Place some bug juice on a rag (balled up not flying all over the place). Dab some wherever you can, but try to get most of their ears. This seems to be most effective. Also put a lot on their neck. It may be helpful to have two people do this job. One-person hold the lead rope or use the “relaxed position” taught in class (One hand holding loosely under the jaw – NOT GRIPPING – and the other hand holding loosely behind the ears) while the other person applies the insecticide. Most llamas don’t like it, but it is for their own good.

☞ Now it is time to get your things in order after the llamas are situated. Surely you picked this site because there is a nice level place to set up your tent. Go ahead and do that.

☞ It is a good idea to hang the panniers and the saddles on tree branches so they are not lying on the ground. This keeps everything dry and prevents mice from chewing on the cinches. Keep the saddle pads clean. They will attract a lot of dirt and debris.

☞ It is also a good idea to have a bear safe camp set-up. That means no food in your tents at anytime. You should hang your food and garbage ten feet up and ten feet from any other tree. Ideally use a rope strung between two trees and place your food in the middle.

☞ It is a nice idea to have your clothes that you plan to wear the next day in the tent with you. That way they are warmer and you don’t have to go get them in the morning in your PJ’s.

☞ Keep a loose eye on the llamas whenever you are in camp and check on them before you go to bed. Untangle any that need untangling and make sure they are ok. Most will probably be grazing or kushed, happily chewing their cud. Check the llamas as soon as you emerge from your tent in the morning as well. Most likely everything will be fine, but it only takes a second to check.

☞ If you stay in one camp for longer than two days you should re-stake the llamas at least once for two reasons: one, they will get more to eat, and two this will minimize their impact on the environment.

☞ *Make sure if you hear an alarm call you go check it out.*





# Llama On the Loose!!

Having a llama get loose can be a stressful situation. However, let's start by saying **DO NOT PANIC!** Remember that the llama can read your body language and chemistry. Most likely our llamas will not run away unless spooked by something and they probably won't go far anyway.

☞ Rule #1 **NEVER** run after or chase a loose llama. This will only cause the llama to run further away from you.

☞ Rule #2 Determine what happened. Did he just get loose from the picket line? (Make certain you are tying your knots properly!) Did something scare him/her (mountain lion, bear, sheep, moose etc.)? If he has a long length of rope hanging from his halter slowly approach the end of the rope and step on it.

☞ Rule #3 If you can see the llama approach him but go around him/her, not head on. Don't make eye contact. Act like you aren't paying attention to him. Casually step on the end of the lead line if it is still attached. If the lead/picket line is not attached take a lead line with you and the SWEET MIX BAG. Our llamas are little piggies and will most likely stay put or even come to you if you shake the SWEET MIX AROUND IN A COOKING POT. When that happens, put the lead line around the neck and after that is secured, clip it to the halter. Remember—slow fluid movements are best. Never grab or lunge at the llama. If the halter is not on or is broken, have someone go get the extra supplied halter (in the llama pack that is supplied). After the llama is secured with the lead around the neck, stand on the left side of your llama and slide your right arm around the llama's neck. Place one side of the halter in each of your hands (your right hand will be holding the strap that goes into the buckle and your left hand will be holding the buckle) making a big opening for the llama to put his/her nose through. Gently (not touching the llama's nose) slide the halter way up on the nose and buckle the crown piece to a comfortable adjustment.

☞ Rule #4 If all else fails take every piece of rope you have and string them out around 4 trees to make a small corral. Then put the other llamas inside this small corral and using another length of rope and your friends push the llama toward the corral and close the corral off with the rope as he moves into it. Then you can approach and rehalter or attach the lead.

Rule #5 Never lose sight of the loose llama. If someone needs to go back to camp and get something, have one person stay near the loose llama to see if s/he goes somewhere.

Rule #6 If you happen to notice that a llama is missing from camp, form a search party. Take some llamas but always leave one in camp for bait in case Mr. Missing comes back. Llamas don't like to be alone (although the one left in camp is all right in this case) so they will most likely find each other. Listen very carefully for rustling brush, humming from the lost llama and pay attention to the llamas you have with you. They will find the other llama before you will.

**WHEN IN DOUBT, SHAKE THE SWEET MIX AROUND IN A COOKING PAN AND CALL THEM BY NAME. SPEAK SOOTHINGLY TO THEM AND TELL THEM IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT.**

*Remember to have fun on your trek. We care about you and the llamas and want you to have a great time!*

Be sure to follow all Forest Service rules according to the area where you will be trekking. In some cases a stock permit (free of charge) is required.



# First Aid Kit "FAK" For Llamas

As a part of your gear for packing including the Saddles, Panniers, Halters and leads you will receive a Llama First Aid Kit. Aka FAK (You will need to bring your own personal first aid kit) this is actually more than just a first aid kit for the llamas but it will contain some useful items for your llama trek such as:

1. Spare Halter and Lead in case one breaks and an extra 40 feet of poly cord
2. Duct Tape, Leather or Rubber pieces, stitching kit to make a rubber bootie if the llama hurts a pad
3. Pin out Stakes in individual stuff sacks to put the llamas out to graze or when you are camped. When the llamas are on the pin put the lead in the stuff sack and place it back in the FAK
4. Water Bucket –optional but nice
5. Sweet mix
6. Scales for weighing panniers
7. Hand Gun (optional-supplied by you)
8. Spare cord or Bungies
9. Flagging during hunting season
10. Trail Bell (optional) certainly a good idea when you are traveling in Grizzly country
11. Brush for cleaning the llama
12. Insect Spray or wipe cloth and 100% DEET
13. Picket Line (optional)
14. Extra Strap for Breeching or Chest strap should one break
15. Llamas Colorado business cards in case someone asks where you got those great animals
16. In Colorado with the beetle kill there is always the possibility of a tree down across the trail. There are times when you can't go around it, over it or under it. That is why taking a folding Bow Saw with you can be invaluable.
17. Rubber tubing 2 feet long, 3/8 of an inch in diameter. This can be used as a tourniquet or placed in the llamas nose/airway if they get a swollen face after a

## Don'ts

- ☞ Do not jerk on the lead and pull on your llama's head
  - ☞ Do not try to do a marathon with the llamas
  - ☞ Do not put more than 80 pounds total on any llama
- ☞ Do not tie the lead llama to something while others are strung behind him or her
  - ☞ Do not force an obviously tired llama beyond limits
    - ☞ Do not chase a loose llama
    - ☞ Do not remove the halter
- ☞ Do not pin the llamas out in boggy ground where they can't find a dry spot
  - ☞ Do not ever hit the llamas
- ☞ Do not let the llamas have potty breaks during stream crossings



# 👉 Do's

- 👉 Do expect to have a relaxing wonderful time
  - 👉 Do attend to the llamas needs first
  - 👉 Do use the quick release knot for tying the llamas during breaks
- 👉 Do take care when stream crossing or walking on narrow trails and lead the llamas one at a time
  - 👉 Do find a place to camp that accommodates you and the llamas
  - 👉 Do allow the llamas to graze at least an hour per day of lush vegetation
    - 👉 Do check out alarm calls
    - 👉 Do offer the llamas water in camp
- 👉 Do continually check the load, cinches and saddle to make sure they are properly positioned
  - 👉 Do yield to horses on the trail
- 👉 Do obey all rules in your area according to the Forest Service
  - 👉 Do practice low impact camping
  - 👉 Do take frequent breaks for you and the llamas



# This Knot is Call



☞ The best knot to tie your llama to a stationary object with.

☞ Remember to use a short lead when you are applying DEET, brushing, saddling or unloading the panniers. Keeping a short lead makes those activities much easier.



1.

Bring the Llama up to the post ( tree etc ) so he is on your right side as you face the post.



2.

Bring the lead around the back of the post from your right to your left.



3.

Make the number 4 with your lead by bringing the free end across in front of you and over the " llama end " just below his halter..



4.

Put a bend in the free end (the end you are holding in your left hand) of the lead.



5.

Bring the lead in your right hand underneath both sides of the 4 and push that through the bend you put in place with step 4.



# *ed the Quick Release Knot*

6.



Continue to pull and tighten the loop you pulled through.

7.



Putting your left hand on the knot push the knot back against the post as you pull the loop you pulled through toward you.

8.



9.



To release just pull on the free end of the lead and it should release the Llama (even under pressure).

10.



11.



Finally pull the knot against the post tight enough so that pulling on the lead just below the halter feels secure...Give it a tug.

# *Frequently Asked Questions!*

☞ **Do llamas spit?** Yes llamas will spit most frequently in the course of food disputes, dominance, wrestling matches and sometimes when confined in a small space of a trailer or the back of a truck. Female llamas will spit when refusing the amorous advances of a male llama or when defending their young. Llamas will spit on humans when they feel threatened or in pain. Some of my llamas will spit when being given an injection or when being sheared. As a normal, well-adjusted llama they do not spit on me when I catch, halter or pack with them. Llamas that have been spoiled or poorly handled may spit at the slightest annoyance. These animals can be retrained to alter that behavior. All the llamas we use here at Llamas Colorado are very reluctant to spit on people and will avoid that at all cost.

☞ **Can a llama hurt his feet on a trail?** Llamas are very durable animals and for the most part their feet, which are characterized by a soft pad and a toenail that is quite hard, they rarely hurt their feet by cutting them on a trail. They can end up with tender feet as a result of very rocky soil and large amounts of weight on their back. Usually a day or two in camp to let the feet heal up will address this issue. I have also seen llamas who developed sore front feet as a result of going down very steep trails with weight on their back due to the impact of landing repeatedly on their front feet as they drop down off each shelf. Keeping the weight a little further back on the animal will help with this but it is not going to make a difference with a really rough trail system.

☞ **What do llamas need to eat?** Llamas eat grass and other herbaceous materials. They can select the food that is right for them and given a choice of grass will usually select that as their favorite. Nevertheless they will browse on adjacent bushes and herbaceous plants to supplement their diet. When they are on the trail once a day they should get a small amount sweet mix with a mineral supplement to keep salt and trace mineral intake intact.

☞ **Do horseflies and mosquitoes bother llamas?** Yes, at least as much as they bother people. We spray them with Permethrin which is an herbal bug repellent but we are also comfortable using Deep Woods Off or a similar DEET containing spray on their head, legs and abdomen and buttock region so they are more comfortable. Llamas do not like to have this applied and as such I find an aerosol can is the easiest way to apply the product. Usually one person will grab the llama's halter or lead under the chin and the second person will apply the bug repellent to the animal in a liberal fashion. There should be adequate bug repellent with you as you head up the trail to take care of your animal's needs as well as your own.

☞ **Where and when did llamas get their start as pack animals?** The oldest fossil remains of a "camelid" show that the first ancestor of llamas originated in the rocky mountains of Colorado. They migrated south during the Ice age. Llamas were domesticated around 6,000 years ago in the Andes Mountains and by 3,800 years ago, were used for packing and other purposes in Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and Ecuador. Under the Incan rule (1450-1532), llama pack trains accompanied armies. Within 100 years after the Spanish Conquest in 1532, though, 90 % of the llama population—along with over 80% of the Indian population—had been killed to reduce grazing competition for cattle. Mountain communities have continued to rely on the progeny of the 10% that survived to this day.



# *Frequently Asked Questions! con't*

☞ **How much weight can pack llamas carry?** The rule of thumb on loads for mature pack llamas is similar to that for horses: about 20%-25% of body weight with adequate conditioning. That means that the average, adult llama weighing 325 pounds may carry from 65-80 pounds of gear. But a good conditioning program, good nutrition, and guarding against excess body fat are as important as a scale to getting the weight your llama can carry right. Age is also important. Two years old is a good age to start introducing llamas to the saddle, panniers, and experience on the trail, but both their attitude and physiology are likely to be negatively impacted by giving them a load to carry that young. A three year old can begin to carry weight incrementally; most people who pack with llamas hold off on full loads until the fifth year. Overloading llamas of any age may also shorten their packing days by breaking down their backs, pasterns, or knees. If a mature llama sits down on the trail, suspect poor conditioning, too much weight, overheating, or illness—not stubbornness.

☞ **How far can they go in a day?** This, too, has to do with conditioning, as well as age, experience, and “heart”. In general, reasonably loaded, experienced adults in good tone can match almost any hiker in terms of distance. Six to eight miles per day is quite manageable and, with wise use of breaks, llamas in condition with a somewhat lighter load are able to hike much farther in one day. Fully loaded llamas are most comfortable walking at a moderate pace, especially where elevation is gained. It’s essential to avoid heat stress. And, you should avoid “marathon” hikes or pack trips with young llamas. Give them a chance to feel good about packing, rather than start them out experiencing it as drudgery.

☞ **What do you need to transport a llama to the backcountry?** Horse or stock trailers work well, but since llamas weigh about one third as much as horses and most “kush” while a vehicle is in motor, less substantial trailers will work, as long as the structure will safely contain the animal. Llamas can also be carried in vans or stock racks on pick-up trucks. They can easily jump onto the tailgate of a full-sized pick-up truck. They can be trained to ride on airboats and in small airplanes. It is not safe to tie a llama in a trailer. If they fall or become tangled so that the halter is pulled down on the lower part of the nose, they can suffocate.

☞ **What and how much do they eat and drink?** Llamas are browsers, eating a variety of vegetation much like deer. Their digestive system including three stomachs is extremely efficient. A steady diet of alfalfa is too rich and will lead to obesity. One llama is adequately fed on one bale of good quality grass hay per week. Llamas drink relatively little—1-3 gallons/day—but although related to camels, they cannot go for long periods without water. Pack llamas that refuse to drink from streams or lakes will usually drink daily if offered water from a bucket they are familiar with. They should also be provided with minerals appropriate to the area. On a pack trip, we generally carry 1-2 pounds of alfalfa pellets/llama/day when supplementation is needed.

# Frequently Asked Questions! *con't*

☞ **Do they take a lot of health care and other maintenance?** Llamas are relatively disease-free, but they must be vaccinated against certain diseases and wormed regularly. The vaccination and worming regimen varies by region. Good nutrition—good quality grass hay—is important. Free access to trace minerals is recommended. Obesity is detrimental to their health and limits their ability to do their job. Their two large toenails need to be kept level with the bottom of their foot—this may require periodic trimming or toenails may wear down automatically on rocky terrain. All of the above care can be done by the owner or at a veterinary clinic. Most people who pack with llamas shear them every spring. This is important to help to avoid heat stress—a potentially life-threatening condition—as well as simplifies grooming and saddling. We recommend grooming pack llamas carefully before ever leaving your own property to avoid carrying weed seeds into the backcountry.

☞ **Who is in charge when I lead the llama?** These animals are very intelligent and given the opportunity will break the rules or take advantage of you if you let them. It is important that you remain in control of a llama at all times. This is done by way of a halter, which goes around the llama's head and should never come off during the course of the trip and a lead, which attaches to the halter by way of a snap link. When the llamas are pinned out at night we use a nylon tether attached to a corkscrew pin that attaches in place of the lead allowing them to graze a 30 foot circle

☞ **Can a Llama get too close to me as I am walking?** It is important that llamas follow the person leading them by one to three feet and that they do not require continuing pressure in order to move up the trail. Most packing llamas learned to stay just the right distance behind a person leading them without getting too close. A gentle tug on the lead will often bring a llama up closer to you and he will understand that he needs to walk faster to stay the appropriate distance. Likewise if a llama gets too close then a gentle tap on the front of his neck saying, “hold back,” “hold back” should suffice to let him know that he needs to walk a little slower.

☞ **Is it OK if my llama wants to continually snack on adjacent bushes and trees as we go up the trail?** Llamas should not be reaching out to eat grass, or other leafy materials as they are moving up the trail since it breaks up the cadence of the hike and at some point becomes very annoying to the person leading the llama and other members of the group. If a llama sits down on the trail he should immediately be pulled back up onto his feet. If it looks like the llama is tired then take the llama up the trail another 75 or 100 yards and then give him a break so that he can recover adequately. If we let the llama determine when he is going to stop, he may decide that he would like to stop every 50 feet, which obviously impacts the quality of the trip. For that reason “kushing” on the trail is a bad behavior and it is not tolerated when it occurs. Having said that, it is important to allow the llama to urinate and/or poop when they have the urge to do so even if it is on the trail and interrupting the flow of the things. Within a few minutes he will be finished with business and then everyone can happily move on. It is a good idea to push the poop of the trail with your boot or hiking stick so that future hikers won't have to move around it or step through it.



# *Frequently Asked Questions! con't*

☞ **What do I do when I reach a stream crossing?** If the llamas are being led in a string, stop and unstring them so you can lead them one at a time. (Unless it is a large stream i.e. anything more than 10 feet, in which case it's easier if they are all strung out one after the other) llamas do tend to jump streams unless they are trained not to. For some reason this is more common with smaller little narrow streams in the range of two and half to three feet wide than it is with larger streams 10-20 or even 40 feet wide. Usually, holding the llamas head down by taking the lead under his chin and pulling down as you approach the stream and asking him to "step, step" through the stream will allow the llama to do so without any efforts on his part to launch across the stream or on top of you as you try to guide him through the stream. It is important to try and stand to the side as you lead him through the stream just in case he does launch forward so you won't be hurt. You should also make sure your friend and any other llamas are not standing directly where he might jump.

☞ **What order should the llamas be in as they move up the trail?** Oftentimes the sequence with which the llamas are lead up the trail can make a big difference. For instance, certain llamas do not tolerate having another llama behind them but are happy to stay behind other members of the group. If you're having trouble headed up the trail it is wise to change the sequence with which the llamas are proceeding to see if that will change or mitigate the difficulty. Stringing llamas one after the other is a good way to make it easier to travel in the back country and often times a simple over hand loop attached to the back of the proceeding llama's saddle will suffice to string the llamas along without any difficulty. Again, however, if you are having trouble with them change out the sequence and see if that doesn't make a difference. I found that some llamas love to lead and are placed in front where they are most happy and other llamas really do not like to be out in front leading the pack, so to speak. We make an effort to train all of our llamas to lead independently but personality may prevail.

☞ **How do I know the llamas wont eat poisonous plants?** When the llamas are pinned out it is important that they have an area with grass. There are lots of associated herbaceous plants in the mountains, some of which are poisonous. The llamas know which plants are poisonous and will stay away from them, but if you give them no option but to eat poisonous plants they will have to do so. A way to make sure that they don't get sick on the trail is always put them in an area that does have some grass, easily visible so they can pick out the grass and eat that in preference to other herbaceous plants that are questionable. Don't sweat it if you see them eating all kinds of plants, they know what they are doing.



# *Frequently Asked Questions! con't*

## **☞ How can I saddle up the llama when we are ready to break camp in the morning?**

In getting the llama ready to put a saddle on it's important that they are put on a short lead. Putting the llama on a short lead makes it less likely that they will move around to avoid being brushed out and having a saddle placed on them. It will protect you because they can't move in your direction if they find the process annoying. By short lead, I mean four to five inches from their chin. They should be tied to an immovable object such as a tree or fence post or the side of a pickup. Once they are securely attached then they can be brushed out briefly along the back and the sides where the saddle will sit. It is not necessary to brush out the entire animal to get the saddle on them. The saddle is placed on the animal usually designated for that animal and fitted to them. It is important that the front cinch is very tight so that only two fingers can be slipped underneath it. The rear strap on the saddle should be loose and not confining. The front strap does much of the work of keeping the saddle and panniers in place. . We use a breast strap and a butt strap to keep the saddle in place as well. Once the saddle is in place and tightened up, the panniers should be loaded with your gear, weighed out evenly, plus or minus two pounds and then with a person on both sides these panniers are placed on the animal synchronously so the weight is evenly distributed. After the panniers are in place all the pockets should be closed up, zippered shut and to make sure that the weight is pulled up and is close to the animal as possible to make for less of a tendency to produce a rocking motion as he proceeds down the trail. Keep the load tight to the body of the animal and avoid a tall pile of gear on top.

## **☞ What do the llamas do when we break for lunch?**

When I stop for lunch I usually look for a grassy spot that can support llama's grazing for a few minutes. I usually pull off the panniers (but leave the saddles on) to get lunch and to give the llamas a break from carrying their loads. Again it usually makes a lot of sense to either have one person in the party hold the llama under the chin while the other two load panniers or to attach the llama to an immovable object when the panniers are placed back on him or taken off so that he is not moving as you are handling them. The llamas can be left on their leads during the lunch hour and allowed to graze in that fashion.

## **☞ What kind of food do we need to take for feeding them?**

In the evening when the llamas are pinned out they really do not require any additional food, but giving them a treat involving sweet mix and some mineral mixture will befriend them significantly. It also provides salt on long pack trips where they may not meet their salt or mineral requirements during the trip otherwise. It is useful to offer them water in the evening if they have not been exposed to it during the daytime. Allow them enough time to decide whether they want to drink or not, i.e. 45 minutes exposed to the water. The llamas can be taken down to a stream or a bucket of water can be placed close to them, which they will access if they are thirsty.



# *Frequently Asked Questions! con't*

☞ **What do I do if a llama gets lose?** If a llama should slip off its lead or lose its halter it is important that it becomes the first priority to recapture that llama. Most llamas will stay close to their fellow packers because they are strong herd animals. Nevertheless, it is important that the llamas be on halter and lead so that we have some control over their activity and can ensure their safety as well as usefulness to us. For that reason there is a rope in the gear supplied with the llamas for crossing large streams or recapturing them. The tie out pin and rope can also be used for this purpose. I would suggest a couple of tie out pins be place in a semi-circle amongst some trees and then the llama that gets loose gets herded into that area and trapped by way of the stream crossing rope as you close the circle off. You can leave the other llamas inside there and he will have a natural inclination to go join his buddies thus facilitating the ease with which he is captured. Also see earlier section on "Llamas on the Loose"!

☞ **What do we do if the saddle or Panniers fall off as he is walking?** If for some reason the llama flips off his panniers (another reason they should not be jumping streams) or they became twisted and fall underneath him it is necessary to pull the panniers off and the saddle off and reattach the saddle perhaps with a tighter cinch. Then the panniers can be placed back on the animal in the fashion we talked about above. If you see a saddle that seems to be off to one side then it may be that the panniers may have not been weighed out appropriately or you have a significant side-to-side difference in the way the saddle sits on the animal. If that happens and you can move weight from the lower pannier to the upper pannier to try and even out the process or you can lower the pannier on one side in order to keep the panniers equally situated on the llama's back. It should be approximately equal in terms of height and location so the saddle sits square on the animal's spine. Re-weigh the panniers if they keep shifting.

☞ **What should we do with the saddles and panniers when we are in camp?**

When you camp at night it is important that the tack (saddles and the panniers) is adequately protected from animals, rodents or inclement weather. It's important that the panniers do not contain grain or other edible substances at night, which would cause an animal to chew into them. It is important that the saddles be securely on a limb of a tree or a large log where they are off the ground. Then lay the panniers across the saddles so as to protect the padding and the saddles from rain.

☞ **What do we do if it starts to rain?**

There is a rain cover with each set of panniers (in one of the 4 side pockets) that completely covers the panniers and the saddle on a given animal. There are hooks on the corners of the rain cover that will attach to the exterior portions of the pannier. This rain cover can also be used to cover the panniers and the saddles at night to keep them dry.

☞ **When are you going to stop typing this stuff?** I think that is enough information for now. If you think of other information that we should add to this booklet please make a note below and let me know. I hope you have a truly magical Wilderness experience with very little stress and much enjoyment as you move through the backcountry.

*Happy Trail's  
John and Devin*



