

TEJ DRIVES ROAD DOC

996 Road Trip Prep Checklist

A printable pre-drive planning guide for getting a Porsche 996 ready for a real road trip, mountain run, or weekend drive.



What this is

A public prep checklist built around the Tej Drives approach: simple checks, calm planning, and fewer surprises before the road gets serious. It is useful for 996 owners, older sports-car owners, and anyone preparing a driver-focused car for a trip.

Best for

Porsche 996 owners, older 911 drivers, weekend road-trip planners, mountain-road drivers, and anyone towing or driving a low sports car to a destination.

Core idea

Handle the boring checks before leaving so the trip is about the road, not guessing what the car needs on the shoulder.

Use it for

Fluids, tires, brakes, tools, spares, trailer prep, cabin setup, GPS planning, and post-drive notes.

Drive posture

Prepared, smooth, and realistic. This is not a race prep sheet. It is a road-trip readiness guide.

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Quick Overview

A good road trip starts before the first mile. For a 996, the goal is not to overbuild the car or chase every possible issue. The goal is to catch obvious problems, pack the right basics, and leave with a clean plan.

Simple rule

Do the checks early enough to fix something. A checklist done the night before is useful. A checklist done two weeks before is better.

<p>Primary focus Road-trip reliability, mountain-road confidence, and avoiding preventable issues on older sports cars.</p>	<p>Key systems Fluids, cooling, tires, brakes, suspension, battery, lights, tools, spares, route, and recovery plan.</p>
<p>Trip mindset Keep the car smooth, legal, and predictable. The best trip ends with the car parked safely at home.</p>	<p>Main risks Old hoses, tired tires, brake heat, loose wheels, low fluids, weak battery, low front lip clearance, and overpacking.</p>

Tej Drives prep rules

<input type="checkbox"/> Start with the car cold and parked on level ground.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fix obvious issues before trying to make the car look perfect.
<input type="checkbox"/> Do not ignore fresh leaks or new smells.	<input type="checkbox"/> Check wheels and tires before any long highway run.
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan fuel before mountain roads or remote stretches.	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep tools useful, not excessive.
<input type="checkbox"/> Leave early enough to avoid rushing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Document issues after the trip while they are fresh.

Prep Timeline

Use this timeline to avoid turning prep into a last-minute scramble. Adjust based on your car, trip length, and how far you are from shops or parts.

Best practice

Anything that requires parts, alignment, brake work, tire replacement, or shop time should be checked at least one week before the trip.

2 weeks before	Review known issues, order basic parts/fluids, check tire condition, inspect brakes, confirm registration/insurance, and book any shop work.
1 week before	Wash enough to inspect the car, check for leaks, verify lights, battery, wipers, tires, brakes, and suspension feel.
2-3 days before	Check fluids cold, set tire pressure baseline, test cameras/chargers, print docs, pack tools, and confirm route/weather.
Night before	Fuel up if practical, load light gear, charge batteries, set GPS stops, and avoid doing major mechanical work late.
Morning of	Walk around the car, inspect tires, check for puddles, confirm phone/camera mounts, and start the first miles calmly.

Do not do this right before leaving

<input type="checkbox"/> Install untested major parts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Change suspension settings without test driving.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ignore a new warning light.	<input type="checkbox"/> Leave with unknown tire pressure.
<input type="checkbox"/> Start the trip with low fuel.	<input type="checkbox"/> Pack heavy loose items in the cabin.
<input type="checkbox"/> Assume GPS will solve route planning.	<input type="checkbox"/> Chase a noise by guessing.

Fluids & Consumables

Fluids are not glamorous, but they decide whether the trip starts calmly. Check the basics cold, then recheck anything suspicious after the first drive.

996 note

Older water-cooled 911s deserve extra attention around coolant smell, visible drips, radiator area debris, and any fluid that suddenly changes level.

Engine oil	Check level using the correct process for your car. Look for sudden consumption or fresh leaks.	Pack a small top-off bottle if the trip is long or remote.
Coolant	Check level cold. Look around the ground, rear, hoses, and front radiator area for signs of leaks.	Do not ignore coolant smell or unexplained level drop.
Brake fluid	Confirm fluid age and pedal feel. If fluid is old, refresh before mountain driving.	Brake confidence matters more than power on a twisty road.
Power steering	Check for noise, seepage, and correct level where applicable.	A small leak can become a mess on a long drive.
Washer fluid	Top off before bug-heavy or mountain-road drives.	Visibility is part of safety.
Consumables	Pack microfiber, glass cleaner, gloves, paper towels, and basic wipes.	Small items prevent annoying stops.

Fluid checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Oil level checked correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/> No fresh oil puddles after sitting overnight.
<input type="checkbox"/> Coolant level checked cold.	<input type="checkbox"/> No coolant smell after warm-up.
<input type="checkbox"/> Brake fluid age/status known.	<input type="checkbox"/> Windshield washer fluid topped off.
<input type="checkbox"/> Small top-off supplies packed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rag/gloves/funnel packed.

Tires, Brakes & Suspension

This is the confidence section. A 996 can feel great on the road only when the contact patch, brake system, and suspension are ready for the job.

Mountain-road rule

Do not start a hard road day with questionable tires or brakes. Back roads punish old rubber, weak pads, loose wheels, and overheated fluid.

<p>Tires Check tread depth, age, sidewall condition, pressure baseline, leaks, and any rubbing after recent wheel/tire/suspension changes.</p>	<p>Wheels Inspect lug bolts/nuts, wheel fitment, spacer setup if used, and any vibration from recent work.</p>
<p>Brakes Check pad life, rotor condition, brake feel, fluid age, and smell/noise after a short test drive.</p>	<p>Suspension Listen for clunks, confirm ride height is not causing obvious rubbing, and test the car before the trip.</p>
<p>Alignment feel Watch for pulling, wandering, weird steering wheel angle, or instability under braking.</p>	<p>Heat management Plan cooldown stops during mountain drives. Hot brakes and rushed return runs are a bad combination.</p>

Confidence checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Tire pressure set cold.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tread and sidewalls inspected.
<input type="checkbox"/> No visible cords, bubbles, or cracks.	<input type="checkbox"/> Lug torque/fitment confirmed.
<input type="checkbox"/> Brake pedal feels normal.	<input type="checkbox"/> Pad life checked.
<input type="checkbox"/> No new rubbing after turns/compression.	<input type="checkbox"/> No shake or pull on test drive.
<input type="checkbox"/> Spacers/adapters inspected if used.	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooldown plan included for mountain roads.

Mechanical & Electrical Walkaround

This page is for the quiet checks that can save a trip: lights, battery, belts, fans, leaks, warning lights, and anything that changed recently.

Do not normalize new behavior

If the car suddenly smells different, starts differently, runs hotter, makes a new noise, or leaves a new spot on the ground, treat that as a finding.

Cold start	Listen for unusual noises. Watch for smoke, rough idle, warning lights, or slow crank.
Warm-up	Let the car reach normal temperature and confirm the cooling fans/temperature behavior feel normal.
Lights	Headlights, brake lights, turn signals, hazards, reverse lights, plate lights, and trailer lights if towing.
Battery	Confirm battery health, clean terminals, and that the car starts normally after sitting.
Leaks	Check under the car after sitting and again after a short warm test drive.
Recent work	Reinspect anything recently touched: wheels, suspension, brakes, interior wiring, engine bay items, or body panels.

Walkaround checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> No active warning lights.	<input type="checkbox"/> Car starts cleanly.
<input type="checkbox"/> No new smoke or rough idle.	<input type="checkbox"/> Temperature behavior normal.
<input type="checkbox"/> All exterior lights work.	<input type="checkbox"/> Battery condition acceptable.
<input type="checkbox"/> No fresh leak spots.	<input type="checkbox"/> Recent work inspected.
<input type="checkbox"/> Mirrors/glass clean.	<input type="checkbox"/> Wipers usable.
<input type="checkbox"/> License/registration current.	<input type="checkbox"/> Insurance and roadside info accessible.

Tools, Spares & Packing List

Pack for realistic problems, not every problem. The goal is to handle basic roadside issues, document what happened, and avoid being helpless if something small goes wrong.

Pack light

A sports car on a road trip does not need a full garage in the trunk. Bring useful basics, secure them properly, and keep cabin items from moving around.

Basic tools Tire pressure gauge, inflator, flashlight/headlamp, gloves, microfiber, basic socket/bit kit, zip ties, tape, and small towel.	Roadside support Jump pack, phone charger, portable battery, emergency triangle/light, insurance, roadside assistance info, and shop/tow contact plan.
Car-specific items Wheel lock key, lug tool/socket, small top-off fluid, spare fuses, and any known small item your car tends to need.	Cleaning basics Glass cleaner, microfiber, bug towel, quick detail towel, and hand wipes.
Trip admin Printed route doc, hotel details, fuel notes, emergency contact, offline maps, and planned stops.	Content gear Camera mounts, batteries, memory cards, audio plan, charging cables, and a simple shot list if filming.

Pack checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Tire pressure gauge.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tire inflator.
<input type="checkbox"/> Jump pack charged.	<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight/headlamp.
<input type="checkbox"/> Gloves.	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfiber towels.
<input type="checkbox"/> Wheel lock key.	<input type="checkbox"/> Basic tool kit.
<input type="checkbox"/> Zip ties/tape.	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone charger.
<input type="checkbox"/> Portable battery.	<input type="checkbox"/> Printed route plan.
<input type="checkbox"/> Offline maps saved.	<input type="checkbox"/> Roadside/tow info.
<input type="checkbox"/> Camera batteries charged.	<input type="checkbox"/> Memory cards cleared.

Low Car, Trailer & Loading Prep

If the car is low, has a front lip, or is being trailered, the trip needs a loading plan. Do not let the first loading attempt happen when everyone is tired or rushed.

Low-car rule

Approach angle matters. A few minutes setting boards and ramps correctly is better than scraping the front lip before the trip even starts.

Before loading	Inspect trailer, ramps, tires, lights, hitch, chains, straps, and loading area. Confirm the trailer is on stable ground.
Approach angle	Use boards or ramp extensions if needed. Watch the front lip, bumper, undertray, and exhaust clearance.
Spotter	Use one clear spotter. The driver should move slowly and stop immediately if the spotter signals.
Tie-downs	Use proper rated straps and secure the car based on trailer and vehicle requirements. Check for rubbing or loose strap angle.
First-mile recheck	Stop after a short distance and recheck straps, ramps, boards, lights, chains, and load position.
Tow route	Avoid tight technical roads, steep driveways, and routes that send the trailer through roads meant for the car only.

Trailer prep checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Trailer lights checked.	<input type="checkbox"/> Hitch locked and chains crossed.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ramps and boards staged.	<input type="checkbox"/> Spotter ready.
<input type="checkbox"/> Front lip clearance watched.	<input type="checkbox"/> Car centered on trailer.
<input type="checkbox"/> Straps routed cleanly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Loose gear secured.
<input type="checkbox"/> First-mile stop planned.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tow route avoids tight driver roads.
<input type="checkbox"/> Fuel stop trailer-friendly.	<input type="checkbox"/> No car cover while towing.

Route & Drive Planning

The car can be ready and the trip can still go sideways if the route is sloppy. Build the route before leaving, then sanity-check it again before the fun roads start.

Plan for boring success

The best route plan separates transport miles from driver roads. Highway miles get you there. Driver roads are the reason for the trip.

Start point	Set a clean start point with fuel nearby and enough room to check the car.	Do not start the day already rushed.
Fuel plan	Know where premium fuel is before remote or mountain sections.	Fuel stops are also good reset points.
Road sequence	Write the major roads or landmarks in order.	This prevents GPS from improvising a bad route.
Weather	Check rain, fog, temperature, and road closure risk.	Wet leaves and cold tires change the drive.
Stops	Plan scenic, food, and cooldown stops before the road day starts.	Do not stop in unsafe blind-curve areas.
Return leg	Make the way home simple and less demanding.	Fatigue is a real trip risk.

Route builder

Home/base	-----
Fuel stop	-----
Road section 1	-----
Photo/reset stop	-----
Food/rest stop	-----
Return route	-----

Drive-Day Flow

Use this flow on the actual day. It keeps the first miles calm, the fun road section focused, and the return leg from becoming sloppy.

Clean run mindset

Warm the car and driver up first. Do not use the first road section to prove anything.

Pre-start	Walk around the car, check for leaks, tire condition, loose items, camera mounts, and dashboard warnings.
First 15 minutes	Listen to the car. Confirm steering, brakes, temperature, and vibration feel normal.
Fuel/reset	Fuel before remote sections. Use the stop to check tire pressure visually, look for smells, and reset GPS.
Mountain section	Stay smooth, stay in lane, leave margin, and let faster traffic pass safely.
Cooldown stop	Park safely, let brakes cool, check tire/brake smell, look under the car, and review the next leg.
After the run	Do a quick walkaround, write down issues, and do not ignore new noises on the way home.

Drive-day checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Cold walkaround done.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tires checked.
<input type="checkbox"/> No puddles under car.	<input type="checkbox"/> Loose cabin items secured.
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone/camera mounts secure.	<input type="checkbox"/> GPS stops loaded.
<input type="checkbox"/> Fuel plan confirmed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Weather checked.
<input type="checkbox"/> First miles taken easy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Brake cooldown stop planned.
<input type="checkbox"/> Return leg simple.	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-drive notes completed.

Content & Story Planning

If you are filming the trip, plan simple shots that support the story without distracting from the drive. The car, road, prep, and decisions are the story.

Filming rule

Set cameras before the drive. Do not adjust mounts, phones, or camera settings while driving. Pull over safely if something needs changing.

Intro shot Car in garage or driveway, quick prep detail, and the reason for the drive.	Prep proof Fluids, tire pressure, tools, route doc, fuel stop, or loading setup.
Road proof Road sign, scenic stop, GPS stop, or safe pull-off establishing where the trip is happening.	Driving footage Interior steering/shifting, road-forward footage, external safe parked clips, and ambient sound.
Car check Cooldown stop, brake/tire check, fuel reset, and notes after the main road section.	Wrap-up What worked, what needs fixing, what the next drive will change.

Shot checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Garage/prep shot.	<input type="checkbox"/> Route doc shot.
<input type="checkbox"/> Fuel stop shot.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tire pressure/tool shot.
<input type="checkbox"/> Road sign/proof shot.	<input type="checkbox"/> Interior driving angle.
<input type="checkbox"/> Shifter/steering detail.	<input type="checkbox"/> Scenic parked photo.
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooldown/walkaround shot.	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-drive notes shot.
<input type="checkbox"/> Clean outro.	<input type="checkbox"/> Next-drive teaser.

Master Printable Checklist

Print this page and use it as the main pre-trip sheet. Add notes on the next page.

Pass/fail rule

If a check reveals something important, do not just check the box. Write the issue down and decide whether it needs fixing before the trip.

<input type="checkbox"/> Oil level checked.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coolant level checked cold.
<input type="checkbox"/> No new leaks found.	<input type="checkbox"/> Brake fluid status known.
<input type="checkbox"/> Tire pressure set cold.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tread/sidewalls inspected.
<input type="checkbox"/> Lugs/wheel fitment checked.	<input type="checkbox"/> Brake feel normal.
<input type="checkbox"/> Suspension/noise test done.	<input type="checkbox"/> Battery starts cleanly.
<input type="checkbox"/> All lights work.	<input type="checkbox"/> Wipers and washer fluid ready.
<input type="checkbox"/> Tools packed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Inflator/gauge packed.
<input type="checkbox"/> Jump pack charged.	<input type="checkbox"/> Wheel lock key packed.
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone/camera gear charged.	<input type="checkbox"/> Route stops entered.
<input type="checkbox"/> Fuel plan confirmed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Weather checked.
<input type="checkbox"/> Insurance/roadside info accessible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Loose items secured.
<input type="checkbox"/> Trailer plan ready if towing.	<input type="checkbox"/> First-mile recheck planned.

Trip decision

Car status	<input type="checkbox"/> Ready <input type="checkbox"/> Needs attention <input type="checkbox"/> Do not drive yet
Main concern	-----
Fix before trip?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Watch and recheck
Final notes	-----

Post-Drive Notes

Use this page after the trip. The best time to document issues is while the drive is still fresh.

What felt good?

What needs attention before the next drive?

Parts, tools, or changes to consider

Tej Drives reminder

The goal is not perfection. The goal is a car that gets used, checked, improved, and brought home clean.