

Road Conditions at Desert Camp

During our 3 weeks of Desert Camp we will have a wide variety of road conditions. We have been riding on these routes for years and they have been refined to offer the best cycling routes in the area.

Historic Towns and Hotel Week

Our route heads south to Tubac the first day through Green Valley. We ride many popular two lane roads used by local bike clubs on Sunday morning but we do ride 2 miles on Interstate 19 past the border inspection station. This interstate section has a good 7 foot shoulder.

The next day we have an easy ride from Tubac to Patagonia. We are on Arizona Rt. 82 for half of the day which has an okay shoulder but there are a few semi trucks that use this route as a connector from Nogales to Benson to avoid Tucson. So you will need to pay attention to passing truck traffic.

The third day we have a 12 mile gradual climb to Sonoita on Route 82 which has a good shoulder most of the time but there are still a few semi trucks. So you will need to pay attention to passing truck traffic. During the next 15 miles we loop around on back roads through the wine and ranching region. The next 11 miles we rejoin Route 82 which is mostly a downhill ride to lunch (again with a few semi trucks and no shoulder). Once we cross Arizona Rt 90 at the traffic light the trucks turn north and the remaining 9 miles is much quieter down to the San Pedro River. After lunch there is a final 8 miles climb into Tombstone with less traffic.

On the fourth day we ride downhill on Charleston Road toward Sierra Vista. Then south across the valley and around the backside of the mountains. A 4 mile section of Molson Road is a little busy but last year the county was marking it so we are thinking that it is repaved with an improved shoulder. (We are checking on that) Our final road toward Bisbee has a large shoulder and steady traffic. We come up past the mining area in Bisbee with a steep 2 mile climb into town.

Our fifth day heads up Mule Pass from downtown Bisbee. This is a steady 5-9% grade for five miles to the summit. The downhill on Route 80 is smooth and fast with a good shoulder. We head north through Tombstone again and then head west to Kartchner Caverns for lunch and an afternoon cave tour.

The final 12 miles to Benson are fast and downhill with a good shoulder on Route 90. This day has moderate traffic.

Our final day back to Tucson is about 50 miles. The first 7 miles we climb out of town on side roads up the bluffs. Then we get on Interstate 10 for the next 13 miles which has been repaved with a wide smooth shoulder. At the 20 mile mark you start riding the frontage road for 10 miles to the outskirts of Tucson. The final 20 miles are on an assortment of streets with bike lanes and the final 10 miles are on a bike trail back to the hotel.

Century Week

Our route heads south the first day through Green Valley. We ride popular two lane roads used by many bike clubs on Sunday morning into Nogales. We do ride 2 miles on Interstate 19 past the border inspection station. This interstate section has a good 7 foot shoulder.

The next day we have a scenic ride through Patagonia onto Sonoita. We are on Arizona Rt. 82 for half of the day which has an okay shoulder but there are a few semi trucks that use this route as a connector from Nogales to Benson to avoid Tucson. So you will need to pay attention to passing truck traffic.

In Sonoita, the next 15 miles we loop around on back roads through the wine and ranching region. The next 20 miles are on Route 82 again (Watch for trucks - no shoulder). It is mostly downhill to lunch in Huachuca City. You will have the option to stop by the Fort Gate to get your access pass to ride through the Fort later in the week. **Only American citizens can get access passes but sometimes a US veteran can get foreign riders into the fort).**

We will spend the next four nights in Sierra Vista and ride 60-100 loops everyday. The loop rides from Sierra Vista could change a bit but most of them follow different roads in a new direction each day. The day into Fort Huachuca the route becomes quiet desolate ranch roads. Riders without access can take an alternate route around the Fort on the highway we road the previous day. The other loops go east through the mining town of Bisbee over Mule Pass or north toward Kartchner Caverns and Benson. We also loop through Historic Tombstone several times and have lunch downtown. Our final day back to Tucson goes back through the Fort or around the Fort to Sonoita.

We then have a fast 50 mile ride down the canyon and across the bike trails back into Tucson.

Mountain Tour

Our route heads south the first day through Green Valley to Nogales. We ride popular two lane roads used by many bike clubs on Sunday morning into Nogales. We do ride 2 miles on Interstate 19 past the border inspection station. This interstate section has a good 7 foot shoulder.

The next day we have a scenic ride through Patagonia through Sonoita to Sierra Vista. We are on Arizona Rt. 82 for half of the day which has an okay shoulder but there are a few semi trucks that use this route as a connector from Nogales to Benson to avoid Tucson. So you will need to pay attention to passing truck traffic.

In Sonoita, the next 15 miles we loop around on back roads through the wine and ranching region. The next 20 miles are on Route 82 again (Watch for trucks - no shoulder). It is mostly downhill to lunch in Huachuca City.

On the third day we ride from Sierra Vista to Douglas. We are looking to add miles by going up Charleston Road to Tombstone. This road is hilly and it could be busy with local commuter traffic in the morning for the first 20 miles. After Tombstone we head south to Bisbee and climb steep Mule Pass on Route 80 (good shoulder). Our final 25 miles to Douglas are mostly downhill on side roads across the farming region.

The fourth day we ride 101 miles to Lordsburg, New Mexico. Today we only have three turns because we are on Arizona Route 80 (very quiet traffic) heading northeast for the first 80 miles. The winds are typically tailwinds and this is a fast ride to Lordsburg. Many riders have set their personal best time for a Century Ride on this day.

The fifth day to Safford is a crescent shaped route with a big bend up and over a local mountain. The roads are pretty good with decent shoulders most of the day. The hardest part are the headwinds that typically blow the final 25 miles heading southwest.

The next is an Out-n-Back ride up Mt. Graham. It is about 60 miles roundtrip gaining over 5,000 feet during a tough 21 mile steady grade to the top. This is one of the most popular and memorable days of the tour. Riding Mt. Graham is the main challenge this week and the reason many riders want to ride Mountain Week.

Day seven heads mainly south to Willcox. This is a nice 67 mile day with one major climb over a 2,000 foot ridge. The rest of the day is 40 miles of flat riding through the farmlands of the valley.

The next day is an Out- N-Back route to the top of the Chiricahua Mountains. It is 44 miles each direction with most of the climbing on the way to the summit (of course). The return trip is faster but usually into a headwind back to Willcox.

The ninth riding day ends in Tombstone. There are two route options of 75 or 98 miles with only moderate traffic on US 191. Both routes come together for the final 40 miles by riding quiet Gleeson Road into Tombstone.

The final day is a fast 86 miles with a lot of downhill after the first 35 miles. This route has a bit more traffic so riders need to pay attention to cars and trucks that use these roads. We head back down the canyon from Sonoita. Our final 11 miles are on the bike trail to our hotel in Tucson.