

2023 Taco Run



Jimmy & Toni, Pam & Robert, Mark & Karen

This year, we decided to do an Iron Butt ride to the Taco Run along with two other couples, Jimmy & Toni Burns and Robert & Pam Armstrong. The requirements are simple: *You must start or end your IBA ride at the Love's Truck Stop in Lawton, OK.*

Our plan was to leave after work on Thursday at 3:30 pm, ride halfway to Kansas City, take a 6-hour break, leave from KC at 6:00 am on Friday and arrive at the Love's Truck Stop by 3:30 pm. The plan worked perfect!

Since this was Robert & Pam's first IBA (Iron Butt Association) ride, Jimmy & Toni would mentor them.

From start to finish, at each gas stop, Jimmy would upload his DBRs (Dated Business Receipts) and Robert's DBRs to Jimmy's Spotwalla track (electronic tracking device online map) as documentation for the ride. They would write their name and odometer reading on their respective receipts, then take a picture of it next to their respective odometers prior to upload. The uploaded photos would be embedded in the online map at the exact location the receipt was acquired. This electronic submission saves a lot of tedious paperwork. Not only is it easier for the rider, but it's also easier for the

IBA verification team. I would do the same on our own tracking device for mine and Karen's IBA submission.

We all arrived at the Circle K in Hernando to start our adventure! Official start time per my DBR was 3:25 pm 4/20/23. Time to ride!

Hernando rush hour was busier than ever! Prior to our start, Jimmy said there was an accident on I-55 south of the Nesbit exit. We need to get around it before we get on the interstate. Well, most people would have taken Hwy 51 north, but I knew that would be congested too! So, I took a different route on backroads, up and around the accident to get onto I-55. From there, it was smooth sailing!

In Memphis, we bypassed the I-55 bridge and took the M-bridge. Again, to bypass a bottleneck due to construction. It didn't take any time to get through town and over the river into Arkansas! There, we merged back onto I-55 northbound headed toward St. Louis.

At our first gas stop in Sikeston, it was time to prepare for the rain. We could see rain clouds slowly gathering to the west. We knew we would hit bad weather soon! For the next 30 miles, clouds above us were black. We expected rain any minute! We stayed dry longer than anticipated. But, then we hit it head-

on! Hard rain with flashes of lightning and thunder all around us! It rained hard for another 30 miles. By the time we hit the southern suburbs of St. Louis, the rain quit. We stopped for a DBR to mark our route.



Weather Enroute

As we headed west on I-70, the cold front moved through! Within a short time, the temperature dropped 20 degrees from the mid-60's to the mid-40's. Everyone was glad to stop in Kansas City, KS for a few hours in a warm hotel room! It was Midnight when we arrived. We would meet at the bikes ready to ride in 6 hours (6:00 am).

The following morning, we hit the road on time! We continued west for about 30 miles for a fuel stop in Topeka. This allowed us to not only fuel up, but to make any adjustments to our gear on this cold Friday morning.

After a short stop, we continued on to Salina, KS before turning south. Prior to turning, we stopped again for a DBR to mark our route. The

temperature was in the low 40's, but the sun was up. We knew the temperature would start warming up when we made the turn and started heading south. And, it did! By the time we made it to our next gas stop in Orlando, OK, the temperature was 66 degrees. But, this stop didn't come without major drama!

Jimmy was fixated on his gas gauge! He had never ridden farther than 170 miles on a tank of gas! When we passed a full service exit in Perry, OK, Jimmy got concerned! The next sign, we saw said Guthrie 33 miles away! Little did he (or anyone else) know that Mark was planning on stopping in 12 miles. Mark had seen a sign for BBQ 40-miles prior and had planned that as our next stop for gas and food. When we finally pulled into the gas station, Jimmy thought he'd be pushing his bike to the pump. Come to find out, he still had a gallon of gas remaining!

The Smokey Pokey at the Cowboy Travel Plaza was worth the stop! It was awesome! Everyone enjoyed their meal! This was the only time we stopped to eat during our 1,000-mile ride! It tasted soooooo good! After fueling up and eating a good meal, the temperature had warmed up to 70 degrees. Everyone was feeling great! Only 130 miles to go! Knowing that rejuvenated everyone's excitement too! We could see the light at the end of the 1,000-mile tunnel! And, we had

plenty of time on the clock! Let's get-r-done!

No problem running through Oklahoma City at 1:00 pm on this Friday! As Jimmy says "We were haulin' ass and burnin' gas!"

As we approached Chickasha, OK, I looked at my GPS to see how far off route the Leg Lamp was. Karen had found the Leg Lamp a few weeks before our trip and was hoping we would be able to see it. Well, it was less than 2 miles off our route. There was no better time than now to see this roadside attraction. We still had plenty of time left in our 24-hour window since we were only 40 miles from the end!

Stopping at the Leg Lamp was a great photo op! The temperature had warmed up to 76 degrees. The storm and cold weather the night before was just an old memory. We were having fun now!



Chickasha, OK

Back on the road, within 45 minutes we were at the Love's Truck Stop in Lawton, OK. As I was waiting on a pump, Karen was off the bike greeting other riders! A friend, KSolo (2022 Hoka Hey Champion)

was fueling up in front of us. Karen gave him a hug, then went over to other pumps to greet other riders. Our official end time: 2:37 pm for a total of 1,040 miles in 23 hours and 12 minutes. We did it!

From here, it was 5.8 miles to the InnHabit Tiny House Resort in Medicine Park, OK where we stayed. It was a cool place! The owners brought in shipping containers and made a great tiny house complex! Containers were stacked two-high, brightly painted, and were trimmed in cobblestones. The resort was laid out well with a covered firepit in the center for everyone to enjoy! A coffee shop was open with a restaurant and craft brewery in the works. Very cool!



InnHabit Tiny Resort

Shortly after we arrived, our friends, Don & Deanna Yates, joined us! They were staying in the resort, too!

Saturday was the 5th Annual Taco Run. Everyone gathered around Small Mountain Street Taco stand for a group photo at high noon!

The Taco Run organizer asked riders to bring in food donations for the local food bank. Our group

donated a couple of bags of non-perishables.



Taco Time!

I mingled with some friends until Karen caught up with me. We ordered our tacos and ate at the bar top facing the street while waiting on the photo shoot. Karen loves

their steak tacos! I had a steak taco, bacon chicken ranch taco and a burnt ends taco. They were awesome!

But, the best thing was their corn on the cob! They cover it in mayonnaise after cooking it! Then sprinkle Mexican red seasoning all over them. The bomb! I shoved lunch in my mouth just in time! We headed out to the street in front of the crowd to meet the rest of our group. Picture time! kneel down where we're at—Front and center!

Afterward, we rode out through the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, only a couple of miles away. It was a beautiful refuge! Buffalo and longhorn cattle roam wild. There was also a prairie dog town. We rode to the top of Mount Scott. It was cold and windy...real windy! Then, we rode to the Holy City within the refuge. There, they hold the longest running Easter Pageant since 1926. Cobblestone buildings and pageant props line the area. It was amazing!



Wichita Wildlife Refuge

After that, we rode back to the InnHabit Resort to chill around the firepit. We walked back to Small

Mountain Street Tacos to eat again and listen to a Comedy Show. The tacos were great the second time around, but the comedy just wasn't to our liking. Back to the firepit.

After a while, we walked to another bar and grill, Fancy Nancy's. It was a great little place! Of course, we ate again and had some drinks. Good times with good friends!



Fireside Chat

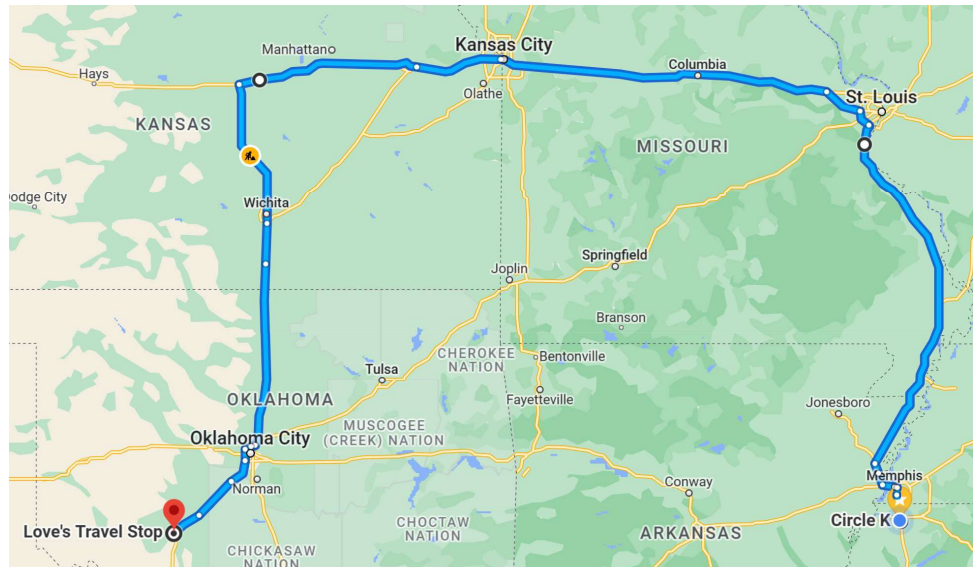
Back at the resort, some other riding friends were enjoying the firepit. Ben Ernst and John Anderson are buddies. They took over another rider's second night in one of the containers. We've known Ben for a few years from other LD events. We knew of John, but never had the opportunity to visit with him. It was good to spend some time with them. John and I are going to be rookies in the IBR (Iron Butt Rally) this year. So, we had plenty to talk about! Ben was a rookie in the 2021 IBR and finished second! Both of these guys are accomplished long-distance riders!

Later, Jeff "Riot" Wyatt (Mile Monsters founder) stopped by, as did Chris "Hop" Hopper (100,000 miles in 100 Days) and his wife

Catherine "Cat" Morehouse, John Levins (Taco Run Organizer) and some others. You meet some great riders at these events! What a fun time!

The next morning, we were up ready to ride at 7:00 am. It was 580 miles back home. It had been a full weekend of riding and eating! Everyone was ready to tone it down a notch or two and enjoy a nice ride home. Fortunately, the temperature wasn't as cold as forecasted. And, it warmed up as we headed east.

We arrived home at 5:00 pm on Sunday. We had a wonderful time! We all completed a challenging Iron Butt ride amid thunderstorms and cold weather. We got to visit with several of our long-distance friends and meet new ones. What more could you ask for over a 3-day weekend! We've already made reservations at the InnHabit Resort for next year's 6th Annual Taco Run! Finally, congratulations to Robert & Pam Armstrong for becoming new IBA members and to Jimmy & Toni for another one of their many successful Iron Butt rides!



1,040 Miles in 23 hrs., 12 min.



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