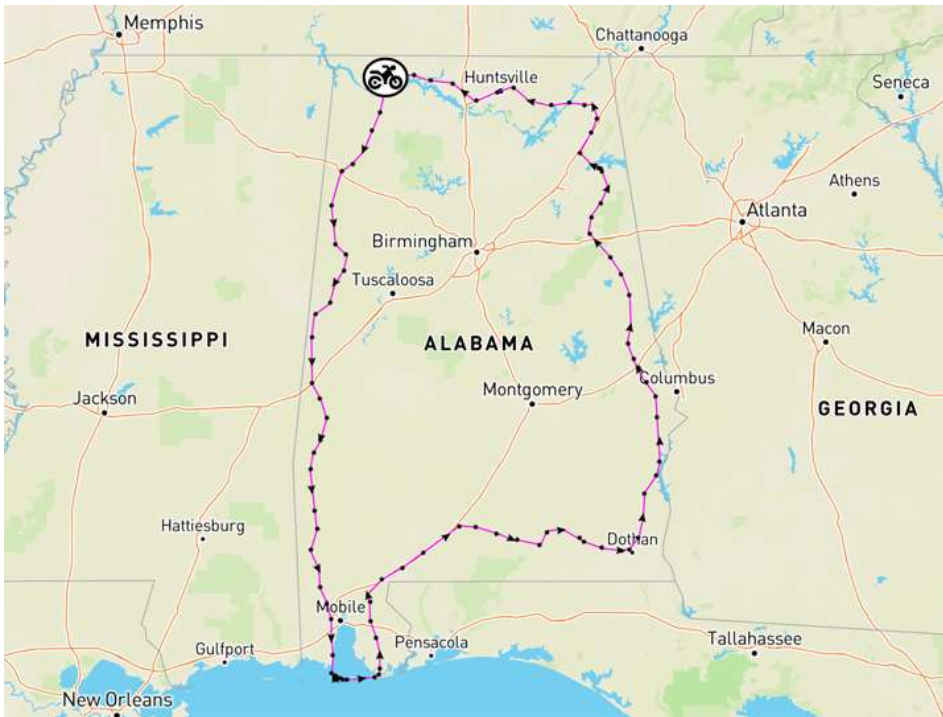


Ride Around Alabama



1,014 Miles in 19 Hours and 49 Minutes

I woke up to my phone alarm blaring at 3:00 am on Saturday, May 14, 2022! I was in a hotel in Florence, Alabama where I staged myself to begin the IBA's (Iron Butt Association's) "Ride Around Alabama". A few minutes later, I was on the bike fueling up next door at a 24-hour Mapco filling station. DBR (Dated Business Receipt) for my official start time was 3:36 am. I'm off!

Here are the IBA requirements for the Ride Around Alabama:

You must obtain DBR in the following jurisdictions. The receipt MUST indicate the city, date and time. Check your receipts.

*Florence (not Muscle Shoals)
Reform
Butler
Dauphin Island
Gulf Shores
Bay Minette
Andalusia
Dothan
Opelika
Centre
Henagar
Florence (not Muscle Shoals)*

You must obtain the receipts in the order listed. Either order (clock or counter-clock) is fine, but they must be in order, e.g. Bay Minette MUST come immediately before or after Gulf Shores.



Start Receipt

Once I rode through Florence and Muscle Shoals, it was dark, real dark! Good thing, I added some high-powered auxiliary lights to the BMW GSA. They can light it up! Out of town, the only other vehicles I saw were trucks pulling boats. They were all headed north early this Saturday morning! I probably saw 20 of these rigs in the next 1 ½ hours. Other than that, I had the road to myself!

I followed Hwy 17 south to Reform, AL. By now, the sun was rising. People were slowly getting out and about. DBR time 5:48 am.

This is my favorite time of the day! I love watching the sun rise on the motorcycle! I get to watch the whole world wake up! The temperature was in the mid 60's. It's springtime and everything's green and colorful! Riding on a nice backroad through the country, it just doesn't get much better than this!

On the next leg, I did run through a brief shower. I could see the leading edge of the storm above me. The clouds were dark. It started spitting huge raindrops. Within minutes, I rode out of it. I could tell it was about to come down! Glad I made it through there just in time! After that, the rest of the day was a very comfortable, sunny, blue skies with puffy white clouds!

Hwy 17 had a lot of farmlands of green pastures with cattle. I enjoyed heading south through the countryside.

As I got closer to Mobile, traffic started to thicken. I was on my way to the ferry at Dauphin Island. The ferry that crosses Mobile Bay was scheduled to leave at 9:30 am. I knew I was going to be close on time. My pace slowed down on the Dauphin Parkway. Traffic wasn't too bad but was increasing as the morning went on. I enjoyed riding over the huge bridge onto Dauphin Island! When I arrived at the ferry landing, I was a few minutes too late! I pulled up into one of the first slots for the next ferry scheduled at 11:00 am. DBR time 9:46 am.

Well, now I have 2 choices; Wait and ride the ferry, or back track north through the Mobile tunnel and around the bay to Gulf Shores, a total of 88 miles. I decided to wait! I don't think I could have ridden any faster than the ferry could get me over there. And, it would be much more enjoyable on the ferry. I just

chilled out, grabbed lunch, and made the most of it. The hour and fifteen minutes went by fast!



Full Boat

The 30-minute ferry ride was great! It was a full boat of cars and SUVs! I was the only motorcycle. Crossing the bay was cool, literally! The cool breeze off the water made for a comfortable ride! I could see many oil rigs in Mobile Bay as we crossed. After making landfall on the other side, I had 20 miles to ride to Gulf Shores for my next DBR.

I arrived at Gulf Shores DBR time 12:11 pm. So, this equated to about 2 ½ hours from Dauphin Island. Would the 88-mile ride around been any quicker? Probably not much. Not any more enjoyable that's for sure!

One of the rules for this ride is that I can't leave the state. So, to define this little boot heel of Alabama and prevent me from riding into Florida, I was required to stop in Bay Minette. From there, all roads to the next stop, Andalusia, were within the state of Alabama.

Traffic was thick as I rode north from Gulf Shores, through Foley, and over I-10. It was only 44 miles to Bay Minette. DBR arrival time 1:07 pm. From there, the rest of the ride was a breeze! Traffic was light and the ride was awesome! Next stop, Andalusia!

The 96-mile ride to Andalusia took 1 ½ hours. I enjoyed riding through the small southern Alabama towns! Andalusia DBR time 2:33 pm. Next stop, Dothan!

I rode right through the town of Enterprise. In the center of town was a statue of what looked like the Statue of Liberty, but as I rode by it, the lady was holding a boll weevil with both hands above her head, not a torch! I laughed to myself as I passed it! I think I remember reading about this as a long-distance rally bonus in the past!

I arrived in Dothan. It was 91 degrees! The warmest temperature of the day! Humidity wasn't bad, so it made for perfect weather! Now, the west and the southern sides of the state were complete. It was time to head north along the eastern side! DBR time 3:54 pm.

I was familiar with this side of the state. When we lived in Newnan, Georgia, we rode along this side several times over the years. As I rode through Eufaula, I remember attending a couple of Gold Wing rallies there.

As I rode north on Hwy 431. I remembered the world's largest yard sale is held every year along this road, a route we've traveled many times and just happened upon the annual event a couple of times. Opelika DBR time 5:53 pm. Next stop, Centre, AL.

The scenery was awesome as I cut through the Talladega National Forest near Cheaha Mountain. When I passed Gedney's Restaurant in Roanoke, I had fond memories of the many times we ate there with Gold Wing Road Riders Association Chapter GA-P. It was just getting dusk when I entered Centre. DBR time 8:01 pm.

By the time, I reached Henagar, AL in the northeastern corner of the state, it was dark. DBR time 9:18 pm. I pointed the bike west for the last leg of this adventure. It was an awesome ride through some wooded areas. I was all alone on the highway with the aux lights turning the night into daylight. I rode along a beautiful, curvy road with big, green trees on both sides illuminating through the darkness!



End Receipt

The last 125 miles were uneventful. In Huntsville, I jumped on I-565. My pace picked up as I tried not to get run over by local traffic! I passed the NASA rocket along the interstate. It was all lit up and so was the town! I went from riding dark backroads to practically daylight in Huntsville! This highway led me to I-65 north where I exited onto Hwy 72 westbound.

I arrived back at my starting point in Florence. Official DBR end time was 11:25 pm. I completed this 1,014-mile ride in 19 hours and 49 minutes. Now, I'm Hangry! Luckily, I just passed a Waffle House. Time to eat!



Time to Eat!

At the Waffle House, I wanted to try the new IBA submission system. The new system allows you to send your Spotwalla link with your DBRs embedded into the map it creates. 5 minutes later, the submission for my ride was complete. Way to go, IBA!

These IBA in-state ride-arounds are a lot of fun! You get to see a lot of the diversity in each state! Plus,

they're a little more challenging than the typical 1,000-mile ride. The weather was nice! The scenery was awesome! It was a great day to ride around Alabama!



Areas of Alabama

Ride Around Alabama

Distance: 1,014 miles

Time: 19 hrs, 49 min.

Average Speed: 51 mph

Fuel Used: 28.361 gal

Fuel Mileage: 35 mpg

Low Temperature: 64°

High Temperature: 91°