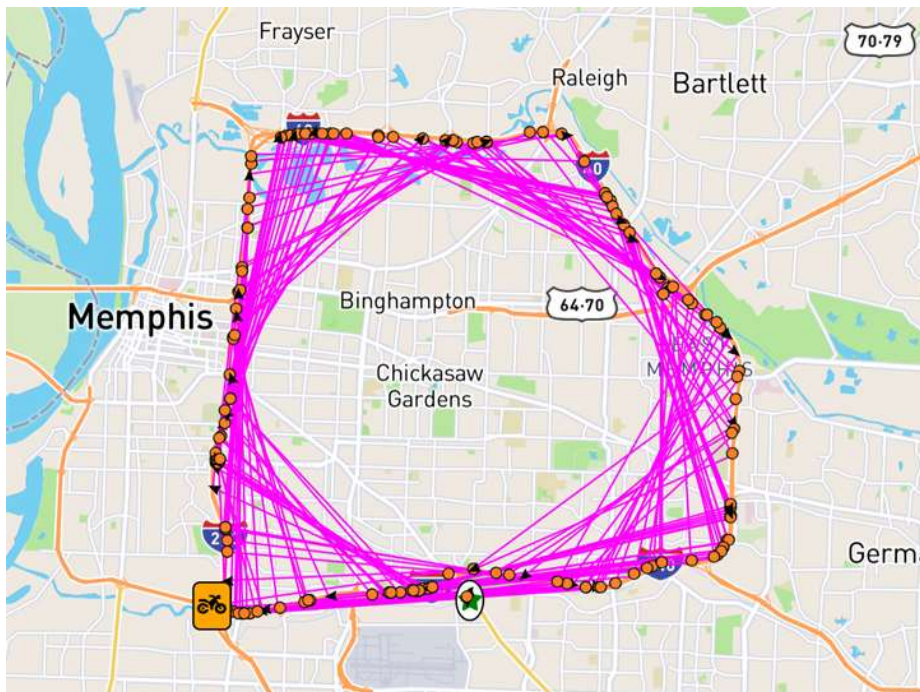


Memphis Insanity



33 Laps around the Memphis Loop for 1,022 Miles

The IBA (Iron Butt Association) offers a variety of long-distance ride challenges. Some of the most insane challenges are the “In-City” rides. These challenges require you to ride at least 1,000 miles in less than 24 hours all within the city limits. Should you leave the city limits at any time during the ride, your ride does not meet the requirements and will not get certified.

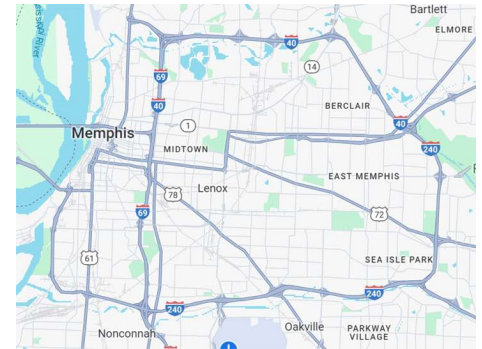
Here is a list of some cities that riders have completed an Iron Butt “In-City” challenge: Los Angeles, Memphis, Chicago, San Francisco, New York, Washington DC, Houston, Detroit, Nashville, Charlotte, Phoenix, Lubbock, Auckland, New Zealand and Singapore.

Memphis is ranked the 28th most populous city in the United States per city-data.com.

Memphis, city, seat of Shelby county, extreme southwestern Tennessee, U.S. It lies on the Chickasaw bluffs above the Mississippi River where the borders of Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee meet. Memphis is Tennessee’s most populous city and is at the centre of the state’s second largest metropolitan area. Pop. (2010) city 646,889; Memphis MSA (metropolitan statistical area) 1,316,100. (www.britannica.com)

The loop around Memphis consists of I-40 along the north side, I-240 sprouting out of I-40 on the east side then moving around the south side

to the west where I-69 connects I-240 and I-40 to make up the west side.



Memphis Loop

Fortunately, all of the loop is within the official city limits. One lap is approximately 31 miles. This requires a total of 33 laps to complete. To date, only 5 people have completed the Memphis In-City Insanity challenge: Doug Vance, Jackie Smith, Gene Cofer, Russell Dickerson and Brian North.

I had been chewing on doing this ride for over a year. It was time to git-r-done!

I mentioned to Jimmy Burns that I was interested in doing the ride. He asked that I give him a heads-up when I planned to tackle it.

At the end of November 2023, I had completed at least one IBA ride per month for the past 12 months. I wanted to continue this streak for a while longer. What would I do in December? Karen and I have an IBA ride planned for later in the month, but there are no guarantees what the weather would be like. The first weekend in December looked

like perfect weather for a ride! If I'm going to complete the Memphis In-City, this would be the perfect weekend! I asked Jimmy if he wanted to join me. He did!

Our plan was to meet at 3:30 am on Saturday, December 2. Then, we would ride up to the Love's Truck Stop at I-240 and Lamar Ave to start the ride. From there, we would ride the loop clockwise for 33 laps. We would refuel at an Exxon station at I-40 and Summer since it would be more convenient to get off and on of the loop as compared to the Love's.

A few days prior, I called the IBA to get their blessing before starting the ride. I would hate to attempt this ride without full understanding of what was required by the IBA. Phone call made—They would be watching!



Me and Jimmy Starting the Ride

Jimmy and I set our Spot (satellite tracking device) and our SWtracker (cellular tracking phone app) to ping every 5 minutes versus 10 minutes. This would show a more accurate map of our ride when the IBA verified it on SpotWalla.

We also linked our headsets, so we could communicate throughout the ride. We felt it was vital to have both set of eyes during a ride like

this. There were just too many things that could go wrong with the amount of traffic that we would be dealing with.

Saturday morning, Jimmy and I were both early to our meeting point in Southaven. From there, we rode up to the Love's where we fueled up and got our start receipt. Official start time 3:43 am.

We agreed to swap out lead duties at gas stops throughout the ride. I would start. We jumped on I-240 heading clockwise.

I-240 has more traffic than you would think at 4:00 am. Not enough to interfere with our ride but very noticeable none the less. The temperature was 55 degrees with overcast skies. It was dark!

As we made our first right-hand turn at the I-69 junction, we both agreed this could be one of our pain points throughout the day.

Memphis was lit up as we rode north through the outskirts of downtown on the western side of the loop. We could also see the Pyramid off in the distance.

The St. Jude Marathon was scheduled for today in downtown Memphis. That event was expecting over 20,000 runners. We didn't think it would affect our route.

The marathon was to begin at 7:00 am. As we rode through the downtown area at 6:00 am, the traffic was thicker than the previous laps. During the next lap at 6:30 am, the traffic was much lighter.

The event was to end by 3:00 pm. We noticed a significant increase in traffic between 1:00 – 2:00 pm.

The next right turn was onto I-40 east. After a couple of laps, we found out the outer lane was definitely the smoothest. The inner lanes were pretty rough!

On the north side of the loop, there was light fog floating in the darkness as we rode along the Wolf River. The fog slowly diminished later as the clouds parted and sun came out.

The next right turn directed us southwest toward another pain point where I-40 and I-240 connect.

Throughout the day, neither of our two pain points (I-69/I-240 at the southwest corner and I-40/I-240 at the northeast corner) were that bad. At times, those locations were congested, but not enough traffic to slow us down too much. Our main focus was to be seen by the surrounding cages (cars and other enclosed vehicles). Luckily, no close calls throughout the day!

On the eastern side of the I-240 loop, we had to keep an eye out for those merging in from I-40. At our final righthand turn, we had to be aware of the traffic from highway 385. Overall, throughout the day, no problems here!

The I-240 bottom-side of our route was drama free until sunset that evening. During our last 2-3 laps, we saw several accidents off to the side with police present. The traffic was increasing and our vision was decreasing due to the darkness!

We could go 7 laps before we had to stop for fuel. At our pre-planned Exxon on Summer Ave, the restrooms were out of order, so we had to find another convenient stop that would work for us throughout the ride. We found a Mobil station just off South Parkway East on the I-69/west side of our loop. This station worked great with easy on/off access to I-69.

Swapping out lead duties worked well for us! This took a little pressure off the trailing bike.

We both had agreed to bring a sandwich along to eat during a gas stop. That alone saved quite a bit of time!

Traffic was intermittent throughout the day. One lap would be thicker than the next or vice versa. But, as evening approached the traffic definitely increased. I think the St. Jude event actually worked in our favor for most of the day due to people avoiding the downtown area!

Thirty-three laps did get old after 15 hours of riding. Especially after the sun went down and several accidents occurred. By then, we were ready to end the ride!

And, luck plays a big part of it! We were lucky Memphis wasn't any busier that day. How could you foresee the level of traffic prior to planning it unless there were well-known large events scheduled?

To put it in perspective, 1,000 miles is the equivalent of riding from Memphis to Albuquerque or

Memphis to Miami. 1,000 miles is a long distance!

What did we ride? Jimmy rode his 2022 BMW R1250GS Adventure. I rode my 2022 BMW K1600 Grand America. Both bikes performed flawlessly!

Overall, the ride was much better than expected! After putting this ride off for over a year, I was glad to pull the trigger. We picked a perfect day! You couldn't have asked for better weather. Cool enough to feel comfortable in riding gear. Plus, no rain—An added

bonus! It was a great day for a long ride around the city of Memphis!

2022 BMW K1600B GA
Distance: 1,022 miles
Time: 15 hrs, 9 min.
Average Speed: 67 mph
Fuel Used: 28.709 gal
Fuel Mileage: 35 mpg
High Temperature: 71°
Low Temperature: 52°



We Got er Done!

In 2022, around 2,420.86 violent crimes per 100,000 residents were reported in Memphis, Tennessee. This made Memphis the most dangerous city in the United States. Detroit was ranked #2. (www.statista.com)