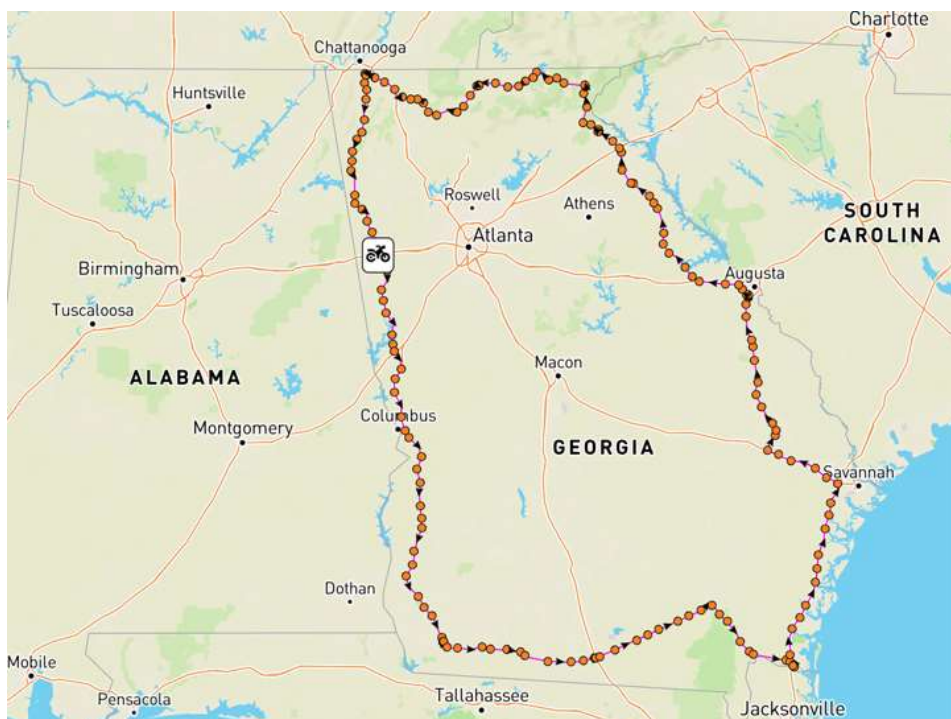


Ride Around Georgia



1,064 Miles in 18 Hours and 51 Minutes

Karen and I created the “Ride Around Georgia” (RAG) back in 2006 for an MTF Regional Ride event scheduled for 2007. Since the event was based out of Newnan, GA, the northwestern route of the RAG didn’t follow as close to the edge of the state as the current requirements. Plus, the roads running along the western side weren’t as nice as they are today.

Since the IBA updated the requirements a few years ago, I wanted to try and conquer this challenge again!

Here are the current IBA requirements paraphrased for the RAG:

The Ride Around Georgia, is a minimum of roughly 1,065 miles. You must ride your motorcycle in a path that traces the geographic borders of the state.

DBR - Dated Business Receipt

The ride must be completed in less than 24 hours.

You may not leave Georgia- except for safety reasons and if you leave you MUST re-enter Georgia at the same point you left it.

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

*Bremen
Bainbridge
Valdosta
St. Marys
Augusta
Toccoa
Clayton
Blue Ridge
Fort Oglethorpe*



Georgia on My Mind

At the roach motel in Bremen, GA, I was up before my phone alarm was set to sound off at 3:30 am ET. I rode to the gas station down the road to fuel up and obtain my first DBR. Official start time 3:49 am ET.

As I headed south on Hwy 27, the temperature was 69 degrees. With very little to no traffic on the road, I hit the bright lights. There were dark, overcast skies with low clouds of fog that I would ride through. Hwy 27 had really improved over the years. Now, it’s mostly 4-lane divided highway. A great road to ride on!

Since I was riding in a counterclockwise direction, my first

stop would be the southwest corner of the state in Bainbridge. At 225 miles, this would be one of the longest legs between DBRs. So, no extra stops were needed with the oversized fuel tank on the BMW GSA.

Since we had lived in Newnan, GA for 23 years, I was very familiar with riding all over the state. It was a great day to get reacquainted with the great state of Georgia and reminisce.

I watched the sun rise just before I stopped in Bainbridge for a DBR. Here, I made a big left turn toward the east! Next stop, Valdosta!

Those 81 miles to Valdosta had overcast skies. I was in and out of fog through the whole west to east leg at the bottom of the state. The overcast skies kept the temperatures in the 70's. Great riding for an August day in the south!

In this southwestern section of the state, I passed peanut fields, cotton fields and some peach orchards. Valdosta DBR collected! Next stop, St. Marys in the southeast corner!



South Georgia

In between Valdosta and St Marys is the Okefenokee Swamp. I had to ride around the north side of it to avoid riding into Florida on the south side.

As I rode through the small towns, there was the typical traffic you would expect, but once outside the town limits it was relatively light on this Saturday morning. The forecast called for a chance of rain. The thick clouds overhead sure looked like they were gathering for a future event. Fortunately, it didn't rain on me until later in the day!

As I rode through Waycross, I thought about being here just a few months ago with Karen and our friends, Chris & Kathy O'Neal. We rode over here Memorial weekend to visit the swamp and eat some alligator.

Back to the task at hand, I continued around the east side of the swamp through Folkston and over to Kingsland before stopping in the southeastern corner of the state at St Marys. I collected my mandatory DBR and headed north on I-95. Next stop, Augusta!

Northbound I-95 was a 3-lane sea of cars! Although not bumper-to-bumper, it was the thickest and fastest traffic I had ridden in all day. Fortunately, there were no incidents on that 100 mile stretch up to Savannah where I turned onto I-16.

I got off I-16 at Statesboro where I caught Hwy 25 up to Augusta. My second longest leg at 222 miles. I

rode through farmland and by pastures with cattle grazing. It looked like the area had been getting plenty of rain this year. Everything was green.

As I entered the Augusta area, I was thinking of stopping to eat. I recognized the area where I approached the Augusta loop (I-520). Sconyers BBQ was located here! This was where Jim Weaver asked me and Dan Ross help him host a Long Distance (LD) Ride to Eat (RTE). That became an annual event for several years.

Jim, a PhD scientist, worked at the CDC in Atlanta. I remember when he started LD riding. An IBR finisher, Jim passed away suddenly. He left behind a young family.

Sconyers hadn't changed at all! I enjoyed taking a little break for lunch before getting a mandatory DBR in Augusta and heading north toward Toccoa.

As I headed north, the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains began to grow. I rode by several very nice horse farms. By now, the sun was blazing and the temperature had climbed to the low 90's.

Toccoa was a beautiful little mountain resort town! It looked like it recently went through a facelift. Everything was freshly painted or new. A very nice place for tourists and retirees!

After stopping for the required DBR, I took a slight jog to the

northeast for 30 miles to the town of Clayton. This was the northeastern corner of my route. Another DBR and left turn had me heading toward Blue Ridge.

Hwy 76 was my east/west route through the North Georgia Mountains. It was a great curvy and very hilly road! I enjoyed this part of the ride! This is where I got into a couple of heavy downpours. As I rode through Hiawassee, I had fond memories of the many Gold Wing rallies that we attended there over the years. It is a beautiful area!

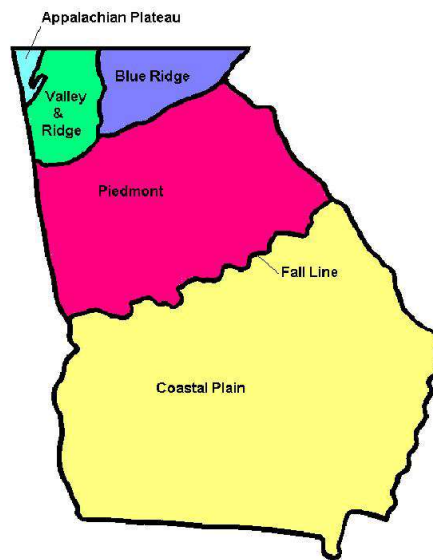
In Blue Ridge, I snagged another mandatory DBR before turning south toward Ellijay, then back up toward Chattanooga. I stayed on the Georgia side of the Tennessee state line and stopped in Fort Oglethorpe for a DBR. This was the final corner of the state, the northwestern corner. My first DBR from a gas station didn't have all the information that is required, so I stopped at an ATM. I reviewed the ATM DBR. All was good! Always verify the pertinent information is correct. That's part of the challenge!

Back on the road, I turned south toward the finish line, Bremen! I followed Hwy 27, a nice 4-lane divided highway, south to Hwy 100. This 2-lane back road kept me closer to the state line and allowed me to bypass the town of Rome.

In Cedartown, I jumped back on Hwy 27 for the rest of the ride south to my starting point in Bremen. Official end time 10:40 pm. For a

total of 1,064 miles in 18 hours and 51 minutes.

It was a great ride around Georgia! I enjoy these state ride-arounds! What a great way to see all of the diversity a state has to offer; Starting in the eastern Piedmont area and heading south around the bottom of the Coastal Plain, then north through the eastern side of the Piedmont area into the beautiful Blue Ridge area and across the northern edge of the state through the Valley & Ridge area and into the Appalachian Plateau before ending through the Valley & Ridge area and returning to the western side of the Piedmont. Being out on the open road and enjoying what nature has to offer is so rewarding!



Areas of Georgia

2019 BMW R1250GSA

Distance: 1,064 miles

Time: 18 hrs, 51 min.

Average Speed: 55 mph

Fuel Used: 30.022 gal

Fuel Mileage: 34 mpg

Low Temperature: 69°

High Temperature: 92°