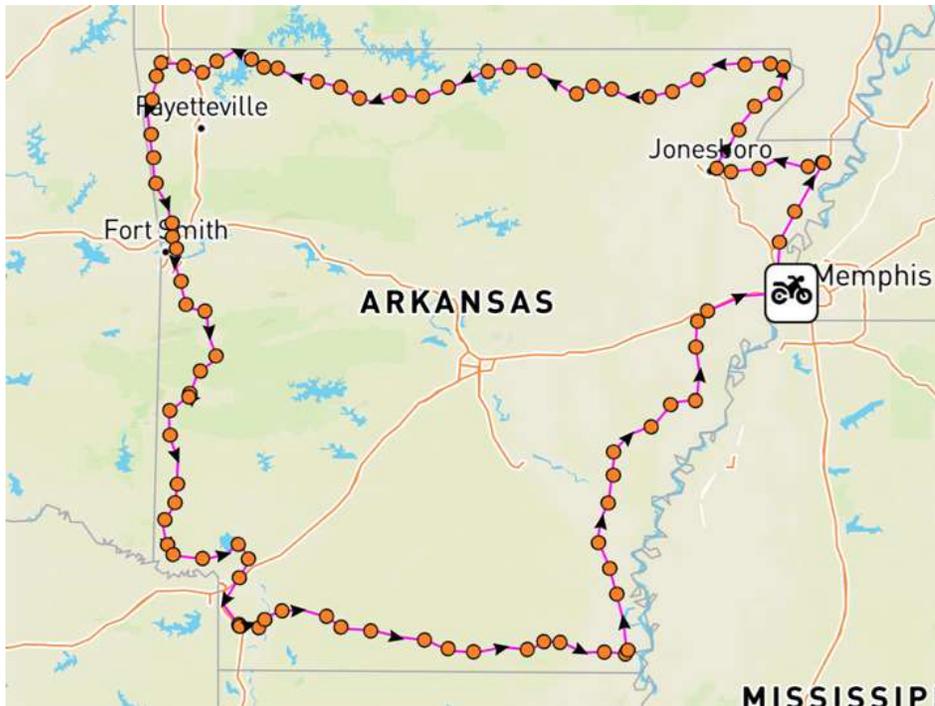


Ride Around Arkansas



1,177 Miles in 21 Hours, 16 Minutes

Arkansas is a great state for riding motorcycles! The Ride Around Arkansas has been at the top of my list of rides for a while! With Spring in full bloom, Saturday looked like a great day to “Get er dun”!

IBA (Iron Butt Association) Requirements: *You must ride your motorcycle in a path that traces the geographic borders of the state.*

The ride must be completed in less than 24 hours. You may not leave Arkansas – except for safety reasons and if you leave you MUST re-enter the state at the same point you left it.

You must start at any of the states' required jurisdictions or at any

location along the inside perimeter of the state that is in a direct path between the required jurisdictions.

You must make a complete circuit of the inside perimeter of the state, crossing your starting point to finish, i.e. obtaining a DBR at your same starting and ending location.

*Blytheville
Piggott
Gravette
Foreman
Fouke
Eudora*

My strategy was to start in West Memphis and ride counterclockwise. This way, I would get the most

technical/difficult part of the ride completed at the beginning versus at the end of the ride when I'm fatigued. I figured the northern boundary of the state would be more technical through the Ozarks due to slower winding roads. While the final leg would have me riding up the eastern edge of the state through the Delta (Mississippi Alluvial Plain) which has straighter and flatter roads.

Also, if I timed it right, I should be able to watch the sun rise before I enter the Ozarks and enjoy that beautiful area in the morning daylight hours. This plan worked perfect!

That morning, I was up at 3:00 am and out of the house by 3:45 am. I stopped at the Love's Truck Stop in West Memphis to fuel up. After reviewing my DBR (Dated Business Receipt), I noticed there was no time stamp on it. I knew Spotwalla (Satellite Tracking System) provided a timestamp when I upload the DBR to my map. But, I like to provide the correct documentation, so there are no questions from the IBA verification team. So, I rode down the street to the Flying J, bought a pack of gum, reviewed my DBR for all the pertinent info and uploaded to Spotwalla. Good to go! My official start time in West Memphis, AR was 4:16 am on May 6, 2023. Giddy up!

As I headed north on I-55, I rode through a couple of construction zones close to Blytheville, but no issues that time of the morning. At Blytheville, I fueled up at another Love's Truck Stop. That DBR was fine!

The rules state that you must ride through the mandatory jurisdictions. A DBR is really not required. Though, Spotwalla is required! You just need verification you rode through. But, I like to get a DBR just in case!

From Blytheville, I headed southwest toward Jonesboro, before I headed north to Piggott. This way, I avoided cutting through the bootheel of Missouri. Remember, you are not allowed to leave the state!

Now, it was 6:00 am and the sun was starting to peek through the horizon. I made it to Piggott a little after 7:00 am. Perfect! The sun was up! A beautiful morning to ride the Ozark Mountains along the top of Arkansas!

I knew this part of the ride would be a little slower. RV's and trucks pulling boats were out an about. I can understand why! I just relaxed and enjoyed the scenery. Different shades of bright green colored the hills/mountains as I rode through. Surprisingly, I didn't see any forest rats (deer) on this leg of the trip!

Near Mountain Home, I rode by some lakes and streams. I saw a lot of cabins available to rent. Some were in very remote areas. That

would be a lot of fun to spend time there—especially this time of year or in the colorful fall season!

I rode through Eureka Springs around 11:00 am. It wasn't too busy yet. That is also a beautiful area! Touristy! I can see why!

More traffic and slow riding through Rogers and Bentonville. I finally made it to Gravette (the northwest corner) at 12:00 noon. From here, the GPS wanted me to backtrack to I-49 then head south. I had my mind set to head directly south on Hwy 59. This took me down an area where I've never ridden and let me bypass all that Rogers, Springdale, Fayetteville mess. Plus, it had me riding closer to the western edge of the state. Good choice! A rural area with beautiful scenery!

In Van Buren, traffic was at a standstill as I rode onto I-540, so I bypassed that onramp and continued over to a small stretch of I-49 southbound before I returned to the backroads. Highway 71 to be exact. The GPS did not like that change in my route at all! It kept wanting me to go back to I-540. But, computers don't know everything! Sometimes you have to be smarter than they are! To be honest, I don't outsmart them very often!

From here, it was a beautiful ride down through the Ouachita National Forest to Mena. Again, the hillsides/mountains were full of different shades of bright green. Plus, the temperature was up into the 90's! This was great! I was

ready for some warmer temperatures. So far, this year had been unseasonably cool.

The rest of the ride down the western edge to Foreman was uneventful. I arrived at the southwest corner at 5:15 pm. There, I saw a gas station that advertised BBQ, so I stopped. They had BBQ sandwiches available—no wait! I'll take a brisket sandwich! It was so good—I ordered another one! It didn't take long before I was back on the bike eastbound before I headed south again.

In this corner, I had to be careful. If I rode directly to Texarkana, I would cross over into Texas. So, I headed eastbound to Saratoga, before I headed south to Fouke.

I arrived in Fouke at 6:45 pm. From that gas station, I headed directly east without any consideration to my GPS. I knew, I missed something, when I heard it recalculate. So, I just let it recalculate and followed it's advice.



Dirt/Gravel Roads

Within a couple miles, I was on dirt/gravel roads. I continued on thinking it would get me to

pavement within a short distance. WRONG! 10 miles later, I'm finally back on asphalt! But, it was a fun little excursion. The dirt/gravel road wasn't bad. I enjoyed the change of pace!

Once I made it back to Hwy 82, it was smooth sailing! I watched the sun set in my rearview mirrors as I headed east through the flat farmlands!

When I arrived in El Dorado, I remembered a time when Karen and I were in the NitWit Rally (a scavenger hunt). One of the bonuses was to go to a phone booth in downtown El Dorado, get in it, and take a photo with our rally flag. Karen and I arrived there around 7:00 pm on a Friday evening. The phone booth was right beside a nice restaurant with an outside patio. We stopped, got off the bike, got out our tripod and placed our phone on it. We both crammed into the phone booth and took a picture. The whole time, customers were eating right beside us and watching! We jumped out of the phone booth, packed our tripod up, hopped on the bike and left. I'm sure that crowd had some laughs out of that!

From El Dorado, I continued to Eudora, the southeast corner. I arrived at 10:10 pm. From there, I had 200 miles to complete my ride back to West Memphis.

I am familiar with the eastern side of Arkansas, so I knew what to expect on the last leg. That's one of the reasons, I rode in a CCW direction. After 10:00 pm, there are

hardly any cars on the dark backroads. I lit up the roads with my Clearwater auxiliary lights and enjoyed the ride!

As I rode through Lake Village, I thought about the Hot Tamales, I ate there just a few weeks ago. In Gillett, I remembered Karen and I going to the Coon Supper a couple years ago. And, yes! We both ate some raccoon!

I headed up through Marianna to Forrest City where I jumped on I-40 into West Memphis. The lady at the Flying J recognized me from 21 hours earlier! Official End time 1:32 am for a total of 1,177 miles in 21 hours and 16 minutes.

The GSA was the perfect bike for this ride! Plenty of suspension for those rough backroads. My gas mileage had improved quite a bit! A noticeable improvement at 42 mpg. I'm sure the slower backroad speeds played a big part in that. I didn't have to make any unnecessary stops for gas other than the required jurisdictions. And, only because I chose to stop there for DBRs.

Another thing, I noticed on this ride were all the bikes that I saw. And, I saw a lot! All types, cruisers, tourers, trikes and adventure bikes. What stood out was the number of adventure bikes! I'm sure they outnumbered all the other bikes together!

The ride itself was awesome! The scenery, temperature and time of the year made it a great one!

As I rode around the state, I could see the difference from one region to the next! This is what makes these state ride-arounds some of my favorite IBA rides. Pack your patience and enjoy what each state has to offer!

From West Memphis, it was 30 miles back to Hernando where I stopped at the local Waffle House for a meal and to chill out for a few minutes. Ever been to a Waffle House at 2:30 am? It's quite a bit different then 8:00 am! 'Nuff said!



Regions of Arkansas

2019 BMW R1250GSA

Distance: 1,177 miles

Time: 21 hrs, 16 min.

Average Speed: 55 mph

Fuel Used: 27.661 gal

Fuel Mileage: 42 mpg

High Temperature: 93°

Low Temperature: 61°