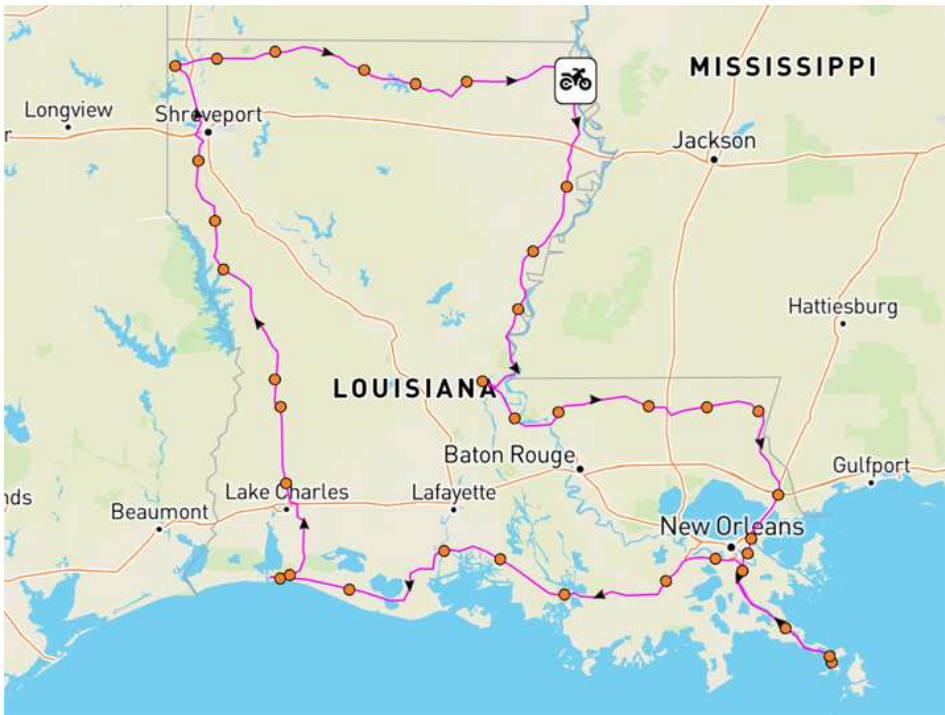


# Ride Around Louisiana



## 1,220 Miles in 21 Hours and 23 Minutes

The alarm went off at 3:00 am on Saturday, October 8, 2022. Within minutes, I left the hotel in Delhi, Louisiana headed for Lake Providence 38 miles away. This was my starting point for the Ride Around Louisiana.

Here are the current IBA requirements paraphrased for the RALa:

*The Ride Around Louisiana, is a minimum of roughly 1,250 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 30 hours or 24 for Gold.*

*You may not leave Louisiana- except for safety reasons and if you leave you MUST re-enter Louisiana 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.*

*Lake Providence*

*Simmesport*

*Clinton*

*Bogalusa*

*Slidell*

*Venice*

*Morgan City*

*Cameron*

*Deridder*

*Vivian*

*Bernice*



## The Bayou State

My start DBR (Dated Business Receipt) at Lake Providence was off by thirty minutes, official time 4:04 am. This little town only had one gas station. No other receipts available. I'll make a note on my IBA application. The end receipt will come from the same station and have the same error. Spotwalla (Tracking Service) will provide an accurate time!

The ride south to Simmesport was curvy backroads for the most part. It was dark as I rode along the Mississippi River Levee. I enjoyed the ride! I had the road to myself most of the time. As I got closer to Simmesport, there were several trucks parked along the levee. They were spread out about every quarter mile or so. There were one or two people in the trucks just sitting there. It was well before dawn. I wasn't sure what they were up too. I

thought hunters at first, but I really didn't see any prime hunting spots in that area or at least what I would consider prime.

At Simmesport, I got my required DBR and a picture of my odometer uploaded to Spotwalla. The sun rose as I turned and headed east toward Clinton. Just after sunrise, the temperature dipped to 61 degrees. I rode through an area where sugarcane was being harvested. The farm boy in me enjoys riding through agricultural areas, especially when there's activity. I'd never seen sugarcane being harvested, so this was a great experience!

At Clinton, I did my required tasks with the DBR and odometer pic. This process embeds these pics in an online map and makes it easier for the IBA to verify rides with times, dates, location and route. A great application created by fellow Iron Butt rider, Jason Jonas. Several devices and phone apps can feed Spotwalla to include SPOT, SWtracker, Bubbler, etc. Different flavors for everyone! Thank you, Jason!

I continued east under the Mississippi state line to Bogalusa. There I did my required tasks, then turned south toward Slidell still just outside the Mississippi state line. Again, at Slidell, I stop for a DBR, odo pic and uploaded both. So far, it had been a great day! I enjoyed watching the sun rise as I rode along. The temperature was great

with low humidity. Very rare in this part of the country!

From Slidell, the next stop was Venice. It's 75 miles south of New Orleans down this slim peninsula following the Mississippi River to where it drains into the Gulf of Mexico. The GPS had me jump on then off of I-10. A few miles later, I rode right up to a line of cars waiting to board a ferry. I guess I'm riding the ferry! This ferry was at Chalmette. The ferry probably held about 15 cars. We boarded on the left side of the boat. The cars drove in a counterclockwise circle around the ferry tower/Captain's deck. They waved me over to the side of the cars at the front of the ferry. Once we made the half-mile river crossing, we exited off the right side of the boat. I had been on several ferries, but not like this one. In hindsight, I guess all ferries are different.



**Chalmette Ferry**

From the ferry, I headed down Highway 23 to Venice. I had ridden this route a couple years ago on the Mississippi River Gold ride (from the headwaters of the river at Itasca State Park in Minnesota to where

the river flows into the Gulf, Venice, LA). I enjoyed the ride all the way down to the most southern point in Louisiana. This time, there was not much standing water as I approached the sign. In 2020, there was a foot of standing water in the road for a quarter of a mile.



**Southern Point of Louisiana**

I stopped and took a few pictures of the sign. I recognized a few stickers on the sign from other LD riders. The sky was bright blue and the temperature a comfortable 80 degrees! It was an awesome place to be! I took a pic of the GSA next to the sign and a pic of the odometer reading, then uploaded as required. Then I headed west to Morgan City. As I backtracked 75 miles to New Orleans, I stopped for the first DBR I could find just for good measure (IBA documentation). Most of the buildings in Venice must have been damaged some time ago from hurricanes or flooding.

It was about 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon when I rode around New Orleans. Traffic wasn't too bad as I rode under the city and headed southwest on Highway 90. This was 4-lane divided highway that went

through several small towns with stoplights. In Morgan City, I stopped for my required uploads, then continued west.

I don't know how many bridges I crossed on this ride, but it was a lot! I'm sure over 100. A lot of Louisiana is wetlands, especially the southern area along the Gulf Coast. Some of these were long concrete bridges on the highways. There were also a lot of sugarcane fields along the south edge too. I really enjoyed watching the harvest, riding over the bridges, seeing various boats including shrimp boats and tugs. It was awesome!



**One of Many Bridges**

It was about 5:00 pm when I stopped at Cameron in the southwest corner for my mandatory DBR. I thought I ought to eat a little something. So, I took a few minutes to eat a Slim Jim and cheese stick. I thought I might stop somewhere that looked quick and appealing, but I didn't. Other than water, that's all I had all day. I had a challenge to complete!

From Cameron, I backtracked east about 10 miles to Highway 27 north.

This took me to Lake Charles where I jumped on Highway 171. I remember from my martial arts days back in the 80's, there were several kickboxers from the Lake Charles area. Then, I wondered what Lake Charles was all about!

Back on Highway 171, it was a nice 4-lane divided highway. I watched the sun set as I rode north to DeRidder. Karen called as I rode down the road. She had been to an American Legion Auxiliary event up in Corinth, MS. Her event was over, so she was checking on me on Spotwalla. She said it looks like you still have a lot of riding to do! I said yes, it's a 1,200-mile day. I expect to use most of the 24 hours time-limit on this ride! Fortunately, I made good time as I rode north along the Texas Stateline.

In DeRidder, I made my mandatory stop and tasks. From there, as I headed north. The 4-lane highway went through several towns. There I had to slow down for the town speed limits, then speed up to highway speeds as I left.

Well, it was dark as I entered a small town. A car headed in the opposite direction lit up with blue flashing lights! I immediately pulled over to wait. The LEO did a U-turn and parked right behind me. He got out of his car and stopped behind my bike to call in my license plate number. I heard him talk on a hand-held mic/radio. Then, he asked how I was doing. I said fine officer! He asked me for my license, insurance

and registration. He radios in my license number. Everything comes back valid/okay. He also noticed the Veteran status on my license.

His son was a helicopter mechanic in the Army National Guard. He just happened to go to the same bootcamp (Ft Jackson, SC) and helicopter mechanics school (Ft Eustis, VA) that I did! We had a good conversation! Before he released me, he said you ride that bike all over, don't you? I said yes, sir! Are you going to be riding all night? No sir, I plan to stop around midnight. Well, slow it down a little, have a good night and thank you for your service! Thank you, officer!

I continued north around Shreveport and up to Vivian for another mandatory DBR. Vivian was off I-49 about 8 miles down a curvy backroad. By now, it's dark! I leave Vivian headed east to my origination point! I only had 200 miles left to go! But, it was along the Arkansas Stateline where I expected to see some critters! And, I did! I saw a coyote cross the road, several raccoons, and a lot of forest rats (deer)! I saw deer on the road, crossing the road, on both sides of the road! They were -- everywhere! There was a full moon, and the deer were moving! Luckily, my only close call came from a raccoon running across the road. I just missed his tail! I did see a big 8-point plus buck. He was standing on the right side of the road facing



right. He had several long tines on his antlers. It was a nice big rack on his head! It was great to see the wildlife! Especially, since I had no close calls with deer!

Around 12:30 am, I thought I was keeping my speed down when I entered another small town. Another car lit up with blue lights! I pulled over. Same as before, the LEO asked how I was doing. I said fine. He asks only for my driver's license and reads my number over his radio. He asks do you know why I stopped you. I said no, sir. When his lights came on, I was doing 30 mph in a 25. I didn't think it was for speeding! Well, he had been watching me well before that and I didn't slow down fast enough for him. I said, I'm sorry officer! He said no problem as he held his palm facing me. Then, the radio stated the motorcycle did belong to me. After that, he said, you're ok! Just slow it down. But, I want to take a look at those lights!

Now, this LEO was a young guy, I would say mid-30's. Probably 6 foot tall or taller. He stood about 3 foot in front on my bike and said, I want you to turn ALL OF YOUR LIGHTS ON! So, I hit the bright button. He said NO! ALL OF YOUR LIGHTS! I said officer, I only have bright and dim! So, I switched back to dim, then to bright. He said put them on bright! I did. Then, he squatted down to see my lights head on! As soon as he squatted, he jumped about a foot in

the air and landed standing up! He said, WOW! THOSE LIGHTS ARE BRIGHT! Then, he said have a good evening and thank you for your service! Thank you, officer!

I take it, the officer couldn't miss me as I entered town due to my bright lights. When he stood directly in front of my bike, he didn't have the right perspective to see the total effect of the lights. It wasn't until he squatted down with his eyes in direct contact with the light beams to see just how bright they really were.

I continued east toward Lake Providence where I ended my ride. Like when I started the ride, I had to go inside the gas station to get a receipt. It was 1:30 am and the DBR was 30 minutes off. As I was walked inside, a couple of guys driving a decked-out Polaris Slingshot (3-wheeled sportscar with no top) pulled in and walked inside. Official end time 1:27 am.

A few minutes later, as I was uploading my DBR and odo requirements on my phone, the Slingshot was pulling out of the parking lot. It was all lit up to the hilt! And, they were playing loud Circus music! It was hilarious! I laughed and laughed! That actually perked me up and kept me wide awake on the 38-mile ride back to the hotel in Delhi. And, so did the cooler temperature of 57 degrees. By the time I arrived at the hotel, I was chilled to the bone!

At the end of the ride, my GPS showed a total of 1,220 miles with an official time of 21 hours and 23 minutes. This met the gold requirements for this ride!

I really enjoyed the Ride Around Louisiana! The fall weather was perfect! Part of my strategy was to ride the southern edge along the coast during daylight hours. This worked as planned! The sugarcane harvest was an added bonus! It was awesome! All the way around!



Regions of Louisiana

### 2019 BMW R1250GSA

Distance: 1,220 miles

Time: 21 hrs, 23 min.

Average Speed: 57 mph

Fuel Used: 34.459 gal

Fuel Mileage: 35 mpg

Low Temperature: 57°

High Temperature: 87°