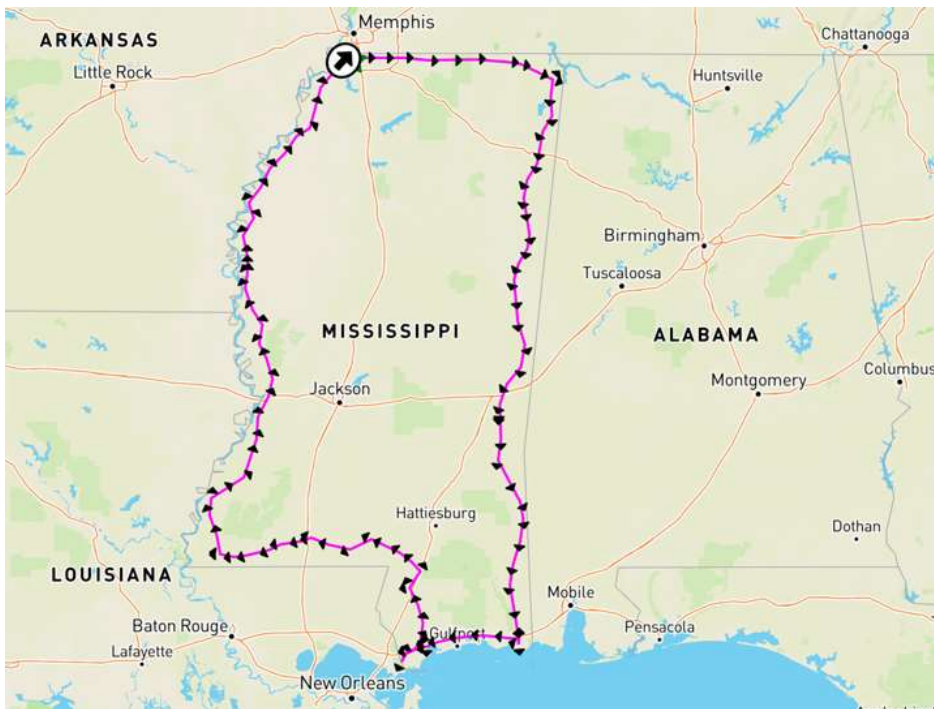


Ride Around Mississippi



Actual Route Created by Mark's Satellite Tracking System

How do you celebrate the first day of Spring? With a ride of course! A ride around the perimeter of Mississippi!

The Iron Butt Association (IBA) has a ride specifically named "The Ride Around Mississippi". Here are the requirements:

The ride must be completed in less than 24 hours.

You must start at any required city. You must start and end the ride at the same location, i.e. same Dated Business Receipt (DBR).

You may not leave Mississippi - except for safety reasons and if you leave you MUST re-enter

Mississippi at the same point you left it.

You must visit each of the listed jurisdictions. If you use spotwalla or other satellite tracking system and can generate a route map, you must obtain a DBR in the those cities marked with an asterisk. If you do not use a satellite tracking system, or it cannot generate a complete map of your trip, you must obtain a DBR in all of the cities listed. The DBR MUST indicate the city, date and time. Check your receipts.*

Pascagoula
Pearlington*
Kiln*

*Columbia
Woodville*
Natchez
Greenville
Walls*
Iuka*
Columbus
State Line*

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. Iuka MUST come immediately before or after Columbus.

You may take any route you like - but remember you may not leave Mississippi and the required DBRs must be acquired in order. Helpful hint: MS Rte 1 runs from Rolling Fork to Friars Point along the Mississippi River. It is a good two lane road with very little traffic. It is part of the "Great River Road".

These themed IBA rides are a little more challenging than a typical 1,000-mile interstate ride. These rides have you on back roads with slower speed limits, going through towns with stop lights/signs. So, it can be a more tedious ride which can be more fatiguing.

I enjoy these types of challenges and was up to the task! As a matter of fact, Karen and I created The Ride Around Georgia in 2006 in preparation for an IBA event that we

hosted for the Motorcycle Tourer's Forum (MTF) that following Spring.

As I prepared for the Ride Around Mississippi, the forecast showed that temperatures were going to dip down to 39 degrees and the high would be 65 degrees. I would get up early and head to the town of Walls in the northwest corner of Mississippi to start the ride and go in a clockwise direction.

I was up at 3:00 am and out of the house by 3:20. The 16-mile ride over to Walls was uneventful. I filled up with fuel. Official start time 3:43 am.

As I headed east on Goodman Road in the wee hours of the morning through Horn Lake, Southaven and Olive Branch there was hardly any traffic. That was part of my plan and it worked well! As I traveled on to Corinth, I saw several large groups of forest rats (deer) beside the the road. I also had a coyote run across the road in front of me about 20 yards. Far enough away that I didn't need to brake, but close enough to catch my attention.

In less than 2 hours, I made it to my second checkpoint in the town of Iuka, the northeast corner. I fueled up, then photographed the receipt next to my odometer (IBA required documentation). Now, I was ready to head south along the eastern border of the state.

The sun slowly began to rise. The cloudy skies prevented the

temperatures from rising. It had hovered in the low to mid 40's so far and wouldn't rise to the low 60's until I hit the Gulf Coast around 11:00 am. Hardly any traffic on highways 25 and 45 heading south. Life was good!

At the town of State Line, MS, I got on Hwy 57 which eventually turned into Hwy 63 to Pascagoula, the southeastern corner. There, I stopped and went through my regular routine of fueling, checking my receipt and photo-documenting as part of my requirements. I couldn't believe how fast I had made it to the coast! This was my third corner. I turned the bike west and headed along the Gulf Coast to the fourth corner, Pearlington.

I-10 was busy! Must be the Spring Break crowd! I had marked a restaurant in Gulfport to stop for lunch, but I just rolled on by after seeing the traffic lined up at that exit. I was hoping to stop and treat myself to some oysters while I was on the Gulf Coast. I continued on and found the Lazy Gator near Diamondhead, MS. It was an excellent choice!



Lazy Gator

This place was right off the interstate and wasn't very busy. And, their food was outstanding! They had some of the best chargrilled oysters that I have eaten! Or, it could have been that I was hungry due to only eating a handful of cashews so far today! Whatever the case, I enjoyed the nice little break and the seafood!



Chargrilled Oysters

After lunch, I jumped back on I-10 heading west. I got off at exit 2 and rode about 5 miles to the small town of Pearlington, the southwestern corner. I stopped at a gas station, but they didn't have pay at pump. I didn't really need gas yet, so I went inside and bought a pack of gum and asked for a receipt. This would document my fourth corner!

Now, I head back to I-10 and back track east to avoid entering Louisiana. I jumped off at exit 13 and headed north to Poplarville where I jumped on I-59 for a short ride to Hwy 13. This took me north to Columbia. By now, the temperature was 65 degrees and mostly cloudy skies. Perfect riding weather!

In Columbia, I turned west on Hwy 98 to McComb where I got on Hwy 48 to Woodville. These were great back roads with very little traffic. In Woodville, I stopped to get the fifth corner receipt. It was 4:39 pm. I had been making great time!

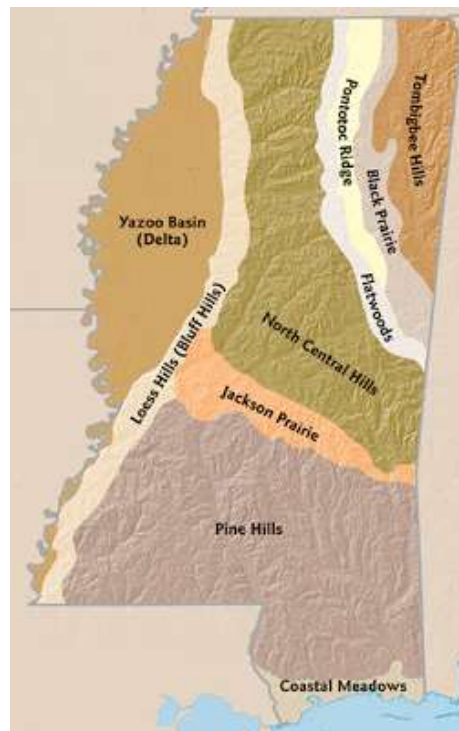
Now, I would head north on Hwy 61 along the western edge of the state. This is mostly a 4-lane divided highway. There were almost no cars the entire time I was on it! That makes for a nice easy ride!

I rode up through Natchez, then through Vicksburg. At Rolling Rock, I used the helpful hint in the IBA requirements and got on Hwy 1 up to Friar's Point. It was a great ride, but I did see a lot of forest rats once the sun went down! I had to dodge one in the middle of the road with several others on both sides of the road. I thought Hwy 61 had light traffic, this 2-lane road had NO traffic! I would ride several miles before seeing another vehicle! This allowed me to use my aux-lights and light-up the road!

Back on Hwy 61, I knew I was getting close to the finish line! The 4-lane divided highway did have some traffic on it as I rode through Tunica and near the casino area. This was comforting to have light traffic to keep the forest rats at bay!

I pulled into the same gas station at Walls where I started that morning. I fueled the bike. Official end time 9:56 pm. The odometer showed a total of 1,056 miles in 18 hours and 13 minutes.

This was a great way to celebrate the first day of Spring! I started early in the morning in the Delta, rode across the northern border of the state through the Bluff Hills, North Central Hills, Flatwoods, Pontotoc Ridge, Black Prairie, and Tombigbee Hills, then down the eastern border through the Black Prairie, Flatwoods, North Central Hills, Jackson Prairie, and Pine Hills to the Coastal Meadows along the Gulf Coast to the western border north into the Pine Hills and along the Bluff Hills before ending up back in the Delta to finish the ride. It's a beautiful state all the way around with so much to offer!



Mississippi Regions

Ride Around Mississippi

Distance: 1,056 miles

Time: 18 hrs, 13 min.

Average Speed: 58 mph

Fuel Used: 30.529 gal

Fuel Mileage: 34 mpg

Low Temperature: 41°

High Temperature: 65°

