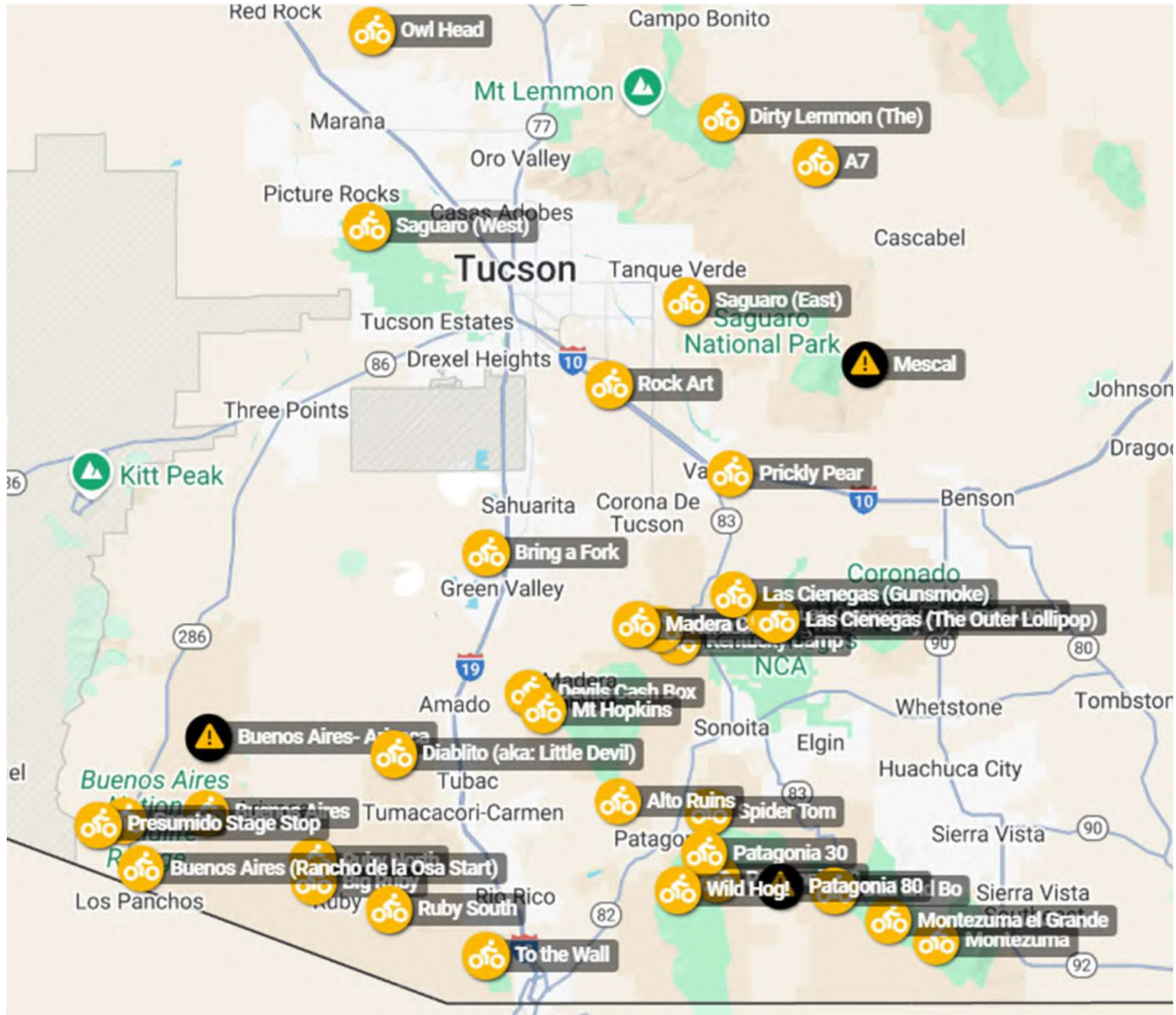


# Tucson Gravel Routes





**Saguaro (West)**

🚴 5 STAR ROUTE  
**Tucson, Arizona**

An easier mixed gravel bike ride through Saguaro National Park (West) with enormous cacti and beautiful desert skies.

**Route:** Tootsie Roll | 22 miles

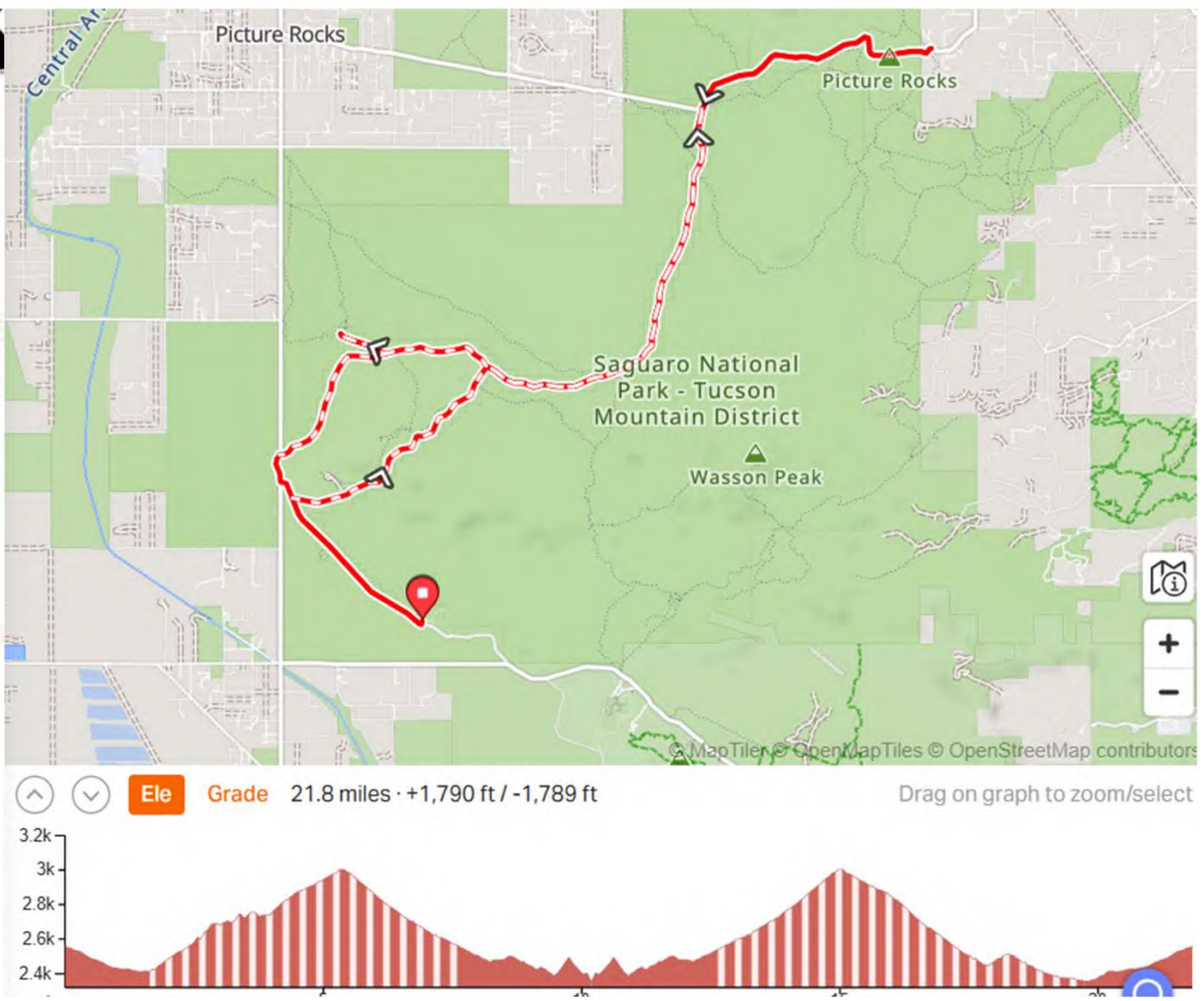
**Gain:** 1,800 feet

**Surface:** 65% gravel, 35% paved

**Technical Difficulty:** Easier

**Navigation:** Straightforward

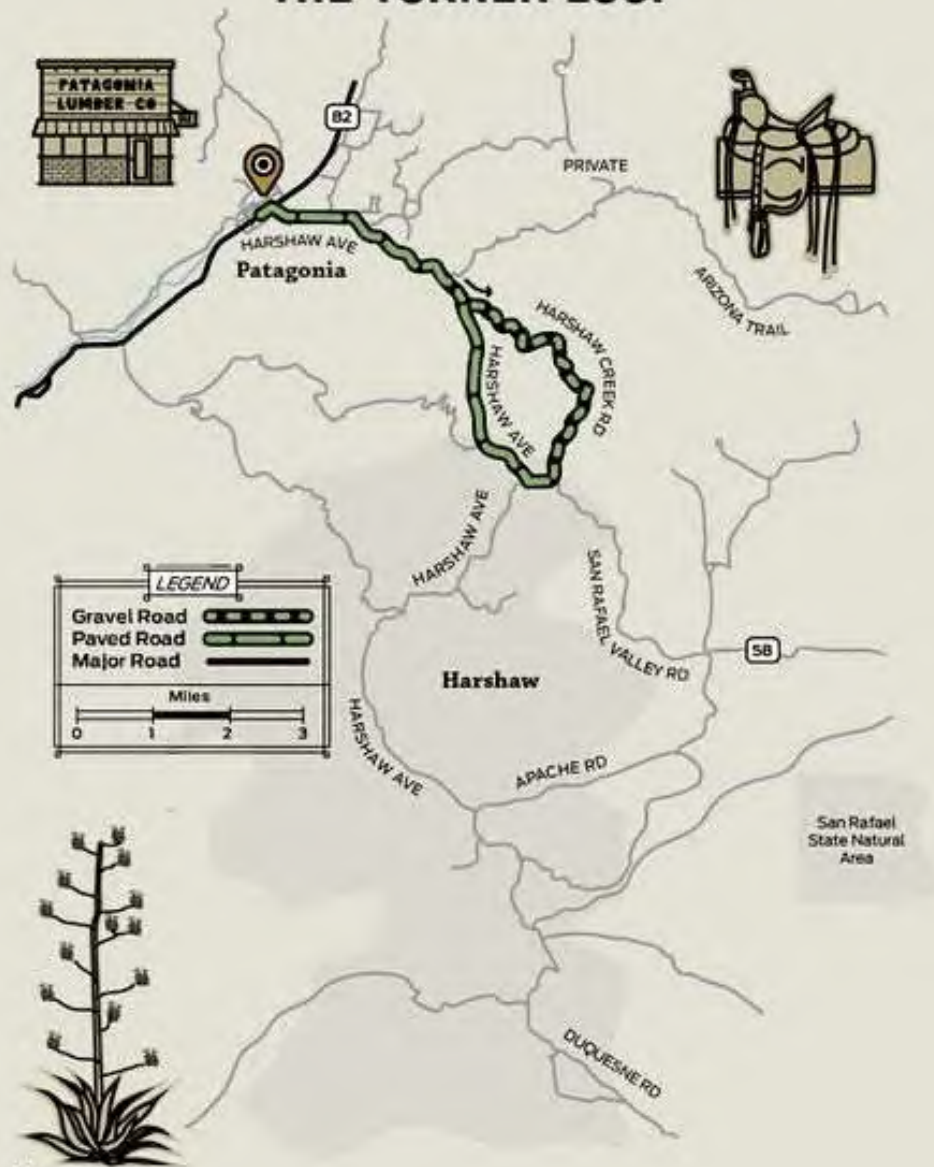
**Locale:** Urban Backcountry





— GRAVEL ROUTES: UNDER 25-MILES —

## THE TURNER LOOP



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On this route, you'll see a number of rock outcroppings that once yielded gold and silver and attracted large numbers of prospectors, and multi-generational ranching families to the area. After moving to southern Arizona in the 1930s to work the family ranch, Jack Turner (1912-2008) became a well known local musician and helped maintain Santa Cruz County roads after acquiring a road grader and front-end loader. He did this task for 35 years.

The route starts climbing before a nice return descent. The canyon walls were carved by an ephemeral stream that flows only during, and for a short duration after, precipitation events. Harshaw Creek is above the water table year-round. The source is not groundwater, but runoff from rainfall — see the evidence in the strands of fruit, cottonwood, willow, and sycamore trees.

A great short loop option for the first or last day visit.

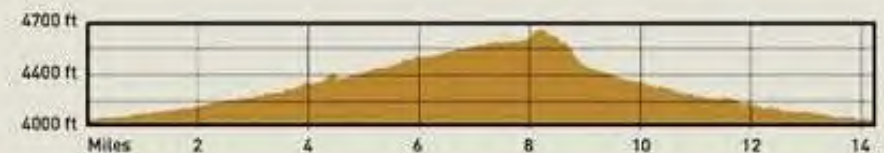


Distance: 14.2 Miles

Elevation: +707 Ft

Max Grade: 5.3%


Approx: 32/86 %Unpaved/Paved  
[ridespot.org/rides/449942](https://ridespot.org/rides/449942)







## Bring a Fork

 5 STAR ROUTE  
**Tucson, Arizona**

See the diverse Sonoran Desert cacti, bask in the glorious views of the Santa Ritas, and ride past the most incredible crested saguaro. A lot of single-track fun on a drop-bar gravel bike.

**Route:** Figure 8 | 15 mi


**Gain:** 700 ft

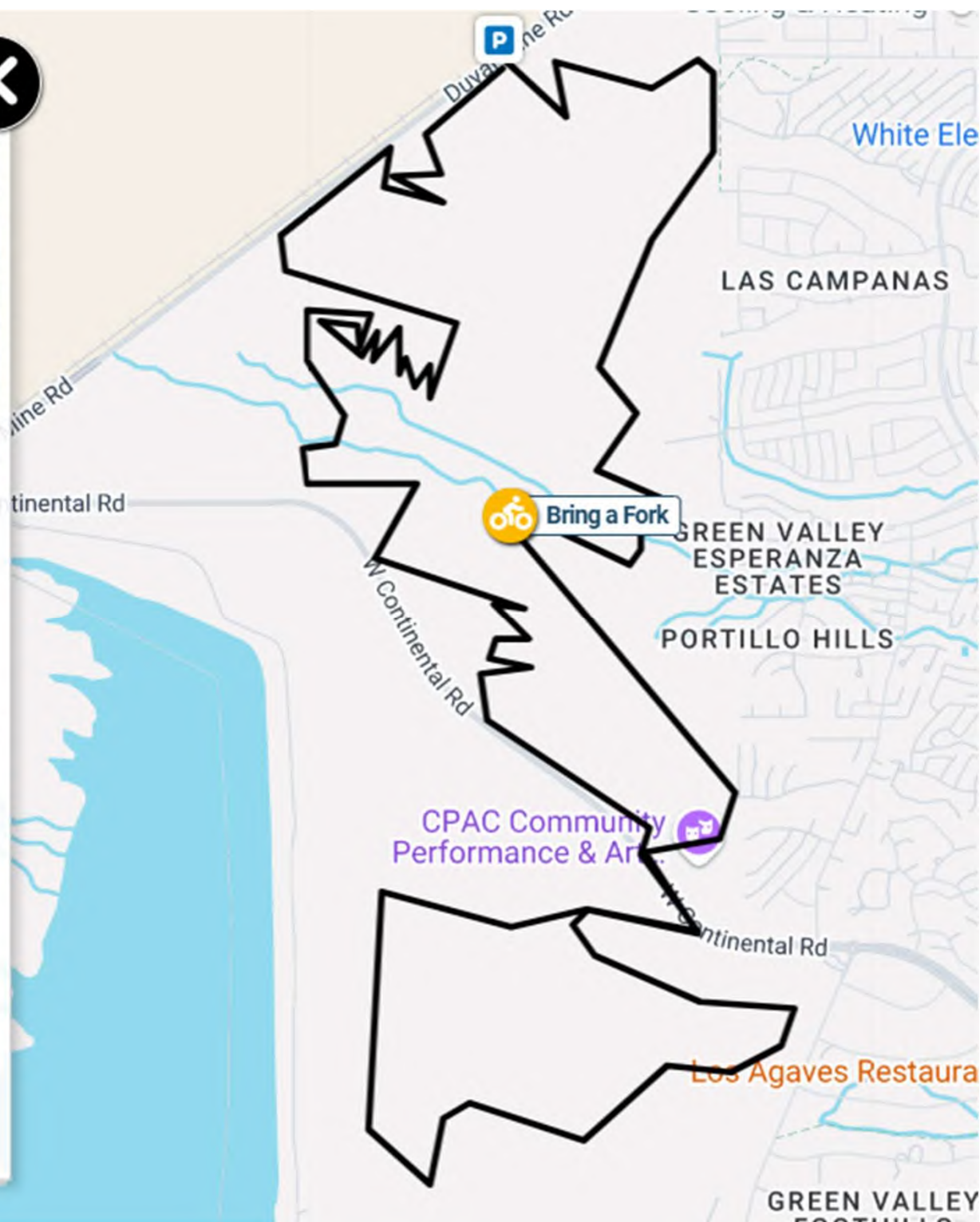
**Surface:** 85% singletrack, 10% gravel, 5% paved

**Technical Difficulty:** Moderate

**Navigation:** Straightforward

**Locale:** Urban Backcountry

[VIEW ROUTE](#) 





# TEMPORAL VIEWPOINT



This route is a challenging out and back hillclimb ride, with steep sections. Leaving north, you'll hit the unpaved Temporal Road. A reconnaissance of the terrain shows the area's geological significance. The volcanic rocks date to the Mesozoic. The mineral extraction industry is why this road exists, providing access to the Sweet and Black Cap Mines, which operated between 1879 through 1950 and produced 370 tons of lead, silver and copper ore.

The ride includes rough topography through foothills of the Santa Rita range. The gullies drain and deposit water into Temporal Gulch, which empties into Sonoita Creek. Keep an eye out for the abundant Sycamore trees along the stream if seeking shade. As you ascend, you'll see low bushes and small trees become prevalent. While a relatively short-distance from Patagonia, this ride showcases the scenic beauty and challenging cycling of Santa Cruz County.

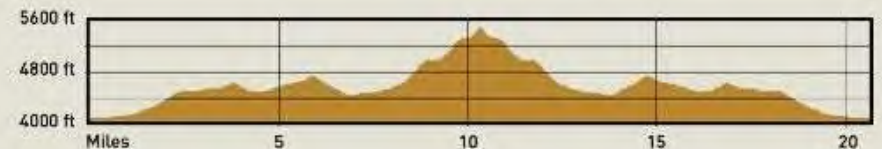


Distance: 20.6 Miles

Elevation: +2,394 Ft

Max Grade: 14.8%

Approx: 91/9 %Unpaved/Paved  
[ridespot.org/rides/449953](https://ridespot.org/rides/449953)







## Presumido Stage Stop

🚴 5 STAR ROUTE

### Buenos Aires, Arizona

Your destination is an original stage coach stop that is nestled into a beautiful, almost presumptuous, canyon lined with tall saguaros. This ride offers up all types of cactus and vista views of Baboquivari Peak.

**Route:** Out & Back | 24 mi

**Gain:** 1,600 ft

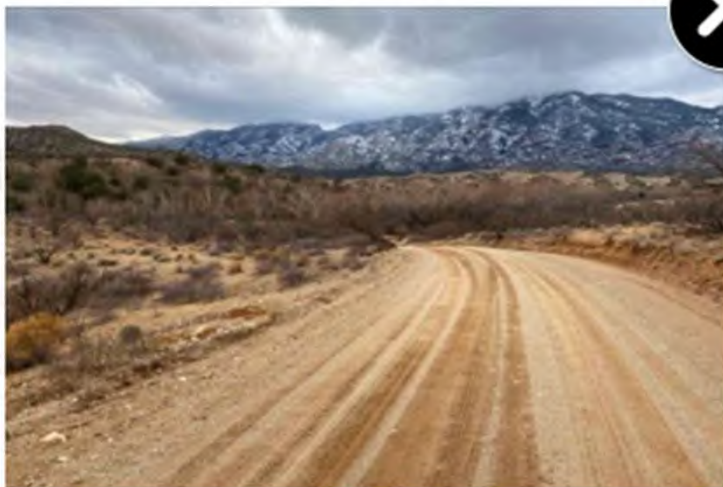
**Surface:** ~ 90% gravel rd, 10% paved.

**Technical Difficulty:** Moderate

**Navigation:** Attention Required

**Locale:** Extremely Remote





## Mescal

⚠️ DEVELOPMENT ROUTE

Tucson, Arizona

An exploratory gravel bike ride on the eastern side of the Rincon Mountain Wilderness with big mountain views!

**Route:** Out & Back | 27 mi

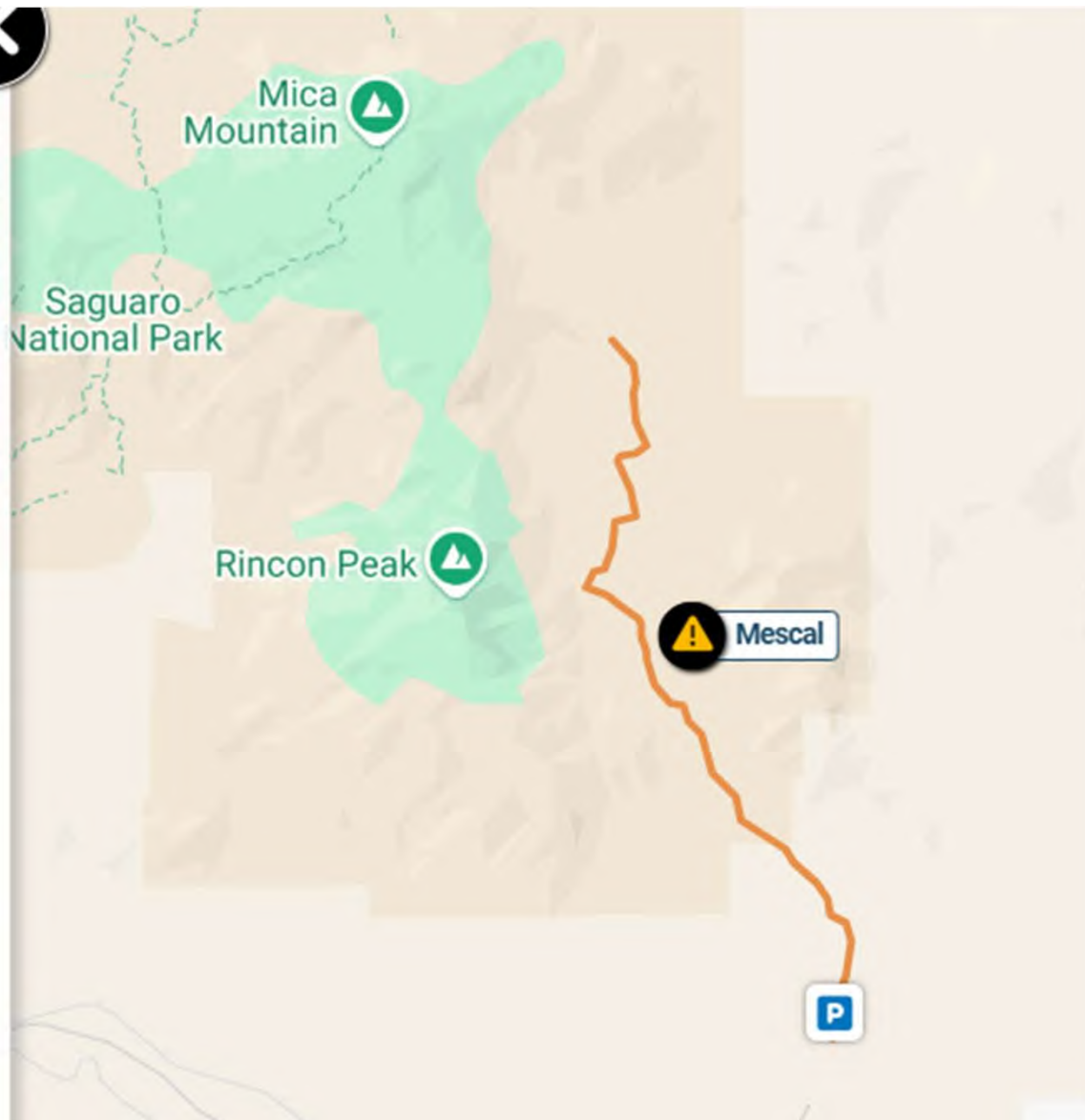
**Gain:** 2,200 ft

**Surface:** 85% gravel, 15% paved

**Technical Difficulty:** Unknown

**Navigation:** Attention Required

**Locale:** Remote







## Las Cienegas (Gunsmoke)

🚴 5 STAR ROUTE

~ Tucson, Arizona

Our favorite Las Cienegas loop; using the best riding roads from the Inner and Outer Loop routes. Miles 12 to 17 are one of the most scenic ridge climbs in the area. You get a true appreciation of the concept...

**Route:** Lollipop | 28 mi

**Gain:** 1,400 ft

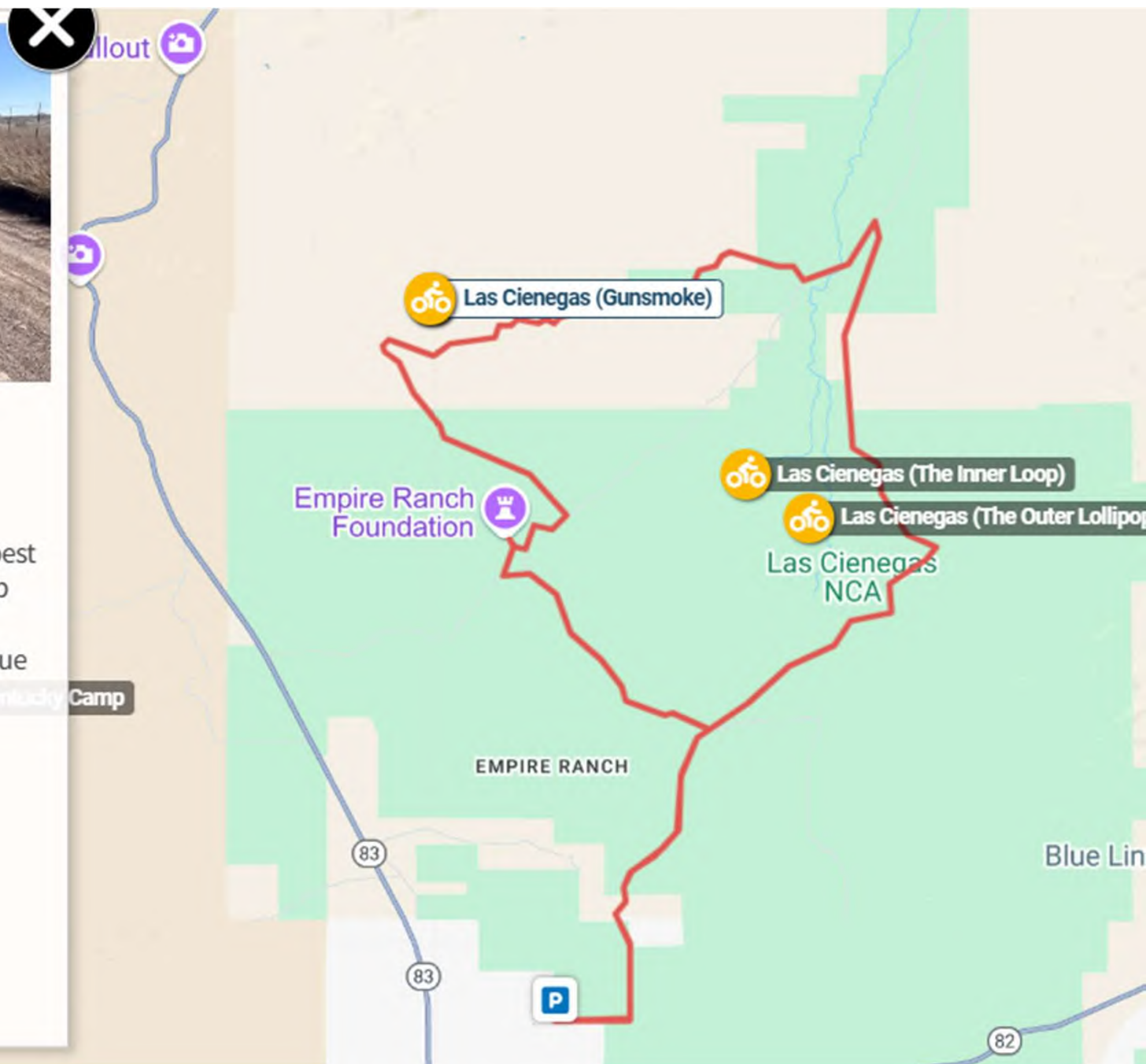
**Surface:** ~ 100% gravel

**Technical Difficulty:** Moderate

**Navigation:** Attention Required

**Locale:** Remote

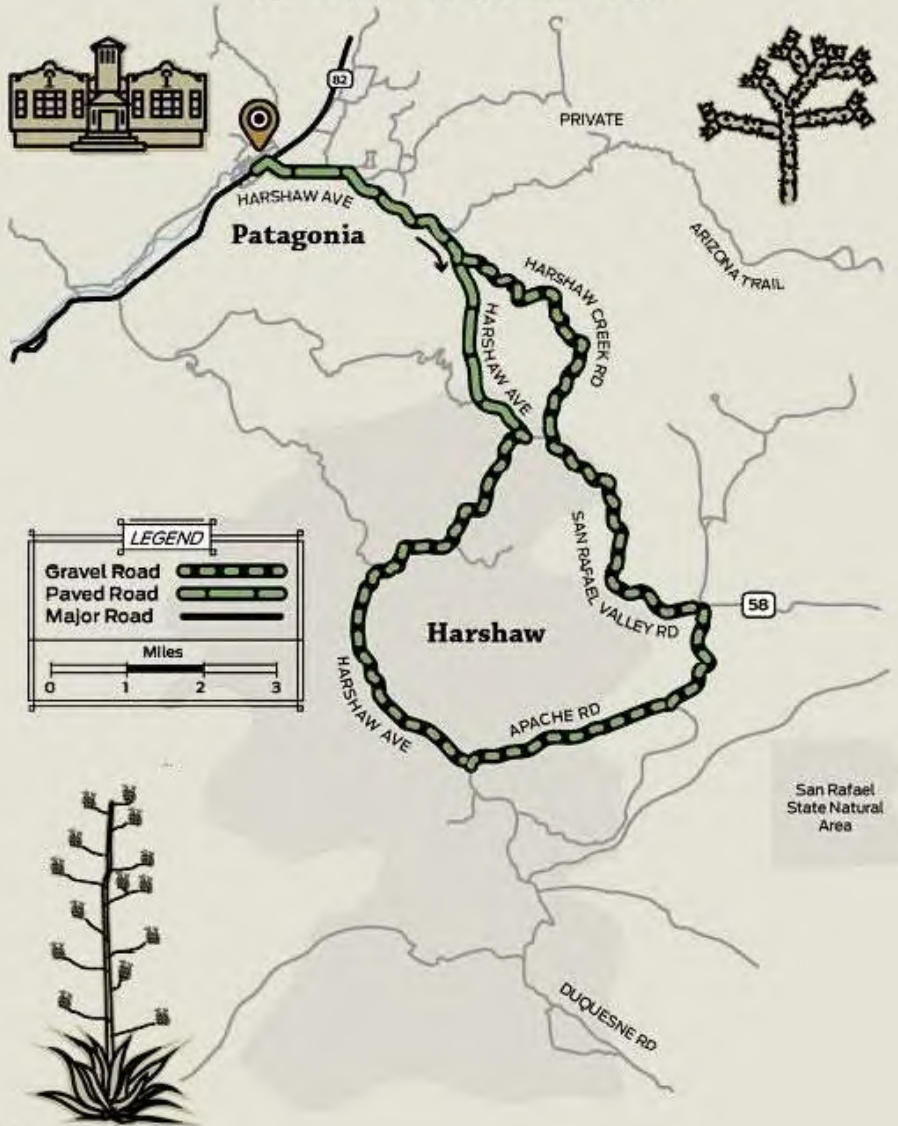
[VIEW ROUTE](#) ➔





— GRAVEL ROUTES: 25 TO 50 MILES —

## SPIRIT WORLD 30



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An homage to an Akimel O'odham basket weave labyrinth design and the belief that a maze with a man figure at the mouth is a symbol of life. This figure represents the O'odham people and their deep respect for the birth/death cycle of high desert life. The maze is analogous to the initial process of exploring the roads of the San Rafael Valley. This is the shortest Spirit World ride, and deepens one's awareness and appreciation for a special place.

Every Sky Island ride requires a cyclist to plan for the challenging twists one will encounter along the way. The more remote the terrain, the more difficult it becomes to navigate the maze. You'll learn to make less mistakes, and grow more confident in your skills and wiser along the way. This ride inspires you to seek out more of the challenging terrain of Patagonia-Santa Cruz County.

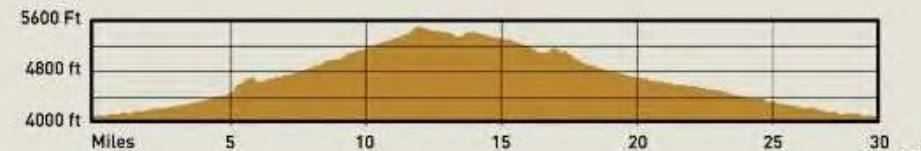


Distance: 28.8 Miles

Elevation: +1,790 Ft

Max Grade: 9.1%

Approx: 66/34 %Unpaved/Paved  
[ridespot.org/rides/449960](https://ridespot.org/rides/449960)







## Ruby South

🚴 5 STAR ROUTE  
~ Tucson, Arizona

An out & back to the ghost town of Ruby, a mining camp from the early 1900s, with the first strike of gold in the late 1870s, and real wild west drama. The ride has wide, sweeping views of the...

**Route:** Out & Back | 29 mi

**Gain:** 3,700 ft

**Surface:** 100% gravel

**Technical Difficulty:** Moderate

**Navigation:** Straightforward

**Locale:** Remote







## To the Wall

Palmaria Wilderness  
🚴 5 STAR ROUTE

### Tucson, Arizona

An exploratory gravel bike ride through the Pajarito Mountains with a stop at the "new" border wall. Great riding! Big views!

**Route:** Loop | 29 mi

**Gain:** 3,000 ft

**Surface:** 85% gravel, 15% paved

**Technical Difficulty:** Moderate

**Navigation:** Attention Required

**Locale:** Remote

[VIEW ROUTE](#) ➔





— GRAVEL ROUTES: 25 TO 50 MILES —

## ALTO GHOST TOWN



{ SPECIAL NOTE: ALL OF  
FOREST SERVICE 143 RD  
CAN BE ROUGH, NOT  
JUST THE TOP SECTION. }



ROUGH  
TECHNICAL  
GRAVEL

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Leaving on Blue Haven Road, you'll ride past the Paton Center for Hummingbirds and Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve. Patagonia has earned an international reputation as a "bird watching" destination due to the more than 200 species of rare and exotic birds that migrate north from Mexico. You'll also pedal past the likely site of the *visita* Los Santos Reyes de Sonoita, established by Eusebio Kino in 1692. It remained occupied until 1770 when Apaches overran the Sobaipuri.

You begin a steady climb up into the Coronado National Forest towards the ghost town of Alto. Settled in the 1900s, it was originally named El Plomo (Lead), and later Alto (High) because the mines were located on a steep mountainside. Highlighting the ride are the ruins of the adobe home and post office built by Josiah Bond that closed in 1933.

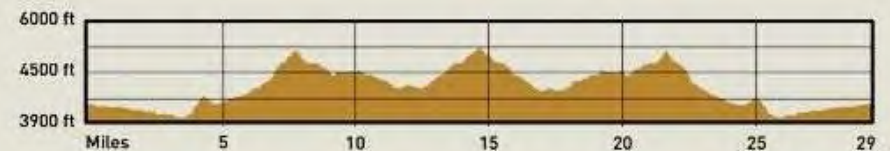


Distance: 29.3 Miles

Elevation: +2,460 Ft

Max Grade: 9.4%

Approx: 95/5 %Unpaved/Paved  
[ridespot.org/rides/449976](https://ridespot.org/rides/449976)







## Mt Hopkins

🚴 5 STAR ROUTE

~Tucson, Arizona

A simple out and back with a big climb and even bigger views! And ... a stop at the Whipple Observatory Visitors Center. Go inside!

**Route:** Out & Back | 31 mi

**Gain:** 4,200 ft

**Surface:** 40% gravel, 60% paved

**Technical Difficulty:** Moderate

**Navigation:** Straightforward

**Locale:** Remote

