



Owl Head

🚴 5 STAR ROUTE

Tucson, Arizona

A beautiful ride with undulating terrain, big saguaro cactus, views of Picacho Peak and Owl Head buttes. A go to 5 Star ride from Tucson.

Route: Loop | 32 mi

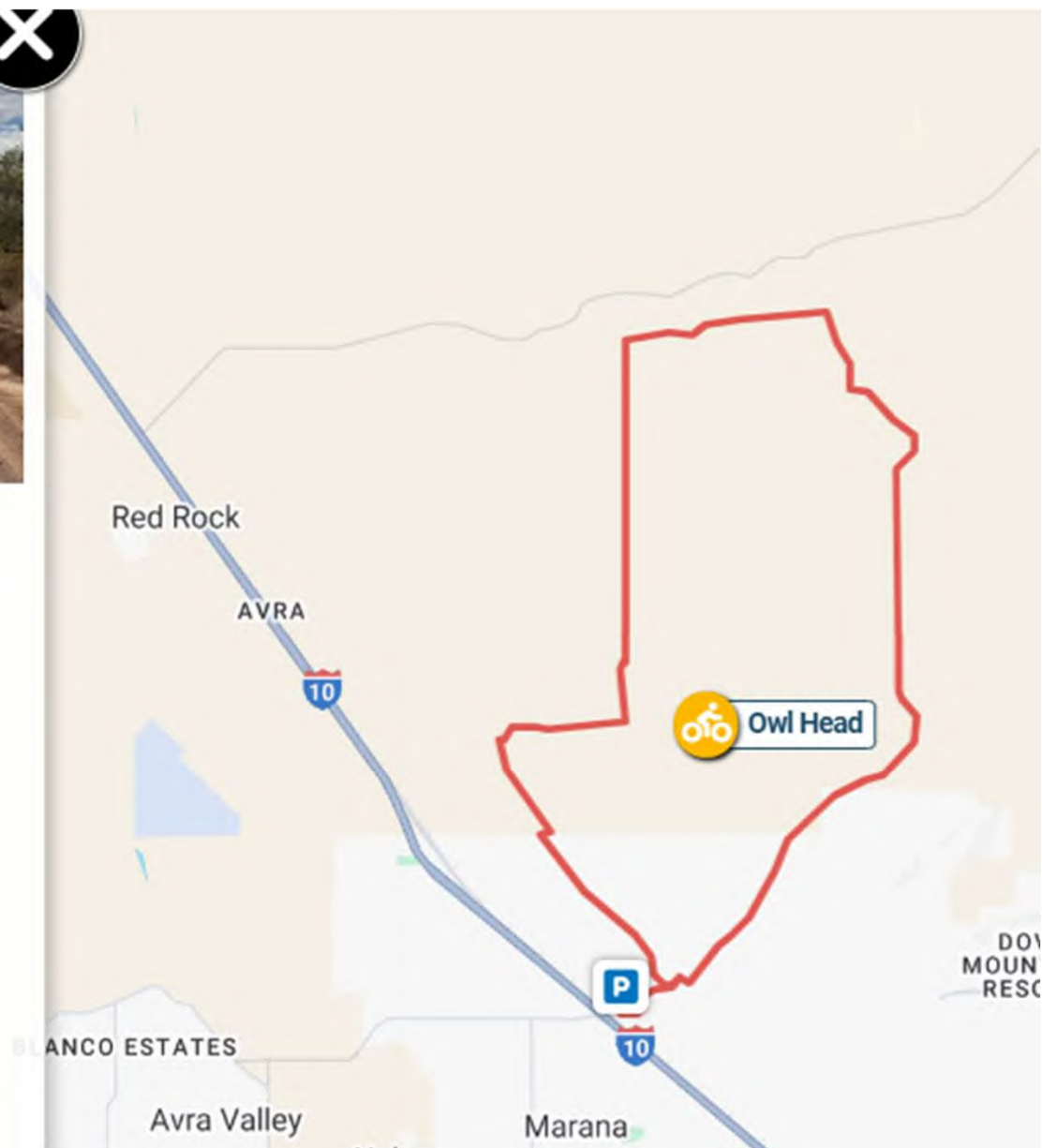
Gain: 1,000 ft

Surface: 85% gravel, 15% single track

Technical Difficulty: Easier

Navigation: Straightforward

Locale: Urban Backcountry





Free Man

🚴 5 STAR ROUTE

Tucson, Arizona

A route free (mostly) of rough, gnarly roads with beautiful Sonoran desert, the Ninety-six Hills, and an old, abandoned ranch.

Route: Loop | 35 mi

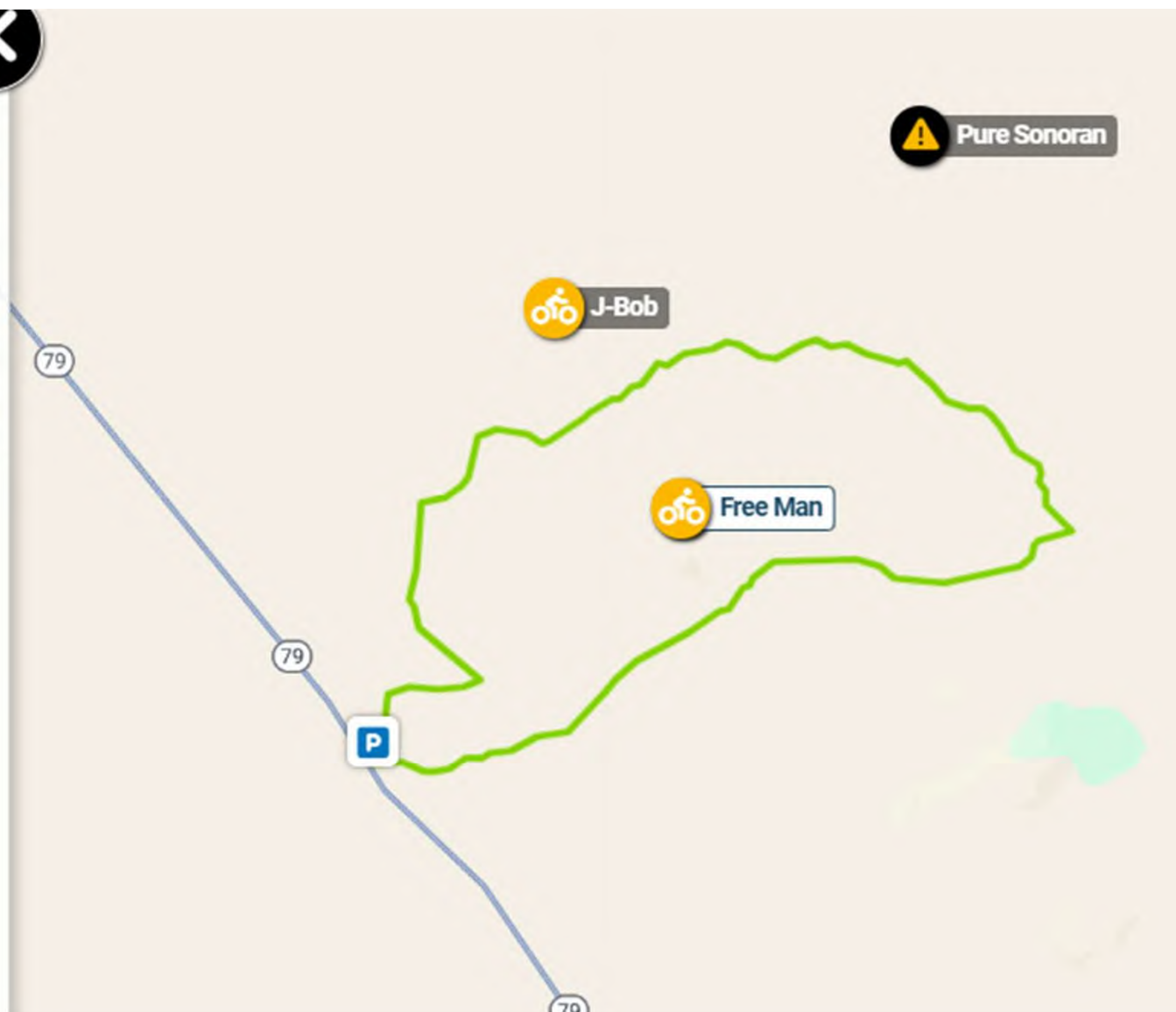
Gain: 1,600 ft

Surface: 100% Gravel

Technical Difficulty: Moderate

Navigation: Straightforward

Locale: Urban Backcountry

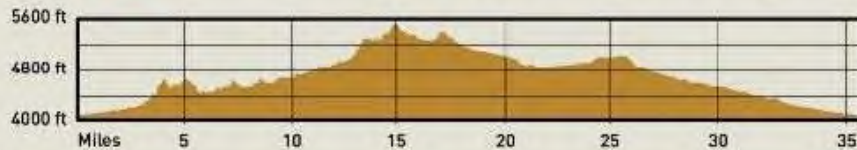


— GRAVEL ROUTES: 25 TO 50 MILES —

MEADOW VALLEY LOOP



**SPECIAL NOTE: PARTS OF THE AZ TRAIL
INCLUDE ROUGH SINGLE TRACK. BE
AWARE AND ENJOY THE ADVENTURE.
ALLOW FOR A LITTLE EXTRA TIME.**



PATAGONIA / SANTA CRUZ COUNTY | GRAVEL ADVENTURE FIELD GUIDE

This ride brings together a number of Santa Cruz County highlights, including Coronado National Forest, a section of the Arizona Trail, views of the San Rafael Valley, and area mining history. Meadow Valley was a silver ore rich area composed of pyrite, chalcopyrite, and argentite. The ore body is described as having an irregular shape of unknown dimensions, which candidly serves as an analogy of what to expect on this route.

The Meadow Valley Loop is a challenging gravel adventure ride that includes a section of the Arizona Trail. While 36 miles from Patagonia, it includes areas where bike+hike scenarios come into play and GPS signals can be lost. Be prepared for a slower pace, where the irregular and unknown variables of terrain, weather, and equipment can factor into how long it takes to complete the ride.



Distance: 36.8 Miles

Elevation: +2,789 Ft

Max Grade: 14.1%

Approx: 83/17 %Unpaved/Paved
ridespot.org/rides/449982



Madera Canyon (via Box Canyon)

🚴 5 STAR ROUTE

Tucson, Arizona

The Madera Canyon (via Box Canyon) out and back is no secret to local riders and there's a reason: it's a solid five star ride. As gravel cyclists, we love variety ... in the surface, the scenery, and the wildlife...

Route: Out & Back | 40 mi

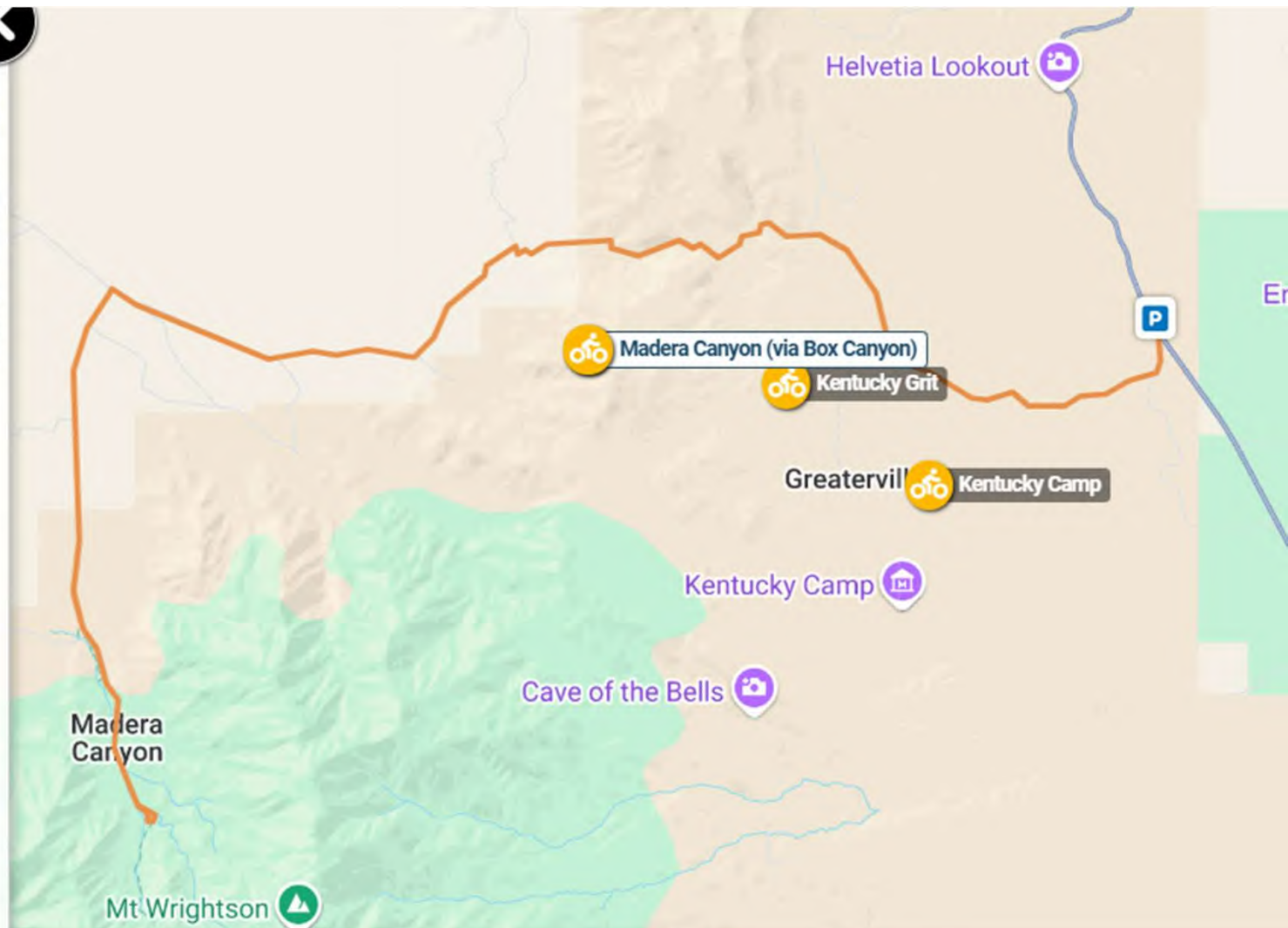
Gain: 4,000 ft

Surface: 55% gravel, 45% paved

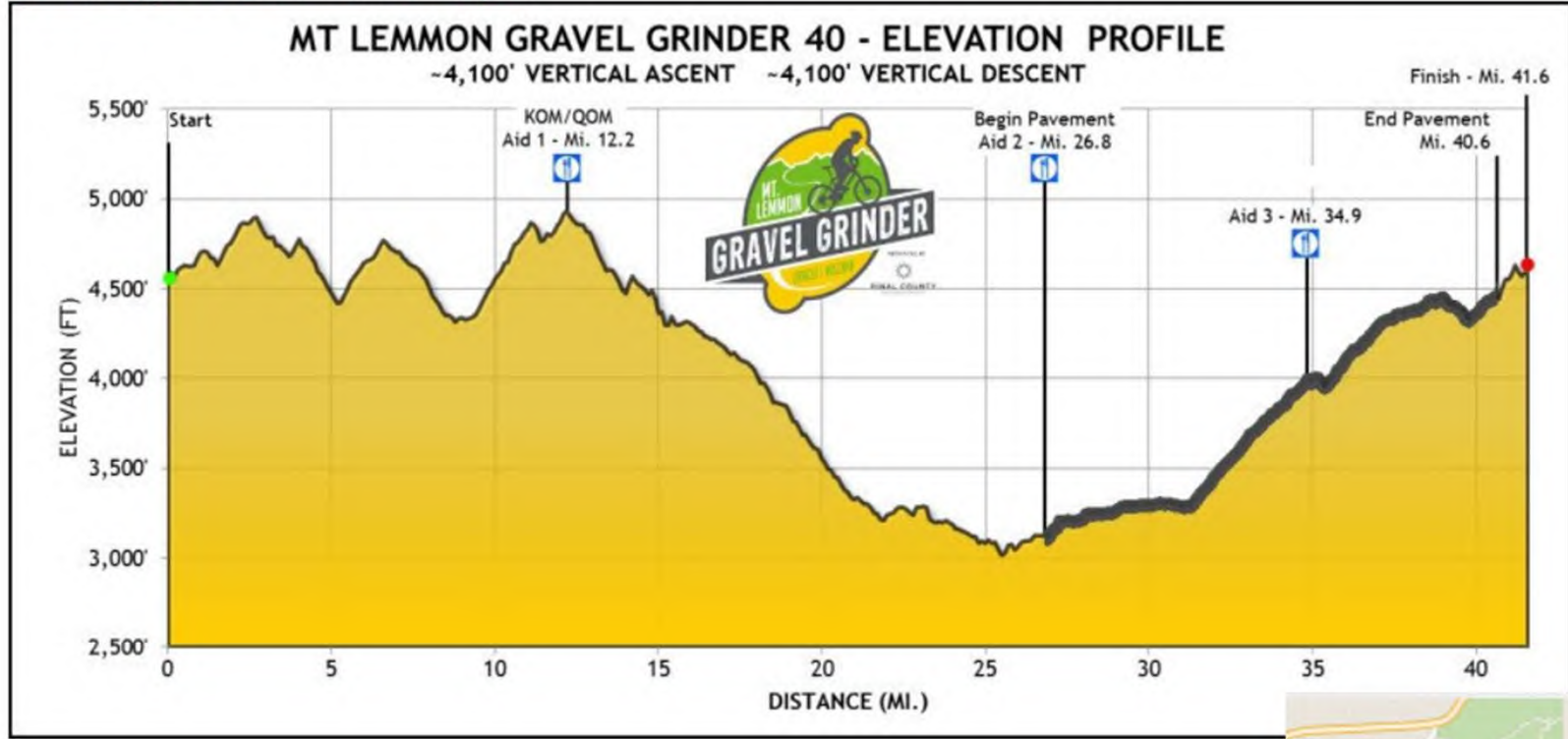
Technical Difficulty: Moderate

Navigation: Straightforward

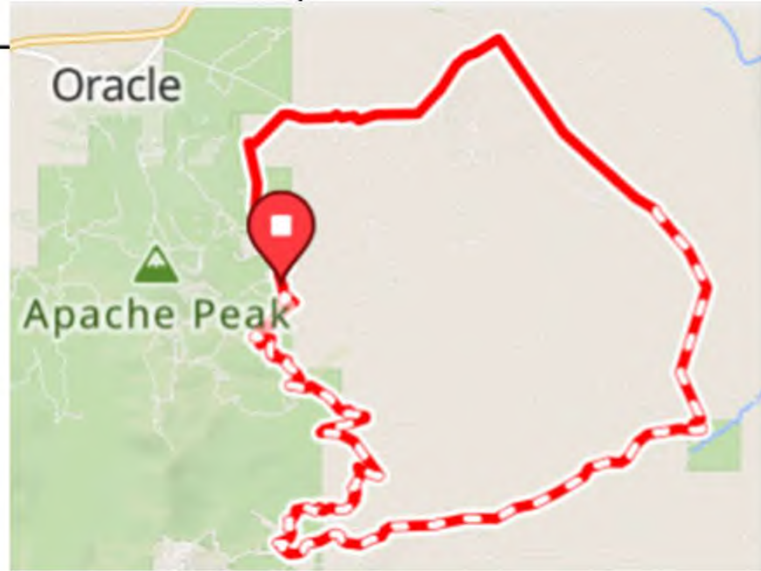
Locale: Urban Backcountry



The 40 Grind course 2016-Present (No event was held in 2020 due to COVID-19): 101 years ago, in 1920, the Mt Lemmon Control Road was the first road constructed to access the higher, cooler elevations of the Santa Catalina Mountains. For those seeking a true epic and memorable experience on one of the most iconic mountains in the sport of cycling, this will be the ultimate adventure! The 40 Grind course is a 42-mile loop that starts and finishes at the 3C Ranch and takes riders through sections of the Coronado National Forest in the Santa Catalina Mountains (Mt Lemmon) and through the neighboring town of San Manuel. There are 27 miles of gravel/dirt roads and 15 miles of paved roads. Expect little to no motor vehicle traffic. Conditions of gravel roads can vary from hard-pack to rutted or washboard depending on the last time the roads were graded and/or touched by monsoon downpours. Elevations along the course vary from 3000 ft to 5000 ft. At the lowest point of the course, average high temps are in the upper 70's for this time of the year.



Peppersauce 41



SONOITA-ELGIN WINE LOOP



Full Loop



Inner Loop

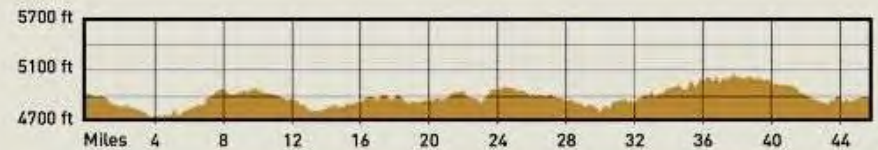


A unique way to experience Arizona's first federally recognized American Viticulture Area (wine-growing region). The heritage dates back to the 16th century. Santa Cruz County has several award-winning wineries that produce distinctive wines which offer locals and visitors a one-of-a-kind tasting experience. The vineyards and tasting rooms continue to evolve, meaning this is the kind of ride you'll likely want to do more than once.

What makes Sonoita and Elgin special? The climate, landscape, and altitude. While other parts of Arizona swelter with heat, cooler temperatures prevail in the rolling, grass-covered hills of the Sky Island Plateau resting at 5,000 feet above sea-level. This 46 mile adventure ride tour is mostly paved. Ride the full loop or break it into a smaller ride with our additional route link. View the 22 Tasting Rooms by name on our corresponding list on page 47.

Please drink responsibly.
Shuttle services are available.

Distance: 46 Miles
Elevation: +2,101 Ft
Max Grade: 5.5%
Approx: 100% Paved
ridespot.org/rides/451007



THE CYCLIST MENU WINE LOOP



Looking to add some unpaved miles to a loop through Arizona Wine Country? Then check out this favorite route of the Cyclist's Menu gravel camp guests. Heading north, the ride starts out on pavement all the way through the Sonoma-Elgin wine district. You'll have a chance to visit any number of tasting rooms in either town before heading south for a return to Patagonia. This route is perfect for checking out some of the world class vineyards, and getting a long ride in too.

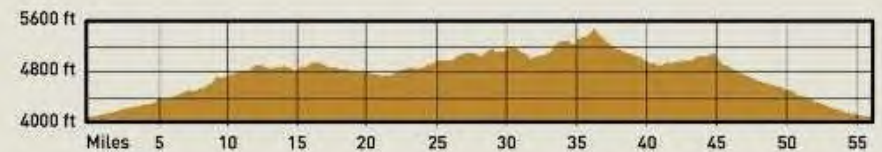
A highlight is the return through the Canelo Hills, which are a series of rounded hills that extend 20 miles and connect the Sky Islands of the Santa Rita Mountains to the northwest, Patagonia Mountains to the southwest and Huachaca Mountains to southeast. The ghost town of Canelo gets its name from the Canelo Hills, which if looked at from the south have a light brown or cinnamon colored appearance — Canelo is Spanish for cinnamon.

Distance: 56 Miles

Elevation: +2,824 Ft

Max Grade: 7.0%

Approx: 36/64 % Unpaved/Paved
ridespot.org/rides/449990



SPIRIT WORLD 50



A fantastic ride for those looking to further their riding experience in the San Rafael Valley. This ride will deepen your appreciation for the high desert landscape that has sustained humans for more than a hundred centuries. The climbing begins early as you ride past the Patagonia Mountains, which have likely been inhabited for about 10,000 years. The Hohokam, ancestors of Akimel and Tohono O'odham, thrived in this area from about 1050 CE to 1450 CE.

This ride highlights the vast biodiversity of the San Rafael Valley and its maze of rolling hills and canyons. You'll have framed vistas of the Huachuca Mountains and Canelo Hills to the east, and the Sierra Madre Occidental to the south in Sonora, Mexico. This route helps illuminate the deep level of respect the O'odham hold for this land. It may be a harsh environment, but it persistently provides for the people.

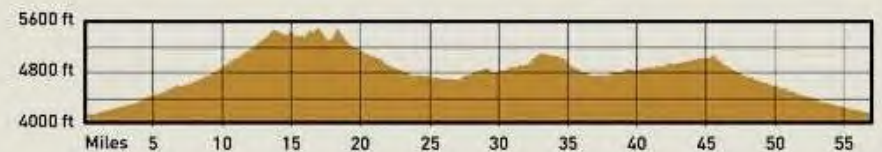


Distance: 57 Miles

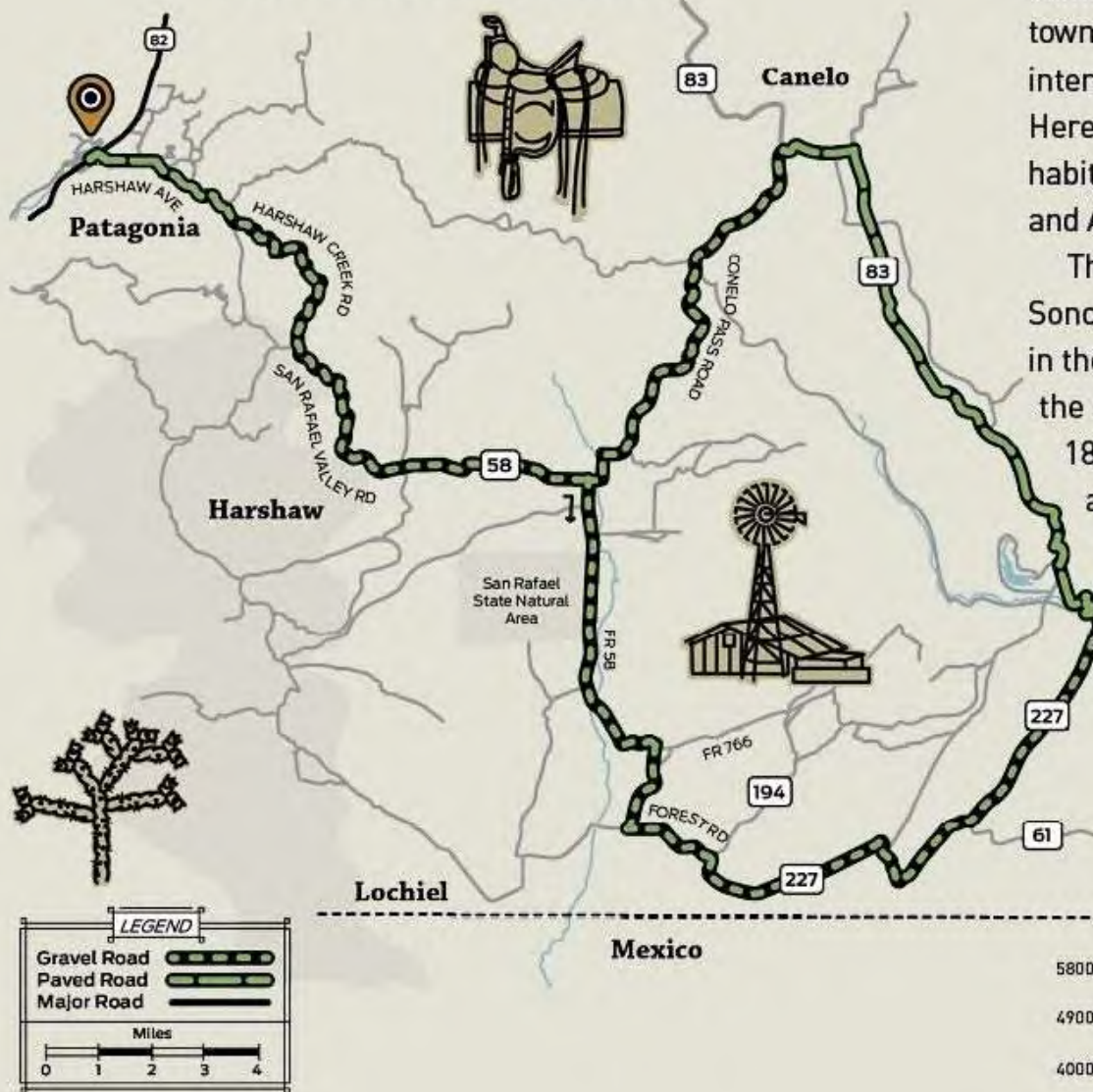
Elevation: +3,361 Ft

Max Grade: 7.7%

Approx: 88/12 % Unpaved/Paved
ridespot.org/rides/450009



SAN RAFAEL BOOGIE



A must-do Patagonia-Santa Cruz County ride with ample climbing. After leaving town, you'll boogie past the ghost towns of Harshaw and Washington Camp, and venture into the intermontane and picturesque 331 sq. mile San Rafael Valley. Here, you'll find 40,000+ acres of unique grassland and desert habitats that have been protected by The Nature Conservancy and Arizona State Parks.

The headwaters of the Santa Cruz River, which flows into Sonora, Mexico and returns north toward Tucson, are located in the San Rafael Valley. This mostly unpaved ride goes through the original San Rafael de La Zanja Mexican Land Grant. In the 1880s it became the San Rafael Ranch. Willam Greene later acquired it in 1903, and his family ran the Greene Cattle Company there until 1998. Get an intimate look at one of the most remote and beautiful regions in all of Arizona.



Distance: 73.6 Miles

Elevation: +4,771 Ft

Max Grade: 9.3%

Approx: 73/27 % Unpaved/Paved
ridespot.org/rides/450018



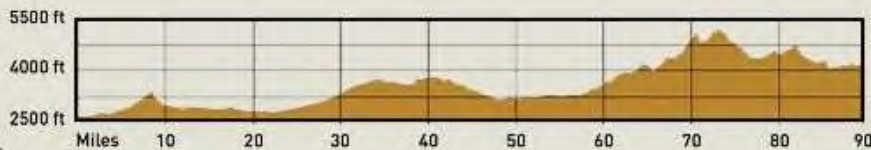
— GRAVEL ROUTES: 75 TO 100 MILES —

TUCSON-PATAGONIA OVERLAND

This Tucson to Patagonia route starts at the Mercado in west Tucson and heads west to see the iconic Saguaro cactus, which is an important source of food and shelter in the desert. The ride can be done in one-day or multi-day rides as a way to skip a car rental and ride to Patagonia. Although in true Kino style you could find a way to overnight outside, especially since you will be riding through the Coronado National Forest and Santa Rita Mountains. The prevalent dark sky of Santa Cruz County is the reason why the Fred Whipple Observatory is located outside Amado as you turn for Mt Hopkins Rd to FS 143. Remember, Eusebio Kino was an astronomer and used his curiosity and knowledge for the subject to enhance his travel experiences. The spirit of this route is all about exploration, and connecting with the natural world.

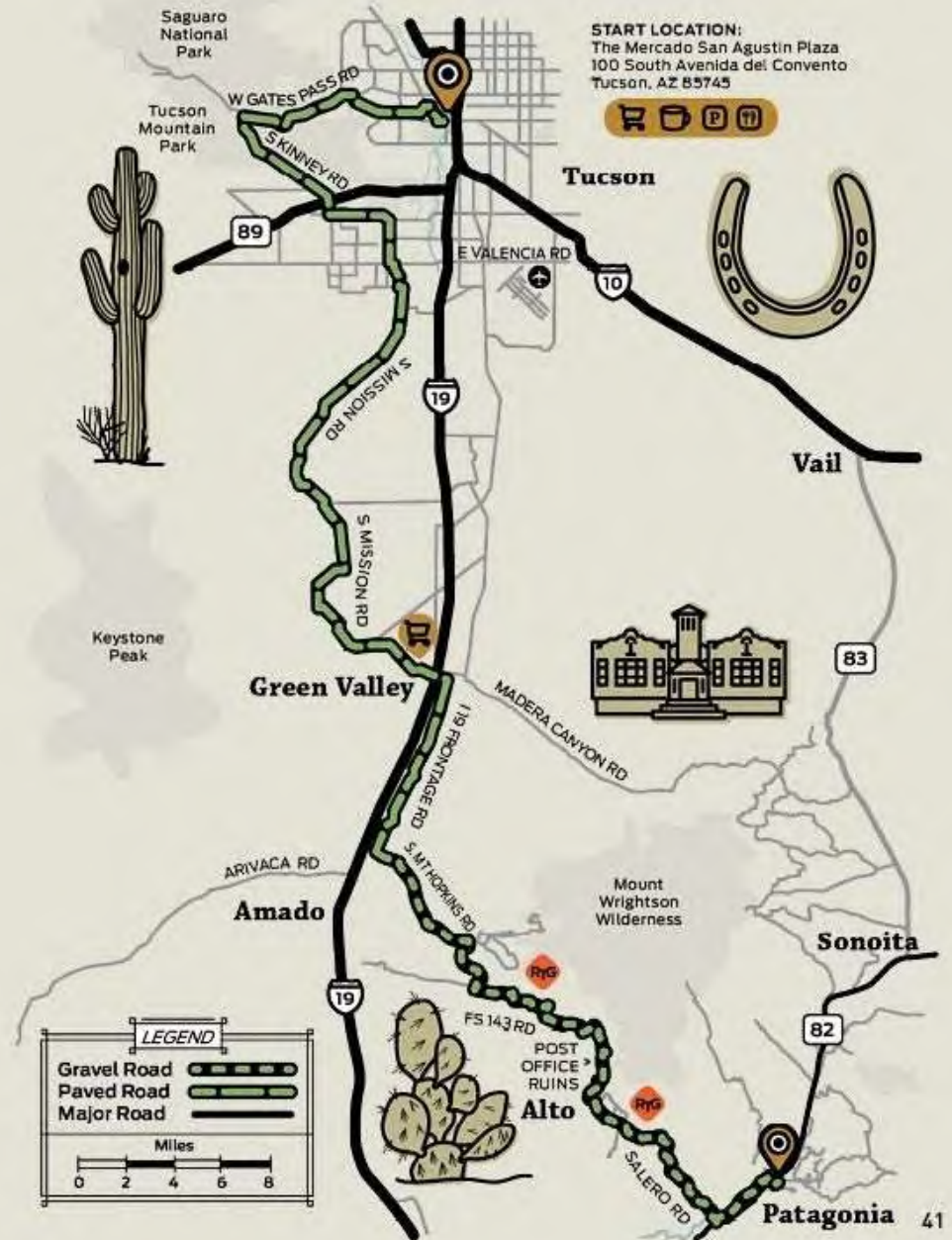


Distance: 90 Miles
Elevation: +6,820 Ft
Max Grade: 13.6%
Approx: 32/68 % Unpaved/Paved
ridespot.org/rides/450023



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— GRAVEL ROUTES: 75 TO 100 MILES —

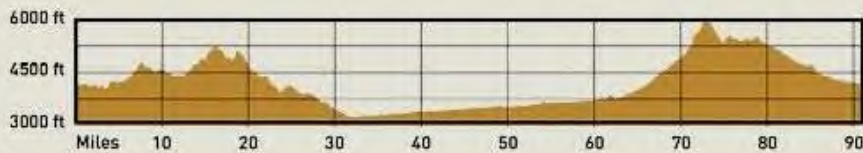
THE DUKE

This ride crosses much of Santa Cruz County and is a mix of paved and unpaved road with amazing views of the Santa Rita and Patagonia Mountains. The ride starts out south from town before heading west across Coronado National Forest to Tubac. Turning south, a paved portion of the route runs parallel to the Santa Cruz River all the way to Beyerville before returning to dirt for the ride over Duquesne Pass. Grand views at the southern end of the Patagonia Mountains abound.

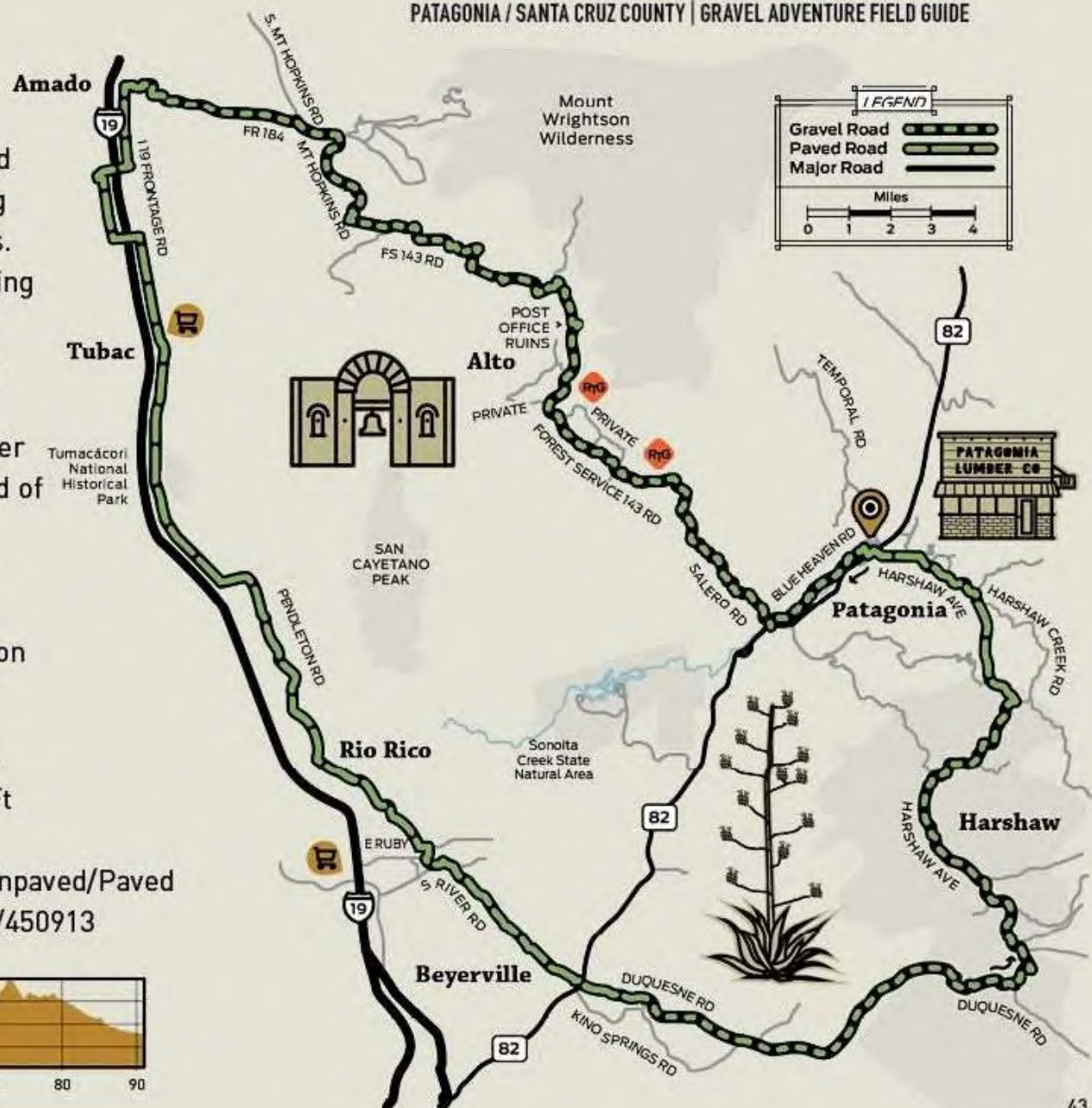
This route also includes a number of cultural sites. Tumacácori National Historical Park near Tubac, protects the ruins of three Spanish mission communities founded by Padre Kino.



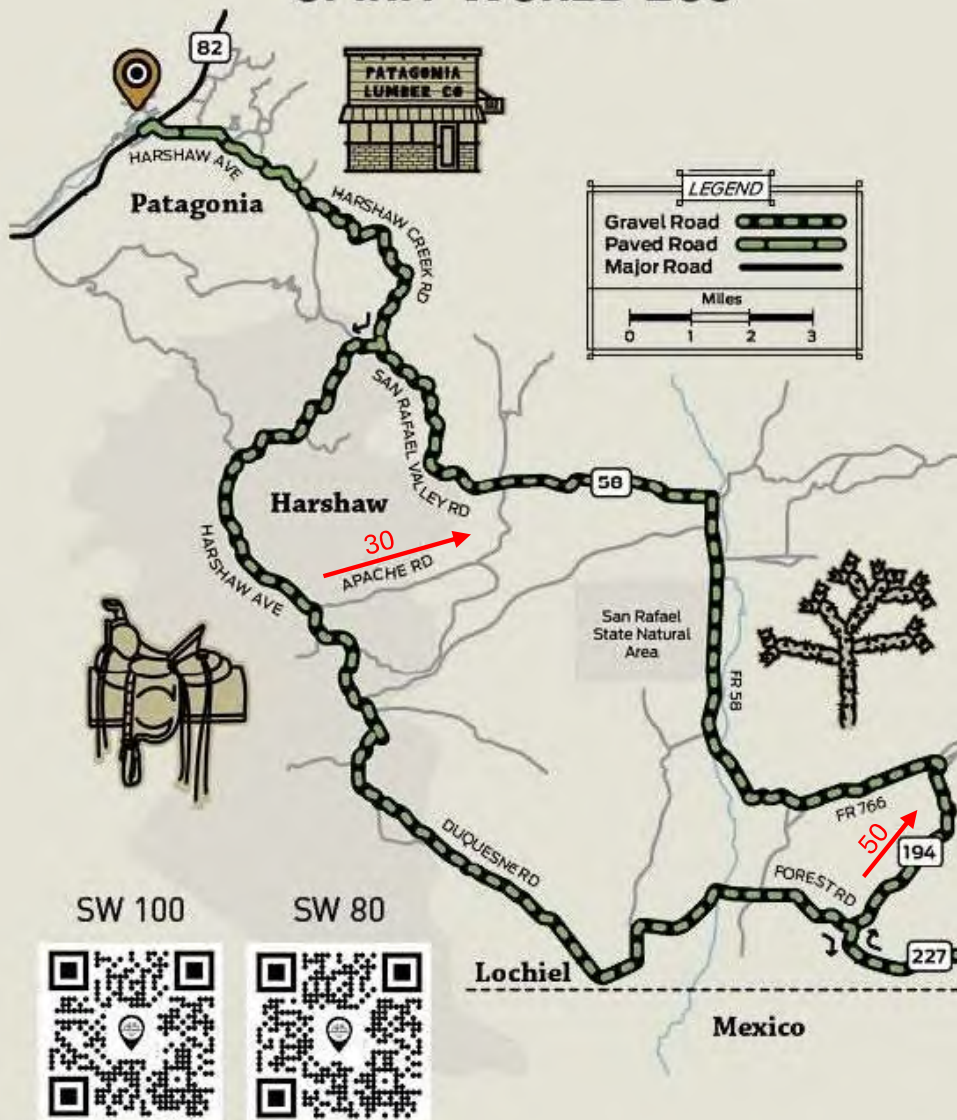
Distance: 91 Miles
Elevation: +6,835 Ft
Max Grade: 14%
Approx: 50/50 % Unpaved/Paved
ridespot.org/rides/450913



PATAGONIA / SANTA CRUZ COUNTY | GRAVEL ADVENTURE FIELD GUIDE



SPIRIT WORLD 100



The Spirit World 100 route is something quite special. It intimately showcases the remote and quiet terrain of the San Rafael Valley. Intended to inspire cyclists and encourage a transformative borderland riding experience, the 100 miles of dirt will test anyone's endurance and taste for adventure. Expect some rutted roads, amazing scenery, as each pedal stroke across the high desert landscape challenges one's physical capabilities, while also expanding your understanding of the human experience along the U.S.-Mexico border. This ride is the epitome of soul riding, and is the hallmark route of the Spirit World 100 gravel race, held annually the first weekend in November.

Distance: 100 Miles
 Elevation: +6,863 Ft
 Max Grade: 10.2%
 Approx: 82/18 % Unpaved/Paved
ridespot.org/rides/450037

