

Santa Cruz Randonneurs

CHUALAR RAMBLE

Permanent Route #240

A RUSA Permanent of 200 kilometers/125 miles

Time Limit: 6h40m to 13h30m

Pre-ride Information—PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Unlike most other events of the Santa Cruz Randonneurs, this brevet is a “permanent”. A permanent means it is a self-conducted ride with a date and starting time of the rider’s choice. This permanent is sanctioned by Randonneurs USA, and counts toward its Distance Awards once per year for a rider’s kilometer total. However, if you are trying to earn the RUSA R-12 this route can be ridden multiple times. In order to enter, you must be a current member of Randonneurs of USA.

Route Description: This route is a large loop to the south of Santa Cruz. It doesn’t have a lot of hard hills, but come ready to do some climbing. We estimate there is roughly 3500 feet of vertical gain in the ride—but most of it is compressed into the second half of the ride. You will encounter several long ascents when you will be more tired, and the afternoon wind might be in your face. A few of the uphill are rather steep; stronger riders will want a 39x25 or 27 low gear, while the typical entrant will be happy he or she has a triple crankset. The climb up Carr Avenue before Aromas at mile 91 is probably the steepest at 12%, while the 5-mile haul up bumpy San Juan Grade before San Juan Bautista is the longest.

The counties that this ride passes through do not keep their roads in good repair and the permanent route is frequently rough. This is not a good ride for 700c x 20mm tires. More importantly, use caution while descending Carr Avenue into Aromas—it is very bumpy and tree shadows can hide potholes.

The route is not marked with arrows; use your route sheet and map (if needed). The rider will supply his or her own map. A good one is the Krebs Cycle Products “South San Francisco Bay & Monterey Bay Areas” bicycle touring map, 2003 edition. AAA also has good maps for its members, such as their excellent “Monterey Bay”.)

Weather: This ride can be done year-round, but cold winter rain storms will be tough to survive since they roll unimpeded off the Pacific Ocean. The wind frequently adds to the challenge, so come with a determined attitude to finish. This is a good summer ride when inland regions are suffering under high temperatures—but some out-of-area riders are surprised at how cool it can be in July due to coastal drizzle and fog, so bring clothing layers. In winter the roads are generally free of ice, but occasionally they can be treacherous in the morning hours. Be sure to use caution if the temperatures at the start are 35 degrees or lower; you may have some surprises in the Aptos area.

Services: There are numerous stores along the route to obtain food and drink, but the 26-mile stretch after Chualar is barren of places to re-supply. It also contains the long climb up San Juan Grade, and there are often headwinds getting to the base of the ascent. Be sure you leave Chualar with full bottles and jersey pockets. (The best store in Chualar is the one across the street from the Post Office; it has good tacos too.)

Start Times: You should choose a start time between 5 AM and 11 AM in order to find stores open during the ride to get receipts to prove your passage. This is not a good night ride due to the lack of 24-hour services along the route.

Start/Finish Location: This brevet begins and ends at the corner of Mission & Miramar streets in western Santa Cruz. There is a 24-hour Valero convenience store at the start/finish. You’ll need receipts from the start **and** the finish; the time imprint on each receipt is your verification or “control”. (Cash registers are not always on time; it is okay to have receipts which show times a few minutes off from the official start/finish times.) If you like, receipts from the nearby Safeway store can be used instead of the Valero. If you drive to the start, there is street parking along Miramar Avenue by the Valero (or along Almar Street by the Safeway.)

Control Procedures: Unlike a century ride, during a brevet all participants must stop at each checkpoint, or “control” if they want to receive official ride credit. These places are marked on your route sheet and on your brevet card. Follow the instructions on your route sheet and brevet card for each control. It will probably mean getting a store receipt or mailing a postcard from that town. A stamped postcard will be supplied with your rider packet. Be sure to bring a pen and a wristwatch.

In addition to using stores at the start/finish in Santa Cruz, you need to stop at the Buena Vista Market at mile 49; after that you will mail a postcard in Chualar at mile 57; then you will need get proof of passage in San Juan Bautista at mile 84. Be sure and record your time on the brevet card at each control point, and of course upon the postcard in Chualar. (Riders might want to bring a bike lock for when they are inside businesses getting controlled.)

For proof of passage, you can ask for a store stamp at any control in lieu of a receipt, but if they do not offer one then you are expected to buy something to get a receipt. Have the clerk write the time upon your brevet card and sign it if you go the store stamp route. If you go the store receipt route, please write your name on the back of the receipt.

You can ride this permanent alone or in a group; if you are with a group that stays together the entire way, then only one receipt is need for the group at each control (but everyone should mark their own cards with the time.) If the riders split up, they then need to get their own receipts after that. Tandem teams only need one receipt for their team, not for each rider.

Each control has an opening and closing time. To get ride credit you must stay within these times, which are based upon the starting time and date you chose.

Riders are expected to keep their brevet card and receipts in good condition during the ride; if they are mangled, wet, or illegible you will not get ride credit. The same applies if the brevet card is lost during the ride.

Be aware that there may also be secret controls during this brevet, so stay on the route. If you should get lost or go looking for food or other supplies, backtrack to where you got off-course. Otherwise, you might miss a secret control. Failure to sign in at a secret control means disqualification from the brevet. If there are any secret controls, they will be in plain sight and impossible to miss.

When you have completed the brevet, be sure and sign the back of the card on the line for the rider. (Don't worry about computing the overall time; we'll take care of that.) After the brevet, return your brevet card and receipts to the ride organizer. Make sure all the times are recorded on the card for each control. Put all the receipts and your card into a baggie and put them in the mailbox at 226 West Avenue, right behind the Valero mini-mart. Or, you can mail them to Bill Bryant, 226 West Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060 within 10 days of the ride.

Regulations: During your ride, all the normal rules of randonneuring apply. Go to the SCR and RUSA web sites to familiarize yourself with the regulations if this type of cycling is new to you. Most important, an approved helmet must be worn at any time when cycling, and if you are riding at night, be sure you have all the required lights and safety gear outlined in the RUSA regulations. Anyone found to be riding at night without these items, or cycling at any time during the permanent without an approved helmet will be automatically disqualified for the ride—and future participation in any SCR event will be unlikely.

You **must** begin your permanent brevet at the time you selected. As stated in the RUSA regulations, there are no "rain checks" for permanents; you must do the ride as you planned, or forfeit. (If you are late to the start, you can start up to 60 minutes after the chosen start time, but you still have to make the second control in the time allowance based upon your original start time.)

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If you should fail to start, or end the ride prematurely, please contact the ride organizer as soon as is practical. We have RUSA matters to attend to whether or not you finish the ride successfully. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

If the foregoing material is unclear or you have other questions before the ride, please don't hesitate to write back so we can answer your question(s). If you want ride credit, all the procedures must be followed correctly and uncertainty about any of them might cause problems after the ride.

In the meantime, good luck and good riding! ☺