

Santa Cruz Randonneurs

SAN GREGORIO RAMBLE

A Permanent Populaire of 126 kms

RUSA Permanent Route #529

Time Limit: 8 hours, 24 minutes

Pre-ride Information—PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Unlike the calendared events of the Santa Cruz Randonneurs, this ride is a “permanent populaire”. Being a “permanent” means it is a self-conducted ride with a date and starting time of the rider’s choice, and “populaire” means it is less than 200 kilometers in length. This permanent route is sanctioned by Randonneurs USA, and counts toward its Distance Awards once per year for a rider’s kilometer total. In order to participate, you must be a current member of Randonneurs of USA.

Route Description: This ride goes north from Santa Cruz along the coast highway and has fine scenery the entire way. You’ll experience great riding along the Pacific coastline, as well as among the pastoral rolling hills that lie inland around Gazos Creek, Pescadero, and San Gregorio. Overall, this route would be called moderately hilly and there is nothing extremely difficult in terms of climbing. There is, however, a fair amount of altitude gain from the numerous hills, and two steep (but very short) pitches in excess of 15% on Cloverdale Road. The typical rider will be happy he or she brought a triple crankset along; by the end of the ride entrants will have gained about 3,000 feet of climbing.

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. Coastal winds can also make the ride challenging any time of year, 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 along the coast due to drizzle and fog. In winter, the coastal highway is free of ice, but sometimes the inland roads can be icy in the morning hours, so use caution. (If the morning temperature in Santa Cruz is 32 degrees or colder, you should prudent and expect possible ice in the forest around Gazos Creek and on Stage Road. And if the road is not actually icy, it will still be darned cold in the parts of the forests and canyons that don’t get any direct sunlight all winter. Overall, spring and autumn usually see the most pleasant weather on the coast; summer can be foggy and winter can be rainy.)

The main weather challenge for this route is the northwesterly winds that blow most days from March through October. They can be quite strong by 10 or 11 AM, so starting around 7 or 8 AM in Santa Cruz is advised; that way you’ll reach the turn up Gazos Creek before they start to howl. Most of the year you can expect a tailwind to push you home from San Gregorio, unless it is rainy weather. (Most storms come on southerly winds.)

Start Times: You should choose a start time between 5 AM and 3 PM 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 services, but if you want to try it, that can be arranged. A postcard can be sent from the post office in Pescadero as proof of passage. (A stamped SCR postcard will be supplied for your use.) You should expect to find little to nothing open in terms of stores or cafés, so haul all your food, but there are water fountains at the Pescadero elementary school that should be helpful.

Services: There are services about every ten to fifteen miles and you won’t need a Camelbak for this route. To find food and drink going outbound, you’ll pass stores in Davenport (mile 10), Gazos Creek (mile 24), Pescadero (mile 34), and San Gregorio (mile 40). On the return ride south along the coast you’ll pass Gazos Creek again (mile 54) and Davenport (mile 68), and of course in Santa Cruz at the finish. Most of these places open about 8 AM and close around 6-7 PM; none are open all night except in Santa Cruz. There are many state beaches and parks along the route with pit toilets that are easily accessible during the ride.

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”. (It is okay to have store receipts which show times a few minutes off from the official start/finish times). If you want something different than can be had at the Valero, cross the street and use the Safeway market. Like the Valero, it is open 24/7.

If you drive to the start, there is on-street parking along Miramar, near the Valero or the nursery.

Control Procedures: In addition to using stores at the start/finish in Santa Cruz, and in Pescadero, you will need to mail a postcard in La Honda with your arrival time. A stamped postcard will be provided with your entry but don’t forget to bring a pen on the ride. Be sure and record your time on the brevet card at each control, and of course upon the postcard in San Gregorio. (You can also 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. If you go the store stamp route, have the clerk write the time upon your brevet card and sign it. However, we randonneurs need these businesses to control our rides, so don’t be too frugal and buy something so that they appreciate your arrival.)

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. Tandem teams obviously 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.

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, 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.

If you are late to the start, you can still begin the ride late and hopefully make the second control in time. If you arrive in Pescadero after second control is closed, your permanent is done (but you can still enjoy a fine ride.)

In order to earn your ride credit you must be controlled properly at the following locations:

Control #1, Santa Cruz, Valero mini-mart, corner of Mission and Miramar Streets, Mile/Kilometer 0.
Get a receipt a few minutes before your registered start time and begin your ride.

Control #2, Pescadero, junction of Pescadero and Stage Roads; "downtown" along Stage Road, Mile 33/Kilometer 53.
Opens 1h46m after your registered start--Closes 3h32m after your registered start.
This is an "open control" and you can get proof of passage anywhere in town. Note your arrival time on your brevet card.

Control #3, San Gregorio, junction of Stage Road and CA Highway 84/La Honda Road, Mile 40/Kilometer 64.5. Opens 2h08m after your registered start--Closes 4h16m after your registered start.
Note your time on your brevet card and on the supplied SCR postcard; mail the postcard from San Gregorio, the local postmark is your proof of passage.

Control #4, Santa Cruz, Valero mini-mart, corner of Mission and Miramar Streets; Mile 78.4/Kilometer 126; Opens 4h12m after your registered start--Closes 8h24m after your registered start.
Get proof of passage soon after you finish and note your arrival time on the brevet card.

After the permanent is done, return your brevet card and receipts to the ride organizer. Sign the back of the card and make sure all the times are recorded on the card for each control. Don't compute your overall time on the back of the card, we'll do that part. Put all the receipts and your card into a baggie and put them under the doormat at 226 West Avenue, on the street behind the Valero mini-mart. Or, you have up to 10 days to get them to us via the US mail or some other means. After 10 days your ride results will not be processed.

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. You **must** begin your ride on the date you selected, and any secret control opening and closing times will be based upon that start time & date. Per RUSA regulations, there are no "rain checks" for your permanent entry if you change your mind or have trouble getting to the start.

If you are riding at night, be sure you have all the required lights and safety gear outlined in the regulations; anyone found to be riding at night without them will be automatically disqualified.

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. Please be considerate and not endanger your future participation in future SCR events or permanents by overlooking this essential detail. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Good luck and good riding! ☺