

HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club

ROARING FORK ROAD AND GRAVEL “GROAD” WEEKEND

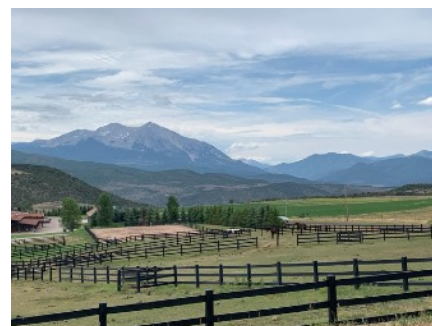
- Dates:** Wednesday July 7, 2021 - 8 pm orientation meeting. Four days riding: July 8-11, depart Sunday July 11, 2021.
- Leaders:** Ron Finch, Robin/Steve Heil **SAGs:** Robin Heil, Bev Louie
- Rating:** Intermediate to advanced. 200 miles, 12,500 ft of climbing. Daily rides range from 48 – 54 miles with 2,200 to 3,800 feet vertical per day (short fast ride planned on Sunday)
- Riders:** 26 (maximum) plus leaders and SAGs
- Price:** \$775 (double occupancy); \$ 200 at registration; Remainder due April 14, 2021. Hotel Single Supplement (solo or with non-riding partner): \$1,165.
- Cancellation:** Revised [cancellation policy](#) \$75 fee. Travel insurance is recommended.

Overview

Join us for a four-day tour of riding up and over the hills and ridges surrounding the Roaring Fork Valley. The fixed base for this tour will be in Basalt, Colorado, located 180 miles west of Denver and 20 miles down valley from Aspen, Colorado. Basalt (pop 4,200) is a historic mining turned resort town located at the confluence of the Roaring Fork and Frying Pan Rivers at an elevation of 6,611 feet. Gold medal fishing and many excellent restaurants and/or pubs are available within 5 minutes walking distance of the hotel. The bike rides are over lightly travelled roads and bike paths with grand vistas of the Elk Range and surrounding valleys. The “groad” connectors access low traffic roads for a new and different riding experience from previous tours in the region. The gravel sections are uphill, short (2.5 - 7.5 miles) and can better be described as hard packed dirt (i.e. pretty smooth under normal conditions). The rides range from 48 – 54 miles in length with 2,200 – 3,800 ft of climbing. The hotel in Basalt (Aspenalt Lodge) is located on the banks of the Frying Pan River so bring your fly rod or relax in the afternoon/evenings by the river. Non-riding partners are encouraged to join us.

Itinerary

Wednesday July 7. Evening orientation, 8 pm at the Aspenalt Inn. WIFI included, rooms have coffee maker and microwave. There are 3+ coffee shops/cafes very nearby for those that want breakfast or upscale coffee. Early arrivals can ride on the Rio Grande bike trail or up the Frying Pan road towards Ruedi reservoir.



Missouri Heights vista



Ruedi Reservoir

Thursday July 8. Red Canyon loop: 54 miles, 3,100 ft vertical with ~ 7.5 miles of gravel. The ride begins with 22 miles of gentle downhill through the central Roaring Fork Valley. A short, steep ascent of the Red Canyon gravel road (~2.5 miles) accesses the paved rolling ranch land of upper Missouri Heights (vistas, vistas, vistas) and lunch. After a gentle 5 mile climb on packed dirt through rustic ranch country the big views of the Elk range open up. A raucous descent takes us back to the Roaring Fork valley and a gentle uphill cruise to Basalt.

Friday July 9. Ruedi Reservoir and beyond. An out-and-back of 50 -64+ miles depending on where you elect to turn back. Vertical gain of 3,400 – 4,900'. We can't pass up a ride from Basalt to Ruedi reservoir and beyond along the Frying Pan river. Red rock outcrops, lake vistas, aspen forests and idyllic river scenes dominate this ride. We'll plan lunch near Meredith at the 25 mile halfway point with options for longer rides up the valley towards Hagerman pass (9 mi of pavement).



Saturday July 10 Snowmass Campground loop: 48 miles, 3,800 ft vertical with ~10 miles of gravel. Still proclaimed “best ride ever” after 3 scouting rides. This route starts with a warm-up ascent up the gravel on East Sopris Creek road (more vistas). A short, paved descent takes us into the lightly travelled Snowmass Creek drainage and a moderate pedal up to the base of the Campground lift at the Snowmass ski area. A short but steep climb (fair warning, we walked 1-2 stretches) through a shady Aspen forest crests the ridge and the end of the gravel followed by a fast descent into the Snowmass Village for lunch. From there a short climb on the Owl Creek road/bike path is followed by a grand drop into Aspen. Side trips are possible for ice cream, the John Denver Garden, fur coats or other Aspen stuff. Continue the downhill cruise on the Rio Grande bike path to Basalt. Note: a couple of short cuts are available to reduce the distance (38.4 miles) and climbing (2,769').

Sunday July 11. Glenwood Springs Dry Park loop: 49 miles, 2,200 ft vertical with ~ 6 miles of gravel. We will roll down to Glenwood Springs on the Rio Grande bike path. The return trip takes us up towards the Sunlight ski area. A 6 mile cut across on the graveled Dry Park road through the Crystal River Ranch yields a new aspect of the Roaring Fork Valley, Mt Sopris and Capital peak. After a fast descent into Carbondale, the ride finishes with a cruise up the bike path to Basalt. The ride time is 3 – 3.5” hrs for easy get away timing.



View of Mt. Sopris from Dry Park Road

Special notes:

- a) All the routes have been ridden with typical road bikes (25mm road tires) and a tandem without issues. If available wider tires or a “gravel bike” may be more comfortable.
- b) For those who can stay in your own residence please contact the tour leaders to discuss options.

For further information contact:

Ron Finch at blouie-rfinch@comcast.net 303-656-5573
Robin Heil at rjsheil@bresnan.net 970-270-2164