

HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club
SPRINGTIME IN THE SONORAN DESERT
TUCSON AND BEYOND

Dates: Orientation meeting Saturday, March 4, 2023. Riding Sunday, March 5, through Saturday, March 11. Depart Sunday, March 12 (lodging last night included).
Leaders: Janet Slate and Rita Kurelja;
SAGs: Mayoma Pendergast and Kathleen Schindler
Miles: Approximately 390 miles and 17,000 feet of elevation gain
Rating: Intermediate (with extra climbing options)
Riders: 30
Price: \$1800 (double occupancy). \$400 at registration. Balance due January 2, 2023. Single supplement \$2700.
Cancellation: [Standard cancellation policy.](#) *Travel insurance is recommended.*

OVERVIEW

Explore the Sonoran Desert and historic sites in southeastern Arizona during this early season semi-fixed base tour. The weather this time of year is sunny with an average low of 50 degrees and an average high of 75 degrees. Join Rita, Janet, Kathleen, and Mayoma for early season riding, good food, and fun. The first three days of riding will be based in Tucson and use the Loop Bike Path to go north to Oro Valley, west to Saguaro National Park West, and east to Mt. Lemmon. We then head south through Saguaro National Park East to Sonoita for two nights. After an out-and-back ride to Parker Canyon Lake, we'll go south towards Nogales and pick up the historic De Anza Trail at Rio Rico and ride through Tubac to Green Valley. The final day, we will visit the Titan II Missile Museum, the Mission San Xavier del Bac, then return to Tucson.

ITINERARY

Day 0: Saturday, March 4. Arrival and orientation meeting at 5:00 PM.

Day 1: Sunday, March 5 – Oro Valley – 51 miles, 1700 feet. This loop ride has a little bit of everything as we ride through rural neighborhoods into suburban Oro Valley with great views of the western Catalina Mountains. Oro Valley is a bike-friendly town with excellent bike paths and wide lanes. We finish along the Santa Clara River bikeway. Get to know participants during a group meal this evening.



Day 2: Monday, March 6 – Mount Lemmon – 51 miles, 3350 feet. Heading east, this out-and-back ride takes us to Mt. Lemmon along the Loop Bike Path (<https://tucsonloop.org/>) and Catalina/Mt. Lemmon Highway. Mt. Lemmon is one of the top-rated climbs in North America, but we'll only be going up 9 miles to 5100 feet elevation. Our climb will enable us to ride through three ecosystems and see great views in all directions. Options for more or less climbing are possible.



Day 3: Tuesday, March 7 – Saguaro National Park West – 52 miles, 2025 feet. This loop ride takes us over Gates Pass through Tucson Mountain Park into the desert past the Old Tucson movie park and the Arizona-Sonoran Desert Museum (<https://www.desertmuseum.org/>). We ride along the edge of Saguaro National Park West (<https://www.nps.gov/sagu/index.htm>) and return on rural roads and the Santa Clara bikeway.

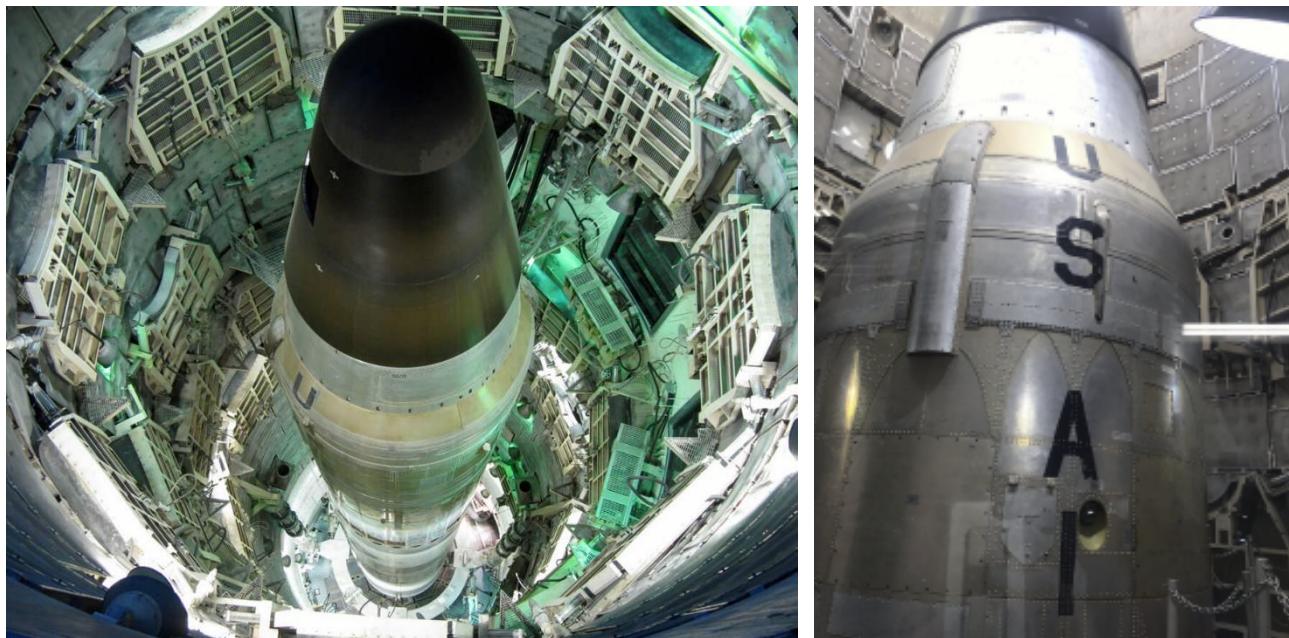
Day 4: Wednesday, March 8 – Tucson to Sonoita – 56 miles, 3100 feet. We depart Tucson to do the 8-mile loop in Saguaro National Park East (<https://www.nps.gov/sagu/index.htm>) and continue along the Old Spanish Trail to lunch at La Posta Quemada Ranch at Colossal Cave Mountain Park. A short shuttle will take us to Sonoita at the end of the day's ride to avoid riding on a busy road. HeartCycle will host a group meal again this evening.



Day 5: Thursday, March 9 – Parker Canyon Lake – 58 miles, 4230 feet. An out-and-back to Parker Canyon Lake, this rolling ride goes through Sonoran foothills on good pavement with little traffic. An option to ride Canelo Road to the west gate of Fort Huachuca is available for those seeking extra miles and more climbing.



Day 6: Friday, March 10 – Sonoita to Green Valley – 68 miles, 1530 feet. From Sonoita, we head southwest through Patagonia toward Nogales, then turn north to the Tumacácori National Historical Park (<https://www.nps.gov/tuma/index.htm>) where we will visit a Spanish mission site that dates to 1691. We will ride a short distance on Interstate 19, which has wide, safe shoulders to pass through the Border Patrol control point. Before we finish the day in Green Valley, we visit Tubac (<https://tubacaz.com/>), an artist colony and site of the Tubac Presidio State Historic Park (<https://www.tubacpresidio.org/>). For additional mileage and climbing, some may decide to ride up Madera Canyon at the conclusion of the day's scheduled ride.



Day 7: Saturday, March 11 – 54 miles, 1200 feet. Our last day of riding starts in Green Valley, where we have an early morning opportunity to tour the Titan II Missile Museum (<https://titanmissilemuseum.org/>) before riding through the San Xavier Indian Reservation to the San Xavier Mission Church (<https://www.sanxaviermission.org/>). After lunch at the mission, we ride back to our hotel in Tucson. An advanced option—in case you did not ride it the day before—would be to start the day with a ride up Madera Canyon.



Sunday, March 12. We say our goodbyes and depart Tucson.

For more information, please contact Janet Slate at jslate@ultrasys.net or Rita Kurelja at ritakurelja@hotmail.com.

Note: Bicycles may be transported from Denver and back for a \$150.00 fee