

HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club Grand Valley Ramble

- Dates:** September 17, 2023 Orientation; Ride September 18-22, 2023
Leaders: Judy & Barry Siel
SAGs: Martha MacCormack & Cathy Olgesby
Rating: Intermediate: Miles 240, Elevation gain ~11,800 feet
Riders: 30 Max
Price: \$1200 (double occupancy); Single supplement \$1800;
\$400 Deposit, Balance due 6/16/2023
Cancellation: [Standard cancellation policy](#). Trip insurance is recommended.



OVERVIEW

Join us for 5 scenic days exploring the Grand Valley in western Colorado. This is a fixed base tour staying in the heart of downtown Grand Junction at the Hampton Inn for five nights. The Grand Valley has a worldwide reputation for mountain biking, and it also has some wonderful rides for road cyclists. Riding up and across the Colorado National Monument with its spectacular scenery on 2 different days should be on your bucket list of rides to do in 2023. The spectacular lunar-looking landscape is accentuated with majestic spires of red rock and panoramic canyons. We will also explore Fruita farmland and have lunch at Highline Lake State Park, cycle the Palisade fruit and wine loop with a visit to an alpaca farm and ride past numerous wineries where wine tastings are optional, and have a remote start at the quiet crossroads of Glade Park for a ride to the Utah state line and back. Most of the roads we will be riding do not have shoulders, but very low traffic after we leave the downtown area.

ITINERARY



September 18 CO National Monument 54 miles & 3,300 feet elevation

The first day you will be biking the crown jewel of road riding in the Grand Valley! After a few short blocks from the Hampton Inn, you will be on the RiverFront trail for a short distance and connect to the Monument bike trail as we head up toward the east entrance of the CO National Monument. Have your National Park pass handy or ride with your buddy who has one. Front & rear bike lights are required to bicycle in the CO Nat'l Monument for the 3 tunnels on this route. We will head up the switchbacks on the east side with each corner gaining altitude and views of the valley & Grand Mesa till you reach the upper rim. Enjoy 23 miles along the Rimrock Road with its many scenic pullouts and overlooks. A stop at the Visitor Center is encouraged. Following your descent on the west side of the Monument head towards Fruita and the CO River for lunch. In the afternoon we return to Grand Junction via some of the rural farm roads.

September 19 Palisade Fruit & Vine Byway 40 miles & 1,200 feet elevation

Heading east out of downtown and joining the Riverfront trail to a bike/ped bridge up a short hill to Orchard Mesa and through the farms of eastern Mesa County where vineyards and fruit orchards dominate the landscape. We will pass many fresh fruit stands along our route as we zigzag toward Palisade and closer to Grand

Mesa. We will visit the Suncrest Orchard Alpacas & Fiber Works farm with our morning sag stop during the harvest season. Lunch in Palisade at Veterans Memorial Park. The afternoon will find us continuing on the Palisade Fruit & Wine Byway



past more wineries and onto the Riverfront trail as we head west back to Grand Junction.

September 20 Glade Park 41 miles & 2300 feet elevation

A group shuttle up to the Glade Park store, where we will mount our bikes for a ride on one of the quietest roads in the county. After 2 miles, you descend into a wide canyon lined with small ranches and majestic rock cliffs. We will head west to the Utah state line where your morning sag snack awaits. Rolling hills, red rocks & free range cattle will make for a delightful morning ride while you head back uphill to lunch at Glade Park. **Optional 17-mile descent** down Little Park Road for those adventurous cyclists with only a 500-foot gain and 2,800-foot descent on rough tarmac with many switchbacks returning you to downtown.



September 21 Fruita Farmland Loop 56 miles & 1,300 feet elevation

Today our loop ride is heading west from downtown along the Colorado River on the bike trail to Fruita. Then we will explore quiet roads as we head northwest towards Highline Lake State Park. Views can be enjoyed of CO National Monument to the south and BookCliff Mountains to the north from the valley roads. Lunch is at Highline State Park which feels like an oasis in the western CO desert. The National Audubon Society states that over 200 species of birds have been observed at the state park. After our return to Grand Junction, our evening group dinner will be held at a local brewery close to downtown.

September 22 Tour de Moon Loop 41 miles & 3200 feet



Another chance to ride the CO National Monument but counterclockwise from the west end with a shallower but longer climb and final exhilarating descent. The secret is out about cycling the sheer-walled canyons and fascinating rock sculptures. This is your last chance for sighting a desert bighorn sheep or golden eagles soaring in the Monument.

Our tour concludes with lunch back at the Hampton Inn before heading home.

For more information, contact:

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Barry Siel bsiel03@gmail.com 303-434-1947

Special Notes:

- 1) Front & Rear bicycle lights **required** to bike the CO National Monument (\$200 fine for no lights).
- 2) Bring your National Park Pass card (if you have one) and a CO State Park Pass (if you have one).