



## Los Coches Ramble & Los Coches Junior

Name	RUSA Route #	Distance	Time Limit	Vertical
Los Coches Ramble	#1336	115 kms	7h40m	~1100'
Los Coches Junior	#1383	104 kms	6h56m	~1000'

Unlike many of the other events of the Santa Cruz Randonneurs, these rides are *permanent populaires*. 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. These permanents are sanctioned by Randonneurs USA (RUSA) and only RUSA members can sign up for a permanent ride. Both these rides count toward RUSA’s yearly Distance Awards and its P-12 award. If you are thinking of trying a 150k, century, or 200k event, either route is an enjoyable training ride with fine scenery.

**Route Description:** These rides are quite similar. They both start and end at the Buena Vista Market on the western side of the Salinas Valley and go south along River Road/G-17 to Greenfield. The 104 km Los Coches Junior then turns around and retraces its route back to the start at Greenfield, while the 115 km Los Coches Ramble does a pretty loop out to Arroyo Seco before rejoining the route that takes riders back to the start.

The scenery along either route is sublime, a mixture of verdant farmlands to the east and rugged hills to the west of the route. Basically, River Road sticks to the western edge of the Salinas Valley, going along the foothills of the Sierra de Salinas mountains. Neither ride would ever be called hilly, but are somewhat “lumpy” with a number of short hills and gradual gradients.

The main challenge to these routes is not the hills, but the weather—specifically the wind. The routes tend to be most enjoyable during the winter months when the strong north wind blowing down the Salinas Valley isn’t present. During the rest of the year, however, getting an early start is strongly advised; the Salinas Valley Zephyr usually starts to blow by mid-morning, making the return from Greenfield fairly challenging, especially by mid-afternoon. Some summer afternoon temperatures will see 100 degrees, but being short rides, an early start can work around that challenge. Or, sometimes summer fog will blow into the Salinas Valley from the Monterey Bay and the temperatures will be unusually cool, at least around the start/finish area. The rides can be enjoyed any day of the week, but Sunday is usually the best day to ride these routes, when agricultural operations take a rest and there is the least amount of traffic.

These are not complicated routes and the navigation is easy. If you want to see it on a map, a very good one is the Krebs Cycle Products “South San Francisco Bay & Monterey Bay Areas” bicycle touring map. They are available in most local bike shops or on-line. The AAA motoring organization also makes very good regional maps for its members; their detail is very useful for cycling on back roads. Both of these routes are on the AAA’s excellent “Monterey Bay” map.

**Services:** To buy food and drink along the route, you’ll find it at the start/finish, then at the turnaround in Greenfield at mile 32. There are also public restrooms and water at La Mission Soledad, about 10 miles north of Greenfield (you’ll pass it outbound and inbound on both routes.)

**Start/Finish Location:** This brevet begins and ends at the Buena Vista Market/Shell Station at 273 River Road, Salinas. It is located about 3 miles south of the junction of River Road and Hwy 68, to the southwest of Salinas. The market has quite a selection of eats and is a popular stop among randonneurs doing the longer SCR brevets.

**Parking & Restrooms:** If you drive to the start, there is not a lot of car parking in front of the store; please do not wear out our welcome by using the spaces normally used by store customers. Park a little distance away and cycle to the store to get your proof of passage to start your ride. If you need a restroom, there are some in the store. Store hours are 6 AM to 9 PM.

**Recommended Start Times:** These routes can be ridden any time of year. Summer temperatures could be hot but with an early morning start you should finish in the early afternoon. Winter rarely sees freezing temperatures and icy roads won’t often be a factor, but keep an eye on the mercury if there are unusually cold winter mornings. Rain can be a challenge from December through March, so watch the weather forecasts and dress appropriately. (On the other hand, the Salinas Valley doesn’t get too much rain during winter.) Probably the best months for the ride are October through March. Remember, though, once you register you **must** use that start time and date. There is no entry refund for non-starts caused by poor weather, bad luck, illness, etc.

The best time of day to start these rides is probably between 6 AM and 8 AM. Most days from early April through mid-October will have a strong northwest wind, and it usually starts blowing by mid-morning. If you want to start before the store opens at 6 AM, you could buy some fuel from the store's gas pumps with your credit card and use that receipt as proof of passage.

**Control Procedures:** In addition to the start/finish, you will need to get proof of passage in Greenfield (a store receipt or something similar like a ATM receipt that has the town, time, and date on it.) If you are doing the longer Los Cocheros Ramble, there will be an information control out on the Arroyo Seco section of the route. Don't forget to take along a pen so you can write on your route card.

This brevet can be done as a night ride if you like. The Buena Vista market is open to 9 PM (or later on weekends), and if you want to start later than that, use the gas pump receipt method for your start and finish, as described above. The store control in Greenfield is open 24 hours. These routes, under a full moon, are quite lovely and carry very low traffic, as our 400k and 600k brevet riders know.

Be aware that there may also be secret controls during this brevet, so stay on the route. If you should get lost, 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.

In your application, be sure to specify the start time and date you want. You must begin your ride at that time, and any secret control opening and closing times will be based upon the start time you select.

During your ride, all the normal rules of randonneuring apply. Go to the RUSA web site for the official regulations of our sport. You should also review the various other pages of the SCR web site to familiarize yourself with randonneuring if this type of cycling is new to you. Or, please don't hesitate to e-mail us with any questions you might have about this ride, or about randonneuring.

After the permanent is done, please return your brevet card and receipts to the ride organizer within 10 days. (A stamped, addressed envelope will be included in your rider packet.) Be sure and sign the correct space on the back of the brevet card for the **rider's signature** before you send it in. I'll figure out the total time, so just sign your name on the back.

**Also, if you must abandon the ride, please call or e-mail when you get home. The same goes if you have to take a DNS (did not start) for whatever reason. There are RUSA insurance matters I will need to attend to.**

**Good luck and good riding! ☺**