

Santa Cruz Randonneurs

PIGEON POINT RAMBLE

Randonneurs USA Permanent Route #74

A Permanent Populaire Brevet of 102 km	Time Limit: 6 hours, 48 minutes
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Unlike most of the other events of the Santa Cruz Randonneurs, this brevet 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 is sanctioned by Randonneurs USA (RUSA), and can count toward their Distance Awards once per year for a rider’s kilometer total. If you are thinking of trying a 150k, century, or 200k event, the Pigeon Point Ramble is an enjoyable training ride with fine scenery. Only RUSA members can sign up for a permanent.

Route Description: This ride goes north from Santa Cruz along the Pacific Ocean shoreline and detours into the coastal valleys that lie inland south of Pescadero. The route is shaped like the letter “p” with Santa Cruz being at the bottom of the “p” and Pescadero at the top. There are no extended climbs but there are lots of little hills. Most have gradual gradients, but a few steep pitches will be encountered--and it could be while riding into a headwind. The average rider will be happy he or she brought a triple crankset “just in case”. Stronger riders will do fine with a 39 x 25 bottom gear. Overall, this would not be considered a difficult ride (unless the weather is awful.)

This is not a complicated route but 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, 2003 edition. 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.

Services: To buy food and drink along the route, you’ll find stores in Davenport (mile 9), Gazos Creek (mile 24), Pescadero, (mile 32), Gazos Creek (mile 40), and Davenport (mile 54). There is a 24-hour 7-11 store at the start/finish in Santa Cruz. There are also many state beaches and parks along the route with pit toilets that are easily accessible during the brevet.

Start/Finish Location: This brevet begins and ends at the corner of Mission & Swift streets in western Santa Cruz. (Mission Street becomes the coast highway as you leave town.) There is a 7-11 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”.

Parking & Eats: If you drive to the start, there is a lot of car parking along Swift Street. Either before or after the ride, a place with good food and coffee is Kelly’s French Bakery. It is just off Swift Street, at 402 Ignalls Street, about 2 blocks toward the ocean from the start/finish. Another good place to eat is Beckman’s Bakery at 2341 Mission Street, about 1 block from the start/finish. They are both “bike friendly” businesses with a nice ambiance and a good selection of food and drink.

**A receipt from either of these places can be used in lieu of a receipt from the 7-11 “start/finish” if you like.*

If you want to start and end the permanent at the Valero mini-mart at Mission & Miramar streets, that is fine too. It is about .5 mile from the official start at Swift & Mission. This will put you very near Bill & Lois’ house and dropping off your brevet card after the ride is easier.

Recommended Start Times: This brevet can be ridden any time of the year. Summer temperatures won’t be too hot and winter rarely sees freezing temperatures. (Inland from the coast and often damp in winter, Gazos Creek Road will require caution if the mercury is much below freezing.) Rain can be a serious factor from December through March, so keep an eye on the weather forecasts and dress appropriately. Some Bay Area riders have been surprised how cool summer temperatures can be on the coast while the inland areas are roasting, so bring layers just in case. Probably the best months for the ride are in spring and fall; summer can be foggy and has more tourist traffic on the coast highway, and winter can be rainy. 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 the ride is probably between 7 AM and 9 AM. Most days from March through October will have a strong northwest wind along the coast, and it usually starts blowing by mid-morning. If you can get 24 miles up to the turn at sheltered Gazos Creek Road before then, you’ll enjoy the northbound ride more than if you battled headwinds all the way from Santa Cruz. Also, if you start this ride late in the day, you might find some stores are closed by the time you get there. (The Pescadero mini-mart stays open pretty late, so does Duarte’s Tavern.) In terms of traffic, weekends are best, and Sunday is usually quieter than Saturday. In any case, there is a good shoulder on the coast highway so it can be ridden with relative safety compared to some other popular cycling roads in the greater Bay Area. A few of the inland roads on this ride don’t always have as much shoulder, but they carry hardly any traffic, so it isn’t a problem.

Control Procedures: In addition to the start/finish in Santa Cruz, you will need to get a store receipt in Pescadero that has the time and date on it. There are several stores, cafés, and a mini-mart in town; all are located close together in “downtown” on Stage Road.

This brevet can be done as a night ride, but you'll need to carry food to sustain you for the entire distance and getting water won't be easy. (Try the elementary school drinking fountains in Pescadero at mile 32, or Duarte's Tavern.) Also remember that a full moon will make it much more enjoyable (and safer); check the calendar before you send in your entry. (In summer, foggy nights are not uncommon, so keep that in mind too.) If you do this as a night ride, you will be furnished with a stamped postcard you can mail from Pescadero since the stores will be closed by 9 PM. The post office is at the intersection of Pescadero & Stage roads; you can't miss it by the 4-way flashing stoplight.

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.

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. 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.

To repeat from above, if you want to start and end the permanent at the Valero mini-mart at Mission & Miramar streets, that is fine too. It is about .4 mile from the official start at Swift & Mission. This will put you very near Bill & Lois' house and dropping off your brevet card after the ride is easier. There is ample street parking on Miramar street.

Control Opening and Closing Times

In addition to getting a store/café receipt at the start, you will also need to get a receipt at:

Mile 32--Pescadero: opens 1h42m after the start; closes 3h24m after the start

Mile 63—Finish: opens 3h24m after start; closes 6h48m after start

After the permanent, return your brevet card and receipts to the ride organizer. The easiest way is to just ride over to 226 West Avenue as soon as you're finished and put them in a baggie and put them in our mailbox. (Going via King Street to Miramar is slightly longer but much nicer than battling the cars on busy Mission street while trying to make a left onto Miramar at the Valero gas station/mini-mart.)

Or, mail them to us. (Bill Bryant, 226 West Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060)

In either case, be sure and sign the correct space on the back of the brevet card for the **rider's signature** before your turn it in at ride's end. 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! ☺