

Big Tip Road Trip



RTE-X-USA Challenge in Memory of Bam Baker

Created by Eric Buskell to support restaurant servers and staff over the holidays, the Big Tip Road Trip began in December 2022 as an annual event for the RTE-X-USA (Ride to Eat Across the USA).

The idea was inspired by Kevin 'BAM' Baker (Iron Butt Rally and Hoka Hey finisher). BAM and his friends would head to a breakfast location and surprise the server with something like this: "We've all pitched in \$50 each for our breakfast. Pay our bill then keep the rest as your tip."

In 2022, with BAM's blessing, Eric initiated the plan for the annual December 17th ride theme. Since Bam was killed in a motorcycle accident in Australia earlier this

year (2023), it's turned into a great tribute to an accomplished rider and friend to the LD (Long-Distance) community!

Karen and I had planned on doing an Iron Butt ride in conjunction with this event. We're hadn't decided where to ride until Shareef AsSadiq aka "Reef" invited other long-distance riders to join him for lunch.

Reef's plan was to meet at Boudreau & Thibodeau's Cajun Cookin' in Houma, Louisiana at 10:30 am. All would agree to tip at least \$50 above the cost of their meal. The more the merrier! We're in!

We were up at 2:30 am and out the door just after 3:00 am. We fueled

up at the local Circle K. Official start time according to our DBR (Dated Business Receipt) was 3:23 am, December 17, 2023. We're off!

The temperature was 48 degrees with dark, clear skies as we headed south on I-55, The pavement was damp from the light rain that moved through the day before.

We rode the K1600 Grand America, one of BMW's luxury touring bikes with heated handgrips and a heated seat. The electric windshield can be adjusted up and down while in motion. For a touring bike, it's a high-performance machine with a 160 hp, 6-cylinder, water-cooled engine and shaft-driven drivetrain. Pro-shift assist allows you to power shift up or down without the use of the clutch. It just purrs down the road! A great bike!

Karen spotted several deer along the right side of the interstate as we headed south. The temperature dropped down to 43 degrees near Grenada, MS.

By the time we stopped in Canton, MS at 5:30 am for fuel, the temperature was hovering back to around 48 degrees. South of Jackson, the temperature slowly rose into the low 50's where it stayed the rest of the morning.

I-55 south through Mississippi was a breeze—Unlike other interstates that can be congested with tractor-trailers. We enjoyed the sparse traffic down into Louisiana.

We made great time! We were running about an hour and a half ahead of schedule. Our route to the restaurant and back home to Hernando was only 800 miles. We had to include an extra 200 miles into our ride to make it a Saddle Sore 1000. Since we were early, we decided to get a few more miles in before we met for lunch. That way, we didn't have as many miles to make up on the way home.

We exited east onto I-12 and headed to Slidell, LA. There, we turned around and headed back to I-55 southbound. It was an easy 90-mile addition to our route.

As we rode through the Joyce Wildlife Management Area, we saw a bald eagle fly overhead. The bridge network through this area of swamps and wetlands is a construction/engineering marvel! The bridge continued on between Lake Maurepas and Lake Pontchartrain then around I-10 toward New Orleans—Beautiful and interesting! We exited onto I-310 then to Hwy 90 toward Houma.

We arrived at Boudreau & Thibodeau's Cajun Cookin' about 10:20 am. Perfect timing since we were to be seated at 10:30 am.

There were 15 bikes/17 riders that joined us! They included: Shareef 'Reef' AsSadiq (Iron Butt Rally and Hoka Hey Finisher), Carl 'Ksolo' Harris (Iron Butt Rally and Hoka Hey Finisher), Eric Buskell (RTE-X-USA creator, Iron Butt Rally and Hoka Hey Finisher), Doug Vance (Iron Butt Rally Finisher), John Levins (Annual

Taco Run Host and Hoka Hey Finisher), Bruce 'Hippy' Rimes (Hoka Hey Finisher), Pete Milani (Hoka Hey Finisher), Kenneth Brooks (Hoka Hey Finisher) Chuck Abbey (Hoka Hey Finisher) and Justin Marsh to name a few.



Long-Distance Friends



Long-Distance Friends

This Mom-and-Pop restaurant had some of the best Cajun food that we'd ever eaten! And, we've eaten several times in Louisiana over the years. Karen and I ordered the Boudreau & Thibodeau's Special. It consisted of shrimp and crabmeat rolled in flour and fried on a bed of angel-hair pasta with creamy crawfish sauce. Delicious! For dessert, I had the pecan bread pudding. Again, outstanding!

Afterward, everyone left a big tip and went their separate ways home to Texas, Florida, North Carolina,

Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi!

Karen and I headed back the way we came. A couple miles north of the restaurant was the Houma Area Visitors Center. Out front was a big pair of shrimp boots! Huge! So, we stopped for a photo op!



Shrimp Boots

From there, we headed back to I-55 northbound. Traffic was light. The temperature peaked at 69 degrees!

We still had over 100 miles to add to our route. In Jackson, MS, we exited westbound onto I-20 and rode out about 60 miles, then turned around back toward Jackson.

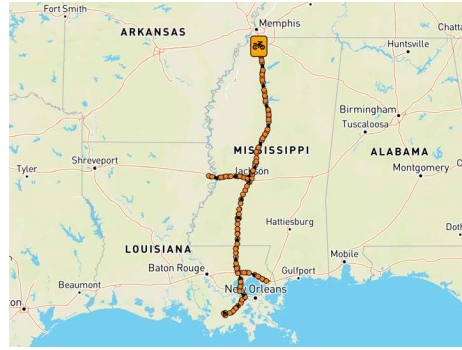
It was dark as we merged back onto I-55 just north of Jackson. The ride north was very similar to the ride down, dark with temperatures falling into the upper 40's. Along the way, we saw several deer off to the side of the road grazing.

We made it back to the Circle K in Hernando to complete our ride. Per our DBR, official end time was 8:01 pm for a total 1,016 miles in 16 hours and 38 minutes!

We decided to stop at the local Waffle House for dinner before heading home. There, we gave our server a big tip, too!



Hernando Waffle House



1,016 Mile Route

2022 BMW K1600B GA
Distance: 1,016 miles
Time: 16 hrs, 38 min.
Average Speed: 61 mph
Fuel Used: 33.578 gal
Fuel Mileage: 30 mpg
High Temperature: 69°
Low Temperature: 43°



Happy Face

It was another great day on the bike visiting with our long-distance friends at Boudreau & Thibodeau's while completing the Big Tip Road Trip 1000. We filled our bellies and warmed our hearts! What more could you ask for during the holiday season!



Lunch Place



Cajun Cookin'



Shareef 'Reef' AsSadiq - Organizer