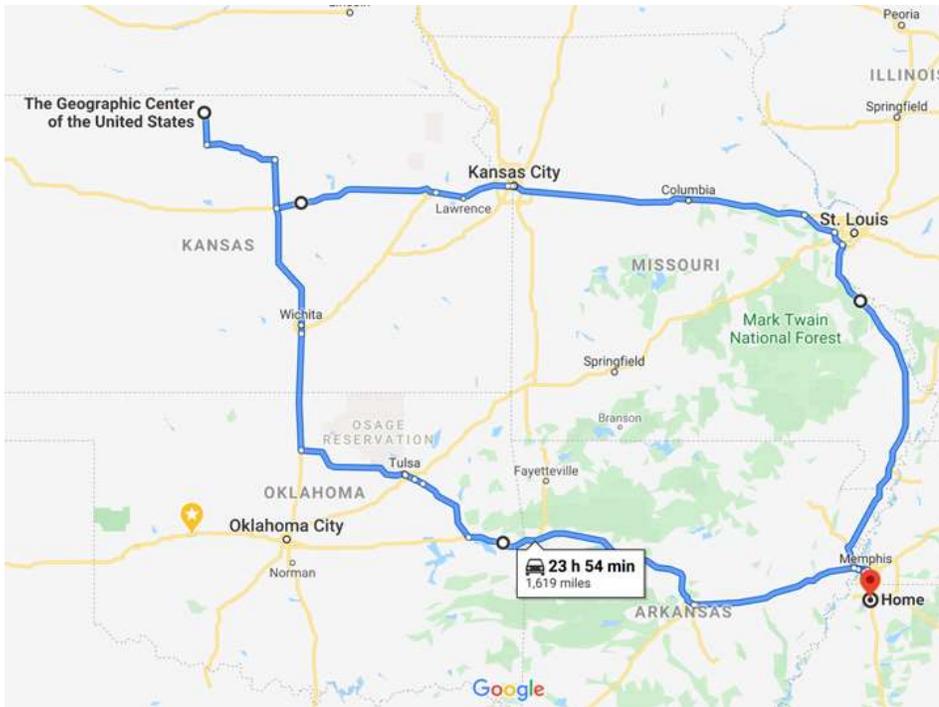


Journey to the Center of the U.S.



1,622 Odometer Miles in 23 hours and 1 Minute

From Wikipedia: The geographic center of the contiguous United States is the center of 48 U.S. states. It has been regarded as such by the U.S. National Geodetic Survey (NGS) since the 1912 additions of New Mexico and Arizona to the United States. In 1918, the Coast and Geodetic Survey found this location by balancing on a point a cardboard cutout shaped like the U.S. This method was accurate to within 20 miles, but while the Geodetic Survey no longer endorses any location as the center of the U.S., the identification of Lebanon, Kansas, has remained.

I was planning a Bun Burner Gold (BBG1500 or 1500 miles in 24 hours). This ride, I wanted to start at home and end at home.

A friend of ours just completed the 4-Corners True-X ride that is sanctioned by the Southern California Motorcycling Association (SCMA). That ride consists of starting at one of the extreme 4 corner cities of the lower 48 states (San Ysidro, CA; Blaine, WA; Madawaska, ME; and Key West, FL) and ride to each of the other three cities, but you stop in the geographical center in Lebanon, Kansas each time you travel to the next city.

Since our friend just completed his True-X ride. I checked out the distance to the geographical center and back. I had never been there and it sounded like the place to go! The distance was 1,461 miles and it went through some curvy backroads in Arkansas to Springfield, MO then onto Kansas City on some secondary roads. Looking on Google Maps, I decided to stretch the route out by making it all interstate riding and make it a loop versus an out and back trip.

There was rain in the forecast for the beginning of my ride. Plus, several hours would be night riding. So, I decided the interstate route is the best way to go. For one, I needed at least 1,500 miles (I always add a cushion to that). Two, interstate is better for night riding. Three, interstate is better for riding in the rain. Four, there are less critters on the interstate. And Five, a BBG is a very intense ride that makes the interstate a much better choice!

I set the alarm for 1:00 am. I was awake just after midnight. I tossed and turned, then jumped out of bed! No rain! The weatherman had been wrong all week! I jump on the bike and headed to get my start receipt. 12:58 am. Time to ride!

I headed north out of Hernando. No problem getting through Memphis at this time of the night. I stayed on

I-55 headed towards St Louis. After a few hours, I call my buddy, Don. He is a trucker that drives all night. Don told me to give him a call. We talked for about 30 minutes, then it was time for me to start looking for a place to fuel up. Cape Girardeau, Missouri was my first gas stop. It's 3:33 am.

The whole second leg of the trip was dark and rainy. After leaving Cape Girardeau, it starts misting rain. The closer I got to St. Louis, the more the rain volume increased! It slowly went from a mist to a hard rain. I stop for gas in New Florence, Missouri at 6:07 am.

Starting with leg three, the weather was perfect! The sun was up and everything was green! I enjoyed the ride across Missouri! In Kansas City, I cross the river into Kansas City, Kansas. Here's where I have a little problem! The GPS is telling me to exit off of I-70. Well, why would I want to do that? I know that I need to be on I-70! Evidently, the GPS is smarter than me! Oh! There's construction on I-70! So, I made a few attempts to get off I-70 and back on to avoid the construction. It burned up some time, but I finally made it back to I-70! (Note to self: GPS is smarter than you!) I stop in Bonner Springs, Kansas for gas at 8:47 am.

The ride across Kansas was awesome! Several people have told me they hate driving across Kansas! Well for one thing, I hate driving too! But, I enjoyed the rolling

prairie. Especially this time of the year when everything was green and lush! Not many trees, I could see for miles as I crested the huge green hills! Beautiful! Maybe it's the farm boy in me that enjoys seeing the agricultural areas as I ride along! It's all good!



Somewhere in Kansas

I eventually get off the interstate. I enjoy the countryside as I ride these backroads. I stop in Beloit, Kansas for gas at 11:47 am. Now, I'm only about 50 miles from the geographical center.

I finally make it to the small park dedicated to the geographical center. There is a small chapel (only big enough to seat 8 people), a stone memorial with flagpole, a stone marker, a bench and a sign.



Center of the Lower 48



Center Memorial

I eat some beef jerky and a handful of almonds as I take a few pictures. I briefly talk to a couple of families that stop at the park, one family is from California, the other from Michigan.

Now, I look at the time. It's 12:58 pm, exactly 12 hours from when I left Hernando! I have exactly 12 hours to be home! Fortunately, my route home is 42 miles less than the route to get here!

After leaving the park, I ride two miles to the town of Lebanon, KS. I stop here to get a gas receipt as proof I was here at the time stated. This provides official documentation as part of the IBA protocol. Life is good!

I ride backroads for about 100 miles to get back on the interstate headed south. I hop on I-135 to Wichita, KS. A great day to be on the bike! I stop for gas in Wichita at 3:48 pm.

The next leg takes me through Oklahoma. What a pain! I guess Oklahoma's way of deterring people from entering their state during the pandemic is to have road construction! A lot of it! One lane for miles and miles, then 5 miles of two-lane, then back to one lane! I must of rode like this all the way through Oklahoma! Traffic never did stop, but it was a constant slowing down and speeding up! I was fortunate enough to have a Texas Toll Pass on my BMW. I can stay in the fast lane and avoid the toll booths. This pass was good in Kansas and Oklahoma. I finally make it to Muskogee, OK for gas at 6:35 pm.

This next leg of the trip takes me from the Great Plains to the Ozarks! Arkansas is a beautiful state and fun to ride in! I ride east as the sun sets behind me. Karen calls to talk. We had spoken several times during my ride. I'm glad the Bluetooth setup allows me this ability. She is curious about my progress and I enjoy keeping her up to date! I stop in North Little Rock, AR for gas at 9:54 pm. I tell Karen that I'm only two hours from home.

The final leg is uneventful. The full moon did lighten up the dark night quite a bit! It's after 10 pm and truck traffic is light. I see a lot of trucks lined up in the rest areas and parking areas along the interstate. I'm glad of that! I-40 between Little Rock and Memphis can be a pain with all the semi-trucks!

Karen calls as I ride through Memphis. We plan to meet at the Waffle House in Hernando. I am hungry!!!

I stop for gas in Hernando to get my official end receipt. Time 11:59 pm. This equates to 23 hours and 1 minute from when I started my journey!

Due to the pandemic, I've been working at home all week. I enjoy getting out and riding on the weekends. Most of the time, I enjoy riding with Karen. But, there are times when I enjoy solo rides. Especially those that are a little more extreme than others. Weather in the Hernando area was supposed to be rainy, so it was a good day to head west into the sunshine. But, as they say any safe day on the bike is a great day!



Time to Eat!!!

BMW R1250GSA Ride Stats

Distance: 1,622 miles
Time: 23 hrs, 1 min.
Average Speed: 70 mph
Fuel Used: 50.878 gal
Fuel Mileage: 31 mpg
Low Temperature: 68°
High Temperature: 88°