

Western United States Tour Map '08

Contributed by Daniel Hienzsch
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To inaugurate the new Maps feature of Motoescapism, I've decided that my first map will describe the Western United States Tour I'll be undertaking in June. I'll be covering seven states over the course of the two week ride. In addition, I'll be hitting three national parks at least, and they are biggies: Grand Tetons, Yellowstone and Glacier.

I'll put more in the Tech-Website section later on how I'm doing the mapping, but suffice it to say it isn't the easiest bit of technology in the world, and unfortunately it's far from automated.

Have a look below and explore around the various areas I'm going to be hitting. I noodled around with various ideas on what to do and where to go for nearly a month now; it's a good thing I do this all electronically or I'd have crumpled up a minor forest of highlighted maps putting this together. After seeking input from those that know (shout out to JD) this is the final draft of the route. I've incorporated a lot of things I've learned through experience into this route such as verifying multiple gas stations on desert routes in Nevada and ensuring there are easy points where I can turn around if need be. Rest assured though that there are plenty of wilderness / desolation / middle-o-nowhere sections in this. I am tremendously excited to go to Montana, the fourth largest state in the United States. Greater Los Angeles has, get this, 22 million people living here. Montana has, get THIS, 900,000... for the WHOLE STATE! I hope I will find the quiet and solitude that those statistics suggest.

I also hope that Going to the Sun Road will be open; at the present time it isn't. There is still a 21 mile stretch that they are plowing and it was raining this week. I've been told, and have read several stories, that this is a Grande Dame of sport touring road in the United States, right up there with the Dragon, and I'd very much love to ride it all the way east to west.

I also got it in my head (well, gas prices got it in my head; \$25 to gas up a motorcycle?!?!?! Insanity!) that I would try to camp most of this trip. I haven't put stake to earth in probably close to 10 years so I'm a little nervous about it. I've also only gone camping out of cars, specifically a 1979 Suburban my parents had and my 1973 VW Beetle when I had that. I can't really pack that much stuff onto the Triumph; this is about lean and efficient camping. I'm also nervous about the whole "no place to really lock anything", "what if it rains", (god help me) "what if it snows" stuff. So, in order to face that demon down, I decided that my first night was going to be in the most obscure camp on the way... get it over with fast. Bob Scott campground looks like it's going to be a hoot to get to and a hoot to stay at. I also suspect that I'm going to be the only one there! How wild would that be.

So enough verbal rambling... on with the map! The purple line is nearly entirely accurate as to how I've planned my roads out for this tour. The purple icons are either significant way points along the way, or locations where I'll be camping / staying for the night. The rest of the map tools are standard Google Maps features that I hope you are familiar with.

Enjoy!

Note July 26, 2008: Well... this map isn't accurate entirely anymore... the difference between what I planned for the route and what I actually did in reality differed...

{mosmap align='left'|width='800'|height='600'|kml='http://www.motoescapism.com/kml/montana_tour.kml'}

