

Big Red's Big Ring Century

Are you hungry for easy miles? Here's a bike ride that will score you a hundred miles and have you home in time for lunch. It's all within our county and it's flat. In fact, if you want to make the ride easier and save some weight, you can take off your small chainring and leave it at home. You won't need it today.

Start on Main Street in Morro Bay and ride south through Morro Bay State Park to South Bay Blvd.

Turn right on South Bay and ride through Los Osos to Los Osos Valley Road. Left on LOVR (the **Red Davis Bikeway**) to Foothill.

Turn left on Foothill at the signal (the **Bob Garing Bikeway**) into San Luis Obispo. At Santa Rosa Street, turn right to Monterey and turn right again to Mission Plaza. Take a break, use the public rest room, check out the Mission.

From Mission Plaza, ride south on Monterey one block, turn left on Broad Street, then right on Higuera and follow it out of town to Vachell.

The good: Bike lane on most of the length of Higuera.

The bad: City traffic – ride as if drivers can't see you and give yourself plenty of room.

Turn left on Vachell—follow it as it turns east and becomes Buckley Road and joins Highway 227 just past the airport.

The good: Painted shoulder on Buckley.

The bad: A very narrow painted shoulder and lots of high speed motorized traffic.

Turn right on 227 to Biddle Ranch Road.

Turn left on Biddle to Orcutt Road.

Turn right on Orcutt to Lopez Lake Drive.

The good: Class 2 bike lane in places; traffic diminishes after you leave Hwy 227.

The bad: No shoulder in some places and motorists drive fast.

Turn left on Lopez Lake Drive and ride to the park entrance at the lake.

The good: Rest rooms at Biddle Park (the famous "piddle at Biddle") and at the entrance to Lake Lopez.

The bad: Climbing the dam without a small chainring. Stand up and tough it out.

Turn around at the lake and ride south on Lopez Lake Drive to Cecchetti Road.

Turn left on Cecchetti, ride to the tee, right on Branch Mill, left on School, left on Huasna Road. Ride out Huasna to Charlotte Loomis Road at the bottom of the climb to Huasna Valley. Turn around here and return to Branch Mill Road.

The good: Great scenery, pastoral setting with little traffic.

The bad: No shoulder, fast cars. Be aware that not everyone who drives on Huasna Road loves bicyclists. Stay as far right as possible, do not cut corners and respect motorists' right to drive unimpeded by slow-moving bicycles in the driving lane.

Turn left on Branch Mill and follow it to Cherry. Left on Cherry, right on Traffic Way, right on Bridge Street, right on Branch. Take a break at the **Branch Street Deli**.

The good: Little traffic on Branch Mill.

The bad: Lots of traffic in Arroyo Grande.

From the Deli, right on Branch, left on Bridge, left on Traffic, then right on Fair Oaks Avenue. Just past the high school, turn left on Valley Road and follow it to Highway 1.

The good: Cool ocean breezes as you approach Halcyon.

The bad: The breezes usually blow in your face when you are riding westbound; agriculture operations tend to litter the bike lane with dirt and sand.

Ride west on Highway 1 through Halcyon, Oceano, Grover Beach and Pismo.

The good: Riding along the ocean on broad shoulders.

The bad: Lots of vehicle traffic. Don't inhale – yes, cannabis sales are legal in Grover Beach.

Turn right on Mattie Road, under the freeway, and follow it past McLintocks until it joins Shell Beach Road. Continue on Shell Beach to Avila Beach Road, turn left and ride to the end of the road at Port San Luis.

The good: Light traffic, great views of San Luis Bay.

The bad: Narrow riding lanes.

Take a break at the pier (It's Harford, not Hartford – no "t"). Then turn back and take a left at the golf course opposite Avila Beach onto the **Bob Jones Bike Trail**. Follow the bike trail to Ontario Road. Turn left and follow Ontario until it connects to South Higuera. Left on Higuera and ride into town to Marsh Street.

The good: Beautiful bike trail along the creek.

The bad: Watch out for slow walkers, strollers, runners and dogs.

Right on Marsh to Santa Rosa (Highway 1)

The good: It's exhilarating to ride in downtown traffic. See if you can ride fast enough to make all the lights.

The bad: Watch out for drivers making strange moves on Marsh, particularly around the post office.

Ride west on Santa Rosa to Foothill, left on Foothill (**Bob Garing Rikeway**) to Los Osos Valley Road.

Turn right onto LOVR (Can't get enough of the **Red Davis Bikeway**) to South Bay Blvd. Turn right and return to Morro Bay.

One hundred miles and you did it all on your big chainring.