



**MONTANA TOUR**

*2024*

***RIDE GUIDE***

*Red Lodge-Columbus-Big Timber  
Livingston-Absarokee-Red Lodge*



Montanatour.org

# WELCOME

Thank you for joining us for our final week-long *Montana Tour*! We are a nonprofit organization focusing on community and cycle tourism – gravel, road and mountain bike. Proceeds from our events, Big Sky Gravel & Montana Tour will fund our community bike shop, education, clinics and safety.

**Thank you to our sponsors!**

**TERRY**



**skcratch** LABS



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Basics	4
Packing List	5
Arrival	6
Map of Red Lodge	7
Event Check-In	8
All Things Bikes & Mechanics	10
Hotels & Luggage	11
Start/Finish & Camping	11
Meals, Handwashing & Cleanliness	12
Meals	13
Other Stuff	14
Schedule of Events by Day (June 22-June 28) <i>Find special events each day here on route and in camp</i>	15-17
Route Information & Safety	18



# BASICS OF THE MONTANA TOUR

Red Lodge elevation begins at 5,555 ft; Montana is known for dramatic changes in weather and while we don't ride to high pass elevations this year, we will be susceptible to big changes in weather at the foothills of the Beartooth-Absaroka ranges. Be sure to leave aid stations with **full water bottles, drink often**, stay fueled with food and electrolytes and eat well at dinner. If you live at a lower elevation, your body will be adjusting to elevation – you will need to drink and eat more than normally. Hydration is the most important.

Each aid and water station will have water, electrolytes and nutrition by Skratch Labs. Full aid stations have food too, but you will have the opportunity to stay supplied while out on the route. Many of our stops are a good distance from local amenities; if you see a store and think you might need something – stop!

Mechanics will be on the route and in camp. See more on page 10.

Luggage/bag weight is either one 65 lb. bag for campers or two bags at 40 lbs each to accommodate extra gear. If staying in a hotel, please keep it to one bag at maximum 65 lbs. Please be thoughtful of those hauling your gear. While we know six days on a bike will require more than just your bike clothes, use the packing list to keep it lighter. Red Lodge, Big Timber and Livingston have a laundry service and we have small spinners for washing bike kits and other small items. More about packing is on page 5.

Baggage location for drop off on Sunday morning, June 23, will be at the start line. If you are staying in a hotel, please be sure you've noted the hotels in rider information or at check in, and check your bag tags! We drop off where the tags say you are staying. Camping – there will be a large flag that notes baggage and it's as close to main camping sites as we can get it for you.



# PACKING LIST

## Bike

- Helmet – required!
- Gloves
- Bike shoes
- 2-3 bike shorts
- 2-3 jerseys (1 long sleeve/arm warmers)
- 1 set leg warmers/bike tights
- 3 pairs socks – one wool or thick layer
- Rain jacket
- 1 wool or synthetic layer
- Bike shoe toe covers
- Wool or synthetic skull cap
- One item with reflective gear – vest/jacket
- Rear view mirror\*

## Bike Accessories

- Small bike pouch
- Rear bike light – red or bright white
- Two water bottles or hydration pack**
- Tire irons
- Bike tube
- Patch kit
- Chain lube\*
- Duct Tape/electric tape\*
- 1-2 cleat screws
- Zip ties\*
- Plastic bag or bike seat cover\*
- Gear drop bag – to leave gear at a rest stop in order to be picked up and brought to the finish. Zip lock, old stuff sack, big sock – anything that folds and fits easily into your jersey.

## Off Bike Clothing

- Walking shoes
- Pants
- Shorts
- Shirt – short and long sleeve
- Undergarments
- Thermal pants/top
- Outer warm layer – puffy
- Gloves
- Beanie/hat & brimmed hat
- Swim suit\*

## Miscellaneous

- Sunscreen
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Camera\*
- Extra water bottle
- Chamois Crème
- Multi-tool\*
- Pain reliever of choice\*
- Maps downloaded from Ride with GPS\*
- Fishing rod\*

## Camping\*

- Sleeping bag
- Pillow
- Tent
- Sleeping pad or similar
- Headlamp/flashlight
- Earplugs
- Bungee or rope for tying off a short area to hang/dry washrag/towel
- Towel & washrag
- Small chair (we will have some in camp)
- Dry cloth for under tent

\*Denotes not necessary but recommended. or pertains to camping participants. For those in hotels, please keep bags to 65 lbs. or less. For campers, there is more to bring but if more than 65 lbs., please divide your camping gear and clothing into two bags and mark them with your names. We will be providing bag tags as well to note hotels, camping and just to add another source of identification.



# ARRIVAL

## Flying In

If flying into the Billings airport, we will have a schedule out with a survey late May to sign up for a shuttle to Red Lodge Friday evening and Saturday mid-day/evening. Please pay attention to email.

## Driving In

If you are driving to the event, parking will be at the Red Lodge Dog Park/Rodeo Grounds off Hwy 78. You can park there Saturday after 2 pm or Sunday morning from 6-8 am. Parking fee will be \$20 for the week and paid at check-in.

Basic Camping Rules for Saturday night. Vans, campers, trailers and tents welcome! There are not designated spots, just select a parking area in the grass. The camping is free for Red Lodge Songwriter Festival Ticket Holders and Montana Tour participants. This is City land and within Red Lodge City boundaries so please plan your camp as though your camping in town.

*Portapotties & trash bins will be provided; limited potable water – for filling water bottles only. Please use good camping etiquette and the guidelines below.*

## Camping Etiquette 101

- Follow the Leave No Trace Rule
- Respect your neighbors (goes without saying)
- Don't burn ground fires: no open (on-the-ground) fires.
- Fires are permitted in enclosed containers, such as charcoal grills or hibachis – watch for any new signage as fire restrictions change rapidly in our area; this can include open grill type use.
- Don't modify the landscape in any way
- No unattended youth (under 18)
- Dogs? Clean up after your dog and do not leave unattended



# MAP OF EVENT AREA RED LODGE, MT

Parking, Start Line & Finish Line: [Hwy 78, South on Rodeo Drive, Red Lodge](#)

Start, finish and parking area is also a no-host campsite night of June 22 and late check-in morning of June 23. Airport shuttles from Billings Airport will be arranged prior to the event and your times will be secured via email in early June. [Map of Red Lodge](#)

The Roosevelt is where you can pick up a rental bike, assemble your own bike or if you ship your bike, this is the location, Montana Tour (put your name on second line) 519 S Broadway, #222, Red Lodge, MT 59068. We will shuttle from hotels to this location if you need a ride on Saturday and it's also walkable from the hotels. If you are planning on using shuttles, please stay in the areas we have mapped and recommend under [Accommodations](#).



# EVENT CHECK IN

Early check-in, June 22, is operating in downtown Red Lodge at our Community Bike Center in Roosevelt Center, 519 S Broadway #222 from 2 - 8 pm. Late check-in is June 23, 7 – 9 am. Ride information links, sent via email mid-May, need to be filled out by June 3.

You'll receive:

- Rider wristband
- Identification numbers
- Pre-purchased jerseys
- Rider gift
- Rider Bag

Your baggage tags will be a color for the hotel/camping you have signed up for in participant planning. Please be sure to verify we have the correct information for you by checking your bag tags. If they are not correct, your bags may go to the wrong place.

We will have a very basic print map that will note mileage, elevation, rest stops and a couple of other items for the whole ride. Each day's route and other small routes (like parking to camp) will be uploaded on Ride with GPS.

<https://ridewithgps.com/events/234021-2024-montana-tour>

## 3 DAY WEST EVENT

You will check in and park vehicles the same as week-long participants. Your shuttle from Livingston will bring you back to the Red Lodge parking lot or can drop you off at a downtown Red Lodge accommodation. Arrangements are made at Check-In, please note in your Rider Information sent out late May that you needs a shuttle back to Red Lodge. Thank You.





# BIKE SHIPPING/RENTALS

If you are shipping your bike through [Bike Flights](#) or another way, the address for shipping is Montana Tour (put your name on second line) **519 S Broadway, #222, Red Lodge, MT 59068**. Please make sure your bike is going to be delivered by Thursday, June 20. That leaves at least one day for a late arrival, Friday; Red Lodge does not have deliveries on Saturdays. Bike Flights does a good job helping track and find lost boxes, Fed Ex and UPS you're on your own. We recommend a bike case vs. a box.

If you are shipping your bike and assembling yourself, they will be available mostly upon arrival in Red Lodge the week before the ride. Andy Baranovic, the bike mechanic will be assembling bikes June 21-22.

Rentals: Please make your own arrangements with the [Spoke Shop](#) if you want your rental bike prior to June 22. Please email Jennifer at [jd@406projects.com](mailto:jd@406projects.com) for questions, links, phone numbers if you haven't made arrangements and need help. *Do not sent your personal bikes the the Spoke Shop unless you intend to be in Billings getting it yourself.* Ship all bikes to the Red Lodge address above.

Assembly and disassembly is \$75 paid directly to the mechanic. Bikes will be ready to test Saturday afternoon.

Bike bags/boxes will be stored at Community Bike Center in Red Lodge during the week of the ride.



# BIKE MECHANICS

## **Bike Pumps & Tires**

Bike pumps are for general use and stationed next to the Help Desk or Mechanics. Do not use mechanic's pumps or reach into their area to use any tools – these do not belong to the tour. Thank you!

Tires – The Tour is on multi-surface roads: gravel, paved road and dirt. We recommend a gravel bike or road bike suitable for gravel, dirt and road surfaces. Minimum recommended width is 35 mm gravel tires with tread. While you may be able to do most of these roads on a road bike with a heavier road tire, we don't recommend it. Higher-skilled riders may be ok on a 32 mm tire with tread but we don't recommend this width for most riders.

## **Mechanics**

Mechanics are on hand in the camp area and along the route during the day. They will be close to the Help Desk in camp. You will be charged for parts needed or major overhaul items. Montana Tour provides the mechanics and expertise. Tips are always appreciated!

The mechanics and the Community Bike Center will supply limited bike retail items at the start, along the route and in camp. Please bring specialty items you need or prior to the ride. There are no bike shops in Columbus, Big Timber or Absarokee. Livingston has one small shop and Red Lodge has community bike center with limited retail (tubes, tires, CO2 cartridges, lube, chains).

## **ON-ROUTE MECHANICALS:**

A SAG will take you to the next mechanic if your bike is unrideable – mechanics will not be able to come to you but they will be available at most rest stops. If you happen to catch them en-route you will be one lucky cyclist!



## HOTELS AND LUGGAGE

We will move luggage to and from hotels and the camp. Shuttles will run to and from hotels to camp, ride start/finish, parking. In some cases, it will be faster to use your bike, especially in the smaller towns. We will take care of picking up baggage after you leave the hotel. There will be a designated spot to leave your luggage. If your items are not packed inside your bag they may not get included when we pick them up. Camping items included, if it's not all **inside** the bag, things may go missing.

*Shuttle passes are required if you are using hotels.* They are available in registration and at check in for \$50. Some hotels are all within bike riding or walking distance Tip: Bring a small backpack to put items in when riding between ride headquarters and hotels.

## CAMPING

Camping and baggage haul to each campsite is part of the ride support. If you would like to purchase Tent Sherpa, a tent rental and setup service, it is \$575. This service includes a Sierra Designs 4 person tent set up for you, a Kelty quality sleeping pad, chair for outside the tent and luggage brought to your tent. This service can be purchased when registering for the event. Add a second person (you are cozy with) for \$150. You need to bring your own sleeping bag.

**General Charging: Is free and part of the ride.** We will have solar chargers, direct electric and generator power. But we do suggest bringing a portable charger to help keep your lights, phone, bike batteries and other items charged. Try to unplug from the internet when you can & keep your phone on airplane mode – cell service isn't the best on route.

**E-Bike Charging: Is an extra \$30** for the week and paid for at registration. We ask that you do not plug in e-bike batteries in general charging. There will be one designated area for e-bike batteries with it's own generator and power source.

If you're using an e-bike, we suggest a backup battery. Not because you can't charge at night but cold kills batteries and we will not have charging



opportunities on route. We will do our best to help you but please be prepared. Our towns will likely not have e-bike batteries available for purchase.



# HANDWASHING & CLEANLINESS

We will have hand-washing areas next to port-a-potties and hand sanitizer around. Please use them. If you don't feel well while on the tour, please let our medical staff know that will be with us. Don't wait. We have a dedicated professional medical staff, and they take your health seriously; please do the same and get checked for any possible illness. We are always concerned about all viruses and bacteria bugs spreading so please be diligent. Complications from dehydration can seem like a stomach virus, so take care of yourself and **keep your hands clean.** *Avoid touching your face; give people space.*

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included every day. Breakfast is 6 – 7:30 am (except Day 1, 7-9 am), Dinner is generally 5 – 6:30 pm (6-7:30 in Big Timber). Lunch is on route (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday) or at finish/ camp (Sunday, Friday & Wednesday for those not riding).

**BREAKFAST/DINNERWARE:** You must bring a mess kit or plan to use one of our plate/bowl/cup/silverware combinations during breakfast and dinner. We provide a washing area that will allow for scraping, pre-wash, washing, rinsing and sanitizing. We have bags that you can use for your kits as well. Thank you! Using reusable items decreases our footprint significantly!

All meals include beverages and condiments. Route stops and lunch stops will include electrolyte drink by SKRATCH Labs. If you prefer something different, you will need to bring it. We use four different flavors of SKRATCH drink to help change things up along with some of their snacks. Water will be available at all stops along with other nutrition. Route stop food includes something salty and/or a starch, a fruit, and something sweet. Stops are designed to be around 20 miles apart and are equipped with porta-potties and hand sanitizer/hand wash station.

**SHOWERS:** The shower truck will be set up beginning Sunday afternoon (after first day of riding, Columbus, MT). It will be available for use each afternoon and close in the evening about 9 pm; no morning showers. In Livingston, Wednesday layover day, it will be available that morning.



# MEALS

You can view and download the meals provided on the same site you see this Ride Guide. Things can change, however we will hope to stick to the menu as much as possible.

If you have a food allergy, please note in your MT Tour Participant Information that comes out mid-May. Lunches are sandwiches or wraps with fruit, protein cookies, and something salty like chips; grilled sandwiches/soup (in camp). V: Vegetarian GF: Gluten Free BUT NOT A GLUTEN FREE KITCHEN. If you are Celiac, please contact us we will need to take an extra step. Yellowstone Kelly's is our caterer; they do their best based on the knowledge we receive.

***Additionally, if you see a paper bag with food it in that has a V, GF, ALLERGY with a rider number/name written on it, and it's not your name, DO NOT EAT IT! Someone will be riding very hangry.***

- *Dinners include beverages & condiments; breakfast includes juice, coffee, hot tea and milk (dairy & non-dairy).*
- *Breakfast always includes Oatmeal & Cold Cereal Bar w/ Toppings, Fresh Fruit, Yogurts, Granola & Toppings*
- *If you have a special item that you want us to keep for the week for any reason, please let us know and YK's will keep it in the refrigeration truck.*

***Route Food:*** *Skratch Labs is our sport hydration. We will provide some additional chews, bars and electrolyte items. Route stops will also include a food item. Route support will be placed as close to every 20 miles as possible. Routes over 60 miles includes lunch on route. Under 60 miles lunch is in camp at destination town.*



## OTHER STUFF!

**Extra Events:** We will have some live entertainment and post other intown happenings that we either provide transportation or walkable/bikeable.

Saturday, June 22, Red Lodge – Songwriter Festival. [Purchase tickets here.](#)

Sunday – Columbus, MT

Monday – Big Timber, MT

Tuesday – Livingston, MT

Wednesday – Livingston, MT

Thursday - Absarokee, MT

**JD Graham (at park)**

**The Imaginaries (at Circle T Brewery)**

Walk the Yellowstone Riverbank by camp!

**Katabatic Brewing downtown Livingston**

Homemade Ice Cream on route (10-12)at Greycliff Mill

3-6 Homemade treats in camp by Cobblestone Ladies

**Natural Bridge:** On Day 3, we will have an opportunity to hike around the [Natural Bridge area](#) on our route stop. We have permitted a stop with the Forest Service and will provide a gear bag for walking shoes so you can explore as much as you like! This beautiful area off the beaten path should not be missed.

**Glassisum Designs:** Katie will be selling her bicycle inspired glass. We will have a Glassisum Design raffle along with other items to support Montana Tour to help us further our work. She will join us in Livingston, her hometown!

**Pools/Rivers:** We have a camp with a pool in Columbus and Big Timber. River access in Livingston, we are camping very close to the Yellowstone River.

**Fishing:** Feel free to bring your fishing rod as you may have opportunities on this route to fish, especially in Livingston during our Layover. The Rock Creek and Stillwater rivers provide a great place to put your feet up and listen to the roaring waters or use your fly rod when in Absarokee and Red Lodge.

**Massages:** Will be available in Livingston and we will email more information for sign up asap.



# DAILY SCHEDULES

## June 22 – Red Lodge, MT

2 – 8 pm Rider Check-In at Roosevelt Center, 519 S Broadway

## June 23 – Columbus, ~ 44 Miles, 85% Gravel, 15% Pavement

7:00 – 9:00 am Parking cars, breakfast, loading baggage truck

8:30 am Welcome remarks at Start Arch

9:00 am Start – roll out after breakfast, everyone on route by 10 am.

9-11:00 am Stockman Café in Rapelje (Rest Stop 1) will have homemade items for purchase! This small café supports their town's Senior Center and more.

2:00 pm Route closes, après riding snacks

4:00 pm Music by [JD Graham](#) at Heritage Park and Meadowlark Brewing onsite

5:00 – 6:30 pm Dinner

7:00 pm Announcements

## JUNE 24 – BIG TIMBER, ~ 65 miles 55% gravel, 45% pavement

6 – 7:30 am Breakfast

7:00 am Start – roll out after breakfast, everyone on route by 8 am

3 pm Route closes, après riding snacks

4:00 pm Circle T Brewing open with snacks for purchase and beverages





4 – 6 pm Music by [Imaginarie](#)s at Circle T Brewing, beer & snacks available for purchase.

6:00 – 7:30 pm Dinner/Announcements

## JUNE 25 – LIVINGSTON, ~ 65 miles 44% gravel, 56% pavement

6 – 7:30 am Breakfast

7:00 am Start – roll out after breakfast, everyone on route by 8 am

9 am – 11 am Rest Stop at Natural Bridge for hiking. head back out on bike by 11 am

4:00 pm Route closes, après riding snacks

5 – 6:30 pm Dinner

6:30 pm Shuttle for 3-Day riders (approximate, watch for updates)

7:00 pm Announcements

FINAL FINISH FOR 3-DAY RIDERS!

## JUNE 26 – LIVINGSTON ~ TBA

6:30 – 8:00 am Breakfast

7:00 am Start – roll out after breakfast, everyone on route by 8 am.

7:00 am Shuttles for boat rides and fly fishing excursions.

3:00 pm Route support closes. Après riding snacks

4:00 pm EXPLORE DOWNTOWN LIVINGSTON & KATABATIC BREWING

5:00 – 6:30 pm Dinner

7:00 pm Announcements



## JUNE 27 – ABSAROKEE ~ 84 miles 45% gravel, 55% pavement

- 5:30 – 7:00 am Breakfast
- 7:00 am Start – roll out after breakfast, everyone on route by 8 am
- 10 am – 12 pm Homemade Ice cream stop at Greycliff Mill
- 3:00 – 6 pm Après riding snacks with homemade treats from Cobblestone ladies group. The Cobblestone supports much of the town of Absarokee and they are coming to you after this long day on the saddle!
- 4:00 pm Route closes
- 5:00 – 6:30 pm Dinner
- 7:00 pm Finale Celebration of 6 Day cycling tour. More to come!

## JUNE 28 – FINISH DAY ~ 45 miles 70% gravel, 30% pavement

- 6 – 7:30 am Breakfast
- 7:00 am Start – roll out after breakfast, everyone on route by 8 am
- 11 am – 2 pm Finish Line party in Red Lodge with lunch!



## ROUTE INFORMATION, SAFETY & MAPS

Jefferson Valley EMS & Rescue and Red Lodge Fire & Rescue EMS will be on the route with us each day. We are in and out of cell service range, so we depend on HAM Radio Operations to communicate with each other between SAG units and rest stops. These radios are all for emergency situations including weather, evacuation and location of riders. Please have your rider number showing so you can be identified if something happens, and you are unconscious or unable to talk to an emergency responder.

**Should you need help on the route**, please step off the road at least 4 feet (many times into the grass/dirt) from the white line on pavement or edge of gravel road surface. Then be sure to give one of the event vehicles a **THUMBS DOWN**. **If you wave, they may not stop – they may wave and smile!**

If you're hurt, but mobile and not necessarily an emergency, a SAG or route vehicle will take you to the next rest stop if it is not safe to evaluate onsite. If your injury requires emergency care, our EMT's and Paramedics on route will help evaluate next steps. **Please carry your ID with you and any other information that is needed – including insurance card and allergy information.**

Maps are embedded on this site or downloadable from Ride With GPS. We will provide a very basic map in your packet but for more detail, use your chosen device. Download prior to arrival and use the Ride With GPS app or upload the file to your own map device. Cell service is generally good in town and not-so-good or bad out on the route.

**More on Cell Service:** If you choose to use your cell phone and have downloaded the ride files, you can use the files without your phone being on data: turn that feature off and save battery. Your phone will die on these routes – cell service goes in and out on the roads.





Montanatour.org