

## HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club Basalt and Aspen Road and Gravel Tour

**Dates:** July 24, 25 - 28, 2024  
**Leaders:** Ron Finch, Robin/Steve Heil  
**SAGs:** Robin Heil, Bev Louie  
**Rating:** Intermediate to advanced. ~200 miles, 14,000 ft.  
**Riders:** 26  
**Price:** \$1100 double occupancy, single supplement \$1650, deposit \$300, balance due April 24, 2024  
**Cancellation:** Standard [cancellation policy](#) applies. **Travel insurance is strongly recommended.**



### OVERVIEW

Please join us for a four-day tour of riding up and over the hills and ridges surrounding the Roaring Fork Valley. While the four of us have travelled to many places with HeartCycle, the Roaring Fork Valley remains among the best riding experiences we have had anywhere and we enjoy sharing it with others. This tour is a blend of new and classic favorites in the Roaring Fork Valley.



The bike rides are over lightly travelled roads and bike paths with grand vistas of the Elk Range and surrounding valleys. The gravel connectors access low traffic roads for a different riding experience from typical rides in the region. The gravel sections are uphill, short (2 -3 miles) and are often in better condition than most paved roads.

The fixed base for this tour is Basalt, Colorado, located 180 miles west of Denver and 20 miles down valley from Aspen, Colorado. Basalt (pop 4,200) is a historic town located at the confluence of the Roaring Fork and Frying Pan Rivers at an elevation of 6,611 feet. Gold medal fishing and excellent restaurants and/or pubs are available within 5 minutes walking distance of the hotel. The Aspenalt Hotel in Basalt is located on the

banks of the Frying Pan River, so bring your fly rod or relax in the afternoon/evenings by the river. Non-riding partners are encouraged to join us.

## **ITINERARY**

### **Wednesday July 24th - Evening orientation, 8 pm at the Aspenalt Inn, Basalt CO**

There are 3+ coffee shops/cafes very nearby for breakfast and coffee. Early arrivals can ride on the Rio Grande bike trail.

### **Day 1: Thursday July 25th - Ruedi Reservoir and beyond, 57-64 miles, 4100 - 4900 ft.**

This is an out-n-back ride with options depending on where you elect to turn back. The ride from Basalt to Ruedi reservoir and beyond along the scenic Frying Pan River is always a great ride. Red rock outcrops, lake vistas, aspen forests and idyllic river scenes dominate this ride. We'll have lunch at the Meredith reservoir (halfway point) with an option for longer rides up the valley towards Hagerman pass (3.5 miles of pavement).

### **Day 2: Friday July 26th - Snowmass Campground loop, 41 miles, 3,100 ft.**

This ride has ~10 miles of gravel and was proclaimed the "best ride ever" by Scott McCormick in 2021 after a deer jumped over his head. This route starts with a warm-up ascent up the East Sopris Creek valley past Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell's Home Run Ranch at the summit. A short, paved descent takes us into the lightly travelled and super scenic Snowmass Creek drainage and a moderate pedal up to the base of the Campground lift at the Snowmass ski area.

A short but steep climb (fair warning, we walked 1-2 stretches) through a shady aspen forest under lifts and across ski runs crests the ridge and the end of the gravel and climbing. A short descent leads to the Snowmass Village for lunch. Following lunch the options will be: a) return directly to Basalt downhill on bike paths for rest and relaxation, or b) the hard chargers can take a side trip out and back up the Woody Creek drainage to Lenado extending the ride total up to 58 miles and 4,500 ft of climbing.



**Day 3: Saturday July 27th - Maroon Bells from Basalt, 59 miles, 3,800 ft.**

The Bells are one the most photographed sites in Colorado for a reason. We will trundle up the Rio Grande bike path from Basalt to the John Denver gardens in Aspen. A short cruise through Aspen (very bike friendly) and the Marolt open space brings us to the start of the major climbing up Maroon Creek to the Bells. Most of this road is limited to shuttle bus and local traffic only so it is a favorite for local riders and e-bike tourism. We will have lunch at the base of Maroon Creek canyon and return to the Rio Grande trail through the Buttermilk/Tiehack area and the Cemetery Ridge bike path for the return trip to Basalt.

**Day 4: Sunday July 28th - Missouri Height ramble, 40 miles, 3,000 ft ~ 2 miles of gravel.**

We will have giant vistas of the Elk Range (Mt Sopris, Capital Peak, Maroon Bells etc.) and the Ragged Mountains (Chair Mountain) while riding back roads through idyllic pastures with horses, llamas, deer and maybe some elk. Wild turkey crossings are real. The ride time is 3 - 3.5 hours for Sunday “get away” timing. Pick up a Mango popsicle for the ride home at the Sunday farmers market near the hotel.





Special notes:

- a) All the routes have been ridden using standard road bikes and 25mm tires without issue. However, wider tires (30+ mm) or a “gravel bike” will be more comfortable. Also reasonable for a tandem.
- b) For those who can stay in your own residence please contact the tour leaders to discuss options. Tour price will be discounted 50% (\$550)

For further information contact:

Ron Finch  
blouie-rfinch@comcast.net  
303-656-5573

Robin Heil  
heilrobin1@gmail.com  
970-270-2164