Sample Route V1

SAMPLE ROUTE

Rancho La Ponderosa

N32 22.308 / W115 56.360

Take Highway 2 to La Rumorosa. Turn south on the dirt road across from the Nevada Panaderia (it's a good one). Follow the signs to Ibacar. As soon as you see the actual exit sign for Ibacar, there is a Y in the road. Go right and it will take you up the mountain. From there just follow the main dirt road to the waypoint listed above.

Rancho La Ponderosa is aÂ beautifully pined high desert retreat areaÂ with more off-road potential than any other site. As a family owned and operated business, Arturo and Jorge have been hosting events and promoting their haven as a motorized paradise for several years. They own nearly 100 acres of intense riding and exploring. The area is mountainous with clusters of huge boulders sparsely dump-trucked aside the damp riverbanks and rolling knolls. Tall pines, short oaks, and various sized shrubs and cactus are intermingled with deep sand, cliffs, and ravines making the area exceptionally challenging and fun. If you did not attend the 98 AAYWA GPS Event, ride the event course PNLOOP. It's advanced.

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I will never forget the epic 30th birthday spent at Rancho La Ponderosa (shoot, did I give my adolescence away?). Arturo was excited that we would be staying for my celebration showing up later with a full ice chest of 30 Caguamas! That's Spanish for "BIG sea turtle" and it is used to describe BIG things. These beers are over a quart in volume.Â Arturo, Jorge, Juan and myself, Oscar (a beloved ranch hand there), and two neighboring ranchers had a serious birthday party. We huddled closely around a small fire and each one of us got up and sang Spanish songs with a little side-line coaching.Â With each empty Caguama, we sounded more like the rock stars we looked and danced like.Â While being a finicky reptile-loving vegetarian, I was offeredÂ a very special birthday desert:Â rattle snake jerky with lemon and salt.Â With a sour face IÂ smiled graciously accepting the carnivorous delicacy of my Lizard friend.Â I'm not sure if it were the Caguama's or the mere fact that I was entrenched in Baja's culture, butÂ I fought for the last bite as we chased each other around the ranch laughing harder than we could run.Â We hugged and cried til dawn knowing it would soon be over and Juan and I woke the following morning with ever lasting memories of dirty jokes we never quite understood. What an awesome birthday!Â

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Motel & Campground

The motel consists of three very primitive cement rooms with rickety beds and clean sheets. There is no generator so candlelight sets the ambiance on the patio after dark. The next option is camping. The sites are beautiful and there is room for plenty of visitors to find a somewhat secluded spot. Outhouses are shared and showers are lukewarm, if the fire under the outdoor water heater is stoked. This oasis is primitive, remote, beautiful, peaceful, and some of the best off-roading on the Peninsula. Try it once and you'll be back.

Restaurant

The rustic kitchen facility is filled with historical artifacts, photos, motor sport paraphernalia, and junk food. When the chef cooks, it is always good and if their mother is there, request the Chilequiles! There is nothing in the world like mom's Chilequiles (pronounced Chee-lay-key-lays). Trust me.

Rancho La Ponderosa 98' Event Loop

"The Single-Track" - Loop

Route Introduction:

Route (load to GPS): PNLOOP1 & PNLOOP2

Course: Loop - one way

Ride Rating: 5

Total Miles: 31

Ave Time: 4 hours

ATV/4-Wheels: NO - This is a tight technical single-track loop

Warnings:

Don't be fooled by the mileage and expect to finish this course much faster than 4 hours. Not only is it a technical ride, but it is also navigationally challenging offering a skilled guidebook rider a great time. The first person to finish the event loop was John Volkman in just under 3 hours 45 minutes.

Do not reverse this route. It is a one-way loop!

This is a technically challenging ride; bring zip ties, JB Weld, duct tape, and tweezers for cactus.

About the GPS Event:

In 1998, I held the first ever GPS navigated event in Baja marking this incredibly cool loop. This route was the most difficult to plot and map, the most difficult to choreograph, and gave us the most weather while trying to accomplish it. Not so ironically, it was also the first route completed for the guidebook. The bigger the challenge the more significant the focus, I suppose!

The event provided 20 GPS units for loan on a first come first served basis along with what I call a technical buffet. Each rider registered had the GPS uploaded with the course waypoints (by the Amrel ruggedized laptop that endured all our Baja travels) and had a chance to visit several vendors and learn about both GPS and Baja worthy dirt bike equipment. Each participant was set up with a specially fabricated mount and then went through a 40-minute class learning the basics of the GPS and how to use it with the guidebook. After this was completed, these newfound GPS junkies took off like rockets and EVERYONE returned safely with excited smiles and lots of stories. As my first time "event hostess anxiety" wore off and my skin returned back to its normal color, the bonfire started and the Tecate and Tacos were served amongst the GPS crew! We had a huge raffle where every participant got a prize like: Full Fox Outfits, IMS Desert Tanks, Overland Equipment Hydration Water Packs, Dunlop Tires, Smith Goggles, Fugawi Moving Maps Software for GPS, Cycoactive accessories, Clif Bars, T-shirts, and ball caps.Â

Our last GPS Event was in 2006 at Rancho Santa Veronica.Â Right now we are busy with other creative ideas to keep you safe on Baja's trails, but if you would like to see another GPS Event, please email us with a request.Â We may do a special event again when the time is right.

Course Descriptions:

Starting north down the big main wash directly away from Rancho La Ponderosa, the wet sand feels almost as if you are riding the beach. Joining several new washes, the river widens, yet dries out into a nice fat deep sand avenue. Don't get going too fast or you'll miss the waypoint out of the first wash. It's a bumpy course through the shrubs and makes a connection to another "haul buns or fall over" deep sand wash. Waypoint 1PN21 is the slightly tricky to find single-track yanking you from the riverbed and starting the hairpin turns through the trees and cactus. At several points, you will find yourself squeezing through tight bushes that want to cling to your jersey and unforgiving boulders that don't accept the Size of the XR650L well (but Juan got it through, so you can too). The single track dumps in and out of soft sand and wet washes. There are sections of uphill rock piles, flat slick rock, a few technical rock hopping water crossings, more soft

deep sand, and little hidden hill climb. All the while, don't forget to check out the scenery! It is some of the most beautiful territory in the northern Peninsula (says me). Finally, waypoint 1PN48 sneaks up on you (so watch carefully for it) connecting to a very faded jeep road that can really challenge your GPS skills. After joining a nice curvy two-track, you are led back to the rancho through a final sandy wash. This will be one of the most talked about rides you accomplish in the guide; make sure you try it sometime.

Special Tips:

During this route, if you stop at a waypoint, the GPS may not have switched over to the next waypoint yet. Look at the mileage in order to detect if the GPS is still reading the current waypoint. Upon moving away from the waypoint, the GPS will switch.

This route has more waypoints than most GPS models tolerate in a route. Therefore, two separate routes are needed in the GPS to complete the course. DO NOT forget to start the second route with the same waypoint as the last waypoint in the first route. Name the second route PNLOOP2 and start the new route with waypoint 1PN48 through PN1 (being the last waypoint in the loop).

There is NO GAS at Rancho La Ponderosa. Bring enough gas to supply all rides. If you need to leave gas jugs behind, ask Arturo or Jorge to store them safely while unattended. Gas can be bought in Tecate or La Rumorosa on Highway.

Navigate this course with a very sharp eye and pay serious attention to the route. For the first time, travel slower to ensure less wrong turns and/or accidents while watching the GPS instead of the tree lined hairpin turn that will sneak up on you. You will still enjoy the route more than any other, I promise.

It is imperative that you do not forget which waypoint you are going to next. Chant the waypoint name in your head until you reach it (i.e. 1PN41, 1PN41...). Trust me, this will aid in a smooth, fun, and less stressful ride.

Download the route coordinate sheet here

click>> In PDF Format

(requires Acrobat)

click>> In Excel Format

(requires Microsoft Excel)

HOW TO USE THE CHARTS:

Example of Written Course Description Charts

Example 1:

Mine/Calamajue Junction TO Gonzaga

Load: GNJJ-M / "Invert" route / Set Odometer to 0

WPT
MILES
Â
COURSE DESCRIPTION
LAT-N
LONG-W

JJ1

0

X

Mine/Calamajue Junction - N off main Rd.

29 Â 32.765'

114 Â 16.210'

Â

0.5

Â
SR
Â
Â

1GN11

4.1

Â
Mine camp on L - straight

29 Â 36.103'

114 Â 16.459'

Â

5.7

Â
Stay on main Rd. up little hill
Â
Â

Â

5.8

X

SR (arrow may point opposite way)
Â
Â

1GN10

6.25

Â
Y-R

29 Â 37.807'

114 Â 16.477'

DESCRIPTONS & EXPLANATIONS:

Mine/Calamajue Junction TO Gonzaga provides the name of the location to start and where the route will end. It is shown at the top of Example 1.

Load: GNJJ-M / "Invert" route / Set Odometer to 0 is shown at the top of the Course Descriptions box (under the route name) and each section is explained below:

Load: GNJJ-M:

This is the file name of a route you will load to your GPS or the name of the route (provided on the Course Description Chart) to manually enter into the GPS. GNJJ-M can also be found on the map. You should have each route (that you are planning to ride) already loaded to the GPS before leaving on your trip. If you do not have the disk, you will need to manually enter each waypoint name and coordinate in order to construct the route.

"Invert" route:

Each route moving from north to south will move forward by waypoint number (i.e. GN1, 1GN1, 1GN2, 1GN3, etc.). You will "Activate" GNJJ-M to move forward through the route chronologically, from north to south. In the example above, the route is "inverted" and you are moving backwards or south to north. To reverse a route, this guidebook will continue using the term "Invert". It is imperative that you know how to "Activate" a route to move forward and "Invert" the route to move in reverse (if necessary, refer to your GPS manual).

Set Odometer to 0:

How self-explanatory could this one be? Just make sure that you set the odometer to zero where the route asks. Almost all of the starting points are from a GAS location. If something happens to the GPS during the ride, the mileage provided will guide you to the final destination. Be foolproof in Mexico by using mileage as well as using the GPS and always carry the provided topographical maps.

The following applies to each column in the Written Course Descriptions:

WPT Column:

These are the names of each waypoint location in a route. In Example 1, JJ1 is the name of the first waypoint of this route. There are two types of waypoint numbers: JJ1 and 1GN11. If the waypoint starts with a "letter" like JJ1, the waypoint is a location in a town or a gas facility. If the waypoint starts with a "number" like 1GN11, the waypoint is a directional telling you what to do to reach your final destination (the final destination in this route would be GN1 indicating the Gonzaga Gas Station (if you could see the end of this example route). If you look at each route Chart, it should be easy to see which routes move forward chronologically by waypoint (GN1, 1GN1, 1GN2) "Activated" and which routes run reversed (JJ1, 1GN11, 1GN10) "Inverted".

MILE Column:

At WPT JJ1, set the odometer to 0. This is your starting point. At 0.5 miles from JJ1, you will SR (stay right - see abbreviations); there is no waypoint at this mile marker. Read all directions in order to navigate smoothly. 1GN11 is 4.1 miles from JJ1 where you will see a mine camp on your L (left) and continue straight. Are you following this? If you go off course and return to a waypoint, make sure to reset your mileage to match at that waypoint to resume. Miles are to be used in conjunction with the GPS. Unless there is damage to the GPS, don't use the mileage alone.

Column with X:

This X marks the spots in the route that are easy to miss. Really pay attention to these indications; they are critical areas that could change the ride from hassle free and fun to timely and confusing. Read ahead and be alert.

Course Description Column:

At every waypoint, the Course Descriptions should always be referenced. The GPS will point you to the next waypoint (as the crow flies, meaning in a straight line). In some areas, there are too many trail options to point you in the right direction. The Course Descriptions will alert you to these areas and keep you on a confident track. Pay close attention to all aspects of the written Course Description instructions. In order to understand the course descriptions, you must understand all of the abbreviations.

Reference your GPS and course descriptions together, use your odometer and make sure the mileage stays on target, and read ahead so you can watch the road while riding! I've experienced some awesome endos and great recoveries while completely engrossed in navigation.

Latitude-N Column:

This is the first (latitude) number of a waypoint. N indicates North.

Longitude-W Column:

This is the second (longitude) number of a waypoint. W indicates West. Together, the Latitude and Longitude numbers make a coordinate. Unless you have the disk to upload to the GPS, each coordinate should be entered into the GPS by name (i.e. JJ1) and used to construct the routes provided in this guidebook.

Entering a Route:

First enter all the waypoints into the GPS. Name the waypoint the name given in the course description chart under WPT and punch in the coordinates from the Latitude-N and Longitude-W columns. Once all the waypoints have been entered, go to routes on the GPS main menu screen. It is easy from here to construct the route. On the first line, type in the name of the first waypoint and hit enter until it logs to the next line and continue chronologically inputting each waypoint according to the course description chart. Input each route and then you are ready to "activate" or "invert" the route. Typically, I recommend following the arrow on the page that shows the compass. Make sure the GPS shows it is going to the next waypoint from your location and do not skip any waypoints unless necessary (new gates, etc.). Read each description for the waypoint you are heading to before taking off to be familiar with the next location; the rest is easy????? just follow the arrow!

Ride Ratings: (Scale of 1 - 6+) 6+ is most difficult:

*These ratings are based on technical terrain and duration. The terrain may vary in comparison to these descriptions.