



Before Your First Tour

Now that you have full access to the BAC website, you can familiarize yourself with how BAC operates, glimpse photos of other members on tour, and take a look at the current tours being offered. We hope the following will help you prepare, sign up for, and safely enjoy your first BAC tour.

PREPARATION OF BODY, MIND, AND BIKE. As advertised, BAC is a club for “experienced cyclists.” Most tours require spending a good part of each day riding to the next destination, rain or shine. Therefore, you need to train *on a bike* to attain the required level of fitness. Even if you are aerobically fit and strong in another sport, the important thing on tour is those bicycling muscles! Outdoor riding experience is also necessary for your comfort and safety. You need the skills and confidence to handle your bike while riding in traffic, in rainy weather, in wind, and while climbing or descending. Acquaint yourself with the list of Safety Reminders found on the website. Finally, one aspect of conditioning very important to your comfort on tour is the conditioning of your “seat.” Be sure that you and your bicycle seat get along!

How are you at navigating and map reading? You will need to get from point A to point B using cue sheets and maps (plus GPS on many tours), as BAC tours are not led by a guide. Sometimes you will need to follow complex directions to get through urban areas. There is no custom or obligation to ride as a group, though compatible riders often do so. As a single, if you don't feel comfortable riding alone, sign up with a known riding partner or ride with a group on the tour for moral and mechanical support .

Is your bicycle in good shape? Arrive on tour with it well maintained and know how to make basic repairs, such as fixing a flat, by yourself. Van support is only for luggage and emergencies and it's not a “SAG” for the weary.

Besides fitness of body and bike, you'll need a spirit of adventure and tolerance for the occasional snafu or hardship. Be prepared to enjoy the sunny days and endure the rainy ones. Remember that for your volunteer leaders it is “their vacation too.” Your cooperation, flexibility, and congeniality are important to the enjoyment of all.

GETTING ACCEPTED ON A TOUR. You may be shocked to see how few spaces are left on tours posted a year in advance of departure. To avoid disappointment, keep an eye on "Breaking News" on the homepage of the website and be prepared to sign up as soon as the Monthly Update email comes out. Before clicking "I/We want to go on this ride" carefully read the leader's Ride Description, which includes Overview, Ride Rating, Logistics and Administration sections. The Ride Rating combines average daily mileage and feet of climbing to arrive at a rough estimate of difficulty which appears in the upper right of Ride Description. In addition, BAC encourages Ride Leaders to disclose additional factors as listed in the Ride Rating System page found in a link on the website homepage. If in doubt about your ability to do the tour, contact the Ride Leader, who also will likely contact you as new member. Remember that Ride Leaders, not the BAC Office Manager or the Board of Directors, have complete discretion in selecting riders, accounting for your tour payments and determining your refund if you must withdraw from the tour.