

RAW Route Description

The current edition of RAW will start on the shores of the Pacific Ocean in Oceanside, California and end in Durango, Colorado. The Race will cover roughly 925 miles, with 56,000 feet of climbing, while passing through 4 states.

After leaving the Pacific Shores, the route crosses the Coast Range, the deserts of the American Southwest, climbs up onto the Coconino Plateau, passes through the Navajo Reservation, Monument Valley, the Four Corners Area and ends in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Along the way, racers cross the Colorado River, the most important river in the Western US.

RAW uses facilities provided by the City of Oceanside for the various start-related activities – check-in (Harbor Lot 1) and race-start (The Strand and West Community Center parking lot), all located in the vicinity of the Oceanside Pier.

RAW employs a “time trial” and “parade” start. Racers will leave the parking lot west of the Beach Community Center at intervals and travel via police escort along the Strand, up Surf Rider, north on Cleveland to the San Luis Rey River Bike Trail and east to Mance Buchanan Park on College Avenue, where the parade start ends and racing begins. This time of year, temperatures on the Coast will average 60 to 80F. Weather is generally cool and somewhat foggy in the morning, clearing in the afternoon. Racers will travel inland and gradually gain elevation. Climbing toward the crest of the Coast Range, the skies will clear and the humidity will drop. After cresting out at roughly 4,200 feet, racers will descend “the glass elevator” to the Anza Borrego Desert and Imperial Valley where temperatures are likely to be in the 100 to 120F range with extremely low humidity, generally 5 to 10%.

Racers will travel around the south side of the Salton Sea (235 feet below sea level), through irrigated farmland and desert sand dunes to Blythe on the Colorado River. From there they will proceed north up the Colorado River Valley, crossing into Arizona just south of Parker. Desert-like conditions – low humidity, triple-digit day time temperatures – will persist through Congress and up Yarnell Grade to the Prescott National Forest. At this point Racers will have climbed over 6,000 feet from the Colorado River crossing.

The RAW half-way point is between Congress and Prescott.

From Prescott the route crosses up and over 7,000 foot Mingus Mountain and descends through Jerome into the Verde River Valley and the town of Cottonwood. This section is characterized by narrow and winding roads with few turnouts. Leaving Cottonwood, the route heads east across I-17 to Camp Verde. From there the route crosses the Verde River at an elevation of 3,000 feet, climbs up over the Mogollon Rim onto the Coconino Plateau and north to Flagstaff.

Race RVs are not allowed on certain sections of the route between Yarnell and Flagstaff. Also, auxiliary support vehicles not required for this section should use the alternate

routing to avoid being trapped into illegal caravanning on the narrow mountain roads. Alternate routing will take the non-essential support vehicles via limited access highways to the Camp Verde and Flagstaff Time Stations.

Elevations on the Coconino Plateau will be 5,000 to 7,000 feet. Days will be 80 to 100F and nights 50 to 60F with clear skies and low humidity. Similar conditions should persist across the Navajo Reservation, through Monument valley, all the way across the “Four Corners Area” into the mountains of Colorado. The Four Corners is the only place in the US where 4 states touch – Arizona, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico.

Between Flagstaff and Colorado, the route traverses high desert with spectacular rock formations. Upon entering Colorado the high desert gives way to the Rocky Mountains. Actually, the Rockies are comprised of a series of mountain ranges. The Race ends in the town of Durango, located in the southwestern foothills of the westernmost range, the San Juan. Durango is the quintessential western mountain town. It seems everyone in town participates in outdoor activities of some sort. Durango is a major cycling center, home to Fort Lewis College, winner of numerous collegiate cycling titles. Durango is home to many world famous bicycle racers, including, Bob Roll and Ned Overend.

The finish is located in Santa Rita Park off of Route 160, on the Animas River.

The Race Across the West is finished ... 925 miles with 56,000 feet of climbing. Durango, the quintessential western town, has many small restaurants and bars. It's time to celebrate ... you've earned it ... go for it!