

# WESTERN SPIRIT

Cycling Adventures



## Big Bend & the Rio Grande

5 days/4 nights

### DAY 1



After meeting in Midland, we will shuttle south to Terlingua and Desert Sports Bike Shop. Here you can soak up views of the Chisos Mountains and Big Bend National Park or grab a map to orient you to this remote and rugged landscape. After a delicious lunch we will shuttle a few more miles to the Lajitas Trailhead. Our afternoon ride will offer a great introduction and warm up for the rest of the week. We'll ride fast and flowing singletrack and techy two-track that weaves through ocotillo cactus with stunning views of the surrounding Chihuahuan Desert. This ride will have you grinning from ear to ear! After our ride we will shuttle further west towards Big Bend Ranch State Park and our camp for the next three nights.

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 10 miles

### DAY 2



Today's ride will take us into the heart of Big Bend Ranch State Park, starting at the Barton Warnock Visitor Center and the East Contrabando Trailhead. The Rincon Loop is part of a larger IMBA epic ride and showcases the variety of mountain bike terrain the park has to offer. A mixture of single-track, two track, dirt road, and desert washes make up this challenging loop. Along the way we will see the historical Whitroy Mine, Smith Crawford House, the Wall of Hands, and the Flatirons of the remote Solitario. We will pack a lunch today, allowing us the whole day to ride, explore, and take in the scenery.

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 30 miles

### DAY 3



Today we will ride another section of Big Bend Ranch State Park, starting from the West Contrabando Trailhead. We will ride the classic Contrabando Dome Loop, incorporating the Waterhole Trail and the newer Fresno Divide Trail. Incredible views and technical rock sections will demand your full attention. After our ride in the state park we have several options, including a visit to the historical Contrabando movie set, a refreshing dip in the Rio Grande, or more riding or hiking along the River Road, rated as one of the most scenic routes in Texas.

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 10-20 miles

### DAY 4



After packing camp we will shuttle east to Big Bend National Park. Today we take a break from the bikes and get on the river with a float through Hot Springs Canyon on the Rio Grande. Our float takes us past limestone bluffs, ancient ruins, and the historic Langford Hot Springs where we'll stop and soak our tired bodies. After our float through Hot Springs Canyon we'll shuttle to our camp in Chisos Basin, beneath the dramatic Chisos Mountains.

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 8-20 miles

### DAY 5



This morning will begin with either a hike or bike ride beneath the stunning Chisos Mountains. Regardless of how we choose to end

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our adventure we will be rewarded with views of the vast Chihuahuan Desert and the terrain we explored earlier in the week. We'll have lunch in the national park and then shuttle back to Midland.

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 7 miles riding or 6 miles hiking

## RIDE NOTES

We will be without vehicle support during some sections of the ride. Many cacti, sharp vegetation, and sharp rocks exist along trail.

Itineraries are subject to change due to weather, road conditions, rider safety, and other factors which may affect the logistics of the adventure.

**Road Surface:** Mixed surfaces. Single track, double track, packed dirt road, rocky 4x4 road, loose rock, sand washes, and pavement.

**Overall Rating:** Intermediate / advanced

**Technical Difficulty:** Moderate to difficult. While much of the route is suitable for intermediate riders, there are some steep, loose, technical rock sections.

**Physical Difficulty:** Moderate. Some short, steep climbs at low elevations.

**Altitude:** 1,800- 7,500 ft

## Travel Logistics

### MEETING PLACE AND TIME

#### Midland, TX

The trip will meet at 7:00 AM CDT at the Sleep Inn & Suites, 5612 Deauville Blvd, Midland, TX. This is ~10 minutes from the airport. Sleep Inn & Suites offers free airport shuttles.

You may park your car here, gratis, during the trip. You will need to spend the night before in Midland, TX.

### ENDING TIME

We will return to Midland between 4:00-5:00 PM on the last day.

### SHIPPING YOUR BIKE

If you are shipping your bike, send it to:

Desert Sports Bike Shop  
22937 FM 170  
Terlingua, TX 79852-0448  
888-989-6900

It is critical that you include your name, "Western Spirit Cycling" and tour date on the outside of the box. If you choose this service, you must get this organized through our office.

It is imperative to have your bike finely tuned and cleaned before your tour so you know it is in top running condition.

### GETTING TO MIDLAND, TX

**Driving to Midland, TX.** Midland is in west Texas, 300 miles west of Dallas/Fort Worth.

#### Flying into Midland/Odessa, TX

Airport Code: MAF

### TAXI SERVICE

**Imperial Taxi:** 432-770-3660

**Midland Shuttle Services:** 432-312-0443

**Midland Executive Car Services:** 432-260-5428

### LODGING BEFORE YOUR TRIP

It is a good idea to book your rooms in advance; here are a few recommendations for Midland, TX:

#### Sleep Inn & Suites

432-694-4200

#### Holiday Inn Express & Suites Midland Loop 250

432-520-3600

#### Quality Suites

432-620-9191

Country Inn & Suites  
432-218-7980

## Packing for your trip

Be sure to bring everything on this list. We have carefully developed this list to ensure your comfort on the tour regardless of the weather. If you are prepared for extreme weather, it is an adventure. If you are not prepared it can be a serious problem.

We recommend the layering system, including a wicking or long underwear layer, an insulating layer and a weather barrier for wind and rain. This list reflects that philosophy. Weather can be unpredictable so be sure to bring all the warm clothing and rain gear listed!

**HOW TO PACK:** The bulk of your gear and clothing will ride in the Western Spirit support vehicle (preferably in a large duffle bag) and will **not** be accessible during the day.

For this trip, you will need a riding pack and optional day bag:

- Your riding pack may be a hydration pack, but needs to carry 3 liters of water, rain gear, other warm clothing, and food for the day. You may be away from camp and the support vehicle all day and need to be self-sufficient.
- A small day bag is optional and may be used to store things you'd rather not ride with, but would like to have access to during the day. This day-pack will remain with the support vehicle and may not be accessible, depending on the day.

### WHAT WE PROVIDE:

- ✓ meals, snacks, water, electrolyte drinks, non-alcoholic drinks
- ✓ camp mugs, all kitchen and dining ware
- ✓ 2 large cycling water bottles
- ✓ camp chairs
- ✓ solar showers
- ✓ sunscreen & bug spray
- ✓ bike stand and lube
- ✓ guides bring their own tools

- ✓ first aid kit with basic medications

### BRINGING OR RENTING

- mountain bike (Our rentals come with flat pedals. You are welcome to bring your own if you prefer.)
- helmet (gratis w/rental bike)
- tent
- sleeping bag
- sleeping pad

### CYCLING CLOTHING

- cycling shoes
- 3 - 5 pair cycling shorts
- 3 - 5 cycling shirts
- long sleeve cycling shirt
- long sleeve cotton shirt or solar sleeves. Highly recommended for protection from sun, cactus, and potential falls.
- tall socks (knee socks, soccer socks). Highly recommended for protection from cactus and potential falls.
- knee & elbow pads. Highly recommended for protection from cactus and potential falls.
- windbreaker
- tights or leg warmers
- 2 pair cycling gloves (1 pair full length for warmth)
- rain jacket (Gore-Tex or similar)
- rain pants (Gore-Tex or similar)
- warm layer (lightweight synthetic puffy jacket or long sleeve fleece shirt)
- sunglasses or other eye protection

### CAMP CLOTHING

- camp shorts
- shirts
- warm socks
- long underwear, top and bottom (wicking layer, not cotton)
- 2 pair warm long pants
- long sleeve fleece or sweater
- pile or down jacket (insulating layer)
- warm gloves and hat
- brimmed hat or visor
- bathing suit (for solar showers on the trip and at the hotel before/after your trip)
- hiking shoes

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- sandals
- cheap PVC rain gear (to wear in camp)

## PERSONAL

- toiletries
- medication (daily and emergency)
- towel
- biodegradable soap
- wet-wipes
- flashlight or headlamp (with extra batteries)
- sunglasses
- riding pack: 10-15L gear capacity with 3L water storage (Camelbak Mule or Camelbak H.A.W.G. are good choices)
- optional day bag
- cash for tipping guides: your guides work as a team and share all of their gratuities. A tip of 10-20% of the price of your trip given to either one of your guides when you return to civilization is a great way to say thanks for a job well done.

## OPTIONAL

- camera, extra batteries
- binoculars
- alcoholic or any of your favorite beverages (your guides will pack these)
- books or maps
- we encourage you to turn your devices off, but if you cannot, please bring a way to charge them. We recommend a portable USB charger with 1-2 charges. Also, putting your phone on airplane mode to save power is recommended.

