



2020 Natchez Trace

FAQ's

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A. Pre-ride questions

1. How is the ride in 2020 different from previous years?

The Natchez Trace Ride will be the route, but this year we will ride the whole 442 miles! Different from previous years, we will only build with one Covenant Partner along the Trace, adding a ride day, and keeping the same great hosts from year's past! The dates are also later on in the year, increasing the possibility of good weather for a nicer ride.

We're excited to go back and spend time with all the friends we've made along the way the past four years, and enjoy the natural beauty and awesome cycling on the Natchez Trace Parkway.

This change of plans will make the drive back to Nashville on Sunday a bit longer, but we still commit to getting folks to their cars by 4:00 PM.

2. The Fuller Center is a Christian organization, but I don't consider myself Christian. Am I welcome to participate in the ride?

Absolutely. While The Fuller Center is unashamedly Christian, we welcome all people regardless of faith to support and participate in our work, and we place no religious requirements on our beneficiaries. We build with and for Hindus in Nepal, Buddhists in Sri Lanka and Muslims in Africa.

One should note, however, that for the sake of community, all riders are expected at least to be present for a number of faith-based aspects of the trip, such as morning devotions, Sunday worship services with our church

hosts, prayer before meals, etc. As such, riders should at least be comfortable with these types of activities and surroundings.

3. How much training do I need to do?

All riders are responsible for getting themselves physically prepared for the ride. While the Bike Adventure is a great place to learn from more experienced riders, we hope that all participants bring a baseline of prior experience to the ride. It is our recommendations that riders complete this training checklist on the bike they will bring to the ride:

- Natchez Trace riders should complete 150+ miles of cycling ahead of the ride
- In that training, you should aim to complete a ride of 60+ miles

For a more comprehensive planning tool, see our Training Guide on our Tools for Riders page.

4. What kind of bike do I need? Does the Bike Adventure provide any help with getting one?

A road bike is strongly recommended, although riders in the past have used touring-style bikes and completed the ride. Recumbent riders have also completed the cross-country trip, although we do ask that you contact us directly at bike@fullercenter.org if you plan to ride a recumbent bike or a trike. These bikes may place a few extra demands on our support team, so giving us a heads-up will ensure that we can accommodate you! If you really want to join the ride, but you don't have a decent road bike –we understand, and better yet... we can help you! The Bike Adventure has an agreement with an outstanding bike shop, Cycle World in Albany, GA, to help provide bikes for our riders in-need. By fundraising a little extra through our [Bike Assistance Program](#), we can get you setup with a nice new ride at a price which is even nicer. Please note that the Bike Assistance Program is intended for those who truly need help getting a bike. If you already have a serviceable road bike, then we recommend that you use that one..

5. Do I need to be a super-avid cyclist and/or highly skilled builder?

No. Many of our riders have had very little experience cycling, and we want this event to be accessible for cyclists of a wide range of abilities. Also, while skilled volunteers on the work-site are incredibly valuable, even unskilled people can learn and contribute.

6. When and where do I need to arrive?

We ask that riders plan on arriving to our first host church between 6-9 p.m. on Friday, April 6. Information on where to arrive will be made available as the day draws near.

More specific details on arrival timing and location for each ride will be emailed to registered participants well in advance of the arrival date.

7. How do I get to my starting point/home from my end point?

Each rider is responsible for arranging his or her own transportation for where they join/exit the trip. The trip support vehicle will be shuttling people from transportation hubs to the church in Nashville, and will be helping folks get where they need to go from Natchez. You can also consider carpooling with another rider(s), which you can coordinate through your ride's Facebook group that we set up.

Detailed information about all transportation logistics will be emailed to riders as the ride draws nearer. With any questions ahead of time, email bike@fullercenter.org.

8. How do I get my bike to my starting point?

Most airlines, trains, and buses allow you to bring your bicycle with you for a fee. Airlines usually allow you to check your bike as luggage for a fee and as per their packing specifications. Check your airline's baggage policy

and/or call them ahead of time, and then bring your evidence (printed policy) with you to avoid any extra hassle from the attendant.

As your arrival date nears, we can also send you a shipping address to which you can ship your bike using any standard carrier (UPS, FedEx, Postal Service, etc). Take a look at our [Shipping Your Bike](#) page to learn about all the options you have when it comes to transporting your bike.

Due to space restrictions, you may ship your bike in a hard case or reusable box, but the carrying device must be shipped elsewhere after your arrival. No cases or reusable boxes will be carried in the trailer.

9. How much stuff can I bring with me?

Room in our support trailer will be very tight, so unless you want to strap it to your back or to your bike (not recommended), each rider can bring 1 bag of about 4,000 cubic inches but no more than 4,500 cubic inches / 40lbs. Not sure the size of your bag? Measure the length, width, and height in inches, and then do the math:

Length x width x height = bag volume in cubic inches

Keep in mind you will be receiving two t shirts and at least one jersey, which you wear wear for most of your trip. We will make every effort to do laundry every 3rd day. The rider with the heaviest bag may or may not be required to carry a water bottle full of pennies with them on their bike, so pack carefully.

One exception: People bringing laptops may bring them in a separate laptop case/bag.

10. Do you have a need for any non-cyclists on the trip to support the riders?

Yes! In general, our team is self-supported – we do daily chores like cooking, laundry, etc. as a team. However we do need volunteers to do a couple of jobs that the cyclists can't, and in the right situation we're open to other ideas as well. Below are a couple of opportunities. If you're interested, [contact us!](#)

Communications / Multimedia Intern:

Each summer we look for individuals to accompany us on our trips who will document the journey and tell our stories through videos, blog posts, photos, social media, etc. They'll also help build local connections by contacting key media outlets along the way. This is a wonderful opportunity for someone looking to gain some hands on experience in the multimedia and communications field ... and to have the adventure of a lifetime! Spreading awareness is one of the main purposes of the ride, which means this person will play a very important role in the overall success of this trip, and is a valued member of the team.

Drive our van:

We need someone to drive our van and trailer across the country this summer. You'll be a member of the team and get to see all the same sights and have the same awesome journey of faith ... just with a lot less strokes of the pedal!

Drive your own vehicle along with us:

In the right situation, we'd love to have you drive along with us for either the summer ride. It's a tremendous help to have extra support out there on the road; whether it's an extra snack, a ride in a rainstorm, or just an extra word of encouragement for a tired rider, it makes a huge difference on a journey like this. You'll be a big part of our mission, and an important member of the team ... plus you'll get to see this beautiful country and meet all the amazing folks we come across along the way! This support person would be responsible for their own expenses, such as the cost of gas for their car. We'd love to talk with you about how it works, and invite you to join us for the adventure! Know that you would be loved and appreciated!

Interested? Visit our page to learn more and/or contact bike@fullercenter.org.

B. Ride Logistics

11. Is the ride fully-supported?

Yes...by you! While we do seek support volunteers (whom we love and adore!), the ride is truly carried by each member of the team. We have chore groups to spread the load of cooking, laundry, packing, cleaning, etc. Sometimes we have to rotate riders spending a day helping with the support vehicles. In other words, the ride is fully supported because we support each other. Perhaps a better term would be "community-supported."

Do note, however, that a support vehicle pulling a small trailer will carry all our individual and group gear to our destination every day. See "How much stuff can I bring with me?" for baggage size limitation information.

Along the route, you need not carry any luggage on your bike, and we will have rest stops with snacks and water every 20 – 25 miles.

12. Should I expect to ride literally every mile from Nashville to Natchez?

Probably not. As a team-focused ride, sometimes we have to give up personal goals for team goals. Riders may need to travel some miles by van due to weather, mechanical issues, safety concerns, speed/time issues, etc. It may help if you think of yourself as joining a team adventure rather than conquering a personal feat.

13. Who drives the support vehicle?

Glad you asked. We hope to find a volunteer to drive the vehicle along with us for the whole trip (see “Do you have a need for any non-cyclists on the trip to support the riders?”).

14. How do we do laundry?

Laundry will be one of the tasks of the chore groups. We’ll typically do our laundry in Laundromats every three days.

15. Where do we stay at night?

We will typically stay in churches, church camps or other community centers. We live simply in this way to ensure that as many dollars as possible go toward the mission, and sleeping within the community also is consistent with our ideal of being a grassroots ministry.

The trip will provide Thermarest air/foam mats on which to sleep.

16. How far do we go per day and how fast do we ride?

Our average distance is about 65 miles with some days shorter and our longest being around 100 miles. We do not need to ride as a giant pack all day every day; riders are free to ride alone (but not alone at the back) or to break up into groups as they choose.

Speed Requirements

- 12 mph – moving average
- 10 mph – including stops

In order to keep the group relatively together, and advancing at a reasonable pace, riders joining for a segment or more should be able to maintain a moving average of at least 12 mph and be able to go 20-25 miles without long rests. After accounting for breaks at rest stops, riders should be comfortable with an elapsed time based average of 10 mph, meaning a 60 mile ride should take no more than 6 hours from start to finish. This pace allows for at least 20 minutes of rest for every 20 miles that you ride with the moving average of 12 mph.

Our speed requirements are not intended to be exclusive, but are meant to set transparent expectations in order to best accommodate the needs of the entire team. Maintaining the 10 mph elapsed time average pace affords the support crew the ability to meet the needs of the team as a whole during and after the ride, with rest stops, shuttles to showers, and timely arrival to dinner. Trip leadership may ask riders to start from the first rest stop, or skip a 20 mile segment between rest stops in order to keep the support crew moving at the minimum pace.

Note for riders gifted with speed: very fast riders may find that you reach the designated rest stop location ahead of our support vehicles, which await the final riders at the previous rest stop before departing. Fast riders should be prepared to wait at rest stop locations or self-support towards the end of long ride days. However, since this is not a race, but a team on a mission to change the world, we hope our ride is an opportunity to bond together as a team for a common purpose!

17. How many of the meals are provided? What do we eat?

Meals are prepared by rotating chore teams, or by generous hosts. Breakfast and lunch typically consist of cereals, bagels, bananas and other simple foods. Peanut butter is a real staple of the diet. The cost is covered by the trip.

Our trip commits to ensuring that dinner is provided by churches or chore groups 5-6 nights a week. Riders should anticipate the need to purchase their own dinner once or twice a week.

BONUS: If I'm vegetarian / vegan / gluten free / allergic to peanuts, will I starve?

We do our best to accommodate riders with varying dietary needs or restrictions. However, since many of our meals are provided by our generous church hosts, and since dietary needs vary widely even within a single trip, there may not always be the exact foods you'd choose for yourself to eat available at every meal. For those who abstain by choice, we would encourage you to eat what is served as much as possible.

If your dietary restrictions are extremely stringent, please let us know so we can discuss the best way to accommodate them, and know that you may have to plan to supplement your meals on your own.

Peanut butter and bread are regular staples of our rest stop food (lunch). We can typically supplement with other foods, but if your allergies are highly sensitive such that any contact or traces of them can cause you to have a severe reaction, please know that we cannot totally control all cross contamination on the road. In such cases, please discuss with us carefully ahead of time so that you can determine if or how you may be able to safely participate.

18. Are there chores or other responsibilities?

Yes. In preparing mentally for an event like this, the team aspect can be easily overlooked. To reach our goal, however, we need to work together; divide and conquer the task before us.

Some riders may be asked to serve as full-time "experts" on a certain area (such as route planning, bike maintenance, etc.), while others will sign up for a specific chore team for the week.

19. What do we do about showers?

When possible, we try to find hosts that have showers onsite. Other times we will arrange for the team to use showers at a local school or community center, and occasionally participants may have to pay for showers at YMCAs or other public facilities. The types of showers can range from the bathroom in a local church member's

home to the typical gym shower, and when all else fails, we look for a garden hose to let people “hose off.” (That’s why we call this an “adventure”!)

20. What happens if I am unable to complete one of the day’s rides?

No problem. The support vehicle should be able to pick up you and your bike. We are not going to abandon you! Of course, for logistical reasons, we need our riders to participate expecting to be able to complete the mileage.

21. How much free time will we have?

Define “free time.” Every day, you will get to spend hours just riding a bike. As for how much time will you have for relaxing, exploring, etc., it will depend on a number of factors. For instance, the length of the day’s ride, the speed at which we completed it, the number and length of rest stops along the way, the amount of tire or mechanical issues that may have slowed down the group, how many pictures we stopped for, etc.

There will be group activities in the evening, like dinner, a presentation, chores, weekly group meeting, etc., but we do make it a priority to allow folks to just “do their thing.”

22. What does a typical ride day look like?

We will first start off by saying that there really isn’t a typical day on the Bike Adventure as each day presents new and exciting challenges. Also, with factors like weather, terrain, riding distance, shower logistics, church hosts, etc., it’s always hard to give exact times or details regarding the day so riders need to remain flexible. With all that said, here is an example of a ride day which should give you a general idea of what to expect.

6 a.m.: Breakfast is served. Complete your morning chore tasks (clean church, pack coolers, etc.) and get your bike ready to go.

7 a.m.: Gather outside for route meeting, brief devotion and general overview of the day.

7:15 a.m.: Depart for the day's adventure! Rest stops will be set up every 20-25 miles for riders to get snacks, refill water bottles and take a quick breather.

Ride your bike!

2:30 p.m.: Arrive in town. Many people stop for milkshakes and burgers.

3 p.m.: Arrive at host location. Help unpack trailer, unload coolers and get ready to head to showers.

3:30 p.m.: Head to showers! Generally within walking/biking distance or a short van ride away.

6 p.m.: Supper is served either by church hosts or chore group. If the church is providing supper, they will generally allow us to give a little presentation on our ride and the Fuller Center.

9:30 p.m.: Lights out!

23. Will I get to go to a church of my choice on Sunday?

We understand that this is an important and sensitive subject to folks, and we try to be as accommodating as possible within our logistical constraints and desire to be with our hosts.

Typically, all of our riders will be strongly encouraged to attend church with whoever happens to be hosting us. For many, it has proven to be an opportunity to explore branches of the Christian faith to which they have never before been exposed. On Sunday, we will wake up at Shady Grove United Methodist Church in Duck River, TN. Our church hosts will cook us breakfast, and in years past, we all attend the service. If you are interested in attending another service, please contact your Trip Leader so we can plan with you (bike@fullercenter.org).

24. What do we wear during the ride? Can I wear my own jersey?

As part of the registration fee, riders will receive one Fuller Center jersey. (You are on your own for shorts/spandex.) Also if you reach the \$1,000 fundraising level before January 1st you will get an additional jersey for free! You also have the option to purchase another one for \$40 during registration.

Riders joining our team for more than a day must wear the Fuller Center jersey. It makes us easily identifiable, helps us spread the word and makes us look like a team.

You may also purchase a Bicycle Adventure jersey from a past ride for lower prices.

25. Do I have to stay the nights with the group or can I just find local hotels?

Riders should stay with the group to allow for seamless communication amongst the team and to foster community spirit.

26. How can people stay in touch with me during the ride?

There are a number of ways your friends and family can follow the journey and stay in touch!

- All the trip riders will rotate in posting to a trip blog this spring and summer, which can be found [here](#).
 - They can find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#)
 - We will try to set up designated mail stops — places where friends or family can send mail for you along the way. We will keep you posted as the ride nears.
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C. Fundraising / costs

27. What's the cost, and how much do I have to raise?

We try to keep the ride as affordable for the cyclist as possible, so the registration fee for those joining for a segment or the whole way starts at an “early bird” rate of \$200. The registration fee increases to \$250 on January 1st and to \$300 on March 16th. Signing up early will save your spot and some cash!

In addition to the food and support along the ride, paying the fee also means that you'll receive one Fuller Center jersey and a t-shirt. (You are on your own for shorts/spandex.) Keeping in mind that we will do laundry every three days, riders can opt to pay an additional \$40 for another jersey.

To ensure that our ride impacts those in need, all participants must meet a minimum fundraising requirement to participate.

	Riders 27+	Riders 26 and Younger
Natchez Trace Fundraising Requirement	\$850	\$600

(Note that or if you are participating in our Bike Assistance Program, your fundraising requirement will be higher than the figures listed above)

Remember that each rider sets their own fundraising goal, so you may want to consider choosing an amount even higher our minimum! High goals help you and your supporters think big.

Our team goal is to raise \$300,000, which would bring the total raised by FCBA since 2008 to over \$3 million — so we need everyone to come through if we hope to reach it!

To show our appreciation for your fundraising efforts we will give you an additional 2020 Fuller Center Jersey for free if you hit the \$1,000 fundraising level before January 1.

For help, check out our [Fundraising Guide](#).

28. How much should I expect to spend along the trip?

Individual costs along the trip should be relatively low, since the trip will be finding the sleeping quarters and providing nearly all the food.

Plan on the trip providing 5-6 dinners a week, with participants needing to pay for their own meal once or twice a week. (Other purchased food — like stops for ice cream, coffee, etc. are on your own.) The trip will try to make it as affordable for you as possible to complete the journey, but it is not an absolute all-expenses-paid trip.

Your biggest personal costs will come from getting yourself to/from the trip and your personal biking-related purchases, such as spare tires and tubes, gloves, handlebar tape, helmet, pedals and shoes, etc. We have some suggestions for [Ways to ship your bike](#), and if you don't have a road bike for the ride yet check out our [Bike Assistance program](#).

29. How do we send in and get credit for our donations?

Checks should be made payable to “The Fuller Center” with “bike – [rider’s name]” in the memo section of the check and mailed to:

The Fuller Center for Housing
Attn: Bike Adventure
701 S. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Americus, GA 31719

Donations can also be made online by going to the trip’s [Meet the Riders](#) page, and you can create your very own fundraising page on our website [here](#).

30. Are donations tax-deductible?

Yes! The Fuller Center is a 501(c)(3) organization and meets all 20 Better Business Bureau Charity Standards. All contributions that we receive are deductible against federal income taxes. Please note that we can only send the recognition receipt to the writer of the check we receive.

The Fuller Center will send a receipt and donation recognition for any amount \$10 or over. Even still, you will want to thank your supporters more personally.

31. How will I know who has donated for me and how much I have raised?

Your full donation report will be kept on your personal fundraising page, which will be set up for you upon your registration. If you would like to get a report of your donors' emails and mailing addresses, or have any other questions about your fundraising, please contact bike@fullercenter.org.

32. Where does the money we raise go?

All the funds go to support the work of the Fuller Center for Housing. Thanks to our simple living on the road, the support of churches and countless volunteers, historically only about 3% of the fund raising is needed to cover the cost of the ride. The rest is covered through the registration fees.

Since we work with the numerous Fuller Center partners most closely, the default and our preference is for funds to go to the sites where most needed. If you have a particular Fuller Center location you are passionate about, though, we do allow you to designate your funds raised for that project. To do so, you must email us at bike@fullercenter.org within 2 weeks of registering.

33. How will I ever be able to raise all that money?

You can do it! And we can help. Download the fundraising guide from our [Tools for Riders page](#), or email bike@fullercenter.org to ask for more help.

34. What if I've registered but can no longer participate in the ride? Can I get a refund?

Registration fees are non-refundable, but may be transferred to another ride that year. If you cancel but would still like to register for a different ride in the same calendar year, you may transfer your registration and fundraising total to a later ride. If you're unable to ride in the same calendar year, please contact your trip leader.

e.g. John signed up to ride Ocean to Ocean Segment 2, but then had a family emergency and wasn't able to participate. He still wanted to ride with FCBA though, so he then signed up for Parks & Peaks Segment 8 without paying a separate registration fee. His fundraising total was also carried over to his 'new' ride.