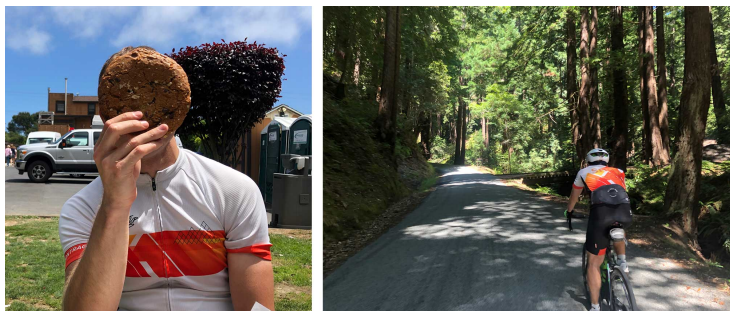


## Back to normal but not quite normal



On the left we see a Pescadero cookie just barely passing the Cookie Face Test. On the right, the infamous Bridge of Death that defines the beginning of the "Hammer of Thor" segment on Tunitas Creek. Passed the cookie test, failed the Hammer of Thor.

Strange sort of ride today. First weekend back post-France, and I was expecting that post-France performance bump to show up, but it was nowhere to be seen. Just did not have it in me today for a hard effort on the climbs. Nothing hurt; I just couldn't get my heart rate to respond to the effort I requested. Heart rate stayed considerably lower than normal for pretty much the whole ride. Sure, it was pretty warm, but climbing Old LaHonda when 78 degrees, compared to the Col du Lauteret at 102? I sent Kevin ahead on Old LaHonda, hoping maybe he could pull something off, and, while certainly a lot faster than me, he was pretty disappointed with his 20:23.

With West Old LaHonda closed for repairs, we had to do the odd thing of heading right on Skyline and heading out 84. One forgets how much nicer the West Old LaHonda descent is, where you almost never see a car, compared to all the traffic on 84. Fortunately, once we made the turn onto Pescadero Road, traffic all but disappeared. Almost eerily so.

Pescadero was good for the usual sandwich, cookie and olallieberry struddle (plus a Mtn Dew for me, Coke for Kevin). Then it was heading north into the wind on Stage Road. Kevin had actually suggested the possibility of the reverse Pescadero loop, which would have had us returning via West Alpine, and an added bonus of tailwinds heading south on Stage! But I wasn't convinced my legs had it for the slightly-longer ride with the nasty climb up West Alpine. West Alpine by itself isn't so bad; it's that lead-in over Haskins that kills you.

Tunitas? Nothing special there. We were both just kind of phoning it in. Maybe next week.