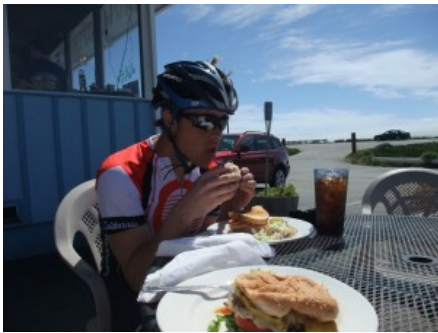


We finally pulled off the "different" ride from a few weeks ago

A few weeks ago, Kevin (my son, not the pilot) and I were going to do something a bit different from the norm. He often complains that he wants to ride something different from the usual Pescadero/Tunitas loop, but it's tough to get in a really challenging ride without heading toward the coast, and it's hard to avoid Pescadero (gotta stop at the bakery) and Tunitas. That day Kevin had some issues from his various epilepsy meds, so I went out on my own and had to do a slight modification due to some flooding.

Today, no danger of flooding, and Kevin was doing fine, so we finally pulled it off, but not at the 9am starting time I was hoping for; somehow it was determined that Starbucks and Noah's Bagels had to be procured first, and then Kevin remembers that his rear tire is flat, plus a couple other things I don't recall, so it wasn't until noon that we finally set out.



Lunch at the excellent Gazos Creek Cafe. And yes, they take credit cards!

The route? Woodside/Old LaHonda/Pescadero (nothing unusual yet!), the Bean Hollow to the coast and south on Highway 1 to Gazos Creek. Now we're talking something different. Had an excellent lunch at the Gazos Creek Grill, same place I ate a few weeks ago. So far, so good, since we were heading south, with the wind at our backs!

The run north was on Gazos Creek Road, which I'd hoped would be relatively sheltered from the wind, which it was. Then back through Pescadero (twice through Pescadero on one ride, without stopping at the bakery?), north on Stage, then the long grind up Highway 84 back to Woodside.



Ever get a sunburn on just one side? Easily done on Stage Road, with fog on the coast, and the afternoon sun opposite.

It's counter-intuitive that it's actually longer getting back via 84 than Tunitas Creek, but that's just the way it goes. The grade's not as steep on 84, but there's something about, shall we say, "less defined" climbs that seems to make them harder. On Tunitas, you've got a climb you can sink your teeth into! On 84, you're just putting miles under your feet as you make your way first from the coast to LaHonda (with a variety of small "junk" climbs along the way) and then a mild, exposed and often-straight climb from there to Skyline.

About 75 miles, 6600ft of climbing, so technically, not a "tough" ride (has to be 1000ft of climbing/10 miles). But it felt harder than the numbers indicate, partly because of the headwinds, partly because Kevin's getting stronger again and has his Old LaHonda time back into the 24 minute range (he was just a bit faster than that before he had the kidney issues earlier in the year that kept him off the bike for three months).Â Not much time left to get Kevin in really good shape; the trip to see the Tour de France is only a few months away, and one of the days we'll be there will possibly feature a truly-epic 100 mile ride with over 15,000 feet of climbing.

After today's ride, I'm thinking it's possible!