

TWO KANSAS GALS GO TO TYLER, TX

by Glenda Kelly #13645

Two gals, two bikes, four days – 1600 miles. (Well, Genia had more!) Great excuse for a trip - ride to TX to meet and greet!

Day 1 - leave Lawrence bright and early around 6:30 am, after breakfast. Our goal for the day: Mena, Arkansas, Sun Country Inn. We planned to head south through Kansas on Highway 59, via Eureka Springs, AR. Somewhere in all those windy roads was a turn we should have made! South of Branson we regroup, plan a new route to angle over to Highway 7, to head South again. The new Rand McNally road atlas was put to the test. We make Highway 7 and everything appears to be back on track! A roadside park is found and a long rest break is taken – finished off the water and the last granola bar! The others had already been consumed along the way – did I mention it is 5:00 pm by now?! We rally again, deciding we can make it to Mena amidst REPEATED promises of Margaritas when we get there (yeah!) We check our way again, deciding where we would angle over to Highway 71 to head straight into Mena. So off we ride. And we ride, and we ride, and we ride. Great twisty roads, motorcycle nirvana! By now I can hear my stomach grumbling over my screamin' eagles. After another road ending, reconfiguring our route again, we are getting closer! At last – Highway 71 – sustenance, margaritas must be at the end of this rainbow! As we get into town we see the hotel – right there! Yeah! We check in, ask for the nearest food location, unload, and WALK next door for Mexican food! It is now 9:00 pm, and I just have to get across the parking lot – I can do it! Great food, but of course it is a dry county. Wouldn't you know!

Day 2 - leave Mena to ride the east side of the Talimena Trail and head to Tyler! Breakfast sandwich at McDonald's and we are off and riding! Another great weather day! The Talimena is magnificent! We cross into Oklahoma, enjoying the grand vistas. I spy something rather large aiming to run across the road in front of Genia – What in the world??? – Large black furry bear! Only one - and he was moving rather fast. Couldn't tell where we went in the woods after crossing the highway. WOW – note to self: gotta get the camera around-the-neck-point-and-shoot figured out! We made it to the hotel in Tyler without further adventure; check in around 2:00. Genia said we would eat lunch when we got there, and maybe have a margarita. So we inquire at the desk – of course, dry county. And by then others were beginning to ride so introductions went round and the chatting began! The decision was made to eat nearby and so around 6:00 we headed over to a nearby Mexican restaurant for dinner. Would be nice to have a margarita. Had a great time meeting everyone and visiting.

Day 3 - Got ready to leave, ate continental breakfast at the hotel and contemplated taking some extra banana nut muffins to stash in my bag. Barb leads us on a ride to check out some TX towns she had previously scouted. Very interesting!! Glad we made that ride! By 11:00 it is getting a little steamy; Genia is starting to melt so we starting our trek back North. We contemplate our route at the local Sonic over a nice cold cherry limeade. We decide to pretty much go back the way we came, ride the rest of the Talimena, and ride through eastern OK to home. We chart our course and decide we will stop in Tahlequah

for the night; it looks fairly large on the atlas, hopefully there will be margaritas there! Off we go! Eastern Oklahoma was as picturesque as AR – we crossed several lakes, and enjoyed the views. We arrive in Stigler, OK around 5:00, pull over to figure out how much further we need to go. While perusing the atlas at the side of the road we hear a high-pitched loud sound – looked up – a blur went by – someone on a sport bike, and not far behind were two police cars. WOW - bet that was a chase, we decide we aren't going that direction; we'll go the other way and figure out an alternate route. There appears to be another lake we have to get around, and decide to head for Sallisaw and not back track to get to Tahlequah. We make it – find a hotel away from the interstate and unload. Check with the hotel clerk and learn the only places to eat are the ones we saw back by the interstate and of course it is Sunday, no margaritas. It is only around 8:00 pm - so off to dinner we go (continental breakfast and candy bar long gone!)

Day 4 - Another great riding day! We chart our course for home and off we go. We stop in Grove, OK and have a quick lunch, then head for Kansas. A few road detours and we arrive in Lawrence around 5:30.

YEAH – WE DID IT! Observations: First motorcycle trip with someone other than DH – was great! Why is it everywhere two gals stop on bikes and pull out an atlas that a guy has to ask us – ‘Need help figuring it out?’ Why can you ride 1500+ miles and never find a margarita? Genia has a new nickname ---- ‘Camel’!!