

# Sturgis Rally 2010

In a land where bison once thundered across the prairie, modern-day cowboys rumble over the land on iron horses. Each August, hundreds of thousands of motorcyclists journey to the Mecca of the motorcycling world: Sturgis, South Dakota.

The legacy of the Sturgis Rally began in 1938 when J.C. "Pappy" Hoel, a local motorcycle shop owner, and some friends came up with the idea of holding a motorcycle race and stunt competition. The first event consisted of 19 racers at the half-mile track and some dangerous events such as board-wall crashes, ramp jumps and head-on collisions with cars. Local businesses put up the \$500 prize money. Every year the event grew as both racers and spectators learned of the event. The races were cancelled for two years during World War II when the war took many young men overseas.

After the war, the Sturgis Rally event started to grow as the motorcycling lifestyle gained popularity. One thousand motorcyclists attended the program in the city park during the 1965 rally. By the time the 1980's rolled around, the attendance numbers climbed into the tens of thousands. For the 50th Anniversary in 1990, approximately 400,000 bikers came to celebrate. In 1999, the event drew 275,000 290,000 people from around the world. The biggest rally of all happened in 2000, the 60th Anniversary. Estimated attendance was 550,000 633,000. People who have never attended a motorcycle rally wonder what the event is all about. The Sturgis event is a celebration of motorcycling. Big deal, right? People get together because they like bikes; how is that interesting? Being a motorcycle enthusiast is only part of the equation. Motorcycling is more than a sport and more than a hobby. It's a lifestyle a state of mind.

For the millions of people around the world who ride, motorcycles represent more than just a means of getting from Point A to Point B. Motorcycles are icons of freedom and individuality. When people gather at a rally, sure they talk shop. But they also break away from the treadmill of everyday life, creating their own Nirvana.

So who are these people that flock to Sturgis? Motorcyclists come from all walks of life; there are probably some in your neighborhood. Teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers and social workers, along with countless other professions, are represented at the Rally. Motorcycling is universal it transcends countries, genders and economic lines.

Sturgis is a special place for motorcyclists. Steeped in history and situated in the scenic Black Hills, it offers more than just a good time. It is a place where motorcyclists can enjoy camaraderie with their friends and freedom on the open road. Riding out to the Badlands, over to Devil's Tower or cruising past Sylvan Lake offers serious scenery and solitude.

Of course, a visit to Sturgis would not be complete without a trip down the historic Main Street. Five blocks are open to motorcycle traffic only, creating a sea of bikes and people. Astride their iron horses, people ride up and down the street, seeing the sights and being seen. There are colorful people and bikes even one that looks like a buffalo.

Vendors selling a vast array of goods line the streets throughout the downtown area. Leather goods, T-shirts and tattoos line up with Internet services, jewelry, bike parts and food. Oh yes, food! For those of you with milder tastes, there are regular burgers and fries, but for the more adventurous, ostrich, alligator and jambalaya tempt the imagination, if not the taste buds. But one bite will quash your apprehensions this stuff is good!

Racing, the sport that started it all still remains an integral part of the event. Initially, the event began with a half-mile race. There is short track races today, in Sturgis. The racing side of the event has expanded to include AHDRA drag racing at Sturgis Dragway as well as professional and amateur hillclimbs at the hill right behind the Sturgis Short Track.

Touring was not an original event at the rally, but joined the event line-up within a few years. The first tours departed from Main Street and included everyone that attended the event! These days, tours are still a great way to experience the sites in the Black Hills. The Dark of the Moon tour takes people to Mount Rushmore for the evening lighting ceremony. The annual Governor's Tour brings many dignitaries to Sturgis for a ride to Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse.

Your first trip to Sturgis will make your head swim, eyes throb and ears roar. You'll love every minute of it. Once you have attended, you will understand what is impossible to put into words. Join the pilgrimage. Come to Sturgis.