Biking in Central Vermont

The quiet villages, rolling hills, and breathtaking scenery of Central Vermont could not have been better designed for the biking enthusiast.

The combination of paved and unpaved roads winding by historic communities and picturesque countryside provides the perfect setting for day-long exploration.

The tours of Central Vermont are designed for the enjoyment of the recreational cyclist. However, Central Vermont is hilly, so a reasonable level of fitness is required.

Each tour is laid out to return the rider to his or her starting point. Tours range from 5 to 25.7 miles. Some have optional extensions, and creative minds can combine routes or design their own from the maps provided.

From Montpelier's historic downtown and capitol district to the secluded meadows of the Mad River Valley, these tours provide an ever changing backdrop for your travels.

Along the way, you will encounter steepled churches, country stores, and dairy farms. You'll pass forests, streams, and quiet ponds.

You'll be able to stop and enjoy apple cider, maple candies, Vermont cheddar, or hand-dipped chocolates.

Use this guide for a one-day adventure, or plan a week and investigate every route.

Your home base can be a deluxe motel or a country bed and breakfast. Pack sandwiches to go, or enjoy nearby restaurants of every variety.

The tours in this guide are unique. You will find them nowhere else. They were discovered and mapped by local residents who share your passion for wide tires and open spaces.

The residents of Central Vermont have a love of the land and natural environment that is unsurpassed. They revel in the splendor of the mountains, the rush of streams and the solitude of the fields. They are committed to preserving their heritage, and they invite you to share the wonder of the Vermont experience.

For more information:

Send Email to request a printed copy CVermont1@aol.com
Central Vermont
Back Road BIKE TOURS

Berlin Pond Loop (new) 5 miles

Terrain and Road Conditions:
This loop is shorter and not as hilly as most of the other rides. It is suitable for casual cyclists and even families, if the children are fairly strong peddlers. The entire route is on dirt roads.

Tour Highlights:
This tour will take you around the perimeter of Berlin Pond. Nestled at the foot of the Irish Hills, Berlin Pond supplies the drinking water for Vermont's capital city, Montpelier. The pond is a popular spot for bird watchers, joggers and bicyclists. Automobiles also share these roads, so remember to ride single file.

Calais Historic Hamlets (new) about 20 miles

Terrain and Road Conditions:
This route covers some hilly terrain and requires a reasonable degree of fitness on the part of the cyclist. Most roads are marked. With the exception of a short stretch on County Road, this entire route is unpaved.

Tour Highlights:
The Hamlet Tour offers an exciting visit through Central Vermont's countryside. Along this route you will encounter four compact settlements, each unique, but each reflective of Vermont's past. You will also traverse landscapes of pastoral beauty and wind past several lakes and ponds. There is a tremendous reservoir of history along this ride, so pedal forward and allow your mind and senses to wander back.

Mad River Valley Recreation Path (new) 4.5 miles

Terrain and Road Conditions:
This route is quite short. It is flat on the recreation path, and flat to gently rolling on the road portion. The recreation path is mostly a dirt track, but may be sandy, grassy or gravelly in places and is not suitable for "skinny tires." Access to the recreation path is provided by an easement granted through the generosity of the landowner and the path is maintained by a network of local volunteers (The Mad River Path Association). Please respect all posted rules and STAY ON THE PATH. Also ride with caution and at prudent speed as the path receives considerable pedestrian use by dog walkers, families with small children and others. The road sections of this loop are dirt, with the exception of a very short section of Tremblay Road which is paved.

Tour Highlights:
This loop will take you along the banks of the beautiful Mad River, past farm fields, swimming holes, wetlands, under a covered bridge and through flood plain forests, offering views of the surrounding mountains all along the way.

Mad River Tour Overview
16.3 (Optional loop 8.7 miles)

Terrain and Road Conditions:
The degree of difficulty you encounter will depend on whether or not you choose to include the optional section north and east of routes 17 and 100, as this contains the trip's most rugged terrain and consists entirely of unpaved surfaces. The main route is more gentle and incorporates some paved surfaces. It begins with a good climb, however, and has one prolonged descent, so a degree of fitness is required.

**Tour Highlights:**
The landscape you will traverse on this tour is memorable and inspiring. Its focal point is the Mad River, which carves a course through a narrow valley between the Northfield and Green Mountain ranges in a series of inviting pools, riffles and gorges. Along the way it passes classic New England villages, pastoral farmlands, covered bridges, and some of Vermont's highest peaks.
The river's milling power and fertile floodplain were magnets for 18th and 19th century settlers. Reminders of those bygone times abound in the architecture and landscape features of the valley. The latter half of the 20th century has witnessed the valley's renaissance as a recreation and resort center, hosting several downhill and Nordic ski areas, a particularly scenic segment of the Long Trail, year round events and festivals, and a full complement of services, goods and accommodations.
The tour is designed to introduce the cyclist to the Mad River Valley in all of its drama and diversity. It will take you into historic Waitsfield and Warren villages; past art galleries and antique shops; up the valley walls past hillside farms, stone walls and panoramic overlooks; over dirt roads lined with stately sugar maples; and along the clear flowing waters of the Mad River.

**Montpelier - East Montpelier 16.5 (9.2 miles option)**

**Terrain and Road Conditions:**
These loops are not terribly long, but it's quite hilly - particularly on the way out of and into Montpelier. With the exception of one short segment over very rough surfaces, the roads upon which you will ride are well maintained and fairly wide dirt or asphalt surface. Most road names are posted.

**Tour Highlights:**
Atop the golden dome of the Statehouse in the City of Montpelier stands a statue of Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture. This tour takes you from her home in Vermont's charming capital city out to the beautiful and productive farmlands she symbolizes - and back again. Montpelier is the smallest state capital in the U.S. at a population of 8,000. It's thriving downtown hosts several impressive government buildings and an array of historically and architecturally significant commercial buildings. The latter host a variety of unique businesses and restaurants. Montpelier is a compact city. Only minutes out of town, on the back roads of East Montpelier, stone walls, majestic sugar maples, historic barns, churches and farmsteads, and mountain views across verdant pastures grace the landscape.
Note: For those wishing to both shorten the ride and avoid the climb out of Montpelier, park at the Old Meeting House (see below) and begin your ride there.

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**Northfield Tour 12.3 miles**

**Terrain and Road Conditions:**
This route is not long, but contains two very steep climbs. The "upside" of this is that in 12 miles of cycling, there is only about a mile and a half of serious "gear crunching" the rest is flat, downhill or gently rolling. Road surfaces vary from paved State highway to narrow, winding dirt roads. Most of the route is unpaved.

**Tour Highlights:**
This tour takes you through a variety of landscapes in a
relatively short distance. Along its course you will encounter cool forests, panoramic mountain views, hillside farms, and a small urban center steeped in history. The tour begins and ends in Northfield Village that has a population of 2,000. Chartered in 1781, Northfield has had its share of ups and downs. Its first period of rapid growth began in 1848 when it was established as the headquarters of the Central Vermont Railway. Just five years later, in an apparent vendetta against the town, Vermont's governor, vowing to "make grass grow in the streets of Northfield," moved the railroad headquarters to St. Albans. However, Northfield was not about to roll over. In 1866, Norwich University, a private military academy, moved to Northfield giving the town a much needed infusion of life. The university is still going strong, as you will see. In the 1890's the granite industry became established in Northfield bringing with it many Spanish and Italian stone workers. During the Great Depression of the 1930's, the industry was forced to consolidate its resources into nearby Barre, plunging Northfield into yet another period of decline. The town bounced back once again behind the establishment of a knitting and woolen industry and the expansion of the university. Today, Northfield is a proud and thriving small town.

The Lakes Tour (new) 7 miles

Terrain and Road Conditions:
While this is a short loop, it traverses some hilly terrain. Nearly all of this route is on well-maintained dirt roads.

General Description:
This short loop takes you through the wettest towns in Vermont (Woodbury has 25 lakes and ponds: Calais, 14). So, bring your swimsuit and fishing pole. Water, however, is not this route's only attraction. You will also pass through pastoral countryside and two compact, charismatic villages.

Waterbury-Stowe 22 miles

Terrain and Road Conditions:
Although this loop has a few fairly rugged climbs, they are broken up by stretches of easy, level pedaling - particularly on the Stowe Recreation Path - and exhilarating descents. Almost half of your trip will be covered on paved surfaces (including two and a half miles on the Stowe Bike Path) with the remainder being on fairly wide, well maintained dirt roads.

Waterbury-Stowe Tour Highlights:
Variety is the hallmark of this loop. It will take the cyclist past panoramic mountain views, under "haunted" covered bridges, through woods and pastures, along and over small rivers, into one of Vermont's best known villages, and past several shops and tourist attractions. Just about everyone will find the type of cycling experience they seek at some point on this ride.

Websterville Loop 13.7 Miles

Terrain and Road Conditions:
Although this route is fairly short, there are a few good climbs, especially after reaching Washington Village. Roads are paved near the settled areas, but most of this tour is on unpaved, gravel roads.

Waterbury-Stowe Tour Highlights:
Granite is the backbone of Vermont. Nowhere is this more evident than in the vicinity of Barre, where the landscape, economy, and culture have been defined by this rock for 200 years. This route will take you past historic and active quarries (including the world's largest!). But granite isn't the only attraction - there are Indian trails, historic homes, three villages - and of course, the classic Vermont countryside. Although the route is fairly short, there are a few long climbs.
Berlin Pond Loop
5 Miles

Terrain and Road Conditions:
This loop is shorter and not as hilly as most of the other rides. It is suitable for casual cyclists and even families, if the children are fairly strong peddlers. The entire route is on dirt roads.

Tour Highlights:
This tour will take you around the perimeter of Berlin Pond. Nestled at the foot of the Irish Hills, Berlin Pond supplies the drinking water for Vermont's capital city, Montpelier. The pond is a popular spot for bird watchers, joggers and bicyclists. Automobiles also share these roads, so remember to ride single file.

Route Description:
- Park at the designated parking area on Brookfield Road near the intersection of Paine Turnpike. Turn left out of the lot and ride along the east side of the pond.
- At about .4 mile, after crossing a wetland area, the road will climb into a wooded area. Bear left to continue on Brookfield Road.
- Proceed south along Brookfield Road. The terrain is rolling, passing a few residences, farmsteads and glances of the pond to the west.
- At about 2.2 miles the road reaches a remote intersection. Take a sharp left onto Mirror Lake Road.
- At the 2.7-mile mark, after crossing a wetland, the road intersects with Paine Turnpike South. Turn left (north) and proceed along the western shore of the pond.
- At about 4.5 miles, you will begin to parallel I-89. Not long after that, Brookfield Road will appear on your left. Take the left turn back to the parking area.
The Hamlet Tour offers an exciting visit through Central Vermont's countryside. Along this route you will encounter four compact settlements, each unique, but each reflective of Vermont's past. You will also traverse landscapes of pastoral beauty and wind past several lakes and ponds. There is a tremendous reservoir of history along this ride, so pedal forward and allow your mind and senses to wander back.

Tour Highlights:

The most appropriate starting point along this tour is the tiny village of Maple Corner. Here, there exists a post office and general store which can provide both parking and provisions. Located at the southeast corner of Curtis Pond, Maple Corner owes its existence to this body of water and the industries it helped power. In the early 19th century, the village hosted saw and grist mills. Later, in the 1870's, a woolen mill and machine shop which produced horse rakes, appeared. Around 1910, a carriage factory here was converted to a creamery which served nearby farms.

From Maple Corner, pedal east out of town along Kent Hill Road. Shortly (0.7 mile) you will arrive at Kent's Corner. This small hamlet has changed very little over the past 150 years or so and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Kent Tavern is owned by the Vermont Historical Society and is occasionally opened to the public.

Turn left onto Robinson Cemetery Road at the four corners intersection. Just a short distance up the road you will notice a historic post and beam, waterpowered sawmill to your left. A bit further up the hill you will pass the cemetery and views of Groton State Forest to the east.

At 1.88 miles you will arrive at a grassy triangle. Stay to the right and continue along West County Road for about 1.5 miles at which point you will turn right onto Bayne Comolli Road.

Remain on this road for 2.5 hilly miles before arriving at a T intersection with another grassy triangle. Turn right here onto No. 10 Pond Road. Continue on, passing the pond on your left.

At the next intersection, a right hand turn onto North Calais Road will enable you to continue the loop. However, a very short side trip into the hamlet of North Calais is recommended. A left hand turn will bring you there. As you poke around the village you will notice a number of decrepit dam walls and stone foundations amid the historic residences. These lay as a record of North Calais's days of saw and grist milling (as early as 1800), and as a manufacturing center (later 19th century). Water flowing from Mirror Lake powered the production of wooden clocks, cast bells, carriages, coffins, woolen goods and even wooden fifes.

Stay to the right at the Y (Calais Road) in the village then make a sharp right onto No. 10 Pond Road (2.4 miles) at the triangle just beyond.

Proceed along the shores of No.10 Pond and then Nelson Pond (where the road becomes Nelson Pond Road). These are beautiful clear, cold water bodies. Both have public access areas.

Turn right at the four corners intersection beyond Nelson Pond onto Charter Hill Road and climb steeply into open pastureland affording views back to the lakes and the hills and forests beyond.

Take your first available left onto Tebbets at a grassy triangle (4.7 miles) and continue to climb. At the crest of the hill, you will be rewarded with some excellent views of the countryside and encounter an unusual cultural landscape feature: a large barn with an enclosed ramp which bridges the road.

After crossing under the barn you will descend sharply at first, and then more gradually back to the Village of South Woodbury.

Turn left onto Foster Hill Road and continue back to Route 14 and the Town Clerk's Office.

The Lakes Tour

This short loop takes you through the wettest towns in Vermont (Woodbury has 25 lakes and ponds: Calais, 14). So, bring your swimsuit and fishing pole. Water, however, is not this route's only attraction. You will also pass through pastoral countryside and two compact, charismatic villages.

Route Description:

Park at the Woodbury Town Clerk's Office located on the east side of Route 14 in South Woodbury. This cluster of Greek Revival structures looks much as it did during its heyday as a milling center in the mid-19th Century.

Head straight across Rte 14 and climb Foster Hill Road through the Village of South Woodbury on a paved surface. Above the village, the road veers to the left, pavement ends, and the climb continues as you head south toward Calais.

At about 2 miles, you will descend into the tiny Village of North Calais. As you poke around this settlement, notice a number of decrepit dam walls and stone foundations amid the historic residences. These lay as a record of North Calais's days of saw and grist milling (as early as 1800), and as a manufacturing center (later 19th century). Water flowing from Mirror Lake powered the production of wooden clocks, cast bells, carriages, coffins, woolen goods and even wooden fifes.

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Turn left onto Foster Hill Road and continue back to Route 14 and the Town Clerk's Office.

Terrain and Road Conditions:

This route covers some hilly terrain and requires a reasonable degree of fitness on the part of the cyclist. Most roads are marked. With the exception of a short stretch on County Road, this entire route is unpaved.

Terrain and Road Conditions:

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General Description:

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Exit North Calais the same way you entered and continue on North Calais Road (which becomes Pekin Brook Road) for about 4 miles of mostly downhill pedaling. You will pass the Calais Town Hall, which dates from the mid 19th century, along the way.

At a four corners intersection (10.25 miles), turn right onto George Road passing a farmstead on the right. The road will begin to climb steeply and turn more primitive. The road will turn sharply to the left near the top of the climb, straighten out and reach a T intersection at 11.7 miles.

Turn right at the T onto Lightening Ridge Road. (This road earned its name because the wagons that once used it were often forced to lighten their loads in order to make the climb. But don’t worry; although you will be climbing again, the steepest part is behind you.)

Proceed on Lightening Ridge Road. Bearing left, it becomes Adamant Road and descends into the village of Adamant at about the 13.5-mile mark. This little hamlet, located on the shore of Sodom Pond was settled in the 1880’s when granite was quarried in this locale. It is the site of the first State Chartered Credit Union in Vermont, a cooperative store, a renowned music school (offering summer concerts), and an annual strawberry festival.

Proceeding through the village you will pass the Adamant Methodist Church on your left. Bear to the right at the intersection just beyond this point onto Martin Road.

In 1.13 miles you will reach another T intersection. Turn right onto County Road and travel for about one half mile on a paved stretch before turning right again onto Bliss Pond Road.

Shortly after passing Bliss Pond, bear left at a grassy triangle onto Old West Church Road and continue about 1.5 miles back to Kent's Corner. Along the way you will pass the Old West Church (c.1823), a meeting house which is heated by wood stoves and retains its original pews. In letters above the pulpit, a message written in dried hemlock boughs commands: "Removeth not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set."

At Kent's Corners turn left onto Kent Hill Road and proceed to Maple Corner, concluding your trip.
Terrain and Road Conditions:
The degree of difficulty you encounter will depend on whether or not you choose to include the optional section north and east of routes 17 and 100, as this contains the trip's most rugged terrain and consists entirely of unpaved surfaces.

The main route is more gentle and incorporates some paved surfaces. It begins with a good climb, however, and has one prolonged descent, so a degree of fitness is required.

Tour Highlights:
The landscape you will traverse on this tour is memorable and inspiring. Its focal point is the Mad River, which carves a course through a narrow valley between the Northfield and Green Mountain ranges in a series of inviting pools, riffles and gorges. Along the way it passes classic New England villages, pastoral farmlands, covered bridges, and some of Vermont's highest peaks.

The river's milling power and fertile floodplain were magnets for 18th and 19th century settlers. Reminders of those bygone times abound in the architecture and landscape features of the valley. The latter half of the 20th century has witnessed the valley's renaissance as a recreation and resort center, hosting several downhill and Nordic ski areas, a particularly scenic segment of the Long Trail, year round events and festivals, and a full complement of services, goods and accommodations.

The tour is designed to introduce the cyclist to the Mad River Valley in all of its drama and diversity. It will take you into historic Waitsfield and Warren villages; past art galleries and antique shops; up the valley walls past hillside farms, stone walls and panoramic overlooks; over dirt roads lined with stately sugar maples; and along the clear flowing waters of the Mad River.

Route Description:
- Park in the Village of Waitsfield where public parking can be found across from the library on Route 100. This scenic hamlet is listed on the national Register of Historic Places and boasts many fine, well-maintained 18th- and 19th-century structures. Greek Revival is the prominent architectural style. Waitsfield had its origins as a milling settlement, but quickly evolved into the main commercial center of the Mad River Valley.
- Turn east at the village's main intersection and proceed through The Great Eddy Covered Bridge over the Mad River. Also on the national Register, this span is the second oldest covered bridge in Vermont and the oldest in continuous operation. Built in 1833, its braces were actually hewn from tree crotches. Just below the bridge is a popular swimming hole.
- Climb out of the village and take your first left onto Common Road (0.4 mile).
- Climb rather steeply for another 1.2 miles on paved surfaces before reaching Waitsfield Common. If you don't choose to ride the Fayston option, you have just completed what is far and away the most difficult part of this loop. Here you will bear right onto Common Road and cruise along a high plateau for about 3 miles on a dirt surface, passing occasional farmsteads and panoramic vistas.
- At 4.4 miles bear left onto the paved surface of East Warren Road to continue the loop. You will soon encounter a roller coaster dip and rise and then continue on a plateau into the town of Warren.
- At 8.4 miles, just after you pass Airport Road, the pavement will bend sharply to the right and begin an exciting 2-mile descent along Freeman Brook into the village of Warren.
- When you reach the “T” intersection in the village, you will need to turn right to continue the loop, but first, make a left and see the rest of this picturesque hamlet. Warren Village is another national register site. Although it had its beginnings as a mill village, all of its early mill and dam sites have been lost to floods and fires. However, over 70 historic structures remain in this tight cluster of residences, commercial buildings and churches. The covered bridge at the far end of the village dates to 1879 and was built by one man.
- Backtrack cross the Mad River and turn right onto Route 100 North.
Continue north, paralleling the river until you reach the intersection of Routes 100 and 17. If you are tiring at this point, you may continue north on Route 100, through the settlement of Irasville. You will find a variety of shops and stores, and back to the village of Waitsfield (16.3 miles). If you're still pretty fresh and in the mood for some hills and incredible scenery, turn left onto Route 17.

1.02 miles from the intersection, take your first right onto Number Nine Road. Climb steeply, bearing right at an island of mailboxes. Soon you will reach the Bragg Hill Farm, c. 1843, providing spectacular views to the south and east.

Bear right at the intersection of Stagecoach Road and Bragg Hill, then left onto Kew-Vasseur Road (3.0 miles).

Here you will climb once again to another marvelous vantage point, descend into a small basin, climb again and descend to a "T" intersection (4.5 miles).

Turn right here onto Center Fayston Road and descend swiftly for 2.6 miles to Route 100, taking time to admire the scenery. The last part of this descent is very steep so check your brakes at the top.

Turn right onto Route 100 South and pedal 1.6 miles back to the Village of Waitsfield (loop total is 8.7 miles).
Mad River Valley Recreation Path
4.5 miles

Terrain and Road Conditions:
This route is quite short. It is flat on the recreation path, and flat to gently rolling on the road portion. The recreation path is mostly a dirt track, but may be sandy, grassy or gravelly in places and is not suitable for "skinny tires." Access to the recreation path is provided by an easement granted through the generosity of the landowner and the path is maintained by a network of local volunteers (The Mad River Path Association). Please respect all posted rules and STAY ON THE PATH. Also ride with caution and at prudent speed as the path receives considerable pedestrian use by dog walkers, families with small children and others.

The road sections of this loop are dirt, with the exception of a very short section of Tremblay Road which is paved.

Tour Highlights:
This loop will take you along the banks of the beautiful Mad River, past farm fields, swimming holes, wetlands, under a covered bridge, and through flood plain forests, offering views of the surrounding mountains all along the way.

Route Description:
1. Park at the Recreation Path parking lot on the west side of the Meadow Road Bridge.
2. Turn right out of the lot back onto Meadow Road, cross the bridge and then take an immediate, hard right just after the bridge, onto the path.
3. The path more or less follows the course of the river for about 1.5 miles before branching off to the east. It is well marked the entire way. At about the 2-mile mark, the path will deposit you onto Tremblay Road.
4. Turn left onto Tremblay Road. A short climb will bring you to the intersection of North Road where you will turn left again.
5. Stay on North Road for about 2 rolling miles before reaching the intersection of Meadow Road at the bottom of a hill, shortly after passing a dairy farm.
6. Turn left onto Meadow Road and ride back to the parking lot.

Note: If you would like to avoid automobile traffic altogether, simply turn around and retrace your steps on the recreation path after reaching Tremblay Road.
**Montpelier East Montpelier**

16.5 (9.2 mile option)

**Terrain and Road Conditions:**
These loops are not terribly long, but it’s quite hilly - particularly on the way out of and into Montpelier. With the exception of one short segment over very rough surfaces, the roads upon which you will ride are well maintained and fairly wide dirt or asphalt surface. Most road names are posted.

**Tour Highlights:**
Atop the golden dome of the Statehouse in the City of Montpelier stands a statue of Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture. This tour takes you from her home in Vermont’s charming capital city out to the beautiful and productive farmlands she symbolizes - and back again.

Montpelier is the smallest state capital in the U.S. at a population of 8,000. Its thriving downtown hosts several impressive government buildings and an array of historically and architecturally significant commercial buildings. The latter host a variety of unique businesses and restaurants.

Montpelier is a compact city. Only minutes out of town, on the back roads of East Montpelier, stone walls, majestic sugar maples, historic barns, churches and farmsteads, and mountain views across verdant pastures grace the landscape.

Note: For those wishing to both shorten the ride and return back onto pavement. Continue on Center Road for about one mile and a half to its intersection with the County Road. As you approach this junction, great long-range views open up to the south and west over the City of Montpelier.

**Route Description:**
- **Park in the City of Montpelier** (public parking can be found in several lots and on the street, but it’s not always easy, especially when the legislature is in session). After seeing the various points of interest downtown, proceed north on Main Street bearing right at the roundabout across from the former Masonic Temple which now houses a medical clinic.
- **Climb steadily out of town on Upper Main Street** (on the way you will pass the New England Culinary Institute on the left - the school operates several fine restaurants in the city which are well worth visiting!). After a sharp left hand turn, Main Street becomes County Road, flattens out a bit and becomes a bit more rural in character. About a mile and a half out of town you will pass the Morse Farm stand on the right where a variety of local agricultural products, crafts and gifts may be purchased.
- **Continue on the County Road until its intersection with Barnes Road on the right (3.2 miles). Barnes Road (unpaved) will lead you through a residential area to the historic settlement of East Montpelier Center.**
- **Turn left onto Center Road (4 miles).** Shortly you will pass the Old Meeting House (c. 1823), a National Register Historic Site and community landmark, on the right. Take a moment to admire this fine example of “Federal Vermont” architecture.
- **Continue up scenic and historic Center Road pedaling on dirt surfaces past tidy farmsteads and beneath the canopy of majestic roadside sugar maples. Center Road appears in State records as early as 1793 as “the road from East Montpelier to Memphremagog” and as you travel upon it, you may believe that time is standing still.**
- **At about 6.6 miles, turn right onto Sibley Road.** Notice the old farmhouse which soon appears on your left - it was built in 1795 and is reputed to have been involved in the embargo of the War of 1812 and the Underground Railroad. Further down the road on your left, you will pass an impressive complex of agricultural buildings known as the Sibley Farm. The Groton Mountains to the east provide a splendid backdrop for this arresting scene.
- **Shortly after the Sibley Farm, the road branches in a “Y” at a grassy triangle. Take the left fork and continue for one-half mile before turning left onto a rugged jeep trail which runs uphill through a pasture within sight of the farmhouse at the end of Foster Road. Stay on this trail as it winds through the woods for about .6 mile. Turn right onto Chickering Road at the end of the trail.**
early as 1793 as “the road from East Montpelier to Memphremagog” and as you travel upon it, you may believe that time is standing still.

In just over one-half mile you will come to a “T” intersection. Turn right onto Guyette Road. One mile later turn right at another “T” onto Snow Hill Road. The views from the height of land on this road are inspiring. Farms, fields, woods and mountains form a patchwork landscape.

Continue straight over pleasant, rolling terrain for almost three miles. (Snow Hill Road will change to Dodge Road at a four-way intersection.)

At the end of Dodge Road (12.8 miles) turn left back onto Center Road, through the hamlet of East Montpelier Center, past the Old Meeting House and back onto pavement. Continue on Center Road for about a mile and a half to its intersection with the County Road. As you approach this junction, great long-range views open up to the south and west over the City of Montpelier.

Turn left onto the County Road and retrace your steps back down Main Street to downtown Montpelier. Use caution on this steep descent.
Northfield Tour
12.3 Miles

Terrain and Road Conditions:
This route is not long, but contains two very steep climbs. The "upside" of this is that in 12 miles of cycling, there is only about a mile and a half of "gear crunching" the rest is flat, downhill or gently rolling. Road surfaces vary from paved State highway to narrow, winding dirt roads. Most of the route is unpaved.

Tour Highlights:
This tour takes you through a variety of landscapes in a relatively short distance. Along its course you will encounter cool forests, panoramic mountain views, hillside farms, and a small urban center steeped in history. The tour begins and ends in Northfield Village that has a population of 2,000. Chartered in 1781, Northfield has had its share of ups and downs. Its first period of rapid growth began in 1848 when it was established as the headquarters of the Central Vermont Railway. Just five years later, in an apparent vendetta against the town, Vermont's governor, vowing to "make grass grow in the streets of Northfield," moved the railroad headquarters to St. Albans. However, Northfield was not about to roll over. In 1866, Norwich University, a private military academy, moved to Northfield giving the town a much needed infusion of life. The university is still going strong, as you will see. In the 1890's the granite industry became established in Northfield bringing with it many Spanish and Italian stone workers. During the Great Depression of the 1930's, the industry was forced to consolidate its resources into nearby Barre, plunging Northfield into yet another period of decline. The town bounced back once again behind the establishment of a knitting and woolen industry and the expansion of the university. Today, Northfield is a proud and thriving small town.

Route Description:
- Park at Depot Square in the heart of the Village of Northfield and proceed east on Wall Street, across the railroad tracks and the Dog River.
- Turn left onto Water Street at your first intersection and follow along the flood plain of the river. The Dog river is known as one of Vermont's better trout streams.
- At about 1.2 miles, after passing Terry Hill Road, the road bends sharply to the right and up Dole Hill Road. This road climbs steeply for almost a mile, past Norwich University Cemetery, to an open hilltop with nice views of the Dog River valley and the hills beyond. After cresting the hill, you will descend, bearing left at a grassy triangle and left again at a stop sign (2.8 miles) onto Smith Hill Road.
- Continue your descent on Smith Hill Road to the intersection of Rte. 12A (4.1 miles).
- Bear left at the top of the hill. In about a mile, panoramic views to the west begin to unfold, each more magnificent than the previous. On a clear day, Vermont's highest peak, Mount Mansfield, is prominent on the northwest horizon.
- After 3 miles, Winch Hill Road drops sharply back to the valley intersecting Route12A again at 10.3 miles.
- Turn right onto Rte. 12A, then left at its intersection with Rte. 12 (11.2 miles). Proceed past Norwich University, or take time to explore its beautiful campus and military museum. Continue down Main Street with its many well kept, historic homes, returning to Depot Square (12.3 miles).
- Continue your descent on Smith Hill Road to the intersection of Rte. 12A (4.1 miles).
- Turn left onto 12A and proceed under a trestle bridge. Take the first right onto Bull Run Rd (4.4 Miles).
- You will ride through a cool streamside forest for 2.2 miles on gently rolling terrain before turning left onto Winch Hill Road. This turn comes shortly after you cross the fourth bridge over Bull Run. The ascent up Winch Hill is extremely steep and it may be necessary to dismount and walk in places. However, it only lasts about a half mile and you will be well rewarded for your efforts.
- Bear left at the top of the hill. In about a mile, panoramic views to the west begin to unfold, each more magnificent than the previous. On a clear day, Vermont's highest peak, Mount Mansfield, is prominent on the northwest horizon.
- After 3 miles, Winch Hill Road drops sharply back to the valley intersecting Route12A again at 10.3 miles.
- Turn right onto Rte. 12A, then left at its intersection with Rte. 12 (11.2 miles). Proceed past Norwich University, or take time to explore its beautiful campus and military museum. Continue down Main Street with its many well kept, historic homes, returning to Depot Square (12.3 miles).
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Waterbury - Stowe
22.2 Miles

Terrain and Road Conditions:
Although this loop has a few fairly rugged climbs, they are broken up by stretches of easy, level pedaling - particularly on the Stowe Recreation Path - and exhilarating descents. Almost half of your trip will be covered on paved surfaces (including two and a half miles on the Stowe Bike Path) with the remainder being on fairly wide, well maintained dirt roads.

Tour Highlights:
Variety is the hallmark of this loop. It will take the cyclist past panoramic mountain views, under "haunted" covered bridges, through woods and pastures, along and over small rivers, into one of Vermont's best known villages, and past several shops and tourist attractions. Just about everyone will find the type of cycling experience they seek at some point on this ride.

Route Description:
- Park along the road at the Waterbury Center village green, reached by turning east off Route 100. The village green was the southern terminus of Vermont's last trolley line. The Mt. Mansfield Electric Trolley Co. ran from Waterbury Center to Stowe from 1897 to 1932. Provisions are available at the general store west of the green, as they have been since the mid 1800's.
- Take 1 quick left at the green to reach Maple Street. For a mile or so you will ride on paved level ground through a residential neighborhood before beginning your ascent of Barnes Hill. Here the pavement will give way to dirt and the gentle terrain and suburban feel will end. As you climb and crest Barnes Hill, excellent views of Mount Mansfield (Vermont's highest peak) and the Green Mountains will open up on your left. On the right, you will pass two scenic farms nestled at the base of the Worcester Range.
- At about 3.7 miles, you will bear to the left at a 3-way intersection. Here, Barnes Hill Road becomes known as Stowe Hollow Road. After a short ascent to the height of land between Waterbury Center and Stowe Village, the route drops sharply for a long, swift and very scenic 2-mile descent.
- At 5.6 miles you will arrive at a 4-way intersection with a STOP sign. Proceed across the intersection and under a covered bridge, onto Covered Bridge Road. According to local legend, this bridge has been haunted for 150 years by the ghost of a young woman named Emily who hung herself from the rafters after being spurned by her lover.
- Bear left back onto Stowe Hollow Road (paved) and descend quickly into the Village of Stowe (7.6 miles). This route will deposit you on Main Street (Rte. 100), opposite Community Church, Stowe's most famous landmark.
- Cross Main Street into the church driveway and go behind the building where you will find the Stowe Recreation Path. First, take a little time to explore Stowe Village. All varieties of food, accommodations and shopping are available in Stowe; both in the village and on the Mountain Road (Rte. 108). Car shows, horse shows, concerts, festivals, and other events are frequent throughout the year.
- The recreation path is a popular spot and for good reason. It is flat, scenic, paved and free of motorized vehicles. On weekends and holidays it can attract hordes of walkers, bikes, and roller bladers, so exercise caution. Keep your speed down and your eyes up. The path meanders back and forth along and over the West Branch of the Little River for about 5.5 miles. This tour, however, employs only a 2.7 mile section. Shortly after the 2.5 mile point which is marked on the pavement, the path crosses under a bridge. Immediately after the bridge, a parking area/access point will appear to the left. Get off the path here and turn right out of the parking lot onto Luce Hill Road (paved; 10.3 miles).
- After a short flat, you will begin a fairly long, rather steep ascent. Proceed straight, passing Barrows Road on the left. Near what seems to be the top of the hill, the road turns sharply to the left and climbs more gradually for another 1/2 mile to the Trapp Family Lodge. The Trapps, of the Sound of Music fame, settled here and built this establishment after fleeing the Nazi's in the late 1930's. This hilltop location reminded them of their native Austria. The views to the left of the Worcester Range, and further up the road to the right of Nebraska Notch, are unparalleled.
- After passing the Lodge complex, the road turns to dirt and begins a very beautiful, but very steep descent into the Village of the Little River. Be sure your brakes are in good working order!
At 14.2 miles at the bottom of the hill, take a left onto Moscow Road (paved). Proceed along the river and through the little Village of Moscow to the road's intersection with Rte 100 (16.4 miles).

Turn right onto Rte. 100 South. Although this is a heavily traveled route, it has wide shoulders and you will only be on it for a short distance (less than a mile).

Route 100 will make a gradual climb up Shutesville Hill. Near the top, across from a display of chainsaw carvings, turn right onto Gregg Hill Road (17.4 miles).

Gregg Hill Road (dirt) will loop back to Rte. 100 after 3.9 very pleasant miles of cruising (21.3 miles).

Turn right (south) onto Rte. 100. Turn left onto Hollow Road just after passing the Cold Hollow Cider Mill, one of Vermont's most popular tourist attractions. Continue back to the Village Green.
Websterville Loop
13.7 Miles

Terrain and Road Conditions:
Although this route is fairly short, there are a few good climbs, especially after reaching Washington Village. Roads are paved near the settled areas, but most of the tour is on unpaved, gravel roads.

Tour Highlights:
Granite is the backbone of Vermont. Nowhere is this more evident than in the vicinity of Barre, where the landscape, economy, and culture have been defined by this rock for 200 years. This route will take you past historic and active quarries (including the world’s largest!). But granite isn’t the only attraction - there are Indian trails, historic homes, three villages - and of course, the classic Vermont countryside. Although the route is fairly short, there are a few long climbs.

Route Description:

- Park at the Barre Town Elementary School on Websterville Rd., Lower Websterville.
- From Barre Town Parking area turn right onto Websterville Road. From this point until you reach Washington Village you will be following the Historic Coos Indian Trail, one of only two East/West prehistoric Indian trails known to have existed in Vermont.
- Continue on Websterville Road for about a mile until you reach the Wells Lawson Quarry on the right. This is the oldest quarry on Millstone Hill and was opened sometime around 1800 by Abijah Abbot who is said to have provided millstones to many of the early gristmills in New England. This was the deepest quarry in the world having a depth of over 400 ft.
- At the quarry, Websterville Road bears left. Continue straight for a few hundred feet to the next intersection then turn left onto Little John Road, getting off the main road (Church Hill Road), which continues up hill. Little John Road will be paved for .2 miles then will continue as a gravel road for another mile. Historically this is the most interesting part of the old Coos Indian Trail. It is part of the very first road opened throughout the town of Barre and was home to many of the town's first settlers.
- Shortly after pavement ends on the left is the "Lodge at Millstone Hill," a converted barn that's now a new bed and breakfast whose property contains many old quarries and private trails. Farther down the road on the right you will come to 2 abandoned quarries with historic markers. These are typical of the 50 or more abandoned quarries located within a one mile radius of this road. What was once an industrial wasteland some 100 years ago has now been reclaimed by nature to become one of Millstone Hill's unique man made natural wonders. These quarries range in depth from 25-50 feet. The water is spring fed and contains several varieties of fish. Beyond the quarries at the intersection is the historic Nichols House. It was built around 1800 and is believed to be the oldest home in Barre Town. It still contains several original fireplaces.
- The road will continue through open farmland for about 1.9 miles until you reach the intersection with Lambert Road. Turn Left onto Lambert Road, descending .7 mile to the intersection with Route 110. Turn Right onto Route 110, and follow for .7 mile going into Washington Village.
- At the library in the village turn right onto Firehouse Road. Go up the hill for .4 mile turning left onto McDonald Road at the cemetery. (McDonald Road will turn into Washington Road, and eventually it will become Tower Road, and then Graniteville Road).
- After 1.5 miles, you will start to climb a steep hill. (Climb will start at Poor Farm Road and will continue for .5 mile) The road will narrow and eventually merge with an unnamed road (when you see a Chalet type home); continue straight on road. After about another mile, you will pass Sugarhouse Road. Shortly after you will pass through a pine tree plantation. About .5 mile beyond, you will see the large communication tower on the right. This is the highest point of the trip.
- Continue on road, notice view of active quarries after about .5 mile. Continue for about 1 mile, you will then be descending into Upper Graniteville and will then see the large Rock of Ages quarry on your left. This is the largest granite quarry in the world. Several hundred feet deep and almost 100 acres in size, it is now filled with water and is no longer active. You can turn left at the old tourist center and get to the edge of the quarry to get a better look at its size.
- Then continue down the hill for about 1 mile. You will pass through Lower Graniteville and will reach the new Rock of Ages Tourist Center. This new state of the art tourist center will open in the spring of 2004. There you can get a comprehensive overview of the Barre Granite story, or visit the manufacturing plant and tour an active quarry. When done with your tour, turn right back onto Graniteville Road. Follow .2 miles back to Barre Town Elementary School parking lot.
and a beehive oven. Continue straight through the intersection onto Lowery Road. Just beyond the intersection .3 miles on the left you will come to the historic Sherman Farm. This was the home of Jonathan Sherman, the winner of the Famous Fist Fight held in the 1790's when Barre was renamed from Wildersburg to Barre (after Barre, Massachusetts), the home town of Mr. Sherman and many of Barre's early settlers.
**Other Activities**

There is much more to Central Vermont than biking through scenic vistas. The beauty of the Green Mountains sometimes overshadows the activity that takes place in the region.

- There is a thriving arts community with galleries, performances and festivals.
- There are historic sites and buildings - buildings that are in daily use, but open to visitors.
- There are walking tours of historic districts.
- There are antique and craft shops, and boutiques of all kinds.
- There are makers of Vermont products who invite you to tour their facilities.
- There are parks, pools and playgrounds.
- There is natural beauty that can be explored by car, canoe or boat as well as by bicycle.
- There are swimming holes and beaches, boating, fishing and camping.
- There are hayrides and horseback riding.
- There is skiing cross-country and downhill and snowmobiling.
- There are numerous granite monuments in Barre and elsewhere that reflect and preserve the region's heritage and ethnic diversity. And much more...

Visitors can arrive by automobile, by plane, by bus or by Amtrak's Vermonter.

There is also plenty of help finding the information you need to make the most of your visit.

The Central Vermont chamber of Commerce publishes the following visitor materials:

- Central Vermont Travel Magazine,
- Central Vermont Back Road Tours (automobile orientation),
- Central Vermont Recreation and Road Map,
- Central Vermont restaurant & lodging quick listings guide, and
- Central Vermont points of interest.

The chamber can also respond to special inquiries on a variety of topics.

Don't hesitate to write or call.

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CV Chamber / P.O. Box 336 / Barre, Vermont 05641
1-877-887-3678 or CVermont1 @ AOL.com
Always wear a helmet to avoid head injuries.
Be sure your bike is in good mechanical order.
Carry water and rest when tired.
Ride at speeds appropriate for the road conditions.
Be visible, especially on dark days or near dusk. (These routes not recommended for night riding.)
Be prepared for changing weather conditions.
Be sure to follow the rules of the road:

- Make sure you know and obey all traffic laws.
- Always ride on the right side of the road.
- Use proper hand signals when turning.
- Never ride in between parked cars.
- When riding through a curve, ride in single file, slow down and stay to the side of the road.

Please:
The tours in this guide are within public rights-of-way, but please respect the rights of neighboring landowners. Show you care for Vermont's landscape by staying within the public right-of-way or asking permission to enter property.

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USE Caution:
The cyclist must realize that potential hazards exist along any Route. Neither the Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce nor the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission assume any responsibility for your safety on these bike routes.

For more area information visit www.central-vt.com

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