



Family Bike Ride Recommendations

Take the family out on some of our great nearby biking paths. To make your planning easier, REI employees have selected some of their favorites below.

Be sure to bring these necessities along on your ride:

- Helmet
- Drinking water
- Lunch or snacks
- Map and route directions
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit
- Tire mini-pump or CO2
- Spare tube or patch kit
- Tire levers



For a complete cycling checklist, visit [Expert Advice](#) on REI.com.

Here Are Five of Our Favorite Kid-Friendly Local Bike Rides

Woodland Park: Centennial Trail

Terrain: **Paved trail**

Distance: **15 miles roundtrip; 800 feet of elevation gain on the way back from Manitou Lake. (For shorter versions, start at Manitou Lake trailhead.)**

Why This Ride: The scenery along this paved trail is spectacular—a nice mix of meadows, flowers, forest and a great view of Pikes Peak on the return trip.

Ride Description: At the Gold Hill parking lot, start your ride on the sidewalk on the northeast side of Highway 67 and take it as it turns north and becomes the Centennial Trail. The trail is paved all the way to Manitou Lake. Keep in mind that the trip to the lake is all downhill (and therefore uphill on the return). However, the return trip from Manitou Lake provides some great vistas of Pikes Peak to distract you as you tackle the 800 feet of elevation gain. There is also a trailhead at Manitou Lake, so you can do this ride with the uphill section first and the downhill on your return, if you prefer. If your family prefers a shorter ride, start at Manitou Lake and ride as far as you wish before turning around—it's downhill back to the lake.

Driving Directions: Park in the Gold Hill North shopping center in the town of Woodland Park, located at the intersection of Highway 24 and Highway 67 in Woodland Park. There is free parking in the Gold Hill parking lot, but there is a \$5 parking/entrance fee if you decide to start from Manitou Lake.

Tips: There are several good picnic spots along the trail—including at Manitou Lake—which make it a great leisurely ride. Consider making a day of it: Manitou Lake is popular for fishing, and hiking trail #670 goes all the way around the lake. Restrooms are available at both ends of the ride.

Garden of the Gods

Terrain: **Paved road with a bike lane**

Distance: **This is a 6-mile loop on park roads, with side-trip options; there is approximately 1,000 feet of elevation gained and lost on this never-flat ride. (A shorter, 3.25-mile version is available.)**

Why This Ride: This nationally known park offers amazing views of Pikes Peak and spectacular rock formations and is a great place to enjoy a day of biking, hiking and just hanging out.

Ride Description: From the Garden of the Gods visitor center on 30th, head west on Gateway Road and an unbelievable view of Pikes Peak comes into view framed by magnificent red rock formations. At about a half mile, the road becomes one-way as it turns north on Juniper Way. This begins a steady uphill segment on a very wide bike lane. The last part of the climb is a bit of a challenge but you are rewarded at the 1-mile point with a spectacular view of the park. This is postcard material, so bring your camera. From this overlook, it is a fast downhill descent for most of the way to the famous Balanced Rock formation at mile 2.7. The last part, however, will be a good climb. After taking in the amazing Balanced Rock, proceed back in the direction you came and follow Garden Loop Road to the Trading Post at mile 3.1—a popular tourist stop with a nice restaurant and outdoor patio. From the Trading Post, head back north on the one-way road up a pretty good grade to a turn at mile 4.1. Follow this mostly downhill road all the way back to the visitors center. If your crew's not up for the whole ride, opt for just the 3.25-mile Juniper Way Loop.

Driving Directions: From I-25 take Exit #146 Garden of the Gods Road west to 30th. Turn left on 30th and drive about one mile until you come to the visitor center on the left. There is plenty of free parking at the visitor center. Remember, however, that the center closes at 5 p.m. and they close the gates to the parking area. There is no admission fee for the park or the visitor center.

Tips: Spend some time at the visitor center and check out the movie that recounts the history of the park. There is also a small restaurant where you can fuel up for the ride or enjoy a "lunch with a view" afterward. There are restrooms about every half mile along the trail.

New Santa Fe Trail

Terrain: **Gravel trail**

Distance: **4.8 miles roundtrip to Ice Lake. Or, continue on for 17 miles one way from the Edmondson trailhead to Palmer Lake; approximately 1,000 feet uphill from south to north.**

Why This Ride: It is an easy, family friendly ride on a wide, gravel trail. This 17-mile section which runs along the front range is easily accessible from a variety of trailheads.

Ride Description: From the Edmondson trailhead, ride north approximately 2 miles where you will enter the Air Force Academy. This section is open during daylight hours but can be closed on occasion because of security situations. You must wear a helmet while cycling on academy grounds. Parents must carry a photo ID; kids not accompanied by their parents should also carry their own ID. At 2.4 miles you will arrive at Ice Lake where you can rest, and even fish if you are so inclined—it's also a perfect turnaround point for a short ride. Beyond Ice Lake, this rewarding ride takes you through a great variety of natural vistas. The stretch that follows Monument Creek features great bird and wildlife viewing. An early-morning or late-evening ride may even offer a glimpse of the beavers hard at work on the many dams along the stream. The northern terminus is Palmer Lake, where you can also park if you prefer to do this ride from north to south.

Driving Directions: From I-25, take the Woodmen Road exit west toward the mountains. The Edmondson trailhead is 0.25 miles on your right after you cross Monument Creek. There's plenty of free parking at the trailhead.

Tips: This is normally a 3-hour ride but you should take your time and enjoy the many rest stops along the way. There are restrooms at the start and end of this ride as well as at each of the trailheads you encounter along the way.

Palmer Park

Terrain: **Unpaved trails**

Distance: **There are more than 25 miles of roads and trails in the park; few are flat, but some are relatively gentle.**

Why This Ride: This popular area is a mountain-biking oasis in the heart of Colorado Springs.

Ride Description: There are way too many trails to describe, but you can start planning your trip by picking up a free map at REI which details this wonderful park. The three beginner trails—Greencrest, Mesa and Grandview—all have easy access and are family friendly. This park offers a great variety of opportunities for riders of all abilities—from gentle to very challenging—and the trails attract bike enthusiasts from all around the city. Always be alert for others who hike, bike and ride horseback in the park, and be sure to yield to others in order to preserve this area for bikers to use.

Driving Directions: The main parking area is in the Meadows. From North Academy Boulevard (Highway 83), turn west on Maizeland Road and take your first right into the park. The next right puts you into the Meadows area. The free map of Palmer Park also points out several other approaches to the park. There are numerous free parking areas, including the Meadows, throughout the park.

Tips: There are some great overviews where you can stop and enjoy the panoramas of the city and Pikes Peak, so don't forget to bring your camera. Several restrooms can be found throughout the park.

Ute Valley Park

Terrain: **Unpaved trails**

Distance: **A 2.5-mile loop, with a variety of other loop options available; most consist of short hills connected by more gentle trails.**

Why This Ride: Protected by the city from land developers, this urban park offers plenty of great riding in varied terrain.

Ride Description: The trailhead off of Vindicator has a pond with a wooden bridge that leads to the network of trails. The trails run on either side of a ravine making the riding either uphill or downhill—none are flat. Because the loops aren't long this is a great area to explore several trails. Some of the side trails lead out of the park and others intersect or shortcut the main trail. There is even a short section of slick rock to test your skills.

Driving Directions: From the south, take I-25 north, exit at Rockrimmon Boulevard (Exit 147), and follow the exit road around, keeping right at the intersection with Mark Dabbling Boulevard. Pass under I-25 and take the next left onto South Rockrimmon Boulevard. After 1.5 miles, turn left onto Vindicator Drive, go nearly a mile and look for the parking area on the left, a quarter mile past Eagleview Middle School. (Note: As of the time of publication, the exit from I-25 was under massive construction. Please check a map and be willing to find alternate ways of getting to the trailhead.) There is adequate free parking at the Vindicator trailhead. If this is full, there is parking at the school track parking lot, right next to the park.

Tips: There are restrooms at the trailhead parking lot.



REI's PEAK program uses a fun presentation filled with hands-on activities and games to teach kids ages 6 through 12 about taking care of the outdoors.

Ask an REI team member about scheduling a free PEAK presentation for your classroom or youth group, or visit www.rei.com/PEAK for more information.



First Saturday in June The American Hiking Society's National Trails Day, sponsored by REI, is a nationwide celebration of trails. Celebrate with your family by taking a hike, or volunteering for a trail clean-up project. Ask an REI team member about how to get involved, or visit www.rei.com for more information.