



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

Sugar River State Trail

Terrain: **Paved and crushed-rock path**

Distance: **The total length of the trail is 23 miles one way. However, you can park in New Glarus, Albany, Monticello or Brodhead and bike as far as you wish; minimal elevation gain.**

Why This Ride: One of southern Wisconsin's best wildlife corridors, this path connects four quaint, historic towns.

Ride Description: Parks, ponds, streams and old farms' are some of the sights along the Sugar River State Trail, which connects New Glarus, Albany, Monticello and Brodhead. New Glarus is a great place to start or end your ride, because it has a public pool, a charming historic train depot, plus an ice cream stand. If you'd rather stick to raw nature, head over to Brodhead and ride across a replica wooden train bridge that guides the trail into beautiful woodlands.

Driving Directions: The official trailhead is located in New Glarus at 418 Railroad Street New Glarus is located off of Highway 69 south of Madison. The trail can also be access from parking areas in Albany, Monticello and Brodhead.

Tips: There are several small parks and playgrounds along the trail. Restrooms are located at the parking areas and at various points along the trail. Riders over the age of 16 will need to purchase a trail pass; \$4 per day or \$15 per year.

Pheasant Branch Conservancy Loop Trail

Terrain: **Gravel trail**

Distance: **4.2 miles roundtrip, or add the Pheasant Branch Creek Trail (an additional 1.3 miles one way); minimal elevation gain**

Why This Ride: Families can enjoy a variety of plants and animals—including some endangered species—without even leaving the City of Middleton.

Ride Description: Take your time on this intriguing ride through the Pheasant Branch Conservancy Loop Trail, which was created in 2005. Like adventure? This trail follows a creek and will provide kids with a sense of exploration as they look for deer, herons, frogs, sandhill cranes, ducks, geese, hawks, owls and dozens of songbirds. Take in the sights and sounds of a variety of natural habitats, including a marsh, prairies, meadows and woodlands—you'll hardly notice that the Conservancy is bordered by residential areas on three sides. If 20 minutes (the average time it takes to complete the loop) isn't long enough, keep riding on the Pheasant Branch Creek Trail, which features bridges over the creek bed.

Driving Directions: The Conservancy Loop Trail is accessible from Pheasant Branch Road or from Orchid Heights Park in Middleton. There is free parking in the lot on Pheasant Branch Road, as well as in Orchid Heights Park. There is also free parking along the Pheasant Branch Creek Trail in Fireman's Park.

Tips: Take a break on the North Trail (part of the Conservancy Loop Trail) to walk to the natural spring observation deck. You can also hike up to Belle Fontaine Knoll and get a wonderful view of the surrounding countryside. Restrooms are available at Orchid Heights Park and at Fireman's Park.

Military Ridge State Trail: Verona to Madison

Terrain: **Paved path**

Distance: **About 10 miles roundtrip out-and-back; minimal elevation gain. Want more? The entire trail extends for 40 miles, mostly on unpaved path**

Why This Ride: When it comes to landscape, this trail offers a little bit of everything and proves to be a delightful ride through some of southern Wisconsin's most beautiful scenery.

Ride Description: Woods, wetlands, prairies, villages, small cities, agriculture—you can see it all on the Military Ridge State Trail, a rails-to-trails development that connects Dodgeville and Madison. A good way for the youngest riders to begin exploring the trail's many possibilities is to start in Verona and ride east toward Madison on the 5-mile section paved. If you need a breather along the way, take a break at one of the observation decks to view wildlife.

Driving Directions: For the paved section, park in the lot at Highway PB east of Verona. Or, you can access other sections of the trail at parking lots in Mount Horeb, Blue Mounds, Barneveld, Riley, and Highway YZ (0.2 miles east of Highway 23, near Dodgeville). The trail office is in Blue Mound State Park, 4350 Mounds Park Rd.

Tips: If you're up for a longer ride, head to Riley for a pancake breakfast on Sundays or visit the quaint shops in Mt. Horeb during a festival weekend. Restrooms are available along the route every 5 to 10 miles. Riders over the age of 16 must purchase a state trail pass for \$4 per day or \$15 per year.

Lake Mendota Coastline

Terrain: **Crushed-stone and paved paths**

Distance: **8 miles roundtrip; one moderate climb**

Why This Ride: This striking ride follows the coastline of Lake Mendota in the heart of the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus.

Ride Description: Start at either the University Bay Athletic Fields or the University Memorial Union and enjoy your venture around campus and Lake Mendota. The trail is relatively easy for children. At the Union, it's fun to hop off the bikes and climb up Bascom Hill for a splendid view of the lake. Another highlight of this ride is Picnic Point, a 129-acre peninsula that extends out into Lake Mendota. Here you can walk down the path and enjoy a picnic, view the State Capitol building and watch the many sailboats on the lake.

Driving Directions: Parking is available at the UW Memorial Union or at Lot 60 near the University Bay Fields. The Union is located off of University Avenue at Langdon; Lot 60 is located on Walnut Street near UW Hospital. There are also numerous small lots and street parking areas available as well. Most lots near campus are either metered or require you to pay on exit, but are free on Saturdays and Sundays.

Tips: The UW Memorial Union always has great ice cream or pizza. During the summer, there is live music most nights on the Union Terrace overlooking the lake. It is a Madison must-see. Restrooms are available at the Union.

Capital City Trail—Capital Springs State Recreation Area

Terrain: **Paved trail**

Distance: **9 miles one way; minimal elevation gain**

Why This Ride: This section of the Capital City Trail offers great views of the surrounding areas and a variety of natural scenery to enjoy

Ride Description: Be one of the first riders on this new trail, which opened late in 2006. Just minutes from downtown Madison, this mostly flat trail leads riders through the new Capital Springs State Recreation Area. Enjoy peaceful, open meadows and a beautiful ridge overlooking the surrounding marshes and open fields. There are a few forested sections to give you a break from the sun and allow you to cool down, too.

Driving Directions: This section of the Capital City Trail is located south of the Beltline, off of Lake Farm Road. From the Beltline you will go south on South Towne Drive. Take a left onto Lake Farm Road. The Capital Springs Recreation Area/Nine Springs E-Way is on the right-hand side. Parking is available at the Nine Springs E-Way (on the right side of Lake Farm Road), as well as at the Lussier Family Heritage Center (just a bit farther up Lake Farm Road on the left).

Tips: Any rider over the age of 16 will need a state trail pass. Passes are \$4 per day or \$15 per year. The neighboring Lussier Family Heritage Center offers special events throughout the year, although it is often reserved for private events. There is a Blue Bike program that allows participants to rent a bike for 24 hours to use on the Capital City Trail. Cost is \$5. Restrooms are located at the parking areas.



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.