



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

Cross-Marin Trail

Terrain: **Paved trail**

Distance: **10 miles roundtrip, out and back; no elevation gain.**

Why This Ride: It's an easy ride on a paved trail that follows Lagunitas Creek through a beautiful redwood forest.

Ride Description: Start at the Shafter Bridge parking lot on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, just beyond the town of Lagunitas. Pick up the flat, paved bike path—a converted railroad bed—at Ink Wells Bridge and ride through massive redwoods all the way to Platform Bridge Road in Tocaloma. Look for abundant wildflowers in the spring and spawning salmon in Lagunitas Creek from November to January.

Driving Directions: From San Rafael, head west on 4th Street (which becomes Red Hill Avenue). Bear right onto Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and continue nearly 9 miles. One mile past the town of Lagunitas there is a free parking lot on the left side of the road at Shafter Bridge.

Tips: You'll ride through Samuel P. Taylor Park, a perfect place for a swim or picnic. There are restrooms in the park. Before you hit the trail, pick up snacks for the kids—and an espresso for yourself—at the Lagunitas Market (on the corner of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Cintura Avenue).

Las Gallinas Ponds

Terrain: **Paved path**

Distance: **6 miles roundtrip; no elevation gain**

Why This Ride: This flat fire road not only offers an easy first adventure for beginners, it's the best ride for birding in Marin County.

Ride Description: The wide paved path winds around the Las Gallinas Ponds and then to the top of San Pablo Bay. Along the way you'll encounter an amazing array of birds, both in the water and around the shore. Keep your eyes peeled for herons, kingfishers, swallows, grebes, hawks, owls, osprey and many other species. Wildflowers are another attraction, particularly in the spring, that make this a recommended ride for nature lovers.

Driving Directions: From Highway 101 in Marinwood, take the Smith Ranch Road exit and go east to McInnis Park. Follow the signs to the water treatment plant. There is free parking in the treatment plant parking lot.

Tips: For some post-ride fun, McInnis Park offers mini-golf, a batting cage, 9-hole golf course, driving range and a good Italian restaurant. There are restrooms in the water treatment plant's parking lot.

Mill Valley Bike Path

Terrain: **Paved path**

Distance: **5-mile loop; no elevation gain.**

Why This Ride: A good ride for beginners, this flat, well laid out trail offers plenty of places to stop with excellent bay views.

Ride Description: You won't be riding through the wilderness on this wide, flat, well-used path, but it's an easy ride with plenty of great scenery to offer. The clearly marked loop follows the bay where you'll see views of San Francisco and Tiburon, as well as lots of birds.

Driving Directions: From Highway 101 south, take the CA-131/East Blithedale Avenue Exit toward Tiburon Boulevard. Go right on East Blithedale Avenue and take a left onto Camino Alto and then turn left again onto Sycamore Avenue. There is free parking along Sycamore Avenue where it dead ends into the Mill Valley Middle School.

Tips: Enjoy a picnic lunch along the edge of the path and take in the spectacular bay views. There are restrooms at the nearby water treatment facility.

Crissy Field—Fort Point Trail

Terrain: **Paved path**

Distance: **3 miles roundtrip. No elevation gain.**

Why This Ride: Take in beautiful views of the Bay and Golden Gate Bridge as you ride past recently restored sand dunes, as well as a tidal marsh and lagoon.

Ride Description: After parking along the Crissy Field Beach, start riding on the well-paved Golden Gate Promenade Trail toward the Golden Gate Bridge and Fort Point. You'll pass a couple gentle beaches along the bay, as well as the recently restored tidal marsh and lagoon. The sand dunes have been planted with native species and are great for bird watching. On the return trip, take the side route along the marsh for a loop around the lagoon and you'll cross a wooden bridge (you'll need to walk bikes across the bridge) before returning to the main trail.

Driving Directions: Enter Crissy Field from the Marina Boulevard park entrance (if you're driving east along Marina Boulevard), or enter the Presidio (and Crissy Field) along Marina Boulevard going west (you cannot turn left from Doyle Drive). The parking lot and beach are to the right just as you cross through the gates. There is free parking available just inside the entrance along the beach side of the street or in the lot.

Tips: Have some fun playing on the battlements of the decommissioned Civil War-era Fort Point, the turnaround point for the ride. There are restrooms at Fort Point and the Crissy Field Interpretive Center.

Golden Gate Park—Stow Lake

Terrain: **Paved path**

Distance: **1 mile loop on island, or combine with a lap around the lake for a couple miles. Minimal elevation gain.**

Why This Ride: Stow Lake is a gem in the middle of the city, where kids can ride around the lake or onto the island.

Ride Description: Stow Lake is an artificial lake, complete with artificial island, waterfall and boulders. You can access the island in the middle of Stow Lake via two bridges on opposite sides of the lake. Once on the island, there are concentric paved paths: one around the perimeter and one climbing to the peak of Strawberry Hill and the artificial reservoir and waterfall. The path to Strawberry Hill's peak may not be appropriate for young riders, but the other paths certainly are. Look for flocks of ducks and other water birds as you go.

Driving Directions: You can get to Stow Lake from either John F. Kennedy Drive or Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, in Golden Gate Park. Follow the Stow Lake signs (there are lots of them) toward the museum and science academy complex. Drive to the boathouse and continue east several hundred yards to the Roman Bridge. You'll be on Stow Lake Drive. There is free parking near the Roman Bridge or along Stow Lake Drive.

Tips: The boathouse offers boat rentals (and snacks at the concession stand), for a little change of pace after your ride. There are restrooms at the boathouse.



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.