



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 Four of Our Favorite Kid-Friendly Local Bike Rides

Loch Raven Reservoir Weekend Ride

Terrain: **Paved road**

Distance: **3 miles roundtrip, with little elevation gain; or 4 miles roundtrip, with 250 feet elevation gain in a 0.25-mile switchback climb.**

Why This Ride: It offers spectacular views of the reservoir and surrounding woods. The 3-mile stretch of Loch Raven Drive between Morgan Mill Road and Providence Road is closed to car traffic on the weekends, 10am–5pm.

Ride Description: The ride starts at Loch Raven Drive's north gate (at Morgan Mill Road) and follows the reservoir south across a bridge to a switchback that climbs to the south gate at Providence Road. Built in 1881, the reservoir supplies most of the drinking water for Baltimore County. It also offers local residents easy access to stunning scenery and great outdoor recreation. You'll share the road with walkers, joggers and inline skaters, so be sure kids know road etiquette, including alerting pedestrians when approaching from behind. If you don't want to make the climb up to Providence Road, turn around at the switchback and head back to your car.

Driving Directions: From Baltimore and I-695, take Dulaney Valley Road north (Exit 27B, Route 146). Follow Dulaney Valley Road for several miles as it circles the reservoir. When the road splits, go right onto Loch Raven Drive and follow it to Morgan Mill Road. Park at the gate.

Tips: There are hiking trails in the surrounding woods. You can rent a canoe or kayak at the north end of the reservoir. Swimming is not allowed. There are portable restrooms along Morgan Mill Road.

Grist Mill Trail and River Road

Terrain: **Paved path**

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

Why This Ride: Part of Patapsco Valley State Park, this easy paved trail is ADA-accessible and includes beautiful scenery, lots of history and a swinging bridge.

Ride Description: Start your ride at Lost Lake. For 1.5 miles, you'll follow the Patapsco River. In the Avalon area, you'll come to the park's famous 300-foot swinging bridge. There's also a new 200-foot suspension bridge across the river. Other historic sites include the original path of the B&O Railroad (the first 13 miles of railroad track laid in the United States, with the cars pulled by horses) and the remnants of Bloede Dam, the country's first hydroelectric dam with the turbines inside its hollow core. But the trail isn't just a history lesson. Kids will enjoy riding through the lush piedmont forest that's home to a wide variety of birds, including kingfishers and herons.

Driving Directions: From Baltimore and I-95, take I-195 (Exit 47) east toward BWI Airport. Take Route 1 (Exit 3) south towards Elkridge. Turn right on South Street. The state park entrance is on the left. Once on the park road, turn right at the "T" onto Gun Road, then left onto Glen Artney Road. Follow it until it ends at Lost Lake. The trail begins at the far end of the parking lot near the restrooms. Parking is also available at the Visitor Center in the Avalon Area. A \$2 fee per person is charged at the park gate.

Tips: Restrooms are located at Lost Lake and in the Avalon area. For history buffs, the Avalon Visitor Center has exhibits spanning 300 years. For safety, walk your bikes across the swinging bridge.

BWI Trail

Terrain: **Paved path, with some wooden boardwalks**

Distance: **11-mile loop, with no elevation gain.**

Why This Ride: It's easy, fun and offers a great chance to see planes take off and land. BWI Airport is the only major commercial airport in the country to have a hiking/biking trail encircling it.

Ride Description: This trail is the perfect study in contrasts. Since it loops around BWI Airport, it gives you unmatched views of the planes, and their roar is amazing. But between landings and takeoffs, you'll be equally amazed by the peaceful pine woods, wetlands and wildflower meadows. In addition to jumbo jets overhead, kids may see ducks, Canada geese and herons in the marshy ponds. You'll also come to the 1830s Benson-Hammond House, now a farm museum, and the Andover Equestrian Area where horses amble in the field.

Driving Directions: There are two parking lots: 1) In the Thomas A. Dixon Aircraft Observation Area. From Baltimore, take I-695 to I-97 South. Exit at Route 176, Dorsey Road (Exit 15) and go west, toward the airport for a short distance. The observation area is on the left, before WB&A Road. 2) In Saw Mill Creek Park. From Baltimore and I-695, exit I-97 onto Dorsey Road and go east, away from the airport. The park is on the right, near the I-97 interchange. There are no fees to park at either lot.

Tips: The Dixon Observatory parking lot can fill up fast. The observatory is THE place to watch jets take off and land. There's also a children's play area to keep young kids amused. Restrooms are located at Andover Park and the Amtrak Station.

Baltimore and Annapolis Trail: Annapolis to Earleigh Heights Ranger Station

Terrain: **Paved path**

Distance: **14 miles roundtrip; minimal elevation gain (2% grade).**

Why This Ride: It's easy and relaxed, with pleasant scenery and a chance to see both historical buildings and local wildlife.

Ride Description: This ride covers just over half of the entire 13-mile-long Baltimore and Annapolis Trail that reaches from Annapolis all the way to Glen Burnie. From the south parking lot, the 10-foot-wide path leads you through suburban neighborhoods and past historic reminders of the old B&A Short Line Railroad that used to run here, including the Severna Park Station. Kids will also have a good chance of seeing wildlife in the woods, wetlands and meadows you'll pass. The Earleigh Heights Ranger Station (mile 7) makes a good picnic and turnaround spot. Check there for ranger-led walks, talks and programs.

Driving Directions: From Washington, D.C. and points west, take Highway 50 east to Exit 27 and follow Route 450 toward the Naval Academy. Go 0.1 miles to the south parking lot on the right. Parking is free.

Tips: Restaurants and stores are situated along the way, in case you get an irresistible urge for ice cream or another snack. Severna Park (mile 5) is a good choice for this. There are restrooms at Earleigh Heights Ranger Station.



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.