



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

Chehalis Western Trail

Terrain: **Paved trail**

Distance: **11 miles roundtrip;**
no elevation gain

Why This Ride: It's a flat, rural rail-to-trail path that winds through pastureland, past frog-filled wetlands and beneath a cool, shady tree canopy.

Ride Description: This is the northernmost section of the trail, which is approximately 22 miles in length total. This section is an easy ride that's peaceful and pastoral as it goes from Woodward Bay Conservation Area to Lacey. Oodles of birds take advantage of the nearby wetlands, and their songs provide the "soundtrack" for your trip. The path is also a favorite of garter snakes that like to scoot across the trail in front of you on warm days. Do be cautious of a couple of street crossings along the path, though.

Driving Directions: Use I-5 south from Tacoma and get off at Exit 109 West. Go slightly more than half a mile to Sleater Kinney Road and turn right. Proceed north for 5 miles, and then turn left on 56th Avenue NE, right on Schinke Road NE and then left on Woodward Bay Road. Look for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) signage to your right. There is a designated free parking area.

Tips: Spend a little time in the Woodward Bay Conservation Area at the trailhead. Waterfowl, seals, great blue heron and other shoreline and marine creatures can be found here, making this a prime wildlife viewing area. There are restrooms at the trailhead and along the path.

Cushman Powerline Trail

Terrain: **Paved trail**

Distance: **4.6 miles roundtrip;**
minimal elevation gain

Why This Ride: This broad, rolling trail is so convenient that you can zip over to it for a quick ride any time of day.

Ride Description: It runs next to Highway 16 from the Kimball Drive Park & Ride Lot in Gig Harbor to 14th Avenue NW, so don't expect quiet or solitude. And, just as you might assume from its name, it does in fact follow a powerline. Nonetheless, kids love it for its rolling hills, smooth pavement and easy accessibility. However, they need to know in advance that there are a couple of street crossings to contend with.

Driving Directions: Take Highway 16 west toward Gig Harbor. After crossing the bridge take the Olympic Drive NW exit, turn right onto Olympic Drive, then left and follow it as it turns into Soundview Drive. Turn left onto Hunt and follow it to the Kimball Drive Park & Ride where the trail originates.

If you're driving from the East side of the Narrows bridge, access the trailhead at 14th Avenue NW: Simply take the first exit (Exit 8) after the bridge off the westbound lanes of Highway 16. Turn right off the exit and left onto Reed Road. Travel 0.5 miles and find the well-marked trailhead on your left (the south side). There is free parking at both ends of the trail.

Tips: There are benches and picnic table along the way, so even though it's a short ride, take the time to stop for a snack (or lunch) break. There are no bathrooms at the trailheads.

John Wayne Pioneer Trail at Iron Horse State Park

Terrain: **Gravel trail**

Distance: **This trail basically extends east-west across the state, so you can tailor this ride to any length that suits you; gradual elevation gain as it climbs Snoqualmie Pass.**

Why This Ride: It's an easy introduction to off-road riding with a gentle 2% railroad grade.

Ride Description: This rails-to-trails project follows the former Chicago-Milwaukee-St. Paul-Pacific Railroad line as it bisects the state from east to west, from the Cascade Foothills to the Idaho border. The western portion of the trail is known as Iron Horse State Park; it's open to hikers, bikers, equestrians and horse-drawn wagons in summer, and to snowmobiles, dog sleds and cross-country skiers in winter. Starting off at the westernmost end of the trail, by Rattlesnake Lake near the town of North Bend, the gravel surface is well-maintained and the scenery, as you climb ever higher toward Snoqualmie Pass, becomes more and more beautiful. After about 20 miles, the trail passes through a 2.3-mile tunnel shortly before the summit. Though you probably won't make it this far with young children, be advised that a headlamp or bike light is necessary inside the tunnel. Also, be prepared to put on an extra layer—it is quite chilly inside. (If older kids really want to experience the tunnel, one option is to start the ride at the Hyak Sno-Park by Snoqualmie Pass and ride downhill.)

Driving Directions: Head north on I-5 from Tacoma and take Highway 18 toward Auburn to I-90 East. Take Exit 32 off of I-90, and then turn right on 436th Avenue SE (Cedar Falls Road). Follow this directly into the parking area for Rattlesnake Lake, which is also the trailhead for the John Wayne/Iron Horse Trail. The trailhead is at the north end of the lake. Parking is free.

Tips: Rattlesnake Lake is a perfect place for some post-ride fishing or swimming. Watch for eagles and osprey as they dive for the rainbow trout that are stocked in the lake. Porta-potties are at the trailhead.

Foothills Trail—Meeker to McMillin

Terrain: **Paved trail**

Distance: **8.4 miles roundtrip (or continue further if you wish); minimal elevation gain**

Why This Ride: Built on a former railway, this paved trail has been improved and nurtured over the years and is truly one of Pierce County's recreational jewels.

Ride Description: Miles of trail continue to be added to this extensive 12-foot-wide, multi-use path. It's an easy ride for kids of all ages and experience levels. There are multiple access points along the 15-mile trail that extends from Meeker to McMillin, but the trailhead in Meeker—which was designed to look like a miniature train station—is a good entry point. This section, a 4.2-mile stretch to McMillin, is one of the new additions; it takes you through trees and farms as it runs alongside an active railway. The trail even crosses railroad tracks in four locations, so use extra care at these crossings. You can turn around at the McMillin trailhead, or continue on to Orting, an additional 2.3 miles. Orting would also be a good entry point as it is nearly the midpoint of the 15-mile path and you have the option of going in either direction.

Driving Directions: From Highway 167 or Highway 512 take the exit to Highway 410. From that, get off at the Orting/Sumner exit, which is Route 162, and head south toward Orting. Turn right onto East Pioneer Avenue then turn right on 134th Avenue East by Van Lierop Bulb Farm. The trailhead is on 80th Street, on the right. There is free parking at all Foothills Trail trailheads.

Tips: Check out the REI Rest Stop adjacent to the 3.5-acre wetlands on the section of the trail between Orting and South Prairie. There are restrooms at all trailheads.



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.