



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

West County Trail

Terrain: **Paved path**

Distance: **4 miles one way; no elevation gain.**

Why This Ride: This completely flat bike route is quiet, beautiful and perfect for a family ride!

Ride Description: The ride starts in Sebastopol, going through Graton and ending in Forestville, and follows the old Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railroad line. The flat path offers beautiful views of the farms and vineyards that dot the area; it is particularly beautiful in fall and spring when the colors are just spectacular. The West County Trail is an extension of the Joe Rodota Trail and will, in the future, link up with that trail to form a 13-mile long ride!

Driving Directions: Parking is available on Merced Avenue or in the town of Sebastopol, next to the trailhead located off of Petaluma Avenue.

Tips: There are a couple of little stores in Forestville and Graton where you can stop for treats or bathroom breaks.

Spring Lake Regional Park

Terrain: **Paved path; minimal elevation gain**

Distance: **2.3 miles one way**

Why This Ride: This ride is a must—for its beautiful scenery and ample opportunities to swim, play and just relax.

Ride Description: The paved path skirts this pretty 72-acre lake and is fun for riders of every skill level—stay on the pavement, or venture onto the dirt paths that run along the water's edge. Along the way, you'll find many shady places to stop and dip your toes into the water. There are also trails connecting to nearby Howarth City Park and Annadel State Park, providing many miles of paths—including more rugged trails for young mountain bikers in Annadel State Park. You'll find more than 200 picnic tables located throughout the park, and the swimming lagoon staffed with lifeguards (summer only) is the ideal place to cool off after your ride. And there's also camping at Spring Lake for an overnight adventure!

Driving Directions: From Highway 12 east, go left at Farmers Lane (Highway 12), then right on Montgomery Drive. Turn right on Channel Drive, then right again on Violetti Drive. The day-use fee is \$6 per vehicle, Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day; it's \$5 at all other times. Special rates apply to buses or trucks carrying more than nine people.

Tips: Ask the ranger for a complimentary map of the area and go exploring! There are many public restrooms along the route.

Prince Greenway/Santa Rosa Creek Trail

Terrain: **Paved path and groomed gravel path**

Distance: **4 miles one way**

Why This Ride: A serene and easy ride that meanders along the shady banks of Santa Rosa Creek.

Ride Description: This ride is fun because it starts downtown and eventually ends up out in the country. There are ample opportunities to stop along the creek and play in the water and relax in the shade or the sun. You begin the ride heading west, going under the overpasses, including Highway 101 as you start out. About halfway through the ride (approximately 2 miles), at the Fulton Avenue underpass, the ride turns to a groomed gravel path. You can either turn around and head back to downtown or, if you're feeling adventurous, follow the groomed gravel path another 2 miles to Willowside Road.

Driving Directions: Start and finish your ride in downtown Santa Rosa on Santa Rosa Avenue between Sonoma Avenue and 1st Street, approximately one half block north of Julliard Park. There are numerous places to park in the area, including a large lot and streetside parking only a block away.

Tips: This ride is centrally located, so there are a variety of lunch and snack options available. There are no trailside restrooms.

Helen Putnam Regional Park

Terrain: **Paved path and dirt trails**

Distance: **1.5 miles one way, minimal elevation gain**

Why This Ride: The wide, multi-use paved trail offers the youngest kids a fun, easy ride. Plus, there are multiple dirt trails for older kids to explore.

Ride Description: Situated in gently rolling hills about 3 miles from downtown Petaluma, this 216-acre park features panoramic views of southern Sonoma County and northern Marin County. A paved trail winds through the park, with shady oaks lining the path. A small pond filled with bluegill makes for a nice stop along the way. Kids with dirt bikes or mountain bikes can go off the path and ride along all but one of the many dirt trails. These dirt trails feature more elevation gains and losses, so bikers should be more experienced and always yield to hikers. At the trailhead, consult the posted map of all the park's trails, so you can choose the ride options that are the most suitable to your family's abilities.

Driving Directions: From Downtown Petaluma drive west on Western Avenue about 1.8 miles, then turn left onto Chileno Valley Road. Drive about 0.8 miles on Chileno Valley Road, then turn left into the park. The large parking lot accommodates 35 cars; the fee for parking is \$5 per vehicle.

Tips: Make a day of it and pack a picnic—a gazebo, a picnic area and children's playground are located at the trailhead. Restroom facilities and drinking water are available at the park.

Joe Rodota Bike Trail

Terrain: Paved path

Distance: **2.8 miles one way; no elevation gain**

Why This Ride: This completely flat, family-friendly trail runs along an abandoned railroad line.

Ride Description: Young children will enjoy riding along the path that meanders alongside agricultural ranches and the Laguna of Santa Rosa. Kids can see signs of the historic railroad along the way, and ride over the old train trestles that now act as the path's bridges. Only pedestrians and bicycles are allowed, so it's a safe and bike-friendly route for young riders. This is ideal ride in spring when wildflowers are in bloom. Great for year-round bird-watching, too!

Driving Directions: Located between Santa Rosa and Sebastopol, the trail can be accessed from Merced Avenue (right off Highway 12 and Fulton Road) or Petaluma Avenue in Sebastopol. Parking is available on Merced Ave. or in the town of Sebastopol, next to the trailhead located off of Petaluma Ave.

Tips: There are limited restroom facilities along the path and many restaurants and stores along the way that are available if needed.

In Sebastopol, stop at Screamin' Mimi's—some of the best homemade ice cream out there! It is on the corner of Hwy 12/Sebastopol Avenue and Petaluma Avenue, at 6902 Sebastopol Avenue.



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.