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

Alki Beach Trail
Terrain: Paved path
Distance: 5 miles roundtrip, with no elevation gain
Why This Ride: It's a beachside ride that offers fantastic views of Elliott Bay and the downtown Seattle waterfront.

Ride Description: The paved trail hugs the Elliott Bay shoreline on a fairly straight course. Though it parallels Alki Avenue the whole length, it is a separate, designated bicycle path that doesn't mingle with traffic. You may be inclined to start this trip at Alki Beach's commercial area and sandy beach, with all the restaurants and shops. Unless you want to search endlessly for a parking spot in this bustling hotspot, park along the street at the other end, closer to the West Seattle Bridge. The beach (and maybe a stop at Spud's for some fish & chips) makes a great turnaround point.

Driving Directions: Take I-5 to the West Seattle Bridge and head west. Turn off on the Harbor Avenue/Avalon Way exit, and then turn right onto Harbor Avenue. The trail begins immediately off of Harbor Avenue (which becomes Alki Avenue). Parallel street parking is available along most of Alki Avenue and Harbor Avenue.

Tips: Jack Block park near the east end is a hidden gem that provides elevated views of the Port of Seattle's working harbor. Look for a tall metal archway over a driveway just before you get to Salty's Restaurant. There are restrooms at Alki Beach Park, near the Water Taxi landing and at Jack Block Park.

Burke-Gilman Trail—Ballard to Gasworks Park
Terrain: Paved path
Distance: This section of trail is 3.6 miles roundtrip, with minimal elevation gain.
Why This Ride: For many Seattle residents, this trail is the easiest, most accessible and pleasant bike path in the city.

Ride Description: For the 3.6-mile roundtrip, start in Ballard and head east toward Gasworks Park, your turnaround point. For longer ride options, hop on the 14-mile trail anywhere along the way and go in either direction. One of the best things about the Burke-Gilman Trail is that it takes you past some of the city's most beautiful waterways—the Ship Canal, Lake Union, the Montlake Cut and Lake Washington—and parks along the way. As a result, it's a very popular trail with cyclists, pedestrians and joggers, so be prepared to share. Most kids won't be able to do the entire trail in one day, but with the going so easy and the sights so plentiful, you might find yourself a lot further along than you had planned!

Driving Directions: In Ballard, the trail starts on 8th Avenue NW, just off Leary Way NW. There is free parking available at all major access points.

Tips: For beginners or younger riders, the stretch from Ballard to Gasworks Park will probably be a good length. Bring a picnic lunch or a ball to toss around in this one-of-a-kind park on the north shore of Lake Union. There are restrooms at many access points and parks along the trail.
### Centennial Trail—Snohomish to Machias

**Terrain:** Paved trail  
**Distance:** Approximately 10 miles round-trip, with minimal elevation gain  
**Why This Ride:** This popular multi-use path provides a fun, easy ride through farm country (and past a few lakes, too).

**Ride Description:** Developed during Washington State’s centennial year, 1989, this mostly flat trail starts in the town of Snohomish and rambles north to its terminus at the Quilceda/Allen Watershed Interpretive Center. That's a lot to embark upon in one day, so this trail is ideal for multiple visits where you can tackle different sections. Starting from the south, the broad path takes you along the Pilchuck River, past farms, wetlands and verdant fields as you head toward the town of Machias. The trailhead in Machias features a replica of a railroad depot built in the late 1890s—the rail line on which the Centennial Trail is built. This would be a good turnaround spot for your first visit.

**Driving Directions:** There are many points to access the trail, but to start in Snohomish, take the Snohomish-Wenatchee exit off I-5 onto Highway 2 in Everett. Traveling east, take the third exit off Highway 2 to Snohomish. At the first traffic light, turn right onto Pine Street and follow it to the intersection of Pine and Maple Streets where the trail begins. There is free parking at each trailhead entry point, though the biggest one is in the town of Lake Stevens on 20th Street, which can accommodate 100 cars.

**Tips:** Just past the Pilchuck Trailhead, see if you can spot the mile-high granite pyramid of Mount Pilchuck and glacier-capped Three Fingers Mountain. There are restrooms at all of the trail’s main access points.

### Saint Edward State Park

**Terrain:** Smooth dirt trail  
**Distance:** 2.1 miles roundtrip, with minimal elevation gain  
**Why This Ride:** It's a fun and easy unpaved—though very smooth—ride through a heavily forested park with some great views of Lake Washington.

**Ride Description:** Find the trail on the east side of the parking area and take it. As you ride, watch for deer, woodpeckers, eagles and the many other animals that make their home in the thick forest by Lake Washington. This is about as close to a wilderness experience as you can get so close to the city. Keep bearing right and the trail will eventually loop you back towards your start point. Ride with caution towards the end as you will cross over the park’s driveway. Enjoy the last bit of downhill as the ride ends at the parking lot. Make sure to check out the great playground afterwards.

**Driving Directions:** From Seattle, take Lake City Way (Highway 522) to Kenmore. Turn right onto 68th Avenue Northeast. After a few blocks, 68th Avenue NE becomes Juanita Drive Northeast. Proceed up Juanita Drive NE to Saint Edward State Park on the right. Drive into the park, bear right at the fork, then take the first right into the large parking area. Parking is free.

**Tips:** Don’t forget to end the day at the park’s popular and enormous 15,000-square-foot Northwest-themed playground. Restrooms are located at the main parking lot.

### Snoqualmie Valley Regional Trail—Duvall to Carnation

**Terrain:** Crushed-rock and gravel trail  
**Distance:** This section is 18 miles roundtrip, but rides can be tailored to any length. Minimal elevation gain  
**Why This Ride:** It’s an out-and-back ride through one of the most beautiful agricultural valleys in the region.

**Ride Description:** Don’t try to tackle all 29 miles of this flat, gravel-bed rail-trail in one go, but definitely consider taking the family out for multiple excursions on different sections—there’s a lot to explore here. You’ll find access points in Duvall, Carnation, Snoqualmie and North Bend. McCormick Park in Duvall is the westernmost entry point, so for this ride, start there. One of the first things you’ll notice is the abundance of farms—something you don’t really get to see if you’re speeding past in a car. This is prime agricultural country, though you’ll also pass the occasional duck pond. Do watch for road crossings as you go. Tolt-MacDonald Park in Carnation would be a good turnaround point; if you’re feeling energetic, there are many miles of this extensive trail left to explore.

**Driving Directions:** To get to McCormick Park take Highway 203 to Duvall. At the light at NE Stephens Street, turn toward the water and park in the free lot at the end of the road. There’s free parking at all of the major access points on the trail.

**Tips:** There are baseball and soccer fields and a children’s play area at Tolt-MacDonald Park, so it’s a great spot for a mid-ride picnic and a little off-bike fun. There are porta-potties at the McCormick Park trailhead and restrooms at Tolt-MacDonald Park. Be aware of one intersection: At 7.6 miles, the trail crosses Highway 303.

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**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.**