

Learn to Ride Part 1

This is a list of our favorite out of traffic or off street rides. Start short with lots of stops, snacks and attractions. Work on biking skills. Nothing is better than repetition. Many of these involve driving to the start...a compromise for training the young ones.

Samuel P. Taylor- Cross Marin Trail

Park at the Trestle over SFD. Walk up to the trestle and ride 2.5 miles (total 5) to Covered Bridge and back. Shady. Bonus: Start at Inkwells. Park at the Salmon view area, open in winter.

(Mountain or Road)

Golden Gate Park, SF

Sunday road closure- spring, summer, fall. Park outside the park or west of Park Presidio. Ride to Academy of Science, DeYoung, Japanese Tea Garden, Conservatory of Flowers, or Children's Playground. Loops-2-5 miles.

(Mountain or Road)

Crissy Field, SF

Exploratorium to Fort Point. Warming Hut for snacks. Ft. Point is free, has a museum and lots of real cannons. 2.5 miles (total 5)

(Mountain or Road)

The Tunnel

Park near Office Depot on Anderson in San Rafael. Cross the street. Ride the path thru the SMART train tunnel. 1.5 mile one way. Starbucks at the Landing.

(Mountain or Road)

Corte Madera Creek

Ross Post Office to Larkspur Ferry and back. Starbucks at the Landing. 3.5 miles (total 7)

(Mountain or Road)

Rush Creek Open Space, Novato

101 North. Exit San Marin/Atherton. Right turn. Go 300 feet, left turn to Gness Field, park just past Park n' Ride. Almost flat dirt fire roads narrowing to near single track.

Great birds and views. 3 miles (total 6)

(Mountain)

Phoenix Lake-Grilly's/Scoop

The classic: Phoenix, 5 Corners, Deer Park. Lunch at Grilly's.

5 miles one way. And home on streets...good intro to dirt and back streets riding. Mud and puddles a plus in a normal winter.

(Mountain)

Learn to Ride (Part 2- roads & traffic)

We suggest learning to ride in 2 phases: 1, Riding the Bike, 2, The Rules of the Road and Street Riding. Here is phase 2 .

Once the basic skills of riding are learned, the child needs to learn to ride on the street, with cars and learn the traffic rules. Even if you never have ridden your child from Butterfield Road over Fawn Drive to Freitas Parkway, the roads and the rules cannot be avoided. Start with side streets, bike routes, the back ways to places. Talk with your child about cars, backing out, dooring, storm drains, stop signs, 4 way stop rules, signaling, ways to make a left turn and taking the lane. We suggest you take a class, even if you are an experienced rider, and get the Marin bike route map from MCBC to learn the bike routes. The "bike routes" are often side streets and have lots of modern improvements to make cycling easier.

Map

Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) www.marinbike.org sells a map of all the street and legal off road routes. This is available in most bike shops. If you join as a member, you get one for free. If you are new to Marin, this map is essential.

Class 1

Take a class with your child. Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) offers a Riding with Youth class several times a year for free. 2-3 grade it perfect. Parent must attend. A safety video, bike check, skills course with cones and a neighborhood street ride. 2.5 hrs. Besides getting a refresher for the grown up, a "teacher" tells the child what to do.

RidingWithYouth@marinbike.org

Class 2:

You take a class. Basic Street Skills for Cyclists Classes are held multiple times per year at various locations throughout Marin County. See MCBC web site.

<http://www.marinbike.org>

Class 3:

Women can also take the special Women on Wheels classes taught by women for women to learn the basics of handling, hill climbing and bike maintenance

www.marinbike.org/Wow

Ask another parent who rides to help your family to get going. You could ask your Safe Routes team leader for suggestions. Once you and your child understand the basics, here are some good places to get started.

School

Bike to your school or another school on a non-school day or to a school event. We always ride to OctoberFest at Brookside Lower and Winter Fair at Manor. The Ross Valley Schools have very good and safe intersections near them and most have back ways with little traffic.

San Anselmo to San Rafael on the Bike Route

Cross SFD at Bank St. Greenfield to 4th Street. 4th Street is the bike route. Good stop light practice. 2.5 miles (total 5 mi.)

San Anselmo to Kentfield on the Bike Route

SA Ave to Shady Lane to College of Marin. Can connect to Corte Madera Creek at the Ross Post Office to Larkspur Ferry. 5 miles one way. Return the same way or make a loop by riding the Tunnel to Anderson to 4th St. and back on the San Rafael to San Anselmo Bike Route.

Puerto Suelo Hill Bike Path to Marin Civic Center

Park in San Rafael. Ride 5th to the start of the bike path by 101. Ride the bike path and get on the road, under 101 to the Civic Center. Farmer's market on weekends. County fair in July. 3 mi. one way.

Mill Valley Bike Path

Park at the Mill Valley Rec Center, ride the bike path to Sausalito. Ride Bridgeway to downtown for a snack or lunch. 4 miles one way.

Tiburon Bike Path

Start at Blackie's Pasture and ride along the bike path all the way into Tiburon. Some street riding in downtown Tiburon. Enjoy the view from the benches in the grassy area in town. 4 mi. one way.

Golden Gate Bridge

Park at last Marin exit--big lot. Ride the bridge to SF. Ride down to the Exploratorium or to Ft. Mason. Some street riding through the Presidio, then long, scenic, flat bike path along Chrissy Fields. Lots of bike and ped traffic on bridge.

Golden Gate Park, SF

On a weekday or Saturday. Sunday the roads are closed to cars. Park inside the park. Traffic is usually pretty quiet. Lots of stop signs. Ride to Academy of Science, DeYoung, Japanese Tea Garden, Conservatory of Flowers, or Children's Playground. Loops-2-5 miles.

Advanced:

Valencia St, SF

Big bike lanes. Lot of great food and shops and stops. Mission Dolores to Noe Valley.

Angel Island

Tiburon bike path from Blackie's Pasture, then take the ferry over to Angel Island. Loop around Angel Island is approx. 5 miles with a couple of steep hills (but you can always walk and talk through them). Can be especially fun on Opening Day on the Bay, Blue Angels day or Civil War day.

Sausalito to San Francisco

Park in Sausalito. Ride Bridgeway up to the GG Bridge, cross the bridge, ride to Ft Mason, Fisherman's wharf, the Embarcadero to the Ferry Building, take the ferry back. Lot of great stops and places to eat along the way and at the Ferry Building.