heart of vermont bikeways

nine loops of the lake champlain bikeways network
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heart of vermont

The bicycle loops described within this guide take you through some of the best cycling country in Vermont. From the quiet beauty of the Green Mountains to the shores of Lake Champlain, Addison, Rutland and Windsor counties are an area of great scenic beauty. Wildflowers growing in profusion in springtime turn the roadsides into a garden. Summer days are bright and blue and the golds and reds of autumn make the fall season spectacular.

The landscape of the area is primarily agricultural, characterized by working farms and apple orchards. You will find views of the Adirondacks across the lake to the west, and the Green Mountains to the east. Pristine brooks and rivers provide refreshing stops along the way. For each of the nine individual loops, this guide briefly describes the historic and cultural sites you will see.
safety guidelines

Motorists and bicyclists share scenic roads. Use caution on narrow, winding or unpaved roadway. Follow traffic laws and ride safely. Bicycles are vehicles by law and have the right to use public roads. You are responsible for operating your bicycle under all conditions.

when cycling, please follow these guidelines:
Source: Mad about Cycling

1. WEAR A HELMET and cycling gloves.
2. Ride with the flow of traffic.
3. When using travel lanes, follow motor vehicle laws. Obey all traffic signs and signals. Do not cut corners.
4. Use clear hand signals when making turns or stopping.
5. Ride in a straight line at least 3 feet from parked cars or curbs.
6. If you must ride at night, use lights and reflectors.
7. Ride defensively! Be aware of motorists’ actions.
8. Be aware of train tracks and other road conditions.
10. Carry items in panniers or a handle-bar pack.
land of milk and honey - 33.9 miles
moderately strenuous

mile

0.0  Downtown Middlebury, start at Municipal Building (corner of College & Weybridge St.). R on Weybridge St. (heading NW)
2.8  R on Quaker Village Rd. (Monument Farms)
7.1  L on Route 17 East
10.2 Cross Route 22A (store) - straight on Route 17 East
11.9 Dead Creek Wildlife Viewing Area on L.
18.2 L on Route 125 East (restaurant)
25.3 R on Route 22A (be cautious of traffic)
25.7 L on Route 125 East
33.0 Route 125 becomes College St. as you enter Middlebury College’s Campus
33.9 Downtown Middlebury
route description

From Middlebury’s 200-year-old “College on the Hill” through the fertile valley floor to the Lake Champlain shoreline, this tour offers the bicyclist some of the best of the region’s scenic, natural, and historical attractions. Farms dominate the landscape, as they have for more than two hundred years. Dairying prevails today, but in the 1800s pastures were filled with tens of thousands of wrinkly Merino sheep.

This route is mostly paved with an alternate dirt road route in West Addison on Jersey Street. Your trip begins on fairly flat roads following Otter Creek. In Addison, West Addison and Bridport, the roads become gently rolling hills with some long flat stretches. Be cautious when traveling on Routes 17 and 125 as these roads see significant automobile traffic.
halfway to heaven - 17.9 miles

moderately strenuous

mile
0.0   Bristol Town Green - start by heading east out of town on Main St.
1.5   R on Lincoln Rd.
4.9   L on Quaker St. (store)
5.8   L on Downingsville Rd.
9.4   Downingsville Rd. becomes Jerusalem Rd.
11.5  L on Route 17 West (store)
12.9  Bristol Memorial Park - stop and wander through the gorge
14.6  L on Route 116 South (restaurant, inn)
16.3  Merge R onto Main St. (heading back into town of Bristol)
17.9  Bristol Town Green
route description

Halfway to Heaven begins and ends in the Town of Bristol, commonly referred to as “The Gateway to the Green Mountains.” This loop takes you from Bristol along Route 116/17 to the Lincoln Road, where you will travel uphill alongside the New Haven River. After passing through the center of Lincoln, the incline will increase somewhat but then level off. At this point you’ll be leaving paved roads to a dirt road with a variety of uphill, downhill and flat sections. Upon reaching Jerusalem, you’ll be back again on paved roads, which bring you down a steep hill until you once again reach Route 116/17, bringing you to a level road as you return to Bristol center. Halfway to Heaven showcases a vibrant downtown, historic buildings, beautiful rivers and mountain views, and a landscape that was dramatically changed in places because of a large flood.
town and country - 31.3 miles

moderately strenuous

mile

0.0  Vergennes Town Green - head N on Main St.
0.2  R at traffic light on Monkton Rd.
9.8  R on Bristol Rd. (general store on L)
12.9 R on Hardscrabble Rd. (1.4 mi. of gravel rd.)
17.7 R on Monkton Rd.
18.8 Monkton Rd. turns into North St.
19.1 Alternate gravel route: R on Plank Rd.
19.8 R on Main/West St. (at lights in Bristol)
23.9 R on North St.
26.1  L on Plank Rd.
30.1  R on Route 7 (be cautious crossing!)
30.4  L on Church St.
31.0  R on Green St. (at yellow blinking light)
31.2  R on Main St.
31.3  Vergennes Town Green
route description

This loop leads from Vergennes, Vermont’s oldest and smallest city, through villages and rich farmland, to Bristol, the “Gateway to the Green Mountains,” and back again. Vergennes and Bristol both have charming, historic downtowns with inviting shops and restaurants. Eat Good Food in Vergennes is popular with bicyclists, and the Bristol Bakery on Main Street and seasonal Village Cremee Stand on the outskirts of Bristol should not be missed.

This route runs along mainly paved roads with dirt sections of Hardscrabble Road and Plank Road. Cyclists should be in good shape to tackle this fairly hilly loop, but note that there are places in Vergennes, Monkton and Bristol to get off your bicycle and rest, eat and drink along the way.
mills to mansions - 40.9 miles

easy

mile
0.0   Middlebury Green - head east on Merchants Row. Straight on Court Square.
0.1   R on Court St. (Route 7 South)
0.8   R on Creek Road
4.4   R on Shard Villa Rd. (swimming hole on R)
7.6   L on West Salisbury Rd. (cautious on Rte. 7)
10.6  West Salisbury Rd. turns into Maple St. and curves right, back to Route 7
12.0  L on Route 7 South
13.2  L on Fern Lake Rd. (store)
15.6  Straight on Lake Dunmore Rd.
16.7  Lake Dunmore Rd. turns into North St.
17.9  R on Forest Dale Rd./Route 73 (store)
20.1  Forest Dale Rd. turns into Marble St.
20.4  R on Park St.
20.7  Brandon. Straight on Center St/Route 7.
22.3  L on Arnold District Rd.
25.0  Arnold Dist. Rd. turns into Swinington Hill Rd.
25.7  L on Leicester-Whiting Rd.
29.7  R on North Main St./Route 30 North
40.9  Middlebury Town Green
route description

Vermont’s rural landscape disguises an industrial history that is at least as important as its agricultural history. Take a closer look at the industrial heritage that made regional centers of downtown Middlebury and Brandon. Churning at the heart of downtown Middlebury is the Otter Creek Falls, first harnessed by early settlers to power sawmills and gristmills. It was marble—locally quarried, shaped and polished by waterpower—that became one of Middlebury’s primary industries. Brandon’s development took a different track with the coming of the Burlington-Rutland Railroad. Brandon became a center for the manufacture of railroad cars. Outside Brandon, Forest Dale grew out of the iron industry, where blast furnaces smelted locally mined ore. The economic prosperity that flowed from these industries was reflected in the homes of prominent citizens. You will have the chance to see these beautiful homes on this relatively flat, paved ride.
gap to gap - 62.8 miles

strenuous

mile
0.0  Shaw’s Supermarket, R on Washington St.
1.2  L on Quarry Rd.
3.3  R on Route 116 South
6.8  L on Route 125 West - E. Middlebury
8.0  E. Middlebury Gorge and swimming hole
10.8  Town of Ripton (store)
13.7  Breadloaf Campus of Middlebury College
16.3  Top of Middlebury Gap
19.3  Texas Falls Scenic Area on left
22.3  R on Route 100 South - Town of Hancock
26.6  Town of Rochester (store, bike shop, cafe)
27.4  L on Route 73 West - begin climbing Gap
36.6  Top of Brandon Gap
41.6  R on Route 53 to Lake Dunmore (store)
47.3  Branbury State Park at Lake Dunmore
49.6  R on Upper Plains Rd. (store)
52.7  L on Beaver Pond Rd.
53.3  R on Lower Plains Rd.
55.1  L on Route 125 West
55.9  R on Route 116 North (store)
59.4  L on Quarry Rd.
62.8  Shaw’s Supermarket parking lot
route description

This beautiful loop is challenging given the two climbs over the Middlebury and Brandon gaps. Each gap is over 2000 ft in elevation, but the rewards of vistas beyond description and the scenic Route 100 Corridor slicing through the heart of the Green Mountains make the effort worthwhile for the physically fit. Gap to Gap brings the cyclist through quaint and picturesque towns that offer restaurants, lodging, a few shops and great country stores. Be on the lookout for these services in East Middlebury, Hancock, and Rochester. Be forewarned that the backside of the Middlebury Gap is steeper than the front. The clockwise rotation of this loop allows the easier side of both gaps to be climbed. This loop begins at the Shaw’s Supermarket parking lot in Middlebury. Exit the lot and head east (right out of the lot).
moosalamoo meander - 42.3 miles

mile
0.0  Shaw’s Supermarket, R on Washington St.
1.2  L on Quarry Rd.
3.3  R on Route 116 South
6.8  L on Route 125 West - E. Middlebury
7.6  R on Lower Plains Rd.
9.4  L on Beaver Pond Rd.
10.0 R on Upper Plains Rd.
11.9 L on Lake Dunmore Rd. (store)
14.2 Branbury State Park (camping)
19.9 L on Forest Dale Rd. (Brandon Gap)
21.6 L on Town Hill Rd.
22.2 L over bridge, becomes Carlisle Hill Rd.
23.8 Carlisle Hill becomes Goshen-Ripton Rd.
30.7 L on Route 125
31.7 Town of Ripton (store)
34.4 E. Middlebury Gorge and swimming hole
35.4 R on Route 116 north (store)
38.9 L on Quarry Rd.
41.0 Bear L on Seminary St. Extension
42.1 Bear L on Washington St. (at stop sign)
42.3 Shaw’s Supermarket
route description

This bike loop offers more than just a great biking experience, it also offers some great opportunities to get off the bike (at a couple of secure locations) and explore the Moosalamoo Region, a 22,000 acre section of the Green Mountain National Forest. Hike to rugged cliffs and scenic vistas, quiet mountain lakes, streams, and water falls. Discover the diversity of plants and animals that make up the rich Moosalamoo ecosystem. There’s something for everyone with outstanding inns for dining and lodging, campgrounds, berry picking, bird watching, fishing, swimming, boating, and hiking on over 50 miles of trails.
america's first victory - 18.8 miles

miles

0.0  Shoreham Town Center - start heading west (R out of driveway) on Main Street from the Shoreham Inn

0.2  L on Route 74 West

3.5  Shoreham Bicycle Rest Stop on right — stop, relax and enjoy the view while learning about America’s First Victory

4.5  L on Route 73 East

5.8  Norton’s Gallery (restroom)

9.9  Alternate ride out and back to Mount Independence (R on Mt. Independence Road – 10 mile round trip)

10.2  Cross Route 22A, straight on Main Street

10.6  L on North Orwell Road - Welcome to Orwell! (store)

15.8  L on Richville Road

18.0  Cross Route 22A, straight on Cemetery Hill

18.3  R on School Street

18.7  R on Main Street

18.8  Shoreham Inn
route description

This bicycle loop of gently rolling hills brings you through apple orchards, farmland and the quaint town centers of Shoreham and Orwell. You will find mostly paved roads along this route with stores for provisions in both towns, an inn in Shoreham, and an interesting art gallery (Norton’s on Route 73) with a clean public restroom. Heading out of Shoreham, this loop offers incredible long views of Lake Champlain and historically significant sites in early American history. Make sure you stop to rest at Hands Cove Park, the bicycle rest stop just after the intersection of Route 74 and Smith Street. Finally, make the trip out and back to Mt. Independence—it’s worth it!
rebels' retreat - 41.1 miles

0.0 Town green in Vergennes. Go down hill and cross Otter Creek
0.2 Turn R on Canal St.
0.3 Turn L on West St.
0.6 Turn R on Panton Road at Goodrich plant
1.9 Turn R on Basin Harbor Rd.
5.1 Turn R on Kellogg Bay Road (unpaved)
6.7 Turn L on Schoolhouse Rd.
8.1 Turn L on Basin Harbor Rd.
8.4 Turn R on Button Bay Rd.
10.3 Turn R on Arnold Bay Rd. (1 mile unpaved)
12.6 Turn R on Lake Rd.
18.7 Go straight on Route 17.
20.8 Turn L on Route 125
24.4 Turn L on Basin Harbor Rd. (also Jersey)
29.3 Turn R on Route 17
30.2 Stay straight on Jersey St.
31.3 Turn R on Goodrich Corner Rd. (Jersey)
36.2 Turn R on Panton Rd. at Country Store
40.4 Turn L after Goodrich plant and return to start in Vergennes
41.1 Vergennes town green.
route description

Rebel’s Retreat is a spectacular route traveling through flat to slightly rolling farmland on Vermont’s “west coast” alongside of Lake Champlain. Although there are no or minimal shoulders, traffic volume is low with the exception of Panton Road and Route 17. The loop begins and ends in downtown Vergennes where food, lodging, and parking are available. Take in unspoiled lake views while meandering the area where the rebellious American Troops retreated after the Revolutionary Battle of Valcour. To avoid capture, the troops, led by Benedict Arnold, escaped to what is now Arnold’s Bay, and retreated by foot to Ticonderoga. Delve into the recent discovery of Benedict Arnold’s scuttled gunboat at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum or investigate the region’s rich history at Chimney Point State Historic Site. Also enjoy a visit to Button Bay or D.A.R. State Parks along Lake Champlain’s scenic shoreline. While in Vergennes, visit MacDonough Park at the Otter Creek Basin, site of Commodore Thomas MacDonough’s 1813-1814 shipyard.
otter creek wandering - 27.5 miles  

easy  
mile  
0.0  Vergennes town green  
0.7  Turn L on Hopkins Rd. (0.7 miles unpaved)  
2.9  Turn L on East Rd. (3.0 miles unpaved)  
6.7  Turn L on Route 17  
7.5  Turn R on Route 23  
12.1  Center of Weybridge - bear L on Route 23  
15.0  Turn L and L again at yield sign to enter Middlebury  
15.4  Turn L on Seymour St. to the left of the big white church  
15.6  Turn L at Greg’s Market  
15.7  Bear R after bridge underpass  
16.3  Cross Pulp Mill Bridge and bear R on Morgan Horse Farm Rd.  
19.8  Cross New Haven River  
23.1  Cross Route 17  
27.5  Vergennes town green
route description

Connecting the historic towns of Middlebury and Vergennes, Otter Creek Wandering meanders through scenic farmlands along the Otter Creek, Vermont’s longest river. Although there are no or minimal shoulders, traffic volume is low through most sections. Terrain varies from flat to rolling, and hills exist in some areas. A majority of the route follows paved roads, with the exception of a 5.9 mile stretch along Hopkins and East Roads to Route 17. The loop begins in downtown Vergennes, where food, lodging, and parking are available.

Presently dominated by dairying, Addison County has a long agricultural tradition of crop-farming, sheep-raising, and horse-breeding. Weybridge is the home of Vermont’s largest agricultural fair, Field Days, held the first full week in August. Be sure to visit the Sheldon Museum in downtown Middlebury, or the Morgan Horse Farm in Weybridge, to experience Addison County’s unique flavor.
general information

lake champlain bikeways mission
To promote bicycling throughout the Lake Champlain regions of New York, Vermont and Québec for the purposes of increasing opportunities for bicycle recreation and transportation, improving the quality of life, enhancing the economic vitality, advocating for sustainable communities, encouraging healthy lifestyles and raising public awareness and appreciation of inherent scenic, historic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources throughout the area.

lake champlain bikeways clearinghouse
Contact us to order a variety of LCB publications, as well as other regional bicycling information:
Lake Champlain Bikeways, c/o Local Motion Trailside Center
One Steele Street #103
Burlington, VT 05401
802.652.BIKE (2453)
info@champlainbikeways.org, www.champlainbikeways.org

emergency info
To reach Police, Fire & Rescue dial 911. If using a cell phone, please be aware of your location.

Disclaimer: Users assume all risks, inherent and not inherent, in the use of materials recommending routes of the Lake Champlain Bikeways network and all affiliated organizations, and individuals disclaim any and all liability on their part for damages or injuries to persons or property should they occur. Routes are chosen, designated and/or signed because: they are popular, or are preferred, or provide continuous routes to destinations, or are lightly traveled, or are scenic, or have more room for cars and bikes, or possess a combination of these attributes.

acknowledgements
The development of this guide took place thanks to the hard work of many volunteers. Lake Champlain Bikeways would like to thank: Jim Arnold, Kevin Behm, Lou Bresee, Bruce Brown, Liz Fitzsimmons, Elsa Gilbertson, Barbara Harding, Dennis Hysko, Ron Morgan, and Brandy Saxton. We would also like to thank the Addison County Chamber of Commerce, the Addison County Regional Planning Commission, The Addison Independent, Northern Cartographic and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for their support, guidance, and input.

We would like to acknowledge funding from the Federal Highway Administration’s National Scenic Byway Program, through the All-American Road, Lakes to Locks Passage, for the design template of this guide.