



Great Sonoma County Rides

Here are directions for ten great rides in or near Sonoma County, ranging from short/flat/easy to long/hilly/hard. These represent a good sampling of what our area has to offer.

Santa Rosa Plains

This beginner ride is a relatively flat 20 miles, with a few rolling hills. From Youth Community Park, go north on Fulton Rd, L on Wood, R on Woolsey, and cross River Rd onto Laughlin. Turn L on W Laughlin, R on Slusser, and R on Windsor. Turn L on Reiman, L on Starr, R on Mark West Station, and L on Trenton-Healdsburg Rd. Cross River again, bear L uphill and then down on Trenton and loop under River to a L on River. Turn R on Old Trenton Road, R on Oakwild, L on W Olivet, R on Olivet, L on Piner, and L onto Youth Community Park

Sonoma Valley

This leisurely, 20-mile ride explores the scenic Valley of the Moon. Starting at the Sonoma Plaza, ride one block N on 1st Street, and turn L onto the bike path. The path passes the historic Vallejo home on its way west. Turn R onto Robinson Rd and L onto Verano. Continue across Hwy 12 until Arnold Drive. Turn R on Arnold and continue thru Eldridge and Glen Ellen (a good lunch stop). The ambitious among you may want to turn L and climb 2 miles on London Ranch Rd to see the home of author Jack London at JL State Historic Park. Retrace route to return to Sonoma.

Dry Creek Valley-Alexander Valley

Approximately 25 miles. This is a good, basic vineyard tour with a few rolling hills. Begin at Healdsburg Plaza and pedal out of town on Mill Street/Westside Rd. Turn R on W Dry Creek, R on Yoakim Bridge Rd, R on Dry Creek Rd. Turn L on Canyon and climb from Dry Creek Valley over to Alexander Valley. Turn R on

Geyserville Ave (thru the town of Geyserville), L on Hwy 128, L on Geysers Rd (only for half a mile), and R on Red Winery Rd. Turn R on Pine Flat and after about a quarter of a mile merge R onto Hwy 128 and take a break at the quaint Jimtown Store. Continue on 128, when 128 turns R, go straight on Alexander Valley Rd, turn R on Lytton Station, R on Lytton Springs, L on Dry Creek, R on Kinley, and L on Mill into Healdsburg. For a few more flat miles, at the end of Kinley, go straight across Mill onto the Magnolia Rd loop, which will return you to Mill.

Spring Hill-Chileno Valley

Starting at Walnut Park in Petaluma, this 30-mile ride is a pleasant tour of the dairylands along the border between Sonoma and Marin Counties. Head N from the park to Western Ave. Turn L and leave town, climbing gently. When Western changes its name to Spring Hill, the climbing gets a little more serious. In the town of Two Rock, turn L on Petaluma-Tomales Rd and L on Chileno Valley Rd, a very pretty, and very quiet back road. When you reach Helen Putnam Regional Park, near the end of Chileno Valley, turn R into the park and follow the bike path over the hill and down into Petaluma. Turn L at the end of the bike path and then R to coast down to D Street, Petaluma's famous avenue of stately homes. Turn L on D and follow it back to Walnut Park.

Sebastopol-Valley Ford

At about 40 miles, this superb ride is extremely scenic with several hills. Begin at Analy High School in Sebastopol and head north on High School Rd. Turn L on Occidental Rd, R on Mill Station Rd, L on Sullivan, L on Graton, and L onto Bohemian Hwy in the charming town of Occidental (a good rest stop). Follow Bohemian Hwy south downhill thru the historic town of Freestone and turn R on Bodega Hwy. After 1 mile, turn L on Valley Ford-Freestone Rd, L on Hwy 1 (thru Valley Ford), R on Middle Rd, R on Marsh, L on Franklin School Rd, L on Whittaker Bluff Rd, and L on Hwy 1, R on Petaluma-Valley Ford Rd, L on Bloomfield, and L on Pleasant Hill into Sebastopol. At the end of Pleasant Hill, turn R on Covert, merge with Hwy 116 and coast downhill to a L on High School Rd and a return to Analy HS.

Sonoma Coast

This terrific 40-mile ride is best done in the early morning before the motorists hit Hwy1. It includes a couple of challenging hills. Begin in Occidental and head north, descending to the town of Monte Rio. Turn L on Moscow Rd and at the quaint old town of Duncans Mills, turn L on River Rd (Hwy 116), and L over the Russian River on Hwy 1. Follow 1 south to a L on Bay Hill Rd (just as you reach the fishing village of Bodega Bay). When it returns to Hwy 1, go L and L again on Bodega Hwy through the town of Bodega, then turn L for a very steep climb on Joy Rd. Turn R on Bittner for a fast descent back to the start in Occidental. A shorter but steeper alternative: At the start,

head west out of Occidental on Coleman Valley Rd. Coleman Valley is one of the most spectacular roads in Sonoma County. It climbs steeply out of town, descends into its picturesque namesake valley, and then climbs up to the ridgeline over the ocean before descending very steeply to Hwy 1. Turn L on 1 and continue the route.

Alexander Valley-Russian River Valley

This moderately challenging 45-mile route travels past miles of premier vineyards. Beginning in the town of Windsor, head south on Old Redwood Hwy, go L on Pleasant, L on Chalk Hill, and L on Hwy 128 into Alexander Valley. After a stop at the Jimtown Store, head west on Alexander Valley Rd, turn L on Healdsburg Ave (thru Healdsburg). Turn R on Mill and head out of town on Westside Rd for a run down the Russian River Valley, turn L over the river on Wohler Bridge, L on Eastside Rd, and R on Windsor River Rd into Windsor. To make the ride extra challenging, turn R off Hwy 128 just before Jimtown and climb up Pine Flat Rd as far as you want to go. It's about 12 miles to the top of the dead end road and it becomes extremely steep in the final two miles... probably the steepest road in the county. Prior to that, the climb averages 6% and eventually delivers you to some wonderful viewpoints overlooking the valley

Cavedale-Mt Veeder-Carneros

This is a very hilly 50-mile ride for fit cyclists, with two major climbs and several smaller ones. Begin in Sonoma and head west on bike path. At end of path, turn R and head north on Hwy 12 thru the congestion of several small towns. Turn R on Cavedale Rd and begin climbing. Cavedale is a very remote, hilly, narrow road. At the end of Cavedale, turn R on Trinity/Dry Creek and descend into Napa Valley. At the bottom of the hill, turn R on Mt Veeder/Redwood and begin climbing again...and then descending to the outskirts of the city of Napa (a good place to re-water). Turn R on Browns Valley, R on Buhman, R on Henry, L on Dealy, and R on Old Sonoma. Jog R on Hwy 12 to a quick L on Duhig, which turns into Ramal Rd and travels thru the Carneros wine region. Turn L on Dale, R on Burndale, bear L on Denmark, R on 7th, L on Lovall Valley to bike path and return to central Sonoma. For a scenic extra, turn R on Lovall Valley and ride it to the end and then return to Sonoma.

The Geysers

This 50-mile loop (3500' of climb) is very remote, with no services and very challenging terrain. Fit, experienced riders only. Begin in the town of Geyserville (just off Hwy 101) and head north on Geyserville Ave, which becomes Asti Rd. On the outskirts of the town of Cloverdale, turn R on Crocker. (You may wish to detour into Cloverdale for food and water... there won't be another chance.) From Crocker, bend L on River and R on Geysers Rd. Follow the deep gorge of Big Sulfur Creek up and down (mostly up). The climb is easy for the first few miles, but just after a hard R near the old Geysers Resort (not open to the public), it ramps up steeply for 1.5 miles to the

top of the ridge...well in excess of 10%. The road then bumps along the ridgeline for a few miles before one of the wildest descents anywhere. After the first section of descent, there is one more climb and then several miles of smooth, fast downhill back to Alexander Valley. Turn R on Hwy 128 and follow it back to Geyserville.