

Route Descriptions, Maps & Charts

CYCLING ROUTES

This guide covers the best areas for cycle touring on roads. The rides do not traverse the country from north to south or east to west, but have been selected because they are scenic, pass through interesting towns or historic areas, are lightly used by cars and easy to reach by public transport. Rides link easily with one another, offering continuity for extended trips. Various transport options for getting to and from the rides are suggested. Rides accommodate both the novice and the experienced cyclist.

In most cases, the rides have been designed to make carrying camping gear and food optional. Each ride is broken into a set number of days, with accommodation and food options available at each day's destination. In some cases alternative destinations are offered.

Cyclists can use this book as an introduction and planning tool, as well as on the road. We hope that once cyclists become familiar with local circumstances they start planning their own routes, too.

Times & Distances

Each ride is divided into stages, and we suggest a day be spent on each stage. In some cases the distance for a particular stage is relatively short, but attractions en route, or nearby, warrant spending extra time – distance junkies may decide to condense two stages into one day.

The directions for each day's ride are given in terms of distance (in kilometres) from the starting point (specified on the cue sheets).

A suggested riding time has been given for each day's riding. Because individual riding speed varies widely, these should be used as a guide only. They only take into account actual riding time – not time taken for rest stops, taking photographs, eating or visiting a museum – and are generally based on an average riding speed of between 10km/h and 20km/h.

Ride Difficulty

Each ride is graded according to its difficulty in terms of distance, terrain, road surface and navigation. The grade appears in the Table of Rides at the beginning of the book and at the start of each ride.

Grading is unavoidably subjective and is intended as a guide only; the degree of difficulty of a particular ride may vary according to the weather, the weight in your panniers, whether children are cycling, pre-trip training or how tired and hungry you are.

Easy These rides involve no more than a few hours' riding each day, over mostly flat terrain with good, sealed surfaces. They are navigationally straightforward.

Moderate These rides present a moderate challenge to someone of average fitness; they are likely to include some hills, three to five hours of riding, and may involve some unsealed roads and/or complex navigation.

Demanding These are for fit riders who want a challenge, and involve long daily distances and/or challenging climbs, may negotiate rough and remote roads, and present navigational challenges.

MAPS & PROFILES

Most rides in this book have an accompanying map that shows the route, services provided in towns en route, attractions and possible alternative routes and side trips, depending on the map scale. The maps are based on the best available references, sometimes combined with GPS data collected in the field. They are intended to show the general routes only of the rides we describe and are not detailed enough in themselves for route finding or navigation. For greater detail, we also recommend the most suitable commercial map available in the 'Maps' section of each ride.

Most chapters also have a regional map showing the gateway towns or cities, principal transport routes and other major features. Map symbols are interpreted in the legend on the inside front cover of this book.

CUE SHEETS

Route directions are given in a series of brief 'cues', which tell you at what mileage point to change direction and point out features en route. These pages could be photocopied or cut out for on-the-road reference and used with a recommended map. The only other thing you need is a cycle computer.

To make the cue sheets as brief and simple to understand as possible, we've developed a series of symbols (see Map Legend on inside cover flap) and the following rule:

Once your route is following a particular road, continue on that road until the cue sheet tells you otherwise.

Follow the road first mentioned in the cues even though it may cross a highway, shrink to a lane, change name (we generally only include the first name, and sometimes the last), wind, duck and climb its way across the country. Rely on us to tell you when to turn off it.

Because the cue sheets rely on an accurate odometer reading we suggest you disconnect your cycle computer (pop it out of the housing or turn the magnet away from the fork-mounted sensor) whenever you deviate from the main route.