



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

American Tobacco Trail (Wake County)

Terrain: **Compacted gravel trail**

Distance: **11 miles roundtrip, out-and-back; no elevation gain**

Why This Ride: This well-groomed rural trail is a pleasant ride in the country that's lots of fun for the whole family.

Ride Description: This is the most rural of the American Tobacco Trail sections that have been finished. You'll travel for miles under a canopy of overhanging tree branches. The compacted gravel surface makes for a very smooth ride. There are mile markers along the trail so you can keep track of how far you've traveled. Benches along the trail and within 400 yards of each trailhead make great spots to pause for a rest.

Driving Directions: From Durham and points north, go south on NC 751 to Lewter Shop Road (Jean's Berry Patch). Turn left onto Lewter Shop Rd. and go 2.5 miles. Turn right onto White Oak Church and continue for 0.5 miles. The free parking area is on the left, near the Wake County Parks sign.

Tips: Stop by Jean's Berry Patch when the strawberries are in season to pick your own strawberries. Restroom facilities are available at the New Hill–Olive Chapel and White Oak Church parking areas. However, no water is available at the trailheads.

American Tobacco Trail (South of I-40)

Terrain: **Graded grass/clay/gravel trail**

Distance: **5.8 miles roundtrip, out-and-back from Massey Chapel Road to the Chatham County Line; no elevation gain**

Why This Ride: Perfect for getting youngsters onto a surface other than pavement. The grass, clay and gravel of this trail was graded flat for the old railroad so kids can get used to being off road without hills or big bumps.

Ride Description: Flat and mostly smooth, this trail crosses through a mixture of suburban developments, farms and mixed forests. Watch for frogs jumping from the edge of the trail into the small ponds you'll pass along the way. The trail continues for a long way, so remember that you have to make it back to your car. Like the north stretch of the American Tobacco trail (also part of the Passport Rides program) there are several places you can start other than the one given below. Note: This stretch of trail is currently open, but in the future it will close temporarily for an application of gravel that will make it easier to maintain.

Driving Directions: From the Durham REI, turn left out of the parking lot on Fayetteville Road, and then turn right on Massey Chapel Road. The trail crosses Massey Chapel Rd. at the pedestrian crossing signs. Park roadside, or at the parking lot off Fayetteville Rd. Parking is free.

Tips: Stop by the Durham REI store on your way, or get your passport stamped on the way back. There are no restrooms on this section of the trail, but restrooms are available at REI.

American Tobacco Trail (North of I-40)

Terrain: **Paved trail**

Distance: **Up to 13 miles roundtrip, out-and-back from the trailhead south to NC 54; no elevation gain**

Why This Ride: This trail—built on an abandoned railway line—follows Durham’s longest greenway and is very friendly to young riders.

Ride Description: Winding through downtown Durham to the suburbs near the REI Durham store, this trail provides a great opportunity for families to get out and enjoy their bikes without having to go very far from home. It crosses several parks that make great places to stop for a picnic or some time on the playground. Make sure children are careful at the road crossings, and everyone can have a great time on a smooth surface with no motorized traffic. There are several parking areas that could be alternate starting points for an American Tobacco Trail adventure.

Driving Directions: From I-40, take NC 147 north. Get off at the US-15-BR/US-501-BR Exit 12B to Downtown/Roxboro Street/Mangum Street exit. Go straight on Jackie Robinson Drive/Willard Street. Park either in the lot just after Blackwell Street or at the American Tobacco Campus (just make sure you heed the parking signs so you don’t get towed).

Tips: Catch a baseball game at the nearby Durham Bulls Athletic Park. Some of the parks along the way have restrooms.

Hog Run Trail

Terrain: **Unpaved paths**

Distance: **Total of 7 miles; minimal elevation gain**

Why This Ride: Hugging Harris Lake, this ride is a good escape from city noise, and the breeze across the water feels great on a hot day. Loops of varying difficulty are linked but separate, so you don’t get any big surprises.

Ride Description: The Beginner Loop (0.7 miles) is easy, flat and presents no obstacles for young riders. You can either return to the parking lot from here or continue onto the Intermediate Loop (1.9 miles). This easy-to-moderate trail has a few small hills and obstacles that can be avoided by taking ride-arounds. Both trails follow the shores of Harris Lake and dip among the tall pines. They’re not crowded, and since they don’t run alongside each other, you feel like you have the park to yourself at times. Older kids might enjoy the Advanced Loop (4.25 miles). It offers log crossings, whoop-dee-doo sections and a few bridges. But even here, the obstacles have ride-arounds for the less experienced.

Driving Directions: From Durham: Take NC-751 South, and continue as road name changes to New Hill–Olive Chapel Road, then New Hill–Holleman Road. The park entrance will be on your right. From Raleigh and Cary: Follow Highway US1 South. Take the New Hill exit (Exit 89) off Hwy US1. At the top of the ramp, turn left onto New Hill–Holleman Rd. and go approximately 3 miles. The park entrance will be on your right.

Once on the main drive in the park, turn right at the first driveway to reach the park office, where you can pick up a brochure. To reach the lakeside facilities, continue straight on the main driveway. Park at the Hog Run trailhead. There are no fees.

Tips: Bike helmets are required. Bring snacks and water because the trails are a little ways from any commercial areas. The park is open 8am till sunset. Maps are available at the park office.

Highland Trails at Lake Crabtree County Park

Terrain: **Unpaved singletrack**

Distance: **Approximately 5 miles of short loop trails; 300 feet of elevation gain**

Why This Ride: This network of trails offers a number of choices for the young rider who can handle a few rocks and roots.

Ride Description: This is a series of 5 interconnected loop trails (each from 1.7 miles to 0.5 miles), allowing you to choose how long or short a ride you are looking to do. The trailhead is just across from the gravel parking lot, and each loop is marked by yellow blazes with connectors marked by red blazes. Most of the intersections have maps posted to help you find your way. The trails are forested and twisty but lots of fun for a new rider. Along the trail, you can expect to see a variety of wildlife including beavers, great blue heron, red-tailed hawks, woodpeckers, songbirds, squirrels, owls, white-tailed deer and other animals. There is also a “skills” area near the trailhead where you can watch more experienced mountain bikers try out teeter-totters and ride down narrow boards.

Driving Directions: Take I-40 toward RDU Airport. Take Exit 285 and go south on Aviation Parkway. The park entrance will be on your left. The gravel parking lot is closest to the trails. Parking is free.

Tips: The trails are closed when they are wet so call ahead to make sure they are open before you go. Keep your eye out for the connector trails (red blazes), tight switchbacks on Loop 3, and for the tough hill on Loop 1 leading to the boat ramp. The park has wonderful grassy fields that are perfect for rest stops and picnics. Restrooms are located at the boathouse and in nearby buildings.



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.