

Vermont: Lake Champlain Islands, Burlington & Stowe

Bike Vacation Only

Come cycle the bike paths and byways of VBT's Vermont home! Since our inception in 1971, VBT has guided group cycling tours throughout the pastoral valleys of our native Vermont—and we know every hidden corner. From the artsy-chic waterfront city of Burlington to the peaceful byways of the Champlain Islands, you'll love spinning through the clean Vermont air—spotting ospreys and majestic great blue herons winging their way along tranquil shores. Along the way, you'll meet VBT's countless Vermont friends—including a Vermont dairy farmer who introduces you to the local tradition of maple sugaring during a tour of his authentic Vermont sugar shack. As you spin through Stowe's evergreen mountain valleys, you'll even have a chance to stop at a local farm stand for Vermont's favorite summer treat—the maple creemee.

Cultural Highlights

- Stay in deluxe accommodations, including a boutique hotel, a charming lakefront inn, and a luxurious mountain resort.
- Cycle scenic backroads on South Hero Island, with panoramic views of both the Green Mountains and the Adirondacks.
- Savor a picnic lunch and wine tasting at a local vineyard in the Champlain Valley.
- Explore the Shelburne Museum, home to more than 150,000 works displayed in 39 unique buildings.
- Ride a dedicated, car-free path through the heart of picturesque Stowe Village.

What to Expect

This tour offers a full range of easy terrain mixed with moderate hills and is ideal for beginners and experienced cyclists. Our VBT support vehicle is always available for those needing assistance with hills.

Tour Duration: 6 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 4-44 miles

Average Cycling Time: 2-4 hours

Group size: 20 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

June 76°/55°, July 80°/60°, August 78°/58°, September 69°/50°, October 57°/40°

Average Rainfall (in.)

June 3.6, July 3.8, August 3.6, September 3.4, October 3

DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins

Pre-Tour Extension Guests:

After an included breakfast, enjoy most of the day at leisure in Burlington. With its beautiful waterfront, vibrant downtown, and surrounding Green Mountains, Burlington offers something for everyone—whether you're sailing on Lake Champlain, biking nearby trails, or sampling Vermont's renowned craft beer. Known as the "Queen City," Burlington is home to the University of Vermont and several smaller colleges. Fun fact: Ben & Jerry's launched their ice cream empire in a converted downtown gas station.

Be sure to visit Church Street Marketplace, just a short walk from your hotel. This bustling, pedestrian-only street is lined with cafés, restaurants, boutiques, and street performers, capturing the lively, youthful energy of the city. There are plenty of excellent lunch options nearby, and your hotel staff or VBT city information can help with recommendations.

Tour Only Guests:

Make your own travel arrangements to Burlington, Vermont. Guests driving to the tour should plan to park at the end point: Burlington International Airport (BTV), where parking is available in a multi-level, covered garage for approximately \$12.00 per day.

Optional Shuttle from Airport to Hotel Vermont

For your convenience, VBT offers a shuttle from Burlington International Airport to Hotel Vermont at 2:30 p.m. sharp.

Alternatively, taxis and rideshares are readily available and recommended if you prefer to arrive on your own schedule. Travel time is approximately 15 minutes. You may wish to have lunch at the airport (subject to café hours) or enjoy a meal at one of the many restaurants within walking distance of the hotel.

Hotel Vermont, your accommodations for tonight, is a locally inspired boutique property in downtown Burlington. The hotel offers comfortable, eco-conscious rooms and easy access to the city's vibrant lakefront, pedestrian shopping district, and arts and dining scene—an ideal launching point for your Vermont adventure.

All Guests:

Meet your VBT trip leaders at 3:30 p.m. in the hotel's courtyard, dressed in your cycling clothes, for your bike fitting and safety clinic, followed by a warm-up ride.

This evening, gather for a group orientation meeting and welcome cocktail, followed by a group dinner at the hotel.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Burlington Warm-Up Ride — 8 miles

What to Expect:

Your warm-up spin offers the perfect chance to get comfortable with the bike that will be your steadfast companion for the week ahead. As you ride, take in the beauty of Lake Champlain, with the Adirondack Mountains rising majestically on the distant horizon.

Cumulative Distance Range: 8 miles

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2: Burlington Bike Path / South Hero

This morning's bike tour follows the lakeshore toward the Champlain Islands, offering gentle terrain and sweeping lake views that make for a pleasant and scenic ride. Your route takes you along the Island Line Trail, one of the most spectacular rail-trails in the country, featuring a nearly three-mile stretch across a historic marble causeway that juts into Lake Champlain. Possibly the world's longest non-motorized causeway, this remarkable path offers panoramic vistas on both sides, with water seemingly stretching to the horizon. Originally built in the early 1900s for the Rutland Railroad, it has been beautifully resurfaced in recent years. Board the Island Line Bike Ferry for a short cruise across "The Cut," a 200-foot gap intentionally left open to allow boat passage between Colchester and South Hero. This ferry reconnects the trail's northern and southern halves, allowing uninterrupted cycling from Burlington into the islands. Along the way, stop at Snow Farm Winery for a wine tasting and picnic lunch before continuing through the towns of Grand Isle and South Hero en route to your next hotel.

Settle in and relax at the lakefront North Hero House Inn, located on North Hero—the second largest of

the three major Lake Champlain islands. Originally granted to Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys, the islands have played a pivotal role in the region's history. North Hero offers dramatic views of the Green Mountains, and the town's early-19th-century architecture adds to its charm. The inn's acclaimed restaurant, with a focus on fresh, local ingredients, provides the perfect setting for tonight's included dinner overlooking the water.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Burlington and Bike Ferry — 20 miles

Afternoon: Snow Farm Winery to North Hero — 20 miles

What to Expect:

Your morning ride offers scenic lake views as you head north from Burlington to Grand Isle along the Island Line Rail Trail Causeway, originally built in 1900. You'll cross "The Cut" via an included bike ferry operated by the nonprofit group Local Motion. Afterward, enjoy a picnic lunch and wine tasting at Snow Farm Winery. Continuing your ride, pass by the private property of Harry Barber, a Swiss native who constructed several miniature castles from local stone—visible from the road. You'll also ride by the Ed Weed Fish Culture Station, which raises landlocked Atlantic salmon and trout for release into Vermont's rivers and streams. The ride to Grand Isle features gentle terrain, primarily on paved roads with a few short, unpaved sections.

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 — 40 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3: North Hero Island and Isle La Motte

Cycle northward this morning along the tranquil lakeshore, crossing a scenic causeway to tiny Isle La Motte—an island getaway within the Champlain Islands and the first point of European contact in what is now Vermont. In 1609, French explorer Samuel de Champlain visited this peaceful isle during his maiden voyage along the lake that would come to bear his name. He described the area as "covered with the most beautiful pines that I have ever seen." Today, Lake Champlain remains the largest freshwater body east of the Mississippi, after the Great Lakes. Fed by Canada's St. Lawrence River—an ancient waterway used by Indigenous peoples for millennia—the lake flows northward into the Atlantic. During the colonial

period, both the French and English vied for control of this strategic corridor, establishing forts along its shores.

Enjoy a loop ride on Isle La Motte's quiet back roads, soaking in the natural beauty and historic significance of the island. Perhaps pause at the peaceful Goodsell Ridge Preserve, a fossil-rich site featuring informative exhibits and trails through ancient reef formations. This is one of the best places to learn about the 480-million-year-old Chazy Reef, the world's oldest known reef system.

Pedal past historic Fisk Farm, once home to Ichabod Ebenezer Fisk, who built his 18th-century estate using limestone and marble from the adjacent Fisk Quarry. At its peak, the quarry employed 100 men and today is part of the Chazy Fossil Reef National Natural Landmark. The estate has welcomed several notable guests over the years, including President Teddy Roosevelt.

Continue your ride along a peaceful lakeside road with serene water views to your left. At the northern tip of the island, arrive at Saint Anne's Shrine, a popular pilgrimage destination known for its sweeping views of Lake Champlain. The site features a statue of Saint Anne, tranquil walking paths, interpretive signage, and a restful atmosphere—perfect for a quiet break.

Loop back to North Hero in time for lunch on your own—perhaps at Hero's Welcome, a whimsical general store and café. Pick up a fresh-made sandwich and enjoy an alfresco lunch on their scenic lakeside deck, a favorite among locals and visitors alike.

This afternoon, choose your own adventure: continue cycling along the picturesque shoreline or opt for a self-guided walk at Pelots Point Nature Area, a peaceful trail network weaving through sugarbush, cedar groves, and marshland bordering secluded Pelots Bay. Keep an eye out for local wildlife—osprey, great blue heron, hawks, ducks, beavers, and turtles are all common sights.

Alternatively, take some time to relax at your lakefront inn. Complimentary kayaks, canoes, and stand-up paddleboards are available for guest use, or you may opt to book a spa service (advance reservations required; fees apply). Enjoy the evening at your leisure, perhaps lingering over dinner and savoring your final night on the islands.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Isle La Motte — 32 miles

Afternoon: Pelots Point — 12 miles

What to Expect:

Cycle north from your inn to Isle La Motte, stopping at the Goodsell Ridge Preserve and Saint Anne's Shrine. The route follows mostly quiet, paved country roads, with a short stretch of dirt road. Those wishing to shorten the ride may take a shuttle before reaching the causeway to Alburgh. In the afternoon, choose to relax at the inn or opt for an additional ride to Pelots Point Nature Area for a self-guided walk. This moderate-to-easy trail system features three loops totaling approximately three miles.

Cumulative Distance Range: 32 – 44 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4: Explore Shelburne / Cycle Along Lake Champlain / Shuttle to Stowe

This morning, head to Shelburne to visit an authentic sugar house, where you'll learn about Vermont's proud tradition of maple sugaring. Afterward, ride to the Shelburne Museum for an optional visit. This outstanding museum of folk and decorative art, quilts, textiles, paintings, Americana, and historic buildings boasts a remarkable collection of more than 150,000 works. Its unique campus includes 39 exhibition buildings, including a round barn, covered bridge, and general store. Highlights feature 500 quilts, 1,400 waterfowl decoys, 120 weathervanes, and 50 carousel figures—as well as the 220-foot steamboat *Ticonderoga*, built in 1906 at the Shelburne Shipyard. This day boat once served ports along both the New York and Vermont shores of Lake Champlain until 1953. The shipyard itself dates to the late 1700s and played a role in naval construction during World War II.

Enjoy a scenic ride south to Charlotte, where you can visit the peaceful town beach. Scan the waters for a chance to spot "Champ," the legendary lake creature said to be a distant cousin of the Loch Ness Monster. Lunch is on your own today, and your trip leaders will recommend local favorites along your route.

If you're eager for more cycling, consider continuing to Shelburne Farms, a 1,400-acre working farm and education center on the shores of Lake Champlain. Commissioned in 1886 by Dr. William Seward Webb and Lila Vanderbilt Webb as a model agricultural estate, the property features architecture by Robert H. Robertson and a sweeping pastoral landscape designed by Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. and further developed by the Olmsted Brothers. Now a National Historic Landmark, Shelburne Farms is celebrated for its natural beauty, historic significance, and commitment to sustainability and agricultural education.

Meet back at the Shelburne Museum parking lot at 3:00 p.m. for the shuttle (approximately 60 minutes) to Stowe. Upon arrival, relax or take a stroll through this postcard-perfect mountain town nestled at the foot of Mount Mansfield, Vermont's highest peak. Dinner is on your own tonight—perhaps at one of the town's celebrated farm-to-table restaurants or cozy local eateries.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Shelburne Museum — 4 miles

Afternoon: Charlotte Beach — 16 miles OR Shelburne Farms and Shipyard — 12 miles

What to Expect:

A shuttle brings you to a sugar house in Shelburne. From there, enjoy a short ride along scenic back roads to the Shelburne Museum. Continue cycling on quiet country roads to Charlotte and its peaceful town beach. You may choose to ride farther to explore Shelburne Farms—renowned for its fine cheddar cheeses—as well as the historic Shelburne Marina and Shipyard. Return to the Shelburne Museum parking lot for a 3:00 p.m. shuttle to Stowe.

Cumulative Distance Range: 4 — 32 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5: Stowe Countryside & Village

This morning's scenic ride begins on the paved Stowe Recreation Path, a flat, car-free route that winds through meadows and woodlands alongside the West Branch of the Little River. From there, continue along a mix of paved and dirt back roads toward Edson Hill. This stretch offers a quintessential Vermont experience—passing weathered barns, rolling pastures, grazing cows, and stands of old maple trees. Though the climb is steady, you're rewarded with sweeping views of the surrounding Green Mountains and serene countryside.

Arrive in downtown Stowe, where you'll find inviting shops, restaurants, and cultural attractions. Take time to explore the Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum, browse local craft and antique galleries, or shop for outdoor gear and apparel. Lunch is on your own today—choose from a variety of restaurants in Stowe Village or along the recreation path.

Those opting for the extended biking route will head to picturesque Stowe Hollow via quiet country lanes with more panoramic views of Vermont's iconic peaks and farmland. Highlights include Emily's Bridge, a historic 19th-century covered bridge wrapped in local lore (some say it's haunted), and Grand View Farm, a classic Vermont photo op with its red barn and dramatic mountain backdrop.

Return to the resort this afternoon to relax—enjoy a dip in the pool, unwind in the sauna, or explore nearby walking trails. This evening, gather with your fellow travelers for a festive farewell dinner to celebrate your time together in Vermont.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Stowe — 16 miles | Stowe Hollow PLUS — 21 miles

What to Expect:

Today's rides traverse the scenic hills surrounding Stowe. You'll cycle along the flat, car-free Stowe Recreation Path and navigate a few sustained inclines on picturesque country roads, all while enjoying sweeping mountain views. For a shorter ride, stick to the Recreation Path, which leads directly into Stowe Village. For those seeking more of a challenge, an extended route adds mileage—and hills—through classic Vermont landscapes. While today's rides are not especially long in distance, they do include moderately rated terrain. After your ride and lunch, return to the resort at your leisure to relax and unwind. An additional independent ride may be available for experienced cyclists—ask your trip leader for details.

Cumulative Distance Range: 16 - 21 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6: Stowe / Shuttle to Burlington / Your VBT Vacation Ends

After breakfast at the resort, set out for a final spin on the Stowe Recreation Path. Pause at the Brookdale Covered Bridge for a memorable photo op before retracing your route back to the hotel. There will be time to shower and pack before departing for home. Alternatively, you may choose to enjoy a leisurely morning at the resort or take a walk into Stowe Village for one last visit.

VBT has arranged a group shuttle from Stowe to Burlington International Airport at 11:30 a.m. (approximately 60 minutes of travel time).

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Stowe Recreation Path Out and Back — 10 miles

What to Expect:

Spend your final morning with a short ride along the flat, paved Stowe Recreation Path, relaxing at the hotel, or exploring Stowe Village.

Cumulative Distance Range: 10 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Hotel Vermont (Day 1)

Vermont's newest boutique hotel, the Hotel Vermont offers perfectly situated accommodations in downtown Burlington. The natural splendor of this "green," sustainably operated hotel, coupled with its desire to embrace both the outdoors and shared community values, promises a truly memorable experience. Guests will enjoy warm, attentive service and special touches designed to improve one's mental and physical well-being. The hotel's air-conditioned rooms are simple, yet elegant, with clean, crisp design elements and warm rustic charm. Rooms include flat-screen TVs, MP3 docking stations, and complimentary Internet access.

The North Hero House (Days 2-3)

Having recently completed an extensive renovation, this beautifully restored country inn has been welcoming guests since 1891 when they arrived by paddle wheel steamer. North Hero House features two full bars, a sandy beach, an acclaimed restaurant and a caring staff. Clustered at the water's edge, rooms include WiFi, clock-radios, and cable television and most feature a stunning panoramic view of the lake and mountains.

Bluebird Cady Hill Lodge (Days 4-5)

Boasting an exceptional location—especially for active travelers—the Bluebird Cady Hill Lodge is just a five-minute walk from charming downtown Stowe, Vermont, and five miles from the famed Mount Mansfield. Enjoy hiking and world-class mountain biking on nearby backcountry trails; attractions like Trapp Family Lodge, the Vermont Ski Museum, and a variety of breweries are also within easy reach. When you're not out adventuring, revel in the lodge's rustic mountain ambiance and relaxing amenities, including two swimming pools, a hot tub, game room, fire pits, fitness center, Great Room bar, air-conditioning, high-speed Internet access, and beautiful alpine views.