

California: Wine Country & the Pacific Coast

Bike Vacation Only

America's wine estates and vineyards are a bucket-list destination—and bicycling lets you experience it with all your senses. Vistas of rolling countryside blanketed with grapevines delight the eye. The lullaby of Pacific surf soothes the soul as you trace the coast. Smell the aroma of a farm-fresh picnic lunch spread out in a tall redwood forest. And, of course, taste the wines that have made California the toast of the nation. Plus, we've tucked in extras, including a tasting of olive oil and vinegar, time to explore some of the most charming Spanish Colonial towns in the West, and overnights in unique, centrally located accommodations. Don't miss this chance to experience a sensory extravaganza that makes ours supreme among California wine country bike tours!

Cultural Highlights

Sample California reds during a private tasting at Jessup Cellars in Yountville.

Experience West Coast hospitality at highly rated inns with sweeping views.

Learn why Alfred Hitchcock chose Bodega Bay as his film setting for *The Birds*.

Explore Healdsburg, a charming Sonoma town whose historic Spanish Colonial plaza is chock full of diverse art galleries.

Feast on an exquisite picnic lunch under the magnificent canopy of coastal redwood trees.

Cycle the Napa Valley Wine Trail, pausing for a tasting at some of the most renowned wineries in the region.

Trace the history of Gold Rush pioneers and red Zins cycling through Dry Creek Valley.

What to Expect

This tour offers mostly easy terrain with the occasional rolling hill and the opportunity for longer rides.

The VBT van support shuttle is always available.

Tour Duration: 6 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 6 - 48

Average Cycling Time: 00:30 - 04:45

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Apr 72°/43°, May 78°/46°, Jun 86°/50°, Jul 90°/52°, Aug 89°/52°, Sep 87°/50°, Oct 80°/46°, Nov 65°/44°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Apr 1.5, May 1, Jun 0, Jul 0, Aug 0, Sep 0, Oct 1.5, Nov 2.6

DAY 1: Arrive in Napa / VBT Bicycle Vacation begins

VBT provides a shuttle from San Francisco International Airport to the Napa River Inn in Napa, departing at 1:10 p.m. If you arrive later or if your flight is delayed, please make your own arrangements to the Napa River Inn.

Meet the shuttle at San Francisco International Airport outside Terminal #3, Level 1, Courtyard 4. There are signs in the baggage claim area that read "CHARTER BUSES." Follow them and look for the "Pure Luxury" shuttle. The driver will be holding a VBT sign. The driver and vehicle arrive in the courtyard at 1:00 p.m.

2nd Option: Join a shuttle from the Grand Hyatt San Francisco at 1:40 p.m. Wait for the shuttle outside the hotel entrance, as the shuttle driver may not leave the vehicle. Please allow for traffic delays. The shuttle bus reads "Pure Luxury." If you miss this shuttle, please make your own arrangements to the Napa River Inn.

If you are driving to the tour, free parking is available at the Napa River Inn during your stay. Your trip leaders can assist you with finding parking for the remainder of the tour.

Meet at the Napa River Inn in Napa, California, located on the river in beautiful downtown Napa. Ask the reception desk for your welcome package at check-in. Meet your trip leaders at 3:30 p.m. for a safety talk and bike-fitting. Your California wine country bike tour officially begins with a short warm-up ride along the river. Tonight, you'll dine at a neighboring restaurant for a taste of some of the region's farm-fresh cuisine.

Accommodation: Napa River Inn, Napa

Included Meals: Breakfast (for Pre-extension guests only), Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 6 miles

Afternoon

Warm-up: 6 miles

What to Expect: Ride directly from the inn on the Napa Valley Vine Trail, a dedicated bike path. Views of the Napa River are a constant companion on this easy familiarization ride.

DAY 2: Yountville / Jessup Cellars / Napa Valley Vine Trail

After breakfast, roll through the heart of the Napa wine region as you ride north along the Vine Trail to Yountville. Here, you'll pause for a picnic lunch and a private wine tasting at Jessup Cellars before returning to Napa by bike or shuttle. This afternoon, you'll have free time to browse downtown Napa's shops and galleries, explore some more wineries, or relax in the day spa at the Napa River Inn.

Dinner is on your own at one of Napa's many restaurants.

Accommodation: Napa River Inn, Napa

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 10 - 38 miles

Morning

Napa to Yountville: 20 miles

Afternoon

Yountville to Napa: 10 or 17 miles

What to Expect: You can expect an easy ride, primarily on a dedicated bike path. No significant climbing. Taking a slightly different route with several mileage options, you'll return to explore more of Napa.

DAY 3: Carneros / Sonoma / Bodega Bay

This morning's ride leads to the Carneros region, a viticultural district known for cooler-climate varietals and sparkling wines. The grapes benefit from ocean breezes, allowing the grapes to ripen more slowly. Before they were laced with vineyards, these Carneros (sheep) hills were once grazing pastures.

Arriving by bike to the picturesque town of Sonoma, enjoy an included tasting of family-produced olive oils and vinegars with our friend Frank Figone. There is time for lunch on your own at one of the eateries on the historic plaza—the largest in the state. Afterward, board a shuttle for the 60-minute transfer to Bodega Bay.

Accommodation: Inn at the Tides, Bodega Bay

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 24 miles

Morning

Napa to Sonoma: 24 miles

What to Expect: Leaving Napa this morning, you ride west to Sonoma. Today's ride is mostly on back roads. The VBT support vehicle is available to flatten the few rolling hills. After lunch on your own in Sonoma, the group boards a shuttle to Bodega Bay.

DAY 4: Armstrong Redwoods / Healdsburg

This morning's ride offers beautiful views of the Pacific Ocean, following the coastline for ten miles before turning inland to Guerneville and Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve. Here, gather for a picnic lunch under the magnificent canopy of the *Sequoia sempervirens* or coastal redwood. The world's tallest trees live 500-2,000 years, reaching heights of 350 feet.

After lunch, continue by bike or shuttle toward your hotel in downtown Healdsburg. Along the way you may choose to visit family-owned Gracianna Winery for an optional tasting. Once in Healdsburg, you'll have time to settle in and explore town. This vibrant destination is known for its historic Spanish Colonial plaza. Visit the museum, stroll along the river through Railroad Park, or perhaps explore one of the galleries showcasing art, photography, glassware, and jewelry.

Dinner is on your own with many choices in the neighborhood.

Accommodation: Harmon Guest House, Healdsburg

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 21 – 48 miles

Morning

Bodega Bay to Armstrong Redwoods: 27 miles

Afternoon

Armstrong Redwoods to Healdsburg: 21 miles

What to Expect: Today you cycle along the famous Pacific Coast Highway with breathtaking ocean

vistas. Then you will head inland to ride among the coastal redwood trees following the Russian River. The morning ride ends in Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve where your trip leaders prepare a picnic lunch. If you wish, after lunch continue cycling through redwood forests and into the Russian River Valley where pinot noir is king!

DAY 5: Alexander Valley / Healdsburg

Today takes you on a ride through the kingdom of pinot noir in Alexander Valley. The valley is sheltered from the Pacific Ocean by low-lying hills. Because of this, it is one of the warmest areas in Northern California during the day, but at night the temperatures lower significantly, offering cool climate conditions for the grapes. The valley's closeness to the Russian River allows for an early morning fog that covers the lower vineyard areas until it is burned off by the sun. This natural air-conditioning allows the grapes to develop full-flavor maturity over an extended growing season—often 15 to 20 percent longer than neighboring areas.

You'll also ride the Geyserville and Lytton Springs roads within Alexander Valley. Along the way, you might take advantage of optional stops at tasting rooms, including the Coppola Winery—a one-of-a-kind experience.

All cycling finishes before lunch, which is on your own in Healdsburg. Take advantage of free time to swim or paddle in the river at Veterans Memorial Beach, or to take a dip in your inn's pool.

Tonight, enjoy a farewell dinner at the inn and make a toast alongside your fellow travelers to your California wine country bike tour.

Accommodation: Harmon Guest House, Healdsburg

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 22 miles

Morning

Alexander Valley: 22 miles

What to Expect: You can look forward to a gentle ride through pinot noir country. You will cycle the beautiful West Dry Creek and Dry Creek roads, followed by Geyserville and Alexander Valley, passing through some of the most famous California vineyards, with optional fun tasting stops along the way.

All of the cycling today takes place before lunch (on your own) in Healdsburg, where you have the chance to explore local shops, hang out by the pool, or go on another bike ride.

DAY 6: Cycle Dry Creek Valley / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends / Depart for home

Your California wine country bike tour ends with one final scenic journey. Today's route takes you through the Dry Creek Valley, a beautiful, winding landscape with a unique microclimate filled with an unusual mix of plant life, from redwood groves to live oak forests—even palm trees and cactus dot the landscape. Along the way, a couple notable wineries may interest you: Everett Ridge or Quivira Biodynamic Winery.

Return to your inn for a shower and lunch before your shuttle to San Francisco International Airport at 2:00 p.m. We recommend a flight out of San Francisco no earlier than 6:00 p.m.

If you drove to the start of the tour, the VBT van will transfer you to meet your vehicle.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 19 miles

Morning

Dry Creek Valley: 19 miles

What to Expect: Enjoy a peaceful ramble through the Dry Creek Valley, passing beautiful vineyards and elegant tasting rooms. Upon returning to Harmon Guest House, your trip leaders prepare a final picnic lunch.

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

The Harmon Guest House (Days: 4,5)

Set amidst breathtaking views of the Fitch Mountains and Sonoma hills, the Harmon Guest House is a boutique property that exemplifies the effortless beauty of the region. Watch the sunset from the rooftop terrace, stroll along the garden courtyard or creekside park, or lounge around the fire pit. After a day of exploring, sip a fresh cocktail or take a refreshing dip in the pool.

Napa River Inn (Days: 1,2)

The Napa River Inn's location within the historic Napa Mill allows access to the neighborhood's specialty shops, restaurants and wine tasting rooms. As Napa's highest Michelin rated, and Forbes Four Star hotel, you are assured a restful and memorable stay. Three diverse buildings house the inn's 66 air-conditioned rooms. Restaurants, a spa and retail shops coexist in the riverside complex. Originally built in 1884, it is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and is a National Trust Historic Hotel of America.

Inn at the Tides (Day: 3)

Just steps away from the Tides Wharf pier, the Inn at the Tides is set upon acres of natural surroundings; its large bay windows and outdoor terrace make the perfect gazing spots. The inn's rooms are built along a hillside with stunning views of Bodega Bay with either a balcony or fireplace. There is a heated swimming pool, sauna, therapeutic massage services, a hot tub, and several on-site dining options. Note that the mild climate and bayside locale create a natural cooling airflow, making air-conditioning unnecessary.