

Vermont: Lake Champlain Islands, Burlington & Stowe

Bike Vacation Only

Cycle along scenic shoreline paths during this spectacular Lake Champlain bike tour, where unrivaled nature, charming towns, and Vermont hospitality go hand in hand. Your route features picturesque, car-free bike paths and breathtaking views of mountain ranges in both directions – the Adirondacks to the west and the Green Mountains to the east. On the mainland, experience the small-city hospitality and culture of Burlington, the fascinating history chronicled at the famed Shelburne Museum, and the vibrant resort and alpine aesthetic of Stowe. On the water, kayak tranquil Lake Champlain, take a refreshing dip in a local beach, and absorb panoramic views as you ferry your bike from one beautiful place to the next.



Cultural Highlights

- Cycle the quiet back roads of Isle La Motte
- Explore historic St. Anne’s Shrine and Fisk Quarry, home to the world’s oldest reef

- Enjoy deluxe accommodations: a cozy Vermont inn, a boutique hotel, and a luxurious mountain resort
- Pause on a Lake Champlain island for a delicious picnic lunch
- Enjoy a scenic ride on South Hero Island with views of the Green Mountains and the Adirondacks
- Visit a local vineyard for a picnic lunch and wine tasting
- Ferry between the islands and the mainland as you ride one rewarding path after another
- Follow your own whims in Burlington's lively downtown
- Tour the Shelburne Museum, an extraordinary collection of 150,000 works
- Ride through the heart of Stowe on a dedicated path
- Grab a beer at one of Vermont's locally owned breweries during your stays in Burlington and Stowe

What to Expect

This tour offers the full range of easy terrain mixed with moderate hills and is ideal for beginning and experienced cyclists. Our VBT van support shuttle is always available for those who would like assistance with the hills.

Tour Duration: 6 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 13 - 22

Average Cycling Time: 01:15 - 04:00

Group size: 20 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Jun 76°/55°, Jul 80°/60°, Aug 78°/58°, Sep 69°/50°, Oct 57°/40°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Jun 3.6, Jul 3.8, Aug 3.6, Sep 3.4, Oct 3.0

DAY 1: Start from Burlington / Transfer to North Hero

Make your own arrangements for travel to Burlington, Vermont. The tour begins and ends at the Burlington International Airport (airport code: BTV). Please plan to have lunch before leaving the airport or bring a packed lunch with you.

VBT will offer a shuttle to our first inn, the North Hero House. The shuttle works on a "show and go" basis

with no reservations needed. Meet your trip leader outside the main exit from baggage claim and across the road in the shuttle pickup area. Your trip leader will be wearing VBT staff garments and holding a VBT sign and the van will have VBT signage. Our shuttle to North Hero will leave promptly at 1:00 p.m. (travel time is about 45 minutes). After settling in, join your VBT trip leaders at 3:30 p.m. in your cycling clothes for a bike fitting and brief cycling-skills clinic. This will be immediately followed by a short warm-up ride. This evening, gather at 6:00 p.m. for an orientation meeting and welcome cocktail. You will enjoy dinner at the inn at 7:00 p.m.

If you are arriving after the shuttle departs, you will need to arrange transportation to the North Hero House at your expense. You can take any taxi from the Burlington airport or call one of the following taxi companies: Green Mountain Taxi (802-503-3096) or Burlington Airport Taxi (802-239-1515). Travel time is approximately 45 minutes.

Guests driving to the tour should meet the group at Burlington International Airport and park your cars here for the week. Parking rates are approximately \$12.00 per day. The airport offers both short and long-term parking in their newly expanded, multi-level, covered parking garage. The main parking entrance is located just past the terminal building on the left. Credit cards and cash are acceptable payment methods.

VBT Pre-Trip Extension guests: You have another morning to enjoy Burlington. At 12:45 p.m., the shuttle will meet and transfer you to Burlington International Airport to meet the rest of the group and your trip leaders for your transfer to the North Hero House (travel time approximately 45 minutes). This transfer from the Burlington hotel is only available to guests who purchase the pre-trip extension through VBT.

Settle in and relax at North Hero House on North Hero, the second largest of three major Lake Champlain islands. Originally granted to Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys, the islands have played a pivotal part in our nation's history. North Hero offers dramatic views of the Green Mountains and the town's early-19th century architecture adds to its charm. The Lake Champlain Island, the Adirondacks and Green Mountains are the result of North America colliding with the European continental plate millennia ago.

Meet your VBT trip leaders at 3:30 p.m. in your cycling clothes for a bike fitting and brief cycling-skills clinic. This will be immediately followed by a short warm-up ride. This evening, gather at 6:00 p.m. for an orientation meeting and welcome cocktail. You will enjoy dinner at the inn at 7:00 p.m.

Accommodation: North Hero House, North Hero

Included Meals: Dinner

Cumulative Distance Ride: 12 miles

Today's Ride Choice:

Afternoon

Warm-up North Hero: 12 miles

What to Expect: Your warm-up spin gives you the opportunity to get used to the bike that will be your stalwart companion for the rest of the week. Pedal over gentle terrain on country lanes. Admire the beauty of Lake Champlain with the Green Mountains across the horizon.

DAY 2: Cycle Isle La Motte and North Hero Island

Cycle northward this morning along the tranquil lakeshore, crossing a causeway to Isle La Motte, one of the Champlain Islands. Named after French explorer Samuel de Champlain in 1609, Lake Champlain is the largest freshwater body east of the Mississippi after the Great Lakes. Canada's St. Lawrence River, an important transportation route for indigenous people for thousands of years, flows in from the north and empties into the Atlantic Ocean. The French and English built forts in a race to control the lake during the early colonial years leading up to the Revolutionary War.

Ride quiet back roads on Isle La Motte, stopping to visit the historic St. Anne's Shrine and Fisk Quarry. The shrine has lovely views of Lake Champlain, information on local history, short walking trails, rest rooms, and blissful serenity. In 1787, Ichabod Ebenezer Fisk built his estate with limestone and marble from Fisk Quarry. At the height of operations, he employed 100 men. Remarkably, the quarry has fossils from the Chazy Coral Reef, the world's oldest reef, formed 480 million years ago.

As you continue your invigorating ride, take in the natural and historical sights. This was the first of the lake's islands to be visited by French navigator and explorer Samuel de Champlain and his party of French and Native Americans in 1609. He described the place as "covered with the most beautiful pines that I have ever seen." After a picnic lunch, you are free to choose between a guided kayaking excursion, more cycling along the lovely shoreline, or an afternoon of relaxation before dinner back at the inn.

Accommodation: North Hero House, North Hero

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 18 – 49 miles

Morning

Isle La Motte: 31 miles

Afternoon

Grand Isle: 18 miles

What to Expect: Cycle north from your inn to Isle La Motte, with stops at St. Anne's Shrine, Fisk Quarry, and Halls Apple Orchard. After lunch, there is an optional 17.8-mile lollipop loop ride south to Grand Isle in lieu of, or after kayaking. Cyclists can shorten the ride with a shuttle before they reach the causeway to Alburg.

DAY 3: South Hero / Burlington Bike Path

This morning's Lake Champlain bike tour takes you along the shore of the southernmost Champlain Island which includes the towns of Grand Isle and South Hero. The lake views and gentle terrain make for very pleasant cycling. You will stop at Snow Farm Winery, Vermont's first vineyard, for a wine tasting and picnic lunch, before continuing on your ride. Later, board the Island Line Bike Ferry for a short cruise with your bike. This service joins the two sides of "The Cut" between South Hero and Colchester along the recently resurfaced marble causeway and allows you to "ride" uninterrupted from the islands into Burlington. After crossing "The Cut," join the Burlington Bike Path and continue cycling to your hotel.

Known as the Queen City, Burlington is home to the University of Vermont and several smaller colleges. Ben & Jerry's began their ice cream empire in a renovated gas station downtown. Offering glorious sunsets, sailing on the lake, hiking and biking on nearby mountains, and Vermont craft beer, Burlington is a beloved destination. A walk down Church Street Marketplace puts you in the heart of the city's vibrant, youthful energy.

After settling in, you can explore Burlington's Church Street Marketplace and find a spot for dinner on your own. You'll find many restaurants and several breweries within walking distance of the hotel.

Accommodation: Hotel Vermont, Burlington

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 14 – 35 miles

Morning

Snow Farm Winery: 21 miles

Afternoon

Bike Ferry and Burlington: 14 miles

What to Expect: Your morning ride provides you with lake views heading south from North Hero to Grand

Isle over gentle terrain and a combination of quiet dirt and paved roads. Travel by the private property of Harry Barber, a native of Switzerland who created multiple miniature castles from local stone that can be seen from the road. You will pass the Ed Weed Fish Culture Station that raises landlocked Atlantic salmon and trout to release into Vermont's rivers and streams. Feel free to view the vast tanks of fish and educational exhibits, or walk around the hatchery grounds. After a picnic and wine tasting at Snow Farm Winery, ride along the Island Line Rail Trail Causeway which was built in 1900. You will cross "The Cut" on an included bike ferry run by the non-profit group Local Motion. The ride into Burlington features gentle terrain on bike paths.

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

After breakfast, you will ride to the Shelburne Museum for an included visit. This fine museum of folk and decorative art, quilts, textiles, paintings, Americana, and period buildings boasts an extraordinary collection of more than 150,000 works in a unique setting which includes 39 exhibition buildings. Among its holdings are 500 quilts, 1,400 waterfowl decoys, 120 weathervanes, and 50 carousel figures—along with the 220-foot steamboat Ticonderoga, built in 1906 at the Shelburne Shipyard on Lake Champlain. It operated as a day-boat serving ports along New York and Vermont shores until 1953. The Shelburne Marina and Shipyard opened in the late 1700s and began building sidewheel steamboats in the early 1800s. During World War II, it had naval contracts to build subchasers, torpedo lighters, and tugboats.

You may choose to continue to Shelburne Farms, a 1,400-acre working farm and education center. With its beautiful grounds and interesting architecture, this National Historic Landmark was designed as a model agricultural estate in 1886 by Dr. William Seward Webb and Lila Vanderbilt Webb. If you're looking for a bit more cycling, enjoy an additional ride south to Charlotte, where you can visit the town beach. Scan the waves and try to catch a glimpse of "Champ," the legendary lake creature that could be a distant cousin of the Loch Ness Monster. Lunch is on your own today, your trip leaders will make suggestions of the best places to stop along your ride.

Meet back at the Shelburne Museum parking lot at 4:00 p.m. for the shuttle (approximately 60 minutes) to Stowe. Upon arrival, relax or take a stroll around the resort town before dinner on your own tonight.

Accommodation: Topnotch Resort, Stowe

Included Meals: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 12 – 28 miles

Morning

Shelburne Museum: 12 miles

Afternoon

Charlotte Beach: 16 miles

OR

Shelburne Farms and Shipyard: 12 miles

What to Expect: Ride in the morning through the University of Vermont campus, connecting to back roads that lead to the Shelburne Museum. You may continue to Shelburne Farms, home to fine cheddar cheeses, as well as Shelburne Marina and Shipyard. Enjoy more country cycling along the lake to Charlotte and its town beach. Meet back at the Shelburne Museum parking lot for a 4:00 p.m. shuttle to Stowe.

DAY 5: Stowe Village / Morrisville

Your scenic ride this morning begins on the paved Stowe Recreation Path, a flat route free of motorized vehicles. Turning off the recreation path onto Luce Hill Road, you will ride through the picturesque neighboring village of Moscow, following roads with very little traffic and wonderful views of Mount Mansfield and the Worcester Range. Stop at a glassblowing workshop in Moscow. Along the way, you will pass the famous Emily's Bridge, a Stowe landmark with a ghostly past. Arrive in downtown Stowe, with its many shops and restaurants. Take time to explore the Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum, fine antique and craft galleries, and outdoor clothing and equipment stores. Lunch is on your own today. You can choose from any of the restaurants in Stowe Village or along the recreation path.

Today's longer option leads you to Morrisville in Lamoille County, following pleasant country roads. Take time to stop at Rock Art Brewery to sample some of their Vermont craft beers. Whichever ride you choose today, return to the resort to enjoy a dip in the pool or a spa treatment (advanced reservations recommended). Later gather for a farewell dinner at Flannel restaurant, a Stowe favorite.

Accommodation: Topnotch Resort, Stowe

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 5 – 35 miles

Morning

Stowe Bike Path and Moscow: 11 miles

Stowe to Morrisville: 19 miles

Afternoon

Downtown Stowe to Topnotch: 5 miles

What to Expect: Today's rides traverse the valley beneath Stowe Mountain Resort. You will cycle on the flat Stowe Recreational Path and through the village of Moscow, enjoying the mountain views along picturesque roads. You may choose to ride to the village of Morrisville to visit a local brewery. After your ride and lunch, return to the resort.

DAY 6: Stowe and Waterbury / Depart for home

After breakfast at the resort, you may choose to cycle on the Stowe Recreation Path, hike a path in the woods of Stowe, or enjoy the amenities of the hotel. Later this morning, transfer to Waterbury, stopping along the way at Cold Hollow Cider Mill, one of Vermont's most popular locales for savory apple cider donuts. Your tour concludes with a festive lunch overlooking the rolling mountains and hills of Waterbury.

VBT has made arrangements for a shuttle from Waterbury Center to the Burlington International Airport at 2:00 p.m. (travel time approximately 60 minutes). We recommend flights out of Burlington no earlier than 4:00 p.m. If you need to get back to the airport prior to that time, the transfer back to Burlington will be at your own expense.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Cumulative Distance Range: 10 miles

Today's Ride Choice:

Morning

Stowe Bike Path: 10 miles

What to Expect: Ride from the hotel along the bike path, deciding how far you would like to travel. You may ride all the way to downtown Stowe and back, pausing along the way to enjoy the forests and open fields.