

California: Napa, Dry Creek Valley & the Pacific Coast

Bike Vacation Only

Cycle from Napa Valley to the Pacific on this self-paced Bicycling Vacation! This enriching Napa and Sonoma Valley bike tour delivers you to classic “NorCal” landscapes of lush vineyards, golden hills, dense forests and dramatic ocean shores. Follow the Napa Valley Vine Trail and the old wagon trail known as Silverado to renowned wine towns where mineral springs and mud baths refresh the spirit. Traverse the scenic Dry Creek Valley, famed home of red zinfandel and pinot noir grapes. Ride under a soaring canopy of redwoods, among the world’s oldest and tallest trees. All the while, California’s finest wineries beckon you to stop and sample their finest. Take your time ... from Calistoga to Healdsburg and beyond, these American Viticultural Areas are meant to be savored.

Cultural Highlights

- Pedal the Napa Valley Vine Trail, pausing to sample California’s sublime wines at your own pace
- Follow the route of a historic wagon road as you cycle the Silverado Trail
- Bike under the magnificent canopy of soaring coastal redwoods in Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve
- Ride the beautiful Dry Creek Valley, where some of the finest red zinfandels are produced
- Slow down to “beach time,” absorbing Northern California’s splendid Pacific Coast at a carefree pace
- Cycle into cinema’s history in Bodega Bay, where Alfred Hitchcock filmed scenes for *The Birds*

What to Expect

This tour offers mostly easy to moderate terrain with the occasional rolling hill and a longer ride on the last day with no opportunity to shorten the ride. Please verify your bike selection for this tour as it is not always possible to change bikes once you arrive on tour. Travel with your friends and family—we can accommodate multiple guests on this self-guided vacation. Our 24/7 support system is available if needed.

Tour Duration: 6 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 6 - 45 miles

Average Cycling Time: 2:45 - 4:15

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Apr 72°/43°, May 78°/46°, Jun 86°/50°, Jul 90°/51°, Aug 89°/52°, Sep 87°/50°, Oct 80°/46°, Nov 65°/44°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Apr 1.5, May 1.0, Jun 0, Jul 0, Aug 0, Sep 0, Oct 1.5, Nov 2.6

DAY 1: VBT Self-Guided Bicycling Vacation begins / Arrive in Napa

Your Self-Guided Bicycling Vacation begins at the Napa River Inn in Napa, center of some of California's most heralded wineries. The charming town is situated on the Napa River, and your inn puts you at the center of it all. Make your own travel arrangements to Napa. For suggestions on traveling to Napa, please, refer to your VBT Handbook. If you are driving to the tour, free parking is available at the inn. Suggestions for parking for the remainder of the week are also in the VBT Handbook.

You meet your VBT Local host, along with any other VBT guests arriving on the same day, at 1:00 p.m. for a Welcome Orientation at the inn (Napa River Inn, 500 Main Street, CA 94559 707.251.8500). Please be dressed and ready for cycling. Your Local host will be carrying a VBT sign and/or wearing a VBT garment.

The Welcome Orientation with your VBT Local host includes:

- An overview of the itinerary
- Bike fitting and equipment familiarization
- Review of the Ride with GPS navigation app
- Important contact information in case you need to reach your VBT Local host
- Safety briefing
- Local suggestions (restaurants, things to do, etc.)

Everyone comes to Napa Valley to sample their favorite wines in the place of their origin. Here, where some ten percent of the world's wines are produced, you have hundreds of wineries to choose from! It is pure pleasure to follow your own desires in this scenic pocket of California, blanketed with vast vineyards and overseen by the Mayacamas Mountains. The stunning valley gained international recognition among oenophiles after the 1976 Judgment of Paris, when a Chardonnay from Calistoga beat nine other contenders in a blind tasting.

Head out on a warm-up ride along our suggested out-and-back route. This idyllic spin traces the scenic Napa River whose waters nurture an enormous network of vineyards. The short ride leaves you ample time to browse downtown Napa this evening, perusing its galleries and shops and perhaps stopping at the Oxbow Public Market, a lively and colorful emporium of olive oils, spirits, and all manner of souvenirs. Stop by a wine tasting room or wine bar to sip a glass or two. Alternately, you may indulge in the services of the day spa at your inn.

This evening, select one of Napa's many fine restaurants for a dinner of locally sourced dishes and—of course—the region's incredible wine.

Today's Ride Choices

Today's Ride Choice Napa Loop — 5.7 miles

What to Expect: This short ride leaves directly from the inn, following the Napa Valley Vine Trail, a dedicated bike path. Enjoy views of the Napa River as you familiarize yourself with your bicycle.

DAY 2: Yountville / Napa / Stay Put Day

After breakfast, you cycle into the heart of the Napa Valley, heading north along one of the region's renowned and scenic routes—the Napa Valley Vine Trail. It's about 10 miles to Yountville, named for the pioneer who established the first vineyard in the valley. The town's status as a favorite destination for gourmands makes it the ideal stop for a morning pastry, or you can time your day so that you pass through at lunchtime.

Today's Ride Choices

Napa to Yountville — 20 miles | Yountville to Napa long option — 10 miles | Yountville to Napa long option — 17 miles

What To Expect:

Napa to Yountville

The route departs Napa primarily on a dedicated bike path to Yountville with no significant climbing.

Yountville to Napa long option

Traveling by way of a slightly different route, you'll return to explore more of Napa. This shorter option stays primarily on the valley route from this morning's ride. Traveling by way of a slightly different route, you'll return to explore more of Napa. This longer option adds a deviation towards Carneros Creek and adds some moderate hills.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3: Napa to Healdsburg / Move on Day

The day starts with a shuttle to Calistoga. Then, cycle west out of Calistoga into classic wine country. Lush vineyards, golden hills and wide-open farm fields mark your progress and evoke the spirit of the good life of northern California. You choose from two rides today, one leading you to Healdsburg on a more direct route and the other sending you onto quieter roads with some hill climbing. Both feature breathtaking vistas, opportunities to stop for wine tasting and vineyard tours (including at the vineyard owned by Francis Ford Coppola) and an invigorating finish in the charming town of Healdsburg, home to three of the top wineries in the United States and consistently hailed as one of the top 10 small towns in America.

You spend two nights here in this bustling valley town on the banks of the Russian River. Upon arrival, take time to explore the historic 19th-century Spanish Colonial plaza with its quaint gazebo. Follow the tree-lined streets to its museum housed in the Carnegie Library, stroll along the river through Railroad Park or perhaps explore one of the galleries showcasing the valley's lovely art, photography, glassware, and jewelry. Dinner is on your own; you'll find ample mouthwatering choices near your hotel.

Today's Ride Choices

Calistoga to Healdsburg short option — 33.4 miles | Calistoga to Healdsburg long option — 36.6 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4: Dry Creek Valley & Alexander Valley / Healdsburg / Stay Put Day

Spend today as you wish, exploring shops and boutiques, paddling in the river at Veterans Memorial Beach and exploring this once sleepy farming village. If you're an oenophile, visit the Healdsburg Public Library, the region's reference for all things wine. Or canoe along the fabled Russian River by canoe, admiring the towering redwood trees and riverside vistas.

If you prefer more time on your bicycle, ride the American Viticultural Area of the Dry Creek Valley, a scenic stretch of some 160 wineries that largely grow the red zinfandel grape. The route—striking for its sand-colored landscapes and lush vineyards that stretch to Dry Creek and distant hills.

Your scenic ride leads you into the adjacent Alexander Valley, realm of the celebrated pinot noir grape and the largest wine region in Sonoma. Because it is sheltered from the Pacific by low lying hills, this is one of the warmest areas in Northern California by day and very cool by night. The Russian River's early morning fogs further keep the grapes from maturing too quickly. The growing season is thus up to 20 percent longer than in other areas, resulting in a more fully realized wine. The gentle Geyserville and Lytton Springs roads provide ample opportunities for wine tastings, including the Coppola Winery, designed by its cinephile owner as a pleasure park of food, wine, dancing and performances.

Today's Ride Choices

Alexander Valley from Healdsburg short option – 22.7 miles | Alexander Valley from Healdsburg long option – 31.6 miles

What To Expect:

Alexander Valley from Healdsburg short option

On both options, you can look forward to a gentle ride through pinot noir country. You cycle the beautiful West Dry Creek road to Geyserville and the Alexander Valley. The day's route leads you to some of the most famous California vineyards, including the Coppola winery, where you may stop for tastings and tours as you wish.

Alexander Valley from Healdsburg long option

On both options, you can look forward to a gentle ride through pinot noir country. You cycle the beautiful West Dry Creek road to Geyserville and the Alexander Valley. The day's route leads you to some of the most famous California vineyards, including the Coppola winery, where you may stop for tastings and tours as you wish.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5: Armstrong Redwoods / Bodega Bay / Move on Day

Set out on an epic ride that showcases the best of Northern California. You begin among the vineyards that have surrounded you all week. Follow the winding Russian River through fertile farmland and dense forests. In Guerneville, you may take a short detour into the magnificent Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve, where the world's tallest trees live up to 2,000 years and soar to 350 feet. Enjoy your packed lunch here under a breathtaking canopy of the Sequoia sempervirens. Your river valley route

continues its course to the Pacific Ocean and Sonoma Coast State Park. The Russian River ends here, but your ride continues south along California's stunning Pacific Coast Highway, a spectacular stretch of coastal prairie and sandy and rocky shorelines. As you ride, keep your eyes out for the Arched Rock just offshore. At ride's end, you arrive in Bodega Bay, where Alfred Hitchcock filmed some scenes for *The Birds*.

Today, Bodega Bay is far more subdued, a scenic fishing village overseen by the rocky peninsular cliffs of Bodega Head. You settle in to your inn here and have the rest of the day to simply relax with a walk on the beach, a spa treatment, a dip in the pool or a soak in the hot tub. With its oceanside setting, it's the perfect spot to wrap up your Northern California adventure.

For dinner, you might stay at your inn to indulge in the dishes of the Tides Wharf Restaurant. Its parking area was used by Hitchcock in the film, but you'll remember it for its fresh seafood, spectacular bay views and gracious service.

Today's Ride Choices

Healdsburg to Armstrong Redwoods to Bodega Bay — 45.3 miles

What to Expect: Today's ride departs Healdsburg and follows the Russian River Valley over rolling terrain. At 18 miles, in Guerneville, you have the option of an out-and-back ride of about 6 miles total to the Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve, a stunning forest of redwoods. It is a gradual climb up to the Reserve. Returning to your route at Guerneville, you continue along the river valley and enter Sonoma Coast State Park at about 36 miles, turning due south along the famous Pacific Coast Highway. Enjoy breathtaking ocean vistas, with the Pacific on your right-hand side, for about 10 miles until you arrive in Bodega Bay.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6: VBT Self-Guided Bicycle Vacation ends / Departure

Your California wine country bike tour ends with breakfast at your hotel in Bodega Bay. Check-out is at 11:00 a.m. Depart at your leisure. For suggestions on traveling from Bodega Bay, please refer to your VBT Handbook.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

(Days: 1,2,3,4,5)