



Cycling North America

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Foreword

Ride, rode, written

Cycling is the best way to get to know a place. On a bike, you travel through towns you would never otherwise visit and meet people you would never otherwise meet. You see more of the countryside than you ever could on foot and gain more intimate knowledge of it than you ever could in a car. Hemingway said it best. "You have to sweat up the hills and coast down them."

Over the years, our writers and photographers have travelled all over the globe. Be it for WorldTour races in far-flung metropolises or backcountry bike-packing adventures, they have collected stories and information about the most interesting places in the world to ride bikes.

For issue one of the Soigneur Travel Series, the *Global Cycling Guidebook*, we asked them to share their knowledge of their favourite spots.

Of course, we couldn't cover the world comprehensively. A beautiful thing about bicycles is that they can be ridden almost anywhere. There are many wonderful places to ride that we have missed.

However, we have included cycling destinations on every continent save Antarctica [if any of you are planning a fat-biking expedition there, send us a note]. For some, our writers focused on certain cities. For others, they decided to cover wider regions. All together, they included an eclectic mix of spots that will appeal to all sorts of cyclists.

We hope the *Global Cycling Guidebook* will inspire your next adventure.

Soigneur



CYCLING NORTH AMERICA



Roads to ride

Gold Run Road, Mount Greylock,
Horseshoe Bay, Mont Megantic,
Mount Hood

Tips & hot spots

Montréal (CA), New York City (US),
Boulder (US)

Essay

Mardis Lachine, Converging Stories,
Flagstaff



From the Pacific coast to the Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic, North America is home to some of the vastest and most majestic landscapes in the world. Even cities such as New York, Toronto, Vancouver, and Los Angeles, all world-class metropolises with outstanding art, music, and restaurant scenes, are not far from true wilderness. From the lofty crags of the Rocky Mountains to the forested Appalachians through the wide plains that stretch across the mid-west, North America lies waiting to be explored. Outside of the most densely populated areas, you are soon likely to find yourself rolling over gravel. All over the continent, an almost endless web of dirt roads joins remote lakes and ranches to faraway outposts. Once mostly the preserve of European émigrés, cycling is becoming more and more of a mainstream sport, though one less focused on elite competition than welcoming all comers. Most visitors to North America will get to know one or two particular spots. For the ultimate experience though, ride across the continent. Only then could you truly understand its immensity.



**Massachusetts
Mount Greylock**

42°38'13.5"N
73°10'03.6"W

When the foliage turns a burnished copper in autumn, and the smell of woodsmoke wafts through historic townscapes, the ride up towards the summit of Mount Greylock is as cheerful as they get. From the gusty apex of Massachusetts' highest point—at 1,173 metres—five states sprawl below you. Then, there's a deservedly long descent, through a seemingly endless tunnel of trees, back down a comfortable slope. You might just afford a peek at the pretty farms that line the roadside as you speed past.

**British Columbia
Horseshoe Bay**

49°19'55.9"N
123°15'48.0"W

The undulating road to Vancouver's northwest leads past the iconic Burrard Inlet, which offers superb views over the lively city and its important waterways. Then, it's onwards to Lighthouse Park and Horseshoe Bay. Those who crave a climbing challenge can turn up Cypress Mountain on the way back and collect a significant number of vertical metres. The long, but not terribly steep, climb towards the ski resort is part of the renowned Triple Crown route. The village at the top is a veritable ghost town in summer. A fun descent on a good wide road is your just reward, whereafter it is a pleasant ride back through Stanley Park to end up back in Gastown—where a cold pint is always at your beck and call.



**Quebec, Canada
Mont Megantic**

45°27'21.6"N
71°09'05.2"W

This steep climb has become notorious amongst Québécois and international racers alike, due to its inclusion in the Tour de Beauce, a race that has been held annually since 1986. The double-digit gradient at

the start of the climb might catch you off guard, as it ramps up to almost 20%. A smooth, wide lane of tarmac winds its way through dense pine woodlands, which few riders have the wherewithal to appreciate. The gruelling ascent finally ends, fittingly, at an observatory on the ridge, where you can rest your battered legs and wait for the stars to end their indifferent orbits overhead.

Montréal, Canada



Toronto is richer, Vancouver is more beautiful, Ottawa is the capital, but Montréal remains the beating heart of Canadian culture. Situated at the foot of Mount Royal on the shores of the Saint Lawrence in the southwestern corner of Québec, it is home to the country's best music and restaurants and art.

The second largest Francophone city in the world after Paris, it is brilliantly multilingual and multicultural. Old colonial buildings dating back to 17th-century New France mix with soaring skyscrapers, brick townhouses, and leafy parks. Ice hockey is undoubtedly the city's number one sport—the Montréal Canadiens are supported with near religious fervour—but Montréal also has a rich cycling history and scene. It was one of

the first cities in North America to build bike lanes and is home to one of the world's first and most successful bike sharing programmes. It was the first non-European city to host the world road race championships—Eddy Merckx won the rainbow jersey on Mount Royal in 1974—and hosted the 1976 Olympic Games. The modern Grand Prix Cycliste de Montréal WorldTour race uses much the same course that was used for those championships and the Olympics. It climbs from the city centre, past McGill University, to the top of Mount Royal and is a popular training route for the city's cyclists. The local racing community is probably the best in Canada. That has much to do with Québec's cycling federation, which does an excellent job of promoting the sport and supporting young riders. Top-class athletes such as Guillaume Boivin and Lex

Albrecht call the city home and show up to local races when they are in town. For a city of close to two million people, Montréal offers excellent riding. Within the city, you can head out through the park along the Lachine canal, from the Old Port, and then along the shore of Lake Saint-Louis. To the north, lie the Laurentian mountains, a range of leafy hills, dotted with quiet Québécois villages. The area around Mont Tremblant is home to some beautiful cycling—especially when the leaves turn in fall. South of Montréal are the Eastern Townships, where minor roads join small touristy towns, nestled by lakes between farms and rolling hills, which rise higher as you approach the US border. The peace and quiet of the countryside tempers Montréal's vibrant energy nicely.

Ride

Mardis Lachine

Every Tuesday evening through the summer, Montréal's racers gather in the borough of Lachine for **Les Mardis Cyclistes** (mardiscyclistes.net). Founded by Italian immigrant and Québécois cycling legend Tino Rossi in 1978, the criterium series has thrived for over four decades. Each week, races for boys and girls and elite women are capped off by a 50-km event for pros and elite men. On any given Tuesday, Tour de France racers will sprint for primes against local heroes in what is surely one of the fastest and most competitive crits in North America.

History

1974 World Championships

The 1974 world championships were the first to be held outside of Europe. Eddy Merckx won the 262.5-km race, beating Raymond Poulidor in a two-up sprint for the rainbow jersey. Having won the Giro and the Tour de France earlier in the season, he became the first rider to win cycling's Triple Crown. The race's route was similar to the one later used for the 1976 Olympics and today's **Grand Prix Cycliste de Montréal** (gpcqm.ca).

Ride

Bixi

North America's first large-scale bike-sharing system, **Bixi** (montreal.bixi.com) is loved by Montréalers. With over 600 docking stations located right through the city, its sturdy, easy-to-handle bikes, designed by Michel Dallaire, are ubiquitous in every neighbourhood. Available with a



subscription or for one-time use, they are the favourite mode of transport for everyone from schoolkids to bankers from April till November.

Eat

Montréal Bagels

Denser, sweeter, crunchier, and chewier than the fluffy bagels found in grocery stores, Montréal bagels are boiled in honey water before being baked in wood-fired ovens. They were first brought to the city by Jewish immigrants from Poland at the start of the 20th century. **St-Viateur Bagel** (stviateurbagel.com) and **Fairmount Bagel** (fairmountbagel.com) are local institutions.

Culture

Jazz Festival

Countless concerts and festivals featuring every musical genre imaginable are held right through the year in Montréal, culminating in the massive summer **Jazz Festival** (montrealjazzfest.com). Miles Davis, Ella Fitzgerald, and Montréal's favourite son Leonard Cohen are among the greats who have graced the festival's stage.

Eat

L'Express

An old-school French bistro with a checkerboard floor and mirrored walls, **L'Express** (restaurant-l'express.com) is a Montréal institution. Open every night till three a.m. (two on Sundays) to serve the theatre-going crowd, it serves a classic menu and has the best value-for-money wine list in the city. Artists and business people have been meeting here since 1980.



Gear T-Lab

Roberto Rossi and his team at **T-Lab** (*t-lab-bikes.com*) hand-build custom titanium bikes in Montréal. Their close relationships with the city's aerospace industry have helped them to develop innovative tube-shaping techniques to create frames that can be up to 30% stiffer than traditional titanium models, without sacrificing the material's exceptional ride quality.



Local hero Valérie Plante

Elected in 2017 on a platform that promised to get the city's residents moving, Montréal's mayor is a keen cyclist. Her administration's plans for the **Réseau Express Vélo** (*projectetmontreal.org/express_cycle_network*) include the building of over 184 kilometres of segregated bike lanes, which will criss-cross the city and complement Montréal's existing cycling network.

Rides Mount Royal

Mount Royal rises above McGill University in **downtown Montréal** (*lemontroyal.qc.ca*). A leafy park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, who drew up the plans for Central Park in New York, it is a forested haven in the centre of the city and a favourite training ground for cyclists. The 1.7-km

climb to the top of the Voie Camillien-Houde is not an alpine col, but successive repeats on its 7% slope certainly add up. The professional peloton does it 18 times during the Grand Prix Cyclistes de Montréal, which features 4,734 metres of climbing.

History Olympic Stadium

Built for the 1976 Games, **Montréal's Olympic Stadium** is one of the most distinctive buildings in the city. The shell-like structure, which was designed by French architect Roger Taillibert, is topped by a huge, swooping tower, which offers views over downtown and the Saint Lawrence. It was the home of baseball's Montréal Expos, until the team folded. Unfortunately, the beautiful Olympic velodrome beside it was converted into a nature museum.



Eat Smoked Meat

Beef brisket that's been salted and cured with spices, before being hot smoked, Montréal smoked meat is one of the city's great delicacies. Invented in the kosher delis founded by Jewish immigrants, it's been embraced by all of Montréal's communities. For the full experience, go to **Schwartz's** (*schwartzsdeli.com*) and order a medium-fat sandwich with yellow mustard and a pickle.



Lex Albrecht's favourite rides

Canadian pro and national-team racer Lex Albrecht has made Montréal her home. These are some of her favourite rides.

Easy | Lachine Canal Spin

For an easy ride, take the Lachine Canal bike path from downtown

to Réne Lévesque park. It's a 1-1.5h scenic loop. You can see the surfers playing in the rapids just before Verdun.

Medium | The Voie Maritime

The Voie Maritime is great. It can be easy and relaxing, because it's flat and calm. Hard intervals are also

great there, because there is no traffic and there are no intersections.

Hard | Mount Royal

For a hard one, do loops of the old Women's World Cup course with the Côte de la Polytechnique added in.



Ride Central Park

Recently declared car-free, **Central Park** (centralparknyc.org) is Manhattan's most accessible cycling circuit. The 10-km loop will bring you past reservoirs, scenic bridges, and the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** (metmuseum.org) and even up Harlem Hill for a bit of heart rate elevation. Go in the early hours of the morning and hop into one of the many training groups, or weave past joggers and tourists at a more leisurely pace at any other time of day.

Ride Prospect Park

Also recently closed to automobile traffic, **Prospect Park** (prospectpark.org) is Brooklyn's training ground. The approximately 5.5-km loop is lightly rolling and frequented by cyclists of all kinds, from elite racers to leisure riders. The best part: Prospect Park is surrounded on all sides by coffee shops and bakeries for after-ride sustenance.

Ride River Road and 9W

An easy ride to Upper Manhattan and a hop over the Hudson River on the George Washington Bridge brings you into New Jersey and almost directly to **River Road**, the almost traffic-free mainstay for the city's cycling community. Rolling



terrain and lovely views funnel you out onto **9W**, which continues through various hamlets along the Hudson. Continue all the way to the top of **Bear Mountain** (parks.ny.gov/parks/13) for a decent climb and imperial century if you begin and end in the city.

Eat Anything your heart desires

New York is a **foodie paradise**. The hungry cyclist can literally get anything her heart desires here. Not a region across the globe goes unrepresented in the city, from vegetarian Dim Sum to Argentinian barbecue to most likely a fusion of the two.

Eat Gotham West Market

The **Gotham West Market** (gothamwestmarket.com) is a little off the beaten path, but to say it is a good alternative to the sanity-threatening crowds at Chelsea Market wouldn't be doing it justice. It's been called one of the best food halls in the world and offers a large range of international food and drink. Bonus: you can walk directly into **NYC Velo** (nycvelo.com) after you indulge.

Eat Boxer Donut

If your ride brings you up 9W to Nyack, don't miss **Boxer Donut** (boxerdonut.com), formerly Gypsy Donut, an institution for cyclists. One can never go wrong with the classics, but the more



Tips & hot spots by Charl Neethling

Cape Town, South Africa



At the foot of Table Mountain, one of the New Seven Wonders of Nature, and nestled between the Indian and Atlantic oceans, you'll find one of South Africa's most famous places—the incredible city of Cape Town. This rapidly expanding metropolis offers its residents and more than five million yearly visitors whatever their hearts might desire. From the hustle and bustle of shopping, restaurants, and live performances in the world-renowned V&A Waterfront to the absolute natural bliss of its many nature reserves or pristine sandy beaches, Cape Town has it all.

Although some international visitors still seem to be concerned

about safety and political issues, the friendly nature of Cape Town locals and continued efforts of the Mother City's security improvement initiatives make it a welcoming city to tourists from all across the globe.

From a cyclist's perspective, Cape Town is a fantastic destination for riding. From breathtaking road rides from one restaurant or coffee shop to the next, urban alley-cat races in the heart of the city's streets, hardcore downhill MTB, or multi-day gravel grinding camping trips, Cape Town offers a wide variety. It even has an indoor velodrome that has hosts national and international events on a regular basis. Although it has yet to reach European heights, its bicycle commuter culture has steadily been growing and gaining momentum,

and with beautiful weather, ever-improving cycling infrastructure, and the increasing regularity of gridlock traffic jams, the concept is becoming more appealing to a wider range of locals.

When it comes to cycling events, organisers have been working hard over the past ten years to ensure that events not only rival international events but set the standard. A number of cycling events hosted in Cape Town rank amongst the top cycling events internationally in their respective classes. With so much to be experienced on and off the bike, international cycling tourists often include one or more of these events in one trip and go back home with a renewed love for cycling and often a completely new perspective of Cape Town and South Africa.

Ride

Cape Town Cycle Tour

Renowned as the world's biggest individually timed cycling race, the **Cape Town Cycle Tour** (capetowncycletour.com) gives around 40,000 cyclists the opportunity to test themselves on 109 kilometres of Cape Town's finest roads every year on the second Sunday in March. While there have been some adjustments to the route originally set out for the first race in 1978, the modern route still includes a spectacular start in the heart of the city, a very exciting stretch of the N2 and M3 (both major highways usually closed to bicycles), the beautiful beach towns of Muizenberg, Simons-town, and Hout Bay, the world-famous Chapman's Peak, a fast-paced sprint through the fancy streets of Camps Bay, and the finish line at the Cape Town Stadium.

Drink

Constantia Wine Farms

Known as an area that produces world-class wines, the hills of **Constantia** and its surroundings host thousands of tourists and locals every week for wine tastings, incredible lunches and dinners, and breath-taking views, less than 20 kilometres from the city centre. The riding opportunities around these farms are also not to be overlooked, from tree lined lanes for the roadies to exciting single-track, and even a local cyclocross race hosted at one of the farms.



Shop

Woodstock Cycleworks

This first-generation **family-run bicycle shop** (woodstockcycleworks.com) has more character than most bicycle shops and, with an incredible collection of classic South African and international bikes on display, it is definitely worth a visit, even if your bike doesn't need a tune-up.

Ride

ABSA Cape Epic

Although it might start and finish close to the clean city streets, neither rider nor bike will come away from this race even remotely clean. Famously dusty, hot, and brutal, the **Cape Epic** (cape-epic.com) challenges entrants over a week of riding on some of the most challenging terrain the greater Cape Town area has to offer. With a new route every year, riders have to keep their skills and fitness levels sharp even if they've done it before.

Shop

Rook Cycles

Positioned on the famous Long Street, **Rook Cycles** (rookcycles.com) has established itself as Cape Town's premier fixed-gear/single-speed/urban-cycling shop. It offers a range of locally designed bicycles, carefully curated commuter gear, and a weekly evening ride that explores some of the city's most unique spots.

Gravel

Eroica

Started as a festival to celebrate the beauty and style of classic cycling and bicycles, the **Eroica** (eroica.cc/en/south-africa) festival has grown all over the world and, with world-class gravel roads a stone's throw from Cape Town, the South African edition has grown in popularity since its inception a few years ago. It offers entrants the option of completing three separate distances on



a classic steel road bicycle built before 2000 in SA or their home country as well as one distance set out for modern gravel bikes. Along with a classic bicycle exhibition, a best-in-show competition, and an evening of local food and wine, this cycling weekend is organised to be one week away from the Cape Town Cycle Tour, meaning that visitors can arrange to take part in both events in one trip.

Eat
Bree Street

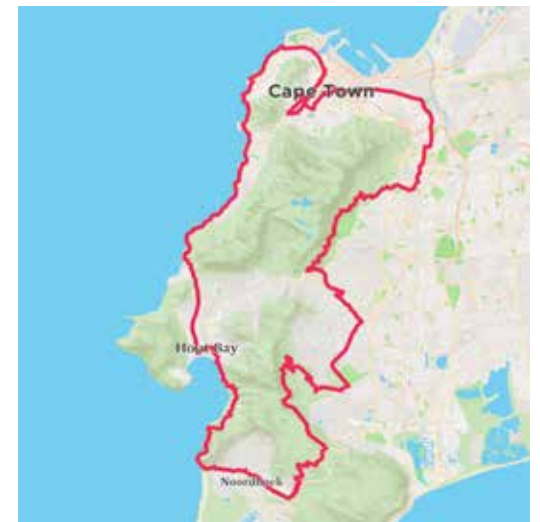
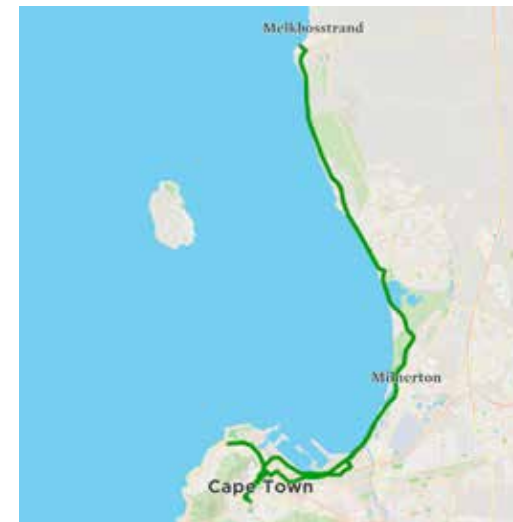
Lined with close to 100 restaurants, from tiny takeaway coffee spots to fine-dining restaurants, this street in the heart of the city has evolved into one of **Cape Town's favourite foodie hangouts**. It is the perfect street to explore for post-ride calorie replenishment.

Relax
Sea Point Promenade

Another one of the local favourites, this **six-kilometre stretch of boardwalk** runs right along the ocean and even gets a bit wet during very high tides. Open to joggers, cyclists, and anyone in-between, it is the perfect place to enjoy a beautiful sunset before heading across the road for a delicious dinner and some fine South African wine.

Shop
East City Cycles

Sleek, professional, impressive—just like the bicycles and gear sold here—**East City Cycles** (eastcitycycles.com) and its staff offer you an experience aimed at getting the most out of yourself and your two-wheeled machine.



Charl Neethling's favourite rides
Charl Neethling wakes up every morning to the sight of Table Mountain. These are some of his favourite rides in and around Cape Town.

Easy | Melkbos Miles ●
This out-and-back ride is easy and safe with minimal climbing and a separated bike lane almost all the

way. You'll get all the ocean views and fresh air you can handle!

Medium | Smiles for Miles
A short road ride along the ocean towards Llandudno with some good climbing on the way back into town via Camps Bay Drive, the bonus on this ride is the super fun Kloof Nek Road descent at the end.

Hard | Round the mountain ●
A beautiful mix of tar and gravel, winding out of the city bowl and all the way around Table Mountain, this ride offers incredible views from start to finish.

Jebel Shams

The Mountain of Sun



Words & image: Jonathan Kambskard-Bennett

I looked over my shoulder and saw Phillip walking up the hill behind me. The view was quite something; rocky mountains loomed around us and a wide valley separated our dirt road from a little village in the distance. We were very much alone, and Phillip looked tiny pushing his bike uphill beneath the sharp peaks. It was hot. I swung a leg over my frame and wheeled my bike into the shade to wait.

W

e were deep in the Al Hajar mountains, slowly making our way around a gravel road at the foot of Jebel Shams—the highest peak in Oman. It's also known as the Mountain of Sun, which seemed a fitting nickname. It was February, but the temperature was sweltering. We'd flown to the Arabian Peninsula for a week-long bike-packing trip to escape the British winter and soak up some sun, but I was beginning to regret not visiting earlier in the year when the temperatures are cooler.

We weren't choosing to go slowly. On the contrary, we were both starting to run low on water and wanted to get out of the mountains as fast as possible, but progress was taking longer than expected. The road was devilishly steep in places, and the gravel was loose. It was easier on the knees to dismount, so we found ourselves walking up many of the inclines.

I was surprised to see Phillip walking the section I'd just cycled. When he caught up, he wiped his brow and pointed down into his rear wheel. There was a small crack in the hub, and when he put too much pressure on the pedals, the crank would slip forward without catching. We agreed that it would be best to walk up the next short climbs.

That afternoon we dropped down to lower elevation and cruised along a dry river bed with the wind behind us. Fast, flashy cars zoomed past while nonchalant goats grazed at the side of the road. The small villages nestled between palm trees on terraced hills were an intriguing mixture of old and new. Modern concrete homes had large satellite dishes hanging over their roofs, but if you looked up the mountain side behind them, you'd spot the ruins of ancient watchtowers perched on rocky crags.

After resupplying in the oasis town of Al Hamra, we began our final ascent back up to 2,000m above sea level. At the top, the tarmac came to an abrupt end, and we were met with another dirt road that dropped sharply into the next valley. I let loose, skidding on every corner through clouds of dirt, while Phillip cautiously descended, wary that every bump would widen the crack in his rear wheel.

By the time we reached the bottom, Phillip's wheel was in a sorry state and he had to walk up almost every hill. Occasionally a 4x4 would drive past us, and I wondered how long it might take before we could hitch a ride back

ONE WRONG TURN ALONG THIS PERILOUS ROAD COULD RESULT IN A LONG TUMBLE INTO THE CANYON

to civilisation. I concluded that it would probably take a very long time, and, after watching the cars drive carefully around tight corners by sheer-drops, I figured I'd rather take the chance and continue cycling. One wrong turn along this perilous road could result in a long tumble into the canyon.

As darkness settled, we finally reached a smooth surface again. A new road had been built through the mountains and suddenly we were flying along a brand-new highway. The mountains had become dark silhouettes, leaving just a thin corridor for the stars to shine through above us.

We were soon back in Rustaq. The town's grand mosque had high minarets that punctuated the low skyline and were lit up from every angle. Neon lights kept the late-night shop signs bright, and the roads were busy with traffic. We celebrated our return to civilisation with ice creams from a petrol station and lifted up Phillip's bike to inspect the damage. I spun the rear wheel and watched as it wobbled from side to side, accompanied by a gentle hum from brake pad rub against the disc rotor. We had conquered the mountains, but only just.



Jonathan Kambskard-Bennett (GB) once set out to see how far east he could ride. Three years later, he arrived home in London, having pedalled through 42 countries and clocked around 50,000km. He continues to write about his cycling adventures.



of dedication, and to even get a chance at racing in the first place requires ten months of hard graft at the Japan Keirin School, where immersion and dedication are everything.

Eat Tonkatsu Tonki

Tucked down a side street near Meguro station is this unassuming little restaurant, which has been serving traditional **tonkatsu** (fried pork cutlet in panko breadcrumbs) since 1939. It's always busy and you can't book, but queue up at the back and then squeeze in at the counter with the locals and

you won't be disappointed. Choose between lean (*hire-katsu*) or fatty cutlet (*rohsu-katsu*) depending on your taste. All meals are served with refillable rice, cabbage, pickles and miso soup. Attention to detail in Japan is almost sacred and the open-style kitchen means that you can see the meticulous operation in full swing, with each chef preparing one specific part of your meal before the plate moves down the row to the next. If a simple, hearty Japanese meal is what you are after, you can't go wrong at this Tokyo institution.

Stay Ryokan

The Japanese are rightly proud of their unique hospitality, or *omotenashi*, and there is no better way to experience this than staying a night in a **traditional Japanese inn**, or *ryokan*. More commonly found in rural areas, *ryokan* are best described as the Japanese equivalent of a bed and breakfast. You can expect to sleep on a comfortable futon laid out on *tatami* and to be served a Japanese meal, *kaiseki*, in your room for dinner and breakfast. Bathing in the *ofuro* (bathroom) is often communal, though gender-separated. Some basic etiquette will count in your favour. As per local custom, remove your shoes before entering any *tatami* room and make use of the *yukata* (dressing gown) provided. Tipping in Japan is unnecessary and discouraged.



Stay Onomichi U2

This super stylish **cycling focused hotel** (*onomichi-u2.com*) in Hiroshima is certainly worth a stay even just for enjoying the ride through café. This is not a tacky theme establishment, rather a slick and architectural gem of a place to stay. Handy for exploring the 75-km Shimanami cycle path. Book ahead; it's popular.

Eat Japanese Omelette Okonomiyaki

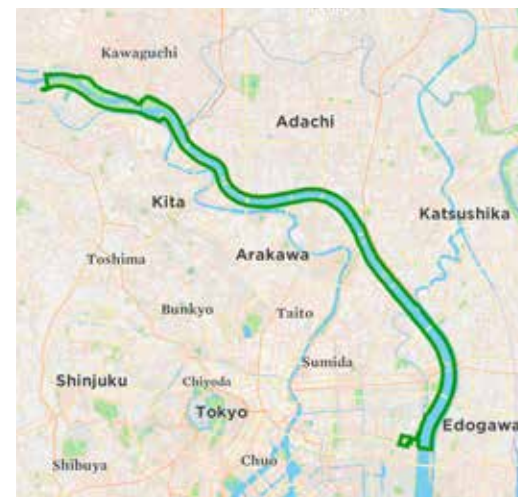
This savoury pancake is the ultimate post-ride fuel. Taken from the Japanese word *okonomi*, meaning 'what you like' and *yaki* meaning 'cooked', you'll find small restaurants dedicated to this humble but flavourful dish. Diners are typically sat in a booth around a *teppan* (hot plate) where the server brings out the basic ingredients



and either cooks it for you, or you can go full DIY. Typical ingredients include eggs, shredded cabbage, pork belly, and shrimp. The toppings are the best bit: sticky and sweet *okonomiyaki* sauce, Japanese mayo, seaweed flakes, and pickled ginger. Fill your hungry boots.

Ride The Japan Alps

A series of mountain ranges that divide the main island of Honshu, the Japan Alps provide a playground for cyclists that like vertical gain. **Ride Japan** (*ridejapan.cc/tours/alps-route-japan*) runs a fully supported nine days Alps Route Japan trip.



Adam Cobain's favourite rides

Adam Cobain created RideJapan to showcase the best riding on offer throughout this magical country. Here are some of his favourite rides.

Easy | Tokyo Arakawa River ●

The Arakawa stretches all the way to the mountain to the west of Tokyo. Join the hundreds of

Japanese cyclists who enjoy this beautiful cycling path everyday.

Medium | Izu Peninsula

A short train ride from Tokyo, the Izu Peninsula is the weekend destination for many. This loop captures ancient temples, bamboo forests, stunning craggy coastline and all in the backdrop of Mt. Fuji.



Hard | Japan Alps ●

The Japan Alps are one of the best places to ride in Japan. This course is straight out of a grand tour stage and with two H.C. climbs, epic descents, and stunning views.



Christchurch, New Zealand
Akaroa

43°47'49.5"S
172°57'58.7"E

Christchurch and Akaroa are considered by many to be the heart and soul of South Island cycling, and this route joins them over two massive climbs. The landscape here will make a lasting impression upon even the most well-travelled cyclist—its unspoiled ravines and pastoral hill-sides are a pleasure to ride through. The jagged peaks of volcanoes dominate the horizon in the distance. The town itself, with its 175-year-old French heritage, is a pleasant enough spot to recuperate and refuel with quality food and drink.

Tips & hot spots by Liam Friary

Auckland, New Zealand



Welcome to Aotearoa, where people, land, and stories embrace. “*He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata! He tangata! He tangata!*” What is the most important thing in the world? It is people! It is people! It is people! Wherever you go in New Zealand, you’ll be embraced like a local. Fascinating stories, captivating experiences, and legendary landscapes await you. From mammoth national parks to dynamic Māori culture and world-class hospitality, the country has it all. New Zealand can be mellow, but it’s always epic.

Māori are the tangata whenua or ‘indigenous people of the land’

of Aotearoa (New Zealand), and Māori culture is central to the country’s adventurous national identity. The countryside spans white and black sand beaches, craggy mountains, lush forests, rivers, lakes, and volcanic marvels. Almost one-third of the land has been set aside in national parks, reserves, and heritage sites to preserve New Zealand’s ecological wealth—a pristine panorama of ancient forests and landforms, rare birds, and creatures that have survived since prehistoric times. There are many opportunities to explore it.

With so many beautiful parks, rugged mountains, and forests all around the country, many Kiwis and visitors head into the

wilderness, where you can find some of the world’s best on- and off-road cycling experiences. Cycling is a popular sport in New Zealand. Whilst keen cyclists might go for challenging multi-day alpine tracks, there are also many quiet country roads, coastal meanders, forest trails, and dedicated cycling tracks. Almost as soon as bicycles appeared in New Zealand, enthusiasts began racing them. The country has since developed a strong cycling culture.

Ride The Worlds

Every Saturday morning at 8 a.m., a large group of riders meet at Mechanics Bay on Tamaki Drive. The ride is referred to as **the Worlds**, and the 70-km loop around the airport is always ridden at a high tempo. This is an iconic ride and has been going for two decades. On any given Saturday, you might find WorldTour riders mixing it up with young hitters and local hard men in the pace line.

History Commonwealth Games

The **1990 Commonwealth Games** were held in Auckland. **Graeme Miller** hails from the South Island’s Blenheim and won two gold medals at those Games, one in the men’s road race and one in the men’s time trial. The race’s route traced the foothills of the Waitakere Ranges.

Ride Waitakere Ranges

For those who want hills, head to the west, and you’ll discover the **Waitakere Ranges**. The ranges are covered in native forest, and the roads weave their way in-out-up-down through the rugged landscape. Iconic black-sand beaches dot their way along this craggy land.

Eat Amano

Situated opposite Auckland’s Waitemata Harbour and spanning Britomart’s historic Altrans and Quay buildings, **Amano** (amano.nz) offers incredible, humble service and delivers rustic, Italian-inspired fare. Sharing plates are seasonal and



sustainable, with local produce sourced from New Zealand’s growers and farmers.

Eat Best Ugly Bagels

Montreal-style bagels are deliberately man-handled—hand-rolled and cut, then simmered in sweet honey water. They’re baked in a custom-made stone oven which runs on New Zealand’s greatest natural fuel—Manuka hard wood. **Best Ugly Bagels’** (bestugly.co.nz) unique style and flavour have made them a staple in the city.

Culture Arty Titirangi

Titirangi is the gateway to the Waitakere Ranges; it is known for the bohemians, musicians, artists, writers, and potters who reside in the area. There’s a local arts and crafts market on the last Sunday of each month.

Race K2 Cycle Race

The **K2 Cycle Race** (k2cycle.co.nz) is the toughest one-day bike race in the southern hemisphere. It is also one of the most scenic. The gruelling 200-km course circumnavigates the Coromandel Peninsula, travelling through sub-tropical forest and rural pastureland along the Pohutukawa coastline of the Hauraki Gulf. There is an elite event and a sportive. Every four years, the organisers also put on what they call the K4—a two-lap race around the same course. The next one will be held in 2022.

Local Hero George Bennet

Kiwi racer **George Bennet** ([@georgenbennett](https://twitter.com/georgenbennett)) is one of the top climbers in the professional peloton. He has won the Tour of California, finished tenth in the Vuelta, and emerged as one of Team