





Arcata to San Francisco

Trip Length: 6 Riding Days

Start: Arcata

End: San Francisco

Distance: 340 miles/547 km

Difficulty: Moderate-Challenging

Itinerary Summary

Travel through enchanted forests, rolling coastal roads, towering redwoods, wine country, and so much more. Starting in Arcata in Northern California, you'll bike through rolling farmland, amongst mesmerizing Redwood forests, and along the cliff side coastline as you meander south. Visit the quaint towns of Humboldt, Mendocino, and Point Reyes, and experience Northern California's famous fog. Finish your adventure climbing the coastal hills into the Bay Area, for a spectacular entrance into the city over the Golden Gate Bridge.

A Note on Bike Touring

[More than just a bike tour](#)

Travel By Bike

We believe that the most powerful journeys are challenging, self-propelled, outdoor adventures. This is why we find bike touring to be one of the most fulfilling ways to travel in the beautiful outdoors. As a cyclist, you truly feel everything on the road. You are more vulnerable and open, allowing you to find connection with those you'd least expect. Your senses are enhanced, and you can take the time to reflect on everything you pass. Bike touring is more than getting from A to B by bike, it is about giving yourself time to explore everything in between.

Travel Local

As a bike tourist, you are making a huge impact on local economies wherever you ride. Comparing the impact of a road tripper to a bike tourer, you will spend on average 4x more time in any given town than someone in a motor vehicle. For each day you could drive your route, you will spend approximately 4.5 days biking that same span of road. This means that you are a huge force in the economic empowerment of the towns you bike through. While this may not seem obvious to some, it is making a huge difference to the small communities along your route. We ask you to keep this in mind when touring, so that you can be a bike touring ambassador to others on your journey, and make decisions that benefit the communities that host you.

Thank You for Greening Our Roads

Bicycle advocacy movements are popping up all around the country. Local communities are petitioning their counties to improve bike infrastructure and educate both drivers and cyclists on road safety. You are a testament to the increased demand for such programs, and just by biking along the coast, you are making a huge statement. On behalf of biking associations all around the country and from Best Coast Biking, thank you for being part of this movement. Now, back to the fun part, below you'll find details about your upcoming trip!

Day By Day

Arrival Day & Orientation | Arcata

Arrive into Arcata and enjoy an evening in town. Check out the local breweries, mom and pop Americana dining, and local parks before getting ready for your ride. Enjoy the evening in town, and fuel up for the next morning.

Arcata - Avenue of the Giants | 60.7 miles

After riding out of town, we'll ride along the 101 for a short distance. We'll break from the highway, and head into the rural back roads of Northern California, both in the hills and the valley farmlands. We'll pass the tiny town of Ferndale, known for its Humboldt Creamery, and later, Rio Dell and Scotia, once two bustling forestry communities. Today's ride ends with a glorious ride through the famous Avenue of the Giants, biking among the majestic redwoods.

Campground Information: Burlington Redwood State Park

Price: \$5 Hiker/Biker

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Hiker/Biker site, toilets, coin operated hot showers, picnic tables, fire rings, washing basin.

Avenue of the Giants - Standish Hickey | 48 miles

Today's ride starts in the redwoods, and meanders on quiet roads for most of the morning. By lunchtime, we enter Garberville, in the heart of Humboldt County. We have a few short sections on the 101, but we take side roads into small communities for most of the day. Today's ride ends in the forest, riverside. Swimming is highly encouraged.

Campground Information: Standish Hickey State Recreation Area

Price: \$5 Hiker/Biker

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Hiker/Biker site, toilets, coin operated hot showers, picnic tables, fire rings, washing basin, charging outlets, river access, local convenient/grocery store, bike stand for maintenance.

Standish Hickey - Van Damme | 60.5 miles

Today we hit the California coast on the famous Highway 1! We'll begin with two big climbs out to the coast, and be instantly rewarded with stunning rocky ocean views. We'll pass through quaint towns like Westport, Fort Bragg, and Mendocino before arriving at our campsite for the night, Van Damme just south of Mendocino. A picnic lunch is a good option today, unless you can make it to Fort Bragg, and Mendocino is full of enticing cafes and dinner spots.

Campground Information: Van Damme State Park

Price

Open: May-November

Facilities: Hiker/Biker site, toilets, coin operated hot showers, potable water, picnic tables, hiking trails, kayak rentals.

Van Damme - Stillwater Cove | 66.4 miles

Riding between small towns, along rolling coastal roads just doesn't get old. We'll bike through the quaint villages of Point Arena, Anchor Bay and Gualala, and pass several beach access points along the way.

Be sure to pick up dinner supplies in Gualala as our options quickly limit before finishing at Stillwater Cove. Gualala is also a great camping option if you want to shorten the day.

Campground Information: Stillwater Cove Regional Park

Price: \$5 Hiker/Biker

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Hiker/Biker site, toilets, coin operated hot showers, picnic tables, potable water, fire rings, hiking trail.

Stillwater Cove - Point Reyes | 58.2 miles

This morning, we'll bike one of the most incredible climbs of the journey. Cycling high above the ocean below, the views from this cliffside road will leave you in a state of awe. Winding along the coast, we'll pass small communities like Jenner, Bodega Bay (great camping option), Valley Ford, and Tomales. The ride ends in the town of Point Reyes Station. Olema Campground is only 2 miles south, and in town, there is much to be explored. You may even delay the end of your trip to venture out into the Point Reyes National Seashore.

Campground Information: 2 Options: Olema Campground or Samuel P. Taylor State Park.

Olema Campground

Price: \$40-44

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Private campground individual site (6 people occupancy, no hiker/biker option), toilets, hot showers, potable water, picnic tables, fire rings, camp-wide wifi, propane, atm, laundry,

Samuel P. Taylor State Park

Price: \$5 Hiker/Biker

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Hiker/Biker site, toilets, coin operated hot showers (occasionally closed for water conservation efforts), potable water, picnic tables, fire rings, hiking trails.

Point Reyes - San Francisco | 43 miles

Our last day takes us along the scenic Sonoma coastline past Tomales Bay and Stinson Beach. Our last major climb of the trip takes us winding up the side of Mt. Tamalpais, into the Marin Headlands and Sausalito, before crossing the iconic Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco.

For more information on the National, State and Regional Parks in Oregon and California, we recommend you visit the following sites:

<https://www.nps.gov> | National Park Service official website. Detailed information on national parks (that often provide free camping with limited facilities) and campsites.

<http://parks.ca.gov> | California State Parks official website. Information on campgrounds, recreation sites, and seasonal restrictions/notices.

<http://parks.sonomacounty.ca.gov> | Sonoma County Regional Parks official website. Detailed information on regional campsites and parks.

Equipment, Packing and Preparation

Bike Equipment: Touring bike, front and rear racks, waterproof panniers & handlebar bag with map case, pump, helmet, allen key, lock, bungee cords, pedals, 2 water bottles, bike lights, smartphone mount, spare parts and tools for small repairs and maintenance.

Camping Gear: Tent, sleeping pad, sleeping bag, tarp, cookware set, kitchen set, headlamp, first aid.

Route Design: Download or print your day-by-day route suggestions, essential tips, campsite options, places of interest, and dining recommendations along the way.

Accommodation Costs: We provide suggestions and details of the best campsites. They average \$5 per person per night. Should you want to stay indoors, there are several apps and websites that offer booking assistance for your trip.

Meals and Beverages: We outline our favorite cafes, restaurants, and grocery stores, so you can tailor your trip just as you like.

Emergency Services: 911 is always your first point of contact in an emergency situation. This document contains a list of hospitals and clinics along your route.

Travel Medical Insurance: It is recommended to have medical insurance (or travel medical insurance if coming from outside the USA) before embarking on your journey.

Personal Travel Expenses: Consider all costs to get to and from your trip with your gear.

What To Pack

Clothing, Personal Items, Toiletries & Electronics

Essential Clothing		✓	Recommended Clothing		✓
Bike shorts	2-3		Casual t-shirts	1-2	
Biking Jerseys	2-3		Shorts	1	
Rain jacket	1		Casual pants	1	
Down or fleece jacket	1		Sports bras	2	
Biking gloves	1		Warm hat	1	
Underwear	2-5		Warm gloves	1	
Socks	2-5		Biking cap	1	
Long sleeve layer	1-2		Pair waterproof booties	1	
Swimsuit	1		Pair cycling sleeves	1	
Pair biking shoes	1		Casual shoes	1	
Waterproof sandals	1		Organizing bags	2-3	
Long athletic pants	1				

Personal Items		✓	Toiletries		✓
Wallet			Toiletry Bag		
Government ID/Passport			Toothbrush/Toothpaste		
Keys			Soap		
Sunglasses			Shampoo/Conditioner		
Notebook and pen			Deodorant		
Book/e-reader			Sunscreen & lip sunscreen		
Eye Mask			Insect Repellent		
Ear Plugs			Hand sanitizer		
Luggage/Locker Lock			Mirror		
Quick dry towel			Razor		
Sleeping Bag			Tweezers		
			Tissue and wet wipes		

Electronics		✓			✓
Smartphone			Headphones		
Camera			Charging plugs		
External battery			Charging cables		

Start & Finish Cities: The Rundown

Arcata

Things to do

- Outdoor Adventures: Hike through Arcata's Community Forest. With over 600 acres to explore, you can wander for hours. Access is in town just at the corner of 11th St., 14th St. and California Ave. Also in town, check out the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Reserve. It's got 5 miles of trails and is a popular spot for runners, artists, and wildlife viewers. Access is on South G St. For a hit of the beach, take a short trip out to the coast at the Mad River County Park. It's a short 7 mile drive or ride out to the park, where you can enjoy sandy beaches and crashing waves.
- Stock up for your first day: Arcata North Coast Co-Op is a great local market with a large selection of produce grown in Humboldt county. For other basic needs, Safeway and CVS are just outside the center of town on F St. and 7th St.
- Get Organized: If you need any last minute supplies before your trip, here are a few good places where you'll be able to find the basic necessities. Pacific Outfitters of Arcata (open 10am-6pm), Adventure's Edge (open 9am-6pm M-Sat and 10am-5pm Sun), and Revolution Bicycle Repair (open 9am-6pm M-F, 9am-5pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) all have outdoors and biking oriented gear. We recommend you look here first if you need a packtowl, biking shorts, freeze dried meals or other accessories for your trip.

Our dining & drinking recommendations

- Brunch: Cafe Brio is a French inspired bistro and cafe in Arcata's town plaza. It's great for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Check their website for opening hours as each day is different.
- Lunch: Casual, filling, and locally grown organic meals are best at Luke's Joint on the plaza. For a delicious crepe, sweet or savory, check out Renata's Creperie on G St. Great for breakfast or lunch (open Tues-Sun). The Big Blue Cafe is a local favorite with tasty sandwiches. Also great for brunch (open 8am-3pm everyday).
- Dinner: For the best seafood dinner in town, check out SALT Fish House in Arcata Plaza. Other great dinner spots are Folie Douce, Mazzotti's On the Plaza, Plaza Grill, and Tomo's Japanese Restaurant.
- Sweet Tooth: Check out Arcata Scoop for some delicious homemade organic ice cream. All flavors are made right in the shop!
- Liquid Dinner: Everette's Club is the local pub. They've got live music some nights, and is known to host a rowdy bunch. Humboldt Brews boasts a large selection of local beers, and also has a pretty good kitchen for pub food and burgers. Redwood Curtain Brewery is the local brewery in town if you're interested in a tasting.

For more on things to do & see in Arcata, visit: 101things.com/humboldt/

San Francisco

Things to do

- **Outdoor Adventures**: Explore Golden Gate Park (closed to traffic every Sunday), hike through Land's End or down to Baker Beach from the Presidio, stroll the length of Ocean Beach or get in the water.
- **Famous San Francisco**: Gather items for a picnic lunch, and people watch at Dolores Park or Alamo Square (get a photo of the Painted Ladies here); walk the length of the Embarcadero and visit the Ferry Building, the Exploratorium, Pier 39, Cannery Row, and Ghirardelli Square; take a mural tour through the Mission District and get a sense for the city's politico-art culture; get your culture fix at the SFMOMA, De Young Museum, and the Legion of Honor; step into China Town or North Beach for some instant world travel; catch some live music at a famous venue like The Fillmore, Great American Music Hall, The Independent or one of the smaller venues in the Mission.
- **Bay Area Excursions**: Head across the bay, and visit Oakland's Uptown neighborhood or Jack London Square. Bars, music venues, and dining options will keep you busy all evening; surf? Head down to Pacifica for the Bay's surf Mecca; take a day trip on the water and visit Angel Island and Alcatraz; catch a home game from one of the Bay's sport teams.

Our drinking & dining recommendations

- **Brunch**: After riding 780 miles, you're allowed to indulge. Our favorite spots include: Maven, The Corner Store, Ella's, Zazie, Starbelly, Sabrosa, Boxing Room, State Bird Provisions, Tartine Bakery & Foreign Cinema.
- **Lunch**: SF has some of the best tacos and Mexican cuisine around. See for yourself: Taqueria Vallarta (low key & delicious), Cholita Linda, Lolo, Nopalito, food carts abound in the Mission.
- **Dinner**: With more than something for everybody, here's a short list of our top picks: Foreign Cinema, El Techo (rooftop), Gracias Madre (vegan), Marlowe, Scotland Yard, Nopa, Liholiho Yacht Club & Tadich Grill.
- **Liquid Dinner**: It's time to celebrate your journey. For something casual, try Biergarten or Speakeasy Tap Room. For something with a bit more ambiance, check out Trick Dog, The Hideout, Bourbon and Branch (reservation only Speakeasy), or Yield (biodynamic & organic wine bar).

For more on things to do & see in San Francisco, visit: www.sanfrancisco.travel

Safety and Health

Staying Healthy on the Road

Hydrating

Staying hydrated is key to a successful bike trip. Make sure you are staying well hydrated throughout each day, despite cool temperatures. Remember to drink a bottle every 1 to 1.5 hours to make sure your body and energy stay in top shape. We also strongly recommend you keep electrolyte packs or tablets with you for when you need a little help to recover from a hot day or difficult climb. These can be found at most bike shops and sports stores. Should you ever run out of water and you are not near a potable water source, there are iodine tablets in your first aid kit to purify stream or river water.

Stretching

Make sure to take a little time every afternoon to stretch out your legs, back, and shoulders. Biking long distances can take a toll on your joints if you're not in the habit of biking long distances on a regular basis, and stretching can help you avoid swelling, joint pain, and injury.

Eating

You will burn a lot of energy bike touring. Make sure you are taking in enough calories throughout the day to maintain balanced energy levels to avoid fatigue and weakness. Depending on your body and the difficulty of the day's ride, you'll need to eat three proper meals a day, and snack on healthy sources of energy to feel strong and energized. Keep a few snack bars, nuts, and/or fruit handy at all times so you can have easy access to energy when you need it most. Dehydrated meals are also a great option for a quick easy meal on the go. Keep your meals balanced, and make sure you consume enough carbohydrates in your system throughout the day.

Hygiene

Most campsites along the route will have shower access to campers, so you can stay clean and fresh on your trip. As you will have limited clothing with you on your journey, we suggest you wash or rinse your bike clothing each day while you shower so that it is relatively clean for the following ride. You can alternate two sets of bike attire to ensure that clothing is dry before you wear it again. Bike shorts especially should be clean to avoid bacterial infection, and dry to avoid rash and chafing. Some cyclists like to keep baby powder or shammy butter with them to keep the groin area dry and comfortable during long distance rides. We suggest you bring any ointments or products you are used to using to help you avoid irritation.

Road Etiquette

Riding With Others

Riding with friends, or meeting other cyclists on your ride is part of the fun. However, it is important to follow a few safety protocols to avoid common accidents.

- Ride side by side only in quiet areas where cars have ample time to reduce their speed and go around you.
- When passing another rider, let them know! (“*On your left!*”) And always pass on the left.
- When stopping to take a photo, make sure anyone behind you knows you’re going to stop and pull off as far to the right as possible.

Visibility

It’s extremely important to be visible on the road. This means being aware of changing light when entering forests or near dusk, and making yourself seen when you might camouflage into the shadows on the road. Keep your lights handy for when you think cars might have a hard time seeing you, and take the time to stop in order to turn them on.

Road Shoulder

Sometimes, the route has a great bike lane (or path) that gives cyclists ample space to ride. Other times, the shoulder becomes much smaller or even disappears. It is extremely important that you give yourself enough space to feel confident and well balanced regardless of shoulder width. If you ride too close to the white line when there is no shoulder, you risk losing your balance or riding off the road. If you ride to the left of the white line, cars will wait to go around you. If you try to ride as far to the right as possible, cars will try to squeeze by. You are much safer riding left of the white line when the shoulder is too narrow than trying to stay close to it.

[General Safety](#)

Helmets

As a participant on our trip, you must wear your helmet while riding at all times. At orientation, please make sure the helmet fits you properly and comfortably. If you would prefer to bring your own helmet, we encourage you to do so.

Pedals

We provide flat pedals to all of our riders. If you have your own pedals that you’re used to (clip in or other), we encourage you to bring them to orientation so we can install them on your bike. Having the right pedals is the first step to being well balanced. Please do not bring clip in pedals that you have never used, as it is common to fall when you’re learning to clip in and out.

[Hospitals & Clinics En Route](#)

[Arcata](#)

Hospital: Mad River Community Hospital | 3800 Janes Rd. Arcata, CA. Tel: (707) 822-3621. Web: www.madriverhospital.com | 24 hr.

Clinic: North Country Clinic | 785 18th St. Arcata, CA. Tel: (707) 822-2481. Web: www.opendoorhealth.com | M-F: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Sat & Sun: Closed.

Eureka

Hospital: St. Joseph Hospital | 2700 Dolbeer St. Eureka, CA. Tel: (707) 445-8121. Web: www.stjoehumboldt.org | 24 hr.

Clinic: Eureka Community Health & Wellness Center | 2200 Tydd St. Eureka, CA. Tel: (707) 441-1624. Web: www.opendoorhealth.com | M-F: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Extended Hours: M-Th: 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. Sat: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Sun: Closed.

Garberville

Hospital: Jerold Phelps Community Hospital | 733 Cedar St. Garberville, CA. Tel: (707) 923-3921. Web: www.shchd.org | 24 hr.

Clinic: Redwoods Rural Health Center | 101 West Coast Rd. Redway, CA. Tel: (707) 923-2783. Web: www.rrhc.org | M-F 8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Sat & Sun: Closed.

Fort Bragg

Hospital: Mendocino Coast District Hospital | 700 River Dr. Fort Bragg, CA. Tel: (707) 961-1234. Web: www.mcdh.org | 24 hr.

Clinic: Mendocino Coast Clinics | 205 South St. Fort Bragg, CA. Tel: (707) 964-1251. Web: www.mendocinocoastclinics.org | M-F: 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Sat & Sun: Closed. 24-hr On Call Provider Tel: (707) 961-1251.

Gualala

Urgent Care: Gualala Medical Center | 46900 Ocean Dr. Gualala, CA. Tel: (707) 884-4005. Web: www.rcms-healthcare.org | M-F: 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Sat & Sun: Closed.

Point Reyes

Urgent Care: Coastal Health Alliance | 3 6th St. Point Reyes, CA. Tel: (415) 663-8666. Web: www.coastalhealth.dreamhosters.com | M-Sat: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Sun: Closed. 24-hr On Call Coverage.

San Francisco

Hospital: UCSF Emergency Department | 505 Parnassus Ave. San Francisco, CA. Tel: (415) 353-1037. Web: www.ucsfhealth.org | 24 hr.

Clinic: Golden Gate Urgent Care | 2395 Lombard St. San Francisco, CA. Tel: (415) 796-2242. Web: www.goldengateurgentcare.com | M-F: 7 a.m. -10 p.m. Sat & Sun: 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.