



GUIDED TOUR | SIGHTSEEING | BIKING | GREAT FOR COUPLES | GREAT FOR FRIENDS

HIGHLIGHTS

Hear it on the grapevine—a 6-day cycling adventure is the best way to explore California’s wine country on this guided bike tour with Intrepid Travel.

If you're looking for an unforgettable vacation for all five of your senses, look no further! On this tour powered by Intrepid, you will combine wine, rugged coastline and the best Northern California has to offer as you cycle from stunning wine country to epic redwood forests and on to the rugged Pacific Ocean coast.

With great weather, breathtaking scenery, and over 500 vineyards, the valleys of Napa and Sonoma are a cyclist's paradise. Off the bike you'll find wine tastings, amazing cuisine and a wealth of history to experience, and this cycling adventure takes in the best of it at a pace set to enjoy rather than race, making it a trip for every rider.

The Basics

Start and Finish: San Francisco, California

Minimum Age: 15

Group Size: Minimum 1, Maximum 13

ITINERARY

San Francisco/Sonoma

Welcome to your California cycling adventure. Leave San Francisco and head north across the world-renowned Golden Gate Bridge for the one-hour journey to the heart of the renowned Sonoma Valley winemaking region and the historic town of Sonoma. Here you'll be fitted to your bike and, after a short safety talk, start your first ride in Californian Wine Country, enjoying a gorgeous route through the pastoral beauty of the farms and vineyards – and why not enjoy an optional tasting at one of the wineries along the way. Finish up your ride with a return to Sonoma via the same route and drop into the tree-lined town plaza, visiting the historic Mission San Francisco Solano and the Sonoma Barracks. This is where the 1846 Bear Flag Revolt took place in a bid to separate California from Mexico. Refuel from your first ride tonight by choosing from the range of top-quality restaurants that line the square.

- Accommodation: hotel/motel (1 night)
- Please note: there are no meals included on this day.

Special Information

Today's riding distance is approximately 51 kms/32 miles, mostly flat for the first 17kms /11 miles, then undulating, with approximately 355m/1170ft of elevation gain. It's very important that you attend the welcome meeting as Intrepid will be checking insurance and emergency contact details at this time. If you are going to be late, please let an Intrepid representative or your travel agent know. The meeting spot is at the San Francisco Marriott Fisherman's Wharf at 9 am. If you are driving, you can meet the group at 10 am in Sonoma – you can leave your car there for the week.

Santa Rosa/Sonoma Valley Cycling

After a hearty breakfast, saddle up and head to the historic and agricultural hub of Petaluma. Your first stop today is the Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park. The Rancho Petaluma Adobe here – thought to be one of the best-preserved buildings of its era in Northern California – was the main house of General Vallejo, a key political figure in the transition of California from Mexico to the US.

Continue on to the town and its well-preserved historic center, which includes many buildings that survived the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Here you can choose to stop at one of the many creameries selling local produce from the surrounding farms – you'll definitely want to sample the local cheese and ice cream.

Continue cycling north to the remote but beautiful Bennett Valley, stopping by a winery that, in addition to its wine, is known for its fragrant lavender fields. You are welcome to enjoy a tasting here (not included) before cycling all the way downhill to Santa Rosa, your home for the next two nights.

- Accommodation: hotel/motel (1 night)
- Included Activities: Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park
- Breakfast is included

Special Information

Today's riding distance is approximately 60 kms/37 miles, a small hill near the start, mostly flat then a steep climb at around 43kms/27 miles before descending the last 15kms/9 miles. Approximately 460m/1500ft of elevation gain.

Santa Rosa/Napa Valley Cycling

After breakfast, you'll avoid a long climb by transferring by vehicle (approximately 25 minutes) to the Petrified Forest, where you can walk among the fossilized trees perfectly preserved in the aftermath of a volcanic eruption of nearby Mt St Helena some 3.4 million years ago. From here take to your bike and ride into the Napa Valley proper, enjoying a freewheeling descent into the hot springs town of Calistoga.

From here you are welcome to explore some Napa wineries, including the option of visiting Chateau Montelena, which has its place in wine history with its 1976 win of the Judgement of Paris that put California on the world stage for wine quality. Even if you don't taste there, the grounds are an impressive sight. From here ride back into Sonoma County via the Franz Valley and over Chalk Hill to return to Santa Rosa for the evening.

- Accommodation: hotel/motel (1 night)

- Included Activities: Petrified Forest visit
- Optional Activities: Chateau Montelena Winery visit - USD25
- Breakfast is included

Special Information

Today's riding distance is approximately 68 kms/42 miles, starts with a small uphill then sharp descent, then undulating lightly downhill, with approximately 630 m/ 2070ft of elevation gain.

Healdsburg

Today pedal west along mostly flat roads to the town of Sebastopol, once a prime apple-growing region now turned over into vineyards. Here, lining Florence Ave, you'll be treated to the whimsical and slightly surreal sculptures made from scrap metal by a local artist couple. Then continue north to the Russian River Valley, one of the cooler wine-growing regions in northern California, specializing in Chardonnay and Pinot Noir – you're free to stop to taste along the way to Healdsburg.

Tonight is free for you to explore the town of Healdsburg, and your leader will have a number of suggestions for you in a town that's as much about food as wine.

- Accommodation: hotel/motel (1 night)
- Breakfast is included

Special Information

Today's riding distance is approximately 42kms/26 miles, slight downhill for the first 10 kms/6 miles, undulating for 20kms/12 miles, then mostly flat with approximately 250m/820ft of elevation gain.

Healdsburg/Russian River Cycling

Today is a true cycling highlight as you ride into the heart of Californian redwoods country at the Armstrong Redwoods State Park. It's impossible not to marvel at the 1,400-year-old trees that tower over 300 feet high, so take some time to appreciate the majesty of nature. Then leave wine country behind and follow the Russian River through the light forest all the way to the small coastal town of Jenner, where the river meets the Pacific Ocean. You'll be able to take in the sight of harbor seals beached on the riverbank with the ocean waves crashing behind them. From here drive (approximately 40 min) back to Healdsburg. This afternoon you'll have some free time to simply relax. Or maybe consider enjoying the many tasting rooms in town or treating yourself to a massage at a nearby spa.

- Accommodation: hotel/motel (1 night)
- Included Activities: Armstrong Redwoods State Park
- Breakfast is included

Special Information

Today's riding distance is approximately 67kms/42 miles, undulating with approx. 525 m/1720ft of elevation gain. Please note that at time of writing Armstrong Woods is currently closed due to the wildfires that ravaged the area in Aug 2020. It is due to reopen "sometime in 2021", but even if it's closed you will ride to redwoods nearby.

Dry Creek Valley Loop/San Francisco

The final ride of the week will include some truly classic wine country cycling as you spend the morning making your way on the Dry Creek Loop along quiet back roads dotted with welcoming vineyards. There's a single steep climb along the way up to the Lake Sonoma Overlook but the 360-degree view from the top across Lake Sonoma Bridge and the Russian River is a true highlight (as is the descent back down the same road you just rode up!). At the end of the ride head back to the hotel, where you'll have a chance to return to your room to freshen up and pack before departing Healdsburg. Take the drive back toward San Francisco, taking the leisurely route through the famed Napa Valley, visiting St Helena for lunch (and one last tasting) before arriving back at Fisherman's Wharf around 3 pm.

- Included Activities: Napa Winery visit
- Breakfast is included

Special Information

Today's riding distance is approximately 50kms/31 miles, mostly flat for except for one steep climb/descent to Lake Somoma after 22kms/14 miles, with approximately 525 m/1725ft of elevation gain. The group will return to San Francisco via Sonoma, passing through Sonoma around 2 pm.

OFFERS

5-Night Cycle Sonoma & Napa Valley

FROM 0

5 NIGHTS |

The package rate displayed is per person based on double occupancy in a twin share room. Solo travelers will be allocated a room with someone of the same gender. A single supplement is available. Stay tuned for more 2023 dates!

Package Includes:

- Accommodations for 5 nights in hotel and motel
- 5 breakfasts included
- Bicycle hire (please advise your height at time of booking to receive a suitably sized bike)
- Transportation: Bicycle (e-bike option available, subject to availability) and support vehicle
- Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park visit
- Petrified Forest visit
- Armstrong Redwoods State Park visit
- Napa Winery visit

More Information

Q & A

How fit do we need to be?

There are regular rest breaks each day, however, it is important to note that you will be riding over multiple and consecutive days in a climate and terrain that may be unfamiliar. While it can be tempting to start out riding as hard and fast as you can (Intrepid gets it!), they recommend taking it easy on the first few days while your body gets used to the rides and the climate.

As a general rule, the more preparation you can do for this type of trip, the more you will enjoy it. Prepare for the trip by doing aerobic type exercises before traveling - jogging or swimming are some options, though cycling is best. If possible take some extended day rides before traveling, or spend time on exercise bikes in the gym. The more your muscles (and bottom) are prepared for the riding on this trip the more you will be able to enjoy the wonderful countryside and people you meet while riding. Note that enthusiasm for bike riding and adventure is essential!

It is also important that you are both confident and competent in riding a bicycle, both solo and in a group environment.

Cycling Distances:

The information listed in the itinerary is a guide to the approximate distances and terrain cycled each day. However, this may vary depending on the physical capabilities of the group, and changes to local conditions. For safety reasons Intrepid only cycles during daylight hours, so there may be some early morning starts. They take regular rest breaks throughout cycling days.

What biking gear do we need to bring?

Bicycle hire is included in your trip price. Please advise your height at the time of booking so Intrepid can organize a suitable sized bike. Bike helmets are

compulsory on this trip. Bike helmets cannot be provided locally so please ensure you bring your own bike helmet from home.

Will I have to take a COVID-19 test to take this trip?

A negative COVID-19 test is NOT required before joining a trip unless it is a requirement of entry for the country. If you are unwell prior to traveling, please stay at home and contact us to make alternative arrangements. At the group meeting, you will be asked to complete a self-screening health form and report any COVID-19 symptoms as well as any close contact with someone who has suspected or confirmed COVID-19. If you are displaying any symptoms or have any health concerns at this time, the advice of local health authorities will be followed to determine whether medical assistance, isolation or further action is required. All travelers should continue to monitor their health throughout their travels and report any relevant symptoms to their tour leader.

Can we bring our own bikes?

While Intrepid is confident in the quality and suitability of the bikes they include, they do recognize that sometimes you just need the comfort of your own bike to enjoy the ride. If you are thinking of bringing your own bike on this tour please advise at the time of booking and take note of the below information. If you do choose to bring your own bike please note that Intrepid will not be carrying a spare bike for you.

Suitable Type of Bike:

Although the surfaces of the roads Intrepid travels on is generally good there are occasionally gravel or potholed sections of road/track. As such, they recommend a 'mountain' or 'hybrid' style bike with plenty of gear selections for easy cruising. Please note that Intrepid usually cannot accept tandem bikes on their tours as often they are too large for their transport. In some destinations, they are able to make an exception. Please ask beforehand.

Before the Trip:

Intrepid recommends that you have a full service of your bike performed by a trained mechanic, to help minimize any issues you may have during the trip itself. Please also ensure that you have specific and adequate cover for loss, damage or theft for your bike under your travel, home contents or a specialist insurance policy.

During the Trip:

Your bike will be transported in the same way as Intrepid's included bikes, usually in the bike support vehicle or on the bike trailer. While they endeavor to take the best care they can, you should recognize that transported bikes do get the occasional bump or scratch along the way. The same applies when Intrepid takes other forms of transport, such as a train, where they are unable to pack the bikes ourselves. Your bike will also be secured in the same way as their included bikes. Please note this can occasionally be outside (where the bikes are locked together).

While Intrepid's mechanics can usually assist with minor repairs, you are responsible for the safety and upkeep of your own bicycle. This includes conducting regular safety checks of your bike during the trip and cleaning your bike. In addition, any parts that require replacing are your responsibility. Most destinations have access to only limited spares along the way, and access to bike shops can be days apart. Therefore, please ensure you bring any spare parts that you may require (especially specialist parts).

In order to reach our destination, it is necessary for Intrepid to travel via various modes of transportation, including planes and trains. Please be aware that any extra costs involved with transporting personal bikes are your responsibility. This includes (but is not limited to) additional transport costs and customs/import fees.

How are bikes transported during this trip?

While there are occasions Intrepid uses local public transport such as trains, buses or taxis to cover long distances or attend non-cycling activities they predominantly use the bicycle as their main form of transport. On most of the trips Intrepid also has a support vehicle as secondary transport for traveling longer distances, avoiding hazardous areas to cycle, as a backup should they have any incidents and of course an option for those that would prefer not to cycle for an hour or a day. These vehicles range from a minivan in most regions up to a full-sized coach or overland vehicle in others. Your preferred airline should have no problem carrying your bike, but many will charge an extra fee. Contact them before departing to discuss their arrangements for transporting bikes.

A well-padded bike box obtainable from a bike shop is usually the best method of plane transportation. Intrepid recommends that you accompany your bicycle on the flight. Unaccompanied bicycles have been known to spend some extra days in the hands of customs authorities.

Please also note that many taxis are not large enough to transport a bike box/bag so you may be delayed waiting for a suitably sized vehicle.

What will the weather be like?

Napa and Sonoma offer a Mediterranean climate. It generally does not rain from mid-May to mid-October meaning that is a great time to ride knowing that it shouldn't rain. That lack of rain does however mean things get dry in the fall and increased wildfire risk has become a problem. In the last 4 years there have been devastating wildfires that have caused a considerable impact in late summer through fall, so while Intrepid has historically run many trips in September & October, there is a significant risk of smoke from fires from mid-August to mid-November.

Are gratuities included?

To allow flexibility in showing your appreciation, gratuities are not included. If you're happy with the service you receive, providing a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many destinations. Please note Intrepid recommends that any tips are given directly to the intended recipient by a member of your group, rather than collected and passed on by the group leader.

Hold on to your smaller notes and coins to make tipping easier. The following amounts are per person suggestions based on local considerations and feedback from past travelers:

Local Guides:

Throughout your trip, you may at times have a local guide. Intrepid suggests \$3-5 per passenger per day.

Drivers:

You may have a range of drivers on your trip. Some may be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for several days. Intrepid suggests \$3-6 per day for drivers.

Your Tour Leader:

You may also consider tipping your tour leader for outstanding service throughout your trip. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline \$2-4 per person, per day can be used. Of course, you are free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality and the length of your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service.

In total, Intrepid recommends you budget approx \$5-10 per day of your trip to cover tipping.

What if I have food and dietary requirements?

While travelling with Intrepid you'll experience the vast array of wonderful food available in the world. Your group leader will be able to suggest restaurants to try during your trip. To give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat, generally not all meals are included in the trip price. This also gives you more budgeting flexibility. As a rule, Intrepid groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There's no obligation to do this though.

Your group leader will endeavour to cater for specific dietary requirements where possible, and vegetarianism and gluten intolerance will be catered for in most instances. There may be some meals and activities that are fixed in advance and therefore cannot be modified to suit dietary requirements. These instances will be indicated in the 'trip notes' itinerary. Please notify your group leader of any dietary requirements in your group meeting at the start of the trip.

For those suffering from particular food allergies, your group leader will endeavour to disclose to their fullest knowledge the main ingredients in dishes being consumed. It is, however, your personal responsibility to ensure that you do not ingest any foods to which you are allergic.

What will the Group Leader do?

All Intrepid cycling group trips are accompanied by one of Intrepid's cycling leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. Intrepid endeavors to provide the services of an experienced leader however, due to the seasonality of travel, rare situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders.

Intrepid's cycling leaders are all passionate cyclists, as you'd expect, but they also go through some pretty rigorous cycle-trip specific training. Each one has undergone on-road training and supervision and knows how to do safety checks, basic repairs and emergency first-aid. And at the end of the day they're still regular Intrepid leaders, which means they will provide information on the places you are traveling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to their local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the places visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. At Intrepid they aim to support local guides who have specialized knowledge of the regions they visit. If you were interested in delving deeper into the local culture at a specific site or location

then your leader can recommend a local guide service in most of the main destinations of your trip.

On this trip, you will be accompanied by two local leaders - one to cycle with you, and one to drive the support vehicle.

As an extra safety precaution, the cycling leader will provide you with the daily routes through the RideWithGPS smartphone app and supply a phone holding strap to connect your phone to the handlebars.

What should we bring?

Packing for a cycling tour isn't that different from any other adventure. But if you want to be comfortable and warm, here are a few bike-specific tips.

- Helmet – these are compulsory, but if you don't have your own you can sometimes purchase an approved and well-fitted one at the start of the trip (our leaders can assist you with this). There are some destinations where you are unable to purchase or hire appropriate helmets locally so you will need to bring your own.
- Padded bike shorts
- Quick-dry jerseys. You can definitely get away with a few cotton t-shirts but having a few light and breathable jerseys will make your cycling a lot more comfortable, especially in warmer/humid climates.
- Quick-dry socks
- Cycling gloves are not essential but recommended as padded cycle gloves will make your riding more comfortable and can help protect you in case of a fall.
- Rain gear. Pack a light poncho in case the weather turns when you're out on the road
- Light breathable waterproof/windproof is especially useful for those early mornings or downhill sections when the wind-chill becomes a factor.
- Water bottle. Intrepid does not provide bottles but all their bikes have one bottle holder fitted (and a second one can be fitted if required). Please bring a cycling-specific water bottle as other types will fall out of the holders. A Camelbak will make drinking on-the-go easier.
- Sunglasses. Well-fitted sports sunglasses help protect against dust, insects and (of course) the sun
- Day pack. The support vehicle will carry your main bag, but a day pack for snacks and clothes is a good idea.
- Suncream. Please bring a high protection factor (e.g. SPF 50) sunscreen as long days in the saddle can really expose you to the sun
- Shoes. Normal sports shoes can be worn on all of Intrepid trips however you may want to consider a flat shoe with a relatively stiff sole as it makes pedalling a lot more efficient. Regular cyclists are welcome to bring their own cycling-specific shoes however Intrepid recommends 'mountain bike' style shoes that have a grip on the sole rather than road bike' shoes as you will still be walking around while on the rides (cafe/photo/toilet stops, etc.). For safety reasons, they require that you wear shoes that completely cover the toes while riding.
- Saddles are standard, unisex models. Less experienced cyclists may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. Regular cyclists are welcome to bring their own saddle – the leader will assist in fitting it to your bike
- Pedals. All bikes come with flat pedals. Regular cyclists are welcome to bring their own pedals – the leader will assist in fitting them to your bike

As space in the support vehicle/transport can be limited Intrepid requests that you bring only a small luggage bag with you rather than larger bags or suitcases. They also request that travellers bring only a small bag, no more than 20kgs with them.

What is not included?

- Airfare
- Airport transfers, taxes and excess baggage charges
- Bicycle helmet (Bike helmets are compulsory on this trip. You will be unable to hire bike helmets locally so please bring your own from home)
- Travel insurance (mandatory and must be taken out at the time of booking)
- Optional activities and all personal expenses

Sonoma Napa Valley Cycle Intrepid T&C

This trip is provided by Intrepid Travel. Minimum age requirement is 15 years old. Minimum of four people total must book this trip for it to happen.

Maximum 12 people allowed on the trip in total. A Single Supplement may be available on this trip, please ask for more information.

Deposit:

Lock in your trip with a deposit and then pay the rest in instalments whenever you like, with no interest or fees. Just make sure you've paid in full by 21 days before your trip is scheduled to depart. If you cancel your trip up to 21 days before departure, you can transfer your deposit to another available trip or hold your deposit on file indefinitely.

Insurance:

Travel insurance is compulsory on all Intrepid trips for those travelling internationally. They require that at a minimum you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. If you are travelling within your home country or region please confirm before travel that you are entitled to access the public medical system easily should an accident occur. Intrepid strongly recommends all travellers have a policy that also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage or personal effects. For international trips, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24-hour emergency contact number has been sighted by your leader. If you have credit card insurance your group leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number, and emergency contact number rather than the bank's name and your credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

Authority on Tour:

Trips are run by a group leader. The decision of the group leader is final on all matters likely to affect the safety or well-being of any traveller or staff member participating in the trip. If you fail to comply with a decision made by a group leader or interfere with the well-being or mobility of the group, the group leader may direct you to leave the trip immediately, with no right of refund. Intrepid may also elect not to carry you on any future trips booked. You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited

Health:

All travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully on this trip. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to manage and enjoy Intrepid's style of travel. Please note that if in the opinion of the group leader or local guide any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, Intrepid reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund. You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. They recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements as they may not easily be obtained while travelling. Any form of violence (verbal or physical) or sexual harassment, either between customers or involving our leaders, partners or local people, will not be tolerated. Use or possession of illegal drugs will not be tolerated. If you choose to consume alcohol while travelling, drink responsibly and abide by the local laws regarding alcohol consumption.

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