

BIKE INFORMATION

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAREFULLY

While the biking is non-competitive (it's not a race!) there are still very important items we need to cover for everyone's safety. The following information has been compiled for you in order to give you healthy tips that encourage a comfortable and safe ride.

WHAT KIND OF BIKE IS THE BEST FOR TOUR?

First off, Spoke Folk almost always bikes on paved roads. You will rarely find Spoke Folk biking on trails because our vans stay with the bikers at all times. Occasionally, Spoke Folk may need to travel down a gravel road. Our goal is to avoid them, but sometimes we have no other options. So the best bikes for tour are a road bike or hybrid bike. The thinner tires and lighter weight of these bikes make road riding much more efficient. If you have a mountain bike, rest assured that they are fine for Spoke Folk touring. Plenty of Spoke Folkers use mountain bikes. The riding is a little tougher but very doable. If resources allow, you can put "slicks" on your mountain bike; they are tires that fit mountain bikes but are more smooth and create an easier ride.

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE MY BIKE FOR TOUR?

No matter what style of bike you are riding, the bottom line is make sure that your bike is in good riding condition **before** you bring it to Spoke Folk. Each summer, someone shows up with a bike that is in relatively terrible condition. This person also arrives with the expectation that somehow it will magically be ready for the tour. On behalf of past tour bike mechanics, please arrive with a healthy bike. If you're not sure what "healthy" is, find someone in your area who does – this might mean taking your bike to a local shop at least a week before you (or it) leaves for Spoke Folk. Explain to them what you are doing, and ask them to give your bike a check-up and maybe even a tune-up (Costs for work typically starts around \$40-\$80). Make sure to ask the shop for an estimate before they do the work too.

Also make sure to prepare physically for tour. Even though the distance we bike isn't huge every day, it will be something that your body is not used to doing. Therefore, preparation is key! Get on your bike and ride. Get used to having your back end on a seat for a long time and if you feel any unnatural discomfort, get into a bike shop and have them look at how your bike is set up to your body. Bike set up is very important when riding long distances, particularly seat height, angle of the seat and handlebar placement!

WHAT KIND OF GEAR DO I NEED TO BRING ALONG?

- _____ A helmet with no dents of any kind: You will be required to wear one any and every time you ride your bike.
- _____ An orange flag with a clip: The flag should be up to 6 feet tall. It makes you much more visible to your fellow Spoke Folkers and to traffic. Spoke Folk will provide this but feel free to bring your own if you'd like.
- _____ At least one large water bottle or camelback: You will drink a quart of water every hour or ten miles that you bike on tour. If your bike can carry more than one bottle, bring it.
- _____ A spare tube for your bike tire. If you rent a bike from Spoke Folk, spare tubes are covered by the rental price
- _____ Some form of ID card and your cell phone
- _____ Optional-Raingear: Slickers are good, but a poncho or even a garbage bag will be okay. Note: we **will** bike in rain, but not thunderstorms.
- _____ Optional- A bike bag or camelbak of some sort to transport the above items. Rental bikes have a small bike bag already on the bike.

WHAT KIND OF CLOTHES SHOULD I WEAR WHILE RIDING?

- _____ Bike shorts: You can pick them up at a bike shop, Amazon, or sporting goods store. Cost varies, but you should be able to find a decent pair for about \$30. They are worth every penny! Padded shorts help eliminate later pain!
- _____ Bike Gloves: They'll give you better grip on your handlebars and stop your hands from getting too sore.
- _____ Shoes: Tennis shoes and cycling shoes are best. Teva sandals (or any sandals that strap over your toes AND ankles) are okay, but are not encouraged. Any type of flip flops are not good for biking and will not be allowed when on your bike.
- _____ Tops: Due to direct sun and the problems that can come from exposure to daytime sunlight, a full t-shirt or cycling jersey is required attire. Exposed jogging bras or swim suits are not appropriate and do not provide adequate protection.
- _____ Sunglasses can be very important to wear while biking. Glare off of roads can become dangerous after riding for a while.

ROAD RULES:

Please have the following knowledge firmly in your mind:

1. A helmet is worn at ALL times. As protective as they are, bike helmets are not indestructible. They are considered "single-impact" gear: After one fall or crash where you hit your head, you should discard the helmet and get a new one. Even if there are no visible dents or damage, you should replace the helmet; even minor impacts can affect a helmet's ability to protect you.
2. Know the hand signals for left and right turns, and stop.
3. Ride on the right with traffic. Obey all traffic laws and signs. Most states view bikes the same as cars, with the same rules.
4. Ride in single file when cars are around.
5. Watch for road debris or potholes. Point them out to those who are riding with you.
6. BE VOCAL! Call out to your fellow tour members such things as "Car Back", "STOPPING", "ON YOUR LEFT", etc.
7. Do not follow too closely behind other cyclists or cars. Also do not draft behind vehicles.
8. Keep glancing back to watch for traffic behind you.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON SPOKE FOLK:

Every day before your ride, your tour will do a brief, group devotion, stretch/warm-up as a group, and go over the directions for the day. You will receive a copy of those directions.

In the event that you, or your bike, get hurt when you're out on the road; we have two vans out there with you. The trailing van stays behind the last riders to encourage them and serve as a warning to other traffic on the road. The rover van will be a great sight to you as you bike. After stopping at a grocery store to purchase food for lunch, it roves from the front group to the back group insuring everyone is doing ok. It also helps those bikers who are having issues, fills water bottles, and provides fruit (and other treats). You will also be given all the counselors' phone numbers should you need to contact whoever is driving that day for assistance.