



Cycling Adventures for Independent Travelers

## Brattleboro - Bellows Falls Hub & Spoke Tour

### Tour Overview

**Tour Dates:** You may schedule your tour to begin on any date during our tour season, which extends from May 1 through October 31. See Schedule web page for additional scheduling considerations.

**Format:** Hub & Spoke tour with hubs (bases) in Brattleboro and Bellows Falls. Spend as many days at each hub as you wish.

**Distance:** Choose any or all of 10 cycling day-trips ranging from 17.5 to 32 miles.

**Terrain:** Most of the day-trip rides feature relatively easy terrain, with some including a few long, steady climbs and/or a few short, steep climbs. See spoke descriptions below for details.

**Location:** Southeastern Vermont's lovely and historic Windham County; portions of Windsor County, VT; portions of Cheshire County, New Hampshire; and portions of Franklin County, Massachusetts. All rides begin and end in Brattleboro or Bellows Falls, Vermont.

**Hub & Spoke Format:** Diverse Directions' Hub & Spoke tour itineraries are designed for those who prefer to minimize changes of hotels and/or like the flexibility of being able to determine which days they cycle. With our Hub & Spoke tours, you stay in two different base locations (hubs), from which you cycle roundtrip day-trip rides (spokes.) Since you are not changing hotels on most days, the choice is always yours as to whether you to cycle or enjoy other activities. There is only one required cycling day for Hub & Spoke tours -- the day that you move from your first hub to your second hub.

### Brattleboro Hub

Brattleboro is a lively southern Vermont arts and cultural center, ideal for window shopping, gallery hopping, people watching, participating in a walking tour, canoeing on the Connecticut River, hiking the trails of the Brattleboro Retreat or visiting the Retreat's Petting Farm, buying Vermont handcrafts, relaxing over a locally brewed beer, catching a movie or some live music, and of course, enjoying any one of a variety of exciting eateries and fine restaurants.

Accommodation options for your stay in Brattleboro include a downtown 1930's art deco style hotel, several lovely bed and breakfasts, and for the budget-minded, a variety of motels.

Following breakfast on your first full day in Brattleboro, you will attend a brief orientation at your hotel or B&B, test ride your bicycle, and then begin the first of your day-trip rides, or spokes.

## **Brattleboro Spokes**

We offer 5 day-trip rides from our Brattleboro hub. Each ride features stunning scenery along roads that generally quiet. The rides vary in length and degree of difficulty. You are free to do as many or as few rides as you wish. The following is a description of each of the Brattleboro rides:

### **Newfane Easy Loop - 24 miles**

This beautiful ride follows the course of the West River, from its mouth in Brattleboro to the quintessentially Vermont village of Newfane, one of New England's most beautiful villages. The terrain of this ride is easy, with just some minor exceptions. On this ride you will have the opportunity to:

- See (and cycle) the West Dummerston Covered Bridge, Vermont's longest covered bridge still in use;
- Visit and tour the Grafton Village Cheese Company, where an incredible variety of delicious cheeses are produced and sold;
- Visit and tour the Saxtons River Distillery and Tasting Room, where liqueurs are produced using Vermont maple syrup;
- Experience the village of Newfane, with its classic village green, gleaming white 19th century buildings, and numerous shops where antiques and local artisan products are sold; and
- Hike the Rock River Trail, a beautiful, wooded path along the Rock River, where you can take a refreshing dip in any of several swimming holes. See why this place is a favorite among locals in the know. Secure bike parking is provided.

### **Newfane - Williamsville Moderate Loop - 30 miles**

This ride includes all the sights and activities listed above for the Newfane Easy Loop ride, plus:

- Additional riverside cycling on a tranquil stretch of shaded, unpaved road that is certain to make your heart leap.
- Cycling to the tiny village of Williamsville on the Rock River, with the opportunity to visit the Williamsville Covered Bridge.
- Even more lovely views of the Rock and West Rivers.

### **Newfane - Williamsville Challenging Loop - 32 miles**

This ride is identical to the Newfane - Williamsville Moderate Loop, but returns to Brattleboro via a route that takes you up into the mountains on an enchanting, unpaved road for unforgettable views of the West River Valley. Your climbing efforts are rewarded many-fold, not only with the vistas, but also with roadside cascades, an ancient cemetery, and a real off-the-beaten-path experience.

### **South Brattleboro Loop - 23.5 miles**

This very bucolic ride with easy-to-moderate cycling takes you west to Brattleboro's Creamery Covered Bridge, before turning south for some wonderful cycling in the hollows between the mountain ridges south of Brattleboro. The route takes you briefly into Massachusetts by way of a shaded, unpaved road that parallels a beautiful cascading river; and then brings you back into Vermont through beautifully rolling areas mixed with forests and dairy farms. Back in Brattleboro, you will pass the uniquely designed buildings that comprise the former Estey Organ factory.

## **Tri-State Loop - 33 miles**

Experience three New England states over the course of this fascinating 33-mile loop! On this ride you will see the discernable differences between these neighboring states -- in their architecture, land use, and geography. Beginning in downtown Brattleboro, you immediately cross the mighty Connecticut River into New Hampshire, where you follow the course of the river to Hinsdale, NH. There you head south through the forest to historic Northfield, Massachusetts. Then, after a stretch of dazzling green beauty, you turn north again and re-enter Vermont, hugging the left bank of the Connecticut River, with gorgeous views of the surrounding mountains and riverside. A truly remarkable ride!

## **Change of Hubs - Cycle 27 miles from Brattleboro to Bellows Falls**

Your route to Bellows Falls follows the mighty Connecticut River northward, which forms the border between Vermont and New Hampshire. Though cycling in the fertile, orchard-studded valley carved by the river, the terrain is gently rolling, with occasional rises providing beautiful views of the mountains just across the river. You arrive shortly in the quintessentially Vermont village of Putney, known as a Mecca for arts and crafts, and a wonderful opportunity to break and refuel.

Beyond Putney, your route takes you down to the riverside on a quiet dirt road before reaching Westminster. In Westminster, you cross the river to the New Hampshire side and the beautiful village of Walpole, another great opportunity to take a break and enjoy a tasty treat at locally renowned Burdick's Chocolates. Just ahead, the mountains begin to close in on you, creating Bellows Falls' dramatic setting. Crossing back into Vermont, you reach the day's final destination, Bellows Falls.

## **Bellows Falls Hub**

Bellows Falls was a manufacturing powerhouse in the 19th century, putting to use the massive energy of the falls for which it is named. The old factories are mostly gone now, but the vestiges of that prosperous era remain in the Victorian mansions that comprise the town's registered historic district. (You can even overnight in one, if you wish.) Bellows Falls is a wonderful place for strolling and soaking in the New England atmosphere.

Accommodation options for your stay in Bellows Falls include a Victorian bed & breakfast and an economy motel. If you prefer to stay in a smaller village, you also have the option of staying at an inn in Walpole, NH or in one of two B&Bs in nearby Saxtons River, VT.

## **Bellow Falls Spokes**

We offer 5 day-trip rides from our Bellows Falls hub. Each ride features stunning scenery along roads that are generally quiet. The rides vary in length and degree of difficulty. You are free to do as many or as few rides as you wish. The following is a description of each of the Bellows Falls rides:

## **Grafton Easy Loop - 25 miles with 8-mile challenging option**

This beautiful ride follows the course of the Saxtons River, from Bellows Falls to Grafton, one of New England's most beautiful villages. When you reach Grafton, don't be surprised if you just want to sit for hours drinking in the beauty of its 19th century buildings and lovely setting between the surrounding mountain ridges. If you can motivate yourself into action, however, you may take advantage of the many art galleries, the local museum, Grafton's covered bridge, and the original Grafton Village Cheese Company, where a tremendous variety of cheeses are produced and sold. There is also the Grafton Ponds Outdoor Center, offering a variety of trails and activities in this pretty setting.

If you're up for more challenging cycling, you can make a strenuous 8-mile loop from downtown Grafton into the surrounding mountains, featuring stunning vistas and an awesome downhill return to the village.

On your way to Grafton or on your return ride to Bellows Falls, you also have the opportunity to visit the tiny, but charming village of Saxtons River.

### **Chester Moderate Loop - 32 miles**

This truly unforgettable ride takes you to Chester by way of a tranquil, shaded, unpaved road that follows the course of the Williams River. The beauty of this ride could stand alone, but in addition, this day-trip loop provides the opportunity to visit 3 historic covered bridges and the ever-so-charming village of Chester, with its elongated village green lined with 19th century Victorian buildings, and its good-natured Vermonters looking to share their portion of paradise with you. You'll definitely want to spend some time exploring Chester's many artisan and retail shops, and perhaps swing by Chester's "Stone House Village," named for the pre-Civil War houses constructed from locally quarried stone.

On your return route to Bellows Falls, you'll have the opportunity to visit the village of Saxtons River, before your final short stretch of cycling along the Saxtons River.

### **Vermont - New Hampshire Challenging Loop - 29 miles**

Rich in variety, this challenging loop takes you immediately across the Connecticut River into New Hampshire, where you will cycle quiet roads through a number of quaint New Hampshire villages, separated by stretches of forests and generally following the course of a rushing stream. Before crossing back into Vermont, you will visit Charlestown, New Hampshire, with its beautifully preserved historic district. You also have the opportunity to visit a restored 18th century fort to experience the early, untamed days of the region's history.

Back in Vermont, the most challenging part of the route ensues, as the mountains practically fall to the river banks along this stretch. Of course you are rewarded for your efforts with great vistas.

### **Vermont - New Hampshire Moderate Loop - 26 miles**

This route is identical to the Vermont - New Hampshire Challenging Loop, but returns to Bellows Falls via the New Hampshire side of the Connecticut River, eliminating the most challenging stretch of the loop.

### **Charlestown, New Hampshire Easy Loop - 17.5 miles**

This easy ride takes you to historic Charlestown, New Hampshire along the New Hampshire shore of the Connecticut River and returns by the same easy route. This loop includes the opportunity to visit the restored 18th century fort to experience the early, untamed days of the region's history.

### **Walpole, New Hampshire - 4 miles each way**

The ride to Walpole, NH is not one of the official day-trip rides, but if you are not staying there (it is one of your options) you should definitely consider making the short ride for a visit. Another one of the most charming villages you will ever see, Walpole is also home to Burdick's Chocolates, a true haven for the discriminating chocoholic.