Pedal the Peak District
9 journeys of discovery by bike

Explore the spectacular countryside of the Peak District by bicycle on quiet lanes and traffic-free trails. Pretty villages, superb views, interesting history, fascinating wildlife and geology – it’s all here for you to enjoy on these nine journeys of discovery.

Complete with Ordnance Survey maps and helpful advice, these carefully researched routes offer the very best of the Peak District on two wheels.

www.visitpeakdistrict.com/cycleroutes
The Peak District, situated right at the heart of England, offers some of the most awe-inspiring and varied landscapes in the country. From the rolling hills and limestone dales of the White Peak to the high heather-clad moorlands of the Dark Peak, this is countryside to explore slowly by bike.

The nine routes in this brochure have been chosen to offer you some of the best views, the most picturesque villages, the quietest lanes (and former railway lines) and an abundance of cycle friendly cafes and pubs for refreshments. Hear the birdsong and smell the wildflowers as you pedal and give yourself time to stop awhile at the interesting places en-route. This is a special landscape and you need time to admire those views!

Following the routes
The routes have been designed as leisurely day rides for reasonably fit riders and involve some hills, so choose a route suitable to your level of fitness, and don’t feel disheartened if you have to get off and push occasionally. Just enjoy the fresh air and exercise! Route 1 is the easiest, and they become progressively more challenging so that Route 9 requires the highest level of fitness.

They use open public roads (traffic is generally light and the short busier sections where you should take extra care are marked on the map) with some sections of traffic free trails.

Each route is highlighted on its own Ordnance Survey map with arrows showing which way round to go and added directions at certain points to help you with navigation.

Although the routes are not waymarked, all the information you need is on the route maps, so it will help to study them before you cycle. Some of the shorter routes may be suitable for adventurous families but none are suitable for very young children.

Route maps are at 1:50,000 scale (1¼ inches to 1 mile) except route 9 which is at a slightly smaller scale of 1:40,000.

The website www.visitpeakdistrict.com/cycleroutes has detailed information about accommodation, refreshment stops and places to visit on each of the nine routes. Check it out to make sure you don’t miss anything!

www.visitpeakdistrict.com/cycleroutes
Gingerbread and great oaks

Explore the rolling Derbyshire countryside taking in the timeless Georgian architecture of Ashbourne and visit traditional estate villages.

Starting from Ashbourne, famous for delicious gingerbread and the annual Shrovetide Football match, cycle southwards through picturesque villages taking in the thatched cottages of Osmaston, where you can still see lakes in the parkland of the former Osmaston Manor.

Cycle along the scenic traffic-free Tissington Trail, a former railway. Take a breather in Tissington, famous for its well dressings in the summer and stop to admire Tissington Hall, a fine Jacobean mansion. As you head back towards Ashbourne along the quiet lanes of the Dove Valley take in the views of the tranquil landscape with its patchwork of dry stone walls.

Refreshments:
Tissington, Ashbourne, Mappleton, Shirley

Toilets:
Ashbourne, Tissington and Thorpe

Maps:
Ordnance Survey Landranger 119 Buxton & Matlock and 128 Derby & Burton upon Trent

Total Ascent:
149m (north)
482m (south)

www.visitpeakdistrict.com/cycleroutes
Roaches and reservoirs

Uncover a landscape shaped by water, experience traditional villages and enjoy spectacular gritstone edges.

Starting from Tittesworth Reservoir, cycle towards the pretty village of Meerbrook, with the Roaches as a dramatic gritstone backdrop. Turning left after the Lazy Trout towards Leek there are beautiful views of Tittesworth reservoir which has over 100 hectares of rich wildlife habitat. Lapwing, snipe and curlew are regular visitors to the fields around here and when water levels fall in the summer the exposed mud attracts birds such as oystercatchers, plovers and herons. Soon the road diverges from the lake as you climb up and then down to join the Staffordshire Way, just south of Rudyard Reservoir. (From here you can take an optional visit to the market town of Leek, famous for its textiles and antiques emporia). Follow the former railway line through the woodland landscape alongside the reservoir - on summer weekends and holidays you may even find yourself cycling next to the miniature Rudyard Lake Steam Railway! The reservoir was built in the 1880s to feed the canals in the Midlands, later the famous poet Rudyard Kipling was named after the locality by his parents who visited here.

After returning to Tittesworth you can enjoy a rewarding climb on another short loop towards Ramshaw Rocks, Hen Cloud and The Roaches which together form a magnificent gritstone escarpment. Drop back down to Tittesworth to complete the whole figure-of-eight route.
**Rail trails and limestone dales**

Discover limestone dales, a former railway, the historic plague village and the ‘Cathedral of the Peak’ in an unspoilt farming landscape.

Starting at Millers Dale, once a major station on the Midland Railway opened in 1868, climb towards Wormhill and Wheston. Continue to Tideswell and take time to explore its fine medieval church, known as the ‘Cathedral of the Peak’. Cycle up onto Breton Edge, where there are spectacular views of the Dark Peak moorlands to the north and the walled landscape of the White Peak to the south. Descend into Eyam, the village famous for heroically isolating itself when the plague spread in 1665. An undulating ride across moors then drops down into Cressbrook Dale, crossing the River Wye below Monsal Head to join the railway line again. This line, which until the 1960s carried a railway across the Peak District from London to Manchester, is now the ‘Monsal Trail’, a traffic-free route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Cycle through limestone cuttings and tunnels on the Monsal Trail, peering down on Cressbrook and Litton Mills, former 19th century textile mills built to harness the power of water. Today, the scene is a peaceful home to wildlife such as dippers darting around the riverbanks. Look out for early purple orchids and cowslip in May, followed by ox-eye daisies, common rock rose and bloody cranesbill on the slopes. Smell the unmistakable wild garlic in spring and follow the flight of colourful butterflies, such as the brown argus, common blue and green hairstreak.

**ROUTE INFORMATION**

- **Distance:** 20 miles / 32.2 km
- **Start and Finish:** Millers Dale, former station SK17 8SN (or Eyam or Tideswell)
- **Terrain:** Undulating route mainly on peaceful lanes through quiet villages. There is a short steep section of rough track at Upperdale which may need to be walked to rejoin the trail.
- **Refreshments:** Tideswell, Eyam, Foolow, Great Hucklow, Millers Dale
- **Toilets:** Millers Dale, Tideswell, Eyam and Monsal Head
- **Map:** Ordnance Survey Landranger 119 Buxton & Matlock
- **Total Ascent:** 527 m
Biking and birdsong around Carsington

Discover a tranquil landscape shaped by lead mining and quarrying as you cycle through the limestone hills and dales.

Starting from Middleton Top, where an engine once hauled wagons up from Cromford Canal, head along the former railway (now the High Peak Trail) through a landscape shaped by quarrying but now a peaceful haven for wildlife. Visit the pretty village of Parwich, where there were several leadmines in medieval times.

Continue onto Bradbourne and around Carsington Water, a large reservoir with a visitor centre, café and varied biotope. In spring the reservoir is home to breeding birds such as lapwings, redshanks, tree sparrows, redstarts and ravens. In winter up to 6,000 birds may gather on the reservoir - including goldeneyes, tufted ducks, godwits, wigeons, teals and coots. You may also catch a glimpse of some regular rare visitors - divers, grebes and waders. Although many of these birds can be viewed from the track around the reservoir, there are also a number of specific hides provided where you can get closer without disturbing them.

Climb up through scattered settlements towards Wirksworth, a bustling market town with its cobbled yards and local craft shops and where lead was mined since Roman times. The town is home of the Barmote (the oldest industrial court in Britain) and an impressive Norman parish church.


www.visitpeakdistrict.com/cycleroutes

ROUTE INFORMATION
Distance: 21 miles/33.8km or 18 miles/29km (short cut)
Start and Finish: Middleton Top visitor centre and cycle hire DE4 4LS
Terrain: Traffic free trails, unsurfaced roads (which can be muddy following wet weather) and quiet country lanes with moderate hills. The shorter ride follows signed route 54A back to the start.
Refreshments: Middleton Top, Parwich, Carsington Water, Wirksworth
Toilets: Middleton Top, Carsington and Wirksworth
Map: Ordnance Survey Landranger 119 Buxton & Matlock
Total Ascent: 579m
Matlock moors, hills and mills

Journey through a landscape full of history and heritage with breathtaking views.

Starting from Matlock, once famous for its spa, cycle towards Cromford and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, the birthplace of the industrial revolution. Then onto Holloway, where Florence Nightingale, ‘The Lady with the Lamp’ used to live.

Enjoy the quiet lanes as you cycle up towards Ogston Reservoir taking in the views of the Amber Valley. Stop and explore the village of Ashover with its Norman church before climbing up onto Beeley Moor with spectacular views over the heather moorland towards the gritstone edges of the Peak District. Drop down into the Derwent Valley again at Darley Dale, with views across to the edge of Stanton Moor.

Cross over the A6 road and the railway line, part of the old Midland Railway’s route between Manchester and London which was closed in 1968. Nowadays steam trains operated by Peak Rail run on this section of the line down to Matlock. On your return look out for the ancient yew tree at St Helen’s Church, Churchtown (thought to be 2000 years old with an enormous girth of 33 feet!).


www.visitpeakdistrict.com/cycleroutes
Highs and lows around Hathersage

Take a journey through moorland landscapes, experience traditional Dark Peak villages and enjoy spectacular gritstone edges.

Starting from Hathersage, the village Charlotte Bronte visited and inspired her to write 'Jane Eyre', cycle high up onto Abney Moor taking in the spectacular scenery. Visit the small village of Great Hucklow, once a centre for lead mining and now home to a gliding club. Pedal on towards Castleton, enjoying outstanding views of Mam Tor, known as the ‘shivering mountain’. Descending into the village, situated at the western end of the Hope Valley, look out for the ruins of Peveril Castle perched on a rocky outcrop overlooking the entrance to Peak Cavern. Nearby can be seen the entrance to Winnats Pass, a spectacular limestone gorge.

Take a breather in Castleton to explore the home of the world famous Blue John stone, visit the showcaves, pubs and cafes and the visitor centre before journeying on to the village of Hope.

As you head towards the small hamlet of Thornhill, enjoy the views across the Hope Valley before you ascend to take in the breathtaking sight of Stanage Edge, one of the birthplaces of climbing and still internationally renowned today.

At the end of your ride take time to explore the village of Hathersage, which once had a large needle, button and wire drawing industry. The mills still stand but are now converted to other uses. In the churchyard you can see a 10ft long grave, believed to be that of Robin Hood’s friend ‘Little John’.

www.visitpeakdistrict.com/cycleroutes
Stately homes and standing stones

Experience typical White Peak landscape, a Stone Age henge and a Bronze Age stone circle, magnificent historic houses and their parklands.

Start from Hassop or Bakewell former stations on the Monsal Trail. Passing through the busy market town of Bakewell famous for its pudding and medieval bridge over the River Wye, head up towards the village of Sheldon. You pass the remains of Magpie Mine before continuing on to Monyash, an attractive village with limestone cottages and farmhouses centred on the village pond.

Carry on towards Youlgrave and via the hamlet of Alport before climbing up to Stanton in the Peak, an attractive gritstone village from where you can make a short diversion to see the Nine Ladies Stone Circle on Stanton Moor. Before you drop down to Rowsley look out over the Wye Valley to Haddon Hall, a lovely medieval manor house and the location of many films.

Follow the signs to Chatsworth, enjoying views of the Duke of Devonshire’s home as you cycle through rolling parkland. Take time if you can to visit the house and gardens, one of England’s finest stately homes with many art treasures and fine furniture. Turn left before the river as you come into Baslow to follow a quiet lane to Hassop and left again before Great Longstone to rejoin the Monsal Trail.
Hills, dales and trails
Take a journey through the hills and limestone dales of the Peak District and enjoy traditional villages, medieval settlements, copper mines and a disappearing river.

The High Peak Trail, once part of the Cromford and High Peak Railway, takes you north from Parsley Hay. A picturesque gated road leads you past the footpath to Pilsbury Castle, one of the finest examples of a medieval motte and bailey castle in Derbyshire.

Cycle down the Dove Valley to reach the charming village of Hartington, once famed for the production of Stilton cheese. Then a short section of the former Leek and Manifold Light Railway – (built to serve surrounding dairy farms 1904-1934) passing the quiet hamlet of Ecton, the site of one of the most productive copper mines in England during the 18th century.

The River Manifold makes its way past Wetton Mill, then disappears underground during the summer months. Look out for Thors Cave, believed to have been occupied by humans as long ago as 10,000 years.

Take a breather in Alstonefield village before recrossing the River Dove and a hard climb back to join the Tissington Trail at Alsop. As you travel back to Parsley Hay enjoy the views of rolling White Peak countryside and look out for Hartington signal box as you near the end of your journey.

www.visitpeakdistrict.com/cycleroutes
High moors and gritstone tors

Travel through high moorland landscapes with awe-inspiring views and visit the spa town of Buxton, home to a series of popular summer festivals.

Start at Chapel-en-le-Frith, founded in 1225, then climb the hill up to the viewpoint of Eccles Pike. Look out for the topograph showing the distinctive landforms in a 360 degree circle around the Peak District.

Continue westwards and after a challenging climb enjoy rewarding moorland views from Pym Chair and Windgather Rocks.

Take the road towards Kettleshulme, which was part of the Salt Way from Cheshire, following signs to the beautiful Goyt Valley and its stunning reservoirs and woodland.

Cycle through Buxton, famous for its healing spring water and beautiful Georgian Crescent. Stop off for a free spirit-reviving drink of the natural mineral waters at St Anne’s Well before heading off to the village of Peak Forest, once part of a Royal Hunting Forest. The final leg of the journey takes you past Ford Hall, home to William Bagshawe, the Apostle of the Peak and a member of one of the oldest families in the area.


www.visitpeakdistrict.com/cycleroutes
Planning your holiday

If you’re thinking of a short break or longer holiday there are plenty of cyclist-friendly places to stay in the Peak District - look out for the ‘Cyclists Welcome’ symbol which tells you that a hotel, B&B, holiday cottage or campsite offers you everything you need, including lockable cycle storage.

See www.visitpeakdistrict.com to view a wide range of places to stay, search for ‘Cyclists Welcome’ accommodation or order a copy of the Peak District Visitor Guide. Alternatively contact one of the Tourist Information or Visitor Centres below.

Tourist Information and Visitor Centres

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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.visitpeakdistrict.com">www.visitpeakdistrict.com</a></td>
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Travel to the Peak District
Locate at the very heart of England, the Peak District & Derbyshire is easy to reach. Railway stations close to the nine cycling routes are:

- Whaley Bridge and Buxton (Manchester line).
- Matlock Bath and Matlock (Derwent Valley line from Derby).
- Chinley, Edale, Hope, Bamford and Hathersage (Hope Valley line between Manchester and Sheffield).

For information contact:
www.traveline.org.uk
www.nationalrail.co.uk
www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/visit
www.transportdirect.info

Get cycling.....
Regular cycling has many benefits both for yourself and the environment. It builds fitness, strength and well being, brings you closer to nature and helps reduce traffic congestion and pollution. It’s fun, but should also be safe so follow these tips:

1. Please consider other users at all times. Keep to the left and ride in single file. Give way to pedestrians and horses. Ring your bell or call out “bike” when approaching others from behind.

2. Make eye contact - eyeball other road users, particularly at junctions.

3. Look over your shoulder - check behind you when starting off, before you signal and at regular intervals.

4. Look well ahead - check ahead for obstructions in the road so that you do not have to swerve suddenly.

5. Get out of the gutter - ride at least a metre from the kerb – and further out if it is unsafe for a vehicle to pass.

6. Don’t get car-doored - leave plenty of room when passing parked vehicles.

7. Show your intentions - signal and manoeuvre well in advance, and only when it is safe to do so. Keep your position in your lane so vehicles cannot undertake.

8. Cover your brakes - rest your hands on your brake levers, so that you are ready to use them. Always use both brakes at the same time, and take care on slippery roads.

9. Light up - when it is dark or there is bad visibility you must have lights on the front and rear of your bike. Carry spares in case your main lights fail. Wear bright or reflective clothing. Consider wearing a helmet.

10. Take care when approaching horse riders. Horses can be alarmed by sudden noises and actions so slow down and give them as much room as possible.

Want more help?
Beginners and experienced cyclists alike can benefit from an adult training session visit www.ctc.org.uk/instructors to find details of cycle instructors in your area.
Cycle Hire Centres

If you haven’t got your own bike, or haven’t brought it on holiday with you, there are a number of cycle hire centres in the area (look out for symbol on the route maps) including:

Ashbourne
Mapleton Lane, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 2AA
Open March to October every day, November to February limited opening.
Tel: 01335 343156
email: ashbourne.cyclehire@peakdistrict.gov.uk
www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/cycle

Derwent (near Bamford)
Fairholmes Car Park, Derwent, Bamford, Hope Valley S33 0AQ
Open March to October every day, November to February limited opening.
Tel: 01433 651261
email: derwent.cyclehire@peakdistrict.gov.uk
www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/cycle

Parsley Hay (near Buxton)
Parsley Hay, near Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 0DG
Open March to October every day, November to February limited opening.
Tel: 01298 84493
email: parsleyhay.cyclehire@peakdistrict.gov.uk
www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/cycle

Middleton Top
Middleton by Wirksworth, Derbyshire DE4 4LS
Restricted opening.
Tel: 01629 823204
www.derbyshire.gov.uk

Other centres are at Blackwell Mill (on the Monsal Trail near Buxton), Carsington Water, Hassop Station (on the Monsal Trail near Bakewell) and Waterhouses (Manifold Valley).

Remember to secure your vehicle and remove ALL valuables if leaving your car parked. If you see anything suspicious please contact Staffordshire Police on 0300 123 4455 or Derbyshire Police 0345 123 3333.

Whilst every effort has been made to present routes where it is legal to cycle, individuals are always responsible for their own safety and the safety of others. All information is provided in good faith by the publisher and producer and was believed to be accurate at the time of publication.

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Photographs courtesy of Visit Peak District & Derbyshire, Peak District National Park Authority, Natural England and Greg Walker.

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