

Efficient Cycling

Cycling Efficiently

As well as having a safe tour, we are keen for you to enjoy the trip and achieve a real sense of accomplishment. This is likely to include cycling within your limits and not exhausting yourself before lunch. Here are some thoughts on how to stay happy on the bike:

“Seven Habits of Highly Effective Cyclists”

[Apologies to Stephen Covey]

1. Eat before you are hungry. Even moderate cycling burns around 300 calories per hour so eat plenty of snacks such as power bars or trail mix. We need to eat in enough time to allow our bodies to process the food and get the fuel to your legs before the fuel gauge reaches on empty. Recovering from a fuel deficit is very difficult, and will leave you tired for the rest of the day. So, go on, indulge yourself. *[Everybody's metabolism is different, but when riding extended distances, it is typical to need to eat something every 45 minutes. A nice big bowl of pasta the night before and a carbohydrate rich breakfast in the morning also help.]*
2. Drink before you are thirsty. It can get very hot out there on the bike. As you sweat, you will lose both water and essential salts. The dry air in California and the cooling effect of the breeze mean you will not notice the effects until it is too late. Drink plenty of water before you start to ride and then take regular sips en route. *[A good target is to drink either water or sports drink at least every 30 minutes.]*
3. Ride at a pace that feels comfortable. Even when climbing hills it is good practice to be able to keep a conversation going without being out of breath. This means changing down to a low gear, keeping your cadence high and taking things easy. If you are a slow rider riding with fitter friends, have them ride at your pace rather than you struggling to keep up with them. This will also help them avoid sore legs the next day.
4. The sun can get quite intense, especially in the middle of the day so keep your shirt on and use a high factor sunscreen. *[Watch for being burned through the gaps in your cycle helmet. Many of the best helmets have extra wide gaps to help keep you cool. A bandana under the helmet can make all the difference.]*
5. Relax and change your position regularly. Changing your hand position helps avoid shoulder cricks or back aches. Drop handlebars are better for being able to do this. Getting out of the saddle regularly will help avoid saddle sores. Having done some training rides will also be useful in respect of both of these.
6. Check your bike. A sticking brake or skipping gear can stop you relaxing and can be dangerous. If you are unsure, talk to your guide, we will be happy help you check things out if you have a concern.
7. Smile, you are on vacation! *[OK, so we couldn't really think of a seventh.]*

The Rules

We also have a few simple rules we ask you to follow, to help your safety and enjoyment:

1. Always wear a cycle helmet, fastened securely while cycling.
2. Do not ride at night or in the failing light of dusk.
3. All cyclists under 16 years of age:
 - must wear a florescent safety triangle or high visibility clothing
 - need to be accompanied by an adult over the age of 21 who is responsible for their safety at all times while cycling
4. Ride in single file and with the direction of traffic.
5. All riders should carry identification, details of their medical/travel insurance and emergency contact details.
6. All riders must have signed the accident waiver indicating they are fit to ride and understand the risks.

We wish you a safe, enjoyable and rewarding ride.