

Heaven on wheels

If you can commute by bike, you can vacation by bike. PDX's two friendliest touring experts have everything you need to make your next getaway human-powered, dirt-cheap, and off the grid.



The coast trail that might It's the missing crown jewel of outdoor recreation in Oregon: An offroad bike/horse path to the Pacific. After floods wrecked the Salmonberry rail line in 2007, this route through a remote valley of the Coast Range floated into of a lot of wilderness lovers' dreams. It'd cost tens of millions and take years to piece a trail together, but a feasibility study due next year could kick it into high gear. A quick note of support might help flip the levers of power: pdx.be/ToTheCoast

Bring it! Nine non-obvious things to pack

from author Ellee Thalheimer & Cycle Wild founder Matt Picio

Bugspray. Mosquitos can fly 10 mph. On uphill climbs, "there's a cloud," Picio said. "You can't really stop them."
Earplugs. Unsafe in the city, these help on highways because only vehicles are loud enough to get through.
Sarong. Camp towel + yoga mat + changing room + hip pouch = Thalheimer's most precious clothing item.
Gladware. Cook once, nosh twice.
Chamois. \$70 padded shorts, essential to protecting key assets on trips over 15-20m. Don't wear with underwear. Optional: chamois butter lubricant, \$16.
Zipties & masking tape. Good for most temporary bike repairs.

The perfect first time 18 miles northwest of Hillsboro, on the offroad Banks-Vernonia trail, is Stub Stewart State Park, a frequent weekend shot for CycleWild's bike-camping beginners. Skip the hills by riding to the end of the Blue Line; the only stressful stretch is 7 miles along Highway 47 north of Forest Grove to the trailhead. At the park: \$10-a-site wooded camping, hills, canyons, and, (for the true bike-tour aficionado) golf. pdx.be/BeginnersTrek

The coast trail that ain't Portland mayoral contender Charlie Hales has made a "100-mile" rail-and-trail project down the Columbia "all the way to Astoria" a key part of his pitch to bicyclists. The river railroad is "hardly used," he told BikePortland.org last winter, repeating the plan to both OPB and Portland Afoot. Say what? Portland & Western's line hauls 20,000 cars a year, feeding more than 1,000 jobs along the river and brand-new plasticboard and ethanol plants, P&W's David Anzur said July 18. Anzur said steep cliffs and narrow tunnels leave no room for a trail on the valuable corridor; state rail planner Bob Melbo agreed that it's infeasible. Hales replies that they need to think bigger. "I love these guys ... but they have a point of view that is very train-centric." Hm. pdx.be/AstoriaPromises

The world's best local bike tour website? Matt Picio's nonprofit labor of love, CycleWild.org lists dozens

of bike-friendly campsites in Portland's "rideshed," gear lists and a community of young local couples and singles who take year-round group trips into the nearby wild. Next up: Sept. 21 to Mt. Hood.

The belly of the beast Here's what Easterners don't seem to get about great cities: they're not quite complete until they include escape hatches.



Wine country This four-day swing through the Willamette Valley's golden section is the closest to home of eight detailed trip plans in *Cycling Sojourner*, Ellee Thalheimer's meticulous, beautiful new 240-page, \$18 guide to bike travel in Oregon. Includes detail maps, food, lodging, fun, bike shops and a two-page packing list; weighs 9.2 oz and fits in a handlebar bag. It's the bottles of Pinot that really add to your load – best to finish those immediately. pdx.be/BikeGuideBook

Top of the morning The old Columbia River Highway has its ups and downs (biggest climb: 800 feet to Crown Point's Vista House), but nab summer reservations early in the year for one of eight campgrounds. You'll never settle for ogling waterfalls through a windshield again. pdx.be/BikeTheGorge

StrikeMaster fire starter. Sold at Portland Saturday Market for \$15 or online for less, this Picio-approved handheld tool combines flint, steel, wood and flammable magnesium shavings in a single pocket-size object.

PowerGorilla gadget charger Advanced and/or geeky tourists like Picio love this optional luxury: a \$225, 105 watt-hour battery for charging other batteries and can accept just about any electronic cable, including a laptop's.

U.S. flag. For the back of your bike. Picio learned the trick while biking across the country: "It makes it a lot less likely that cars will honk at you or cut you off or do anything rude or bizarre." ?

