

BICYCLING IN BERMUDA

With a year-round average temperature of 70°F (21°C), Bermuda is often ideal for bicycling. Not only is biking a great way to have fun and stay in shape, but it allows you to take a hands-on approach to your sightseeing. Although many tourism brochures extol the glories of bicycling on Bermuda, the roads are unfortunately not suitable for beginners. Think carefully and ask around when you're deciding where you can ride safely and comfortably.

Most roadways are well paved and maintained. Although the island's speed limit is 32kmph (20 mph) for all vehicles, exercise caution when bicycling. The roads are narrow and winding and car traffic, especially during the day, tends to be heavy. Most drivers are considerate of cyclists, but a car may approach without warning because the government discourages unnecessary horn honking. Fellow cyclists might even overtake you. Organised bicycle racing is one of the most popular local sports.

Renting a Pedal Bike

Push bikes or pedal bikes, the terms Bermudians use to distinguish bicycles from motor-scooters, are a popular form of transportation and activity. You can rent a pedal bike by the half day, by the day or for your entire stay. In addition to the rentals at cycle liveries, some guest properties also have pedal cycles for house guests' use, with or without a fee. Pedal bike rentals feature unisex, trek mountain-type bikes that are generally 18-speed, 21-speed or even 24-speed. Rates range between \$30 or \$35 for day one; \$50 or \$60 for day two; \$65 or \$75 for day three and so on and only \$10 per day after seven days. No insurance or extra costs at the cycle liveries; an insurance fee of \$10 may be applied at the guest properties. It's always a good idea to call as far in advance as possible because demand is great, especially from April to October.

Enquire about a pedal cycle tour – it may be more appealing to you to be part of a guided group of two or three hours duration; the west end is a popular part of the island for this.

Where to Bike in Bermuda

Only the hardiest cyclists set out to traverse the 34km (21-mile) length of Bermuda in one day. For most people, it's far better to focus on smaller sections at different times. So, decide what interests you parish by parish, and proceed from there. To save time or to make your day more interesting, you can take your pedal bike aboard any of the ferries (there is no additional fee to board with a pedal bike) and then begin cycling.

A good suggestion for all cyclists is to explore the Bermuda Railway Trail, an open trail route of the former Bermuda Railway and which is restricted to only bicyclists and pedestrians. The Railway Trail stretches through a great deal of the length of the island from west to east and consists of seven sections, each one with its own character and sights to see. The Railway Trail is featured in the Bermuda Department of Tourism's Handy Reference Map and Bermuda East to West brochure. Using these two guides you can decide how much of the Trail you'd like to cover and which sections to focus on.

A helpful tip: the two sections located in the west end, specifically in the parishes of Sandys and Southampton, are paved making for a leisurely bicycling experience; enjoy the outstanding views of the Great

Sound and opportunities to sightsee amenities such as Somerset Bridge, the smallest drawbridge in the world, and Fort Scaur Park and the Village of Somerset. The remaining sections of the Railway Trail are unpaved and will likely make for a more aerobic bicycling experience as in some places it will be necessary to traverse the main road for short distances where there are breaks in the Trail, but the sights and scenery and opportunities to stop for a picnic will be worth the effort.

If you're a real demon on a bike, choose a part of the island that will give you a real challenge, such as pumping up to Gibbs Hill Lighthouse in Southampton Parish, one of the oldest cast-iron lighthouse in the world. The panoramic view from the foot of the lighthouse is well worth the effort. Go the distance and climb the 185 steps to the top of the lighthouse!

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