Bicycle Tours in USA: Cycling the San Juan Islands

OVERVIEW

Visit Washington State's San Juan Islands, riding some of the quietest and scenic terrain available in this spectacular state. Slow down and take it all in - a temperate climate, tranquil waters, mountain vistas, and the chance to get glimpses of whales – elements that are sure to make your island-hopping-by-bike experience truly unique. Our San Juan Islands Bike Tour is one of a kind.

This trip is designed as a loop so you can drive to and from the tour in case you prefer not to fly. Save $200 if you decide to bring your own bike.

Dates: Pick a date below or select your own date, starting on a Sunday. We are able to operate this tour with 4 or more people. Price changes may apply for 4 people. Given the unique circumstances surrounding travel we understand if you are more comfortable traveling in a private group.

HIGHLIGHTS

Anacortes; Friday Harbor; Whale Watching Cruise; Lavender Fields; Orcas Island; Cycling Mount Constitution; Doe Bay

TOUR FACTS

Tour Style	Classic: Learn more about our Classic tours at https://www.experienceplus.com/choosing-the-best-tour/styles/classic
Includes	6 days, 5 nights accommodation, double occupancy; meals as noted in itinerary; non-optional activities as outlined in itinerary; ride-friendly snacks and beverages throughout each day; hybrid or alloy road bike rental – carbon road bike or E-bike available for an upgrade fee ($100 for carbon; $200-300 for e-bike); professional trip leader(s); van support & porterage service; reusable water bottle & luggage tags.
Countries	USA
Begin/End	Anacortes, WA
Arrive/Depart	Seattle's Sea-Tac Airport (SEA)
Total Distance	153 miles (248 km)
Avg. Daily Distance	26 miles (41 km) per riding day
Tour Level	

Please Note: We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes, including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the online itinerary for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:
https://www.experienceplus.com/bike-tours/usa/san-juans-BSA

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DATES & PRICES

DAILY RIDE SUMMARY

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level	Notes
1	34km / 518m (21mi / 1700ft)	Rolling hills		
2	66km / 884m (41mi / 2900ft)	Rolling hills		
3	29km / 366m (18mi / 1200ft)	Rolling hills		
4	48km / 793m (30mi / 2600ft)	Hilly		
5	Hike option			Hike option
6	35km / 701m (22mi / 2300ft)	Hilly		

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Meet in Anacortes, Bike Fidalgo Island Loop

DAY 1: Sun, Sep 12th

Highlights Anacortes, Fidalgo Island

After meeting in Anacortes, WA (~1 pm, about 90-min drive north from Seattle) for a brief orientation we'll pedal around Fidalgo Island taking in stunning water views of the surrounding Puget Sound. After getting settled in for our lodging for the evening we'll enjoy the first of our meals together.

Distance 34 km (21 mi)
Gain 518 m (1700 ft)
Terrain Rolling hills
Level
Meals Dinner
Lodging Majestic Inn

Anacortes to Friday Harbor

DAY 2: Mon, Sep 13th

Highlights Bike San Juan Island Loop

After breakfast we'll board the first of the ferries we'll take this week traveling among the San Juan Islands to the town of Friday Harbor. Upon arrival we'll loop around the entire island – which in the middle of the 19th century was subject to a border dispute and was once divided between the UK and the USA, as both claimed it as their territory. Fortunately, despite the presence of troops from each country, the only fatality was a pig, hence the incident was dubbed the "Pig War". You'll have options to stop along the way to learn more about this quirky chapter in American history as we pass by the American and English camps that comprise San Juan Island National Historical Park. September: Possible Upgrade Option - Tucker House Inn

Distance 66 km (41 mi)
Gain 884 m (2900 ft)
Terrain Rolling hills
Level
Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Friday Harbor - Whale Watch

DAY 3: Tue, Sep 14th

Highlights Whale watching cruise, Lavender Farm Loop

Today we'll return to our bikes for a morning ride looping inland on the island past a lavender farm before returning to Friday Harbor. After lunch on your own in Friday Harbor, we'll board a whale watching boat and, with luck, have the opportunity to see Orca whales in the wild. Our boat ride is 3-4 hours and if whales aren't featured we may see other wildlife including bald eagles. Tonight we enjoy another great dinner in Friday Harbor with ample fresh, local seafood options if you are so inclined. September: Possible Upgrade Option - Tucker House Inn

Distance 29 km (18 mi)
Gain 366 m (1200 ft)
Terrain Rolling hills
Level
Meals Breakfast, Dinner

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Friday Harbor to Orcas Island

DAY 4: Wed, Sep 15th

Highlights Orcas Island, pottery studio

This morning we take another ferry to Orcas Island. You'll pedal off the boat from there stopping at Deer Harbor then a pottery studio featuring the work of several local artists and a stunning natural setting overlooking the Canadian Gulf Islands just across the border a few miles away. After a guide-prepared picnic lunch you'll pedal onward to our home for the next two nights in Eastsound. You are free to explore and choose your own dinner restaurant tonight. September Hotel: Outlook Inn

Distance 48 km (30 mi)
Gain 793 m (2600 ft)
Terrain Hilly
Level
Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Hike Orcas Island

DAY 5: Thu, Sep 16th

Highlights Explore Orcas Island

You'll have the option to hike today, including the possibility to hike Mt Constitution. At 2,398 feet, it's the tallest point in the San Juan Islands and features a stunning panoramic view of the surrounding islands in the US and Canada as well as Washington's snow-covered Mt Baker rising over 10,000 ft. After returning to Eastsound, you'll have time to shower before check out. We'll return by ferry to Anacortes (arriving ~ 2pm – dependent on ferry schedule and ferries sometimes run late) where we will say goodbye and you can continue your adventure as you please!

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Bike to Doe Bay

DAY 6: Fri, Sep 17th

Highlights Moran State Park and Doe Bay

If you'd like to get another ride in the morning we have a great route though Moran State Park to Doe Bay. After returning to Eastsound, enjoy exploring town before we gather again for our farewell group dinner. Hotel: Outlook Inn

Distance 35 km (22 mi)
Gain 701 m (2300 ft)
Terrain Hilly
Level
Meals Breakfast

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INCLUDED

WHAT'S INCLUDED

When you book a tour with ExperiencePlus! our goal is to ensure your only focus each day is to hop on your bike and explore scenic cycling routes in new destinations. Inclusions may differ depending on which tour style you pick but all ExperiencePlus! tours include what we believe are the most important aspects of a bike tour.

- On all our guided tours, you can expect superb tour leaders who are fun and multilingual, bi-cultural experts, and cycling enthusiasts. They will support you and help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- High quality bikes selected for the terrain you are cycling on and correct bike fitting to ensure comfortable cycling.
- Thoughtfully designed itineraries and routes that take advantage of stunning cycling destinations and the freedom of bicycle travel. Plus, all the logistics are taken care of.

PRE-TRIP SUPPORT

- Bicycle training programs designed specifically for your tour and fitness level.
- Planning tips on what to pack, hotel recommendations and other helpful details from our Travel Planning Pages: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/
- A gift of your choice (cycling jerseys, socks, or a t-shirt) as our way of saying thanks for choosing EP!
- *Traveler services including assistance booking extra nights at the tour starting and ending hotels. (*Explorer and Self-guided tour styles excluded)
- See "What's Included" for tour-specific inclusions and be sure to check the "Keep in mind" section under "Tour Summary" online.

BICYCLES

For a full list of what's included with your bike see: https://www.experienceplus.com/what-to-expect/our-bikes/. If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so. On Explorer and Self-guided tours we include a GPS device on all bikes.

NAVIGATING, DAYSHEETS AND VAN SUPPORT:

On a guided tour, each day you'll receive a daily briefing with a highlighted route map. On a self-guided tour you'll receive a comprehensive orientation and bike fit on the first or second morning of your trip. About 14 days prior to your tour, we will provide you with access to RideWithGPS Experiences, our platform to distribute information on each tour day's activities, meals and ride, as well as GPS-routes.

Daily information on the RWGPS Experience includes important phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information. On Classic, Bike and Boat and Expedition tours we also navigate using our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map. On Explorer tours the terrain and destinations are not always conducive to using chalk arrows so we'll ride as a group or you can navigate on your own with the GPS tracks.

On a guided tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths. On a self-guided tour you will have luggage transfers that will transport your bags from one hotel to the other.

Need More Miles? On many days it is possible to add miles to the day, just talk to your tour leader about your options or ask when you are planning your self-guided trip.

Need Fewer Miles? On a guided tour, the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. On a self-guided tour we recommend you review the tour level to make sure you can ride the full distance.

ON A GUIDED TOUR: TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADERS

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5-8% of the tour cost per traveler — this is for the entire tour leader team, not each tour leader. You can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your tour leaders did not quite meet your expectations, please let us know. *Tips are included in Expedition pricing and not expected on self-guided tours.

PHOTOS:

By reserving space on tour, you agree that ExperiencePlus! may use, re-use and reproduce any images, photos or videos sent to us, or that are taken by our guides or other travelers, in any medium, including but not limited to print, electronic media, or Internet, free of charge and without your right to inspection. If you do not want us to use any images of you, you must inform us or your tour leader in writing at the start of the tour.

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STYLES

OUR TOUR STYLES

We realize that one size does not fit all and there are as many ways to travel by bike as there are different types of cyclists and travelers.

Classic Tours: Dream of traveling through a region by bike? Our unique chalk arrows lead the way as you explore small villages and world-class cities while traveling at your own pace.

- Tour Length: 7-15 days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars.
- Road Type: Pavement, bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van support and chalk arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 1-4.5

Explorer Tours: Travel further off the beaten path - we let the destination dictate where we ride, not the road surface.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days
- Hotels: 2-3 stars
- Road Type: 30-50% gravel or hard-packed dirt, the rest pavement.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2 tour leaders, GPS and van support
- Price: $$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Bike and Boat Tours: Spend days cycling and your evenings relaxing on a private boat as you cruise to your next port.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days, some itineraries have land-based extensions available.
- Barge/Boat: 3-4 star, same cabin for the entire boat trip except for land extension.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Navigation and support:2 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Expedition Tours: Multi-week tours where you spend long days on the bike with the added satisfaction of pedaling across multiple countries.

- Tour Length: 15-40 days
- Hotels: 2-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel.
- Multi-night Stays: On rest days
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 4-5

Self-guided Tours: perfect for those who have an independent spirit, want the flexibility to choose their own dates, and don't need van support or tour leaders during their trip. Every departure is a private tour!

- Tour Length: 6-8-days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel on bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: GPS routes and luggage transfers
- Price: $
- Tour Levels: 1-4

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LEVELS

We know that travelers have different cycling abilities and preferences for the number of miles, elevation gain, and type of terrain they want on a bicycle tour. We have rated each day of our tours on a scale of 1-5. Our Tour Level's are an average of the day rating on tour. We recommend looking at the daily summary on the PDF and Website Itinerary to see details about each day's ride.

LEVEL 1 - 1.5

Level 1 - 1.5 days will be mostly flat and the distance will rarely exceed 50 km. Level 1 - 1.5 tours are suitable for beginner cyclists, those traveling by bicycle for the first time, or multi-generational groups with a desire for a nice and easy bike tour with plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the scenery.

- **Average daily mileage:** 20 - 50 km. (12-30 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 0-400 M (0-1200 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat with occasional gentle climbs at a grade of less than 3%, that are sustained for a maximum of 3km. There might be a steeper but short climb.

LEVEL 2 - 2.5

Level 2 - 2.5 days are ideal for riders newer to bicycle touring looking for a bit of a challenge.

- **Average daily mileage:** 30-60 km (18 - 38 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 400 - 600 m (1200 - 2000 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly rolling terrain around 3%. Presents multiple 3% to 4% climbs. May present an occasional steeper climb.

LEVEL 3 - 3.5

Level 3 - 3.5 days are great for active individuals (who run, bike, swim etc. on a regular basis).

- **Average daily mileage:** 50-70km (30-45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 600 - 900m (2000 - 2800 ft)
- **Terrain:** Multiple Climbs with grades of 4 - 6%.

LEVEL 4 - 4.5

Level 4 - 4.5 days are the best riding days for avid cyclists or very active individuals who are excited to challenge themselves on a bike.

- **Average daily mileage:** 70-90km (45-55 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 900-1000m (2800-3600 ft)
- **Terrain:** Presents multiple steep climbs (6% to 8% grades), 1 to 3km long. Alternatively, 4 — 6% grades for 6 kilometers or more.

LEVEL 5 (EXPEDITION)

Our Expedition tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages mean limited van support so we recommend these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- **Average daily mileage:** 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 500-2000 m (1600- 6500 ft)
- **Terrain:** Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

REMEMBER

A tour level is the average of the days so we recommend you look at the day level on each day of the itinerary to help you better understand what to expect from your tour.

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CHECKLIST

TO DO ONCE YOU'VE BOOKED!

- ☐ Read through your Reservation Confirmation and After you Book Information (link sent to you by e-mail), it has important information to help you plan your trip!
- ☐ Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country.
- ☐ Complete the Customer Information Form: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/customer-information-form/
- ☐ We recommend you take out travel insurance. Find details at https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/travel-insurance/
- ☐ Choose a bicycle training program: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/bicycle-tour-training/
- ☐ Peruse our country-specific Travel Planning Pages: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/

6 TO 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- ☐ Refer to your Tour Packet/Itinerary to see step-by-step arrival and departure information for your tour, meeting place and time, if a reservation on a complimentary ExperiencePlus! Shuttle (if applicable) is required, along with other important information to help you plan your arrival and departure.
- ☐ Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed.
- ☐ Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights.
- ☐ Begin your chosen training program
- ☐ Final payment is due 90 days (120 days for Bike & Barge/Boat tours) prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail which we send 10 days prior to the due date for detailed instructions.

6 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- ☐ Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Reading and Movie Lists: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/.
- ☐ Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing Lists for suggestions, and see luggage limits at https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/packing/.
- ☐ We'll email you your access code to Digital Daysheets, Hotel Itinerary, Participant Roster, names and contact information of your Tour Leaders, emergency phone numbers, and other important departure information about 2 weeks prior to your tour start date. All this will be provided to you via a feature called Experiences via the RideWithGPS App (tracks available but not necessary for navigation on Classic, Expedition and Bike & Boat tours).

DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack one day of cycling gear in your carry-on just in case. See you soon!

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