

# Great Bicycle Towns



Bicycle Resources collected by Scott Schumacher - Minneapolis, Madison, Portland

## A Summer Inspiration

In the spring of 2006, I bought a new bike and challenged myself to explore my surroundings in Summer as much as possible atop it! I not only visited many places, trails, and bicycle events where I lived (Minneapolis, MN), but also rented a bicycle (instead of a car) in both Madison, Wisconsin and Portland, Oregon. As a part of my journey, I thought I'd share some tips and resources I discovered along my path.

## A Different Kind of Guide

Along with bicycle shops, bike rental places, and other online resources, I wanted to also provide resources for those on a more sustainable path, or on a shoestring budget. You'll sometimes find information on hostels, local farmers markets, worker-owned and cooperative businesses that love bicycle traffic. I may throw in a cool coffee shop here and there too! A lot of the resources listed here are ones that I discovered by mere chance while riding through on my bike. In my opinion, that's what it's all about - discovering great people, places, and events that maybe one wouldn't have encountered were they visiting by car. Bicycling, to me, is about slowing down. Along with not consuming gasoline and polluting in a strange city, you are doing your body a big favor by exercising. Moreover, while you're giving to yourself, why not give back to the community? Taking time to volunteer and connect can be an incredibly positive experience!

## Some great activities anyone can do whenever traveling by bicycle:

- Visit and shop local farmers markets for fresh (and often organic) food
- Volunteer at a community bicycle shop
- Patronize locally owned establishments
- Take Public Transit! Spend some time walking too!
- Go to the local public library
- Purchase a bicycle map and explore
- Participate in a Critical Mass ride on the last Friday of the month, where often hundreds, if not thousands, of bicycles become traffic
- Above all, meet other people, and enjoy yourself!

# Helpful Hints

Before you hit the open road on your bike, here are a few hints and tips that I've found helpful.



## Brush up on Safety

A great book on bicycle safety for commuters or anyone on city streets is John Allen's Street Smarts. Through the use of diagrams illustrating real-world scenarios which bicyclists encounter, John Allen packs a concise and complete bicycle road safety manual into a small, 46-page booklet. Contrary to the widely held belief that bicyclists should stay as far to the right as possible on streets, the manual advocates riding farther away from parked cars, many times toward the middle of a street, for both safety and visibility. In addition to road safety, Allen gives an overview of pre-trip safety checks, as well as advice on dealing with angry motorists and other difficult situations. The manual is also available free online at: [www.bikexpert.com/streetsmarts/](http://www.bikexpert.com/streetsmarts/)



## Use a rear rack and rack bag

A great investment for any bicycle is a rear rack, and a rack mounted bag! I like it that I don't have to wear a backpack or messenger bag around my shoulders and back. Pack your camera, extra snacks and water, along with a mini tire patch kit in the pack as well! When visiting other cities and renting a bike, you can ask if they can attach a rack or rent you a bike that has one already installed. The rear rack bag I chose is secured and removed easily with velcro, so I can attach it and remove it from the rack whenever I stop places. Put extra reflective stickers on the back of your rack bag, or pack a set of clip-on front and rear lights, in case you find yourself riding in the dark.



## Pack a repair kit and practice tire changes

In your rack bag, keep the following items: a spare inner-tube, tire levers (for removing tires), a small wrench (if your wheels don't clip off), and a tire patch kit. You can also bring a mini air compressor that can be mounted on the cross bar of the bike. It can inflate your patched tire enough to get to a gas station to fill your tire more fully. I carry about a dollar in quarters when I remember too, for places that charge for air, or if I need to use a pay phone in an emergency. If you haven't changed a bike tire yet, take a class or go to a workshop, then go home and practice changing your own tires.

# Minneapolis, Minnesota



*Minneapolis Stone Arch Bridge*

## Featured Trail - Midtown Greenway



A great citizen initiative, the Midtown Greenway cuts through Minneapolis' south side at 29th Street. It's a great quiet space filled with community gardens,

public art, and easy on and off ramps. This is the fastest way to travel from the Mississippi River, bordering St. Paul, to Minneapolis' trendy Uptown district. For more information visit [www.midtowngreenway.org](http://www.midtowngreenway.org).

## Take the Hiawatha Light Rail!



MetroTransit's Hiawatha Light Rail line travels from the heart of downtown to the famed Mall of America in Bloomington, MN.

Or, if you like, you can bike down the trail that lies adjacent to the rail line from the Cedar-Riverside station. Take this trail farther south to visit Minnehaha Park (where it connects to the Grand Rounds Trail), then historic Fort Snelling! Visit [www.metrotransit.org](http://www.metrotransit.org) for maps and information on how to ride!

## **Great Trails!**

### **Midtown Greenway**

[www.midtowngreenway.org](http://www.midtowngreenway.org)

### **Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway**

[www.minneapolisparcs.org/grandrounds/home.htm](http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/grandrounds/home.htm)

### **Cedar Lake & Kenilworth Trails**

[www.skateminnesota.org/trails/cedar.html](http://www.skateminnesota.org/trails/cedar.html)

### **Lake Calhoun & Lake Harriet**

[www.minneapolisparcs.org/grandrounds/dist\\_cl.htm](http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/grandrounds/dist_cl.htm)  
*Rent a Canoe! Details on the Minneapolis Parks web site!*

### **Minnesota Trails Information**

[www.mnbiketrails.com](http://www.mnbiketrails.com)  
[www.skateminnesota.org](http://www.skateminnesota.org)

## **Bike Shops**

### **The Hub Bike Co-op**

[thehubbikecoop.org](http://thehubbikecoop.org)  
*Two Locations in Minneapolis:*  
*West Bank - 301 Cedar Ave S*  
*(612) 238-3593*  
*South - 3024 Minnehaha Ave S*  
*(612) 729-0437*

### **Freewheel Bike**

[freewheelbike.com](http://freewheelbike.com)  
*1812 S. 6th St*  
*Minneapolis, MN*  
*(612) 339-2219*

### **Sibley Bike Depot**

[www.bikeped.org/Depot.html](http://www.bikeped.org/Depot.html)  
*509 Sibley St*  
*St. Paul, MN*  
*(651) 222-2080*

### **Grease Pit Bikeshop**

[home.mn.rr.com/collectivecycle/](http://home.mn.rr.com/collectivecycle/)  
*504 Cedar Ave*  
*Minneapolis, MN*

### **One on One Bicycle Studio**

[oneononebike.com](http://oneononebike.com)  
*117 Washington Ave N*  
*Minneapolis, MN*  
*(612) 371-9565*

## **Organizations**

### **Midtown Greenway Coalition**

[www.midtowngreenway.org](http://www.midtowngreenway.org)  
*(612) 879-0103*

### **Minnesota Bicycle & Pedestrian Alliance**

[www.bikeped.org](http://www.bikeped.org)  
*(612) 222-2080*

### **Transit for Livable Communities**

[www.tlcminnesota.org](http://www.tlcminnesota.org)  
*(651) 767-0298*

### **Share the road Minnesota**

[www.sharetheroadmn.org](http://www.sharetheroadmn.org)

### **Major Taylor Cycling Club**

[www.geocities.com/major\\_taylor\\_mn/](http://www.geocities.com/major_taylor_mn/)  
*(651) 822-8070*

### **Twin Cities Bicycle Club**

[www.mtn.org/tcbc/](http://www.mtn.org/tcbc/)

### **Minnesota Cyclists**

[www.minnesotacyclist.com](http://www.minnesotacyclist.com)

### **Minneapolis Bicycle Messenger Association**

[www.mbma.net](http://www.mbma.net)

### **Bicyclelane email List**

[groups.yahoo.com/group/bicyclelane/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bicyclelane/)

### **Yellow Bike Coalition**

*Borrow a Bike!!*  
[www.yellowbikes.org](http://www.yellowbikes.org)  
*(651) 222-2080*

### **MetroTransit**

[www.metrotransit.org](http://www.metrotransit.org)  
*(612) 373-3333*

## **Great Places to go!**

### **Seward Cafe**

*2129 E Franklin Ave*  
*Minneapolis, MN*  
*(612) 332-1011*

### **Hard Times Cafe**

*1821 Riverside Ave.*  
*Minneapolis, MN*  
*(612) 341-9261*

### **Minneapolis Farmers Market**

[www.mplsfarmersmarket.com](http://www.mplsfarmersmarket.com)  
*312 East Lyndale Ave N*  
*Minneapolis, MN*

### **Midtown Global Market**

[www.midtonglobalmarket.org](http://www.midtonglobalmarket.org)  
*Park your bike on the Midtown Greenway!*  
*Lake Street & Chicago Ave*  
*Minneapolis, MN*

### **Minneapolis Central Library**

[www.mpls.lib.mn.us](http://www.mpls.lib.mn.us)  
*300 Nicollet Mall*  
*Minneapolis, MN*  
*(612) 630-6000*

# Madison, Wisconsin



## Capitol City Bike Trail



Winding its way around Lake Monona, the Capitol City Trail begins just northeast of downtown Madison at the start of historic and eclectic Williamson Street. You'll pass near the botanical gardens at Olbrich Park (look for the big greenhouse dome!), then navigate rolling hills in beautiful residential areas. Near the end of this 17-mile circle path, you'll be greeted by spectacular scenes of Lake Monona and Frank Lloyd Wright's Monona Terrace. The view is breathtaking!

## Tai Chi on Monona Terrace



If you find yourself in Madison on a Tuesday, check out the Monona Terrace convention center, and enjoy a free Tai Chi class on the rooftop from noon to 12:45pm. They often take a break in the hot month of August, but in early summer and the beginnings of fall, it's a treat to be able to unwind before getting back on your bike to go exploring. For more information contact the Tai Chi Center of Madison at (608) 280-9730, or visit their website: [www.taichihealth.com/monona.html](http://www.taichihealth.com/monona.html)

## Great Trails!

### Capital City Trail

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/ORG/land/parks/specific/capcity/](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/ORG/land/parks/specific/capcity/)

### Southwest Bike and Pedestrian Path

*18 miles linking the University of Wisconsin-Madison with the south and west portions of the city.*

### The “Missing Link” Trail

*Scheduled for completion in August 2006, this trail will join the Capital City Trail with the SW Path!*

[www.lic.wisc.edu/users/jsc/bike/bike12a.htm](http://www.lic.wisc.edu/users/jsc/bike/bike12a.htm)

### Lake Mendota/University Path

*Starting at the north end of Park Street, this soft gravel trail is very wooded and scenic, linking UW-Madison with Madison’s west side.*

## What Map to Get?

*I strongly recommend getting the Madison Bicycling and Resource Guide & Road Map, created by the Madison Department of Transportation. Pick it up at any bike shop, or download it free at: [www.cityofmadison.com/transp/bicycle.html](http://www.cityofmadison.com/transp/bicycle.html)*

## Bike Shops

### Machinery Row Bicycles

[www.machineryrowbicycles.com](http://www.machineryrowbicycles.com)  
601 Williamson St  
Madison, WI  
(608) 442-5974

### Williamson Bicycle Works

[www.willybikes.com](http://www.willybikes.com)  
3729 E Washington  
Madison, WI  
(608) 244-2453

### Revolution Cycles

[www.revolutioncycles.net](http://www.revolutioncycles.net)  
2330 Atwood Ave  
Madison, WI  
(608) 244-0009

## Organizations

### We Are All Mechanics

[www.weareallmechanics.org](http://www.weareallmechanics.org)  
Bicycle Repair courses for women  
(608) 244-0009

### Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin

[www.bfw.org](http://www.bfw.org)  
(608) 251-4456

### Scram! Courriers

[www.scramcourriers.com](http://www.scramcourriers.com)  
Madison’s bicycle messengers  
(608) 441-7360

### City of Madison Bicycle Resources

Arthur Ross, Pedestrian and Bicycle Coordinator - (608) 266-6625  
[www.cityofmadison.com/transp/bicycle.html](http://www.cityofmadison.com/transp/bicycle.html)

### Bicycle Transportation Alliance of Dane County

[danenet.wicup.org/bcp/](http://danenet.wicup.org/bcp/)

### Red Bikes and Yellow Bikes

Free bikes for check out!  
(608) 251-1663

### Wheels for Winners

[www.wheelsforwinners.org](http://www.wheelsforwinners.org)  
Donate a bike or volunteer so kids can earn a **free** bike!  
(608) 249-2418

### Madison Metro Transit

[www.ci.madison.wi.us/metro/](http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/metro/)  
(608) 266-4466

## Things to do! Places to go!

### Dane County Farmers Market

[www.madfarmmkt.org](http://www.madfarmmkt.org)  
One of the largest Farmers Markets in the US. Saturday Mornings around the Capitol Square.  
(608) 455-1999

### Madison Hostel

[www.madisonhostel.org](http://www.madisonhostel.org)  
Stay downtown for an affordable price!  
141 S. Butler St.  
Madison, WI  
(608) 441-0144

### Motherfools Coffeehouse

[www.motherfools.com](http://www.motherfools.com)  
By far my favorite coffee shop anywhere! Great local music and art!  
1101 Williamson St  
Madison, WI  
(608) 259-1301

### Madison Public Library

[www.madisonpubliclibrary.org](http://www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)  
Caution: Don’t bring large backpacks here, they have restrictions due to “vagrancy problems”.  
201 W. Mifflin St  
Madison, WI  
(608) 266-6300

# Portland, Oregon



## Trails on Water!



This “city of bridges” does well in featuring its most beautiful resource - the Willamette River. Take the trails on both sides of the river near Waterfront Park.

Ride on a dedicated bike and pedestrian path on the bottom of an iron lift-bridge, then take a path that appears to float on the water. Continue south past a daily amusement park and on to the Springwater Corridor Trail.

## Portland’s “Fareless Square”



Public transit has never been better! Much of the downtown of Portland is encircled by a freeway ring, and inside that ring **transit is FREE!** In Fareless Square,

you can take a bus, the Max Light Rail, or the Portland Streetcar almost everywhere. Take the Max Blue Line to Gresham for spectacular views of Mount Hood. For more information on transit, visit [www.trimet.org](http://www.trimet.org)

## Great Trails!

### Springwater Corridor Trail

[www.40mileloop.org/  
trail\\_springwatercorridor.htm](http://www.40mileloop.org/trail_springwatercorridor.htm)

*A smooth and easy grade path beginning across the Willamette from downtown, you will go through the Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge. After this, the trail turns eastward to end in Gresham, where Mount Hood shines in the distance.*

### Leif Erikson Trail

*Great for mountain biking! Lots of curves and hills in a forested area.*

### Columbia River Highway

*If you do have access to a car or a friend with a car, North and east of Portland, it features stone bridges, waterfalls, and tunnels.*

## Bike Shops

### Community Cycling Center

[www.communitycyclingcenter.org](http://www.communitycyclingcenter.org)  
*Tuesday evenings are drop-in volunteer nights!*  
1700 NE Alberta  
Portland, OR  
(503) 546-8864

### Waterfront Bicycle Rentals

[www.waterfrontbikes.com](http://www.waterfrontbikes.com)  
*Say hello to Karen (the co-owner) for me!*  
315 SW Montgomery  
Portland, OR  
(503) 227-1719

### Northwest Bicycles

916 NW 21st Ave  
Portland, OR  
(503) 248-9142

### Bicycle Repair Collective

[www.bicyclerepaircol.net](http://www.bicyclerepaircol.net)  
4838 SE Belmont  
Portland, OR  
(503) 233-0564

### North Portland Bicycle Works

[www.npdxbikeworks.org](http://www.npdxbikeworks.org)  
3951 N. Mississippi  
Portland, OR  
(503) 287-1098

## Organizations and Resources

### Gracie's Bicycle Calendar

[calendar.gracies.org](http://calendar.gracies.org)

### KBOO Bike Show

Podcast  
[bikeshow.portlandtransport.com](http://bikeshow.portlandtransport.com)  
*Wednesdays, 9:00am - 90.7fm*

### SHIFT

[www.shift2bikes.org](http://www.shift2bikes.org)  
(503) 542-6900

### Portland Office of Transportation

[www.portlandonline.com/  
transportation](http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation)  
(503) 823-5185

### Bicycle Transportation Alliance

[www.bta4bikes.org](http://www.bta4bikes.org)  
(503) 226-0676

### Portland TriMet

[www.trimet.org](http://www.trimet.org)  
(503) 238-RIDE

## Things to do! Places to go!

### NW Portland International Hostel

[www.nwportlandhostel.com](http://www.nwportlandhostel.com)  
425 NW 18th Ave  
Portland, OR  
(888) 777-0067

### Hawthorne Hostel

[www.portlandhostel.org](http://www.portlandhostel.org)  
*Discounts if you bike!*  
3031 SE Hawthorne Blvd  
Portland, OR  
(866) 477-3031

### Food for Thought Cafe

[www.fftcafe.org](http://www.fftcafe.org)  
*A student-run organic and fair trade cafe on the Portland State University Campus*  
(503) 725-4736

### Microcosm Publishing

[www.microcosmpublishing.com](http://www.microcosmpublishing.com)  
*Zines and off-the-beaten-path books and publications*  
311 N. Ivy St  
Portland, OR  
(503) 249-3826

### Portland Farmers Market

[www.portlandfarmersmarket.org](http://www.portlandfarmersmarket.org)  
(503) 241-0032

### Portland Public Library

801 SW 10th Ave  
Portland, OR  
(503) 988-5123