

Tour de Pines FAQs

Are you thinking about riding the Tour de Pines but have some questions? Here are some answers to some commonly asked questions about the Tour. If you still have questions, contact Becky (becky@pinelandsalliance.org) and she can put you in touch with a committee member.

- 1. So what type of ride is this?** This is a tour on asphalt roads. The main group maintains a leisurely pace of 11-13 mph. This pace allows the participant to simultaneously safely dodge a pothole and outpace the Jersey Devil, all the while enjoying the beauty and splendor of the Pinelands.
- 2. But I ride like the devil. Can I still partake?** Yes, you are welcome to partake and set your own blistering pace. We, however, encourage you to slow it down a bit and use this as an opportunity to have a nice multi-day recovery ride. Or perhaps it would be a good time to dust off the old fixie. See 18 below.
- 3. Is it a group ride?** It can be. Each day will have a group leader who will lead the main group at the Tour pace of 11-13 mph. You are welcome to join the main group. If you find the pace too slow, you can break off, but please let the ride leader know you will be leaving the group. Conversely, if you start out on your own but decide that you want to be part of the group, just let the ride leader know you will be joining the group. There will also be a ride sweep for each day's ride.
- 4. Are the turns marked?** The turns are not marked.
- 5. With the turns not marked, will I get lost?** Not if you follow the cue sheets and definitely not if you join the main group. The cue sheets reflect the road names as you will see on the actual road signs not necessarily what is on Google Maps.
- 6. What is a cue sheet?** The cue sheet tells you where to turn, the distances between turns, the lunch stop location, the bathroom locations, and help contact information.

Some of the roads we will be riding on are very popular for cycling, so PLEASE do not blindly follow the rider in front of you, as that rider may not be on the Tour.

- 7. But I cannot read and pedal at the same time. What do I do?** You have options: ride with the main group; convince a friend, who can read and pedal at the same time, to accompany you; or, get one of those new-fangled GPS gadgets.
- 8. Are the cue sheets available as GPX files?** Yes, once you register for the ride you will be e-mailed the cue sheets for each route and GPX files to use on your new-fangled GPS gadget. If you use a gadget, please be mindful of the speaker volume as some people come on the Tour to get away from technology. Also, depending on the gadget, a signal

may not be available in the Pinelands. If you choose to use a gadget, please also have a paper copy of the day's cue sheet with you.

- 9. I like to ride my bike, and it sounds like fun, but I have never ridden 50 miles at one time. So I am not sure if I can do it.** If you can complete a 30-mile ride and are an active person, you should be able to complete any one of the five rides. Due to the relatively flat topography, it will be the easiest 50 miles you will ever ride! You have the option of joining the main group with an average pace of 11-13 mph. There is plenty of support available in the main group, and we have never left anyone behind! Including lunch, the main group stops three times.

Still not convinced you can ride 50 miles in one day? No problem! There are shorter route options on some of the days.

- 10. What do I do about supplies (food and hydration)?** Carry enough supplies to satisfy your basic needs. Supply stops are marked on the cue sheets. In addition, we will pass several eateries and Wawas, but there may not be one present when you need it. Of course, you have the option of carrying all of your supplies.

- 11. So do you just ride straight through, start to finish, on any of the days?** For the main group, no, unless there is a Jersey Devil sighting. The main group will make a lunch stop and two additional stops each day. Of course, you have the option of riding straight through if you want or need to get back by a certain time.

- 12. Do people really ride all 5 days?** Most riders ride one or two days, but several are lucky enough to take 5 days away from their normal routine to experience the magic of a 5-day scenic bicycle tour in the Pinelands National Reserve. You can add more adventure by booking lodging, by either camping or staying in hotels/motels.

- 13. I like to ride, but I am concerned about traffic.** Whenever possible the routes will be on low traffic roads or roads with a bike lane. If you are not comfortable with riding with traffic, you should ride with the main group. Besides the group being more visible, when appropriate the leader and other group members will bark out safety warnings. Taking a safe riding course can help. Check out The League of American Bicyclists at www.bikeleague.org or a local bike club.

- 14. What if it rains?** With a few exceptions, the Tour is a rain or shine event. We cancel in the event of a hurricane or a lightning storm. Please dress for the weather. You can always ride a different day of the Tour if the weather prevents you from riding on your preferred day.

- 15. My friend and I are planning to ride this year's Tour de Pines. We would like to know that we are preparing properly. We want to enjoy it and not be sore and beat up at the end! Is this possible, and how far should we be riding to get ready?** Start with getting comfortable on your bike for 10-15 miles and work your way up to a minimum of

30 miles at an 11-13 mph pace. Initially, you only need to ride long enough for all the things that could make you uncomfortable to happen, and this generally occurs within the first 10 miles or so and tends to repeat itself over and over again with more distance. Minor setup adjustments generally fix whatever discomfort you may experience during your short rides. When you are able to cruise through your 30-mile rides at 11-13 mph feeling just fine, you are ready to have some good days out on tour! If you are unsure what adjustments to your setup you need, your bike shop can help. Just tell 'em where it hurts. They will need both you and your bike, as you want to test the new adjustments.

16. Our kids are all good riders, they are ages 9-11, and we ride with them often. We were wondering how they would do on something like this. The Tour for young children on their own bikes, due to the length of the routes. The roads are not closed to traffic. Tag-alongs are not allowed. We look forward to your whole family's participation within a couple of years.

17. Am I going to have to go out and get a new bike just to do this? Chances are you don't need a new bike, just a bike that fits you; is in excellent working condition; and allows you to keep an 11-13 mph pace. Traditional road bikes, touring bikes, hybrid bikes, vintage bikes, mountain bikes, trikes, recumbent bikes, tandems and single speeds have all been on the Tour.

To ensure that the bike you will use on the Tour fits you and is in excellent working condition, take the bike out on a 40-mile ride at least a couple of weeks before the Tour (enough time to get another bike, if needed). This is the only way to know if the bike you have will work as expected.

If you are riding a mountain bike, you should change out the knobby tires for slicks.

18. I do fast shop rides, and a few of us race a little. We are trying to get faster. It sounds fun, but it doesn't fit what I am trying to do. Going slower than I can for that long could end up making me slower, right? You are sitting on the golden goose! Quite the contrary, this ride is the type that every competitive amateur shop rider and triathlete say they need to do. Long recovery rides are essential for success in competition. Recovery is not rest, it allows shredded muscles and tissues the chance to rejuvenate within the essential activity. Trainers of winning athletes don't let recovery base-building zone training off the hook. The Tour de Pines is ideal for a competitive athlete as a complete recovery zone base-building ride. Start reminding yourself to stay in the small chain ring only. You will have charge in your muscles after successive days of training in this zone, and many an athlete has been able to kick it up a notch. In my experience, most non-professional competitive athletes will improve performance immediately after successive days of recovery-zone-base-building. Riding at a talking pace every so often also makes you faster when the day comes to put the hammer down!

19. I used to ride a lot and it only took me two or three weeks to be ready for a big ride. I think I should still be okay with that kind of lead-time (even though I have been off the bike a while). Is this still about right (I ride nearly every day during those three weeks), or should I add an extra week because of time off the bike? Do not go by what you remember - get back on your bike, get it running right, and get out for an hour or two when you can! You will be less likely to have problems and you will have a good ride.

20. I have done some big rides, and they have all had a van that cruises along to help you if you need it. I feel the vans are good to have out there to make sure everyone gets home, and I would like to know why you don't offer support. Unsupported is not accurate, and we understand the type of rides you are accustomed to. We ride with a very small footprint. All of our rides are loops, and there is never any shortage of tech support available in the group. There is always a ride leader and someone bringing up the rear (the sweep), and we have integrated smartphones into our communication protocol. No one has been left behind as a snack for the Jersey Devil. The Tour de Pines highlights the million acres of still unspoiled beauty and serenity that we want to keep enjoying. We do cross more populated areas, but there are many more miles of quiet open spaces with few cars and vast beauty.

Important information for all riders:

- Please arrive by 8:30 am. All rides start promptly. We will be on our bikes and riding at 9:00 a.m.
- Helmets are required.
- No earphones or cell phones while riding.
- Check-in required at the start of each ride day.
- The Tour de Pines is for registered cyclists only.
- Any rider under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- Make sure your bike is tuned up for the ride. There is no SAG support on these rides.
- Bring at least one spare tube and a tube patch kit.
- The Tour is non-competitive, but please be sure you can ride the distance before you come.
- There is a ride leader and a ride sweep for each day's ride.
- Have fun!