



Cycling around North Dorset

An introduction to the pack.



This leaflet gives you an overview of all the seven routes so that you can choose where you want to go whilst still at home, and then just take your chosen route card with you. It also highlights the important landscapes you will go through and some other routes you will cross on your way. So switch off the TV, leave the car at home and go cycling around North Dorset.



Printed on recycled paper

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As you have picked up this pack, you must be interested in investigating the delights of North Dorset on your bike. Whether you're a complete beginner or a hardened mountain biker, this pack will have something for you. There are seven routes in total that take you around some of North Dorset's hidden gems.



The seven routes in this pack represent just a small portion of the network of trails and rights of way there is to discover in North Dorset. There are several trails that cross the district including the Wessex Ridgeway and the North Dorset Cycleway.

Wessex Ridgeway

The Wessex Ridgeway project is a community-based, sustainable countryside recreation project co-ordinated by the Dorset Countryside Ranger Service. This exciting project focuses on the Wessex Ridgeway Trail, from Lyme Regis to Ashmore.

This 63 mile route is being developed into a high quality, multi-use recreational trail suitable for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and, where feasible, for people with disabilities. Route 6 takes you along the Wessex Ridgeway and Routes 2 and 5 come close to the Ridgeway so you could take a detour.

North Dorset Cycleway

The North Dorset cycleway is 73 miles long and takes you on quiet country lanes in an anti-clockwise direction. The route also passes through part of Hardy's favourite and somewhat flatter Blackmore Vale, through which the River Stour meanders.

Strong, experienced cyclists complete the route in a day, but for those who wish to enjoy the route in full, we suggest you spend longer over the trip.

North Dorset is an often overlooked area of Dorset but has some stunning landscape include sections of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the River Stour.



River Stour

From its source at Stourhead, the Stour meanders through North Dorset shaping the landscape. The ever-changing river bed supports a wide variety of wildlife along its banks. Several of the routes cross the Stour and will give you a chance to admire the wildlife that makes its home there. If you're patient, you might be lucky enough to see Water Vole or a flash of blue as a Kingfisher zooms past.



The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB dips into North Dorset. It is one of the largest AONBs in the country and is dominated by Chalk Upland. Routes 2 and 7 will take you through some of this AONB landscape.

The Dorset AONB covers 40% of the county and includes some of Dorset's most dramatic and varied scenery. The tranquil countryside is full of rural charm and still evokes the settings of Thomas Hardy's novels. Routes 5 and 6 will take you through this special landscape.



Overview of North Dorset Cycle Routes

Please see the individual route guides enclosed with this folder.



<p>01</p> <p>Gillingham Explore Gillingham's surrounding countryside on this challenging ride. The ride takes you through some pretty villages in the north of the district.</p> <p>Statistics: Grade 3 Time 2-3 hours Distance 16mls/26km Start Point Peacemarsh Surgery Grid Ref ST 804 275 OS Map Explorer 129 Yeovil & Sherborne</p>	<p>02</p> <p>Sixpenny Handley This is the pack's shortest ride through the pretty villages of Farnham and Sixpenny Handley with the option of a visit to Larmer Tree Gardens.</p> <p>Statistics: Grade 1-2 Time 2 hours Distance 10mls/16km Start Point Sixpenny Handley Village Hall Grid Ref ST 993 174 OS Map Explorer 118 Shaftesbury & Cranborne Chase</p>	<p>03</p> <p>Marnhull This route takes you through Marnhull and Stalbridge crossing the River Stour as you go round. Stop and admire the former Kings Mill now a private residence.</p> <p>Statistics: Grade 2 Time 2-3 hours Distance 18mls/30km Start Point Marnhull Village Hall Grid Ref ST 781 191 OS Map Explorer 129 Yeovil & Sherborne</p>	<p>04</p> <p>Sturminster Newton This route starts in the old market town of Sturminster Newton and takes you through two of North Dorset's picturesque villages, Hinton St. Mary and Manston.</p> <p>Statistics: Grade 1-2 Time 2 hours Distance 13mls/21km Start Point Main town car park Grid Ref ST 786 143 OS Map Explorer 129 Yeovil & Sherborne</p>	<p>05</p> <p>Sturminster Newton & Ibberton As one of the pack's longer routes, this ride will take you through the quiet villages of Ibberton and Okeford Fitzpaine.</p> <p>Statistics: Grade 2 Time 2-3 hours Distance 18mls/30km Start Point Sturminster Newton Grid Ref ST 786 143 OS Map Explorer 129 Yeovil & Sherborne OS Map Explorer 117 Cerne Abbas & Bere Regis</p>	<p>06</p> <p>Bonsley Common Experience a scenic off road cycle ride around Blandford Forest and Turnworth with an opportunity to see a wealth of wildlife all-year-round.</p> <p>Statistics: Grade 3 Time 2-3 hours Distance 12mls/20km Start Point Ibberton Hill Picnic Site Grid Ref ST 792 073 OS Map Explorer 117 Cerne Abbas & Bere Regis</p>	<p>07</p> <p>Blandford An easy ride from Blandford through the Kingston Lacy estate and some of Dorset's most unspoilt villages.</p> <p>Statistics: Grade 1 Time 2 hours Distance 16mls/26km Start Point Langton Long junction with bypass Grid Ref ST 893 062 OS Map Explorer 118 Shaftesbury & Cranborne Chase OS Map Explorer 117 Cerne Abbas & Bere Regis</p>
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