

City to the Sea loop – 70 miles

This route begins and ends in Morro Bay and provides an opportunity to visit nearby cities and to mix and match various segments to tailor a route that suits you. It is rated moderate to strenuous depending on your willingness to ride up and over See/Prefumo Canyon.

A great way to stay cool during the summer is to ride your bike along the coast. The air is fresh and summer is a good time for leisurely, meandering rides to explore new places. Here is a route to get you started. Tailor side trips to suit your schedule and your curiosity.

Morro Bay to San Luis Obispo: 17 miles. Take Harbor to Morro Bay Blvd to Quintana Road at the top of the hill. Ride the new bike lane on Quintana to South Bay, turn right and ride 2 miles to Turri Road. Take Turri back to its intersection with LOVR, turn left and ride to San Luis Obispo. Left on Higuera to Broad Street, Hwy 227.

San Luis Obispo to Pismo Beach: 14 miles of transition from busy city streets to busy county roads and back to busy city streets.

Ride east on Broad Street (Highway 227) to Price Canyon, then south into Pismo Beach.

The good: Smooth pavement, wide shoulders.

The bad: A popular route for motorists.

Pismo to Port San Luis: 9 leisurely miles along the seashore through summer-fun towns.

Right on Price Street and follow Highway 1 as it parallels the freeway through Shell Beach to Avila Beach Drive. Left to Harford Pier at Port San Luis. Refresh yourself at Fat Cat's.

The good: Bike lanes on Highway 1.

The bad: The bike lanes are bumpy and sometimes obstructed by parked cars.

Side trip: If you want to join the seaside action in Pismo Beach, continue south on Price Canyon Road and take Pomeroy Avenue to the pier. Great restaurants and public rest rooms on the beach.

Side trip: If you want to have some fun, turn left on El Portal at the north end of Shell Beach, follow it to the end and ride the dirt pathway that connects to Cave Landing Road above Pirates Cove (don't look down—some of those folks on the beach forgot their bathing suits.) Cave Landing Road continues on to join Avila Beach Drive.

Side trip: After you pass Cave Landing Road, take a left on San Luis Street and ride through Avila Beach. Check out the waterfront and the winery and the Central Coast Aquarium.

Port San Luis to Laguna Lake via See Canyon: 13 miles through the Irish Hills via See and Prefumo Canyons to Los Osos Valley Road.

This is a little tricky. The road is gorgeous but you're going to heat up as you go inland. Then you're going to climb a steep hill for a long time. Then the road turns to dirt. You climb some more through oak woodlands and cultivated pastures and finally top out with the county's best view, looking north over Morro

Bay and the Rock all the way to Piedras Blancas and the lighthouse.

The good: Riding your bicycle through the mountains – a splendid sense of isolation and self-sufficiency as you traverse the only public road that penetrates the Irish Hills.

The bad: Four miles of dirt and gravel require close attention, especially if you're on a skinny-tired road bike.

Short cut ridearound: If you don't want the strenuous extra miles, return on Avila Beach Drive to the golf course entrance to the Bob Jones Bike Trail. Turn left and follow the bike trail to Ontario Road. Ride north, intersect with South Higuera and continue to Los Osos Valley Road.

Laguna Lake to Los Osos: 8 miles of open road on the Red Davis Bikeway to the charming communities of Los Osos, Baywood Park and Cuesta-by-the-Sea.

The good: Wide, smooth shoulder.

The bad: If the wind is blowing, it's going to be in your face.

Back Bay: Have lunch at Sea Pines Golf Course. Take a break at Sweet Springs Preserve. Explore the streets that wind around the shoreline. Yes, some of them are unpaved – that's what makes them charming.

Side trip: Ride out to Montaña de Oro State Park. You climb a little hill to the county's second best view, at the park entrance. Follow the road through the park to the locked gate at Point Buchon. Return via the same road. Stop at the Spooner Ranch house, Park headquarters, and see the exhibits. Check out the beach.

Los Osos to Morro Bay: 7 miles on South Bay Boulevard. After you cross Twin Bridges (yes, there is only one bridge now. Some names die hard.), turn left on State Park Road and ride through Morro Bay State Park along the shoreline and into town on Main Street. Turn left on Marina to the Embarcadero. Enjoy the seaside shops and restaurants. Ride out to the rock and watch the tourists feed seagulls and squirrels.