**Valley Forge Bike Tour**

Everyday thousands of cyclists ride past the heart of Valley Forge National Park on the Schuylkill River Trail. Yet only a handful make the journey over the impressive and relatively new Sullivan’s Bridge at Betzwood Crossing to ride through what was the center of George Washington’s Continental Army 1777-78 Winter Encampment. Those that do are transported to the 18th Century and bucolic landscapes that bely the hardship and suffering of that Winter nearly 250 years ago.

This ride can be approached two ways. This route is equally suited for those that wish to use it for fitness, and for those who are curious about the history of Valley Forge. There is also an option to do an extra 2 mile out and back via the Plumb Martin Trail to Washington’s Headquarters. If riding for fitness, give oneself 30 minutes to an hour to complete the tour depending your tempo and route choice. A good portion of the route was purposely placed on low-traffic park roads. This not only helps avoid the heavy pedestrian traffic found on the trails in the middle of the park but allows cyclists to ride up to the posted 25mph speed limit (up from the slower 15mph trail limit). Being a relatively short ride, we suggest combining this with a ride from King of Prussia or the Schuylkill River Trail and maybe even with the Bridgeport tour we released a few weeks ago. The options are only limited by your imagination and endurance.

For those curious about the history of the Valley Forge Winter Encampment, plan on allotting one to two hours so you can stop and learn about the many historic features along the way. Fortunately, all the park’s most important historic sites found on the longer automobile Encampment Tour can be accessed by this bicycle-safe route if you take Washington’s Headquarters option (this is the only site you miss if you don’t take this option). To help the bicycling amateur historian, the phone audio tour number is included at the beginning of each route narrative with the corresponding extension included at each Encampment Tour stop.

Whichever reason for your tour, the route starts from the Visitor Center main parking lot. This is a large lot that rarely ever fills, but since you have the advantage of being on bike, think about parking away from the crowds. This is a nice courtesy, even when not in a pandemic. One can also take the SEPTA 125 bus to the Visitor Center (all SEPTA buses have front bike racks for two bikes). If that doesn’t work for you, think about taking either SEPTA rail, high-speed line, or one of the numerous bus lines to the Norristown Transit Center, and then riding a flat 4.5 miles on the Schuylkill River Trail to the Sullivan’s Bridge and Trail that takes you right to the start of the incorporated into a bigger ride like one coming from Schuylkill River Trail.

Again, this is Pennsylvania so hills CANNOT be avoided. This route is recommended for relatively fit adult and teenage cyclists not afraid of climbing hills or dealing with light volumes of motor traffic. And, what goes up, must come down, so steep downhills are also to be expected. As such, those trying the route must also have a bike with properly functioning brakes, and know how to handle a bike on steep slopes under hard braking. As mentioned earlier, due to heavy pedestrian trail volumes, and light motorized traffic volumes on most park roads, it is highly recommended that cyclists use park roads until they reach the parking lot for the General von Steuben Statue. Whether one decides to ride down to visit Washington’s Headquarters, it’s highly recommended at this point that cyclists use the Plumb Martin Trail along Valley Forge Rd / PA SR 23. The trail here has much less pedestrian traffic than in other areas and it keeps cyclists off of PA SR 23 which has very high traffic volumes and no shoulders.

**Short Option (No Washington HQ)**

Ride with GPS Link: https://ridewithgps.com/routes/33373564 **Miles 5.6
Elevation Gain          412 ft
Max Grade Up          8.5%
Max Grade Down      -8.0%
Traffic Skill Level        Fit adult cyclists comfortable with steep hills and very modest traffic volumes.**

Cell Phone Tour Number: (484) 369-1018
Dial this number then enter the extension for the tour stop.

**Text Color Key**

* **Places of Interest**
* SEPTA Stop
* Major Road Crossings / Areas of Caution

Mile 0.0 - START – East side of Valley Forge NP main parking area

0.1 - **Valley Forge NP Visitor Center** – Encampment Tour Stop 1, Ext #1 (Closed for renovations till 2021)

 SEPTA Stop – Bus Route 125

0.6 - **Muhlenberg Brigade** – Encampment Tour Stop 2, Ext #2

1.3 - **National Memorial Arch** – Encampment Tour Stop 3, Ext #3

1.5 - Gulph Road Crossing

2.3 - **Anthony Wayne Statue** – Encampment Tour Stop 4, Ext #4

2.8 - Right turn onto Inner Line Drive Connector

2.9 - Right turn onto North Inner Line Drive
**Redoubt 3** – Encampment Tour Stop 6, Ext #6
(200 feet to the left. Walk bikes to parking lot)

3.0 - **Artillery Park** – Encampment Tour Stop 7, Ext #7

3.3 - Gulph Road Crossing

3.9 - Option to Washington’s Headquarters (jump to end of page 4)

3.9 - **Von Steuben Statue** – Encampment Tour Stop 8, Ext #8

3.9 - Continue east on Plumb Martin Trial (15 MPH Speed Limit)
DO NOT ride on Valley Forge Road / SR 23. High traffic volumes and speeds.

4.4 - **Washington Memorial Chapel** – Encampment Tour Stop 9, Ext #9

5.0 - Beginning of steep decent to County Line Road (mind your speed).

5.3 - County Line Road Crossing

5.4 - Right turn onto Visitor Center Trail Connector.

Mile 5.6 - FINISH – Valley Forge NP main parking area)

**Washington HQ option**

Ride with GPS Link: https://ridewithgps.com/routes/33835009

**Miles 7.4
Elevation Gain          477 ft
Max Grade Up          8.5%
Max Grade Down      -8.5%
Traffic Skill Level        Fit adult cyclists comfortable with steep hills and very modest traffic volumes.**

Cell Phone Tour Number: (484) 369-1018
Dial this number then enter the extension for the tour stop.

 **Text Color Key**

* **Places of Interest**
* SEPTA Stop
* Major Road Crossings / Areas of Caution

Mile 0.0 - START – East side of Valley Forge NP main parking area

0.1 - **Valley Forge NP Visitor Center** – Encampment Tour Stop 1, Ext #1 (Closed for renovations till 2021)

 SEPTA Stop – Bus Route 125

0.6 - **Muhlenberg Brigade** – Encampment Tour Stop 2, Ext #2

1.3 - **National Memorial Arch** – Encampment Tour Stop 3, Ext #3

1.5 - Gulph Road Crossing

2.3 - **Anthony Wayne Statue** – Encampment Tour Stop 4, Ext #4

2.8 - Right turn onto Inner Line Drive Connector

2.9 - Right turn onto North Inner Line Drive
**Redoubt 3** – Encampment Tour Stop 6, Ext #6
(200 feet to the left. Walk bikes to parking lot)

3.0 - **Artillery Park** – Encampment Tour Stop 7, Ext #7

3.3 - Gulph Road Crossing

3.9 - Valley Forge Road / SR 23 Crossing. CAUTION! High traffic volumes and speeds.

3.9 - Continue west on Plumb Martin Trial (15 MPH Speed Limit)
DO NOT ride on Valley Forge Road / SR 23. High traffic volumes and speeds.

4.3 - Beginning of steep decent to Washington’s HQ (mind your speed).

4.9 - **Washington’s Head Quarters** – Encampment Tour Stop 5 (No bikes past bike rack)
Turn around and continue back the way you came to Von Steuben Statue.

5.7 - Valley Forge Road / SR 23 Crossing. CAUTION! High traffic volumes and speeds.

5.7 - Continue east on Plumb Martin Trial (15 MPH Speed Limit)
DO NOT ride on Valley Forge Road / SR 23. High traffic volumes and speeds.

5.8 - **Von Steuben Statue** – Encampment Tour Stop 8, Ext #8

5.8 - Continue east on Plumb Martin Trial (15 MPH Speed Limit)
DO NOT ride on Valley Forge Road / SR 23. High traffic volumes and speeds.

6.3 - **Washington Memorial Chapel** – Encampment Tour Stop 9, Ext #9

6.9 - Beginning of steep decent to County Line Road (mind your speed).

7.1 - County Line Road Crossing

7.3 - Right turn onto Visitor Center Trail Connector.

Mile 7.4 - FINISH – Valley Forge NP main parking area)