

Ride 10 – Kennebec River Valley Tour

Distance:	17, 30, 41 and 68 mile loops
Terrain:	68 mile loop is very hilly; shorter loops are flat to moderate

This hilly and scenic 68-mile gem, winds through the historically important Kennebec River Valley and over a mix of agricultural land and rugged mountainous terrain. Long used by Indians as a thoroughfare between the St. Lawrence River Valley and the sea, the Kennebec River Valley was later settled by Europeans who attempted to scrape out a living from the rocky soil. Farmers carrying their produce to market once traversed the same roads over which bicyclists now travel. From there, it would be shipped over the railroad to large cities such as Boston and New York.

Benedict Arnold also followed this route north to Canada during the Revolutionary War. Little remains of farming villages like Mayfield that once dotted the landscape. A few cellar holes, stone fences and the names of the long-gone towns remind travelers that at one time this area was vibrant. The route is very hilly, particularly the section between Athens and Bingham. Low gearing is essential. Much of the route passes through hardwood forest, so autumn is an especially beautiful time to ride this loop.

Three different shorter options are provided for this tour. Alternate 1 provides a relatively flat 30-mile loop through the agricultural areas of Cornville and Madison.

Alternate 2 is a more rugged, intermediate 41-mile loop where the northernmost section in Solon has some good climbs and a few miles of gravel road.

Alternate 3 takes two miles off the route by using the Bingham Solon Recreational Trail between Solon and Bingham.

Alternate 4 provides a very flat tour along each side of the Kennebec River between Solon and Bingham. On the west side, this option uses the Bingham-Solon Recreational Trail which is a flat trail along an abandoned rail bed; thus making hybrids or mountain bikes the recommendation for this option. The option returns along Rt. 16 on the east side of the Kennebec which is a highway with no paved shoulders but relatively low traffic volumes. This option is a good beginner's tour because of the grades and low traffic volumes.

Special features: Route follows historic Arnold Trail; spectacular views from hardwood ridges; views of Kennebec River and valley.

Road conditions: Generally fair; long stretch of broken pavement from Bingham to Solon on ME 16.

Services: Services and accommodations in Skowhegan, Bingham and Solon, for information contact Kennebec Valley Tourism Council, 179 Main Street, Waterville, ME 04901, 800-393-8629. The KVTC also publishes an excellent free bicycle guide for the area. Also contact the Skowhegan Recreation Dept. which provides

information on local bicycling. Call 207-474-6901 or write to 225 Water St. Skowhegan, ME 04976, or visit the Skowhegan Community Center at 39 Poulin Dr.

Cautions: Roads are generally narrow with no shoulder. Give logging trucks lots of room on ME 16 and other roads on this route. The only “bailouts” for this route are at Bingham and Solon. Services are available only sporadically. Don’t underestimate the time it will take to complete this route, and be sure to carry spare parts, water, food and warm clothing with you.

Starting point: The 30, 41, and 68 mile loops originate from the Rite-Aid parking lot in Skowhegan. To reach the store from downtown Skowhegan, head north on US 201 (Madison Avenue) following signs for Solon and Jackman. Rite-Aid is located at the corner of Madison Avenue and Jewett (there is a traffic light at this intersection). The 17-mile loop originates in Solon at the boat launch parking area for Williams Dam. Turn left on Falls Rd. which is a half-mile north on Rt. 201 from the junction with Rt. 201A in Solon village.

Please note: The Maine Bicycle Tours are published by the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) as an aid to bicyclists. All routes shown on these tours are on regular state and local roads used by automobiles, trucks, buses and other motorized vehicles. The MDOT in no way warrants the safety or suitability of the routes indicated on these tours for shared bicycle/motor vehicle use or for use by young and/or inexperienced riders. Bicyclists assume the risk for their own safety at all times when traveling on the indicated routes.

Although the MDOT has made a reasonable effort to ensure that the information contained in this guide is correct as of the date of publication, the actual conditions riders encounter may vary, and the Department in no way warrants its accuracy. MDOT assumes no liability for personal injuries or property damage suffered by bicyclists.

Mileage readings may vary. We recommend you carry a detailed map of the area with you. All roads on this ride can be found in the Maine Atlas and Gazetteer from DeLorme Mapping Co. (www.delorme.com)

!, BS	0.0	Turn left from the Rite-Aid parking lot on Jewett Street and go 0.2 mile.
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LEGEND. **!**: Important tour directions. **CS**: Convenience store. **I**: Information, tour services. **A**: Accommodations, non-camping. **C**: Camping location. **R**: Restaurant. **S**: Scenery. **ATM**: Automatic teller machine location. **HX**: Historic interest site. **H**: Hiking trailhead/crossing. **P**: Picnic site. **BS**: Bicycle Shop. **OPTION**: Optional side trip.

!	0.2	Turn left on North Street (unmarked) and go 0.5 mile to Dr. Mann Road.
	0.7	Turn right on Dr. Mann Road and go 0.8 mile to Malbons Mills Road.
!	1.5	Turn left on Malbons Mills Road and go 1.3 miles to West Ridge Road.
!	2.8	Bear left where Notch Road (unmarked) forks to the right. Malbons Mills Road becomes West Ridge Road here.
S	6.6	Pass Cornville town hall. <i>There are outstanding views from the ridge of the surrounding agricultural land.</i>
S	8.3	<i>There are beautiful views to the south and west.</i>
!	10.7	Bear right at stop sign on ME 150.
!, S <i>OPTION</i>	10.9	Turn left on ME 43 (Shadagee Road) and immediately turn right on West Athens Road. Go 3.5 miles to Valley Road. <i>There are views of surrounding hills from the ridge on West Athens Road.</i> Make sure you do not follow ME 43 unless you are choosing Alternate 1. ALTERNATE 1: For a shorter 30-mile loop, continue straight on ME 43, immediately bearing left to avoid the left fork which is ME 150, for 11.0 miles to Old County Rd. Turn left here and rejoin tour at Mile 60.3
!	14.4	Turn right on Valley Road and go 2.1 miles to ME 151. ALTERNATE 2: For the intermediate 41-mile loop, turn left immediately before Valley Rd. on Solon Rd. and follow the directions for Alternate 2 below. Note: This loop has a couple sections of gravel road.
!, CS	16.5	Turn left at stop sign on ME 151 (Brighton Road) and go 12.0 miles to ME 16. Turn right at this intersection to go to Athens village. Athens has a convenience store. Stay on ME 151 for 0.6 miles to reach the village and store. Warning: This is the last store until Bingham (22.6 miles).
S	24.2	Continue straight on ME 151 at junction with ME 154. <i>This section is especially beautiful in the autumn.</i> Warning: This part of the ride is very remote.
!	28.5	Turn left at stop sign on ME 16 and go 10.6 miles to Bingham and US 201. Caution: There is a long, steep hill on ME 16 just after turning the corner.

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S	35.8	Start steep descent (10% grade) into Bingham. <i>Spectacular views of Wyman Lake and mountains.</i> Warning: Log trucks are often moving at high speed and have a difficult time stopping on this hill. Pull off the road if you hear one coming!
!, CS, ATM, A, R	39.1	Turn left at stop sign on US 201 and go 0.6 mile to ME 16. Enter Bingham village. All services are available here except bicycle repair.
!, I A <i>OPTION</i>	39.7	Turn right on ME 16, cross the Kennebec River, and turn left. Continue 9.2 miles to US 201A. Wyman Lake Recreation area is 2.5 miles to the right. ALTERNATE 3: <i>Proceed straight through intersection on Rt. 201 for accommodations at the Bingham Motor Inn & Sports Complex, (207) 672-4135. From here there is an off-road alternate route to Solon on the Solon-to-Bingham Rail Trail. This route is shorter and flatter but may not be usable by road bikes in certain conditions. Cross Rt. 201 again near the Gadabout Gaddis Airport and follow the old Somerset Railroad bed between the Kennebec River and Rt. 201. It is seven miles to Caratunk Falls where the trail ends. Follow Falls Rd. out to Rt. 201 and turn right into Solon village and rejoin the tour at Mile 49.9.</i>
!	47.5	Bear left at sharp corner on ME 16. Bert Berry Road merges on the right. Caution: Pavement is broken and rough beyond this point.
!	48.9	Turn left on US 201A (Ferry Street), cross bridge and go 1.0 mile to Solon.
A, R	49.2	Evergreen Cabins, Camping, and Restaurant is on the right.
!	49.9	Turn right on US 201 at stop sign in Solon village and go 1.8 miles to River Road. Caution: There are no paved shoulders outside of Solon village and this section of Rt. 201 has considerable traffic including heavy trucks.
4CS, A	50.1	There is a convenience store on the right. The Solon Hotel is on the left.
CS	50.7	There is a convenience store on the left.
!	51.7	Turn right on River Road and go 8.6 miles to Old County Road.
S	54.1	<i>Note plaque on rock on right, "Oldest Farm in Solon".</i>
!	60.3	Cross ME 43 at stop sign (River Road becomes the Old County Road) and go straight for 1.5 miles to ME 148.
!	61.8	Turn left at stop sign on ME 148 and go 1.1 miles. Caution: Heavy traffic. There is a paved shoulder.
!	62.9	At 4-way intersection, turn right on Russell Road and go 5.1 miles to Beech Street.
S	63.6	<i>There are great views from Russell Road.</i>
	67.7	The old Skowhegan Fairground is on the left.
!	68.0	Bear left on Beech Street and go 0.3 mile to US 201. Look for this turn immediately after passing the fairground.

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	68.3	Go straight at traffic light and cross US 201 to Rite-Aid. This is the end of ride.
<i>OPTION</i>		<i>ALTERNATE 2 41-mile loop</i>
	14.4	<i>Proceed west on the Solon Rd which is a gravel road here. Name changes to Hole in the Wall Rd. in Solon.</i>
	15.2	<i>Bear right at the fork.</i>
	18.0	<i>Pavement resumes</i>
	18.4	<i>Gravel resumes</i>
	18.6	<i>Pavement resumes</i>
	19.2	<i>Gravel resumes</i>
	19.5	<i>Pavement resumes</i>
	19.7	<i>Bear sharp right onto the Athens Rd. or French Hill Rd and continue for 2.9 miles to Solon. Use caution on fairly steep descent into Solon.</i>
	22.6	<i>Rejoin tour at Mile 49.9 in Solon</i>
<i>OPTION</i>		<i>ALTERNATE 4 Flat 17-mile loop along Kennebec River</i>
	0.0	<i>Alternate 4 begins in Solon at the Kennebec River Boat Landing off Falls Road. Leave the parking area and head north on the Bingham-Solon rail trail (trail is flat but unpaved and best for hybrids or mountain bikes) See Mile 39.7 on main tour</i>
	6.7	<i>Follow Rt. 201 north to intersection with Rt. 16 just south of Bingham. Continue straight into Bingham for store or restaurant. Turn left on ME 16 and cross Kennebec River to return to Solon on the west side of the river.</i>
	14.5	<i>Turn left at sharp corner of ME 16, Bert Berry Rd. merges on the right.</i>
	15.9	<i>Turn left onto Rt. 201A (Ferry St.) cross bridge over Kennebec and go 1.0 mile to Solon.</i>
	16.9	<i>Turn left on Rt. 201 in Solon</i>
	17.4	<i>Turn left on Falls Rd. to return to start of option.</i>

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