



Great Basin Bicycles

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Mt Tamalpais / Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Mt. Tamalpais and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area are right next to each other, and just north of San Francisco, California. This entire area has tons of great riding, but most of it is on jeep type roads. I did find some great singletrack in the Golden Gate Recreation Area, but most of the true singletrack is closed do to multi user interaction. Most of the single tracks are only open to hikers and horses. All trails are clearly marked as to who can access which trail, and fines for poaching are steep. So, please respect all trails, and trail users in this area.

This whole area is absolutely beautiful with old growth Cedar trees, and great views of the ocean (see below, Muir Beach is the last cove on the right). The only problem is that most of this area is either strait up, or strait down. Very little is just rolling. So, be prepared to climb, but most of the climbs are smooth climbs, just steep.

The big question here is how to get to the trail heads. There are so many ways to get to the trail heads, that I will just pick the main access from a major freeway or road, then give directions from there.

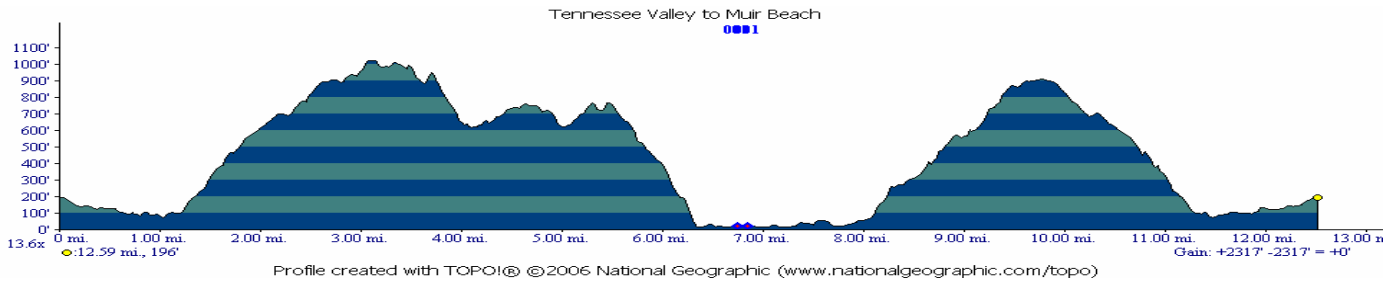


Focus on You Photography
View from Coast View Trail Towards Muir Beach

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Tennessee Valley to Muir Beach with singletrack (Red Trail) (Strong Intermediate to Advanced)

13 miles 2317 ft. total elevation gain



From Highway 1 in Mill Valley, take the Laurel Way exit, and head West. Take a left on Marin Ave, and then take a right on Tennessee Valley Road. Follow Tennessee Valley Road all the way to the end. This parking area is where you start. From the parking area, there is a road that heads out of the parking area to the south east. This will take you all the way around the mountains to the south to over look The Golden Gate Bridge. I have never done it, and it is on my list, but just for information, it is there. For this ride, jump on your bikes, and head strait west on the jeep road. There is a trail marker at the trailhead, or in this case, the road head. Take a quick look just to get your bearings. Once here, follow the road west towards the coast, and in 1.2 miles, you will come to an intersection. If you go strait west, you will hit the beach. A small but quaint beach. However, take a right on the road that you see going straight uphill heading north. Yes, that is your first climb. It is a steep climb. It is completely rideable, but steep. It is an average gradient of 9% for .83 miles. In .83 miles (2.64 miles from the start) you will be at the top of the climb, and at an intersection. The first little singletrack is for hikers and horses only. Sorry, but you still have two options. You



can take a left on the Coast View road to the right, and drop down to Muir Beach which is listed below, or head strait east up the hill. Yes, more climbing. For this ride, continue south after you look out over the ocean (see picture above.) Head west, and as you are climbing, keep looking to your right. Just through the mountains, you will see San Francisco, and one tower of the Golden Gate Bridge the will frame itself between the two peaks. It makes a great picture. Also, watch on your left for your return trail. It is marked as “The Green Gulch Trail, Uphill Traffic Only.” Anyway, continue climbing, and in .5 miles (3.14 miles) you will have reached the top. Here is the kool part, most of the true singletrack in this area is closed to bikes, but this little jewel (see picture left) is open for bikes. However, this section is the most technical section of the ride. If you stay on the road to the right, it will end at the bottom of this singletrack on Highway 1. The first part of this singletrack that you can see along the ridge is great. It is a little steep and tight at first, then it opens up nicely. So head west off the top of the hill, follow the singletrack downhill and across the ridge. In .35 miles, you will crest the top of the uphill. Now it is downhill to Highway 1. Be very careful on this section, it is extremely steep. I had to ride this section with my chest on my seat. This section is not very long, it is walkable, and it is very rocky. A couple of people in the group walked. It is always better to walk than to end up with a broken

collar bone. Anyway, once at the bottom of the downhill in .56 miles (4.05 miles) you will drop out on that aforementioned jeep road. Take a left, and follow it to Highway 1. Once at Highway 1, cross over the road, and the singletrack (Diez Ridge Trail) will pick back up on the other side. The singletrack will switchback up the hillside to the north, then will top out on the ridge in .63 miles (4.68 miles) where the singletrack, kind of a jeep road will have turned and started heading west towards the coast. Continue on this narrow jeep road, and in .8 miles (5.48 miles) you will see a green gate on your left with a post in the ground that says Diez Ridge Trail. Take a left here. If you go straight, you can connect to the Mt Tamalpais trail written up below. So, take a left and follow the trail west. The trail will drop rapidly towards the coast. There are some technical sections, but nowhere near as bad as the previous technical section. At in .76 miles (6.24 miles) the trail will flatten out and head north around the small peak in front of you. Here is the last real technical section. Not quite as bad as before, but still pretty rocky and steep. So drop this last section and in .18 miles (6.42 miles) you will drop out on Highway 1. Take a left, then an immediate right. Keep an eye out on your left, you will pass one green metal road gate, then another one. This second gate will take you to you back if you don't go to the beach. The paved road you are on will dead end at Muir Beach. We met our wives and children at the beach for lunch. Had a great time with them, then turned around and headed back. So, once at the parking area for Muir Beach, walk the bikes along the hiking trail for the beach. Right after you cross over the beach you will see a road that heads left. This is your return road. If you turned at the green gate before, that road would end up right here. Anyway, enjoy the beach, and when you head back, do not cross over the bridge, rather jump on that dirt road, and take the right fork. If you go left you end up at the green gate. Take the right and almost immediately you will come to a "Y" in the road. The right road is the Coastal View Trail, or the intersection you came to at 2.64 miles. So stay to the left, and follow the road west towards Highway 1. This is where the ride gets a little strange. In 1.35 miles (7.77 miles) you will be paralleling a huge 15' fence. Then you will come to a huge gate (see picture left). You need to go through this gate. It will feel like you are trespassing even though you are not. You are in some sort



of compound in Green Gulch. I am not sure if it is state run or not, but there are all of these vegetable fields, and you are riding right along side of them. We ran into a handful of hikers and the people who ran the compound with no problems. It just asks you to close the gate behind you. So go through the gate, and continue along the vegetable fields, and in .33 miles (8.1 miles) you will see a small sign for The Middle Green Gulch Trail. Take a right, and head south towards the huge fence. Go through the fence, close it behind you, and start your next climb. Now it is impossible to get lost. The climb is the only trail in this area, and it is steep. The climb is an average of 11% grade

in 1.44 miles. It is completely rideable, just steep. In 1.74 miles (9.84 miles) you will drop out on the jeep road you originally rode up. From here, just take a right and follow the road downhill and stay to the left. As long as you retrace your trip, and always turn left, you will end up back at your car for 13 total miles.

Mt Tamalpais State Park

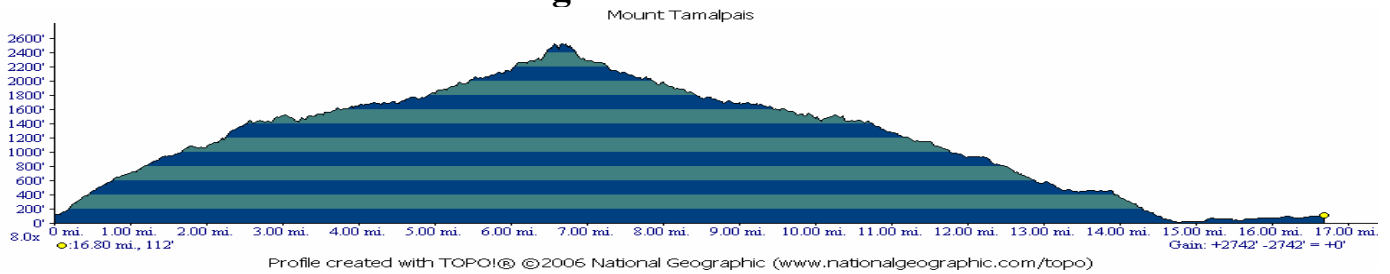
Mt. Tamalpais Climb

I loved this ride, the climbing was steep, but completely rideable. It was just beautiful riding through the old growth cedar trees that towered forever above us. This ride is mainly jeep road, with 3.5 miles of singletrack at the end. The ride is not that technical, rather it just climbs a lot. It is rated as Strong Intermediate, only because of the climbing. I am sure that technically, an intermediate rider could do the ride, but it is just steep and long. You also have to be very careful, because most of the singletrack is illegal for bikes. In fact, if you look at the state park map, they list the start of this ride as closed to bikes. But when you get there, you realize that there is a hiking trail that parallels the jeep road that you will be climbing. That hiking trail is closed to bikes, but the jeep road is open to bikes, and there is a Forest Service sign at the head of the jeep road that states that bikes are ok. When we were getting ready to start this ride, we met a group that told us how this ride is usually done, so that is how I am writing up the ride. I will give you one other option in the text, but who am I to argue with tradition. Now for directions, it is hard to tell you how to get to this ride because it can be approached from many different directions. So I am just going to pick one, but look at the map and realize that Highway 1 goes right through the ride. From San Francisco, find Highway 1 North, and follow it towards Muir Beach. You will just pass the left turn for Muir Beach on Highway 1 and you will see Muir Woods Road on your right. Take this right and follow Muir Woods Road for 1.83 miles, and you will see the shoulder of the road increase for parking. This is where you will park, continue just up the road on the left is your trail head.



Mt Tamalpais Climb (Green Trail) (Strong Intermediate)

16.8 miles 2742 ft. total elevation gain



Again, I loved this ride, the old growth cedar trees with all of the Spanish moss on the trees was just beautiful. I did the ride on Thanksgiving weekend in shorts and a jersey. Again, it was just beautiful (see picture left.) Anyway, from Muir Woods Road, look on the north side of the road for the jeep road start of the road. This road is named Deer Park Fire Road. Take a north on



this road, and the climbing starts right out of the gate. Follow this road up through the cedars, and in 2.34 miles you will have climbed 1294 ft for an average gradient of 9.5%. At 2.34 miles you will come to an intersection. The left turn marked Coast View Trail in your return trail. It is singletrack the whole way down and beautiful. You can make this a shorter trip by just turning here and heading back down to Muir Beach. Anyway, take a right and follow the jeep road uphill. Continue uphill for .36 miles (2.7 miles from the start) the jeep road will drop you out by some storage houses for the forest service. It will feel like you are trespassing, but you aren't. Continue north along the paved road, and past more houses, and in .3 miles (3.0 miles) you will come to a large parking area with bathrooms, and the Panoramic Highway right in front of you. Just to the right, right across the highway from this parking area is another jeep road that heads right, slightly pulling away from the highway. This is your jeep road, The Old Stage Road. The good thing is that the steep climbing is



over. From here, there is still climbing, but nothing as steep as the first section. So continue uphill on the Old Stage Road, and in 2.22 miles (5.22 miles) you will see the Old Railroad Grade on your right. Stay straight uphill, and in .9 miles (6.12 miles) you will pop out on East Ridgecrest Blvd. This is a paved road that does go to the top of Mt. Tam., but there is a nice paved trail that will take you to the top so that you don't have to share the narrow road with cars. So, take a right on East Ridgecrest Blvd, and almost immediately you will see a paved walking and biking trail to the right. Take this trail, and in .43 miles (6.55 miles)

you will hit the top of the paved trail, and the parking area for Mt Tam. There are bathrooms, and water here at the parking area, but in order to get to the top of the mountain, you will have to hike.

We ditched our bikes in the trees, and hiked to the top. Bikes are not allowed on the hiking trail, and the trail is un-rideable. The trail is extremely rocky, and steep.

However, the view should be great, but we had fog below us, and clouds above. We had a great view between both layers, but all we could see was white (see pic left.) So, once on top, hike back down to your bikes, and retrace your steps back down the hill.

So follow the paved trail back downhill, and take the left on the Old Stage Road, which is also the Old Railroad Grade. Anyway, take your left and follow the dirt jeep road back to the Panoramic Highway. Cross over the highway into the parking area, and follow



the paved road down past the houses to the jeep road you came up. Follow this jeep road back down the way you came up, and in 4.47 miles (11.02 miles which includes the hike to the top of Mt Tam. which is 1/3 of a mile hike) you will come to a “Y” in the road. If you go left, you drop back down to your car. That is the road you came up. However, for this ride go straight. This is the Coast View Trail, and is all singletrack with some wide singletrack. It snakes through some great moss covered trees (see picture above,) and should give you great views of the ocean. Again, we just saw fog. Anyway, continue down the Coast View Trail, and in 2.54 miles (13.56 miles) you will pop out on Highway 1. The other way to do this ride, and cut out some mileage, is to start and finish here. There is a pull out just past Muir Beach on Highway 1 on the left side of the road. As you leave Muir Beach, Highway 1 will climb up a short steep grade, that will level out. As soon as it levels out and clears out of the trees, you will see a small group of pine trees, and a dirt pull out on the ocean side of Highway 1. Park here, and right across the road on the west side of Highway 1 is a jeep road with a green Forest Service gate across the road. This is the Coast View Trail. So start here, and finish here. If I had it to do again, this is the way I would do it, but the trees are quite nice the other way. So, back to the previous ride, once on Highway 1, take a left and follow Highway 1 south. The highway will take a quick twisty fun downhill back to the small town of Muir Beach. Once at the bottom of the hill, and in 1.38 miles (14.94 miles) you will take a left on Muir Woods Road. Continue slightly uphill back to the car for a total of 16.8 miles.

SEE MAP BELOW

