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Hiking And Biking In The Philadelphia Area

Posted by [Brittany Thomas](#) in [UWISHUNU](#)



Calling all mountain bikers and hikers: the Philadelphia region is absolutely bursting with verdant parks, preserves and trails, like the Wissahickon pictured here, prime for adventures by bike or foot. (Photos by R. Kennedy for GPTMC)

One plus of the waning of summer is that the heat and humidity have finally let up, which means it's prime time to think about planning fit and fun adventures on the bike or on foot.

Philadelphia has some of the most enormous, not to mention gorgeous, [park spaces](#) in any city in the country, so fall is the perfect time to take advantage of all the potential places to explore.

Below, check out our roundup of the best trails for hiking or biking in the greater Philadelphia area, followed by recommendations for where to gear up and how to get connected with other cyclists and hikers near you.

Let us know in the comments where *your* favorite spot to hike or bike is.

Hiking and Biking Trails in Philadelphia

- **Schuylkill River Trail:** Most know it for the segment that runs through the heart of downtown Philadelphia, but did you know [this trail](#) actually runs for more than 20 miles and counting? Hop on the bike or get walking and you can experience the awesome city views and still be out of town in no time.
- **Fairmount Park:** With more than 215 miles of meandering scenic trails featuring over two dozen historically significant sites scattered throughout, [Fairmount Park](#) is one of the largest metropolitan parks in the country.
- **Wissahickon Creek Gorge Trail:** Speaking of Fairmount Park, this section of it, in particular, is a must-see for anyone in Philadelphia. There are more than 57 miles of trails in the [Wissahickon Gorge](#), but we recommend this trail because it's very well-maintained and great for most skill

levels.



With more than 215 miles of meandering scenic trails featuring over two dozen historically significant sites scattered throughout, Fairmount Park is one of the largest metropolitan parks in the country. (Photo by K. Ciappa for GPTMC)

- **Forbidden Drive:** Also known as the [Wissakichon Valley Park Trail](#), this 7-mile stretch takes you along the Wissahickon Creek from one end of the park to the next. This trail is particularly popular for cyclists due to the mostly paved path. Don't know where to start the ride? We suggest driving to the Valley Green Hotel to park and unload.

- **Manayunk Towpath:** Gorgeous views of the Schuylkill River, downtown Manayunk, Falls Bridge and more can be found along this charming [canal pathway](#) that's easily accessible from downtown Philadelphia.

- **Kelly Drive Loop:** This is the 8.5-mile downtown to just-outside-the-city portion of the Schuylkill River Trail that loops around from center city, across Falls Bridge in East Falls and back up along the opposite, parallel side of the Schuylkill so you can see views of the skyline, Boathouse Row and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Multiple entry points along [Kelly Drive](#) will get you to this scenic city trail especially popular among cyclists.

Bucks County

- **Delaware Canal Towpath:** Running from Easton to Bristol, this 60-mile trail is one of four that make up the 165-mile D&L Trail. [Check](#) to see what sections of the trail are currently closed before heading out, find the spot you want to hike/bike and get ready for picturesque scenes from what's been referred to as "the backbone" of the National Heritage Corridor.

- **High Rocks Trail at Ralph Stover State Park:** Breathtaking vistas facing the Delaware River are well worth the more strenuous [High Rocks Trail](#).



Picturesque trails throughout the five-county Philadelphia region provide city-dwellers with plenty of opportunities for weekend bike rides. (Photo by J. Smith for GPTMC)

- **Core Creek Park Mountain Bike Trail:** This bike trail, located in Langhorne, is a great trail for beginners and all skill levels. Considered a medium intensity ride, all of the ramps and log piles have paths around them so you can get extreme, or not. More info [here](#).
- **Top Rock Trail at Nockamixon State Park:** Located on the picturesque Haycock Mountain, [Top Rock Trail](#) will give you a great view of Lake Nockamixon as you hike approximately 1.4 miles to the summit.
- **Haycock Mountain Trail near Quakertown:** Access this Quakertown [trail](#) from the Top Rock Trail and take a slightly longer, 1.5-mile hike that gives you the option of bouldering the diabase rocks.
- **Delhaas Woods at Silver Lake Park:** Take your pick of trails in this 235-acre [nature preserve](#) with views of lakes, marshes and fields. The Delhaas Woods are a great place to potentially get a look at some wildlife while taking in the foliage.
- **Tyler State Park:** With trails that take you through several unique sections of the park, the Neshaminy Creek zig-zagging through the terrain, four miles of gravel hiking trails and 10.5 miles of biking paths, [Tyler State Park](#) is a great spot for a short-but-sweet hike or bike ride. Make a day out of it and play some disc golf or have a picnic in one of about a dozen groves to unwind after your workout.

Chester County

- **Chester Valley Trail:** Much of this trail is incomplete, but we can recommend the portion running from Valley Creek Road near the Church Farm School eastward to Rt 29. [Chester Valley Trail](#) is not exactly a wilderness trail, but still an easily accessible trail perfect for cycling.
- **Horse-Shoe Trail in southeastern Pennsylvania:** The trail is 140 miles long and runs all the way from Valley Forge to the Appalachian Trail. Not quite feeling up to weeks of hiking? Check [here](#) for information about trail head locations so you can do whatever portion you'd like.
- **Joseph Plumb Martin Trail at Valley Forge National Park:** This is a 6.6 mile, paved trail perfect for beginner cyclists. You can bike [the trail](#) while getting a ride-by historic tour of the Park.

Delaware County

- **Yellow Trail at Ridley Creek State Park:** This 0.09 mile trail is rated as moderate and takes you on a loop past a waterfall through lovely tree-lined paths. Find this and more trails at Ridley Creek State Park [here](#).

Montgomery County

- **Pennypack Trails:** Take your pick of more than a dozen scenic trails for walking, hiking and biking and decide between easy to difficult, old roadbeds to dirt paths to mowed trails. The [Pennypack Trust](#) has a trail for everyone.
- **Skippack Circle Loop Trail:** This is a fairly easy 4-mile trail located in [Evansburg State Park](#) not far from Germantown Pike South. Note to fishermen: try your luck in the stocked waters of the Skippack and Perkiomen creeks.

- **Fort Washington Trail:** Paved until entering into Ft. Washington State Park, the 3.5-mile [trail](#) is perfect for biking, hiking, bird-watching and viewing the beautiful fall foliage.



The Schuylkill River Trail, winding throughout Philadelphia and beyond, is great for biking -- you can even bring your dog along. (Photo by R. Kennedy for GPTMC)

- **Cross County Trail:** This 3-mile trail runs through urban and more rural areas from the Schuylkill River Trail in Conshohocken to the Germantown Pike. Since the [Cross County Trail](#) is paved, it's perfect for beginner cyclists or anyone looking to get a quick ride in.
- **Green Ribbon Preserve Trail a.k.a Wissahickon Trail:** [The trail](#) from Fort Washington State Park to Stenton Ave is perfect for hiking and biking and intersects with several other cool trails.
- **Perkiomen Trail:** This former Reading Railroad bed is now a gorgeous 20-mile trail that connects to the Schuylkill River trail. [The Perkiomen](#) is a crushed stone trail, so bring the appropriate gear.

Gear Up for the Bike

- **Keswick Cycle:** More than just your friendly neighborhood cycle shop, [Keswick](#), with three locations around the Philadelphia area, is the region's top Cervelo, Cannondale, Specialized, Raleigh and Electra seller. Take a safety course if you need to and then check their [Twitter account](#) for notifications about group rides and getting involved in one of their two cycle teams, which welcome all ages and skill levels.
- **Breakaway Bikes:** Located right in the heart of downtown Philly, [Breakaway](#) will stock you up with all the gear you need and even offers indoor training, seminars, workouts and rides to help get you up to speed. They also have several teams connected with various local institutions like QCW Cycling, Temple University and UPenn.
- **Neighborhood Bike Works:** Aiming to offer a healthy escape for urban youth in under-privileged neighborhoods, [NBW](#) is a great place to start getting hooked up with other cyclists in your area. All ages, skill levels and styles are encouraged to get involved.
- **Conshohocken/Plymouth Meeting R.E.I. Store:** This is really the ultimate shop for outdoor athletics, so [R.E.I.](#) is a great spot for cyclists as well as hikers. Specifically for cyclists, they offer custom wheel-building, tune ups and more. Check out their [blog](#) for a great resource to getting active.

Bike Co-ops and Coalitions

- [Pedal Co-Op](#)
- [Philadelphia Bicycle Coalition](#)

- [The Mt. Airy Bike Collective](#)
- [The Bicycle Club of Philadelphia](#)

Gear Up for the Hike

- **Eastern Mountain Sports:** With five local locations, EMS is definitely one of the best spots to grab your hiking backpacks, boots, trekking poles and more. They strive to stay connected to the community as far as hiking events go, so stop by their Upenn store or hit up the suburban shops to get some information on what's happening in your area.
- **The North Face:** Now that fall is here, taking proper clothing into consideration will be a very necessary part of your hiking plans. [The North Face](#) is always the go-to for weather-proof attire, for good reason, so stop by any of the three local stores before you head out this season.

Hiking Groups

- **Southeast PA Sierra Club:** Even if you don't exactly consider yourself an 'environmentalist', per say, you can get involved in the [SEPA Sierra Club](#) to get in on the amazing local adventures they organize, if nothing else.
- **Batona Hiking Club:** With scheduled hikes every weekend that happen regardless of the weather, [Batona](#) is a great group to get involved in so you can meet other hikers, stay active and stay in the know about outdoor events in your area.