

OUTDOOR TRAVEL

THE ACTIVE HOLIDAY COMPANY

USA SELF-GUIDED CYCLING HOLIDAYS

CALIFORNIA'S NAPA & SONOMA VALLEYS - CYCLING IN WINE COUNTRY



Like the bouquet of a spicy Zinfandel, the wine country of California, north of San Francisco, opens up to reveal many delights and pleasures.

Napa Valley and Sonoma County are synonymous with great wine and fine food and dining. By bike, discover shady back lanes, towering redwood groves, a surprising Russian history and delightful pedaling – past vineyards and wine chateaus of every conceivable design

Duration: 6 days/5 nights, with 4 days cycling

Departs: Any day in 2005, unless otherwise noted.

Level of Activity: 50 km daily average (30 miles). This is moderate cycling, encountering a few challenging hills most days. Extra kilometers are possible.

Costs Per Person: Classic: Starting daily except Thursday AU\$2995

B&B Only: Starting daily except Wednesday or Thursday AU\$2595
Single supplement available on request

Off-season discounts of AU\$150p/p apply for travel between January and March 2005

Day 1 Arrive in St. Helena, a trendy and pleasant town in the heart of Napa wine country. Stroll the main streets with its lovely shops, but also venture into the side streets for a feel for California gardens and gracious homes. If you have time, visit the store at the Culinary Institute of America and stroll the adjacent gardens or the Silverado Museum to see the 8000 items relating to author Robert Louis Stevenson's life. Meet your bike.

Day 2 Spend a full day in the St. Helena area, with many choices. Ride up into the hills above the valley, past forests of California redwoods to high altitude vineyards, which are gradually encroaching on old ranch lands. Then sweep back down the Pope Valley into St. Helena. Or meander through the Napa Valley, visiting Bale's Grist Mill, which was a focal point for the valley's settlement during the first half of the 19th century. Cross the Napa River, ride on the lower slope of Howell Mountain and into a rain forest. Whichever option you choose, you'll enjoy gorgeous scenery.

Day 3 Today's destination is Calistoga, known for its thermal spas and mud baths. You have many options to dial in the mileage of your choice.

Take a shorter route in order to have more time to visit some of the historic vineyards in the region, including those that first put California on the oenological map. On the longer ride, you will have the opportunity to watch Old Faithful spout off, as well as to cycle to the historic Chateau Montelena winery, and simply enjoy more of the amazing diversity of this stunning California countryside.

Day 4 Continue north into the Alexander Valley and then over the Mayacamas Ridge to leave Napa Valley and enter the Sonoma Valley. Pedal through the pretty valley of the Maacama Creek and onto the flat lands of the Russian River Valley. Explore extensive vineyards along the edge of the Geysers, the world's largest geothermal field. Discovered in 1847, these amazing hot spots soon gave rise to the California Spa tradition. Is a massage that far off? Your day ends in the delightful town of Healdsburg.

Day 5 A full day in the Healdsburg area lets you explore the unique Russian history of this American enclave. Uncover the wineries of the Russian River Valley, and the unexpected hops industry as well. If you are feeling adventurous, take a side trip into the wild country along Porter Creek. Be sure to leave time to visit Healdsburg, a town with the best qualities of turn-of-the century America, yet with the ambiance of a European countryside. Discover its Spanish-style plaza, numerous museums and excellent antique shops before settling down to a scrumptious final dinner.

Day 6 Spend a few final moments enjoying your time in California's wine country before bidding it a fond farewell, to head off on your next adventure

À la Carte: Extend your vacation by adding on a couple of extra days in Healdsburg to drive out and explore the Pacific Coast. Ask us for details.

Accommodation: The classic level tour features a number of beautifully styled and wonderfully hospitable inns. You may choose to visit with Californian families on our Bed & Breakfast level tour. Meeting other travellers en route. Upgrades are available at all locations.

Getting There: Your tour starts in St. Helena, about 128 km/80 miles north of San Francisco airport.

A self-guided tour is a fully organized vacation for independent travellers. You have the freedom to cycle at your own pace, with support behind the scenes. You have a set itinerary, prepaid accommodations, luggage transfers and emergency support. The bicycle hire is included but there is no guide, no support vehicle and no group to hurry you along or slow you down. You guide yourself, following the detailed instructions, maps and tips provided. Your luggage is transferred to each night's accommodation, reserved and prepaid. Emergency support is just a phone call away. The self-guided formula lets you choose your own meals' plan a simple picnic lunch or discover a hidden café. Eat as little or as much as you want for the evening meal

Tour costs includes 5 night accommodation with breakfast in either hotels or B&B, one dinner, the use of 21-speed hybrid bicycles with panniers & all necessary equipment including helmet, luggage transfers & route notes.

Contact OUTDOOR TRAVEL or your travel agent for details, brochures and reservations

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