

TREKHING BIKE GUIDE



Downloadable

English

**6 Great
Bike
Routes
Around
Lake
Balaton**

**Bikes And
Touring Gear
Especially
for Female
Riders**

**Cross And
Trekking
Bikes
In Addition
All Electric
Motor
Assisted**

**How to
Plan a
Bike
Adventure**

**Cycling
Paradise**



**Balaton
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Balaton BIKE365



BalatonBike365 is a free to download app allowing users to plan and customize cycling routes around Lake Balaton



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Photo: Tirszin János



Cycle touring is addiction, Lake Balaton is affection

When I'm asked about the advantages of touring on a bike, I always give the same reply. On one hand, cycling is faster than walking, ensuring the prospect of covering greater distances, and gathering more experience in the given time. As a bonus, the rider gets a better workout. On the other hand, it's much slower than driving a car while allowing the rider to stay closer to nature. The slower pace allows the brain to absorb more information, and there is the chance to stop at any place desired. Finally, there is the bicycle as the instrument. It serves as sport equipment, lends itself to be cherished, and offers company along the long journeys. The bike for many is true passion.

The present booklet attempts to deliver useful information on current touring trends in

an easy-to-follow FAQ format. How to organize a bike tour? How to choose the right bike? What gear and apparel are needed for a cycling adventure? I sincerely hope that both beginners and the more experienced will be able to find valuable advice inside.

The star of this guide is no doubt, Lake Balaton. A region loved by many cyclists who always seem to find something new to discover. I included 6 new routes which can also be found on the BalatonBIKE365 website. In addition to being fully signposted, the downloadable itineraries offer easy navigation on phones and other devices.

Takács Tamás – editor

HOW TO DESIGN A GREAT BIKE ADVENTURE?

A message pops up: Fancy going cycling to Lake Balaton for the weekend? It seems a good idea, reply follows: "Hell yeah!" But it might be more prudent to ask back: "What kind of ride are you planning?"

First of all, not everyone has the same idea of a bike tour. A Sunday ride with family and a long-distance bike tour are chalk and cheese, and each require different preparation and physical condition. The rider needs to be aware of what's in store. The type of riding determines the likely outcome, and how to prepare to get the most enjoyment while out pedalling. Here are some tips we'd like to share...

There are many difficulties to tackle before jumping in the saddle. Obviously, there should be a plan about the start and finish location, so route planning is at the top of the list. Then there are other factors like the type of roads, the intensity of the ride, whether to go alone, with friends or in greater company. In addition, the goal can be just recreation, or to discover an unknown region. It may also encompass a theme, like getting to know the region's culture, natural landscape and touristic sites. Then again, the bike ride could just be about scouring beaches or visiting ice cream

shops along the way. Cycling touring for some is about the physical exertion, an ever longer distance, riding at high intensity, tackling steep mountain roads or difficult off-road terrain. Touring with company, or friends can create an atmosphere where outside impulses are but removed with warm conversations at rest stops.

"In case the route designer is not familiar with the region, there is no shame in asking for advice or to consult on-line touring forums for information."

What Type of Touring?

As previously outlined, the focus of the bike tour can be on many different aspects, so careful preparations have to be made to provide an enjoyable experience for all involved. Let's look at some scenarios and how best to prepare!

When the Focus is not the Bike...

A common setting is when a family decides to ride the river bank finishing at the ice cream shop. **Here, the emphasis is on recreation and the ultimate experience.** Such a ride can be coupled with a trip to beach, eating and drinking or just discovering a scenic viewpoint while taking some photos to remember. The distance of such rides tend to be short, perhaps just a few kilometres, and the terrain is mostly flat, to limit the lack of endurance as a factor. The bicycle's role is means of transportation, consequently bike choice - as long it functions properly - is not a chief consideration.



Minor mistakes made in route planning and gear choice in this scenario can generally be circumvented, and should not hamper the experience.

Things Get more Serious...

If there is a tangible goal, such as covering a set distance or time, the planning phase gets more involved. Long distance is relative, and in some cases completing the bike tour can be quite taxing. Then again, for typical rides the focus remains on the experience, discovering new places, absorbing the atmosphere of the location, and the physical side of the activity takes the back seat. When planning a longer tour for pleasure, provisions have to be made for proper resting and relaxation, as well as taking in calories to fuel the ride. Likewise, personal fitness has to be taken into account when setting out on a longer distance, as some form of cycling experience and general endurance is required. Bike choice also needs to be considered, especially if the terrain is mountainous or involves some off-pavement sections. The bike has to be in proper condition, well-maintained and adjusted, and all accesso-

ries need to function as intended. In the event of a mishap or something going wrong during the ride, the longer distance and challenging terrain render consequences more serious.

Pleasure of Riding and Discovering...

The classic cycle tour is not dissimilar from a performance-oriented ride. In both cases the rider steps out of the everyday world, and enters a state of "flow". There is a true cycling experience along with the other aspect of touring, such as adventure and discovering new places. The bike is an ideal means for the latter, as it's quick enough to avoid boredom, but slow enough to allow full engagement, as the repetitive motion sets the brain in a receptive mode. Transporting ourselves by our own effort makes us feel that we own the scoured area. Planned rest stops need not disrupt the flow: it separates the ride into segments, helping the cyclist to complete a long distance, as well as helping recollecting events at a later time. Cycling skills take on a greater role for such endeavours. When riding in company, at least some participants should have

experience in bike touring. Bike and gear choice needs serious consideration as well, along with proper gear and clothing. All equipment must be selected based on the planned route, everything has to be checked beforehand for proper functioning. Possible difficulties need to be taken in account, with sound strategies to circumvent the negative consequences. The route itself has to be carefully planned, and some means navigation is a requirement. It's welcome when some members have knowledge about the route, otherwise modern GPS navigation is a must. A multi-day tour takes the preparation phase to another level, and in such scenarios previous touring experience is virtually indispensable.

Performance-Oriented Bike Touring...

In some forms of bike touring exploration is overshadowed by the activity. The focus is on the physical challenges facing the rider, while the

scenery serves as the backdrop to the accomplishment of the set goal. **The objective might be a certain tempo or distance, usually coupled with tackling steep gradients, alternatively the challenge can involve successfully navigating off-road terrain.** When the emphasis is on human performance, rest stops, sights, meals and supplementary programmes are set to the minimum. On the other hand bike choice and setup becomes paramount, it has to fit the terrain, likewise route planning has to take into account the limitations of equipment and personal capability. It may be presumed that this type of touring requires the utmost preparation, in fact the unknown adds to the experience. Thus the added uncertainty is not a hindrance, but a challenge to be tackled. Obviously the greater the endeavour, the higher the risk of an unexpected situation occurring.





Who is the Best Company?

Intention is one part of the equation, the other is the choice of companions. **In most rides, the persons in company are more significant than what you want to achieve.** The experience of touring can be shared with friends, partner, family (including children), likewise the group can comprise of a few people or a large group. Nonetheless, setting out alone is also a viable choice. When choosing participants, the main goal is to reduce the number of critical situations, i.e. friction within the group. A detour due to navigation error might be a source of jesting among friends taking part in an MTB enduro ride, but may be a deal breaker when travelling with your exhausted spouse. Route planning needs to take into consideration abilities and physical condition of all members. It's never a great thing when some are overwhelmed by the challenge. If capabilities vary among the members, the lowest common denominator has to prevail. This means that the skills and physical effort required to finish the tour with suc-

cess has to align with the least capable of the participants. This may involve limiting the number of busy road junctions and omitting a steep road in favour of a shallower gradient. Physical limitations are easier to overcome when some or all participants ride with an electrical pedelec bike, as the choice of motor assistance helps to equalize differences in strength in the group.

There are many factors to consider when touring with a group of participants. The following section lists all the scenarios and requirements.

Travelling alone

Planning a tour where there is just one rider seems an easy task compared to a group scenario. Nonetheless there are pitfalls, the chief one being alone. If something goes wrong during the tour, there is no one to turn for help, the rider has to find a way to overcome the hurdle. Emergency situations have to be considered at the planning stage. In addition a reliable phone (or two) with GPS capabilities has to be packed, preferably employing some sort of accident detection system

where relatives get notification. Provisions have to be made for charging the battery on the bike or carrying a backup power source. These measures can hopefully compensate for the lack of immediate help. Likewise the rider should acquire the knowledge and the skills to solve at least some of the most common problems which might occur during the ride. There could be a technical problem with the bike which needs to be solved, so the rider should be well-versed in bicycle mechanics and have experience in fixing possible breakdowns. A set of common tools have to be packed for the ride, in addition to spare parts like inner tubes, tires, brake pads and cables. Finally the rider who is liable to fall into panic in case of unexpected misfortunes should consider finding company, or limit the scope of the adventure to a level, where the consequences of a possible mishap are not severe. For instance, the tour should avoid difficult to reach or deserted destinations.

Touring with Family

A bike ride with family members is a popular leisure activity. As a rule of thumb, an experienced and sturdy member of the family shouldn't consider the family ride a test of strength. Instead, his or her role is to make sure that all members have the best possible experience, as well as to help overcome hurdles which tend to arise along the way. Apart from the duties of organizing and leading the ride, care needs to be taken to assure proper functioning of all bikes, taking along all the necessary gear, including tools in case of possible breakdown. Likewise the organizer is responsible for proper clothing and provisions, like food and drinks to replenish the lost calories. In a family environment the leader is familiar with the personality and the needs of every participant, which takes most of the guesswork out of the preparations. Familiarity allows for catering to special needs, in order to make the ride truly enjoyable for all. This



"A Sunday family ride and a long-distance bike tour are chalk and cheese, they each require different preparation and physical condition."

can take the form of visiting an ice-cream shop during or at the end of the tour, stopping by to stroke animals, a favourite meal or visiting a venture point. In addition to the above, the organizer must be familiar with the traffic code, where children they can ride and what form of child transport is permissible.

When considering a longer distance family ride, one must also take into consideration the sudden onset of fatigue and the ever-changing mood of the young. This may pose a great hurdle when touring with kids under school age. In such cases it's advisable not to set the bar too high concerning effort and distance. A multi-hour ride is akin to playing Russian roulette: it may turn out to be a truly memorable experience, then again there is a high of probability of a failure. If attempted, there should be some sort of extra motivation, and constant encouragement for feeling of success. When the mood turns for the worse, the children often need some form of distraction. If this fails, and the child balks, the parents need to have an escape plan up their sleeve. This involves ending the ride and getting home by some means of transport. Of course, such a situation is best avoided, either by planning conservatively, breaking the ride up into smaller segments with plenty of interesting distraction in between, or any other means which disrupts the monotony of the ride. It also helps if the children are trained for this type of activity: riding little by little, first to the playground, then somewhat further until youngsters get accustomed to the relative monotony of a bike ride. Another factor to consider is the weather, like strong wind or the scorching sun. We have to keep in mind that children lose more fluids for the given distance than adults, so they have to drink more, and their sense of thirst and hunger are not fully developed. Another consideration is that bike-mounted seats restrict movement, hence more rest stops have to be planned to compensate.

Riding with your partner

A shared bike ride is a popular activity for new-

ly acquainted couples. This usually turns out well, since lovebirds make great strides to achieve success. On the other hand, a cycle tour with your spouse is a much more risky endeavour. A difficult and physically demanding ride tests even well-bonded relationships, so you may consider simply not taking the risk. Thus, it's best treat the bike ride as a form of distraction, without excessive objectives. The emphasis should be on supplementary activities rather than the ride, stopping by cafés and good places to eat, so both parties can remain within their comfort zone. It's also worth remembering that women do not consider roadside bushes as natural toilets!

Riding with experienced cyclists and buddies

With a large group, the chance of something going wrong increases, subsequently preparation has to be made for such scenarios. A mechanical mishap may have an easy remedy, provided you have the necessary tools and spare parts. With numerous riders present, the burden of carrying tools and spare parts can be distributed, but someone must be there to organise everything. In addition to mechanicals, there could be sickness, number one or two needs, which have to be attended to. Instead of stopping everybody for each and every event, the group should be divided, each having a leader who takes care of navigation and communication between the groups. Planned rest stops are also a must, which provides an opportunity for group fragments to reform. Be ready that extra stops will be needed due to the above-mentioned calamities.

Mixed group dynamics

When it comes to a larger group where the members are not familiar with each other, it's crucial to plan for weakest participant. Route planning should adhere to this rule by setting the distance, terrain and gradients accordingly. The organizer has to consider a mixed group like the previously mentioned family format. Every participant should get the most enjoyment out of the ride, which – compared to a family – carries the additional task of coordinating and pleas-

ing strangers. Thus there are more variables and more chances of problems arising. The strategy for a pleasant experience should also mimic family outings: a greater emphasis should be placed on additional activities, cultural programmes including more rest stops at scenic points to make the experience more memorable. During preparations, more information should be distributed to minimize the chance of something being left at home. If possible, arrange the group that there are some more experienced bike riders who can help out with advice and assistance.

Team building rides

A bike ride for company employees is a job for professional organizers and tour guides. Vast experience and know-how is a must, and there are too many scenarios to generalize for this booklet.

Route planning

Organizing a bike tour involves a lot of different tasks, and planning the route is one of them.

It's true that the road and its surroundings has an important role in the experience the riders take home, but it's not the whole story.

The longer and more complex the endeavour, the more difficult it is to find the route that provides the best experience. For one, the designer must be familiar with the area. If there is any uncertainty in this regard, either more research has to be done or the organizer has to consult experts for advice. Another strategy is to take advantage of the multitude of route planning guides available on the internet. There are several social platforms where popular routes are uploaded, and these can be easily transferred to a phone or a GPS device. Nonetheless we need to make sure the uploader



is an average cyclist, not someone with outstanding off-road skills or stamina. The aim for the organizer is to have enough familiarity with the roads to avoid any possibility of navigation error. Even if sufficient preparation is made, there will still be some unseen circumstances, like a road closure, or an off-road trail disappearing due to agricultural or forestry works. For these scenarios one needs a general overview of the region, and plan beforehand for alternative routes along the way.

It's very rewarding to plan a bike tour around Lake Balaton and its surroundings. The present booklet provides potential riders with a number of tried and trusted routes, however there is another great resource in the form of the BalatonBike365 mobile application. The latter enables the rider to select the difficulty of the challenge and the type of terrain. Based on these parameters the app designs a downloadable track, as well as providing a list of the sights and main attractions found along the way. If you have a GPS phone on hand, the navigation to complete the route will be provided. Alternatively you can follow the road signs for the given route for a more conventional touring experience. The BalatonBike365 project encompasses more than 100 km (600 mi) of bike-friendly roads, both paved and off-road, all signposted, and further work is in progress.

When considering other regions for a bike tour, **the organizer should not overlook the resources provided by the most popular route planners like Komoot, Ride with GPS, Bikemap, Garmin Connect.** These generally use heat map algorithms, a technology which looks at where cyclist tend to ride, and what ride plans were made in the area. Given the widespread use these applications, the route is unlikely to disappoint. The chance of ending up on roads with big traffic or on a trail which leads to nowhere is almost zero.

When making the plans for the course, the following should be taken into consideration:
Importance of the start and destination

When travelling with fellow cyclists, the starting point should be a place that is easy to reach by

both rail and car. Ideally, it's next to a railway station with a car park nearby. The end point can be the same, otherwise a railway station should be chosen from where riders can return in a quick and convenient way. In case of large cities like Budapest, both the start and destination should be a bike-friendly location, preferably in a low-traffic setting. It's also important to have buffets, restaurants and supermarket where participants can fuel up before or after the ride, as well as use the toilet.

Careful with the unknown

When designing bike tour for a group, it's advisable for the organizer to be familiar with at least part of the region, and also having already ridden at least some of the roads or trails. Even when travelling alone with the aim of discovering new locations, local knowledge comes in handy. If the planner lacks such information, it's crucial to do the homework. Googlemaps is one great resource where both satellite and road view is available. For direction in populated areas, streetview can be a huge assistance. In case in doubt, the previously mentioned heatmap-generated route can also be checked in Googlemaps for safety. If a trail shows up on satellite view, there a high chance of offering a decent surface for bikes to ride on. Streetview is a must for selecting the start and the end point of the tour, as it helps everybody to find the exact place for meeting up. Finally Googlemaps can display gradient and total elevation which is a good metric for determining the level of difficulty. In case the organizer sees overly steep roads, a decision has to be made to tackle the challenge or find easier ascent.

Avoiding busy roads and mysterious trails

Evading heavy traffic is a must for cyclist in general, especially if the busy road is also narrow, and cars cannot pass easily. When planning the tour route, it's worth checking the roads in Google streetview to see how wide they are, and whether they have a bike lane added. Fundamentally there are three types of routes to take: main roads open to motorized traffic, segregated bike lanes and off-road trails. It's up to the organizer to

choose the ratio of each type for the given ride. However, adding non-paved trails slow the tempo, and there is a greater chance of mishaps occurring. A common problem with off-road is mud build up following wet weather. dead-ends due to vegetation overgrowth of agriculture works is another commonly occurring difficulty. Unfortunately, heatmap-based route planning apps fail to signal such situation since they work from previous information. Such calamities can be avoided by pre-riding the course prior to the event.

Time flies...

As a general rule, time required to complete the ride is longer than what the apps provide. The larger the group, the slower the average speed. While route planning apps commonly calculate a 20 km/h (13 mi/h) average speed, experience dictates that in a group situation these numbers cannot be stuck to. This culprit is often group-dynamics: for instance, a quick 5-minute rest stop will seldom take less than 15, a half our break to visit a castle can be as long as an hour.



Further considerations for planning

- Trails - especially in a forest – is considerably slower to ride than asphalt roads. A fire road with double tire track allows for in a quicker pace and has the added advantage of better communication among the riders. All in all, it's preferable in every aspect, even over paved roads.

- Regular water and food replenishment is imperative when travelling a group. Route planning should take into consideration, the rest stops need to provide a chance to drink and take a few bites. Participants will feel thirsty and hungry at different points of the tour, and this dictates the need to plan more rest stops than what a single person would need. The organizer also has to check possible sources of water or bottled fluid.

- Rest stops should be at bike-friendly locations, as opposed to roadside parking lots. It's desirable to have scenery, even better if it's at a lookout point or some kind of attraction. Such places offer a chance for members to rest and replenish food and calories, while those not tired or thirsty can enjoy the view or learn about the location.

- Breaks should be no longer than 15 minutes, as muscles tend to "lock up" if rested too long.

Equipment – essential gear to navigate the route

The best equipment for navigating a bike ride is a handlebar mounted GPS device. A GPS phone will do the job, brackets are available to mount it on the handlebar. However battery life is very limited compared to dedicated navigation. This can be circumvented by employing a so-call power-bank for additional operating time, or using the phone's power saving mode. Needless to say, paper maps are all but useless for on-bike navigation, likewise non-handlebar mounted GPS navigation should be avoided.

Multi-day tour planning and other considerations

A spontaneous ride during a holiday and a multi-day tour from A to B with all its logistics, accom-

modation, transfers and meals are quite dissimilar. Although both need preparation and some gear to complete, the latter is a magnitude more difficult to execute in a professional way.

What to pack and into what? For rides taking no longer than an hour or two, a back sack might be sufficient. A multi-day group ride may necessitate equipment transport by car. In one way or other, **it's best keep the amount of stuff to a minimum.** Take what's necessary, don't over-pack. For instance a few spare tubes, a pump and a multi tool is a must, but taking a complete tool kit with the intention of fixing nearly all mechanical problem on a bike is going overboard. When it comes to food, you should only pack items which are difficult to get along the route. Self-sufficiency might be a goal for bikepacking adventures, but for most type of bike tours, the key is convenience.

Bike choice does matter on most tours, but more important is the mechanical condition. You can hardly go wrong with choosing a trekking or cross bike since these will take bags, provide sufficient comfort, and have tires that can cope with all types of terrain. Similarly, the now trendy gravel bike provides a wide scope of use, so it could also work, especially if the route contains longer off-road sections. The electric assisted pedelec bike has the added advantage of equalizing fitness level within a group.

Clothing recommendation for bike tours can be found in another section of this booklet. Bike wear is a vital element of success on these adventures, and we have to deal with the question of what to pack as well as what to wear. The latter is dependent on the weather conditions, but it's also essential to be prepared for extreme weather events. These days, high performance technical wear is widely available, sourcing these should not be a problem. They are not only effective but fashionable, and women's children's collections are also accessible. Ideally the organizer specifies the types of clothing for the ride.

Let's highlight and summarize the advices above! First of all, **never plan a bike tour that**



exceeds the capabilities of the participants or the constraints of the equipment. In case of a breakdown in the middle of nowhere, or not being able to reach a destination due to our own limitations, the tour will be a failure, possibly with dire consequences. Secondly, we must be thoughtful of others in the group: both in terms of comfort and safety. No one has to be forced to leave his or her comfort zone by riding down a steep, rocky descent. Safety is fundamental when it comes to bike adventures.



Bikes for touring

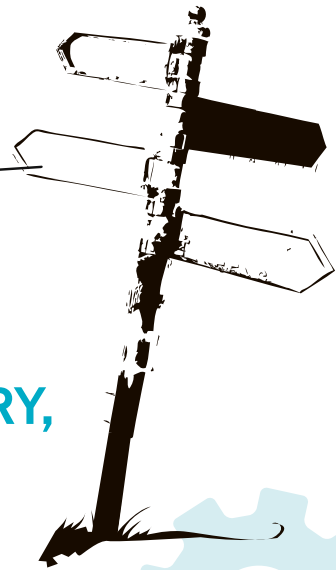
CROSS AND TREKKING CATEGORY, CONVENTIONAL AND MOTOR ASSISTED

“How to choose a touring bike?” The best reply to is another question: “What type of riding do you do?” There are many different kinds of bike touring, and bikes to suit each purpose. It’s difficult to generalize, nonetheless we can safely recommend the cross/trekking category as a good starting point for a cycle-tour. These will help you complete almost any bike venture, including the routes we outline in the booklet.

↖ Cross bikes

As the name suggests, cross bikes combine the features of an off-road bike and one designed for pavement. These are universal machines, suitable for all kinds of riding, and it’s also a great choice for beginner cyclist. The frame geometry is tuned for comfort rather than performance, allowing for a relatively upright body position. For the average rider this provides more comfort and enjoyment, especially on longer distance. On the flipside the cross bike is not the best choice for going fast on pavement, nor can it roll easily on trails like an MTB or gravel bike. This is not to say that cross bikes are slow to ride, especially if they are set up with lighter, better quality wheels and tires. And in spite of gravel bikes being advertised as the best rig for exploration, for general bike touring most are much better off choosing from the cross category. Last but not least, the price of these bikes tend to be considerably lower than any of the aforementioned.

Cross bikes are mostly built around an aluminium alloy frame, and feature suspension fork to cancel out most vibration on the front end. These forks are entry level, employ a steel coil with no means of controlling compression and rebound. Above mid-range some forks of-





for a suspension lockout, and some higher-end models have oil dampening as well. Cross bikes are generally available with men and women specific frame design, offering the exact same parts specification. Frames with lower step-over are easier to mount and dismount, and are also suitable for beginners or less flexible elderly riders.

The wheels on cross bikes are predominantly 622/700c in size, the tires are between 38 to 48 mm, or 1.5 to 2" wide. Tire size determines the type of terrain the bike is suited for, the narrower "slicks" are best for paved roads, the wider "knobby" ones are for both on and off-road. Tire tread for cross bikes tend to feature a smooth centre line with some side knobs, though some tires have centre knobs for off-road stability and control.

More and more cross bikes in recent years are equipped with disc brakes. It's advisable to

choose hydraulic systems over mechanic ones, if the budget is limited, the owner is better off with a mechanical V-brake instead of a cheap cable-operated disc type. Another important consideration is gearing. Cross bikes tend to have three chain rings in front for added range, employing a larger than usual 48T big ring with an 11-36T at the back. This is low enough gearing to tackle steep hills with luggage, but fast enough to ride swiftly on rolling roads.

Cross and trekking bikes are often grouped together as a single category, so it's best to clarify the differences. Though they look similar and have similar frame construction and geometry, the two categories feature distinctly different equipment. For one, trekking bikes have a lot of accessories which cross bikes usually lack, such as an integrated light system, often powered by a hub dynamo, as well as fenders, a chain guard and a kickstand. Cross bikes have

a more athletic and austere appearance. However cross bikes have provisions for mounting any of the above-mentioned accessories, thus they can be set up for all types of touring styles even or other uses, such as commuting. The lack of extra parts also means that the cross variety of touring bikes tend to be less expensive than full-fledged trekking bikes.

Where does a cross bike really show its prowess? Virtually everywhere and in most riding situations, it can handle almost any sort of use. Obviously, a cross bike is not ideal for riding 50 km an hour on smooth pavement and the rider will certainly sense it's limits on rough off-road terrain, but such usage is not typical for the everyday rider. On the other hand it can take you anywhere, around town, to the workplace and back, while it offers an ideal setup for discovering places. We'd recommend the cross bike for nearly all riding situations.

Trekking bikes

Just like the cross category the so-called trekking bikes are intended for a wide segment of riders, but the term "universal" takes a different interpretation. In an overly simplified way, trekking bikes are well-equipped cross bikes tailored especially for city transport and long-distance touring. Another distinction is tire choice. The trekking is more suitable for riding on pavement, while cross bikes provide a wider choice in terms of road surface. Both types offer the same frame geometry, thus similar gearing, handling character and rider position.

"Trekking bikes place the emphasis on bike transport and recreation, but limit the riders to hard road surfaces."





Put in another way, cross bikes are universal in the choice of terrain, allowing the rider to tackle many different types of roads for touring, general exercise. Conversely trekking bikes put the emphasis on bike transport and recreation, but limiting road surface choice due to tire tread and the presence of accessories like mudguards. Accordingly, the latter are more suited to everyday transport and touring on pavement, where we can take advantage of the multitude of extra equipment like a luggage rack, a kickstand, a chain guard or a dynamo power light system. Due to these accessories trekking bikes are somewhat heavy, in exchange for not having to worry about soiling pants in wet weather, taking any luggage required and having electric lighting present all the time.

All in all, the trekking bike is ideal for those who ride all year around, value the convenience provided by the wide array of accessories, and is

prepared spend more and carry some additional weight around when riding. The extra outlay is relative, since starting out with a cross bike and adding all the equipment that are standard on trekking bikes will cost more, which one should keep in mind if the end goal is convenience and year-around use.

The frame for both bike types are similar. They tend to be somewhat overbuilt, and are available in both conventional and low step-over design. The front wheel is suspended by a coil fork, and the seat will also have a telescoping seat post. Trekking bikes will generally have a higher handlebar with an adjustable angle stem for easy setup. There is strong emphasis on comfort on all types of touring bikes, plus the wheels are large in diameter (622/700C) complemented by a 35-45mm wide tires. Another important feature is the presence of an effective disc brake



system, preferably hydraulic, for added power and ease of control. This allows a trekking bike to be ridden safely in wet conditions, adding much to its versatility.

Concerning gearing, trekking and cross bikes employ a wide gear range for all types of terrain, even when loaded with bags. Triple front chainrings are a norm for touring type bikes, a 24-26T small ring combined with a 36T top rear cog is needed for the steep climbs, while a large 48T front chainring and an 11T rear cog will allow for an efficient tempo on rolling roads. Nowadays middle price range drive systems offer precise, smooth and dependable shifting. Internal gear hubs are also available, which can be used with a belt drive setup for added convenience and trouble-free use. On the other hand, these tend to be more expensive, especially the more the more elaborate designs from specialist brands.

All in all, it's not the frame that differentiates trekking bikes (90% are made of aluminium alloy), but rather the parts and the accessories they are built with. There is some variation in the suspension fork used as bikes in the higher end of the price range employ a more elaborate air fork coupled with oil dampening, but the biggest difference is in the drive train, the gearing, the brake system and especially the extra fittings which are unique to trekking bikes. A quality dynamo-powered light system, a stylish set of mudguards and a top shelf saddle or handlebar grips are the bits and pieces that make a trekking bike high end. Performance-wise, just a level difference in drive parts – e.g. Shimano SLX versus Deore – carries little advantage, but riders will certainly notice the level of light output, better cable routing of enough heel clearance in case of the rear carrier. If these details are not dealt by the manufacturer, a slightly more elaborate rear derailleur won't compensate the compromised ride experience.

To sum up, one should choose trekking bikes similar to a car. The emphasis is on day in day out use and great convenience, though the bike also allows the rider to tackle adventures for leisure. A good cross and trekking bicycle has the

power to change our way of life by providing the possibility of year-around bike riding.

↑ Touring bikes employing electric power assist

When considering electric motor assisted bikes for touring and leisure activities, it's advisable to choose a pedelec type with a torque sensor. Only these provide a natural pedalling experience where the stroke of the pedal is seamlessly complemented by elaborate motor drive technology. Such bikes allow the rider to exert the appropriate effort, perfectly complemented by the motor's assistance. Compared to a conventional bicycle where the tempo is limited by physical fitness, a pedelec bike lets the rider to choose the amount of effort for the desired speed and distance covered, but retains the pedal-power feel. Here the effort for the given tempo depends on the assistance level selected by the rider, from economical all the way to "turbo" mode. Based on the pedalling torque, cadence and the travelling speed, the drive system software continuously – down to the fraction of a second – adjusts motor output to perfectly complement rider effort. Thus, a pedelec still behaves as a bicycle, albeit one with additional power provided by the motor, and only supports the rider when actually pedalling. Stopping to turn the pedals immediately cuts motor output, a lighter push on the pedal will lower the amount of power produced. All pedelec bikes have a 250W motor and provide assistance until the bike reaches 25km/h (or 20mi/h in the USA).

Pedelec e-bikes are available in different designs and builds for various applications from daily city transport to tackling off-road trails. Just as with conventional "pushbikes", touring e-bike pedelecs are available with similar setup and ride character. In addition to everything we wrote previously, some extra consideration has to be taken into account when it comes to the electric motor drive of pedelec bikes:

- The range – in other words the distance available from the battery – is an essential feature of cross and trekking pedelec bikes. If used for touring

rather than daily transport, it should offer at least 100 km (60 mi) range on pavement, or 60 km (35 mi) off-road using "economy" assistance. Selecting a model with larger battery capacity will provide more distance at the given assistance level, or allow for more assistance when covering the same distance. As the battery is the costliest part of the bike, most budget pedelecs are feeble in this regard. Nonetheless, in 2023 you can buy a higher end model equipped with a 700Wh battery that will provide ample of range for touring purposes.

- The weight and aerodynamic drag of bags mounted on the bike will require more power (and lessen the range), therefore it's a good idea to purchase a bike with the highest possible motor torque available.

- If you are well-versed in electronic devices, you'll certainly benefit from an up-to-date pedelec drive with some form of "Smart System". Such a unit can be paired with a GPS-equipped mobile phone for extra ride data which can be displayed while riding and recorded for after-ride study and analysis.

- Parts specified on a pedelec tend to be higher level than found on conventional cross and trekking bikes. This can partly be attributed to the higher purchase price, likewise the motor technology necessitates stronger chains, cogs and brakes due to the higher loads due to extra pedalling force and weight. When choosing a pedelec touring bike, make sure it's equipped with at least with mid-level parts from one of the main brands in the industry. The brakes must be of the hydraulic variety paired with larger discs to cope with the added weight and speed.

- A pedelec e-bike loaded with luggage is quite heavy, so a sturdy kickstand is a must. Before a long-distance ride, you need to check whether the stand can support the bike, and adjust it for best support.

When it comes to outlay, these days you need to spend at least HUF 1 million (EUR 2500) on a mid-range touring pedelec. A larger amount will buy you more range, powerful motor a better parts and accessories.



DRESSING UP FOR A BIKE RIDE

Before we embark on recommending appropriate bike wear, some words need to be said about the relative sensation of cold. Depending on genetics, body fat and adaptation, people feel particular temperature differently. Some start to feel cold at 18°C, other can comfortably ride at 8° without gloves. In addition, high intensity riding generates a lot of heat, while the wind chill factor takes over at lower intensity. This explains why some feel colder on the bike, than when they get off, and others the exactly the opposite. These factors have to be taken in consideration when touring with a group, especially on pedelec e-bikes, where the effort is not directly linked to speed.

As to style, today's bike wear shows a great variety, a far cry from the time when body clingy lycra kit dominated the market. Riders can choose from all kinds of fashionable models, including bike-specific skirts or lumberjack-style jerseys. The level of quality for cycling wear varies greatly, from cheap "no-name" items found in department stores and on-line retailers to high-end technical clothing providing all the comfort the rider ever needs. **The reality is that quality bike wear is expensive, which is down to state of art fabrics employed. And only these materials guarantee comfort, proper thermal management, evaporation of moisture and free movement while pedalling.** It's a bonus that the finest pieces of bike clothing also tend to be fashionable, a welcome quality for those who don't want to look like wannabe bike racers.

Base layer

The base layer is in direct contact with the skin, the main function being to absorb moisture, and

Choosing the right outfit for cycle touring is relatively simple affair in summer time, but needs serious consideration when riding in say March or October. In addition to the lower temperatures, spring and fall brings wet weather for Central Europe.

transfer the vapour to the outfacing surface. The most advanced fabrics literally do magic: they keep you feeling dry even when performing a high intensity workout. Some base layers are optimized for hot conditions, others feature thermal regulation as well to keep you warm. The latter manage to insulate as well as getting rid of moisture caused by sweating. In addition to ones worn under a jersey or a shirt, some better shorts also feature an inner base layer to provide similar advantages.

Cycling shorts

Cycling positions most of the weight is on the saddle. Special bike shorts are designed to dampen vibration, prevent chafing and channel moisture away from the skin. The secret to comfort is in the padding. In case of lycra-based garment a multilayer foam pad is sawn into a material, for casual shorts it forms a separate inner layer. When it comes to the race shorts, men are advised to choose the bib type, as this tends to keep everything in place. For women this setup is inconvenient, however some manufacturers offer models with detachable ribbons. Another alternative is a special material which clings to the skin, preventing pad movement and rideup. Casual "baggy" cycling shorts are secured using an elastic belt. In cooler weather it's advisable to pull on ¾ length pants which are available in both lycra and conventional short style. Full length bike pants offer the most heat insulation. It's worth noting that premium cold weather clothing not only provides



the necessary thermal insulation and freedom of movement, but can also withstand rain and wind, while still providing the necessary moisture evaporation. And remember: it's paramount not to wear undies with bike clothing!

➤ **Outerwear**

As mentioned previously, choosing bike clothing in summer is a no-brainer. The typical cycling jersey has three rear pockets to store small items or even food. In spring and fall you're better off with a long sleeve jersey design, and for chilly rides, a "thermo" range is available. The latter has a fleece lining and can withstand some rain. Yet, a thin rain jacket or vest is recommended for better protection against the elements. These can be folded to palm size, and stored in the back pocket. Proper raingear is also available in the form of a waterproof jacket and pants. These keep most wind and rain out while allowing body moisture to evaporate. Just as with all premium technical kit, high-performance cycling jackets tend to be quite expensive. Finally, it's worth keeping in mind that body heat builds up as we ride further, so clothing which feels cold at the first pedal stroke could indeed be perfect mid-ride. Rest stops are ideal time to take off surplus layers.

➤ **Accessories**

Footwear designed for pedalling can transform the cycling experience. Similar to ski boots, spe-

cially-designed cycling shoes accept a cleat on the sole, which engages into the compatible bike pedal. This is called a clipless pedal system. It offers easy engagement, perfect retention while pedalling and simple disengagement when coming to a stop. It's worth investing in clipless system for the extra stability and the efficiency they offer. If you stick with platform pedals, pull on a sport shoe with a stiff sole! Another essential item for riding is a helmet. **Nowadays cycling head protection is light, offers excellent retention, comfort and ventilation, and buying a decent one won't break the bank.** Eyewear can be worn along with modern bike helmets, specially designed models will protect you not only from road debris and insects, but also from wind chill and UV-radiation. In cold weather you have the choice of pulling on gloves, arm and legwarmers as well as a bandana. But be aware that what feels comfortable when standing still can be chilly while out on the road. A back pack is essential for carry more than what pockets can hold. It shouldn't be too big for the items, has to offer stable retention and prevent sweat build-up on the back.

➤ **One final tip**

Modern technical bike wear is manufactured from expensive, delicate materials, thus it's essential to read the included cleaning and washing instruction.

Bikes and touring gear for women

When discussing sport and touring bikes designed for ladies', most think of frame shape. However, the chief question is not that, but how to the conventional bicycle be adapted to women's needs in the various bicycle categories.

„Women's bike frame“: Mentioning the term "women's bike", most will have the image of a trap-ezoid frame with a low step-through top tube. Indeed, such designs are popular, as they not only allow women to ride in skirts, but also to assist beginners in getting on and off the bike. In a touring setting one may encounter a steep descent on a trail, get frightened, pull the brakes hard which necessitates putting the foot down as quickly as possible. In this scenario a low step-through frame is a certainly a bonus, irrespective of what garment the rider is wearing. On the other hand, ladies' with more riding experience don't necessarily require the ease of putting down both feet at stops, making the conventional frame geometry is a viable option. For this reason sport and premium bikes in don't commonly offer the option of lowered top tubes.

These days, only minor differences exist between men's and ladies' version of road and gravel bikes, and this is true in the MTB category despite the added proficient riding skill requirement. The dissimilarity is the slightly altered frame geometry, primarily top tubes being shorter to accommodate female body proportion, as women generally have longer legs and shorter upper body. In addition, women are shorter, so frame sizing starts with XS in order to accommodate riders under

150 cm (5 ft.). Due to differences in body height, a men's M-size frame is in fact larger than a ladies' M. When choosing a bike – especially from an online retailer – these considerations have to be taken into account. In case of mountain bikes (sport and touring versions included) there is another factor, namely wheel size. Most small frames sizes are built around a 27.5" wheel size rather than the more common 29", resulting in a bike that's easier to handle for those under 165 cm (5 ft. 5").

Tip:

If you cannot find a suitable bike for a very short person, take a look at their junior bicycle range: there is a good chance that a 26" wheel version will fit perfectly!

In addition to frame geometry, bike design also tend to be distinct from men's models. In the past



paint scheme used to be overly “feminine” with lots of pink and purple and flower motives. This trend has softened recently, thus modern ladies’ bikes are tastefully stylish.

Special components on ladies’ bikes:

Not only frame needs to accommodate body difference, but so do the bike components and accessories. And we’re not just alluding to the basket in front of the handlebar and the cute bell, which seem to be the two cornerstones of bikes considered “feminine”. In fact both are useful

equipment in their own right, but there are less apparent differences that have a greater effect on comfort and ride character. One of these are saddles, which need to accommodate the anatomic difference in rear end. But there is no reason to go overboard as seen on many comfort-oriented bikes: women don’t require easy chairs to ride a bike!

It’s a fact that female riders generally have wider sit bones, which necessitates a greater saddle width. For instance a 145-155 mm wide “race” saddle fits most women better than the conventional 135 mm size designed for men. There is no need to go much wider as this tends to hamper leg movement: a slight increase is usually sufficient. Apart from being somewhat wider, saddles designed for women also have a different shape. There is a middle cut-out with softer padding around the edges due to protect private parts. A touring or sport bike designed for ladies should be fitted with a saddle that has been specially developed for women’s comfort in mind.

Most brands specify handlebar width relative to breath of shoulders. The handlebar on women’s MTB models are a few centimetres narrower to mirror the anatomy, and brake levers are positioned for less reach to accommodate for smaller hands. These features should enhance ride comfort, handling and improve safety. A less significant variation is the components’ colour scheme, especially in the case of the bar and stem.





Outfit:

These days men's and women's sportswear styles are disengaged, the distinction is even more evident in the realm of bike clothing. Nowadays dressing up to move on two wheels is more a way of self-expression. Regarding functionality, the most important of all the bike-specific apparel are shorts, where we witness a clear differentiation between genders. Like saddles, women's shorts have a different pad design conforming to the anatomic differences. They utilize foams of various densities and elasticity, placed in appropriate locations. The bib element of bike shorts see some modification too, since the conventional style is cumbersome regarding toilette. Some ladies' models have detachable bibs, and some do away with it all together, employing special non-slipping fabrics instead. Both solutions allow women to exert great effort with no movement or ride-up. From the design point of view of, the sky is the limit. For instance, full-fledged bike shorts mimicking skirts are available, integrating hidden shorts with hi-tech padding. It worth noting that one should not wear undies with bike shorts, since it tends to cause chafing and general discomfort.

Gender differences can also be observed with uppers. Jerseys are shorter with a narrower waist, and generally have more feminine designs. In addition women tend to prefer the sleeveless style, which might be attractive, however it regrettably induces sunburn. By and large, sport fashion designers have a free hand to use colours and patterns, but the main objective – at least for well-known brands – the main objective rests on comfort. Thus women's jerseys utilize the same elaborate technical fabric employed for the high-end men's wear in order to channel as moisture away from the skin. Sport bras offer with similar technology for ultimate comfort. Jerseys should be purchased together with shorts to ensure seamless fit: bib shorts tend to more fussy regarding the waist band placement of uppers.

A protective helmet is an indispensable part of the bike outfit. The main split between men's and woman's helmet is the colour scheme, however hair style also needs to take into consideration as a pony-tail can hamper the use the retention system. In order to achieve secure fit, the manufacturer must provide the necessary space for an appropriate slip-through. Women-specific helmets generally have this feature, or employ a different retention arrangement.

Nowadays there is a wide selection of cycling apparel for women for all types of riding and dedication. Apart from the most important pieces mentioned in the section, specially designed shoes, eyewear, gloves and other items are also available in many different styles.





USEFUL AND OBLIGATORY

Bike Accessories

When purchasing a bike, the owner immediately start pondering on additional items to make it more personal. In this section we explore the possibilities of adding parts and accessories to the bicycle from the touring cyclist's perspective.

Essential Items

Taking on fluid during the ride is essential, else may suffer dehydration resulting in serious medical issues. Bicycle riding requires more fluids than usual, due to intense leading wind and physical exertion. **It's difficult to imagine a bike tour when taking on fluids is unnecessary, especially in summer.** Another must-buy item is a light system, which is in fact obligatory by the traffic regulation. The system comprises of a rear light to let other road users see the cyclist, and a constant front light which ideally allows the rider to see the road ahead. Another item required by law is a bell, which comes in handy when riding on bike paths with pedestrian as well on forest trails. For those planning bike touring with young kids a child seat or a kid trailer is something one has to invest in. Likewise, carrying anything larger than what fits into a back sack requires a bag or a basket.

To make quick repairs...


It's practical to equip the bike with a seat bag containing all things that get you out of trouble. There is the ever-present possibility of a flat tire or bolt coming loose. The former requires a patch kit, a mini pump and a spare inner tube. To tighten bolts and adjust parts during the cycle tour, you're best off with a bike-specific multi tool.

Useful additions

It's conceivable never having to turn the lights on while riding, but avoiding rain permanently is next to impossible. Installing a set of mudguards on a touring or commuting bike makes good sense, and we wholeheartedly recommend doing so. The only downside is the limited ability to ride off road in muddy conditions. In case the bike is rarely ridden on dirt roads, it also makes sense to install full length mudguards as opposed to the clip-on type, and keep them as close to the tyre as possible. On the other hand, MTB bikes require the clip-on variety positioned further from the wheel. **A kickstand is another useful accessory for touring, especially on heavy, fully loaded bikes.** Not all rest stops have stable objects for support, and leaning or laying the bike on the ground is a risky affair. It's best to choose a quality kickstand as cheap ones can rattle and are prone to breakage.

Locks for security

Bike theft is a real danger anytime the rig is left unattended. It's imperative to choose a good lock since budget ones do very little to prevent stealing. From security point of view U-locks are hard to beat. The only downside is the need for a strong and stable object to latch to, and often the size of the U-lock is not big enough to reach both the



"Adventuring to unknown places necessitates some form of navigation, and the most common solution is a handlebar-mounted GPS phone."

object and the bike. This is where foldable locks shine: they are constructed from steel slides and work much like folding rulers. The total length folded out is around a meter (3 ft.) which is generally long enough for convenient locking. Commonly seen coil type locks should be avoided since these are very easy to cut. All in all it's best to choose a product from one of the security specialist like Abus, Kryptonite or On Guard.

Navigation

Adventuring to unknown places necessitates some form of navigation. Paper maps have been superseded by technology, nowadays the most common solution is a GPS enabled phone. It can be attached to the handlebar using a special bracket, and we recommend a top-notch mount like Quad Lock for best security and screen visibility. An even better solution is a dedicated GPS device made especially for bicycle use. These offer easier reading and better functions, as well as customizability, and best of all, a much longer battery life compared to telephones. There is no need to buy the most advanced GPS bike computer as even mid-range ones offer a myriad of function and map based navigation. Some popular brands are Garmin, Wahoo and Bryton.

What not to get...

The accessories above are ones which make good sense for those on a bike tour. On the oth-

er hand, our recommendation wouldn't be complete without mentioning some popular choices which are generally redundant. In general, there is no need to over-ornament bike with gadgets: they add to the weight and are often the cause of disturbance or malfunction. For instance, a rear rack should only be installed if extra luggage is carried. When a seat or frame bag holds all the necessary equipment, the rack is just a source of unwanted noise. Likewise, fitting a handlebar extension is only makes sense when used on a regular basis, otherwise it only occupies scarce space on the bar and adds heft to the bike. The list gadgets available for bikes is nearly endless. When in doubt, one should always ask the question whether the accessory adds to the convenience and functionality, or not.



BalatonBIKE365- Cycling in Paradise

COMPLETE GUIDE TO LAKE BALATON CYCLING ADVENTURES

Lake Balaton is truly one of the most popular destinations for cyclist in Hungary, and BalatonBike365 is a unique project to gather everything needed to discover the region on a bike.

- More than 1000km (600mi) of road network suitable for cycling in the most scenic locations of Lake Balaton and its surroundings
- 70+ GPS navigated plus signposted routes for all ages and abilities, on pavement and off road, as well as countless sights and services along the way
- BB365 application with GPS based navigation communicating in 7 languages
- 4 PORT bike centres with a full service and top level e-bike hire
- Hundreds of bike-friendly providers
- 32 service columns and way-stations

1000 km long bike route in your pocket

The first phase of the BalatonBike365 project supported by the European Union saw the development of the BalatonBike365 app (downloadable using the QR-code), which offers more than 70 different cycling routes as well as a detailed online map. Up to date GPS based navigation allows the rider to ride and enjoy scenic routes using a handlebar-mounted phone. The BB365 app shows all the sites along the way, such as lookout points, places of interest both cultural and scenic, as well as many places to eat and drink.





Virtually all routes feature unforgettable sights overlooking the lake and the surrounding hills. The Balaton Highland, the Small Balaton and the Somogy cycle routes were all designated to escape busy lakeside streets, in favour of charming minor roads known only by locals. The BB365 bike routes vary in terms of difficulty, and are graded accordingly. Some follow paved roads entirely, other include lovely and peaceful off-road sections. In addition to navigation provided by the BB365 phone app, there are clearly marked sign posts along the way.

Providing equipment and company, from where ever you start out

BalatonBike365 offers you the chance to spin the legs while on vacation in order to enjoy an unforgettable lakeside ride. There is no need to bring your bike or the associated gear: you can test ride top class bicycles from a recently introduced eMTB to the ever more popular gravel bike. We're ready to provide all the necessary equipment at one of the four PORT Bike Center locations located in Balatonfüred, Bala-

tonföldvár, Keszthely and Kapolcs. There you'll find an exclusive selection of both conventional and motor assisted e-bikes. In addition to bikes, the Centers rent out supplementary gear such as helmets, child seats, bike trailers, back sacks, while offering the purchase of clothing and accessories. Guided tours are also available at set dates. In case you are not interested in cycling, the Centers are open for coffee and advice on how to explore the gorgeous Balaton Region.

Google Play



App Store



To find the above-mentioned PORT Bike Centers:



Rollercoaster ride on dirt and pavement Balatonfüred

Heading out the leading holiday resorts in the Balaton Region, this route has all the qualities of a fantastic bike ride. Included are stunning panoramas, romantic off-road trails, some steep climbs with plenty of reward for the extra physical effort. One being a dreamy forest rollercoaster section, the other a bike racetrack linking Nemesvámos with Hidegkút, not to mention the fantastic vista of Lake Balaton.



around





SETTINGS:

This route can be downloaded from the BalatonBike365.hu website using a QR, however the ride information may be somewhat misleading. The departure is in fact at Nagymező, which is quite a distance from the lakeshore, so most will have to ride a few kilometres more for this trip. Furthermore, there is considerable elevation to the start point with a rather steep sections. To get to Nagymező from the centre of Füred, the rider should follow Óvoda Street and its gravel road prolongation. This part of the trip might be the most demanding, and bumps the distance to 35 km (21 mi) as well as total elevation to about 500 meters (1600 feet). Luckily the next part of the route is relatively easy and offers an unparalleled cycling experience on a rollercoaster forestry trail between Nagymező and Veszprémfajsz. The road surface is mainly gravel with a short section of dirt road just prior to Veszprémfajsz. After heavy rainfall this part of the route will be muddy, otherwise the whole route can be completed on a common cross-trekking bike.

After the joys of the rolling gravel, a low-traffic minor road takes us to Nemesvámos. There we are in for another treat: an almost straight bike racetrack which runs all the way to Tótvázsony. Although there are no turns to navigate, there is plenty of ups and downs, a virtual rollercoaster simulation most riders will never forget. Prior to reaching Tótvázsony, we turn off the "bike highway" and head toward Hidegkút on the public road. Not that there is much traffic around here, but soon we can eliminate all disturbance when we enter another off-road section inside the village. At first the surface is somewhat rough, but soon the trail transforms into a wider gravel road taking the rider back all the way to Nagymező. Anyone who missed looking over the shoulder on the way out, will be greeted to a silvery panorama overlooking Lake Balaton. This is another memory most will cherish forever. The descent back to Füred is quite



fast, so care should be taken, especially on loose gravel sections. Obviously this round trip may be reached from other starting points other than Füred: the route can be touched from Veszprém via a cycleway, in addition to Balatonszőlős, Töt-vázsony and Felsőörs are also nearby.

CHIEF SIGHTS:

Nagymező and the forest north of Füred is in itself an enchanting spectacle, and this can be heightened by taking a southerly detour into the Koloska Valley to the renowned cliffs. Such venture requires some off-road cycling experience and a mountain bike. Nemesvámos is half-way into the ride, so it's the perfect place for a mid-ride stop. The village has several spots to fuel up for the second half, including the Rózsa Pizzeria and Pub, open all year round from 11 in the morning to 10 in the evening. There is also

a new bike staging post called Kerekes Völgyka-pu, its opening hours are posted on their Facebook page. In Hidegkút there is another friendly pub called Krisz-Ti Kocsma. In addition, the ambiance of this old village also merits a look around: the old Swabian houses tell tales of local Germans who were deported from the village in 1948, some of whom never returned. Those who presently live here pay homage to the elders by renovating the lovely houses and keeping the Swabian culture in alive. At the end of the village is the old Jewish cemetery, giving way to the descent to Füred, opening up an unforgettable vista over the Lake.

The route is featured on the BalatonBike365.hu website and the app under "Round tour Balatonfüred-Nemesvámos, red N and switching to English, or using this QR code.

GPS:



ROUTE PLAN

- **Distance:** 27km (17.5 mi)
- **Elevation gain:** 372m (1200 ft.)
- **Terrain:**
- **paved public road:** 6.3km (4.5 mi)
- **dirt road:** 13.5km (8.5 mi)
- **paved cycleway:** 7.2km (4.5 mi)
- **Difficulty:** intermediate



ROUND TRIPS IN TIHANY FOR BEGINNERS AND ADVANCED RIDERS

The Tihany Peninsula is a bucket-list ride, and no Balaton guide is complete without it. We put forward not one, but two Tihany trips from the BalatonBike365 collection: an easy, picturesque one and a more challenging ride in the heart of the peninsula. Indeed the two routes can be joint for an all-encompassing experience, starting out in relaxing fashion, then discovering what the Tihany wildlife has to offer.

ROUTE FOR THE FAMILY

As the title suggests, this ride is for anyone who can turn the pedals. Whatever type of bike you ride or shape you're in, you'll have no trouble getting from Balatonfüred to Tihany and back on the scenic cycleway. The route along the lakeside is flat, every meter is on well-maintained asphalt. It could be the same on the way back from the Tihany pier, but there is also a detour into the hills of the peninsula, offering supreme scenery for those who are willing to do some climbing.

Facts and tourist attractions:

The route begins at the lakefront in Balatonfüred, which is a peaceful ride in April, but can be quite busy and hectic in the summer season. The cycleway widens somewhat towards the Tihany Peninsula, which makes the problem with pedestrians less of an issue. While enjoying the spectacular view over the lake, there are plenty of opportunities to stop for a drink or taste local specialities like the "lángos". The cycleway

continues all the way to the pier after the main road junction which most take to the top of the hill. You can choose the latter and head to the iconic hilltop Abbey, but there is an alternative route halfway up the peak along the hillside. Any of these will offer a great experience with plenty of opportunities to rest, enjoy the scenery with an ice-cream as a treat. As expected, visiting the Abbey and shouting into the abyss to hear the echos provides the greatest reward, followed by a ride on the famous cycling route along the plateau of the peninsula. This also provides the opportunity to visit the Lavender House and other cultural attractions along the way.

You can download the route using this QR-code: <https://www.balatonbike365.hu/en/tour/tandemtura-tihanyban>

GPS:



ROUTE PLAN

- **Distance:** 23km (14,5 mi)
- **Elevation gain:** 150m (460 ft.)
- **Terrain:**
 - - low-traffic public road: 6,2km (4 mi)
 - - public road: 2,6km (1,5 mi)
 - - paved cycleway: 14,2km (9 mi)
- **Difficulty:** easy



ROUND TRIP ON THE TIHANY PENINSULA

While the opportunity to plunge in the lake and the short distance might suggest an easy, leisurely bike ride, this route is somewhat difficult due to the rugged terrain. But for the experienced rider, it offers a chance to experience the extraordinary beauty of the Tihany Peninsula.

Facts and tourist attractions:

This round trip inside the peninsula can be ridden in both directions, however the climbs are more difficult in the southerly direction and less steep heading north. The adventure begins on the cycleway parallel to road 71, then we turn right towards Tihany. Before reaching the old town, we take another right turn to encircle the inner lake. This part of the route is quite scenic: there is the formidable-looking Abbey towering above the lake. It's a good idea to take a detour to the famous tourist sites on the hilltop before continuing the journey on the road along the plateau. We ride a small part of the main road across the peninsula, then take a right turn onto the southern panoramic path which leads us into the heart of Tihany. Soon we are riding on dirt roads then on a concrete down to the lake shore in Sajkod. This road is quite steep, so it's best to take the descent slowly. A cozy paved road takes us to the beach where we find plenty of opportunities to rest, drink and eat the obligatory "lángos". As the farm roads through the vineries can become quite muddy following a rainstorm, this route should only be ridden in dry weather conditions.

You can download the route using this QR-code: <https://www.balatonbike365.hu/en/tour/tihanyi-kortura-strandolassal-lila-j>

Possibility to link up the journeys

Riding from Balatonfüred along the lakeside cycleway to the pier in Tihany as a warmup, followed by the inner lake roads is certainly a viable option. It's also possible just to encircle the lake without descending down to Sajkod, as well as cutting across the peninsula on forestry and farm



roads back to the old town. Alternatively Sajkod can be reached on paved roads as well. Another tip is the road to Füred through Aszófő along the road 71, and this alternative has a junction up to the signposted BB365 route which takes the rider back to Füred on dirt roads rather than the standard lakeside cycleway.

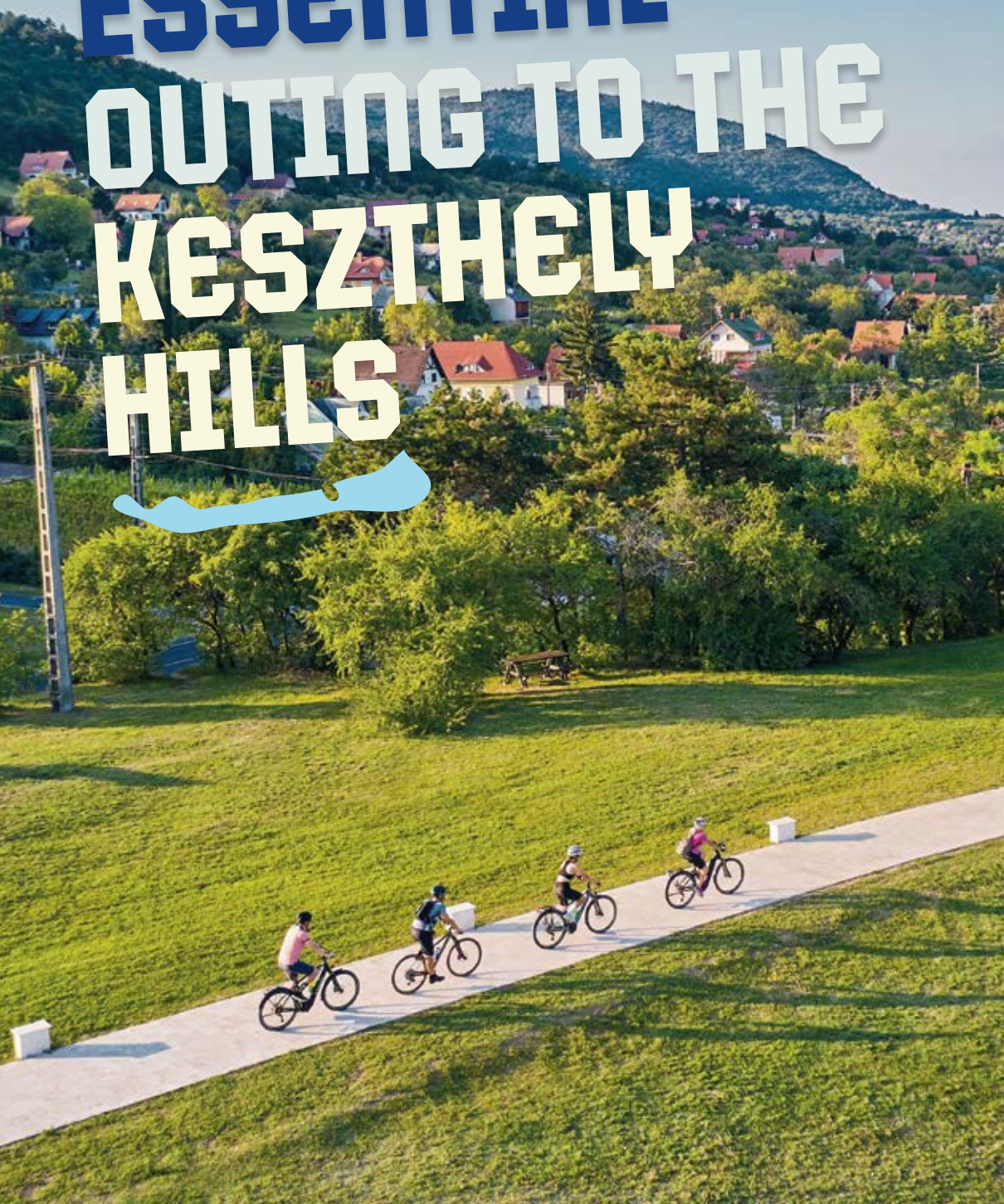
GPS:



ROUTE PLAN

- **Distance:** 14km (9 mi)
- **Elevation gain:** 284m (900 ft.)
- **Terrain:**
 - - low-traffic public road: 4km (2,5 mi)
 - - forest and farm road: 7,6km (5 mi)
 - - paved cycleway: 2,2km (1,5 mi)
- **Difficulty:** intermediate

ESSENTIAL OUTING TO THE KESZTHELY HILLS





The hilly country around Balaton's top holiday resort is ideal place for cycling touring, and all the major sights in Badacsony can be accessed from Keszthely. A never-ending discovery awaits: there is always the possibility to add another attraction, either a cultural landmark, a hilltop viewpoint or both!

THE ROUTE TURN BY TURN:

A 50 km (31.5 mi) ride on flattish paved roads is not an overly difficult challenge, but when two lengthy rises are included, it becomes a physical test. So, it makes sense not to start the tour too brisk, warranted by the fact that the first few miles run along gorgeous pedestrian area in downtown Keszthely. It would also be rude to bowl along. The cobblestone streets lead us onto a cycleway which lead along the city's suburbs all the way to Cserszegtomaj. This village marks the start of the first major climb with some rather steep section near Rezi. Our low-traffic road joins the main road towards Sümeg, so more vehicles can be expected until we reach Zalaszántó. From here the route heads in a South-East direction to Várölg, finally in a quiet setting. On the way to Vállus vehicles becomes even more scarce adding to the peaceful mood. Leaving this charming village takes us onto a short steep ascent, as the asphalt road changes to gravel. Fortunately the surface is solid enough to make it mud-free even after extended rain. The gravel turns back to tarmac just prior to Büdöskút, and a bike rest stop marks the highest point of the tour. We descend along a traffic free but rather rough paved road into a forest, and takes the rider to Balatonyörök. There we turn onto the main cycleway around the shores of Lake Balaton. The lakeside setting is reflected in the type of traffic we experience: in high season the paved bike path is occupied by leisure riders as well as pedestrians, thus more vigilance is required. This cycleway takes us back all the way to Keszthely.

SIGHTS ALONG THE WAY:

We call this itinerary "essential" for a reason. There are plenty of sights along the way, located not far from the roads. For one, the historical centre of Keszthely merits some investigation, especially the Festetics Castle which can be found at the end of the pedestrian precinct. It's only a 200 m detour, and you'll have a chance to experience one of Hungary's most beautiful



baroque buildings along with a garden worth a visit on its own. The next main sight is at a Rezi, the village renowned for its unique hilltop fortress. There is a small road leading up to an unparalleled view of the region. The fortress



ROUTE PLAN

- **Distance:** 51km (31.5 mi)
- **Elevation gain:** 705m (2315 ft.)
- **Terrain:**
 - - paved public road: 25.5km (16.5 mi)
 - - dirt road: 10km (6 mi)
 - - paved cycleway: 15km (9 mi)
- **Difficulty:** intermediate

lacks a major historical narrative, but the vibe is truly unique, and it's completely invisible until the moment we reach the gate. Be aware that the last half mile of the climb is pretty steep, so most will have to resort to pushing the bike. From the hilltop mountain bikers have the possibility to descend along a hiking trail by following the blue signs all the way to Zalasántó. This village is known for the Peace Stupa, one of the chief Buddhist monuments in Europe. A meditative state can be experienced just by climbing to the shrine: it's a steep road but very rewarding. In order to accomplish an uphill triple crown, we can tackle a shorter one just after Búdöskút to the Padkú viewpoint. The rider is rewarded with a stunning view over the lake as well as the surrounding hills. There is an additional viewpoint along the route near Balatonyörök, finally without the need to pedal uphill! When it

comes to stunning panoramas, the lakeshore section of the itinerary has a special one in store: the Saint Mihály Chapel in Vonyarcvashegy. This is the one and only fishermen's chantry in Hungary, built in 1729 by forty Balaton fishers after having survived a terrible storm. Once we tackle the steep road to the top, the chapel offers one of the most spectacular vistas over the lake. After such a testing ride, there is no better reward than one of the county's finest ice-creams. The perfect place is the Bringatanya in Gyenesdiás, just prior to the arrival in Keszthely!

The route is featured on the BalatonBike365.hu website under "Keszthely Hills basic tour (green A)" (<https://www.balatonbike365.hu/turautvonnal/keszhelyi-hegyseg-alapkorzold-a>) and switching the language to English, or using this QR code.

GPS:



Few bike tours allow riders to be as close to nature as the 65 km (40 mi) route between Keszthely and the Kis-Balaton region. It's an extraordinary environment where cyclist occasionally need to stop in order to discover places like the famous Buffalo Reservation or walk along the Kányavári Bridge to the enchanting island within the lake.





**CLOSE TO NATURE
ON ROADS AROUND
KIS-BALATON**

Settings and Road Conditions:

Due to the considerable distance, the ride is more suited to experience cyclists, or those looking for a good workout while admiring wildlife. However, riders with lesser endurance needn't worry, since the route is mostly flat with only a few daunting climbs near the end. And even these hills can be circumvented using alternative roads. Further rejoice to would-be adventurers is relatively the few number of kilometres in traffic. By "traffic" we not mean roads

ROUTE PLAN

- **Distance:** 65km (40 mi)
- **Elevation gain:** 390 m (1280 ft.)
- **Terrain:**
 - - paved public road: 13 km (8 mi)
 - - dirt road: 26 km (16.5 mi)
 - - paved cycleway: 26 km (16.5 mi)
- **Difficulty:** intermediate

open to motor vehicles, but also pedestrians and casual cyclist along the lakeside streets. Instead, this route features an abundance of well-maintained gravel roads on the lake's embankments as well as less busy bike paths and low-traffic county roads. This allows riders to concentrate on the surroundings, ride abreast while chatting to fellow cyclists. This abundant scenery and rich wildlife certainly encourage such conversations.

If you want to avoid steep hills:

For those fearing the ascents coming after Szentgyörgyvár, there is a shorter and less steep road alternative in the direction of Sár-mellék detailed on the BalatonBike365 website. To take this road, one has to turn right off the embankment and follow route 12A. From Sár-mellék there are two ways to return to the original route. This first is on a traffic-free narrow stretch of asphalt (route 122) and re-join near Szentgyörgyvár. In this case the rider only avoids the steepest of the climbs, and a few minor ones have to be dealt with. Alternatively by following the 121A route sign towards Alsópáhok almost all the elevation gain is negated, however this road tends to have heavier traffic.

Route description, chief sights:

A well-maintained cycleway takes the rider from the bike centre in Keszthely to Balatonszentgyörgy, then there is a left turn to another bike path. From Vörs the cyclist enters complete tranquillity, as the route enters a long gravel road





along the lake's embankment. At the one third point of the trip we arrive at the famous Buffalo Reserve in Kápolnapuszta. It's a good idea to get off the bike and walk along the nature trail to take some photos. From the reserve, a paved road takes us to two other main attractions. Just passed Balatonmagyaród is the petting zoo, a must visit for families with children. There we turn left onto an enchanting tree alley that leads us to Kányavári Island: the trip would not be complete without a walk on the renowned bridge. We remain on the cycleway alongside the embankment heading northward, first on asphalt then on a gravel road. Another extraordinary attraction awaits us in Zalavár, the Kis-Balaton House. In we choose to pay a visit, we need to briefly leave the embankment toward the main road. Hilly country greets for the rider from Szentgyörgyvár to Hévíz. Finally we have the chance

to experience one of Hungary's most attractive cycleways from the world-famous spa town back to Keszthely. Enjoying an ice-cream next to the Festetics Castle is an ideal way to end to this extraordinary bike trip.

The route is featured on the BalatonBike365.hu website under "Just naturally – Kis-Balaton bike tour in the footsteps of wildlife" (<https://www.balatonbike365.hu/turautvonal/csak-ter-meszetenes-en-a-kis-balaton-elovilagat-bemutato-tekeres>), and switching the language to English, or using this QR code.

GPS:



Short Outing on South Shore to Kishegy

Some say, the best feature of Balaton's south shore is the view of the spectacular north side. This bold statement is surely up for debate, however few would dispute that Kishegy offers the most stunning panorama over the famed Badacsony. This obviously comes at a price: no matter how we tackle the lookout point, it's going to be a steep, gruelling ascent.



ABOUT THE ROUTE:

This itinerary is a little different from the other since it's not featured on the BB365 website and has not QR-code for the download. For this very reason we are not specifying an exact route. Once the signs are placed on the roadside, the route will be posted on BB365, hopefully in 2024. The main reason for the ambiguity is the construction a new tarmac cycling road from the vineyards down to Balatonboglár which will make this destination road bike friendly. As most riding on south shore is on pavement, riders will be able jump on their slick tire bike, and experience this stunning lookout too. It can be ridden as part of a longer tour, or as short outing for those who wish for a special experience in lieu of the dullness of the lakeside cycleway. Incidentally Kishegy is an important point in the South Balaton wine route, many calling it the Badacsony of the south. Since our itinerary cov-



ROUTE PLAN

- **Distance:** 20km (13 mi)
- **Elevation gain:** 150-250m (500-800 ft.) depending on the route
- **Terrain:**
 - paved public road: 5km (3.5 mi)
 - dirt road: 10km (6 mi)
 - paved cycleway: 5km (3.5 mi)
- **Difficulty:** intermediate

ers only around 20km (13mi), it can be accessed from a wide variety of lakeside resorts, while the resulting bike tour remains within the realms of most riders.

THE ROUTE TURN BY TURN:

We start from the lakeshore in Balatonlelle. Once through the bustling tourist area and on the other side of road number 7, we take a right turn and head in the direction of Látvány. Only a kilometre (1/2mi) onward we take another right turn and we're on the newly tarmacked panorama cycle way mentioned in the introduction. This road takes us directly to Kishegy, but for the moment the resurfacing ends at the wineries.





There is already a splendid view over the Badacsony hills as well as the vineyards below, however, the scenery can be bettered: there is a gravel road heading up to the lookout point. The way down will not disappoint either. Swirling through the beautiful vineyards with a full view over the lakeside is life-long gift. At the end of road we're back in the outskirts of Lelle. Instead of heading straight back to the lake, we'd recommend turning left towards Balatonboglár to visit its architecturally interesting look-out tower called Gömbkilátó. It's located on a much smaller hill, than Kishegy, yet the incline is similarly steep. It's a popular tourist destination, so securing the bike while conquering the metal structure is

a challenge. Bringing a lock for the trip is good idea. On the way back to the lakeshore we have to navigate the far from trivial highway and railroad line crossing. One in the resort area, we join the lakeside cycleway, and ride back to Lelle.

ACCESSIBLE FROM VARIOUS HOLIDAY RESORTS:

Kishegy can be accessed from many resorts on the south shore. Fonyód is only 15km (9mi) westward and Balatonszárszó is in a similar distance to the east. The complete distance from these towns will amount to 50km (30mi), attainable for most riders.

HIDDEN TREASURES ON THE SOUTH SHORE

Those who spend the holiday on the beaches, being familiar only with the ice-cream shops and buffets which line the shore of Lake Balaton, would be shocked by the scenery one could enjoy while riding the ridgeline of the Somogy hills. These ridges are situated perpendicular to the lakeshore, making an out and back route ideal. But be prepared: though the south looks flat, riding the surrounding hills is certainly not a piece of cake...



IN GENERAL:

This 53 km (28.5 mi) bike tour from Balatonföldvár runs mostly on pavement. The itinerary can be accessed using the BB365 app, making navigation a breeze, especially in the bustling resorts. It's good to know that the Bike Centre rents out pedelec e-bikes for those daunted by steep climbs along this route. Another possible hindrance is the presence mud on a scenic trail section, but this would typically occur after a severe rainfall. From the point of safety, we have more good news: the number of miles on crowded lakeside streets is kept to the bare minimum, instead the route takes the rider along paved forestry roads in a nonchalant environment.

THE ROUTE TURN BY TURN AND MAJOR SIGHTS:

We leave the centre of Balatonföldvár along the iconic allee lined with plane trees. This is in

fact the route of the Balaton cycleway. Prior to the ferry crossing, we turn right onto a short cycleway which ends at road number 7. After crossing the main road, the prolongation of the previous street leads us onto a paved forestry road. There is an underpass for the motorway, but other than that, one could not ask for a more ideal road to escape the hustle and bustle of the lakeshore. We might encounter a few vehicles, but it's essentially a closed road. Soon we find ourselves in deep forest which is certainly welcome during hot spells. After the initial ascent from the shore, the forest section of the road undulates. 10 km (6.5 mi) from the motorway, the first opportunity arises to rest and replenishing the lost calories in the shade. From the mid-forest rest stop we continue to roll along, finally descend to a farm called Jabapuszta. Not much to see, but a good place to refill the bottles. Caution should be taken when crossing the main road running through the village since



ROUTE PLAN

- **Distance:** 53km (33 mi)
- **Elevation gain:** 647m (2120 ft.)
- **Terrain:**
 - paved public road and cycleway: 46km (28.5 mi)
 - dirt road: 5.5km (3.5 mi)
 - gravel road: 1.5km (1 mi)
- **Difficulty:** intermediate

GPS:



vehicles travel at highway speeds and visibility is limited to the left. On the other side the forest road continues to the hunting lodge in Alirét. This place is true gem of the Somogy region with a picturesque lake surrounded by a flower garden, making it an ideal rest stop.

The lone dirt road section of the tour begins right at the lodge. Not a challenge in dry weather, but after prolonged rainfall the trail can get rather muddy. Then it's better to turn back and take a longer paved road towards Ságvár, then to Töreki. The trail first head up along a sandy section, then comes Cinege spring where we can fill our bottles once again. This dirt road ends in Töreki, where the official itinerary takes us on a village sightseeing tour. This can easily be curtailed by following the sign to the Kőhegy look-out tower.

Kőhegy is only a few miles away, but the road is so steep, that some will resort to pushing the bike. However, the reward for the extra effort is a breathtaking panorama with the Tihany Pen-

insula at our feet. The downhill from the view-point is a one-way road, nevertheless a tricky one due to the gradient. It's easy to get carried away, and there is a short gravel road section as well, so extra caution is required. This road takes us back to the parking lot on the forestry road where we previously rode. A few miles later we reach the lakeshore. While we make our way back to Földvár, opportunity arises to take some photos at the heart shape statue (Szíve szobor) on the promenade.

This scenic route can be accessed from places other than Földvár. For instance, Siófok is just a few miles east of Zamárdi, making it another ideal start and end point.

The route is featured on the Balaton-Bike365.hu website under "Hidden wonders of the southern coast - The opening ceremony tour of the South BB365 Port" (<https://www.balatonbike365.hu/en/tour/rejtett-deli-parti-csodak-a-balatonfolvari-bb365-port-megnyito-turaja>), or using the QR code.



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