

HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club
Greater Allegheny Passage – Gettysburg – Chesapeake &
Ohio Canal – Washington, DC
Pittsburgh, PA to Washington, DC

- Dates:** Sunday, October 3, 2027, 8 pm, orientation meeting.
Riding Monday, October 4 – Saturday, October 16, with
departure on Sunday, Oct 17 (lodging last night included).
- Leaders:** Jimmy Schroeder and Ron Finch
SAGs: Mayoma Pendergast, Kathleen Schindler
- Rating:** Advanced due to tour duration, gravel riding, and separation
from SAGs on trails. heartcycle.org/tour-ratings
- Distance/gain:** Approximately 516 miles and about 23,250 feet of elevation
gain over 11 riding days; 243 miles are on gravel or dirt; 4
days are road riding. Longest day is 75 miles.
- Riders:** 25 (not including leaders)
- Price:** \$3,900 (double occupancy). \$975 due at registration.
Balance due by July 5, 2027. Single supplement +\$1,950.
- Cancellation:** [Standard cancellation policy](#)

Travel insurance is strongly recommended.

OVERVIEW

“GAPCO” is an adventure indeed! This 2-week tour is a mix of gravel, dirt, and road riding. We will start and end in the large cities of Pittsburgh, PA, and Washington, DC, and in between is “rough” riding in rustic, rural, and wooded settings. The riding up the gentle grades of old railbeds of the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) trail is on crushed-limestone gravel. The surface on the descent towards Washington, DC, is more rugged, 2-track terrain on the old towpaths of the C&O Canal that parallel the Potomac River. The paved-road riding to Flight 93 National Memorial and Gettysburg and Antietam Civil War battlefields is quite hilly. A gravel bike with at least 32-mm tires would be the type of bike to bring or rent (one-way rentals are available in Pittsburgh). Riders wanting an adventure and challenge, please join us on this tour!

ITINERARY

Day 0: Sunday, October 3

Orientation, Drury Inn, meeting room, 8 pm.
Arrive early if possible as Pittsburg is a bike-friendly city to explore. Check out the classic funicular if you have time.

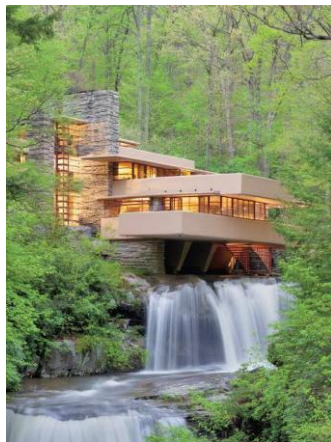


Day 1: Monday, October 4

Pittsburgh to Belle Vernon, PA

48 miles, 1,438 ft elevation gain, 22 mi gravel

We leave our hotel and start the tour at mile zero of the GAP trail at the junction of the three rivers—the Allegheny River, the Monongahela River, and the Ohio River. Biking trails along the Monongahela take us upriver through historical remnants of the old steel industry including crossing the Hot Metal pedestrian/bike bridge. In the afternoon, we start the gravel portion of the GAP rail to trail.



Day 2: Tuesday, October 5

Belle Vernon to Ohiopyle, PA

48 miles, 2,786 ft elevation gain, 33 mi gravel

We experience the GAP trail through idyllic countryside with an afternoon tour at the iconic Falling Water House by Frank Lloyd Wright. We spend the night in the burgh of Ohiopyle, PA.



Day 3: Wednesday, October 6

Ohiopyle to Somerset, PA

39 miles, 2,183 ft elevation gain, 26 mi gravel

More GAP trail scenery including the Pinkerton Low Bridge. We leave the trail in the afternoon to spend the night near Flight 93 National Memorial.



Day 4: Thursday, October 7
Somerset to Meyersdale, PA

41 miles, 2,826 ft elevation gain, 6 mi gravel

Of course, the best way to visit Flight 93 National Memorial is by bicycle. Country roads bring us back to the GAP trail and across the Sailsbury viaduct into Meyersdale, PA.

Day 5: Friday, October 8

Meyersdale to Cumberland, MD

33 miles, 1,056 ft elevation gain, 28 mi gravel

A short day to cross the continental divide (yes, there are two) and the Mason–Dixon line to finish the GAP

portion of the ride. GAP Trail highlights include the Keystone Viaduct and Big Savage Tunnel. Our downtown Cumberland hotel is bike centric located 15 ft from the path.



Day 6: Saturday, October 9

DAY OFF in Cumberland, MD

A rest day in Cumberland, MD

Located at the base of the Appalachian Mountains, the city of Cumberland was initially a military outpost manned by George Washington and became, “The Gateway to the West.” Activities include

the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, or a stroll through 19th- and early 20th-century architecture in the Main St. and Arts & Entertainment District, where you'll find a variety of unique boutiques, local cafés, art galleries, and cozy restaurants and pubs.





Day 7: Sunday, October 10

Cumberland to Town Hill, MD

42 miles, 1,739 ft elevation gain, 41 mi gravel

In Cumberland, we start the C&O Canal portion of the tour alongside the Potomac River. The C&O towpath is a National Historic Park with 74 locks

that once connected Washington DC to Cumberland. This day is primarily 2-track and includes passage through the reopened Paw-Paw Tunnel. We will have a shuttle to avoid the 8-mile, 1,000-ft climb up the ridge to the hotel on historic route 1, or you may ride it if you want.

Day 8: Monday, October 11

Town Hill to Hagerstown, MD

58 miles, 1,523 ft elevation gain, 15 mi gravel

After an 8-mile zip down the hill, we rejoin the C&O path for 15 miles. The tour will leave the locks and viaducts of the C&O path to make our way to spend the night in Hagerstown on the way to Gettysburg.



Day 9: Tuesday, October 12

Hagerstown, MD to Gettysburg, PA

43 miles, 3022 ft elevation gain



Hilly backroads take us to Gettysburg with a stop and tour at Eisenhower's home, another National Historic Site. We are staying in the town of Gettysburg.

Day 10: Wednesday, October 13

DAY OFF Gettysburg Battlefield

Unsupported route: 16 miles, 744 ft elevation gain

Tour the National Historic site leisurely by bike, always a treat.



Day 11: Thursday, October 14

Gettysburg to Antietam to Shepherdstown, WV

57 miles, 4,142 ft elevation gain

A seriously hilly day to return to the C&O Trail. We ride through Antietam National Battlefield, another quiet trip through history to rejoin the Potomac River and the C&O Canal trail.

Day 12: Friday, October 15

Shepherdstown, WV to Georgetown, MD

75 miles, 780 ft elevation gain, 70 mi gravel

The path becomes a mix of crushed limestone and pavement as we ride downstream through Harpers Ferry, the Great Falls of the Potomac, and multiple lock houses and viaducts to the trail's end and our hotel in Georgetown, suburban Washington, DC.





Day 13: Saturday, October 16

Washington, DC

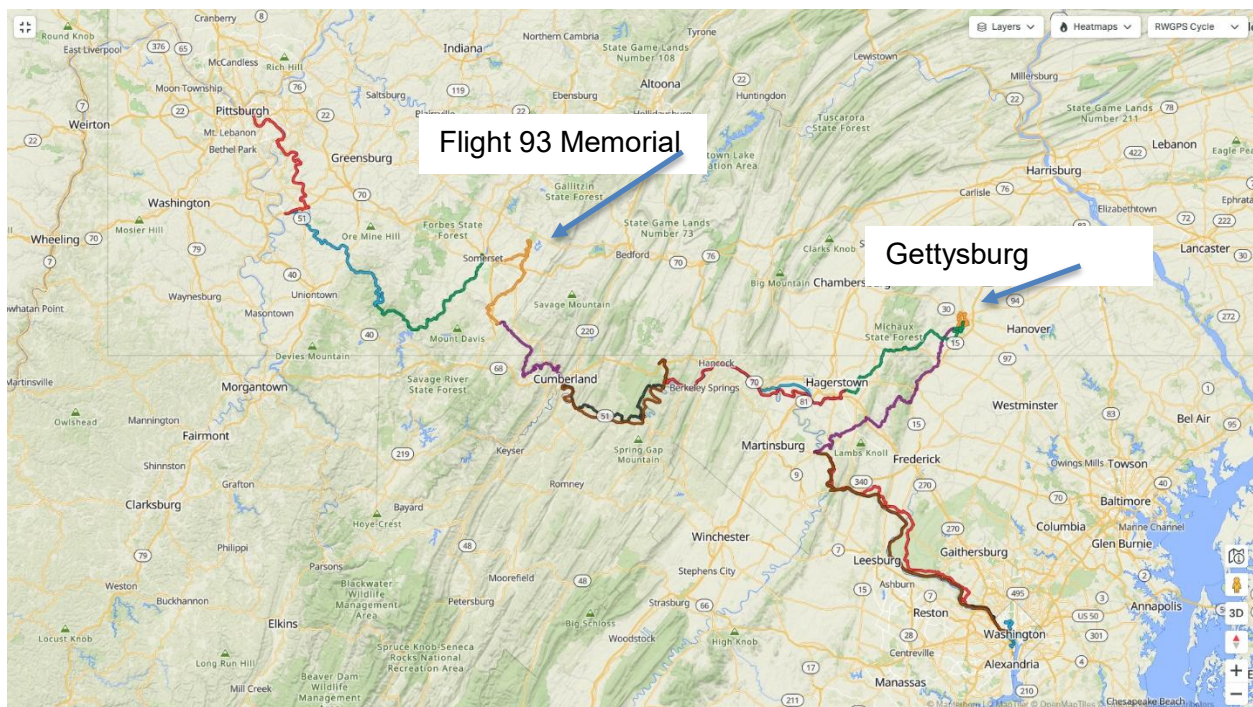
24 miles, basically flat

A scenic bike tour of DC at your own pace including Georgetown, the White House, National Mall, Capitol Hill, and Jefferson and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorials. Time to stop and tour anywhere along the way. Our Crystal City, VA, hotel is across the Potomac near Ronald Reagan National Airport.

Day 14: Sunday, October 17

Departure day. Our hotel is 1.7 miles from Ronald Reagan National Airport.

Tour route map



Days 1–3 and Day 5 on GAP trail

Days 3–4 to Flight 93 National Memorial

Days 6–8 and Day 12 on C&O Canal trail

Days 9–11 to Gettysburg and back

Day 13 in Washington, DC

TRAVEL INFO:

- As a point-to-point tour, if you intend to fly, arrange to fly to Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT) and back from Ronald Reagan National Airport (DCA), Arlington, VA.
- One-way bike rentals for the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) and C&O Canal trails are available in Pittsburgh through local shops or regional partners. Contact the tour leaders for more info.

SPECIAL NOTES:

- Gravel bike with at least 32-mm tires advised.
- An emergency derailleur hanger and a multi-tool are recommended.
- For those traveling from the Denver metro area, the Sprinter will be available to transport bicycles (\$300 roundtrip). A lottery may be needed if the demand exceeds available space.
- Electric bicycles and tandems, please read the answer to the FAQ: *Are e-bikes and tandems allowed on HeartCycle tours?*
<https://www.heartcycle.org/frequently-asked-questions>

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