

Cycling in Waverley and Woollahra

CYCLING by the bays or beaches of Sydney's fabulous eastern suburbs is a great way to spend a morning or a day with friends or family. To show you the best the area has to offer, here are five rides, graded for varying levels of experience and fitness. The routes are all circular, and though the descriptions suggest a start/finish location, you can easily choose your own depending on transport. Good lunch spots abound.

Rides summary

Ride	Route	Grade	Rider suitability	Km
1	Bondi Beach to Rose Bay	Easy	Recreational/family	11 km
2	Paddington to Darling Point	Easy	Recreational/family	7 km
3	Centennial Park to Bronte	Easy	Recreational/family	11 km
4	A grand tour of Sydney's East	Moderate	Recreational/fitness	32 km
5	Sydney Olympics Road Circuit	Moderate/Hard	Fitness/sport riders	17 km

Cycling in Sydney's East

Sydney is built on a huge slab of sandstone kilometres thick, tilted upwards at the coast, cracked and eroded over millennia and surrounded by the slowly rising waters of the Pacific Ocean. In prehistoric times when sea levels were even higher than now, the Dover Heights/Vaucluse peninsular was an island and the lowlands between Bondi Beach and Rose Bay were another entrance to present day Sydney Harbour.

The high ridgelines of Sydney's East run in a roughly north-south direction extending finger-like into Sydney Harbour. Oxford St follows another east-west ridge, the watershed between the Harbour and Botany Bay. Most of the older, and nowadays busier, roads follow these ridges (Oxford St, Carrington Rd, Ocean St and Bondi Rd).

In this part of Sydney it is impossible to avoid hills so a bike with at least 10-speed gears is strongly recommended. It may be hilly but it's worth the effort to take in the spectacular ocean and harbour views and some exhilarating downhill runs.

Rides 1 to 4 use local and less-trafficked streets, shared paths and bike lanes where possible. Ride 5 has been designed for road bike riders and this route follows major roads with a good riding surface but with traffic at peak times.

All rides use public roads and paths, so a degree of caution is recommended. You never know who or what may be approaching around the next tight corner, so take care especially on shared paths! On shared paths use your bell to warn walkers of your approach and on footpaths dismount and walk your bike.

Though every care has been taken with these ride descriptions you should always exercise care and personal judgement when using the routes described. If in doubt dismount and resume riding once you are sure of your path ahead. Once you have travelled each route a few times you won't need to use the map or instructions and can devote your attention to the route and its attractions.

The recommended travel direction for each ride is based on a number of factors: expected morning peak traffic flows; one-way streets; hill gradient; and, ease of turning at intersections. These rides are not recommended for travel in the reverse direction.

The best time of day to do all rides is early morning or weekends when traffic volumes are lowest and the sun's rays are less harsh. We recommend you avoid the "drive to work/school" weekday peaks of 8-9.30am and 3-7pm. Bondi Junction and Bondi Beach can experience high levels of motor vehicle traffic on weekends particularly during the warmer months.

1. Bondi Beach to Rose Bay

This 11km ride visits famous Bondi Beach, cuts back across to Rose Bay on Sydney Harbour, and heads up to Bondi Junction via Bellevue Hill local streets. The ride starts and finishes in the Oxford St Mall not far from Bondi Junction railway station.

The first part of the route follows the eastern-most part of the *City to Surf Cycle Route*, a marked and signposted cycleway being currently developed by Waverley, Woollahra and City of Sydney Councils to give bike riders an alternative to busy Oxford St between Bondi Beach and the Sydney CBD.

Head east through the shopping centre to the Bondi Rd intersection and then follow the shared path on the southern side of Old South Head Rd to Bon Accord Av. From here the route is on-road via local streets to Campbell Pde at Bondi Beach. Caution is needed at all intersections and the two short sections of shared path between Orr St and Penkivil St and along Martins Av (use narrow left-side path) between Penkivil St and Simpson St.

At Campbell Pde cross this busy four-lane road via the refuge crossing and follow the path down past the skateboard rink to the Bondi Beach Promenade. Enjoy the beach sights and watch out

for off-leash dogs. At the far end of the Promenade just before the North Bondi Surf Lifesaving clubhouse take the path to the left to Campbell Pde and cross via the lights into Ramsgate Av. There are plenty of excellent cafés in this area and a swim at Bondi is a good idea if the weather and surf conditions are good.

From here the route leaves the ocean and takes local roads to the Harbour traversing the relatively flat land from Bondi Beach through to Rose Bay. Once high sand dunes it was developed into a medium-density residential area in the middle of the 20th Century. To cross busy Old South Head Rd at the end of The Avenue, turn right onto the path and use the pedestrian lights a short way up the road. Retrace your path on the other side of Old South Head Rd and join Newcastle St through to the Rose Bay shops.

Cross New South Head Rd at the lights and use the northern side path along this busy road to Vickery Av. At the northern end of Vickery Av follow the brick path around the foreshore to the Lyne Park ferry wharf past Catalina restaurant and a number of sea planes moored at the small wharf. Rose Bay was Sydney's first international airport in the days when large sea planes flew out from here on their way to Europe and beyond.

Keep to the water's edge from here around to the O'Sullivan Rd lights, cross New South Head Rd and ride the bicycle lanes to the Plumer Rd shops. Turn right here and after a break at one of the patisserie, confectionery/ice cream shops or cafés, ride up this beautiful fig tree-lined road to Salisbury Rd. Turn left and begin the steady 80 metre climb up Bellevue Hill through some of the most expensive real estate in the country. At Drumalbyn Rd turn left and follow this winding residential street up past terraced mansions and blocks of 1920's flats to Victoria Rd. You are now on top of the ridge – well done!

Follow Victoria Rd around to Old South Head Rd. On the way take a short scenic detour to Bellevue Hill Park (on the left side just after the school) for fabulous views north to Manly on the Harbour and east to the blue Pacific and Bondi Beach.

At Old South Head Rd follow the left side path through to the Oxford St Mall in Bondi Junction.

2. Paddington to Darling Point

This easy 7km ride explores Paddington and the well-to-do harbour-side residential areas of Edgecliff and Darling Point. The ride starts and finishes at Oxford St opposite the sandstone-walled Paddington Army Barracks.

Start downhill on Glenmore Rd and ride through to the Five Ways shops. Take a right turn at the roundabout and ride up Broughton St between the Royal Hotel and Gusto Café. Follow Broughton uphill into Hopetoun turning left into Paddington St.

Paddington St is one of the most magnificent streets in the East. Lined with plane trees and small leaf figs, it is an excellent example of a 19th Century Victorian terrace neighbourhood lovingly restored by its most recent residents.

At the end of Paddington St turn left down Jersey Rd. This is the highest point on the route. Follow Jersey Rd through the stop sign and roundabout past the Lord Dudley Hotel to Thorne St (turn left opposite the Goethe Institute). Thorne St is lined with renovated workers' cottages. Follow it down past the street closure to New McLean St which runs behind the Edgecliff Centre to join New South Head Rd opposite Darling Point Rd.

Follow Darling Point Rd past magnificent mansions and high rise apartment buildings almost to the end. Turn left into Thornton St and follow this downhill to join New Beach Rd at the roundabout. New Beach Rd runs beside the Rushcutters Bay marina with views across the water to the Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House.

At the New South Head Rd lights cross into Mahoney Lane and join the path which runs under the railway viaduct through to South St and Glenmore Rd. Turn right and follow Glenmore Rd through to Oxford Street (note: Glenmore Rd takes a right turn at the far end of Trumper Park).

From here it's a steady uphill ride via the Five Ways to Oxford St. There are many cafés in this area and the coffee is good. Lovers of French pastries will definitely want to call into La Gerbe d'Or patisserie, a Paddington highlight for 24 years. It's on the left at the Gurner St intersection before the Five Ways.

3. Centennial Park to Bronte

This 11km tour links the green expanse of Centennial Park and Queens Park to the blue Pacific at Bronte. The ride starts on Grand Drive at the Park Kiosk, always a good place for a coffee or a sit-down lunch.

Follow Grand Drive eastwards to Robinson Drive turning left to exit the park through the York Rd gates. Outside the gates turn right and follow the path along the right side of York Rd to Queens Park Rd. Cross York Rd and ride along this road in bike lanes through to Charing Cross intersection.

Along the way there is a steep climb up past Queens Park. Pause at the top of this hill to catch your breath and to admire the views westwards to the Blue Mountains.

Cross Bronte Rd and Carrington Rd at the lights and ride almost to the end of Victoria St. Turn right into Prospect St and a short distance along turn left down a short lane which runs through to Henrietta St. Turn right into Henrietta St and travel along the bright green contra-flow bike lane to Gipps St.

A left turn into Gipps St puts you at the top of the hill down to Bronte. At the end of Gipps take care at the roundabout and continue downhill on Bronte Rd past historic Bronte House to the café strip at the bottom of the hill facing the park and surf beach. Bronte Park is a favourite family picnic spot during the summer months. There used to be a range of shops at Bronte but nowadays it's café latte and focaccia wall to wall.

Just past the pedestrian crossing, turn left into the beach car parking area and follow this uphill around the headland. Pre-1961 the Bronte trams used this cutting through to Macpherson St. At Macpherson St continue uphill in bikelanes to the roundabout at Leichhardt St and turn right.

Follow Leichhardt St to the Bronte Rd roundabout and continue up Bronte Rd to the Charing Cross intersection. Turn left into Queens Park Rd and follow it downhill to Centennial Park via the York Rd gates. Turn left inside the gates and complete the 4km Grand Drive circuit.

4. A grand tour of Sydney's East

This 32km circuit takes in all the major sights of Sydney's East. It starts and finishes at the Oxford St Mall in Bondi Junction. Ride up Oxford St and enter Centennial Park via the Woollahra gates opposite Ocean St. Inside the park follow Loch Av (and then Robinson Drive) downhill through the avenue of mature fig trees turning right onto Grand Drive near the York Rd gates.

Ride half of the Grand Drive circuit before exiting the park via the Robertson Rd gates and onto the Federation Way shared path. This wonderful tree-lined avenue takes you past The Entertainment Quarter to Anzac Pde. At the lights cross the busway and turn northwards across Lang Rd onto the magnificent shared path shaded by huge fig trees.

At the top of Anzac Pde turn right, cross the busway, and follow the Moore Park Rd shared path a short distance to a signalised crossing. Wait for the lights, cross into Greens Rd and ride through to Oxford St. At the lights turn right and ride a short way to the Glenmore Rd lights. Turn left here.

Travel a block down Glenmore Rd to Campbell Av and follow this street downhill turning right at the roundabout onto Boundary St which, as the name suggests, is the border line between the City of Sydney and Woollahra Councils. Boundary St leads into McLachlan Av and at the second set of lights turn right into New South Head Rd. Soon after the lights hop the kerb and take the path through the park down to the water's edge for fabulous views of the marina and the Harbour beyond.

If you need a break at this point, try the café in the middle of the park for coffee and cake. Continue east along the seawall to New Beach Rd and follow this around the edge of Rushcutters Bay to the roundabout at Yarranabbe Rd. Veer right and head up the short sharp hill continuing along Thornton St to Darling Point Rd. Turn right here and as you catch your breath, catch a view

to the right of “The Swifts” one of the few remaining grand mansions which once used to dominate the Darling Point peninsular. Most of these have been demolished to make way for high rise apartment buildings – only their gate posts remain.

Darling Point Rd follows the ridgeline so it's easy going to the roundabout at St Mark's Church. Turn left here and head downhill turning left into Ocean Av at the roundabout. Take care on this hill as the corners are sharp and the road off-camber.

Ocean Av heads down to the harbour. Turn right into Williams St before Steyne Park and follow this through to New South Head Rd. Save some energy for the short steep pinch up to the traffic signals. New South Head Rd through to Rose Bay is heavily trafficked during the afternoon peak. Heading in this direction on early morning rides you may have to contend with platoons of tradies in their utes speeding on to their 7am job starts at the renovated mansions of Vaucluse.

After the O'Sullivan Rd lights take the left turn into Lyne Park and follow this road around past the Rose Bay ferry wharf and Catalina restaurant to join the waterfront path through to Vickery Av and New South Head Rd – a pleasant waterside break with a chance to spot a pelican or two.

After the Rose Bay shops (more cafés and watering holes here) is Heartbreak Hill – well known to runners and walkers on the popular City to Surf run, held in August between Sydney CBD and Bondi Beach. After the road bends past Kambala School the grade eases, so that you can even enjoy the magnificent harbour views westwards to the Bridge and Opera House.

Turn left into Vaucluse Rd at the lights and head down to Nielsen Park, one of Sydney's harbour-side treasures. The entrance to the National Park and its delightful harbour swimming enclosure is at the bottom of Greycliffe Av. A kiosk on the beachfront serves takeaway food and coffee as well as restaurant meals.

Continue on from the Nielsen Park entrance past walled waterfront mansions on Coolong Rd, Wentworth Rd and to Fitzwilliam Rd. Just before Parsley Rd, Fitzwilliam veers right to climb the hill. At this point on the left side of the road carry your bike down a short set of steps (signposted) and walk down the path to the timber-decked suspension bridge over Parsley Bay.

On the other side of this bridge the path zigzags up the steep slope. This is a walking track so walk your bike up to the road. At the top of the hill veer left and join The Crescent through to Hopetoun Av. Turn left here and ride on to Watsons Bay. Just before the Old South Head Rd roundabout turn left into Marine Pde and then right into Clovelly St. At the bottom of the hill turn left on a path which leads down to the waterfront. Follow this path along the water's edge in front of the Watsons Bay ferry wharf and the famous Doyle's fish café and hotel.

At the end of the waterfront promenade take the ramp up to Cove St. The golden sands of Camp Cove Beach can be reached off Victoria St at either end. During the summer weekends a kiosk operates at the eastern end of the beach.

The route south to Bondi Beach begins with a section of path along the cliff tops past The Gap. To get to this path take the road into HMAS Watson (hard left at the gates on Cliff St). Just before the naval base boom gates turn right through a gated road into the National Park. Ride up this road past the function centre, always taking the left branch road, until behind the two storey "Old Officers' Mess". Here you will see a path off to the left leading to the cliff edge.

This narrow walking path (wheel your bike) is spectacular and follows the cliff edge past old gun emplacements to Old South Head Rd. There are two sets of steps along the way and fabulous views out to sea and over the Harbour to the north and west.

Back on Old South Head Rd it's an easy ride along the top of the hill south to the New South Head Rd roundabout. Immediately after the roundabout turn left into Young St and continue downhill beside historic South Head Cemetery. At the bottom of Young St there's a walking path which starts on the right side of the road. Because it's very steep with sharp hairpin bends, we recommend you walk your bike while you enjoy the scenery through Diamond Bay Reserve. As you rejoin the road at Craig Av you will notice the start of the coastal cliff top boardwalk. This is not recommended for bikes. There are hundreds of steps!

Follow Craig Av up through the street closure into Military Rd. At the t-intersection turn right into Kobanda Rd followed by a left turn into Peel St. Follow a southerly path (with a couple of left-then-right turns) through to Kippara Rd. Just before it joins Military Rd, turn sharp right into Loombah Rd and follow this around to join Military Rd further on. There are fantastic views of Sydney Harbour and the Eastern Suburbs.

Military Rd down to Bondi Beach is a quick downhill run on a rough and narrow concrete road which requires caution especially on the bends. Ride through famous Bondi Beach on Campbell Pde (in bike lanes). The beach is a great place for a swim or coffee and a bite to eat at one of the many cafés, bars or restaurants.

Just through the large roundabout at the southern end of Campbell Pde veer over to the left and ride up the path to the refuge crossing opposite Lamrock Av. Cross into Lamrock and ride up the bicycle contra-flow lanes past the roundabout and turn left into Rickard Av.

You are now on the *City to Surf Cycle Route*, a marked and signposted cycleway being currently developed by Waverley, Woollahra and City of Sydney Councils to give bike riders an alternative to the busy main roads between Bondi Beach and the Sydney CBD. This route follows local

streets and zigzags up the 80m hill to the Bondi Junction Oxford St Mall via Rickard Av, Barracluff Av, Francis St, Wellington St, Edward St, Martins Av, Orr St, Anglesea St, Watkins St, Bon Accord Av, Old South Head Rd and Oxford St.

5. Sydney 2000 Olympics Road Circuit

One of the most exciting events to take place in the Eastern Suburbs was the 2000 Olympic road race. The 17km circuit between Moore Park and Bronte Beach was ridden by an elite group of international riders (men - 14 times, women - 7 times), and enjoyed by thousands of cheering Sydneysiders and visitors.

It's still possible to ride almost all of this route in same direction as it was ridden in 2000. The route described below is slightly shorter than the original because a few one-way streets, which were reversed for the race, were then changed back to their original direction.

This route uses mostly main roads and is suitable for experienced sporting/fitness riders. Road surfaces are generally good though this depends on weather and maintenance. Recommended coffee/rest stops are at Bronte Beach, Bronte Rd shops, Waverley, Centennial Park Kiosk and, on weekends, the coffee cart near the duck ponds off Parkes Drive in the centre of Centennial Park.

The route starts and finishes outside the entrance to Aussie Stadium in Driver Ave, Moore Park. Remnants of the timing strip can still be seen on the asphalt.

Turning points are as follows: start in Driver Ave; turn left into Moore Park Rd; turn left into Anzac Pde from Moore Park Rd; turn left into Alison Rd from Anzac Pde; turn left into Darley Rd from Alison Rd; left turn into Bronte Rd from Macpherson St; turn right on Bronte Rd at Leichhardt St roundabout; turn right on Bronte Rd at Albion St; turn left into Queens Park Rd from Bronte Rd; turn right into York Rd from Queens Park Rd; turn left (into Centennial Park) then right into Robinson Dr from York Rd; turn sharp left into Carrington Dr from Loch Av; turn sharp left into Parkes Dr from Carrington Dr; turn right into Grand Drive from Parkes Dr; exit Centennial Park at the Robertson Rd gates; turn right into Robertson Rd immediately after the gates followed by a left turn into Lang Rd; turn right into Driver Ave from Lang Rd; follow Driver Av to finish.