

Hood River Harvest Ride

<http://www.hrharvestride.com>



Ride Description

Looking up from your bike, as you pass through shafts of golden sunlight filtering between the fruit trees lining the road, breathe deeply of the wonderfully clean, crisp, fall mountain air and crest the hill. Wow! There is a take-your-breath-away-view of the northern glacial face of Mt. Hood. Welcome to the Hood River Harvest Ride.

The Hood River Valley has unique topography. Shaped progressively by volcanoes, giant glaciers and the Columbia Floods, the terrain has tremendous variety. Low traffic farm roads designed for horse drawn travel (i.e. not too steep) meander through the valley and include flat stretches, moderate hill climbs and exciting descents. Superb riding conditions bring the elite Mt. Hood Cycle Classic, a professional road race, to the area every year. Often sunny, when Portland and Vancouver are cloudy, the bike riding is excellent here in the fall.

The Hood River Harvest Ride features four loops, each with its own appeal. The loops—easy, moderate, and challenging—can be combined or done separately, as fitness allows. Along the way are points of interest: farm stands, two museums, a brewery and a winery. Purchases made while on the ride at Fruit Stand Pick-up points will be delivered back to the starting point for free. Non-riders can get in the on action via the valley's own Mt. Hood Scenic Rail Road which stops in Parkdale, one of the rest stops for the Hood River Harvest Ride.

Ride Suggestions

Beginning Riders – The scenic **Green** Loop is a good choice for beginning riders. Most of the route is on low traffic farm roads, and while it does have some hills, they are not steep or long. Attractions along the way include the Hood River Winery, The Fruit Heritage Museum www.tffhs.org and the much loved Rasmussen Farm Stand.

Average Riders - If you are like most of us (average riders) we suggest starting your ride from the Hood River Fairgrounds and head up the valley on the **Blue** Loop. You will get warm soon with a gradual hill climb that gets more intense until you get to the Upper Hood River Valley, where the ride flattens out. You will see the morning sun on the north face of Mt. Hood which is an awesome sight and you will also be travelling on one of the busier traffic sections of the route, Highway 281, early in the morning when traffic and pear harvest trucks are fewer.

If you started around 8:30 from the Hood River Fairgrounds you will get to Parkdale, a very sweet little community, around 10 or 10:30. The shops will be open, you can get a coffee and can cruise the town or visit the Hutson Museum.

<http://www.byways.org/explore/byways/61400/places/61466/>

After Parkdale and visiting a few fruit stands the ride back to the fairgrounds will bring you in around lunchtime and ready to eat the lunch we will have prepared for you.

After lunch you can tackle the shorter **Green** Loop, do a little wine tasting at the Mt. Hood Winery and enjoy the lower Hood River Valley. Once back at the fairgrounds you will have ridden: **43.6 wonderful miles and experienced 3400 feet of elevation gain.**

Very Fit Riders – Depending on the workout you desire, in terms of mileage and elevation, you can combine the Loops to arrive at your own level of challenge. If you are very fit the **Blue** and **Green** Loops will be easy for you but also contain some of the best riding so don't miss them. Consider adding either the **Red** Lost Lake Loop for a big elevation challenge or substitute the **Orange** Cooper Spur Loop for an easier day; add them both if you want to go really big!

Ride combinations (in suggested order) include:

- Blue, Orange and Green Loops: **61.7 miles and 5050 feet** elevation gain.
- Blue, Red and Green Loops: **74.2 miles and 6550 feet** elevation gain.
- Blue, Red, Orange and Green Loops: **92.3 miles and 8200 feet** elevation gain.
- To make it a **100 mile Century Ride** we suggest adding an 8 mile addition (4 miles up, 4 miles back) to the Orange Loop. After descending from Cooper Spur Village to meet Highway 35, ride south, uphill on Highway 35 for 4 miles - then back to rejoin the Orange Route on Highway 35 headed north. This is a cool section of Highway 35 and worth the additional miles.

Competitive Riders – If you want to ride with some of the Valleys best local riders - and you can hang on - they will be passing though by fairgrounds sometime between 8:30 or 9 AM and doing an undetermined circuit of more than 50 miles. These are folks who ride with Mt. View Cycles, one of our sponsors. They are willing to have visiting riders join in but don't even think about riding with these "Cat 3 and 4" riders unless you are in great shape. You will be on your own in terms of support although we will have some lunch you will be able to take with you. Ask to be hooked up with this pack at the registration table on Saturday morning.

To meet up with family or friends on the Train – The Mt. Hood Rail Road www.mthoodrr.com arrives in Parkdale at **12 noon and stays for an hour (confirm)** before departing. If you ride the **Green** Loop (16 miles) starting around 8:30 AM you should be back at the Fairgrounds about 10:30. From there you can ride the **Blue** Loop and you should be able to make it to Parkdale (13 miles) by 12:00 to meet up with your family and enjoy lunch in Parkdale with them. Start riding earlier if you are a slower rider.

Traffic Levels and Pear Harvest Cautions – About 30% of the ride is on semi busy secondary roads, because we can't avoid them. They will not be nearly as busy as Willamette Valley traffic

however. The Pear Harvest will be in full swing, please follow all traffic safety laws and ride single file, this will make it easier for the trucks to get to the fruit packing facilities.

- **Green** Panorama Loop has almost no busy traffic
 - **Blue** Parkdale Loop has two semi busy sections, on Highway 281 and a short stretch on Highway 35. The earlier you travel on Highway 281 the less traffic there will be.
 - The **Red** Lost Lake Loop will have extremely light traffic.
 - The **Orange** Cooper Spur Loop will have light traffic except for the section on Hwy. 35.
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Weather & Clothing

Sunrise: 6:57 AM Sunset: 6:57 PM

Average low 44 F

Average high 73 F high

Most years there is no rain on this date.

Typical Conditions - There could be early morning clouds which clear soon as the day warms. A wind shell over a short sleeve jersey will be sufficient for warm blooded riders. For those who need more warmth add a vest or long sleeve jersey and vest underneath your wind shell. You will shed these layers as the temperatures increase and you meet up with an elevation challenge.

Current Hood River Weather & webcam:

<http://webpages.charter.net/hoodriverweather/weather.htm>

National Weather Service - Hood River:

<http://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?site=PDT&llon=-121.541247&rlon=120.493747&tlat=46.159584&blat=45.112084&smap=1&mp=0&map.x=2&map.y=107>