

THE BEST ROUTES

The Rowan County bicycle route system consists of five numbered routes and a system of unsigned connectors. This 226-mile system links the cities, towns, points of interest and recreational areas via the more lightly traveled roads favored by local bicyclists. Rolling hills, interspersed with occasional short steep climbs, characterize the terrain throughout the county.

Convenience stores are scattered along the routes, with restaurants and other services available in most towns. The only bicycle shop in the county is in Salisbury. All roads that form the routes are paved. Most roads have low traffic volumes throughout the day, but some have higher volumes of traffic during commuting hours.

The routes are marked with signs like the one shown here. The route descriptions below will help you plan your rides. Follow a single route or combine the routes to create your own bicycle tour. Either way, the natural beauty, charm and history of Rowan County are yours to discover.



ROUTE 1 (29 MILES)

This north-south route connects the downtown areas of Salisbury, Granite Quarry, Faith, Rockwell and Gold Hill. The route begins at **Ellis Park**, north of Salisbury and winds south through a residential area to join the 1-mile Salisbury Greenway Trail. A short ride through another residential area brings you into the heart of **Salisbury**. Take a break at one of the inviting parks; follow tree-lined streets through historic districts; visit the museums; explore the shops downtown; or stop in at a restaurant or cafe for a tasty treat.

As you head south out of town, take extra care as you navigate Old Concord Road, the complex intersections at I-85 and Jake Alexander Boulevard and the busy stretch of Faith Road into Granite Quarry. Visit the museums and historic structures along the way: **Old Stone House/Rowan Museum in Granite Quarry**; the **Rockwell Museum** (only open Sundays from 2-4pm); and

Lower Stone Church. Or, take a side trip to climb **Dunn's Mountain** for a spectacular view of the county. The remainder of the route follows lightly traveled country roads, past farms and woodlands, swinging into Cabarrus County before ending in **Gold Hill**. Linger there for a picnic in the park or a stroll along the rail-trail. Browse through the quaint shops or grab a bite to eat. It's an experience you will remember.

Route 1 intersects with Route 5 in Gold Hill and creates a nice loop back into the Salisbury area.

ROUTE 2 (23 MILES)

Meandering through the southern portion of Rowan County, this route connects **China Grove** to **Dan Nicholas Park**. Near the half-way point, the town of Faith provides a good place to stop for a bit of refreshment. This route intersects with the other four numbered routes, providing many opportunities to customize your ride. Services are limited outside the towns, so be sure to take supplies with you.

ROUTE 3 (32 MILES)

Beginning north of Salisbury at **Ellis Park**, the route follows quiet country roads south to **China Grove**. Stop there for lunch or a break and learn about the area by taking the walking tour through town. The route continues to the county line area where it intersects with Cabarrus County Bike Route 2.

Extra caution is advised on a busy 1 mile section of Mooresville Road (NC 150) and in the vicinity of China Grove.

ROUTE 4 (36 MILES)

Starting at **Ellis Park**, this route swings west through Cleveland, a good place for a break, and ends in **China Grove**. Ribbons of lightly traveled roads take you through lush farmlands where corn, tomatoes and soybeans grow in abundance. Remnants of old homesteads dot the rolling terrain and serve as reminders of the agrarian past. The portion of the route along Woodleaf Road has more traffic during commuting hours. Two historic churches lie just off this route: **Third Creek Presbyterian Church** and **Thyatira Presbyterian Church**. About two-thirds of the way along the route, you can take a side trip to **Sloan Park** to tour the museum at **Kerr Mill**; follow the Historic Tree Trail; or just take a break and enjoy the beautiful surroundings. In China Grove, the route intersects with Routes 2 and 3. Several unsigned connectors intersect with this route at various points along the way, creating many trip options.

ROUTE 5 (26 MILES)

Starting in **Salisbury** and ending in **Gold Hill**, this north to south route accesses several county parks and other recreation areas. Heading east out of Salisbury, the route connects to downtown **Spencer** via quiet neighborhood streets. Several commercial buildings remain from the time when Spencer was home to the Southern Railway Company's repair facility. Many now house restaurants and shops. Before leaving Spencer, be sure to tour the **North Carolina Transportation Museum** where the various periods of transportation history are depicted.

From Spencer, the route turns south through East Spencer. Traffic volumes are higher in this area, especially along Andrews Street, to the crossing of I-85. Continue south along Bringle Ferry Road which has wide paved shoulders to the turn-off to **Dan Nicholas Park**. It's a great place to spend a few hours or to camp and use the park as a starting point for day trips. Watch out for vehicles pulling boats in this area.

The remainder of the route runs through lovely wooded areas and farmlands just west of High Rock Lake and the Yadkin River. A privately owned marina on the lake provides many services, including camping. Two other great places to take a break along the waterway are **Eagle Point Preserve** and the **High Rock Lake Dam** area, both just off the route. At this point, choose to follow the designated route or follow the unsigned connector loop along the river to **Gold Hill**.

UNSIGNED CONNECTOR ROUTES (81 MILES)

The unsigned connector routes run between the designated routes and create opportunities to extend those routes. Countless loop rides can be created to explore the far-flung corners of the county.

BICYCLING ROWAN

Cycle back in time with a ride along the quiet roads of Rowan County and through its charming towns. Restored homes, churches and commercial buildings bring the past to life and the many museums throughout the county provide an opportunity to experience the lifestyles of the time. Intriguing names such as Gold Hill, Granite Quarry and China Grove kindle a curiosity to visit those places to learn about days gone by. Rowan County's natural beauty is showcased in the many city and county parks, where there is an abundance of things to see and do — from panning for gold, to hiking to just relaxing in a beautiful spot. Choose one of the designated bicycle routes or combine several to create your own trip — either way, you'll discover many treasures along Rowan County's back roads.



BICYCLE LAWS

In North Carolina, the bicycle has the legal status of a vehicle. This means that bicyclists have full rights and responsibilities on the roadway and are subject to the regulations governing the operation of a motor vehicle. Under North Carolina law, bicyclists are required to:

- Ride on the right in the same direction as other traffic.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Use hand signals to communicate intended movements.
- Equip each bicycle for night riding with a front lamp visible from 300 feet and a rear reflector that is visible from a distance of 200 feet.

In addition, cyclists under the age of 16 are required by North Carolina law to wear a bicycle helmet approved by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission.

SAFETY TIPS

- Ride defensively and in a predictable manner.
- Wear a bicycle helmet every time you ride your bike.
- Avoid riding at night, if possible.
- Wear bright-colored clothes to increase your visibility.
- Be courteous to other drivers.
- Keep traffic flowing by helping motorists pass safely.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RESOURCES

Rowan County Convention & Visitors Bureau
204 East Innes Street, Suite 120
Salisbury, NC 28144
Toll Free: 800-332-2343
Phone: 704-638-3100
Fax: 704-642-2011
www.visitsalisburync.com

NC Transportation Museum
Phone: 704-636-2889
www.nctrans.org

Division of Bicycle & Pedestrian Transportation
1552 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1552
Phone: 919-807-0777
Fax: 919-807-0768
bikeped_transportation@dot.state.nc.us

Rowan County Parks & Recreation Department
Toll Free: 866-767-2757
Phone: 704-216-7800
Fax: 704-639-0947
www.rowancountync.gov (click on Departments, then Parks & Recreation)

Rowan County Planning Department
Phone: 704-216-8588
www.rowancountync.gov (click on Departments, then Planning & Development)

Visit the Division's website www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle for maps of cross-state, regional, and local bicycle routes, additional information on laws and safety tips, a calendar of bicycle events and listings of North Carolina bicycle shops and clubs.



This map was produced in conjunction with the Rowan County Planning Department. Funding for this project was provided through the NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program. 10,000 copies of the map were printed on recycled paper at \$0.37 a copy and are distributed free of charge. Published January 2009.

BICYCLING ROWAN COUNTY



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

WELCOME TO ROWAN COUNTY

ROWAN'S HISTORY

The history of modern-day Rowan County dates back 10,000 years to the time when Native American tribes, primarily the Sapona and the Catawba, lived in this area. In the 1600s, Europeans first came to the area as they began trading with Native Americans and transporting goods from established colonies in Virginia to the developing areas to the south and west. This route would become known as the Great Indian Trading Path. By the 1740s, when the first wave of European settlers arrived (the Scotch-Irish and the Germans) this route and the Great Pennsylvania Wagon Road — which stretched from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, into the Piedmont region of North Carolina — made settling Rowan County easy.

The population grew so quickly that in 1753, Colonial Governor, Matthew Rowan, signed a bill creating Rowan County. Initially Rowan included the entire northwestern sector of North Carolina, with no clear western boundary, but its size was reduced as a number of counties were eventually split off. Two years later, in 1755, Salisbury, named after the cathedral town in England, was established as the county seat. Because of its strategic location near the Yadkin River, which provided access to ports in South Carolina, and its position as the gateway to the western frontier, Salisbury became a major center of trade and politics in North Carolina.

Rowan County has an important place in American history both before and after the American Revolution. It is the boyhood home of Daniel Boone, an American pioneer and hunter. Boone's frontier exploits made him one of the first folk heroes of the United States. Rowan County was site of battles during both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. In the fall of 1780, while British General Cornwallis occupied Charlotte, North Carolina Militiamen took up posts along the Yadkin River, defending this critical trading center. During the Civil War, Union General Stoneman briefly occupied Salisbury.

After the Civil War, Rowan County continued to grow. The coming of the railroad boosted Rowan County's wealth and helped it transform from a primarily agrarian economy to one based on manufacturing. In 1896, the Southern Railway Company chose Spencer as the halfway point between Washington, DC and Atlanta, GA for its

largest steam locomotive servicing facility. The town that grew up around the new facilities was named after Samuel Spencer, the first president of Southern Railway. Today the facility is a state historic site preserved as the North Carolina Transportation Museum. Despite a substantial shift towards retail and professional jobs in education and healthcare, manufacturing remains the largest segment of Rowan County's economy.

THE PERFECT CYCLING DESTINATION

Rowan County, in the heart of the North Carolina Piedmont, is just a short drive from both Charlotte and Greensboro. The county seat, Salisbury, is a stop on Amtrak's Crescent, Piedmont and Carolinian train routes. Whether arriving by car or train, or setting out from your front door, Rowan County's rural character and many historic sites and recreation areas make the area a perfect cycling destination. Come bicycle along quiet rural lanes and through charming towns to discover the rich and diverse history of the area and to savor the natural beauty of Rowan County's waterways, forests and farmlands.



EXPLORE ROWAN

HISTORIC SALISBURY

From the Revolution to the Civil War to the Victorian era, history is still alive along the streets of Salisbury. The town was established in 1755 at the crossroads of two major eighteenth century roads through North Carolina, the Trading Path, an old Indian trail and the Great Wagon Road. From its beginnings as a wild and woolly frontier town, Salisbury grew and prospered with the coming of the railroad in 1855 and became firmly established as a center of commerce and industry for the region.

Salisbury's early history is reflected in the numerous restored homes and commercial structures featured on a 2-mile, self-guided downtown walking tour. Two museums along the tour route, the *Rowan Museum* and the *Josephus Hall House*, provide glimpses into the lifestyles of the early 1800s. There is also a self-guided *African-American Heritage Trail* that chronicles the historic moments, great leaders and lives of generations of African-Americans who lived, worked and contributed to the industrial, artistic, cultural and spiritual life of the Salisbury community. From April through October, experienced guides lead trolley tours through Salisbury's Historic Districts that highlight preservation efforts and profile the famous and infamous personalities that make Salisbury a place "where the past is still present."

Additional points of interest include:

- *Salisbury National Cemetery* was dedicated in 1874. It is the final resting place of veterans of all wars, including 11,700 union soldiers who died at Salisbury Prison during the Civil War.
- *Salisbury Train Depot* was built in 1908 in a Spanish Mission style and still serves as a passenger rail station.
- *Livingstone College* houses the W. J. Walls Heritage Hall which is a repository of African and African-American history, artifacts, literature and records.



- *Catawba College Eco-Preserve* encompasses 189 acres of natural wetlands, ponds and walking trails as well as a wildlife garden with over 160 different native plant species.
- *Hurley Park* with its quiet pathways and charming gazebos invites you to linger and enjoy the woodlands, streams and gardens within its 16 acres.
- *Salisbury City Park* has a community center, concession stand, walking trails, ball fields, tennis courts, picnic shelters, a fishing lake, two play areas and more within its 41 acre site.

The Salisbury Visitor Center can provide a wealth of information on the museums, heritage trails, parks, trolley tours and other attractions. Visit them at 204 E Innes Street, call them at 1-800-332-2343 or access their website at www.visitsalisburync.com.

SPENCER/NC TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

Located in the heart of downtown Spencer, the museum spans 13 buildings and 57 acres. The buildings date from 1896, and were once Southern Railway Company's steam locomotive repair facility, known as Spencer Shops. Learn how transportation progress helped build North Carolina by exploring exhibits of antique wagons, locomotives, rail cars, automobiles and airplanes or take a train ride around the site. Admission is free. Hours of operation vary. www.nctrans.org

GRANITE QUARRY

Incorporated in 1901, Granite Quarry is known worldwide for its unique pink granite. The *Old Stone House*, built there in 1766, is the oldest standing structure in Rowan County. Furniture and artifacts from that period grace the house and can be viewed Saturday and Sunday, from 2pm to 5pm, April through November. A small fee is charged.

VILLAGE OF GOLD HILL

Gold was first discovered in Rowan County in 1823. The Village of Gold Hill grew up around the industry and soon became a thriving metropolis. By 1845, 3,000 miners were working for the Gold Hill Mines. Catch a glimpse of that "golden" past along the main street with its many restored structures, including the post office, two general stores



and several homes which now house shops and restaurants. A two-mile walking trail through nearby *Gold Hill Mines Historic Park* features several mining sites, the jail, the assay office, the powder house and the ruins of what was probably the largest gold refining plant in the East. Visit www.historicgoldhill.com to schedule a guided tour of this historic locale or to learn more about its fascinating history.

CHINA GROVE

Incorporated in 1889, China Grove was named for a sizeable stand of chinaberry trees that was a landmark for Native Americans. It was established before the Revolution and served as an early stagecoach stop. A walking tour of 20 historic structures has been created to showcase its history. The *China Grove Roller Mill* opened in 1883 and operated there for over 100 years, serving farmers who came to sell their grain, to purchase farm necessities and to socialize. The mill has been renovated and houses a museum featuring antique farm tools. The Roller Mill is open on the second Sunday of each month from 2pm until 4pm. www.hist-society-srowan.com/roller-intro-page.htm

ROWAN COUNTY PARKS

Ellis Park — This park offers 26 acres of recreational activities, including trails, ball fields, tennis courts, volleyball, horseshoes and bocce. There are also picnic shelters, a game room and a playground. The park is open daily from 9am to dusk and admission is free. For more information visit www.rowancountync.gov, click on Departments, then Parks & Recreation, then Ellis Park.

Dan Nicholas Park — This 425-acre complex features a nature center and aquarium, two miles of trails, a petting zoo, gem mining, a carousel and miniature train, miniature golf and a 10 acre fishing lake. The Park also has a camping area, open year round. The park has no general admission fee; however, there are fees for camping, picnic shelter rentals, and other special activities. The park is open daily from 9am to dusk. www.dannicholas.net

Eagle Point Preserve — The 200 acre Preserve on High Rock Lake was established to provide a natural habitat for native fauna and flora. Visitors can hike 4.5 miles of trails to vistas of the lake and wildlife observation points. The Preserve is open daily, but hours vary according to season. For more information visit www.rowancountync.gov, click on Departments, then Parks & Recreation, then Eagle Point Nature Preserve.

Kerr Mill at Sloan Park — This large park features the historic Kerr Mill. Built in 1823, the mill was the source of flour and cornmeal for settlers in the western part of the county. Today a museum, Kerr Mill is filled with milling equipment and artifacts from the early 1800s. Sloan Park has nature trails, picnic shelters and playing fields. It is open year round from 9am until dusk.

Dunn's Mountain

Nature and History Preserve — Hiking up the trail that extends from Dunn's Mountain is no easy task, but once atop, the view is well worth the trek. Picnic tables and restrooms are available at the park. Hours of operation vary according to season.

HISTORIC CHURCHES

Several historic churches can be found throughout Rowan County. *Grace Lower Stone Church* was established in the Rockwell area in 1745; the present building was constructed in 1795 from local field stone. *Organ Lutheran Church* was erected in 1794 and is the oldest Lutheran structure in North Carolina. *Thyatira Presbyterian Church*, located in Millbridge, dates from 1749; the current structure was built in 1860. It is the oldest known Presbyterian Church in North Carolina. *Third Creek Presbyterian Church* was organized in 1751; the building that is still used today was built in 1835. *Third Creek Church* is the oldest continuously used rural church in North Carolina.

