

Gravel Rides Cairngorms & Perthshire



Details

By: Markus Stitz
 Publisher: Vertebrate Publishing
 Price: £15.95
 ISBN: 9781839812613

Having spent a fair bit of time enjoying the spectacular Cairngorm mountains and beautiful Perthshire countryside on foot, I was excited to see what this guide had to offer for exploring by pedal power. Written by route design guru and Bikepacking Scotland founder Markus Stitz, it has something for everyone. The 15 routes are divided into 'easy', 'straightforward' and 'challenging' categories.

As a parent with two young children, I was delighted to see that the shortest route – a loop through Kindrogan Forest near Pitlochry – is less than 15km. In total, more than half of the routes are under 35km, giving

plenty of options for those looking for smaller-scale adventures.

There's also enough here for more experienced off-road riders; all four of the challenging routes are over 50km, include more than 700m of ascent and take you into remote territory. The Dunkeld Moorlands & Big Tree Country route immediately caught my eye, thanks in no small part to the stunning photography that brings each route to life. Taking in remote heather-clad moorland, historic native woodlands and stunning loch-side views, it's typical of the varied experiences these carefully curated routes offer.

Each route description includes an Ordnance Survey map, turn-by-turn route description, points of interest and nuggets of historical information, and recommendations for local eateries and places to stay. There's also a GPX file for every route.

With a 20-page introduction that includes responsible access, bike and equipment choice, safety and local beasts (beware the midge!), this guide has everything you need to explore the stunning heart of Scotland on a gravel or mountain bike. Time to plan a trip!

Sam Waller



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Snails Around France Details

By: John and Kate Bosley
 Publisher: Austin Macauley
 Price: £9.99
 ISBN: 9781035860128

This is the story of retired couple John and Kate Bosley's slow tandem ride

around France. But it's also a love letter to France, an inspiring story of Kate's courage in taking on this challenge despite her visual impairment, and a witty, romantic tale of adventure and curiosity in retirement. It's got me talking to my partner about riding a tandem around France!

Duncan Dollimore



Riding My Bike Details

By: Mike Raine
 Publisher: Paragon Publishing
 Price: £14.99
 ISBN: 9781787920668

As a new bikepacker, I picked this up looking for inspiration. Most of

the book is written in diary fashion with a smattering of monochrome photos; I'd love a hand-drawn map as well. The rides are around Mike's native Wales, plus Scotland, mostly in the rain. Mike is a flora and fauna expert (I must learn more of this), although the book has fewer tips than I expected.

Ian Small



The Escape: The Tour, the cyclist and me Details

By: Pippa York & David Walsh
 Publisher: HarperCollins
 Price: £22
 ISBN: 9780008510602

During three recent

Tours de France spent travelling together as journalists, David Walsh interviews Pippa York, formerly pro cyclist Robert Millar. York reveals how they coped from an early age with the dysphoria of being male, how cycling forced them to hide their true feelings, and the tumultuous journey of transitioning. York and Walsh also talk racing, but it is the resilience of Pippa York that stands out.

Dominic Kelly