

Bicycling



It took 15,000 years for the volcanic landscape at Craters of the Moon to evolve. It cannot be fully seen and appreciated from the window of an automobile! Slow your pace and you will notice details of this strange world which you might otherwise miss. Travelling by bicycle is a perfect way to explore the bizarre formations here.

Craters Loop Drive

The seven mile road through the monument winds past cinder cones, lava flows, and spatter cones. It provides access to trails to tree molds, caves, and other points of interest. Most of the Loop Drive consists of gentle hills. However, there is a mile-long uphill grade from the beginning of the one-way loop to the Inferno Cone parking area. There is also a very steep, short downhill

section just beyond the Spatter Cones. The only bicycle rack is at the Tree Molds parking area. If you want to hike from other locations, you may lock your bicycle to some other object.

Bicycling is permitted on the Loop Drive and on Goodale's Cutoff north of the highway. Bicycles are not permitted on hiking trails.

Why No Bikes on Trails?

The trails in the park were designed as foot paths. They are not wide enough to safely accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. Many have abrupt edges which could cause a biker to careen off onto the sharp lava. These factors make riding bicycles on trails hazardous.

Please do not ride off-road! Off-road cycling not only destroys plants, but also results in rapid erosion of the fragile lava. Tracks remain as scars in the cinders for years to come.

For Your Safety

Please travel in the same direction as traffic on the one-way section of the Loop Drive. The road is narrow, so ride single file. Wear a helmet for protection in case of falls. And remember that it is hot, dry and windy here. There is no water beyond the campground, so fill your water bottle before you start.

Fees

- \$2 for visitors aged 17-61 entering the monument by bicycle.
- Free to U.S. citizens age 16 and under.
- Families entering the monument by bicycle are not charged more than \$4 per group.

Goodale's Cutoff

A dirt road north of US Highway 20/26/93 offers a more remote experience for those who want to get away from cars and people. It also allows you to experience a part of Craters of the Moon history.

In the mid-1800s, tens of thousands of emigrants passed through southern Idaho on their way to fertile farmland and gold fields to the west. The traffic peaked in 1864 when 40,000 people travelled the Oregon Trail about 100 miles south of here.

In 1862 an emigrant party asked guide Tim Goodale to lead them west from Fort Hall on an alternate route. They thereby hoped to reach the gold fields

north of Boise more directly. Goodale led a group of 1,095 people, 338 wagons, and 2,900 head of stock safely from Fort Hall to Boise. It took this enormous wagon train, the largest to travel any section of the Oregon Trail, over three hours to get into or out of camp.

The pioneers travelled north from Fort Hall toward Big Southern Butte, passed near the present-day town of Arco, wound through the northern part of Craters of the Moon, went southwest to Camas Prairie, and ended at Fort Boise. This journey typically took two to three weeks. The road you will be riding on is one section of this historic trail.



Where to Go

Ride east from the visitor center on US Highway 20/26/93 for one half mile. Go around the locked gate on the north side of the highway and follow the dirt road along the base of Sunset Cone. Beyond the Group Campground, the main road continues west. A less-travelled track branches northeast and you may follow this route one half mile to the monument boundary. If you climb over the gate you can continue along the base of the foothills for 1.8 miles to a four-way intersection. Turn right and follow the road .8 miles back to the highway. Head west 2.4 miles to get back to the visitor center.

If you choose instead to continue west past the group campground on the main road, watch for the spot 1 mile farther where the fainter Goodale's Cutoff route heads west off of the main road. The road above this point is closed to visitors to protect the monument water supply, which comes from springs in this area. The stream corridors are also home to sensitive species of plants and animals, which could be disturbed by your presence. Please help us to protect these resources by respecting this closure.

Goodale's Cutoff continues for 1.5 miles to the monument boundary. You may go over the gate and continue along this dirt road, which rejoins the highway in 7.8 miles. Please close all cattle gates behind you. There are other dirt roads which branch off of this route. Stay on the most traveled road, which follows the base of the hills. Travel east on the highway for 3.4 miles to return to the visitor center.

Restrictions on Goodale's Cutoff

- The main road north of Goodale's Cutoff is closed to visitors.
- Overnight camping is not allowed.
- A free permit is required for bike travel. You may obtain one at the visitor center.
- For your safety, biking is not allowed during hunting season (October-November). Although hunting is not permitted in the monument, many people hunt just outside the boundary.

