Guide to the 3Cs Route

Everything you need to know to ride safely and make the most of your two-wheeled adventures.

3Cs CYCLING CAMPUS & CITY

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Table of Contents

I. What to Bring 2

2. Preparing the Bicycle 3

3. Clothing and Footwear 4

4.Nutrition and Hydration 5

5. Weather Conditions 5

6.Traffic Safety 6

1. What to Bring

Before starting any cycling route, it is essential to plan and organize the necessary items to ensure a safe and hassle-free ride. Having the right equipment can prevent complications and enhance your experience.

Documents:

- Identification document: Always carry a personal identification document, especially on routes involving other countries. It is mandatory and necessary in case of emergencies.
- Mobile phone (with navigation apps, if needed): Apps like Google Maps or Komoot can assist with navigation, particularly in poorly marked areas.
- Money or card for emergencies: Unexpected situations may arise, and having a payment method can be useful for small purchases like water or food.

Tools and Materials:

- Puncture repair kit (patches, tire levers, mini pump): A flat tire can be an issue, and a repair kit prevents long walks to a repair shop.
- Multitool for bike adjustments: Minor repairs, such as adjusting the saddle or tightening a loose bolt, may be needed during the ride.
- Spare inner tube (in case of a puncture): Sometimes, patching is not enough, and replacing the inner tube is necessary.

Accessories:

- Helmet (not always mandatory, but highly recommended): Studies show that wearing a helmet significantly reduces the risk of head injuries in accidents.
- Front and rear lights (for visibility): Essential to ensure that other vehicles and cyclists can see you, especially at dusk.
- Lock (for secure parking): Bicycle theft is a reality, and a good lock can prevent losses.
- Backpack or panniers (to carry items): The choice between a backpack and panniers depends on the load and desired comfort.

Extras:

- Electric bike charger (for long routes): Planning charging points is crucial to avoid running out of battery.
- Power bank (to charge your phone): Keeping your phone charged is vital for navigation and emergencies.
- Physical map or GPS (in case signage fails): In remote areas, signage may be scarce, making a map essential.
- Insect repellent: Some areas may have a high insect presence, and repellents can help.

2. Preparing the Bicycle

A well-maintained bicycle prevents mechanical failures and improves efficiency. Checking critical components before setting out is a good practice.

- **Tires:** Regularly check the pressure and adjust according to the terrain. Improper pressure increases effort and reduces stability.
- **Brakes:** Test the brakes and adjust if necessary. Worn-out brakes compromise safety and increase accident risks.
- **Chain:** Lubricate the chain to reduce wear and improve pedaling efficiency. A well-lubricated chain can reduce friction by up to 30%.
- **Battery:** For electric bikes, fully charge the battery before departure and check the range to avoid surprises.
- **Saddle:** Adjusting the saddle height ergonomically improves posture and prevents muscle pain.
- **Lights:** Test the lights and reflectors, especially for night rides.

ABC QUICK CHECK

AIR:

- PINCH YOUR TIRES WITH YOUR FINGERS TO CHECK FOR PROPER INFLATION.
- USE A BICYCLE PUMP TO REACH THE RECOMMENDED PSI (FOUND ON YOUR TIRE).

BRAKES:

- ENSURE BRAKE PADS ALIGN WITH THE WHEEL RIMS.
- TEST BRAKE LEVERS FOR PROPER ENGAGEMENT (THUMB WIDTH BETWEEN LEVER AND HANDLEBAR).

CRANKS, CHAIN, AND CASSETTE:

- CHECK CRANK ARMS' ROTATION AND BOLT TIGHTNESS.
- ENSURE THE CHAIN ISN'T LOOSE OR SKIPPING GEARS.

QUICK RELEASES:

ENSURE QUICK RELEASES ARE TIGHT AND POINTED TOWARD THE BACK OF YOUR BIKE.

CHECK:

- SPIN YOUR WHEELS TO FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH YOUR BIKE.
- BE ALERT TO ANY UNUSUAL SOUNDS OR FEELINGS FOR POTENTIAL MAINTENANCE NEEDS.

DO IT REGULARLY, DO IT YOURSELF, BICYCLE MAINTENANCE

- PUMP YOUR TIRES AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK TO THE RECOMMENDED PSI.
- CLEAN AND LUBRICATE YOUR CHAIN MONTHLY AND AFTER WET RIDES.

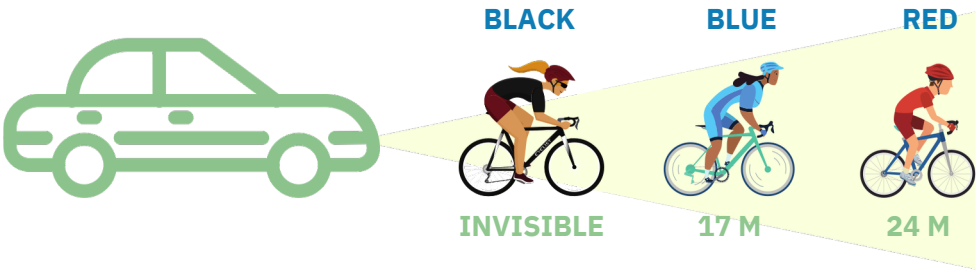
LEARN ABOUT BASIC BIKE MAINTENANCE:

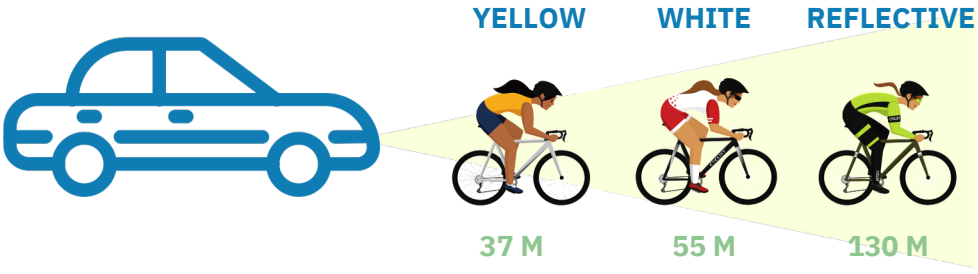
- CONSIDER TAKING CLASSES AT LOCAL BIKE SHOPS OR CO-OPS. SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BIKE SHOP MECHANICS FOR EXPERT ADVICE.

3. Clothing and Footwear

For a safe and comfortable ride, consider fabrics, fit, and weather conditions when choosing clothing.

- **Avoid dark clothing:** Dark clothes are less visible, especially at dusk or night. Prefer light colors (white or yellow) or reflective fabrics.
- **Breathable fabrics:** Enhance sweat evaporation and help regulate body temperature.
- **Fitted clothing:** Reduces air resistance and prevents fabric from getting caught in the chain.
- **Closed, non-slip shoes:** Provide better grip on pedals and reduce injury risks.
- **Layered clothing:** In variable climates, layers allow temperature adaptation without compromising comfort.





4. Nutrition and Hydration

The intensity of physical effort and distance covered significantly impact hydration and nutrition needs. Factors such as kilometers to be cycled, bicycle weight (including panniers or backpacks), and altitude gain should be considered.

Before the Ride:

- **Consume complex carbohydrates with a good glycemic load:** Whole grain bread, fruits, and vegetables provide gradual energy release.
- **Include proteins in your diet:** Proteins help muscle preparation and strengthening (e.g., lean cheese, natural yogurt, eggs).
- **Consume healthy fats:** Essential for energy in long efforts (e.g., avocado, nuts, olive oil). Avoid ultra-processed fats (bacon, sausages, ham).
- **Limit alcohol:** Reduces reflexes, affects balance, promotes dehydration, and hinders muscle recovery.
- **Stay hydrated:** Drink water, natural juices, or eat water-rich foods like fruits.

During the Ride:

- **Carry enough water:** At least 500ml per hour of cycling is recommended. Dehydration can reduce performance by up to 20% and cause serious health issues.
- **Prefer simple, fast-absorbing foods:** Energy bars, bananas, and gels help maintain energy levels, preventing dizziness, weakness, and muscle cramps.

After the Ride:

- **Consume proteins:** Essential for muscle recovery (e.g., chicken, fish, yogurt).
- **Include complex carbohydrates:** Rice, beans, potatoes, and vegetables help replenish energy.
- **Consume healthy fats:** Fatty fish, nuts, and olive oil restore beneficial fats.
- Hydrate properly: Replenish lost fluids with water or isotonic drinks.

5. Weather Conditions

Checking the weather forecast in advance helps ensure appropriate clothing and equipment.

- **Sun:** Sunscreen is essential to prevent burns. Sunglasses and light clothing help protect the skin and regulate body temperature.
- **Rain:** Choose waterproof, lightweight clothing to stay dry. Tires with better grip are crucial for wet surfaces.
- **Wind:** Fitted clothing reduces wind resistance, minimizing fatigue and making pedaling easier.
- **Cold:** Thermal clothing prevents hypothermia. Protect extremities like hands and feet with gloves and appropriate socks.

6.Traffic Safety

Bicycle accidents are more common than expected and can have serious consequences. Adopting safety measures and staying alert is crucial.

- **Be visible:** Use bright clothing, reflectors, and lights. Visible cyclists are 50% less likely to be involved in accidents.
- **Stay alert:** Pay attention to your surroundings and maintain a safe distance from motor vehicles.
- **Signal your movements:** Clearly indicate your intention to turn or change lanes.
- **Use protective gear:** Helmets and gloves are essential to reduce injury risks in falls.
- **Obey traffic rules:** Ride predictably, follow signals, and ensure your safety and that of others.
- **Avoid headphones:** Being aware of traffic sounds helps anticipate risks.

Conclusion: Cycling Safely

The 3Cs project aims to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for cyclists while promoting sustainable and accessible mobility. Proper preparation—from choosing equipment to following traffic rules—ensures a safer ride. Careful planning of nutrition, clothing, and bike maintenance minimizes risks and enhances performance. By following these guidelines, every ride becomes more efficient, comfortable, and secure, contributing to an active and conscious lifestyle.

We recommend reading the Toolkit: Urban and Non-urban Bicycle Use for additional information and daily cycling tips.