

Hello!

Welcome to the second annual Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder!

In just under a week, on Sunday, October 25th, you will embark on a scenic and epic bike ride along historic gravel roads in Northern Virginia. Located east of the Blue Ridge, in lush Loudoun Valley, these crushed rock roadways meander through awe inspiring beauty, past stone walls, grand estates, horse farms, wineries, bubbling creeks, tiny hamlets, and significant historical sites. Riding these roads is a sublime experience – like stepping back in time and cycling through history.

With over 300 miles of gravel road dating back to the early 1700s, Loudoun County Virginia boasts the largest and oldest intact network of gravel roads in the United States. When settlement in this area officially began in the year 1725, these roads were first used by mills and farms to get goods to market and by settlers to get to town and church. Today these special routes are used by residents, farmers, visitors, equestrians, and cyclists.

Inspired by the growing effort to save these historic gravel roads and by a thirst in the cycling community for unique events, EX2 Adventures created this ride to showcase this dwindling, priceless treasure and to raise funds and awareness for **America's Routes**, a group that is advocating to save these historic rural roads from being paved over by development.

THANK YOU for participating in Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder. We at EX2 Adventures are super excited for ride weekend and we hope you feel the same way!

Below are details for the day of the ride. This email is long and will take a few minutes to read but we promise, this information should be helpful and answer most of your questions.

Before we dive into the logistical details of the ride, we would like to address the safety measures we are taking to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. **For everyone's health and safety, it is of utmost importance that you follow these rules on the day of the ride:**

- If you are sick or showing any symptoms of COVID-19 - STAY HOME! At drive-through check-in, all athletes must verify that they have no symptoms of COVID-19 and have not knowingly been in contact with anyone with COVID-19. If you must stay home due to COVID-19, email us and we will

defer your entry to 2021. PLEASE DO THE RIGHT THING – IT'S JUST NOT WORTH IT.

- Please bring a face covering to the event. Face coverings are REQUIRED for all athletes, staff, and volunteers.
- Athletes MUST wear a face covering when not riding. Please carry your face covering with you when you ride and put it on when you stop. Specifically, you MUST WEAR your face covering when checking-in from your vehicle (see below for details), waiting to start, at aid stations, and at all times when you are not riding.
- Volunteers and staff MUST wear a face covering at all times during the event.
- Practice social distancing and stay at least 6 feet apart.
- Hand sanitizer will be ubiquitous at the event. Please use liberally. You are also welcome to carry your own small bottle of hand sanitizer.
- Pass safely on the roads. Use commands such as 'passing on your left' and use the entire width of the road to pass (keeping an eye out for oncoming traffic, of course).
- Spectators ARE NOT PERMITTED at this event.

Schedule of Events for Sunday, October 25, 2020:

- 7:30am-8:45am: 80 Mile (15-min check-in window specific to each rider)
- 8:45am-10:45am: 60 Mile (15-min check-in window specific to each rider)
- 10:45am-12:30pm: 40 Mile (15-min check-in window specific to each rider)
- Post-ride: Pick up swag and t-shirt (if you ordered one or would like to purchase onsite)
- Post-ride: Grab-n-go food available (if you ordered one or would like to purchase onsite)

Staging Area: The staging area is located adjacent to the front lawn of the Salamander Resort (500 N. Pendleton Street, Middleburg, VA 20117). All routes will start and finish here.

Registration: There are only a few spots left in the ride. If friends or family want to ride, please have them sign up right away. **On-site registration will NOT be available.**

Drive-Up Check-in/Package Pickup, Parking, and Staggered Starts: Staggering the check-in and starting times is our best tool to facilitate social distancing. The ride start has been spread over a 6-hour period this year vs a 2-hour period in 2019. Each rider has selected a 15-minute check-in window. Please **ONLY** arrive at Salamander within your check-in window. You can view your check-in window through your registration link below. The option that is select is your assigned check-in time.

[see email sent to you]

After arriving at the venue, please follow the signs to check-in and parking. **Please wear your face covering when interacting with the check-in volunteers.** At drive-up check-in, you will receive your ride packet, which includes a ride guide, bike number/twist ties, bib number/safety pins, route map, cue sheets, tips on riding safety/etiquette, and a reminder of the COVID related safety rules. If you ordered a t-shirt, you may pick it up after the ride. After checking-in, proceed to the parking area and follow signage and the direction of the volunteers. Park your vehicle, prepare for your ride, and then head over to the start corral. Porta-johns will be available near the start corral. You are required to start your ride within 30 minutes of checking in.

Porta-johns: Porta-johns will be available at the staging area and at all aid stations. Hand sanitizer will be available at the portajohns. Portajohns will be cleaned every two hours with a CDC approved bleach disinfectant.

Start Corral and Rolling Start: After parking and preparing for your ride, make your way to the start corral. The start corral is a large area with 10-foot social distancing markers. Move up as far as possible and occupy one of the markers. We will start about 5 riders every 2 minutes. **REMINDER - YOU MUST WEAR A FACE COVERING WHILE IN THE START CORRAL.**

Weather / Rain or Shine Event: Late October weather in Northern Virginia generally ranges from cold mornings in the 30s to pleasantly cool afternoons in the 60s. Please check the forecast the day before the ride and come prepared with appropriate gear. This ride will take place rain or shine.

Hydrate: Be smart and protect yourself, hydrate well before and during the ride.

Ride Safety and Riding Etiquette: Please be respectful of motorists and residents that live along the route. FOR YOUR SAFETY AND TO PROTECT GRAVEL CYCLING IN LOUDOUN COUNTY, PLEASE READ THIS INFORMATION AND FOLLOW THESE RULES:

- **OPEN ROAD RIDE:** The Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder is an open-road ride. Route marshals will monitor some of the intersections along the course but the roads along the route will remain open to vehicular traffic. Riders must abide by local traffic laws. Buckled bicycle helmets are required.
- **THIS IS NOT A RACE.** Remember, THIS IS NOT A RACE. Please take your time and enjoy the roads, the history, and the scenery of this beautiful part of the country.
- **STOP and LET VEHICLES PASS YOU ON GRAVEL.** Many of these gravel

roads are narrow, with little or no shoulder. For your safety and as a show of courtesy, when you see a vehicle, either in front or behind you, PLEASE PULL OVER AT A SAFE SPOT AND LET THEM PASS YOU. Again, this is NOT A RACE. Also, don't forget to smile and wave. This is their backyard, folks. You will not see many vehicles on your ride so when you do, let's show the residents of this area that we are grateful visitors.

- **SINGLE-FILE ON PAVEMENT.** The routes of the Loudoun 1725 are comprised mostly of gravel roads but there are several sections of pavement that connect the gravel. For your safety, please ride single-file when riding on the pavement.
- **HAZARD SIGNAGE.** Keep your eyes open for hazard signage while riding. Generally, these are posted at the top of technical or rutted out downhill sections. Heed extra caution after seeing one of these signs.
- **SAFETY LIGHTS AND BRIGHT CLOTHING.** While not required, using safety lights and wearing bright colored clothing will make you more visible on the roads.
- **DON'T PEE ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD** (i.e someone's yard). We should not even have to say this but here it is. There are portajohns at every aid station. Please hold it until then. Thank you.

Special Note about Horses: It's not uncommon to see horses on the gravel roads you will be travelling on. The most important thing is to COMMUNICATE and make the rider aware of your presence. If approaching from behind, horses have a very large blind spot and won't see you until you're practically level with their heads. It's vital therefore to let the riders know you're there with a clear "good morning" or similar. Don't shout overly loudly but don't be too tentative either. A horse is far less likely to be spooked by the sound of your voice than by being suddenly surprised by you appearing next to them. Wait until they've acknowledged your presence and follow any instructions they may give you for passing. Whether approaching horses from behind or head on, **slow down and be prepared to stop.** Allow plenty of time and distance for the horse and rider to become aware of your presence, and pass widely when it's appropriate to do so. Remember, this is a ride not a race.

Photos: The pros from [Bruce Buckley Photography](#) will be out on the route taking amazing photos of you on your bike. There will be one area on the route where you can get off you bike and get a scenic photo taken. Remember, this is not a race. Stop and smell the roses (as the saying goes) and take advantage of this great keepsake opportunity. All photos will be available for FREE download the week after the event.

80 Mile – Route Specs: The 80 mile route starts and finishes at Salamander Resort in Middleburg, VA, measures 80.6 miles, includes 4951' of elevation gain,

and features 62.0 miles of gravel and 18.6 miles of rural paved backroads. In order, this ride travels through or near the towns and hamlets of Middleburg, St. Louis, Unison, Willisville, Trapp, Bloomfield, Bluemont, Airmont, Unison, Philomont, White Pump, Lincoln, Philomont, St. Louis, and returns to Middleburg. 80-mile riders will check-in from 7:30am-8:45am during your specific 15-minute window. It will take most riders 5 - 9 hours to complete.

- [80M GPS Track, Course Map, Elevation Profile, and Cue Sheet](#)

60 Mile – Route Specs: The 60 mile route starts and finishes at Salamander Resort in Middleburg, VA, measures 59.6 miles, includes 3390' of elevation gain, and features 47.3 miles of gravel and 12.3 miles of rural paved backroads. In order, this ride travels through or near the towns and hamlets of Middleburg, St. Louis, Unison, Willisville, Trapp, Bloomfield, Bluemont, Airmont, Unison, Philomont, White Pump, Lincoln, Woodburn, Philomont, St. Louis, and returns to Middleburg. 60-mile riders will check-in from 8:45am-10:45am during your specific 15-minute window. It will take most riders 3.5 - 7 hours to complete.

- [60M GPS Track, Course Map, Elevation Profile, and Cue Sheet](#)

40 Mile – Route Specs: The 40 mile route starts and finishes at Salamander Resort in Middleburg, VA, measures 41.3 miles, includes 2168' of elevation gain, and features 31.1 miles of gravel and 10.2 miles of rural paved backroads. In order, this ride travels through or near the towns and hamlets of Middleburg, St. Louis, Unison, Willisville, Trapp, Bloomfield, Bluemont, Airmont, Unison, St. Louis, and returns to Middleburg. 40-mile riders will check-in from 10:45am-12:30pm during your specific 15-minute window. It will take most riders 2.5 – 4.5 hours to complete

- [40M GPS Track, Course Map, Elevation Profile, and Cue Sheet](#)

Following the Route / Route Marking: There are several ways that riders will be able to follow the route (80M, 60M, and 40M) but the most popular way will be to follow the route markings. We are using 18"x24" coroplast signs and most of the signage have a white background, the ride logo, and blue arrows/text. At all turns on the route, riders will see a turn arrow about 25-50 meters before the turn, a turn arrow at the turn, and a straight arrow after the turn. When crossing major intersections, straight arrows will be positioned on the other side of the intersection. It is not practical or needed to mark every single side street that comes into the course. So, if you do not see an arrow, then just continue going straight. AGAIN, ALL TURNS WILL BE MARKED. In addition to arrow signage, we will have yellow 'Caution – Bike Event Ahead' signs to alert vehicle traffic that our event is taking place. Other white background and blue text signs we will use include: Aid Station Ahead, Photo Stop Ahead, 80 Mile Only Arrows (to direct 80 mile only riders), 60 Mile Only Arrows (to direct 60 mile only riders), 40 Mile Only Arrows (to direct 40 mile only riders), Single File Please, and Wrong Way (placed

at a few intersections to confirm that riders should not travel down this road). Red HAZARD signs will be posted at the top of technical or rutted out downhill sections. Heed extra caution after seeing one of these signs. A sample of all signage will be on display at the check-in area.

Following the Route / Route Marshals: Volunteer route marshals will monitor several busy and/or tricky intersections throughout the course.

Following the Route / Maps and Cue Sheets: Maps and cue sheets, with written turn-by-turn directions, will be included in your ride packet.

Following the Route / Ride with GPS: Download the ridewithgps app, download the route from our website, and follow the audible cues from your phone. Viewing the route on the app is free but if you want to navigate with the app, you will be required to pay a small fee. SAFETY TIP – VA law allows one earbud only to be used when riding your bike.

Aid Stations: Since aid stations are one of the three areas of congregation with this event (in addition to check-in/start and finish), the flow and function will be much different this year than in 2019. The goal at aid stations is to provide mechanical support, hydration, nutrition, and restroom breaks. A huge THANK YOU to [Bikenetic](#), [Maverick Bikes and Cafe](#), and [The Bike Lane](#) for their amazing support at the aid stations and along the route!

- Reminder – **YOU MUST WEAR A FACE COVERING AT AID STATIONS.**
- Social distancing will be facilitated at each aid station. Stay at least 6 feet apart.
- Riders will not get near food. You will tell a volunteer what you'd like and they will give it to you. Tables will be cleaned with CDC approved bleach disinfectant throughout the event.
- **PLEASE LIMIT YOUR STAY AT EACH AID STATION TO 10 MINUTES.**
- ALL aid stations will be stocked with sealed bottled water.
- ALL aid stations will have at least one portajohn available.
- ALL aid stations will have a mechanic to perform basic bike maintenance, if needed.
- AUSTINS GROVE, PHILOMONT, AND ZEPHANIAH AID STATIONS will have individually wrapped, pre-packaged foods such as chips, cookies, crackers, granola bars, sliders, mini-burritos, fruit with skin such as bananas, sodas, etc.
- Due to the out and back flow at UNISON, the only food at the Unison Aid Station (Aid #1 and Aid #3) will be granola bars.
- 80M riders will have 5 opportunities for aid (spaced 9.2-20.4 miles apart).
- 60M riders will have 4 opportunities for aid (spaced 9.2-16.6 mile apart).
- 40M riders will have 3 opportunities for aid (spaced 7.5-13.4 miles apart).

SAG (Support and Gear): Athletes will also be supported with SAG (Support and Gear) vehicles along the route. SAG vehicles will have a bike pump, basic first aid kit, and the ability to transport a rider and bike should the need arise. SAGs will transport athletes needing major mechanical service or those that miss cut-off times. Additionally, several volunteer SAG teams will travel on bike along the route. SAGs will keep an eye out for riders in need of assistance. If you need SAG assistance, call the number on the back of your bike number and a SAG will be dispatched to your location.

Daylight and Cut-Off Times: Sunset is @ 6:18pm on 10/25. All riders must finish their ride by 6pm. To avoid running out of daylight, we advise all riders, especially those in the later check-in corrals, to start as soon as possible after they check-in. Cut-off times will be used to ensure all riders have finished by 6pm. Cut-off times will not affect riders who maintain a 9mph pace (including stops). Cut-off times will apply mostly to 80-mile and 60-mile riders. Cut-off times will be enforced at aid stations and at the beginning of side loops for the 80-mile route. Those missing cut-off times will be directed to skip a portion of the route or will be transported by SAG to the next aid station or back to the finish. If you stop along the route and return after the 9 mph minimum average speed (ie behind our sweep), you may find that the route has already been demarked and the aid stations have been closed. Please do not do this. If you choose to leave the route, please call our ride POC so we know.

- Unison Aid Station #3 cut off time is 5pm for the 40-milers. Any 40-mile rider missing this cut-off time will be transported by SAG to the finish.
- Hughesville Rd / Foundry Rd intersection cut-off time is 2:15pm. 80-mile riders missing this cut-off will skip the Lincoln side loop and continue along the 80-mile route.
- Oakland Green Rd / Shelburne Glebe Rd intersection cut-off time 3pm. 80-mile riders missing this cut-off will skip the Zephaniah Loop and continue along the 80-mile route
- Zephaniah Winery Aid Station (#4 for 80M) cut-off time is 4pm. 80-mile riders missing this cut-off will be transported by SAG to the finish.
- Philomont Aid Station (#4 for 60M and #5 for 80M) cut-off time is 5pm. 60-mile and 80-mile riders missing this cut-off will be transported by SAG to the finish.

Bike Numbers / Bib Numbers and Emergencies: Each rider will be provided a small bike number that should be affixed with twist ties to the handlebars of your bike and a bib number that should be attached with safety pins to the back of your jersey or on the back of your hydration pack, should you use one. These numbers are important so the photographers, SAG vehicles, aid stations, and roving medical can identify you. Ride POC phone number is on the back of the

bike number. Should you need non-emergency medical assistance or mechanical assistance while on the route, please call the ride POC number and we will activate the appropriate response. In case of medical emergency, call 911 first and then call the ride POC number.

Finish Aid: Sealed bottled water will be available at the finish area.

Pint Glass and Bottle Opener: Cross the finish line and grab your commemorative pint glass and bottle opener. Both are very cool and useful items that will help you remember the awesome time you had on the amazing gravel roads of Loudoun County. A big THANK YOU to Jan Feuchtner, owner of [Bikenetic](#), and longtime EX2 racer and sponsor, Erik Scudder of [Integrated Financial Partners \(IFP\)](#), for providing these nice giveaways.

T-Shirts: If you ordered a t-shirt, you may pick it up after the ride near the swag table. We ordered some extra tees and those will be available for purchase for \$15. Obviously, sizes are limited.

Grab n' Go Post-Ride Food: Salamander resort is providing tasty post-ride food and soft drinks. If you purchased a meal during registration, your name will be on a list of riders that pre-ordered food. The meal includes a sandwich (pulled pork BBQ, chicken salad, Bratwurst, or Veggie), two sides, and a soft drink. Salamander will also be selling food onsite if you didn't pre-order. To prevent congregation and to abide by ABC laws, beer will not be served this year. Food will be served in to-go containers. Please take your food back to your vehicle and do not congregate near the food area.

Recovery/Medical: First aid supplies and services will be available at the staging area. We will also have medical support on the course.

Virtual Wrap Up Video and Giveaways: A few days after the event, we will post a video on the EX2 Facebook page wrapping up the event and randomly giving away prizes. This will be followed up with a wrap up email. Any prizes will be mailed.

Volunteers: We could use a few more to help at check-in, aid stations, and with route marshaling. If any of your friends or family can volunteer, please ask them to sign up online. Times vary from 7am-5pm and shifts are usually 3-5 hours. Volunteers receive free food, a cool ride t-shirt, and our sincere appreciation. Plus, volunteering at the ride is going to be tons of fun!!! [Sign up to volunteer here.](#)

Sponsors: THANK YOU to all our generous sponsors. Their financial and in-kind

support is crucial to the current and future sustainability of this event. Please show your love and support our sponsors in any way you can. Our sponsors include: [Bikenetic Full Service Bike Shop](#), [Erik Scudder from Integrated Financial Partners](#), [Maverick Bikes and Cafe](#), [The Bike Lane](#), [Joey Baird from Baird Automotive](#), and the [Town of Middleburg](#).

THANK YOU to our Supporters: Last but not least, please join us in extending a HUGE THANK YOU to our wonderful ride supporters. Thank you [Salamander Resort](#) for your wonderful support and for allowing us to stage our event on your beautiful grounds. Thank you to amazing photographer and huge cycling advocate Bruce Buckley for your fantastic photos and for planting the seed of this event early on. Thank you to ABC news journalist and longtime EX2 racer Jay Korff and to America's Routes representative Doug Graham for your incredible story [The Long Road Home](#). This Emmy winning documentary helped inspire us to start this ride. We would also like to thank the following people and organizations for their support and advocacy of this event: all the great folks at America's Routes, Loudoun County, the Town of Middleburg Police, the Town of Middleburg, Bill Hatch from [Zephaniah Winery](#), Drew Bishop from the Philomont General Store, Rick Pearsall from the Philomont Volunteer Fire Department, all of the gracious and energetic volunteers, and the professional and talented EX2 staff. Lastly, we would like to thank the communities of western Loudoun County for embracing this event and for allowing us to play in their beautiful backyard.

ONE FINAL THOUGHT: In 'normal' times, we are all about a great party atmosphere and we hope to get back to that next year, but this year is vastly different. For everyone's safety, **ENJOY THE RIDE!!!!!! BUT, PLEASE FOLLOW ALL THE RULES AND BE SAFE.**

Whew, we know that was a lot – thank you for taking the time to read this message and THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN for participating in the 2nd annual Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder. Prepare for an awesome day of bike riding! If you have any questions, feel free to call or email us. See you all on October 25th.

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