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### NEW THIS MONTH

- I have hypoglycemia. How do I fuel properly for the bike?
- Dux Helm – Review
- Mismatched Cyclists: How to Ride with Someone who is Faster or Slower

### ASK A PRO

- After injuring my knee, how can I make sure I'm not pedaling more with the uninjured leg?
- How do core exercises help me become a better cyclist?
- How much strength training should I do?

### PRODUCT REVIEWS

- Dux Helm – Review
- Rudy Project's Sterling Fluorescent Helmet
- Rudy Project Noyz Cycling Eyewear

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Finding Your Exercise Sweet Spot
- Best Benefits of Ginger
- What You Need to Know About Bicycle Maintenance
- Pulse Power: What's the best pulse to power your pedal stroke?

### HEALTHY RECIPES

- Chocolate Chip Granola Bites
- Power-Packed Wellness Muffins
- Chocolate Almond Energizers
- Blueberry Lemony Madness Smoothie

## 2 Day Event Training

## Tackle the Trail: Cabot Trail Bicycle Tour

by Jen Fawcette



Last Labour Day weekend my boyfriend and I decided to head out East to visit my family and do a bike tour of the Cabot Trail. We found bike tour companies that offer week-long excursions for thousands of dollars, but since we were tight on money and time we decided to go with an affordable, condensed tour hosted by a tour company called [Atlantic Cycling Canada](#). We did the 3 day "Tackle the Trail" tour, which costs \$180/person and includes camping accommodations, a van that takes your tents and bags around the trail, two breakfasts, two dinners, and a road crew just in case you blow a tire or give up somewhere along the way.

### Information Package and Registration

We registered for the tour in early June by sending a cheque with a registration form, which was easy enough. If you are out of the country, they also accept payment by Paypal. Our pre-ride info package was mailed to us and it explained everything we needed to know about the tour.

We checked out Atlantic Cycling Canada's website for additional information. Many past-participants suggested riding the Cabot Trail on a road bike with a granny gear. But if you don't have compact gear set, granny gear or road bike for that matter don't sweat it. There were cyclists that rode for 3 days on all types of bikes: mountain, cruisers and beaters included. "Ride the Cabot Trail on whatever you have" is the spirit in Nova Scotia.

After a crazy 18 hour drive from Toronto to my Aunt's house in Truro, NS and then another 3 hour drive to get to Baddeck, in Cape Breton (our starting point!), we were ready to get out of the car and on to our bikes!

Registration was held at the arena in Baddeck the night before the ride and unfortunately there was one guy working the registration table, which meant a long unnecessary wait in line. I guess that's the "Toronto" in me. Everything must be efficient and quick. Nova Scotia has a slower pace, and that meant more time to make friends while we waited in line.

### The Cyclists

Many of the cyclists were regulars on the Cabot Trail and seemed to know each other and the trail like the back of their hand. Knowing this, the organizer gave a casual and brief ride overview.

Riders come from all over Canada and the USA and most are friendly and happy to share cycling stories and adventures with you on and off the road. There were a total of 113 riders on this tour ranging from 16 to 60 years old. The ratio of guys to girls was 2:1.

### The Ride

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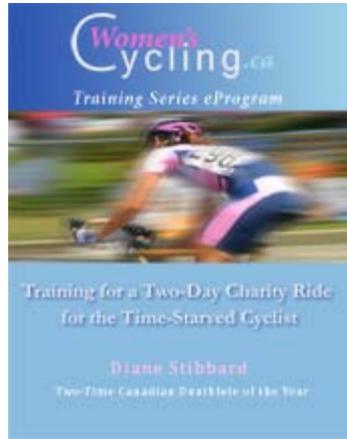
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Once we hit the road early Saturday morning the long drive to Cape Breton melted away. It was my first 3 day ride with “mountain” climbs and hilly seaside terrain. The roads were quiet for the most part and in good condition, with no off-road terrain.

The East coast is beautiful! The tour goes through picturesque seaside towns with spectacular ocean-views. Unfortunately, due to “pea soup” fog and misty rain, our trip’s breath-taking views and photos were few and far between. The weather on the East coast is unpredictable, so invest in a good cycling rain jacket before you head out, you’ll be glad you did.



It was challenging to ride three long days back to back, especially when the second day had two good size climbs—North Mountain and Mount Mackenzie (see altitude below). Day 2 took me a little over 6 hours to complete (we stopped for an hour lunch too). I was 10<sup>th</sup> to arrive at camp, so it was a long day for everyone.

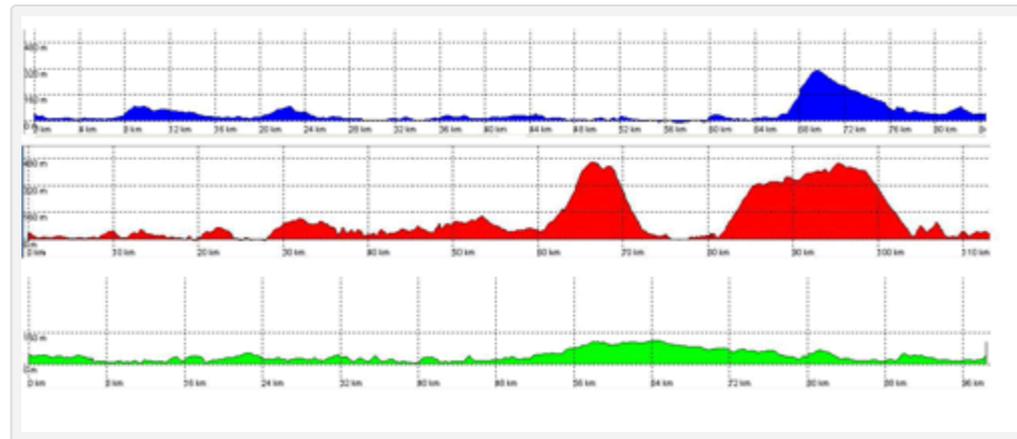
By day 3 my legs were tired. Thankfully the roads were mostly flat and we had a tail wind! We were on coastal roads most of the way back to Baddeck. Riding into 20km winds would have made it a really rough day.

Below is the measurement of altitude for all three days.

Blue: Day 1 Baddeck to Ingonish (109km)

Red: Day 2 Ingonish to Cheticamp (114Km)

Green: Day 3 Cheticamp to Baddeck (94km)



**Camp or B&B**



Since the Atlantic Cycling Canada guides haul your bags from camp site to camp site, we had the gear we needed without worrying about the weight of it all. Camping was fun, even though it poured. Our tent held up to the elements and our Tupperware plastic bins kept the water and dirt out of our supplies, snacks, and clean spandex. The campsite had HOT water and clean showers. I was seriously impressed.

If camping isn't your thing, and you need a bed, four walls and a roof in order to get some shut eye, there are plenty of B&B's to stay in on the tour. B&B's aren't organized by the tour. You're in charge of booking and paying the nightly rate. The tour, however, does provide a list of good B&B's that are on the tour route.

**Meals**

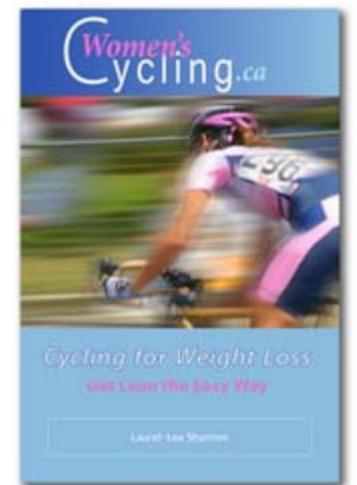
The food was good, but I'd suggest bringing extra food for breakfast and snacks for the road. The tour company provides breakfast (cereal, bananas, toast, coffee, milk and juice), but it was normally picked over by the time I got to it (and I got up early). They don't provide lunch. It's an opportunity to take a break off the bike to stop in a

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town, or a village for a bite to eat. A word of caution: shops, stores and restaurants can be far from each other. Avoid bonking by eating a good breakfast, and pack your back pocket with granola bars and bananas.

Dinner in Ingonish was a delicious buffet style dinner at a lodge. The dinner in Cheticamp was at the only restaurant near the campsite and it was a pasta dinner, which wasn't anything to write home about (but remember these dinners are included in the \$180, so I really can't complain!). Gary, our guide says they're working on improving the Cheticamp dinner for next year.

### The Finish

I arrived back at Baddeck at the end of the third day with a sore bum and a tired body but I was ecstatic with the ride I'd done. Even in less-than-ideal weather I would do it again in a heart beat.

This tour was impressive, especially considering the price. Even though for much of it I was on my own peddling, I felt taken care of along the way. I would recommend it to any first year rider who is looking for a great challenge and awesome excuse to take a road trip out East!



*Jen Fawcette, a young urbanite from Toronto, took the (expensive) leap into the world of road cycling last year. Cycling allows her to face new challenges, meet people, and push her mental and physical strength in ways she never imagined.*

*Aware that women are often left out of road cycling, Jen decided to create a blog about her cycling experiences to spark conversation and discussion on all aspects of the sport —clothing, bikes, maintenance, courses, fitness, etc.*

Check out Jen's blog at: <http://www.rocketgirlblog.com/>

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