

AN ONTARIO'S SOUTHWEST CYCLING ITINERARY

St. Thomas and Four Ports Tour:

Rural Riding With a Beachfront View



Total Distance:
184 km



Suggested Ride and Touring Itinerary:
4 days, 3 nights
(extended suggestions available)



Experience Level:
Moderate to experienced



St. Thomas and Four Ports Tour:

Rural Riding With a Beachfront View

Total Distance: 184 km

Suggested Ride and Touring Itinerary: 4 days, 3 nights (extended suggestions available).

Daily Ride Distance Average: 46 km

Experience Level: Moderate to experienced.

Route Surface: Primarily paved roads and small segments of paved trails.

Route Map Link: www.ridewithgps.com/routes/6653847

Vehicle Parking/Transportation: Park at booked accommodation in St. Thomas or the open parking area at Elgin County Railway Museum.



Starting point: St. Thomas

End Point: Port Burwell

Total distance: 51 km

Interesting stops along the day's route:

- Canada Southern Railway Station
- Elgin County Railway Museum
- Jumbo the Elephant Statue
- Railway City Brewery
- Spring Water Forest Conservation Area
- Aylmer Old Town Hall and Theatre
- Aylmer-Malahide Museum and Settlement Stories Quilt Trail
- Mennomex- Mexican grocery store
- Port Burwell Provincial Park's white sand beaches
- Port Burwell Marine Museum and Lighthouse
- HMCS Ojibwa Submarine

For detailed turn-by-turn directions,
please refer to the route map at:

<http://www.ridewithgps.com/routes/6653847>

Day 1: Leg 1 of 2

St. Thomas to Aylmer - 21 km

Area services along the route: Accommodations, cafés, restaurants, grocery stores, shopping, banking, bike shops, attractions and trails.

- Start your ride in St. Thomas along quieter city roads following the on-road routing and signs for the Trans Canada Trail.
- After 5 km you will connect to quiet country roads.
- After 15 km, take a break at Springwater Forest Conservation Area to explore forested trails, a spring-fed lake, camping and picnic areas.
- Stop for lunch in Aylmer and allow time to visit the town's attractions, the Aylmer Old Town Hall and Theatre, and the Aylmer-Malahide Museum and Settlement Stories Quilt Trail.
- Enjoy the historic main street's antique shops, quaint boutiques and delicious local bakeries.

Day 1: Leg 2 of 2

Aylmer to Port Burwell - 30 km

Area services along the route: Services are limited until you arrive in Port Burwell. Be sure to stock up on water and snacks before leaving Aylmer. In Port Burwell you'll find accommodations, cafés, restaurants, grocery stores, shopping, banking and attractions.

- From Aylmer, follow the 5 km off-road paved Trans Canada Trail/Aylmer Kinsmen Trail as it winds its way through green parkland alongside a scenic creek.
- Stop in at Mennomex, located 4 km south of Aylmer on Hecienda Road, to pick up some authentic Mexican food supplies or have a bite to eat.
- Ride through farmland past gorgeous farms and rural homes, sweeping views and cornfields.
- Your ride for the day ends in Port Burwell, the Jewel of Erie's North Shore.
- Grey Gables Bed and Breakfast welcomes cyclists and additional accommodations options are available, including camping at Port Burwell Provincial Park.
- While in Port Burwell, visit the long white sandy beach at Port Burwell Provincial Park, learn about the marine history of this once busy lumber port at the Port Burwell Marine Museum and view the collection of original lighthouse lenses before stopping at the historic lighthouse.
- Tour inside the HMCS Ojibwa, a once operational submarine from the Cold War era.



Starting point: Port Burwell

End Point: Port Rowan

Total distance: 42 km

Interesting stops along the day's route:

- Backus Heritage Conservation Area
- Long Point Provincial Park, which is located within a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve
- White sand beaches

For detailed turn-by-turn directions,
please refer to the route map at:

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Day 2: Leg 1 of 1

Port Burwell to Port Rowan - 42 km

Area services along the route: Be sure to pack a lunch and extra water. Until you reach Port Rowan, refreshment stops are limited to the Fairground General Store, 16 km along the route, or Cultus General Store, 21 km along the route. When you arrive in Port Rowan you'll find accommodations, cafés, restaurants, grocery stores, shopping, banking, attractions and trails.

- Today's route provides a quiet day of country road cycling alongside rich farmlands and rural scenery.
- Make a stop at Backus Heritage Conservation Area to marvel at old-growth hardwood Carolinian forests. Restrooms are available at the 39 km mark.
- Your ride for the day ends in Port Rowan. Cyclists are welcome at Rowan Nights Bed and Breakfast. Additional accommodations are available, including camping at Long Point Provincial Park.
- Explore the community's rich maritime history and enjoy easy access to the geological wonders of Long Point Provincial Park on the shores of Lake Erie.
- Long Point Provincial Park is located within a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve and is set on a 40-km sand-spit peninsula. The park boasts 1.5 km of white sandy beach and is one of North America's largest bird and waterfowl migration and staging areas.
- Dine at Nossa Casa Bistro for a variety of home-cooked meals using fresh, local ingredients.

Optional route extension for Day 2

Extend your journey an extra day or two and spend time exploring the area's rich nature:

- Follow the Waterfront Trail 14 km east to Turkey Point Provincial Park. Hike the park's trails or consider renting equipment from Long Point Eco Adventures to explore by kayak or mountain bike.
- Stop at Burning Kiln Winery for tastings and lunch on the patio.



Starting point: Port Rowan

End Point: Port Stanley

Total distance: 77 km

Interesting stops along the day's route:

- Port Burwell Provincial Park's white sand beaches
- Port Burwell Marine Museum & Lighthouse
- HMCS Ojibwa Submarine
- Vandenborre Fruit Farm
- Rush Creek Wines
- Dairy Heritage Museum
- Port Bruce Provincial Park (day use only)
- King George VI Life Bridge
- Port Stanley Festival Theatre
- Port Stanley Terminal Rail
- Port Stanley Beach

For detailed turn-by-turn directions,
please refer to the route map at:

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Day 3: Leg 1 of 3

Port Rowan to Port Burwell - 36 km

Area services along the route: Accommodations, cafés, restaurants, grocery stores, shopping, banking and attractions..

- Head west along Lakeshore Road, which is also signed as the Waterfront Trail, and enjoy waterfront views and quiet country roads between small beachfront cottage communities.
- Stop at Sandhills Park for access to restrooms, a snack bar and perhaps a quick cool down at the beach.
- When you reach Port Burwell, stop for lunch or a refreshment in one of the area restaurants. Consider timing your trip with one of Port Burwell's popular annual events like Edison Fest or the Strafford Watermelon Fest.
- Dine at the Lighthouse Restaurant or Schooners Galley Restaurant for some authentic Lake Erie fish and chips.
- Other attractions to enjoy while you're there include Port Burwell Provincial Park's white sand beaches, Port Burwell Marine Museum and Lighthouse and the HMCS Ojibwa Submarine.

Day 3 Itinerary continued on following page...



Day 3: Leg 2 of 3

Port Burwell to Port Bruce - 21 km

Area services along the route: Limited accommodations, cafés, restaurants and attractions.

- From Port Burwell, continue west to Port Bruce following the Lake Erie shoreline and Water front Trail routing.
- Stop in at Vandendorre Fruit Farm, just east of Springfield Road, for fresh local produce.
- Refreshments are available at the Wood Connection General Store located at the intersection of Nova Scotia Line and Imperial Road (16 km into the ride).
- Recommended detour: At Imperial Road and Nova Scotia Line (16 km) branch off route to visit and sample wines and fresh roasted coffee at Rush Creek Wines (additional 2 km each direction on Jamestown Line).
- Continue 2 km further down Jamestown Line from the winery to visit the Dairy Heritage Museum and see the extensive display showcasing local agricultural and dairy history.
- Port Bruce is a quiet community and a former fishing village that offers great fishing, swimming and beach access. Port Bruce Provincial Park is open for day use only.

Day 3: Leg 3 of 3

Port Bruce to Port Stanley - 20 km

Area services along the route: No services are available between Port Bruce and Port Stanley. Take extra water and other refreshments as needed. Seasonal farm gate sales may be available but are not guaranteed. When you arrive in Port Stanley, you'll find accommodations, cafés, restaurants, grocery stores, shopping, banking, bike shops and attractions.

- From Port Bruce continue west to Port Stanley following the Waterfront Trail.
- Port Stanley is referred to as Canada's 'Coney Island' and boasts one of the best white sand beaches on the north shore of Lake Erie. The charming downtown offers a mix of boutique shops, restaurants and cafés and a variety of other shopping experiences. Other attractions include the King George VI Lift Bridge, Port Stanley Festival Theatre and Port Stanley Terminal Rail.
- Spend the night in Port Stanley at Eagle's Rest Bed & Breakfast or Kettle Creek Inn, two great bicycle-friendly options. Additional accommodations are available.



Starting point: Port Stanley
End Point: St. Thomas
Total distance: 14 km

For detailed turn-by-turn directions,
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Day 4: Leg 1 of 1

Port Stanley to St. Thomas - 14 km

- Head north out of Port Stanley on Sunset Drive and ride along the paved shoulder of the road.
- Branch off Sunset Drive just north of Southdale Line onto a paved trail for the last 3 km to your final destination, St. Thomas.

Ride a little longer...

Extend your journey an extra day or two and spend time exploring the area's rich nature and heritage:

- Stay an extra night in Port Stanley to explore the beautiful beaches and charming town, go to the theatre, shop and relax.
- Learn more about railway heritage in St. Thomas at the wonderfully restored Canada Southern Railway Station. Also stop at the Elgin County Railway Museum to view the fascinating display and collection of rail memorabilia and variety of old trains.
- Visit the Jumbo the Elephant statue that pays tribute to the legendary circus elephant that was killed in a St. Thomas train yard in 1885.
- Visit the Military Museum and the elevated old Michigan Central Railway Bridge in St. Thomas.
- Sample local craft beer at the Railway City Brewery and taste local foods at the Farm Gate Market downtown St. Thomas (both open daily).
- Explore St. Thomas on a self-guided heritage walking tour and marvel at the numerous well-preserved historic properties.
- Keep riding the Waterfront Trail. The on-road, signed route continues west from Port Stanley and east from Port Rowan.

Additional Resources and Visitor Information

- www.OntariosSouthwest.com
- www.elgintourist.com
- www.railwaycitytourism.com
- www.norfolktourism.ca
- www.waterfronttrail.org
- www.ontariobybike.ca/southwestontario
- www.ontariobybike.ca/haldimandnorfolk