

# WESTERN SPIRIT

Cycling Adventures



## Lewis and Clark Lolo Trail

5 days/4 nights

### DAY 1



Listed as Outside Magazine's Top 25 Trips of a Lifetime, this historic mountain bike trip begins in Missoula, Montana. We begin by shuttling west over Lolo Pass along the same route taken by Lewis and Clark in September of 1805. Just over the pass, at the Powell Ranger Station, we head north to the Lolo Trail. This is the place where the Corps of Discovery entered the most mountainous part of their trip. As they entered the gentle foothills, they hoped to cross quickly to the westward slope on their way to the Pacific. Yet their hopes were dashed as Clark wrote on September 15th, "From this mountain I could observe high rugged mountains in every direction as far as I could see." This is where our trip begins. In the 1930's the forest service constructed a single lane road along the ridge top which Lewis and Clark traversed through the Bitterroot Mountains. While the road is rarely technical, the riding is challenging, fast, and rolling. Don't be fooled by the low mileage days, the cumulative climbs will result in a serious work out. Day one begins with a steady climb on a narrow ridge top and ends with a winding swoop down to our camp on Cayeuse Creek.

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 13 miles

### DAY 2



Today, we will pass several historic camps used by the expedition on both their initial trip west in 1805 and their return trip east in 1806. Again we will be on the roller coaster ridge top, with each climb rewarded by a ripping descent. After

passing the spot where the corps had a meal of "bear oil and roots," we will continue on to a series of cairns called Indian Post Office. Long before Lewis and Clark appeared in the Bitterroots, the Nez Perce Tribe used this route to go from their homes in the west to the buffalo grounds in the east. It is thought that perhaps the Nez Perce used the cairns at Indian Post Office to leave messages for one another. Our camp tonight is at Horseshoe Lake, a great place for a swim. Tonight we'll discuss the history of the Nez Perce and tell the story of Chief Joseph.

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 15 miles

### DAY 3



This morning we will pack a lunch to carry with us as we will be leaving our support vehicle for a hike on the ancient trail tread called the Nee-me-Poo Trail. We begin with a morning ride before we load our bikes on the support truck and hike past the Sinque Hole Camp and toward the Indian Grave, finally arriving at our destination, the Smoking Place. On the return voyage of Lewis and Clark, even after having visited this place once, Lewis writes: "We were entirely surrounded by these mountains, from which, to one not unacquainted with them, it would have seemed impossible to ever have escaped." After our hike we continue riding towards Spirit Revival Ridge, the place where the corps first glimpsed the plains to the west giving them hope that they would in fact be able to continue their trip to the Pacific. At tonight's camp near Sherman Peak, we will discuss the many skills needed by the members of the expedition not only to survive but to achieve

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their goals of mapping and cataloguing all the lands, people and animals which they encountered.

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 17 miles riding, 2 miles hiking

## DAY 4



By now, your climbing legs will be in top form and your descending technique will be polished. Before we can descend the nearly 3,000 feet to our camp in the cedars, we must climb over 3,000 feet to the top of Rocky Ridge. A refreshing swim in Rocky Ridge Lake awaits, and we'll have lunch lakeside. Up until today most of the trail has been in a forest of Lodgepole pines. Today will we see alpine fir, Engelmann spruce, mountain hemlock, Douglas fir, western white pine, and western red cedar. The trees change as the ridge we are riding turns to the south. It is easy to imagine the amazement of the Corps of Discovery as they continued to experience the vast abundance of this beautiful country. At our enchanting camp in the cedars, we will examine the friendship between Lewis and Clark and their men, in addition to their relationships with the many indigenous people they met along their way.

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 30 miles

## DAY 5



After a short spin from camp we will visit the Clark Tree, a giant white pine in the final stages of its life. At this point in the journey, Clark's thoughts had turned to the next challenge. They had survived the passage through the mountains and now they must prepare for the journey down the Columbia River. To do this they would need boats, and it was here in this ancient grove of enormous trees that Clark took heart, for here were trees from which they could make canoes. At this point, we finish the trip with a lovely hike on the final portion of the trail, to our lunch spot at Lolo Campground, where we will meet our shuttle for the return to Missoula.

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 5-10 miles riding, 2.5 miles hiking

## RIDE NOTES

Itineraries are subject to change due to weather, road conditions, rider safety, and other factors which may affect the logistics of the adventure.

**Road Surface:** Clay and gravel primitive road.

**Overall Rating:** Intermediate

**Technical Difficulty:** Easy to moderate.

**Physical Difficulty:** Moderate to difficult. a significant amount of climbing.

**Altitude:** 3,000 - 7,000 feet

## Travel Logistics

### MEETING PLACE AND TIME

#### Missoula, MT

This tour will begin at 8:00 AM MST at Big Sky Bike, 809 E Front St, Missoula MT, (406) 830-31951. You will need to spend the night before in Missoula.

### ENDING TIME

We will return to Missoula between 4:00-5:00 PM on the last day.

### SHIPPING YOUR BIKE

If you are shipping your bike, send it to:

Big Sky Bike  
809 E Front St  
Missoula MT 59802  
406) 830-3195

It is critical that you include your name, "Western Spirit Cycling" and tour date on the outside of the box. If you choose this service, you must get this organized through our office.

It is imperative to have your bike finely tuned and cleaned before your tour so you know it is in top run-

ning condition.

## GETTING TO MISSOULA, MT

### Driving

Missoula is located 155 miles from Great Falls, Montana and 200 miles east of Spokane, Washington on Interstate 90. Spokane, Washington is the next closest international airport. There is parking available at the bike shop where the trip meets.

### Flying into Missoula

Airport Code: MSO

### Flying into Spokane, WA

Airport Code: GEG

Spokane is an international airport. You can rent a car in Spokane and park it at the bike shop where the trip meets. This is a 3-4 hour drive.

## TAXI SERVICE

**Airport Shuttler:** 406-543-9416

**Yellow Cab:** 406-543-6644

## LODGING BEFORE YOUR TRIP

It is a good idea to book your rooms several months in advance if possible. Here are a few recommendations:

### Holiday Inn Parkside

406-721-8550, 800-399-0408

They have an airport van shuttle.

### Doubletree

406-728-3100, 800-222-8733

They have an airport van shuttle.

### C'mon Inn Hotel & Suites

406-543-4600, 888-989-5569

### South Gate Inn

406-251-2250, 866-608-5966

### Sleep Inn

406-543-5883

## Packing for your trip

Be sure to bring everything on this list. We have carefully developed this list to ensure your comfort on the tour regardless of the weather. If you are prepared for extreme weather, it is an adventure. If you are not prepared it can be a serious problem.

We recommend the layering system, including a wicking or long underwear layer, an insulating layer and a weather barrier for wind and rain. This list reflects that philosophy. Weather in the mountains can be unpredictable so be sure to bring all the warm clothing and rain gear listed!

**HOW TO PACK:** When you arrive for your tour, you will be given a dry bag in which to pack your gear for the trip. Smaller bags may fit, but very large duffels will not.

To pack efficiently in a dry bag, we highly recommend you compartmentalize your clothing and gear into separate bags. Stuff sacks, reusable grocery bags, etc. in different colors work great for this (example: cycling gear in blue stuff sack, camp clothes in red stuff sack, etc.).

Your dry bag will ride on the Western Spirit support vehicle and will **not** be accessible during the day.

For this trip, you will need a riding pack and optional day bag:

- Your riding pack may be a hydration pack, but needs to carry 2-3 liters of water, rain gear, other warm clothing, and food for the day. You may be away from camp and the support vehicle all day and need to be self-sufficient.
- A small day bag is optional and may be used to store things you'd rather not ride with, but would like to have access to during the day. This day-pack will remain with the support vehicle and may not be accessible, depending on the day.

### WHAT WE PROVIDE:

- ✓ meals, snacks, water, electrolyte drinks, non-alcoholic drinks
- ✓ camp mugs, all kitchen and dining ware
- ✓ 2 large cycling water bottles

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C y c l i n g   A d v e n t u r e s

- ✓ camp chairs
- ✓ dry bags to pack your gear
- ✓ solar showers
- ✓ sunscreen & bug spray
- ✓ bike stand and lube
- ✓ guides bring their own tools
- ✓ first aid kit with basic medications

## BRINGING OR RENTING

- mountain bike (Our rentals come with flat pedals. You are welcome to bring your own if you prefer.)
- helmet (gratis w/rental bike)
- tent
- sleeping bag
- sleeping pad

## CYCLING CLOTHING

- cycling shoes
- 3 - 5 pair cycling shorts
- 3 - 5 cycling shirts
- long sleeve cycling shirt
- long sleeve cotton shirt or solar sleeves
- cycling socks
- windbreaker
- tights or leg warmers
- 2 pair cycling gloves (1 pair full length for warmth)
- rain jacket (Gore-Tex or similar)
- rain pants (Gore-Tex or similar)
- warm layer (lightweight synthetic puffy jacket or long sleeve fleece shirt)
- sunglasses or other eye protection

## CAMP CLOTHING

- camp shorts
- shirts
- warm socks
- long underwear, top and bottom (wicking layer, not cotton)
- 2 pair warm long pants
- long sleeve fleece or sweater
- pile or down jacket (insulating layer)
- warm gloves and hat
- brimmed hat or visor
- bathing suit (for solar showers on the trip and at the hotel before/after your trip)
- hiking shoes

- sandals
- cheap PVC rain gear (to wear in camp)

## PERSONAL

- toiletries
- medication (daily and emergency)
- towel
- biodegradable soap
- wet-wipes
- flashlight or headlamp (with extra batteries)
- sunglasses
- riding pack: 10-15L gear capacity with 2-3L water storage (Camelbak Mule or Camelbak H.A.W.G. are good choices)
- optional day bag
- stuff sacks or reusable grocery bags (or separate compartments for your dry bag)
- cash for tipping guides: your guides work as a team and share all of their gratuities. A tip of 10-20% of the price of your trip given to either one of your guides when you return to civilization is a great way to say thanks for a job well done.

## OPTIONAL

- camera, extra batteries
- binoculars
- alcoholic or any of your favorite beverages (your guides will pack these)
- books or maps
- we encourage you to turn your devices off, but if you cannot, please bring a way to charge them. We recommend a portable USB charger with 1-2 charges. Also, putting your phone on airplane mode to save power is recommended.

