

Cycling in St Petersburg, USA

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How would you describe cycling in St. Petersburg?

As far as the physical act of bicycling, well... it's flat here! That makes it pretty easy to get around on any bike, from a 21-speed to a beach cruiser. We've also got some impressive bike infrastructure. The Pinellas Trail is a 47-mile long trail that runs from downtown St. Petersburg all the way to Tarpon Springs. It is mostly an old rail bed that is completely separated from any roadway. We have several larger roads with dedicated bikes lanes, along with new slower speeds and sharrow markings on Central Avenue (our main thoroughfare through the center of the city).

The bicycling community in St. Petersburg is strong and diverse. You've got your hipster bikers, your hardcore spandex bikers and your casual riders. As there are so many people on bikes, I notice a growing awareness by car drivers of our presence. This makes drivers more cautious and cyclists safer.

There are loads of group rides. We've got Halloween rides, Christmas light tours, pub rides, Critical Mass, neighborhood tours... you name it!

We also have some great bicycle organizations. Our [St. Pete Bike Co-op](#) helps novices and pros alike fix anything that's wrong with their bike. They set up shop hours a few days each week to help people maintain and repair their rides. We also have a fabulous advocacy organization called [ShiftStPete](#). They organize community rides and interface with the city to help build and maintain a robust infrastructure to keep our roads safe for bicyclists, pedestrians and every other road user. The City has an app called SeeClickFix that can be used to report unsafe sidewalks or streets, and they've been very responsive in fixing things that cause safety issues for bikers, walkers or wheelchair users. St. Petersburg also has its own Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator, Lucas Cruse, who is a fantastic asset.



How do you use your Brompton bike?

During the first year I lived in St. Pete, my Brompton was the only form of transportation I owned. I took my laundry to the laundromat. I bought more than \$100 worth of groceries and lugged them home. I took my Brompton to (and into) networking events. (It should be noted that a Brompton is an excellent conversation starter). I also used my Brompton to take recycling to the city facilities and to meet friends or clients for coffee. It went everywhere with me.

Even though I now own a car, I still use my Brompton for getting around town, especially when it's cooler. I always have my giant Brompton T Bag with me as it can handle anything I want to buy. It is amazing how much you can stuff into that bag.

I also use it for leisurely cycling with friends or on group rides. St. Petersburg has some amazing scenery - whether it's along the bayfront downtown, throughout our historic neighborhoods on brick streets, along Central Avenue visiting shops and restaurants or on a tour of the many amazing murals that keep popping up around town.

How did you get into cycling?

Back around 2010, I decided to sell my car. It was a challenge to myself. I wanted to see if I could, as many people in this country do, get along without my car. When you don't own a car in Florida, people look at you like you've got three heads (or a DUI or other major driving infraction). I lived 3 miles from downtown Sarasota, Florida. There was a great bus route that ran a few blocks from my house, but I also used my bike for many trips. I've owned a car on and off since then, but I've always kept bicycling in my routine as much as possible. This is especially important since I have a job that requires me to sit much of the day.



What advice would you give to anyone considering cycling in St. Pete?

Find some group rides. Group rides are fun and make you feel safe. They can help familiarize you with the good routes to ride in St. Pete. You can also find future riding buddies.

I would also recommend visiting the St. Pete Bike Co-op. They are open several days a week to help folks maintain their bikes. They hold events and provide support to newbies. It will give you a great sense of confidence to be able to fix your own flat.

Lastly, always have a front and back light on your bike when riding at night. It's the law (and will help keep you from getting hit).

When you're not commuting, where are your favorite places to visit by bike?

Riding my bike to the farmers' market on a Saturday morning is one of my favorite things in the world. I'm proud to say I've carried a watermelon on my bike more than once!

I also enjoy popping into "the place where it all began" (St. Pete's Brompton dealer, [Two Fold Bicycle Shop](#)) to say hello to Michael and find out if he's gotten any new toys in that I might need to check out.



If you could go on one cycling adventure, where would you go and why?

I have a crazy dream to outfit a small van so I can travel around the U.S. for one year with my Brompton, visiting each state. Then, I would write a book about the journey. I already have the title picked out and the domain purchased! I was very inspired by David Byrne's book *Bicycle Diaries* and would like to emulate that in my own way. Sort of my *Travels with Charlie...* but with Simon, my Brompton, instead of a dog.

You can follow mine and Simon's adventures on Instagram at [@bromptonlover](https://www.instagram.com/bromptonlover)