



Road Cycling: The Blue Ridge High Country

Tim Murphy

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Four years ago, discouraged and depleted from his illness, Lance Armstrong traveled to Boone, North Carolina, in a last-ditch effort to get his cycling career back on track. Through fog and chilly rains, Armstrong attacked the rugged hills of the High Country. After a grueling climb to the top of Beech Mountain, Armstrong knew he was back.

In his autobiography, *It's Not About the Bike*, Armstrong said, "Boone began to feel like the Holy Land to me, a place I had come to on a pilgrimage. If I ever have any serious problems again, I know that I will go back to Boone and find an answer."

If you've biked in the Blue Ridge High Country, it's no surprise that the mountains helped turn Armstrong around. Here, road cyclists can find natural beauty, challenging climbs, and exhilarating descents, *if* they know where to go. *Road Cycling the Blue Ridge High Country* now makes this information available for everyone.

In this guide, Murphy gives detailed descriptions of more than 25 routes that cover six mountain and foothill counties in the northwestern corner of North Carolina as well as counties in southwestern Virginia and northeast Tennessee. The terrain on these rides varies from nearly flat to almost wall-like. Elevations on the rides range from 5,500 feet above sea level down to 1,000 feet.

With each tour, you'll find a short synopsis of the ride, an in-depth description of what you'll encounter, detailed directions, information about road characteristics and cautions, elevation details accompanied by an elevation chart, a map of the route, a list of food and services along the route, and other options for outdoor activities nearby.

Whether you're a visiting cyclist looking for routes suitable for your abilities or a resident cyclist in search of some new favorites, *Road Cycling the Blue Ridge High Country* is the perfect guide to an area that Bicycling magazine says offers "some of the best road riding in the world."



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