



# George Hincapie's Favorite Rides

Greenville's star cyclist (and Lance Armstrong's former teammate) shares his top five local bike routes

**W**e proudly claim professional cyclist George Hincapie of Greenville. He's the only cyclist to represent the U.S. in five Olympic Games, the only cyclist in history to be on eight Tour de France winning teams, and the only teammate to be on all seven of Lance Armstrong's Tour de France winning teams. He's also the most popular world-class cyclist living and training in the Southeast.

## Caesars Head Ride

**THE ROUTE:** "This is one of my go-to training rides throughout the year," says George. Start at pretty Furman University. The main climb on U.S. 276 extends about 6 miles to the Caesars Head summit. On a clear day you can see downtown Greenville from the peak. "Round trip from my house is a 55-mile ride with some medium-to-difficult terrain," he adds.

**BIKE:** Road bike

**DIFFICULTY:** 3-4, 5 on climb (key, page 5sc) →

**TOP:** Local cyclists on the Caesars Head Ride  
**ABOVE:** George in a rare moment off his bike

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New York is "yo."  
Hawaii is "aloha."  
Austin is "weird."

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### Paris Mountain State Park

**THE ROUTE:** A variety of mountain bike trails traverse the park about 10 miles from downtown Greenville. "The mountain rises more than 2,000 feet in elevation, so the park has every level of difficulty you may be seeking," George says. "One route starts at Lake Placid on the Mountain Creek Trail and follows Sulphur Springs, Firetower, and Kanuga trails to the North Lake Trail—it involves some of the most difficult and most scenic trails."

**BIKE:** Mountain bike

**DIFFICULTY:** 3-4



### Swamp Rabbit Trail

**THE ROUTE:** Starting at the Caine Halter YMCA in Greenville, you can access the Swamp Rabbit Trail via the Hincapie Path. Head north through Cleveland Park and Falls Park in downtown. "The 14-mile ride along the newly paved GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail is flat and smooth all the way to Travelers Rest," says George. "It's a great ride for the entire family, and also weaves through Furman University."

**BIKE:** Comfort, hybrid, or cruiser

**DIFFICULTY:** 1-2

### Horse Country/Peach Orchards

**THE ROUTE:** Head north from Lake Robinson on Mays Bridge Road, working your way over to State 357 on Mt. Lebanon Road. "Or choose one of the many alternate routes that weave through the horse farms and peach orchards of northern Spartanburg County," says George, offering the options of State 11 and 414 near Campobello. "This is also a great winter ride when it's too cold to climb

into the mountains. Expect windy conditions on this one; it's never flat and has great mountain views as well. "We usually vary the distance from 50 to 75 miles depending on weather and time of year."


**BIKE:** Road bike

**DIFFICULTY:** 2-3

### USA Cycling Pro Championship Course

**THE ROUTE:** "The 21-mile course that is used for the USA Cycling Pro Road Race Championships is one of my favorite routes," says George. "I use the 2-mile climb up the steep side of Paris Mountain in my training all the time." He adds that as you weave your way up, you enjoy scenic views north, and from the top of the climb you can see downtown Greenville and the surrounding area. Note: If you do the entire race loop you will also see Cleveland Park and some of the city's more historic neighborhoods.

**BIKE:** Road bike

**DIFFICULTY:** 3-4 with a 5 on the climb. Or a 0 if you simply choose to sit back and cheer on Hincapie and more than 125 professional cyclists at the open-to-the-public (and free) USA Pro Cycling Championships, which returns to Greenville May 28-30. The 110-mile course finishes at South Main and Camperdown Streets downtown, and there's plenty to check out while the race is underway, including a kid's race (ages 3-12) and a Health and Fitness Expo. 

#### George's Scale of Difficulty

1. An easy recovery ride, not stressful (what George does after a Level 5)
2. A three-hour ride to stimulate the system and get the heart rate up
3. A serious ride, part of his training block
4. A serious ride, just one degree shy of most difficult
5. A ride he undertakes when preparing for the Tour de France

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