




# NORTH ESK

## CYCLE LOOP

Distance:  
**15 miles (24km)**

Time:  
**2-3 hours**

Difficulty:  
**Easy/Medium**

Suitable for:  
**Experienced adult cyclists**



# NORTH ESK CYCLE LOOP

**History, scenery and peace  
on Edinburgh's doorstep**

## Length

15 miles (24km),  
with a 5-mile  
(8km) extension  
to Penicuik and  
back

## Conditions

9 miles (14km)  
traffic-free  
(Penicuik  
extension also  
traffic-free)

## Surface

Mostly tarmac,  
with short  
sections of  
whindust/hard  
gravel

## Time

2-3 hours

## Attractions and facilities

Rich history, great  
scenery, cafes,  
toilets, peace and  
quiet

## How hilly?

Gentle gradients  
or level,  
especially anti-  
clockwise

## Total ascent

522ft (159m);  
highest point  
550ft (168m)

## Suitable for

Experienced  
adult cyclists

## Maps

OS Landranger  
66; OS Explorer  
344, 345, 350;  
Spokes Cycle  
Map of Midlothian

## Be safe


The short sections of public road include some with a speed limit of 60 mph (100kph). While traffic is often light, you should maximise your visibility to vehicles, be vigilant, and ride (or walk) according to the prevailing conditions. Please make other path users aware of your presence if you approach them from behind (call out or ring your bell), and give priority to pedestrians.

## Midlothian Council cycling information:

(downloadable map, advice): [www.midlothian.gov.uk/cycling](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/cycling),  
or call the Cycling Officer on **0131 271 3398**



## Circling the loop

Start and finish at any point. Travelling anti-clockwise is recommended: gentler hills and easier turns. There are signs bearing the Loop logo  at key junctions.

Starting at Eskbank railway station, turning left on to Dalhousie Road (B6392), the route passes through Eskbank (take Melville Road B6392 at roundabout: caution - busy) and crosses the River North Esk. Farmland and views of the Pentland Hills open out as you follow the on-road cycle path and then join the shared-use pavement north towards Gilmerton on Edinburgh's southern edge. At the end of the long straight, turn right down the ramp and left on to the traffic-free cycleway, built on a former railway line which closed in 1969.

Passing under the City of Edinburgh Bypass, a path to your right links you to the Straiton Pond Nature Reserve, previously a clay pit. Straight ahead, the cycleway passes underneath the village of Loanhead (cafes and shops), and crosses the spectacular Bilston Glen Viaduct. Spanning the Bilston Burn, 140 feet (43m) below, the bridge dates from 1894.

Further on, a wooden bridge offers a vantage point for views of the Pentland Hills. Ekki wood, chosen for its durability, is used in the construction of two bridges on this route. The memorial to the Battle of Roslin (1303) appears as you enter Roslin village (food and shops), with its famous and mysterious Rosslyn Chapel (1446).

Leaving Roslin, via Penicuik Road, take the second left (quiet road, gently uphill). The route soon reaches its highest point and turns left at the T-junction, down to the village of Auchendinny. Here, turn left at Dalmore Mill and join National Cycle Route 196, turning right through the tunnel for Penicuik (cafes, shops), or turning left to continue on the North Esk Cycle Loop. This too is a former railway, which closed in 1967. The remarkable sign for Rosslyn Castle station dates from 1874.

The route now runs gently uphill and crosses two roads (caution: fast traffic) before returning to tarmac and commencing a long descent towards Eskbank. This attractive, wooded section connects several communities with schools, a hospital, a supermarket, a college and the railway network, offering a real alternative to car travel. The route joins National Cycle Route 1 at Bonnyrigg (shops, cafes) and brings you back to Eskbank Station.

**BordersRailway**  
Edinburgh • Midlothian • Scottish Borders

 **Midlothian**

PC users: click on images, names and symbols for websites

# NORTH ESK CYCLE LOOP & PENICUIK LINK

Ride anti-clockwise for easier turns  
and hills! Suggested start/finish points:  
Eskbank rail station, Dobbies Garden  
World, Loanhead (Station Road),  
Roslin, Penicuik (Valleyfield Road)  
or Rosewell Car Park

<b>CYCLE ROUTE</b>	
<b>CYCLE ROUTE (PUBLIC ROAD)</b>	
<b>Other Cycle Route</b>	
<b>Main Road</b>	
<b>Minor road</b>	
<b>Railway</b>	
<b>Attraction</b>	
<b>Pub, cafe or takeaway</b>	
<b>Cafe, not open every day</b>	
<b>Restaurant</b>	
<b>Bike shop</b>	
<b>Parking</b>	
<b>Cyclists Welcome scheme</b>	
<b>Picnic place</b>	
<b>Rail station</b>	
<b>Battle of Roslin site</b>	
<b>River</b>	
<b>Built up area</b>	

