

The Route

National Route: 1

Distance: 12.5 miles
Terrain: fairly flat, on traffic-free paths and quiet lanes

Public transport: railway stations at Leuchars, Dundee and Invergowrie

Bike hire: Spokes Cycles, Dundee - 01382 666644 (please give 2-3 days' notice of your requirements)

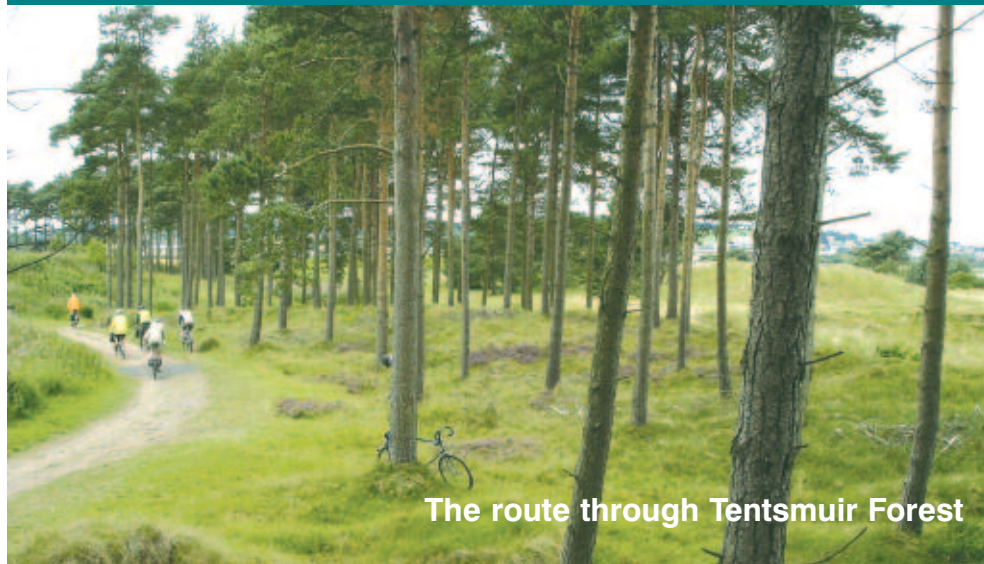
Maps: St Andrews and Port of Tay leaflet available locally from libraries, tourist information centres and bike shops

OS maps: Explorer 371, Landranger 54

Tourist information:
Dundee - 01382 434664,
Kingdom of Fife - 01334 472021

Towns to search for on Sustrans website mapping: Leuchars, Dundee

Leuchars to Dundee via the Tay Road Bridge



The route through Tentsmuir Forest

Fife is criss-crossed with miles of cycle routes, many of them created as part of the Kingdom of Fife Millennium Cycleways.

This ride begins in Leuchars, a town dominated by its association with the RAF (which holds a Battle of Britain air display at Leuchars every year) and the Norman church of St. Athernase. National Route 1 follows a quiet road out of the village to Tentsmuir Forest, which extends over the sand dunes between the estuaries of the Tay and the Eden. Here you have a choice of two traffic-free routes: a direct route north to Tayport; or National Route 1 which follows the coastline eastwards to Kinshaldy and then northwards beside the award-winning beach of Tentsmuir Sands and through the nature reserve, before heading westwards along the Tay to rejoin the direct route at Tayport.

The forest is a carefully-managed mix of pine woodland, open spaces, ponds and dunes, and an excellent wildlife habitat. Three species of roosting bat have made their home in the forest.

The ride continues through Tayport, for many centuries a ferry port, and then on

a railway path which takes you onto the cycle path across the Tay Road Bridge. This is not the Tay Railway Bridge, which famously collapsed in 1879. Its replacement is still carrying trains safely over the Tay and, and at the time of its construction, was the longest bridge in the world at 10,780 feet. US President Ulysses S Grant famously described it as "a mighty long bridge for a mighty small town".

On the other side of the bridge is Dundee, Scotland's fourth largest city, with a proud history of seafaring. Here you can visit RRS Discovery, Scott's Antarctic expedition ship, next to the award-winning Discovery Point Visitor Centre. Also worth a visit are the Sensation science centre, and the Verdant Works textile heritage centre. If you've got room in your panniers for a bargain, you could visit the designer factory outlets on City Quay.

You can take the train back from Dundee, or continue on a traffic-free route alongside the Tay to the railway station at Invergowrie (4 miles from the Tay Road Bridge).