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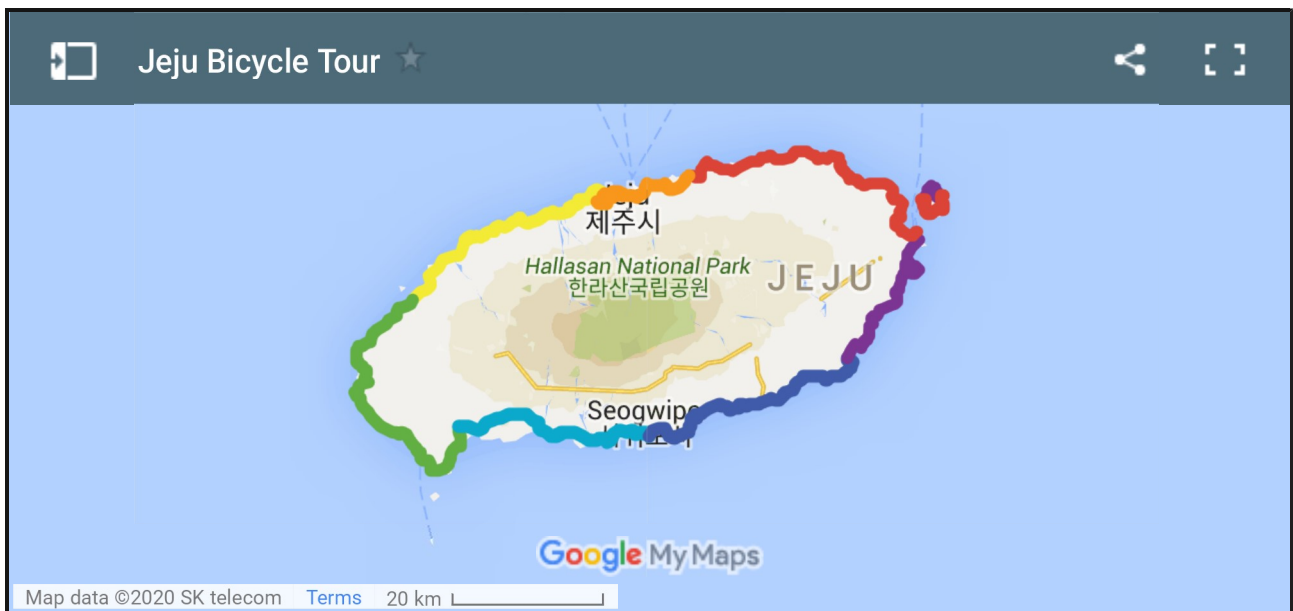
Cycling Jeju Island: Tips and recommendations

Jeju's bike paths are put to the test and perform well against mainland competitors

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승인 2014.08.18 15:05:25



Nikola Medimorec runs [Kojects.com](#), a website about development and transport in Korea. He is studying for a Master's degree in Geography at Seoul National University and often cycles to university or just rides along the Han River. He visited Jeju in June for his first long-distance cycling trip and this is his review of Jeju's cycling infrastructure.

If you don't have a bike, or feel that it would be too hard to bring one with you on your vacation, be sure to check out [our guide to renting a bike on Jeju](#).

I traveled to Jeju and cycled along the shore for a week and was pleasantly surprised by the cycling infrastructure network. Nevertheless, there are some areas for improvement, and if these are completed

even more cyclists could be attracted to the island.

My route

I read up beforehand, including some of the tips in [The Jeju Weekly](#), and also received some advice from friends who had made the trip before. One friend gave up after the first day and another did the whole island in just two days, a task that meant riding 100 k.m. per day. The third friend was more leisurely and completed the standard course in three-and-a-half days.

I took the flexible approach, only having predetermined overnight stops at Hyeopjae Beach, Sanbongsan Hot Spring and Udo Island. Going counterclockwise, my route, recorded with Strava, covered 283 k.m. (See map above.)

Bicycle infrastructure and Highway 1132

There are bike lanes along the main Highway 1132 and along the coastal roads. It was a pleasant surprise. The 1132 road circles the whole island and both sides of the road have well-marked bike paths.

The wide paths are perfect for fast rides, although the bike path merges with the sidewalk in villages. A downside is the view, which is not as picturesque as the coastal road hugging the seashore. Another inconvenience is that cars reach speeds of 100 k.m. per hour as they pass, which can be unsettling.



▲ Clearly marked bike paths in rural areas. Photo courtesy Nikola Medimorec

On the coastal roads

I tried to stay as close as possible to the coast. This was mostly achieved by following the Coastal Road, marked "Haeandoro" in Korean. It is tricky to follow, so I often used online-map services to check my location.

The bike paths are separated from the main coastal road by regular blocks for much of the route, meaning vehicles can only enter the bike lane every few hundred meters.

Even so, don't be surprised to find vehicles (mostly rental cars) blocking your route. These vehicles are easy enough to navigate around and, actually, I was stopped more often – perhaps as much as every kilometer! – by the beautiful views Jeju offers.

Other major local roads have bike lanes without physical barriers and I also found a few narrow paths solely for pedestrians and cyclists. Cars sometimes use these too, but the traffic volume is very low.



▲ Local farmers and others often utilise Jeju's cycle paths. Photo courtesy Nikola Medimorec

Dirt and obstacles on the paths

I have no problem with farmers drying their crops along the paths - it is a unique aspect of Jeju and very endearing - but the biggest problem was the dirt and even glass along the bike paths. Any street cleaning that takes place seems to only cover the main vehicle lanes.

World-class bike networks take great care over cycle path cleanliness, and while Copenhagen's impressive standards may be too much to ask for, there needs to be more awareness of the need for cleanliness on bike paths.

Jeju differences

In comparison with the Korean mainland, there are far fewer basic facilities such as resting areas, toilets, and pumps. The only resting areas along the 1132 highway are the bus stops, which are far from comfortable. Ideally there would be resting areas with bike racks, toilets, repair kits and bike pumps.

The mainland also has plenty of bike-only paths, while Jeju's bike paths follow main roads. However, bike-only paths are not essential on Jeju as the existing paths are sufficient and there is little room, especially on the coastal road, for dedicated bike lanes.

Jeju province does well in acknowledging the tourists who come to cycle. Once I reached a 50-meter break in the bike path and a sign said, "Walk Your Bike," with an explanation – albeit mostly in Korean – that it was for cyclists' safety. At the other end was another sign wishing me a nice vacation. There was even a promise to expand the bike network. It was nothing major, but it was nice to be acknowledged.



▲ Photo courtesy Nikola Medimorec

Improvements in maps and information

When I asked for a cycle map at the airport I was given a normal road map, which is not that useful for cyclists who need more detail. The official provision of cycling material, in multiple languages, needs to be improved.

Another way of improving the cycling experience would be to brand the bicycle trail as unique in Korea, such as the Olle walking paths. I understand this is currently in the pipeline, with improved signage, a stamp system and guesthouse discounts having great marketing potential.

Cycling tips for Jeju and Korea

Don't be intimidated by the expensive road bikes and equipment of Lycra-clad Korean cyclists! The cycling infrastructure is well developed and most of the cycling, especially along Jeju's coast, is fairly moderate.

A repair kit and a spare tube should suffice, although I must admit I survived without those on my trip, only picking up a flat tire outside the airport. Also make sure you have front and rear lights for evening cycling, as I was surprised twice by the dark, which draws in quicker than you might expect.

My golden rule is to stay as light as possible and try to mount your bag on your bicycle, which greatly reduces the strain on your back. And again, you don't need a special bicycle bag as a bag strap can safely secure your luggage.

My cycling experience on Jeju

The bicycle network on Jeju-do is already well developed, but while the hard infrastructure is great, the soft infrastructure needs improvement. There needs to be better marketing, better tourist information, and improved maintenance of bike paths.

In the near future, late 2015 or early 2016, Jeju will be added to the national bicycle network and cyclists will be able to collect stamps along certain courses. Even before this happens, I can think of no better way to appreciate Jeju's beauty than cycling its coastal bike paths.



▲ Some of the views on offer while cycling Jeju Island. Photo courtesy Nikola Medimorec



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Registration Number: Jeju Da 01093 | Date of Registration: November 20, 2008 | Publisher: Hee Tak Ko | Youth policy: Hee Tak Ko

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