

# Tips on Taking a Brewery Biking Tour

The owner of Detroit bike shop Wheelhouse Detroit offers insight on biking between the city's breweries.

By **Mickey Lyons** - July 10, 2023



*Photography courtesy of Mickey Lyons*

Taking a trip to visit the state's many **breweries** by bike requires a bit of planning, so we talked to an expert. Kelli Kavanaugh is the owner of **Wheelhouse Detroit**, a full-service bike shop in downtown Detroit that also offers bike tours of the city. She and her guides have plenty of practice navigating group rides to historic sites and to breweries in Detroit.

Kavanaugh recommends planning a 10-to-12-mile route at what she calls a "conversational pace," where everyone riding is comfortable talking to the person next to them. For beginner cyclists, mapping out an itinerary that covers those miles in an afternoon is a realistic goal.

It's also important, Kavanaugh says, to "definitely know your limits," especially on a hot day. "If you're not a big drinker, don't go out expecting to drink an IPA at four different breweries, because that's not going to work out well."

She recommends taking advantage of nonalcoholic options and hydrating well

with plenty of water as you go. Most importantly, Kavanaugh stresses that being aware of your route and your surroundings is crucial for a fun and safe bike tour.

“Everyone else is not on your beer tour,” she says. “Everyone else is having a regular day, so be cognizant of that and respectful of other people in the world.”

Here are Kavanaugh’s tips for making the most of a bike-and-brew tour:

**Get a tune-up.** This is especially important at the beginning of the season or if you haven’t ridden in a few weeks or more. There’s nothing worse than struggling up a hill through squealing brakes and rusted chains.

**Check your tires.** Kavanaugh cites underinflated tires as the No. 1 hiccup on Wheelhouse’s tours. Make sure your tires are properly inflated to the range specified on the side of the tire and that they’re free of bubbles, dents, and cracks in the tread. Each rider should also carry one spare tube for their tires.

**Designate a mechanic and a map keeper.** Your mechanic should carry a basic set of bicycle tools, either a kit or a collection of pliers; Allen, standard, and torque wrenches; and flathead and Phillips screwdrivers. As for the mapmaker, Google and other satellite map technology work fairly well but are not 100 percent faultless.

“Hopefully someone in your group is a map nerd,” Kavanaugh says, and can keep everyone on the right — and the safest — path.

**Dress for Michigan weather.** Sunny skies can turn to a downpour in an instant here in Michigan. Wear layers and, if it looks like rain might appear, pack a spare poncho or rain jacket. No one enjoys beer when they’re drenched and shivering.

**Wear a helmet! Always.** If your feet are near the pedals, the helmet should be on your head and fastened.

*Although **biking** tours are mentioned in this article, and you cannot get a DUI in Michigan for riding a bike while intoxicated, Hour Detroit is not advocating for doing these activities while intoxicated.*

*Please drink responsibly.*

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