



## Northfield Tour 12.3 Miles

### Terrain and Road Conditions:

This route is not long, but contains two very steep climbs. The "upside" of this is that in 12 miles of cycling, there is only about a mile and a half of serious "gear crunching" the rest is flat, downhill or gently rolling. Road surfaces vary from paved State highway to narrow, winding dirt roads. Most of the route is unpaved.

### Tour Highlights:

This tour takes you through a variety of landscapes in a relatively short distance. Along its course you will encounter cool forests, panoramic mountain views, hillside farms, and a small urban center steeped in history. The tour begins and ends in Northfield Village that has a population of 2,000.

Chartered in 1781, Northfield has had its share of ups and downs. Its first period of rapid growth began in 1848 when it was established as the headquarters of the Central Vermont Railway. Just five years later, in an apparent vendetta against the town, Vermont's governor, vowing to "make grass grow in the streets of Northfield," moved the railroad headquarters to St. Albans. However, Northfield was not about to roll over. In 1866, Norwich University, a private military academy, moved to Northfield giving the town a much needed infusion of life. The university is still going strong, as you will see. In the 1890's the granite industry became established in Northfield bringing with it many Spanish and Italian stone workers. During the Great Depression of the 1930's, the industry was forced to consolidate its resources into nearby Barre, plunging Northfield into yet another period of decline. The town bounced back once again behind the establishment of a knitting and woolen industry and the expansion of the university. Today, Northfield is a proud and thriving small town.

### Route Description:

➡Park at Depot Square in the heart of the Village of Northfield and proceed east on Wall Street, across the railroad tracks and the Dog River.

➡Turn left onto Water Street at your first intersection and follow along the flood plain of the river. The Dog river is known as one of Vermont's better trout streams.

➡At about 1.2 miles, after passing Terry Hill Road, the road bends sharply to the right and up Dole Hill Road. This road climbs steeply for almost a mile, past Norwich University Cemetery, to an open hilltop with nice views of the Dog River valley and the hills beyond. After cresting the hill, you will descend, bearing left at a grassy triangle, and left again at a stop sign (2.8 miles) onto Smith Hill Road.

➡Continue your descent on Smith Hill Road to the intersection of Rte. 12A (4.1 miles).

➡Bear left at the top of the hill. In about a mile, panoramic views to the west begin to unfold, each more magnificent than the previous. On a clear day, Vermont's highest peak, Mount Mansfield, is prominent on the northwest horizon.

➡After 3 miles, Winch Hill Road drops sharply back to the valley intersecting Route 12A again at 10.3 miles.

➡Turn right onto Rte. 12A, then left at its intersection with Rte. 12 (11.2 miles). Proceed past Norwich University, or take time to explore its beautiful campus and military museum. Continue down Main Street with its many well kept, historic homes, returning to Depot Square (12.3 miles).

➡Continue your descent on Smith Hill Road to the intersection of Rte. 12A (4.1 miles).

➡Turn left onto 12A and proceed under a trestle bridge. Take the first right onto Bull Run Rd (4.4 Miles).

➡You will ride through a cool streamside forest for 2.2 miles on gently rolling terrain before turning left onto Winch Hill Road. This turn comes shortly after you cross the fourth bridge over Bull Run. The ascent up Winch Hill is extremely steep and it may be necessary to dismount and walk in places. However, it only lasts about a half mile and you will be well rewarded for your efforts.

➡Bear left at the top of the hill. In about a mile, panoramic views to the west begin to unfold, each more magnificent than the previous. On a clear day, Vermont's highest peak, Mount Mansfield, is prominent on the northwest horizon.

➡After 3 miles, Winch Hill Road drops sharply back to the valley intersecting Route 12A again at 10.3 miles.

➡Turn right onto Rte. 12A, then left at its intersection with Rte. 12 (11.2 miles). Proceed past Norwich University, or take time to explore its beautiful campus and military museum. Continue down Main Street with its many well kept, historic homes, returning to Depot Square (12.3 miles).

➡ Turn left onto 12A and proceed under a trestle bridge. Take the first right onto Bull Run Rd (4.4 Miles).

➡ You will ride through a cool streamside forest for 2.2 miles on gently rolling terrain before turning left onto Winch Hill Road. This turn comes shortly after you cross the fourth bridge over Bull Run. The ascent up Winch Hill is extremely steep and it may be necessary to dismount and walk in places. However, it only lasts about a half mile and you will be well rewarded for your efforts.

