

# FLINT HILLS CYCLING ROUTE GUIDE

EST 1857 EMPORIA, KANSAS

ELEVATION

ABOVE  SEA

1,148 FEET

LAT 38.403903

LONG -96.181662

Visit  
**EMPORIA**<sup>KS</sup>



# WELCOME!

Welcome to the Gravel Cycling Capital of the World! It is clear to see why Emporia is the world's favorite gravel cycling destination. Emporia sits as the front porch to the Flint Hills, a vast expanse of mostly untouched tallgrass prairie. You will see far more cows than cars on these sparsely populated gravel roads. Voted one of the 8 Wonders of Kansas, the Flint Hills provide a rugged and remote landscape, ripe for gravel exploration.

Emporia is also home to UNBOUND Gravel. The big show takes place every year on the first Saturday after Memorial Day. 4,000 cyclists take part in a variety of distances ranging from 25 to 350 miles, with more than 10,000 people taking in the finish line celebration. It is a truly life-changing event that should be on every rider's bucket list.

The gravel roads remain year round though, and are always calling to adventure seekers. We are happy to share this guidebook of iconic local routes to help point you to some of the best riding in the area. Make Emporia your basecamp and prepare yourself for a riding experience like no other!

## BIKE ROUTES

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## VISIT EMPORIA

It has been said that Emporia lives bigger than its population. We certainly agree! Emporia is home to an unusually high amount of world-class events from cultural celebrations and music events, to gravel cycling and disc golf. We have a diverse array of restaurants that will allow you to have your own world culinary tour right here in Emporia. Bring the whole family along for your weekend getaway and be sure to stop by the Emporia Zoo, Peter Pan Park, or spend an afternoon taking in downtown Emporia. Learn more about how to make the most out of your time in Emporia by going to [visitemporia.com](http://visitemporia.com) or scan the QR code below to view the visitor guide.



SHIMANO

EXPLORE  
BEYOND



SHIMANO  
GRX

The world's first dedicated components for gravel adventure



## TIRE PRESSURE GUIDE

Proper tire pressure can transform your ride. In rougher terrain, ideal pressure may be a few psi lower, but it is important to maintain enough pressure to prevent your tire from bottoming out during harsh impacts.

### RECOMMENDED GRAVEL TIRE PRESSURE CHART

	38 - 42mm	47 - 55mm (1.95 - 2.1")
RIDER WEIGHT	PSI	PSI
90	21	16
100	22	17
110	24	18
120	26	19
130	27	20
140	29	21
150	31	22
160	32	23
170	34	24
180	35	24
190	36	25
200	37	25
210	38	26
220	39	27
230	39	29
240	40	30
250	41	30



### PRO TIP

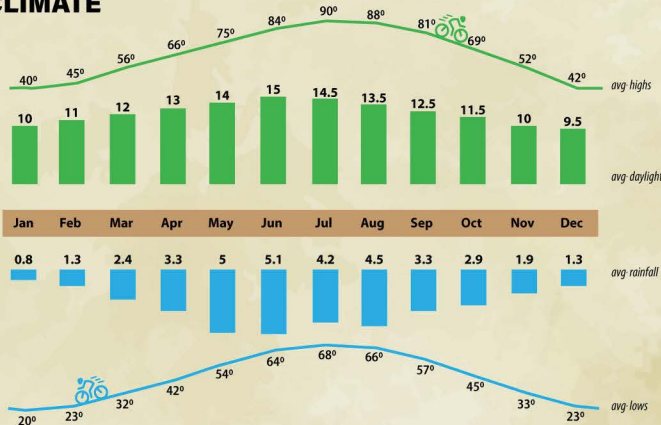
Carry a pressure gauge on your bike and note the pressure where your bike performs best.



PRO PRESSURE CHECKER

PRO-BIKEGEAR.COM

## CLIMATE



Emporia is halfway between Kansas City and Wichita on I-35. Emporia is located approximately 1.5 hours from the Kansas City and Wichita airports.

## EVENTS



Unbound is the world's premier gravel cycling event. Held the first weekend after Memorial Day each year it is a spectacle not to be missed!

This grassroots event takes place out of Americus, KS early in April. Great family-style event for gravel riders of all ages!



This two-day gravel stage race is typically held in early May. Because one day of Emporia gravel just isn't enough!



This gravel night ride is typically held in conjunction with the full moon in July. Experience the Flint Hills in a whole new (moon)light!



## HELMET FIT

How to fit your helmet for best comfort and protection!



### 01

Pick the right size! We recommend the smallest size shell that will fit on your head while still having at least a half turn in the adjustment system



### 02

Front brim should sit about a finger width above your eyebrows.



### 03

Straps should sit close to your face and the buckle should sit just below your chin. Loose enough to open your mouth but not too loose to let the helmet shift on your head.



### 04

Check your helmet regularly for cracks or dents. Replace immediately if you spot any damage!

**LAZER**

# PRE-RIDE CHECKLIST

Before every ride, it's a good idea to perform a quick safety check of your bike. The **A,B,C's** can be helpful.



Check that your tires have **A**ir.



Make sure your **B**reaks are functioning properly.



And if your **C**hain sounds noisy, apply some lube.

## RIDE SPOT

The Ride Spot app, created by PeopleForBikes, is designed to help you find the best routes from trusted local sources, get involved in local activities and earn rewards for riding your bike. PeopleForBikes' mission is to make bike riding better for everyone, and they do that through advocacy, infrastructure and inspiration. We love the Ride Spot app because it's 100% FREE and very easy to use. Download Ride Spot today.



1. Hover over the QR code with the camera on your phone to visit your app store and download Ride Spot.
2. Once you have downloaded and registered, tap on "Routes & Events" to see, save and navigate the best local routes.
3. Use the app to track your own rides and share ride stories to inspire others.
4. To use a GPS device to navigate a route, log into Ride Spot on a computer and download the GPX file for your device.



## SAFETY IN THE FLINT HILLS

In many ways, gravel is one of the safest ways to travel by bike. However, there is much to know about the nuances of gravel riding and the challenges that the Flint Hills provide. That's why we've put together this list of things you need to know before selecting a route and heading out on a two-wheeled journey into the rocky hills!

- Don't be silly, wear a helmet when you ride.
- These roads have a well-earned reputation for having sharp rocks. Make sure you have good rubber on your steed before heading out. 38-40 mm is a good place to start, but also make sure they have a reinforced sidewall.
- There is much that you could bring. Whatever you decide to carry with you, make sure you know how to use it.
- Always carry a cellphone along with enough food and water to cover the distance you are riding. Have a back up plan should you get into trouble.
- All roads are open, public roads. While traffic is light, it tends to be larger trucks, tractors or semis. Be aware, share the road, and give a wave!
- Visit a local bike shop to learn more and ask questions before heading out.

## GRAVEL SURVIVAL KIT

With gravel riding, as with so many aspects of life, fortune favors the prepared. Covering basic equipment needs can help you manage any ride.



### FOOD

- 250-300 calories for each hour

### MINITool

- Fix what's broke

### INFLATION

- CO2 inflator or minipump - test it before you need it

### NAVIGATION

- Paper or electronic, have a map to know where you're going

### WATER

- Prepare to drink 20-30 ounces per hour

### CLOTHING

- Bring layers that match the forecast

### ON BIKE STORAGE

- Have capacity to bring your gear plus a bit extra



# DISCOVER

Explore for the thrill of it. Ride for the joy of it. With **PRO's DISCOVER** gravel components the limit is always somewhere beyond the horizon.



PRO DISCOVER ALLOY 20



PRO DISCOVER  
STEM



PRO DISCOVER  
DROPPER SEATPOST



PRO DISCOVER  
SEATPOST

## AEROBAR SETUP

A clip on aerobar can boost your comfort and speed. To max out enjoyment, pick a system with a wide adjustment range, and set it up so your elbows and shoulders are close to 90 degrees. Set up the arm pads wide enough for comfort, and make sure they're high enough that you can see down the road. Stay out of the bars for tech sections or traffic, but otherwise enjoy gobbling up the miles.



## PRO MISSILE GRAVEL CLIP ON SYSTEM





# MURDER ORDAINED



99



## MURDER ORDAINED

Despite its ominous name, 'Murder Ordained' is a very tame, beginner friendly route. It is nearly pancake flat with only 220 ft. of climbing over the 13.8 miles. It is so aptly named for an infamous murder that occurred at Rocky Ford Bridge (Bird Bridge to locals). While that event occurred decades ago, the history still lives on to locals. The bridge itself is worth the ride with its through-truss design and double-track wooden planks. Whether you're new to gravel or just looking for an easy spin, this is the route for you!



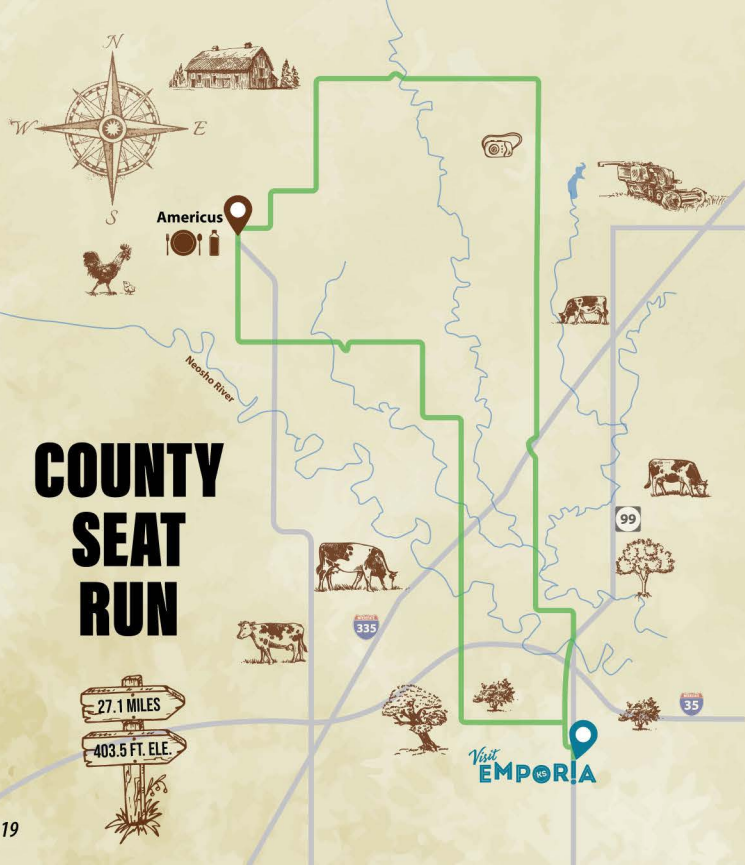
## FLINT HILLS TRAIL STATE PARK

The Flint Hills Trail State Park is a converted rail bed. Climbing is minimal and the grades are gentle. You won't find any steep climbs on this route. And while this particular section is set up as an out and back starting and ending in Admire, KS, FHTSP actually extends for 117 miles. There are plenty of views as this path generally follows the Santa Fe Trail and ultimately concludes in historic Council Grove. A great ride for families, beginners, and advanced riders alike. Everyone can find all day enjoyment on this trail, as you can set your own distance.



# FLINT HILLS TRAIL STATE PARK





## COUNTY SEAT RUN

This beginner friendly route takes riders to the town of Americus, which at one time rivaled Emporia for the position of county seat. While Emporia eventually won out, there were claims of a nighttime raid to steal county records. Have no fear, the animosity has long been put to rest and Americus has welcomed many gravel cyclists, even those coming from Emporia. The Casey's General Store in Americus makes a great place to stop and refuel if needed. Because the route from Emporia to Americus and back stays close to the Neosho river you won't encounter a lot of climbing, making this a great exploratory ride for gravel enthusiasts of all abilities.







# VITAMIN G



Visit  
**EMPORIA**

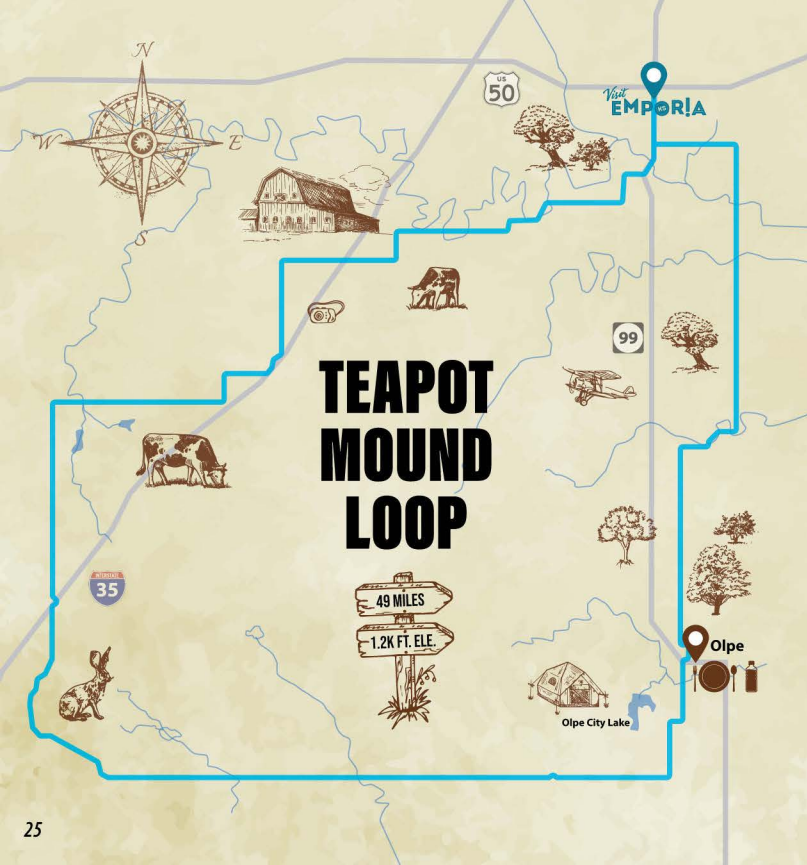
## VITAMIN G

While each person's daily recommended dose of 'Vitamin Gravel' may vary, this route surely is a staple for gravel grinders. One will encounter Minimum Maintenance Roads (MMR), which are typically dirt. This route may not be suitable if conditions are damp, as these roads can turn to mud. When the forecast is favorable, these roads set the foundation for a nice foray into the Flint Hills. While the climbing is still relatively low, you will get a taste for some hills. Do this route often to get your recommended Vitamin G!



1730 ft  
1570 ft  
1410 ft  
1250 ft  
1090 ft





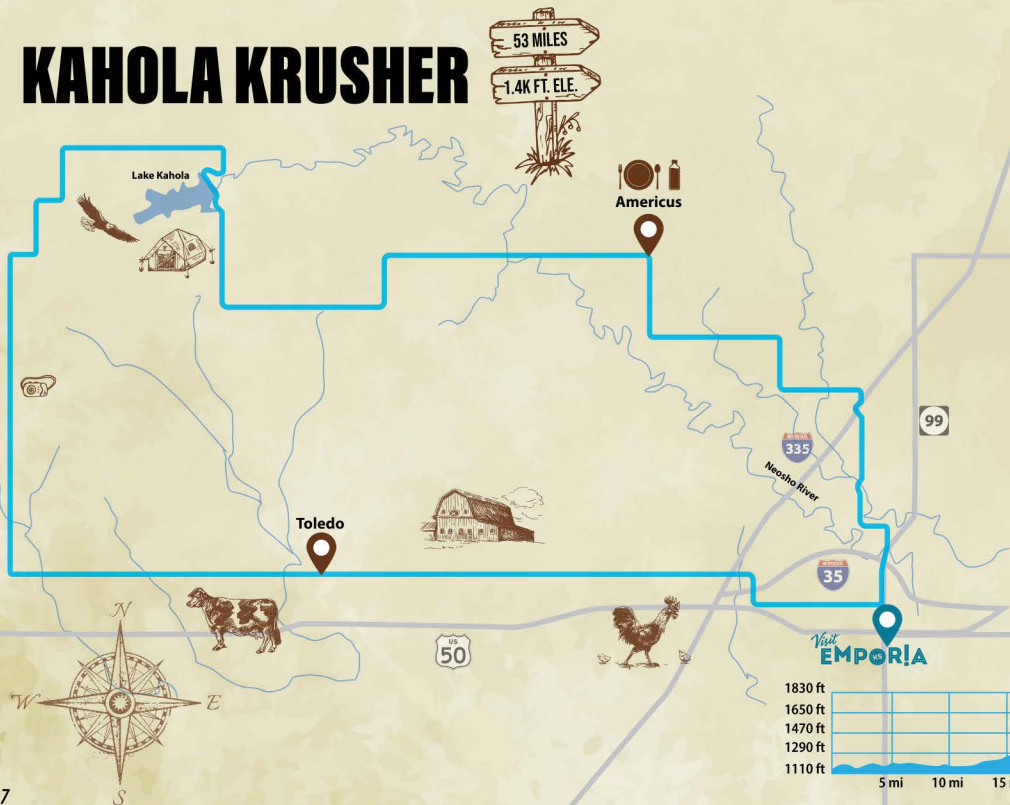
## TEAPOT MOUND LOOP

Now this is what you travel to the gravel capital for, open range and wide open vistas! This loop takes riders over MMR (which can be muddy if wet) and into the open cattle grazing range that makes this area so special. Big climbs lead you south down YY Rd. (Teapot Mound Rd. to the locals) and across the cattle guards into open range. At mile 36 you'll have the ability to top off bottles and get snacks if needed in Olpe. This is the kind of route that will keep you coming back for more!





# KAHOLA KRUSHER



## KAHOLA KRUSHER

Many UNBOUND Gravel veterans will know Kahola Lake quite well, as it typically features in the final leg of most editions of the famed gravel race. And those memories are generally spurned by the late leg crushing climbs to be found there. With just 53.4 miles, this scenic route will give you the same taste of those hills without the epic distance.

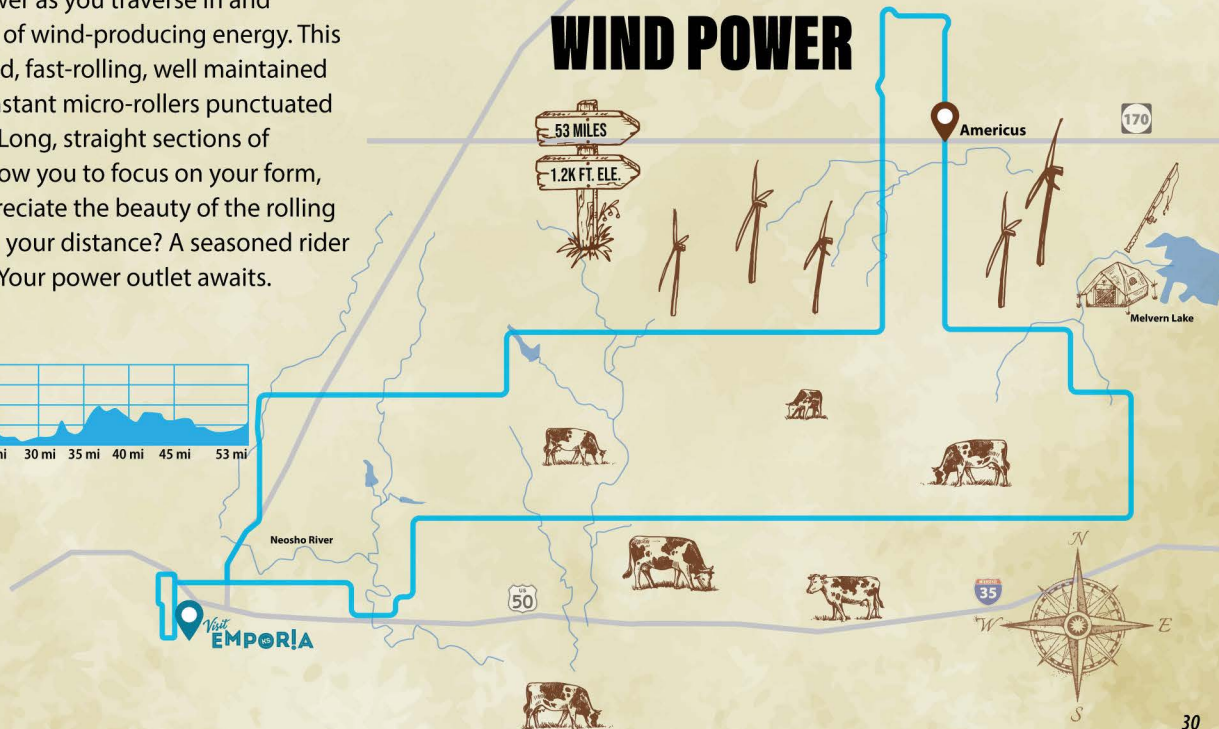


## WIND POWER

Generate your own power as you traverse in and around 200 megawatts of wind-producing energy. This route offers hard-packed, fast-rolling, well maintained gravel that features constant micro-rollers punctuated by a few pitchy climbs. Long, straight sections of non-technical riding allow you to focus on your form, push your pace, or appreciate the beauty of the rolling hills. Ready to lengthen your distance? A seasoned rider with a need for speed? Your power outlet awaits.

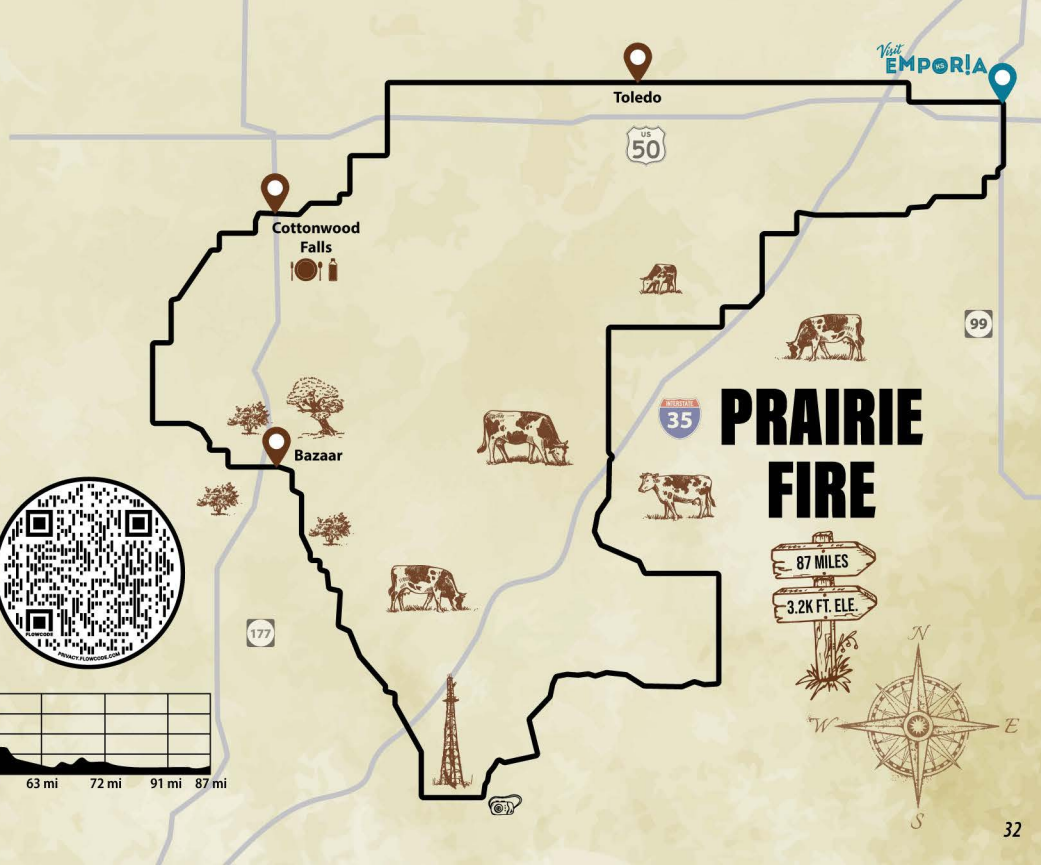


## WIND POWER



## PRAIRIE FIRE

No trip into the Flint Hills would be complete without a ride to historic Cottonwood Falls. This beautiful small town makes a perfect stop for weary riders. On this route, it'll take 60 miles before reaching that stop. The good news is you'll cover some of the best roads in the area en route! This course takes riders over remote and demanding terrain. There is also no support in the way of towns until mile 60. It is for this reason that this route is recommended for seasoned gravel riders who are well equipped for the rigors of such a challenging course.



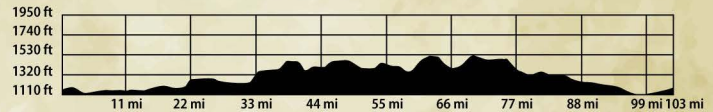


# NATIVE STONE



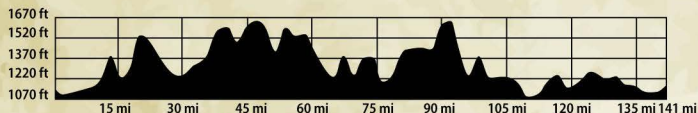
## NATIVE STONE

Wabaunsee County, our neighbors to the North, are famous for their Native Stone. As if the primitive roads weren't enough, catch a glimpse of a native Limestone Fence and you'll certainly feel like you're pioneering along the Santa Fe Trail. Along the way you'll pass through the historic Santa Fe Trail town, Council Grove, which boasts 24 national historical sites. Don't dally too long, as there are still plenty of miles to be ridden!

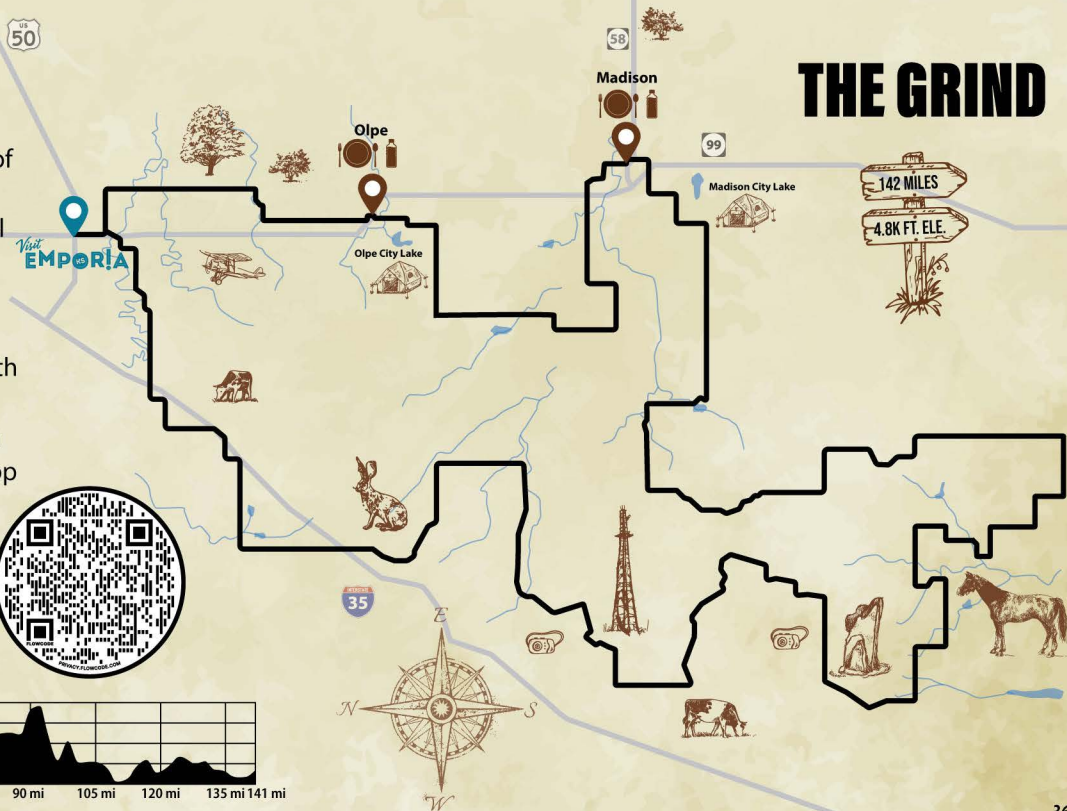


## THE GRIND

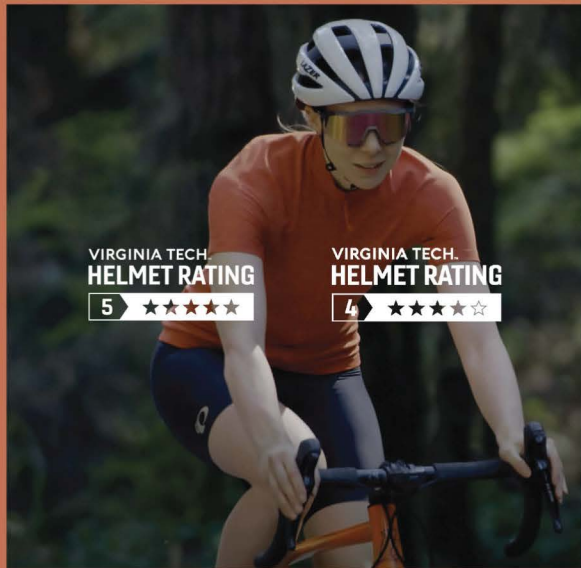
This route is not to be taken lightly by even the most accomplished gravel riders. You'll have 100 miles of the best that the Flint Hills has to offer before finding a town to refuel in. We've pulled out the stops and have given you the green light on the world's best gravel roads. You will be completely on your own, with little to no civilization in sight, for the first 100 miles before arriving in Madison. You'll have another pit stop at mile 126 in Olpe. This one is not for the faint of heart!



## THE GRIND



# PROTECTION FIRST



VIRGINIA TECH.  
HELMET RATING

5



VIRGINIA TECH.  
HELMET RATING

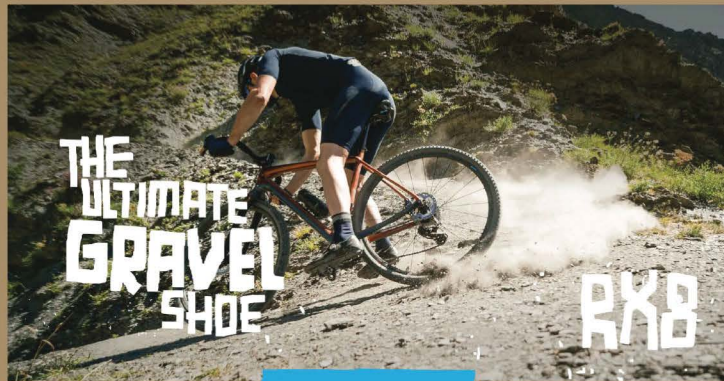
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With the most Virginia Tech 4 & 5 Star ranked helmets available, Lazer is the #1 brand in cycling protection! In competition, adventuring, on road or off and everything in between, there is a Lazer helmet to keep you cool, comfortable and provide "Best Available" protection! **We guarantee it.**

# LAZER

SHIMANO



Want to go faster offroad? Look no further than the RX8.  
Light, agile, effective. This is the gravel racers' choice.  
Leave others behind a cloud of dust, mud or gravel as soon  
as you put these on.



RX800 WOMEN  
YELLOW GOLD



RX8  
BRONZE



RX8  
SILVER



RX8  
BLACK



## LOCAL BIKE SHOPS



### ECLECTIC BIKES

823 Commercial St.

As the name implies, Eclectic Bikes offers not your usual assortment of bikes. You can find everything from vintage to current models.



### HIGH GEAR CYCLERY

520 Commercial St.

High Gear offers small town service with a big city selection. With a passion for cycling, they also donate bikes to people in need through their non-profit, Handlebars of Hope.



### GRAVEL CITY ADVENTURE & SUPPLY CO.

716 Commercial St.

Gravel City Adventure lives by its mission of "Building Community, One Adventure at a Time." Come to chat about all things gravel and learn about adventure opportunities in the area.

VIRGINIA TECH.  
HELMET RATING

5 ★★★★★

With the **Virginia Tech 5-Star** protection ratings, premium venting to keep your head cool, lightweight and with the available Aeroshell accessory cover for weather protection and guaranteed fit and comfort, it's hard to beat the Lazer **G1 MIPS** and **Sphere MIPS** helmets from Lazer!

G1  
**MIPS**



SPHERE  
**MIPS**



**LAZER**

60



SATISFACTION  
GUARANTEE

DAY

We're so confident that you will love your Lazer helmet that offer a 60 day "no questions asked" Satisfaction Guarantee. Combined with a 3 year crash replacement discount program and 2 year product warranty (\*) we know that you will love your new Lazer! (\* 1 year warranty extended to 2 year warranty with product registration)

**LAZER**

## DISC GOLF CAPITAL

In addition to being a hotbed for gravel cycling, Emporia was also named America's #1 Disc Golf Small Town. It is home to Dynamic Discs and the Dynamic Discs Open, one of the world's most prestigious tournaments, and routinely hosts some form of PDGA World Championships. Emporia has 15 disc golf courses in town and another four 18-hole courses in nearby communities. We have put together another pocket guide book containing information on our disc golf courses which you can pick up at the Visit Emporia office or you can scan the QR code below.

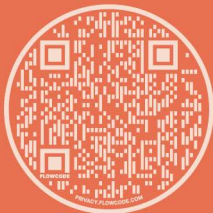


WHAT IS GRAVEL? FOR SHIMANO'S TAKE,  
HAVE A WATCH OF "THE PATH LESS PAVED."



# Visit EMPORIA!A

Thank you for Visiting the  
Front Porch of the Flint Hills!



[visitemporia.com](http://visitemporia.com)

(620) 342-1600

