

Why I Love Cycling

Cycling is, without a doubt, my favorite hobby besides photography. Living in Philadelphia, I'm lucky to have access to the **Schuylkill River Trail**, a route that stretches far into Pennsylvania, providing endless terrain to explore on my bike.

"Cycling is my way of exploring and getting away from the hustle and bustle of Philadelphia."

The trail offers everything I need for a fulfilling adventure and is one of the most beautiful places to visit, especially in the summertime. Between the lush scenery, events, and even boat races, this place has become a backdrop for some of my best moments, both in cycling and photography.

Zen Focus on the Trail

One of the most powerful experiences of biking is the *state of zen* it brings me into. Out on the trail, with no distractions, I can focus on the horizon, allowing myself to slip into a deeply meditative space.

"There are no distractions in front of me, and I can simply focus on the horizon in the distance."

In today's world, filled with urban hustle and nonstop noise, this feeling is rare. The combination of watching trees move past, left and right, while the wind crashes against my face, *evokes my inner conqueror spirit*. Lately, I've been listening to **The Iliad** on audiobook as I ride, syncing the epic narration with the rhythm of my pedals and feeling an even deeper connection to the journey.

Exploring Nature, Escaping the City

Philadelphia offers a unique balance between urban life and green spaces. Only a short ride from Center City, I can reach **Wissahickon** and the surrounding woodlands. These areas are a sanctuary—a place where I can let my child-like curiosity roam free.

"When you live in the center of town, surrounded by noise, it feels really good to be alone, surrounded by nature."

- The *freedom* to immerse myself in nature
- The *ease* of reaching green spaces from the heart of the city
- The *balance* Philadelphia offers between urban life and nature

This is what I cherish most about my hometown. Philadelphia isn't just a city with walkable streets; it's a place where you can step into nature whenever you need to, and I take full advantage of it.

Pure Fun and the Thrill of Movement

In all honesty, cycling is pure fun. I don't do it for exercise, cardio, or any fitness goals—biking is simply exhilarating on its own. It's a fast-paced way to explore new terrain, bringing a rush of adrenaline that's hard to beat.

For me, biking beats driving because it immerses you in the environment instead of isolating you in a car. It's a much more enjoyable way to travel.

- **Freedom of movement:** Exploring at a fast pace
- **Connection with the environment:** Being outside, not behind the wheel
- **Safety and joy:** Sticking to the trail lets me focus purely on the ride

My new electric bike has opened up even more possibilities. With two batteries and pedal assist up to 20 mph, I can cover longer distances with ease. I pack essentials like my **Ricoh camera**, **GoPro**, and sometimes a **360 camera** to capture the journey. The bike trail is where I can truly let loose and find adventure.

Photography and Cycling: The Perfect Combo

Cycling and photography go hand in hand. Biking allows me to explore places I wouldn't normally see, finding new vantage points and moments to capture. I bring my camera and stop often to take photos of scenes like **boats gliding by** or the timeless **Schuylkill River views**.

"It's important to do what you love and photograph along the way."

Some favorite spots include Kelly Drive, where I watch boat races and events in the summer, and the Towpath in Manayunk. There's so much to see—from the peaceful river to bustling city views from **Belmont Plateau**—making the **Schuylkill River Trail** one of the best on the East Coast, in my opinion. The trail stretches nearly 100 miles, offering endless terrain to explore.

As I ride, I enter what I call a "Zen Zone"—observing the passing trail, trees, and sky, like moving through the passage of time. Once I get away from the city cars and enter the quieter parts of the trail, it becomes a truly beautiful experience.

Cycling gives me everything I need—peace, nature, and freedom—all while exploring my hometown and going beyond. It's my favorite way to unwind, my way to get a taste of the wild side of Philadelphia, and it never fails to bring me joy.