

A guide for industry professionals prepared by Northern Ireland
Tourist Board in association with MountainBikeNI.com
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Mountain Biking. Embrace the Mud.

Your guide to becoming
mountain bike friendly



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Mountain Biking: What's it all about?





Mountain Biking: An Industry Overview

Widely regarded as one of the world's fastest growing adventure activities, mountain biking has well and truly landed in Northern Ireland with a bang.

Such is the nature of mountain biking, trails are generally located 'off the beaten track' and so can be a real tourism catalyst for rural economies.

This toolkit is designed to help you cater for both local and visiting mountain bikers so that together we can complement our trails with world class facilities and make Northern Ireland the next 'must-visit' mountain biking destination.

Key Facts

- The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) estimates that there are around 11.8 million people who currently own a mountain bike in the UK.
- There are now approximately 150km of official purpose-built mountain bike trails on offer across Northern Ireland.
- Over 100,000 people are expected to visit Northern Ireland's official mountain bike trails every year.

Meet... Mountain Bike Enthusiasts

Contrary to popular belief, typical mountain bikers are not adrenaline fuelled teenagers but generally professionals between 25 and 45 years old. They are a sociable bunch and true year-round adventure seekers at heart. However post-adventure; they like to be looked after.

Prone to travelling in groups, mountain bike enthusiasts are internet savvy and will quite often plan their trips online weeks in advance. Despite having a higher than average disposable income, they have a keen appreciation of value for money however prioritise convenience, comfort and security of their bikes above all else.





Also introducing... Friends and Families

Similar to the dramatic rise of snowboarding's popularity in the mid-90s, industry experts predict that as the profile of mountain biking increases so too will the numbers of those wanting to give it a go for the first time.

There will be organic growth in beginners and families visiting the trail centres here in Northern Ireland so make sure you future-proof your business by catering for these growing markets. It is important to remember that mountain biking may only form part of their trip so friends and families will be keen to experience other attractions and outdoor activities in your area.

What are mountain bikers looking for?

5 easy steps to becoming mountain bike friendly



STEP 1/5

Mountain Biking equals Mud. It's that simple

There's no getting around it - mountain bikers will be muddy so stand out from the crowd by welcoming them in... mud and all!

Cafés and pubs should consider floor tiles and provision of 'easy to wipe' non-fabric chairs and tables. Accommodation providers should offer a standard outside hose for washing bikes and a specific area for taking off mucky clothes. Good washing and drying facilities are also a must!





STEP 2/5

Prized Possessions

Keep the bikes safe – above all else!

Mountain bikers are very protective of their kit. Most bikes will have a four-figure price tag and so having a safe and secure place to store bikes is essential. This might consist of lockable bike racks outside the café window or a secure garage where the bikes can be safely locked away overnight. Have a selection of bike tools/puncture repair kits on hand for any last minute tweaks and know where your nearest bike shop is for more serious repairs.

STEP 3/5

In from the Cold

Make mountain bikers feel at home. The first thing a biker will be looking for after a long day on the trails is a hot shower - the last thing a biker wants is a cold shower!

Remember mountain biking is a year-round activity. Make sure hot water is available on request and provide adequate washing and drying facilities in your accommodation. Also create a homely atmosphere by having some mountain biking literature sitting on the tables or in the common areas if possible.





STEP 4/5

Fed & Watered

Mountain bikers the world over agree that the perfect day on the trails starts with a hearty breakfast and ends with a good meal and a trip around a few of the local hostelrys.

Use high quality local produce and embrace traditional dishes such as Ulster fries and Irish stew. When it comes to planning lunch on the trails, mountain bikers will quite often bring food with them in their rucksacks. Cafés and accommodation providers should team up to provide locally sourced packed lunches to replenish all that spent energy. Make sure these are full of carbohydrates and include a selection of high energy snacks - this will help on those tough afternoon hill climbs.



STEP 5/5

Know your Trails

Make sure staff are knowledgeable of local trails. Mountain bikers are a sociable bunch and love to chat about the local trails - make sure you're not left in the dark.

Trail centres include a variation of trails and can cater for beginners right through to experts. Make sure you know which trail is suitable for your customers and keep up to speed with any closures or diversions on www.MountainBikeNI.com. Post up trail information and weather updates on a notice board and know exact directions to the trailhead. Better still, offer a pick up service to and from the trails – this will set you apart!

Tell people about it!





Have you Heard?

Highlight your offering on all marketing materials

If you offer a great service for mountain bikers make sure you tell them about it! Mountain bikers want to stay and eat/drink in establishments which properly understand their wants and needs. Embrace your local trails as your unique selling point! Highlight your proximity to the trails and use mountain bike imagery on your website and brochures to reach this market.

Don't forget, social networking is a powerful tool for reaching mountain bike enthusiasts and a great platform where you can work together with the rest of the community to sell your destination.

Help is at Hand

MountainBikeNI.com is the one-stop shop for anyone looking for information on the official mountain bike trails and/or wanting to plan a trip to Northern Ireland. MountainBikeNI.com also provides an online resource and marketing support to private sector businesses who wish to offer added value to the mountain biking product in Northern Ireland. Visit www.MountainBikeNI.com or contact info@mountainbikeni.com for more information or to request high resolution mountain bike imagery of the purpose-built trails in your area.



**Great welcome, great trails,
great food, great craic...**

**Make Northern Ireland a
world class mountain
bike destination.**

