

Getting Dirty with Glenn™

Travel Guide Number 2.1

The Interurban Bike Trail



Interurban Bike Trail

Mequon, Cedarburg, Grafton, Port Washington, Oostburg

Table of Contents

Overview:	3
How do you get here?	3
The Interurban Bike Trail	3
Trail Conditions:	3
Port Washington:	4
Grafton	6
Cedarburg	8
Mequon/Theinsville	8
Best Kept Secrets	9
Bathrooms	9
Bike Shops	9
Shopping/Day Trips	10
Over the Hedgerow Social Media Platforms/Links	10

Typically when I was doing research to take various trips to destination bike trails, I got frustrated and tired of not having one source which would give me honest reviews and in-depth guidance on what to do, where to stay, best locations to eat and most importantly where to ride.

Each of these Getting Dirty with Glenn™ (GDWG) Travel Guides is meant to be a review of my experiences during each of these trips to unique destinations and to perhaps make your visit much more enjoyable. I will share what worked for me and what I feel I could have done to improve the experience. My goal is to make your day trip or weekend getaway more enjoyable with great food, local experiences and accommodations, while having fun.

I will provide links in my GDWG Travel Guides to all key items mentioned and provide links to all of my social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.

Of course you can always access the supplemental interactive google map for this guide on our website

Podcast? Yes, I go even more in depth, highlighting these businesses and destinations on my live, interactive streaming podcast available on blogtalkradio.

Overview:

In 2008 when my wife and I decided to move back to the Midwest after living in Northeast Pennsylvania for twenty years, one of the “must haves” for wherever we moved was to be close to a great bike trail, and an apple® store. After a lot of research, we found that there were a wide variety of bike trails in southeast Wisconsin and the one that really struck a chord with us was The [Interurban Bike Trail](#) (TIBT) because of the great towns it wandered through and offered 30+ miles of paved bike trails. Unfortunately my wife Cheryl, passed away in January of 2023 after a two year journey with stage 4 cancer. As I move forward on my new journey, I am looking forward to sharing my “home” bike trail located in beautiful Ozaukee County along the shores of Lake Michigan. And even better yet, I discovered as the Interurban Bike Trail wanders through the county, it passes by both great restaurants and unique retail stores.

How do you get here?

The [Interurban Bike Trail](#) (TIBT) is located just north of Milwaukee and runs from the north edge of [Brown Deer](#) on the south end of the trail and then runs north through fast growing [Mequon](#), historic [Cedarburg](#), picturesque [Grafton](#), up through [Port Washington](#) located on Lake Michigan and finally up to the village of Oostburg on the north end. TIBT is easily accessible, with multiple access points literally a minute or two from multiple exits off of [Interstate 43](#).

The Interurban Bike Trail

TIBT follows the path of what originally was an electric light railway system. The trail runs from Brown Deer Road on the south end, up to Oostburg on the north end and in between wanders through Mequon, Cedarburg, Grafton and Port Washington. One of the key elements of this trail was the installation of a bike/pedestrian bridge over Interstate 43. A key supporter and driving force for the Interurban Bike Trail bridge were [Wheel and Sprocket](#) Bike stores and it's founder, [Chris Kegel](#) who celebrated life every day.

Trail Conditions:

As can be expected, this trail has heavier use on the weekend than midweek, as do most trails, which is why I always recommend riding any trail midweek or early on the weekends....like 7-10 AM on the weekends. With that being said, this trail is not nearly as busy as a lot of other trails throughout the state.

The condition and flow of the trail vary from south to north. Traveling from Mequon up through Cedarburg you experience higher use of the trail by both bike riders and walkers and this is the most populated section of the rail and has the widest variety of food and drink options. Along with the great selection of food comes much more frequent road crossings, especially when traveling through Cedarburg.

Grafton is a growing community and now offers a lot of different food and drink options than it did just a few short years ago. Although most of the food options are just slightly off the bike trail in Grafton by just a block or two they are easily accessible.

Once you get north of Grafton, the interruption of the bike path with cross roads is much less frequent and when you get north of Port Washington you will have tranquil farm fields on both sides of the trail and it is about one mile between rural roads that cross the bike path.

The trail surface can be bumpy in sections which is why I don't enjoy riding my recumbent trike south of Grafton because I simply can't avoid all of the bumps with three wheels. The trail rides much better on my Trek Carbon Fiber Fat bike with 4.8" tires or my Trek Verve +2 ebike than on my recumbent. If you are on a two wheel bike than you can avoid most bumps, cracks or other issues with the trail pavement. On a scale of 1 (good) and 5 (bad) I would rate the paved surface a 3. Not the worst paved trail I have ridden, but certainly has room for improvement.

Food

I was fortunate that Cheryl was a gourmet cook and had been practicing "farm to table" before it was a thing and her dishes were as good as any restaurant we went to. That is why I try to find local lodging with full kitchens to stay in if we are going to be in one place for more than a few days. On the other hand, if Cheryl was cooking each night, then it was not much of a vacation for her, so we do try to find great local diners and dives to eat at which serve great food. Here are our favorites along The Interurban Bike Trail from Port Washington to Brown Deer.

You are in for an epicurean treat when you come to ride the IBT. Southeast Wisconsin is home to some of the best restaurants, diners and speciality food stores you will find along any bike trail, so let's get started.

Port Washington:

I realized ten years ago after moving back to southeast Wisconsin, that Port Washington or PW (P-Dub) or simply Port as it is known to the locals was truly a diamond in the rough and now fifteen years later PW is emerging as the jewel it always was. With a great marina, a quickly emerging downtown, a live entertainment and shopping district with extensive public

access to Lake Michigan and PW has become a destination for cyclists, fishing fanatics and people who just want to be on or near beautiful Lake Michigan for a day, a weekend or a lifetime.

Be sure to have several different options of clothing layers to choose from because if you are riding your bike into PW from the south on the IBT, the temp can drop ten+ degrees on the last drop into town on the IBT. This is great on a hot summer day, but can be a little cool in the spring and fall if the breeze is from the east and off of Lake Michigan which never really gets much warmer than mid 60's most summers.

[Dockside Deli](#)

This is one of the first local restaurants we stopped at when we first rode the IBT fifteen years ago. Dockside Deli is located on the waterfront with expansive views of the marina, the charter fishing fleet, Lake Michigan and the breakwaters. Probably the number one place to watch boats and people pass by.

As a self proclaimed aficionado of cinnamon buns, I am always looking for the next best melt in your mouth, feed your sweet tooth breakfast treat. And I was not disappointed with the large cinnamon bun with a warm brown sugar base layer at Dockside. Make sure you get there early before they sell out.

Dockside has both inside and outside tables with umbrellas on the lakeside to shade you from the intense summer sun. You place your order at the front counter and choose from a great menu posted above the counter. You can choose from salads, grilled cheese, hamburgers and flatbreads. Once you order, they use your cell phone number to text you when your order is ready. Then you can sit back and enjoy your meal along Lake Michigan with it's gentle breezes.

Just two years ago PW converted a dead end road in front of Dockside Deli into a beautiful outdoor seating area with tables, chairs and a gas fireplace all of which directly overlooks the charter boat fishing area and views of Lake Michigan.

[Twisted Willow](#)

Looking for a great farm to table restaurant? Then you need to look no further than Twisted Willow which literally has their own outrageous vegetable garden at a farm not more than a mile from our home in Grafton.

The IBT goes right next to Twisted Willow on Franklin Street and they have a few tables nestled on the sidewalk, up against the building. Cheryl and I have stopped there multiple times to enjoy their outstanding flatbread on our way further up the IBT to Oostburg. If we see an open table as we pedal by, we simply get off our bikes, lean them up against the building and try not to drool as we wait for our order of flatbread and a salad along with a cool drink. Daily specials are a highlight of the menu and truly are a joy to your tastebuds.

[Daily Baking Company](#)

This bakery is located in a building that has been lovingly completely renovated by the owners of the bakery.

For a long time there wasn't a great bakery in PW and now you can sit at the tables inside and watch the world go by on Franklin Street through the typical old school oversized large windows while enjoying a scone, a sandwich or one of their other great bakery items and of course don't forget to grab a loaf of fresh bread to gently place in your pannier for the ride home and will make sandwiches for dinner or French toast the next morning.

[The Chocolate Chisel](#)

Need we say more? Anything with chocolate in the name has got to be good and this is no different. As master chocolatiers, each creation in the show case is not only a taste sensation, but looks like a work of art. My personal favorite is a sour apple chocolate treat which is a perfect mix of sweet and a little bite of sour. And if you want ice cream, get ready to make a tough decision as you choose a cool treat to enjoy on the cow chairs out on the sidewalk watching the world pass by on Grand Avenue.

[Cousins Subs](#)

Located right on the IBT and Grand Avenue, sometimes there is nothing better than a sub during a long bike ride, day trip or motorcycle ride. You can enjoy a great Cousins Sub while sitting in the store or grab it and go enjoy the view at the expansive waterfront park known as [Coal Dock Park](#).

[Yummy Bones](#)

Ready for some finger lickin' BBQ from a real Pitmaster? Then you need to stop in at Yummy Bones in the heart of Port Washington. Nuff said!!!!

Grafton

Grafton is my adopted hometown and I love the ability to live "out in the country" and yet be five minutes from Home Depot, Costco, Target and a variety of great restaurants. The Milwaukee River winds through downtown and you can enjoy easy access for kayaking the river with the launch located in Veterans Park on the west side of the river just a block from downtown. You can also enjoy summer concerts in Veteran's Park during the summer. And just on the south side of town is Lime Kiln park where you can sit along the river, play disc golf and enjoy a simple picnic in the shade of the tree.

Be sure to stop by our [Grafton Chamber of Commerce/Tourism](#) office where the outstanding staff can guide you in the right direction. Ask them about the role Grafton played in the history of blues music.

Or maybe you love the exciting sport of bicycle criterium racing so be sure to check out when [The Tour of America's Dairyland](#) is in town for the Giro D'Grafton.

[Colectivo](#)

Colectivo is one of my favorite places in our hometown of Grafton and is located on the corner of RT. 60 and Wisconsin Avenue just a block east of the bike path. A great regional cafe with both an extensive coffee and food menu. Cheryl's favorite drink was a Green Hornet and I love their cinnamon buns and we both enjoyed their varied breakfast and lunch menu along with the daily specials. You can sit inside or out on the patio and enjoy some sunshine and fresh air and a break from your travels.

[Fiddleheads](#)

One of the newest additions to the food scene in Grafton, Fiddleheads has a long tradition of providing outstanding coffee bread and food in Ozaukee County. Once again you have the option of eating inside or outside along the newly installed pond less stream in the adjacent pocket park. This is also located about one block east of the bike trail.

[John's Pizza](#)

John's Pizza is located adjacent to the same pocket park as Fiddleheads. Choose from a great menu to help fuel the rest of your ride.

[Sendik's](#)

Need a few things for home or your stay in a local B&B or hotel? Southeast Wisconsin is home to great grocery stores and this is one of our favorites. Sendik's has a great variety of food to go and if you need an adult beverage they have a great selection of wine and beer.

[Big Apple Bagels](#)

There are good bagels and then there are great bagels and that is exactly what you will find at Big Apple Bagels. This is a weekly stop for me as I load up on Everything, Jalapeño or Onion bagels and with half a dozen you get your choice of a free cream cheese spread to go along with the bagels.

Cedarburg

[Boulangerie DuMonde](#)

If you like chocolate croissants and can't make it to Paris this week, then you need to stop in early and buy a couple of the (I simply call it the Boo) fresh chocolate croissants. Then you can enjoy them on the tables on the sidewalk right outside their door or eat them in your car on the way to your next stop. I prefer to grab a couple, put them in the pannier on my bike and then ride home and enjoy.

[Stilt House Gastro Bar](#)

We went to the Stilt House at the recommendation of one of our friends and we were not disappointed. They have an expansive patio which runs between their building and their neighbors building and back to Cedar Creek. You can enjoy a great meal and your favorite adult beverage (they have a lot to choose from) while watching the world go by. Don't forget to get some fresh cut fries and their Angry Ranch dip (I thought it would be really hot)) I was pleasantly surprised because I would call the dip more Mildly Upset Ranch :)

Mequon/Theinsville

When we moved back to the Midwest in 2008, we originally moved to Mequon because it was close to The Interurban Bike Trail had great condos and was a small town. Fast forward fifteen years and this area has experienced explosive growth with the development of three key areas immediately adjacent to the Interurban Bike Trail which have created great local condo options along with an extensive and wide variety of restaurant options.

[Spur 16](#)

Is a great new development on Mequon Road, immediately adjacent to the Interurban Bike Trail, which will include several great restaurants, a Pilates and Yoga studio as well as luxury apartments and condos. We will highlight the individual restaurants in Spur 16 in the next update of this travel guide.

[Colectivo](#)

This is another location for one of our favorites which we have already discussed in the Grafton listing for Colectivo. As with the store in Grafton, here in Mequon there is a great outdoor seating area and they have the same great menu,

[Hollanders](#)

Ok.....When I ride 15 miles one way on my bike from Grafton to Mequon I can justify eating the insanely good Cinnamon Streusel French Toast complete with maple brown sugar butter, warm maple syrup and crumblesIf you are riding your bike they have THE best

bike rack on the Interurban Bike Trail and if you are riding your Harley, Suburban Harley is two blocks north of Hollanders on Green Bay Road.

Best Kept Secrets

Everyone likes a secret and who knows this better than the locals:

Secret #1: As you come down the long hill into Port Washington from the south end, instead of turning to the left and following the trail through Port....follow the pedestrian crossway across S. Wisconsin Street directly in to Coal Dock Park which will bring you right to Lake Michigan and you can look back at the village of Port Washington. If the air is cool and clear, you will be able to see the Milwaukee skyline 20+ miles to the south and beautiful bluffs to the north.

Secret #2: When you take the bike path north out of Port Washington and after you pass the large community gardens at the top of the hill...instead of following the bike trail north, take a right turn onto Hales Trail and follow that for about four blocks and you will end up in Upper Lake Park which has the best views of lake Michigan from atop sand bluffs. You can sit on a bench or a picnic table and take in all that is Wisconsin.

Bathrooms

Going through Mequon, Cedarburg and Grafton there are several establishments where you could use their bathrooms. Once you get out of Grafton, the bathrooms are a little further apart. There is a portable bathroom, on your right (south side of bike trail) just as you cross the bridge over 43 from west to east. The best bathroom facilities are just as you are coming into Port Washington right after you pass the County Maintenance Facilities on your right. You will see the Ozaukee County's Shared Ride building on your right as you turn the corner at Spring Street onto W. Oakland Avenue and there is a small garden up against the building with a circular path for your bike and there are clean indoor bathrooms along with water fillers outside the building.

Bike Shops

There are two bike shops on the Interurban Bike Trail that I can recommend.

The first bike shop is a small, locally owned independent bike shop located in Mequon called Trailside Recreation. Sam and his staff can help you with minor repairs and also has ebikes available for rent by the day or hour and is a dealer for Gazelle bikes.

The second shop I can recommend is a larger regional bike shop called Erik's Bikes in Grafton which is just about a block east of the bike trail and easy to access and near

Colectivo. They are dealers for several large brands of bikes and have a great service department.

Shopping/Day Trips

Although the main purpose on my trips is to find great trails to ride my bike on, I also love to take in the local/regional flavors of adjacent towns and available activities.

Road America Four Miles of Fitness

Road America in nearby Elkhart Lake is a Mecca for anyone who is a fan of auto racing. But.....did you know they offer you the opportunity for a small fee of around \$5 to take your bike and ride on the racetrack on Monday and Wednesday nights during the spring, summer and fall? That's right you can take your bike on the same invigorating track where high performance race cars do north of 150 mph. This is a DO NOT MISS if you have the time when you are visiting the area. Or if you live in the area it is even more convenient.

[Sherper's Outfitters/Port Washington](#)

This is a great new retail store in Port Washington which focuses on outdoor activities and in the summer you can rent one of their kayaks on Lake Michigan at their unique rental locations housed in portable shipping containers.

Over the Hedgerow Social Media Platforms/Links

Website: [GettingdirtywithGlenn.com](#) from our website you can launch any of our social media platforms.

[Instagram](#) We will post photos and short videos on IG.

Podcast Our live, interactive , streaming podcast will highlight some of our trips, talks with interesting people in the biking community and other thoughts related to enjoying life on a bike.

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