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ECO TRIP: Long Island and Beyond

Island Hopping by Boat and Bike

By Andrea Sachs

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sunday, June 26, 2005; Page P04

Lounging motionless on the beach from sun up to sundown went out with the Bain de Soleil tan. Sure, you can swim -- but how many ocean laps can you really do? And you can read -- ho hum, another bodice is ripped. And sleep. And burn.

But for travelers who get antsy on the sand, there's an alternative: a bike and ferry tour of Long Island's eastern tip and Block Island.

The open-air trip is like a seashore sampler of Connecticut, Long Island and Rhode Island. Aboard any of the five ferries that connect these destinations you can see lighthouses from a captain's perspective and watch ospreys and seagulls soar in mixed company. While cycling between the ferry terminals, you can stop for juicy strawberries from a roadside farm stand, or tour a vineyard, or take a five-minute beach break -- before getting back to the real activity of biking and boating.

Our suggested *three-night itinerary*



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Stop 27: Washington, D.C. The Braggs finally pull into home with loads of memories from their second trek and lists of highs and lows from the trip.

Follow the Braggs' trail back to D.C. with our [interactive map](#).

Retrace the Braggs' first journey across the northern states and Canada with our [interactive map](#).

Meet the bloggers with Meredith and Cindy's [bio](#).

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starts in *New London, Conn.*, on the hulking Cross Sound ferry, which sails to Orient Point, N.Y. Now the biking begins: 10, 20, 30 miles (or less) a day. The little-trafficked Route 25 of Long Island's North Fork passes farm stands heaped with supersize produce, nubby pastures and pebbly beaches with views of *Shelter Island, the first overnight stop*. You can spend one evening here, or more. There's no rush to leave-- the ferries run often.

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The commuter ferry to Shelter Island leaves from Greenport, an easygoing town with a carousel, a tall ship, a winery and an ocean's worth of seafood restaurants. The ferry to the island's north point takes no more than five minutes, and you'll want to ride it again and again. When you disembark, you'll find an island full of flowers and sailboats and homes you'll envy. The ferry the next day departs from the south end of Shelter Island and lands in North Haven, the jumping-off point for the South Fork portion.

This bike route is busier traffic-wise and has more towns to explore: Sag Harbor (great for whaling history buffs), East Hampton (for Pollock and Polo), Amagansett (for dosas as long as sticks) and finally *Montauk -- where you can spend the second night* in a classic beach motel or a fancier resort with a spa. The Montauk Point Lighthouse offers views of the *last destination, the pork chop-shape Block Island*, accessible by ferry from the Montauk Dock.

Before you return to New London, fill your hours on Block Island cycling from lighthouse to lighthouse, or beach to beach, or bar to bar. At the National Hotel's porch, order a frozen mud slide and wait for the ferry to chug into port.

Then watch the ferry leave -- without you. There will be another one tomorrow, and there'll be space for you on it. Summer, though, is less forgiving.

Details: Ferry and Bike Tour of Long Island and Block Island

GETTING THERE: New London, Conn., is the starting (and end) point of the loop. To go completely car-free, fly from Washington to New York (round-trip fares from \$115) or Hartford., Conn. (from \$78 round trip on Southwest), then take Amtrak to New London (from \$90 and \$56 round trip, respectively). The ferry terminal is a short walk from train station.

By car, New London is about 360 miles, or a six-hour drive, from D.C. There's limited parking at the terminal for \$10 a day, and a lot across the street (860-443-1775, \$6-\$15 daily).

FERRYING AROUND: The full circuit involves five ferries. All but two go year-round; the others roughly run from Memorial Day to Columbus Day.

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