

Komoot is helping me get back on my bike after a long hiatus

Getting into cycling in my late thirties has been humbling.

I'm responsible for my own medical costs, which really makes me consider things differently than when I was a kid tearing through the neighborhood park on a twelve-speed Huffy. I've also discovered you can spend infinite money on bike stuff if you have the resources, which I do not.

Most of all, I've learned that knowing how to get from point A to point B in a car or on a bus does *not* mean you know the best way to get there on a bike. For this particular bit of cycling logistics, I've found a tremendous – and mercifully free of charge – solution: Komoot.

Komoot helps adventurers plan and follow routes – by bicycle or on foot. There are iOS, Android, and smartwatch apps in addition to a web portal where you can find popular routes or chart your own. You get a lot of helpful information about a route, like where and how steep the hills are, what the surfaces are like, and how strenuous it is. Once you set out, you can record your activity and get turn-by-turn navigation. Handy!

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Komoot uses information from OpenStreetMap, but when you're planning a route, it'll take into account paths its own users prefer. And I'll tell you what, every time I've taken a different route rather than the one Komoot suggests, I've

regretted it. That's how I found myself struggling up Second Avenue in downtown Seattle thinking, "Yeah, this isn't as flat as I thought it was" or pedaling through West Seattle in a bus lane inhaling exhaust fumes. Komoot is also aware of a dirt path connecting two roads in my neighborhood that keeps me on side streets; Google Maps routes me to a busier street instead.

The app is free and you get one map region download to use for planning and navigation without paying anything. My county in Washington state is massive, so I have a lot of room to explore before I'll have to pay Komoot anything to venture out farther.

If you haven't done it for a long time, getting on a bike in a city is intimidating – or at least that's been my experience. But I've also discovered a ton of support: the local bike shop I rolled into with a flat tire, serene neighborhood greenways I never knew existed, paths that take me from one side of Elliott Bay to the other. These things were there all along, but you see your city differently when you're on a bike. A helpful app is just one more thing that has made my cycling comeback just like riding a... well, you know.

<https://www.theverge.com/24137562/komoot-app-cycling-routes>