Turn By Turn Navigation with the Garmin Edge

If you have figured out more / better / easier tips, please send them to me and I will incorporate them. I have the Garmin Edge 800, and have the CityNavigator NT SD card, which is just one of the combinations that will work. (See FAQ)

1) You need to have installed one of the Garmin CityNavigator NT maps onto your Edge 800. Without it, it still beeps to alert you to turns, but you get cryptic "turn northeast" style directions, no street names. There's two different options for CityNavigator, and each has pros & cons.

CityNavigator NT SD Card	CityNavigator NT DVD
"click & go" – no work required Can't be updated **Can be moved between Garmin devices like your car GPS & Edge** Can't be used with the Garmin mapping software on your computer. Future indications are that you will be able to access it on your computer while the Edge is plugged in **Seems to be generally cheaper, esp. gently used**	Requires some additional effort to install on your computer, then from your computer to the Edge Is only licensed for one device - can't install the maps to your car GPS & the Edge **Can be used with the Garmin mapping software on your computer** **Can be updated** **Can install selected maps to your Edge, not necessary to load the entire map set**

2) Do you already have a GPX file or do you need to create one?
   I already have a GPX that I got from the RABA cue sheet library or anywhere else.

   Great, skip ahead to step 3.

   I want to create a route from scratch or convert a cue sheet into a route:

   a) Use your favorite route mapping program to create a route. Both the popular Bike Route Toaster (http://www.bikeroutetoaster.com, free, basic functionality) and the Garmin branded software (i.e. BaseCamp or MapSource) were confirmed to work. If using Bike Route Toaster (BRT), be sure you have checked the box for "Add Course Points at Junctions" to turn that on. Make sure you give the course a name that makes sense to you, and save as a GPX file (use that course name for the file name, too!).
   b) TCX files don't give any additional functionality – they are a Garmin format that includes additional workout data like heart rate and cadence. Since we are sending a route to the Garmin, there's no workout data in that! When pulling data off of your Edge, TCX would be the way to go. I compared GPX & TCX file contents, and they were identical, except there were blank fields for the cadence & heartrate.
   c) BRT doesn't let you change the GPX file name before you save it – just rename the "course.gpx" file on your local computer to the same as the course name once you've downloaded it.
   d) If you are using the Garmin software – we'll publish a cheat sheet separately on how to use it. It's too big to cover here.

3) Plug the Edge 800 in to your computer. It should show up as a "Removable Drive" with a drive letter (on Windows). I'm sure there's something similar for Mac users.

4) Now, save that GPX file you downloaded or created to the Edge's Garmin\NewFiles folder. That folder will be empty, except for the file you just saved. That's perfectly normal. Eject the Edge and disconnect it from your computer (or just disconnect it).

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5) Turn on the Edge and tap to bring up the Courses list. You should see that the Edge has done some magic and the GPX files you copied on there are now added into your Courses list! By default, it sorts the courses by distance from where you are.

6) Tap to select the course you want to ride, and tap the wrench icon before hitting Go. **Make sure Turn Guidance is turned on**. My experience was inconsistent, so it's always safest to check and make sure it's turned on before you go.

7) You are now ready to "Go"! If you are not at the course starting point or the closest part of the course to where you currently are, the Edge will route you to it, and then beep to tell you "course found". You'll get a single warning beep prior to the turn, then a multiple beeps when it's time to actually turn, with street names & arrows. Go off course, and you'll have a very angry beeping from your handlebars! You can also configure the Edge display screens to show you distance to next turn in the scrolling

Frequently Asked Questions

"I don't want to pay for the CityNavigator NT maps! Can't I use Open Source Maps and accomplish the same thing?" Google says you can.   I'd love to get documentation and your experiences with doing it, please share!

"What about using <insert name of another bike route website>?" It will likely also work. I'd love to have your experiences to add to this document.   Let me know, good or bad, if the other routing websites work, and any tips you have on using them. http://www.ridewithgps.com has gotten good reviews from RABA members.

"What's your configuration?" I have the Edge 800 and I got the CityNavigator NT SD card. Hugh has both a 705 and an 800, and uses the DVD maps. I found a great deal on a gently used card, and appreciated the "click & go" simplicity of it, and Hugh loves the rich functionality in the Garmin mapping software. Neither one is better than the other, it all depends on how you want to use it.

"What mapping program do you use?" Based on a recommendation from another RABA member, I've switched from using MapMyRide.com to BikeRouteToaster.com. Less ads, and pure basic functionality – click, save & go. Seems to be harder to edit a route if you want to change it (add or remove turns, for example), but that may be my learning curve.

Are there any advantages to the Garmin software? The Garmin software provides a very easy way to transfer routes to your Edge without having to copy files in Windows Explorer, and can do much more full-featured routes including store stops and rest areas, or including off-road or bike trails that aren't found on public streets. The Garmin software provides an easy way to maintain a library of your favorite routes (i.e., courses), and edit and update them freely.

How much does the Garmin software cost? Both Mapsource and Basecamp are available as free downloads from the Garmin website. However, you will need to have the DVD version of City Navigator NT installed on your computer to use the software effectively with your Edge.   Unconfirmed reports on the Internet have been able to utilize the SD card maps while the Edge is plugged in to your computer, or by doing creative workarounds.   As noted above, some people find the Garmin software overly complicated if all you want to do is create bike routes.

"What's this "recalculate route" setting on my Edge?" CAUTION! The Internet says it's not what we think it is.   User comments indicate that if you let the Edge auto recalculate, it will set you on the shortest path back to the end point, NOT the shortest path to get you back on course! I have not personally tested this, but based on those comments, I have set mine to "prompt".   Others have had good luck with it. My recommendation: try it and see how you like it.