

Cycling Safaris

Northern Spain - Cantabria 2017

Guided Tour

Guide in support van | 277 km | 7 nights / 8 days



A beautiful and varied ride through the highlights of this part of Northern Spain. The rich green countryside contrasts with the blue sea and the magnificent unspoilt beaches. Picturesque villages with flower bedecked houses, fishing harbours, and the magnificent backdrop of the Picos de Europa.

The terrain of this cycle consists of gently rolling hills along the coast and then a fine mountain descent of the River Miera. Easy to moderate.

TOUR ITINERARY

Day 1 (Saturday): Transfer to Santillana del Mar

Pick up from arrival point and transfer to the charming medieval village of Santillana del Mar. Introduction to bikes and route briefing. Spend the rest of the day walking round the cobbled streets of this beautiful village, visit the modern museum of the Altamira Caves or enjoy a ride around the country lanes and down to the coastline.

Day 2 (Sunday): Santillana del Mar- San Vicente de la Barquera 36km

Leaving Santillana, our route heads westwards through green meadows and the hills and valleys of Cantabria with its marvellous unspoilt coastline and beaches nearby. We soon arrive at the charming village of Novalles, set amidst lemon groves and with its fine typical rural architecture.

Next stop is the seaside village of Comillas. Here a visit to the fine beach, the small harbour and the pretty village square with its pavement tapas bars and restaurants is a must, not to mention the architectural sights of El Capricho by the famous Catalan architect Gaudí and the Palace of the Marqués de Comillas. After leaving Comillas, cycle through the Parque Natural de Oyambre and along the beautiful beaches of Oyambre and Merón. We are finally greeted by the stunning view of San Vicente and the Picos de Europa in the distance.

Day 3 (Monday): San Vicente de la Barquera - Potes / Picos de Europa 60km

Leaving San Vicente the route heads westwards along the coast. After a short distance, cycle around the beautiful headland of Pechón with its magnificent views of the coastline. Crossing the River Deva in Unquera we enter the province of Asturias with its markedly different flavour. The village of Colombres is home to the sumptuous villas of the indianos, emigrants to the Americas who made their fortune and returned to a life of luxury. We then head along the Deva Valley, riding through the incredible rocky gorge of La Hermida. Mountains tower around us as we cycle towards Potes and the valley of La Liébana, completely encircled by mountains.

Day 4 (Tuesday): Free Day in Potes

Cycle along any of the three valleys that meet in Potes. Take a trip on the cable car at Fuente Dé to enjoy breathtaking views of the Cantabrian Mountains, where the brown bear and wolves still roam. Enjoy a walk through the lush green valleys or the higher mountains. Spend time in the bustling market village of Potes with its peculiar mix of local farmers, tourists and mountaineers. Visit the many other picturesque villages dotted around the area. Cycle up to the Monastery of Santo Toribio, home to the largest surviving fragment of the True Cross or to the charming country monastery of Piasca. There's no shortage of things to do in this magnificent setting.

Day 5 (Wednesday): Potes - Cabuérniga 63 km

From Potes we retrace our route to the village of La Hermida. We then begin our climb out of the Deva Valley and through the Cantabrian Mountains. This is a route that few tourists ever see. A more challenging ride takes us through this wonderful scenery until we reach the pretty rural scenery and charming villages of the valley of Cabuérniga.

Day 6 (Thursday): Cabuérniga - Villacarriedo 60km

Our route today takes us across some of the lesser-known valleys of Cantabria through beautiful green scenery and villages way off the beaten track. Finally we arrive at the village of Villacarriedo, surrounded by the most beautiful hills and valleys.

Day 7 (Friday): Villacarriedo - Somo 58km

After an initial ascent from Villacarriedo, a marvellous ride through the stunning limestone valley of the River Miera takes us down to the farmland around Somo and the Bay of Santander. Visit the mountain village of San Roque de Riomiera and the spa village of Liérganes with its charming old quarter.

Day 8 (Saturday): Transfer Somo - departure point

End of trip. Pick up from Somo hotel and transfer to departure point

DATES AND PRICES 2017

2nd July

€1,170 per person sharing

€1,320 for single occupancy

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 7 nights accommodation on B&B basis with en-suite facilities
- Bike Rental
- Set Transfer on Day 1: Bilbao / Santander - Santillana del Mar*
- Set Transfer on Day 8: Somo - Bilbao / Santander*
- Information pack and maps
- Luggage transport
- Guide in support vehicle

*Please note that in the case of differing arrival times, cyclists will be transferred at the same time to start point and departure point.

BIKES



Ladies bike (Trek 7.2)



Men's bike (Trek 7.2)

http://www.trekbikes.com/us/en/bikes/road/fitness/fx/7_2_fx/#

You are provided with hybrid-type tourist bicycles from Trek with conventional handlebars and with triple chain ring and easy-to-change gear ratios for comfortable and easy cycling. Road bikes may also be available on request. We can also provide tandems, children's bikes, tow bikes and child seats for those with children.

Hybrid bikes will carry a handlebar bag, useful for carrying money, documents, camera and lots of other useful items which may be needed close at hand. This bag is easily removed from its click fastening and carried around with the shoulder strap. They are also equipped with a rear luggage rack and one or two panniers, or a rear rack bag to carry just what you need for each day's cycling. Road bikes carry a seat post bag if required.

In addition, all cycles are equipped with pump, spare inner tube, water bottle, bike lock and basic toolkit. Extras such as lights or toe clips are available on request.

If you wish to bring your own bike there is a reduction of €100.

You can book an e-bike for an additional €60. Tandems available on request.

GROUPE, GUIDE AND BACK-UP SERVICE

A back-up vehicle with tour guide supports cycling stages. Cyclists do not travel as part of a group or with a guide. Cyclists choose whether they cycle alone or with other cyclists.

Non-cyclists may also participate using our transfer service. Cyclists are provided with our own detailed Route Guide and maps for their chosen route. Fitter cyclists may extend stages at will.

WHAT TO BRING

Specialized cycle clothing may be handy but not strictly necessary. What you do need (among other things) is the following:

- shorts/ long trousers/ track suit/ legging
- shirts/ sweater/ rain clothing
- gloves (only when you book a tour in April. It can be chilly in the morning that time of year!)
- good shoes
- sunglasses/ cap/ swimming costume
- extra towel
- soap/ insect repellent

GENERAL INFORMATION

Route Guide and Maps

You will be provided with our Route Guide which includes detailed route instructions along with interesting information on landscapes, towns and villages, monuments, alternative route suggestions, timetables for local trains and buses, tips on eating and drinking, an exhaustive gastronomic dictionary and a host of other useful information and suggestions to keep cyclists occupied. Routes are carefully described so no time is wasted on unnecessary deviations. Maps of the area are also provided to support the Route Guide.

Trips that include more than one night in the same destination include optional round rides of differing lengths for these free days so cyclists will never be at a loose end.

Weather and Climate

Many people are put off coming to Spain on a cycling holiday due to the weather. They think it's going to be just too hot - and they are probably right! During the summer months Spain is one of the hottest and driest countries in Europe with temperatures climbing up to 40°C - 105°F or even more - too much for your average cyclist.

However, the coast and mountains of Asturias and Cantabria are the exception to the rule. Summer months are a lot milder and not as dry as in the rest of Spain and mean that cycling is a pleasure and the landscape is kept fresh and green. Our tour program here begins in spring and runs right through to autumn.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Best arrival points:

Airports - Bilbao or Santander

Ferry ports - Bilbao or Santander

Bus / train stations - Bilbao or Santander

By Air

Travellers on the routes of Asturias and Cantabria and also the Rioja route generally arrive at Santander or Bilbao Airport where they are met by our pick up service. Some companies fly directly to Santander or Bilbao from the UK and other European airports.

It is often possible to take connecting flights through Spanish airports such as Madrid or Barcelona or through other European cities. Our nearest airport is Santander connecting with Madrid and Barcelona, although flights are not so frequent. RyanAir has now opened a new route from London, Stansted to Santander Airport, actually closer to our starting point in Santillana del Mar.

You may like to extend your holiday with a mini-cruise. Brittany Ferries runs a service from the UK to Santander and P & O Ferries sail from the UK to Bilbao.

Please note that we do not get involved with travel arrangements as we feel that the customer will get the best possible deal either by searching the Internet or asking the local travel agent to check all possibilities.

By Ferry

Another alternative for these routes is a mini-cruise on the ferry. P & O run a service from Portsmouth to Bilbao which takes 36 hours. Brittany Ferries sail from Plymouth to Santander. The new ferry being brought into service in 2004 will do the crossing in 19 hours. Again, we will pick you up from the Santander or Bilbao ferryports.

Most companies will allow you to transport your own bicycle - check with individual companies for their policy on this.

Trains & Buses

If you are travelling within Spain, there is an excellent network of road transport. The Spanish Intercity train service is called Renfe. The local train service along the coast of the Basque Country, Cantabria & Asturias is called FEVE. The major coach companies, depending on where you are travelling, are Alsa and Continental Auto.