

# Cycling Safaris

## Barcelona/Sitges to Valencia

16<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018

6 nights / 5 days cycling

This cycle explores the wonderful region between Barcelona and the Orange blossom coast at Valencia. Like much of Spain once you head a little inland you find smooth quiet roads and great scenery. This landscape is interspersed with medieval towns and villages. There are some wonderfully remote national parks, a couple of nights at the beach and spectacular Parador castle hotel. All in all a great cycling experience.

### Day 1      Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June      Arrival in Barcelona/Sitges

Aer lingus from Dublin Airport to Barcelona El Pratt.

A very short private transfer from the airport will bring you to the easy going beach resort of Sitges. Here you can relax, take a swim or wander the narrow streets.



### Day 2      Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June      Sitges to Poblet (102km/1570m or 122km/2200m)

Leaving the coast we gently climb into the Parc de Foix. Initially the ride hugs the rocks before heading along the shores of the reservoir at the heart of this park. There is a little more work to do as the road gets a little steeper to bring us into another Park the Montmell-Marmellar. For those who dare a side excursion to a famously haunted deserted village (after the Spanish civil war) awaits.

The Royal Abbey of Santa Maria de Poblet is a Cistercian monastery, founded in 1151, located at the feet of the Prades Mountains and is a spectacular site to behold. We will stay nearby in the village of Poblet.

#### Optional Climb:      Cap del Coll

A relatively easy climb at 7km and gaining 297m it is only 4.3% average, but gives nice views of the surrounding countryside nonetheless.



**Day 3      Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June      Poblet to Tortosa (129km/1590m or 143km/2120m)**

The day begins with a gradual climb through the Muntanyes Prades to the Coll de les Masies. This is a large calcareous range noted for its dome shaped rocky outcrops that is heavily forested with oaks and pines. A relatively unexplored region the road is quiet and peaceful. Once leaving these mountains after around 25km we enjoy plenty of downhill riding as we pick up the Rio Ebro at the wonderful Miravet with its Templar castle. We follow this river valley towards the coast. Tortosa sits on this river and is surrounded by mountains. It is a very attractive town and self styled city of the Renaissance.

Tonight your accommodation is a wonderful Castle Parador Hotel.



**Day 4      Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June      Tortosa to Morella (86km/1850m or 121km/2890m)**

Today the cycle concentrates on the Parc Natural de la Tinenca de Benifassa. Here we find a beautiful quiet meandering road with spectacular scenery. The countryside is surprisingly green here with many trees to contrast the dramatic rocks.

Morella is one of the prettiest villages in Spain. It wows you from a distance as it rises majestically from the surrounding countryside. Once inside its walls you then consumed by its tradition, history, folklore and gastronomy.

Optional Climb:      Mont Caro

Tortosa is at a mere 12m with Mont Caro as a great backdrop. It stands to reason that this would be a long and challenging climb! 23km, gaining 1424m with an average of 6.1%. The first 9km are easy which means the last 12km hitting no less than 8% and km20 @10.3%. It is similar in difficulty to Ventoux but with some interesting switchbacks and a statue to the Virgin Mary at the top!



**Day 5      Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June      Morella to Benicassim (122km/1190m or 157km/2440m)**

This is the easiest day of cycling as although gaining 1000m we lose almost 2000m (with the last 50km being a wonderful gradual downhill).

The cycle brings us on seemingly endless, smooth, quiet roads. Pine forests are separated by gorges as you follow Rio Mijares towards the coast. There is a last small climb at the Serra del Desert de les Palmes, which brings you to a lovely road with wonderful views to the ocean and a nice descent to the beach and your hotel along the beach promenade.

## **Optional Climb: Puerto Vidré**

With an easy day this climb will give some extra work for riders who want it.

It is a massive 26km long but averages a fairly steady 3.3% with the hardest section at 6%.and tops out at 1260m.

## **Day 6 Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June Benicassim to Valencia (121km/1180m or 136km/1901m)**

Today we begin by heading inland where our cycle is really dominated by two nature parks.

Firstly we cross Parc Natural Serra d'Espadà. This is a defined eco region due to the Olive trees and Cork oak trees. We then pass into the Parque Natural de la Sierra Calderona. Quite similar in geography it is another region of many caves and deep gorges and formerly a hiding place of bandits. We then enter the city of Valencia a wonderfully vibrant city with modernista architecture and a large old quarter. Your hotel will be based in the centre of the fabulous old town where a last dinner and celebration will be held in a local restaurant.

**Optional Climb: Puntal del Aljub A short climb (3.5km gaining 200m) to this viewing point**



## **Day 7 Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> June Valencia to Dublin**

Collection from the hotel and private transfer 2 hour 15mins to Alicante airport for the flight back to Dublin

**Price: €1350.00** Based on twin Sharing (single supplement €325)

### **Includes:**

- 6 x Nights Accommodation in Minimum 3 star (some 4 star)
- 6 x dinners
- 5 x lunches
- 1 x Set transfer from Barcelona El Pratt Airport to Sitges
- 1 x Set transfer from Valencia to Alicante
- Bike transfers to/from Belfield, UCD
- Support vehicle with mechanic
- Snacks en-route
- Cycling Guide(s) ratio of 1:10 approx
- Fully researched route
- Insurance for bike transportation
- Administration of the cycle