

Catalonia Explorer



Welcome to Peak Tour's fantastic Catalonia tour, another amazing adventure on two wheels. Keeping off the beaten path, and on some truly wonderful cycling roads, we embark on an unforgettable journey through the heart of the Catalan community. The beauty of the countryside, rich history, and vibrant culture, not to mention the delicious food, all await us. We will take you through the three captivating regions of Bages, Osona, and Girona, each offering its own unique charm. From the solitude of monasteries and natural parks and gorges, through volcanic hills, to the cosmopolitan university city of Girona and the surrounding medieval villages. The roads are seemingly made for cyclists, with lovely twists and turns, exciting switchbacks and majestic backdrops. The landscape and stunning views speak for themselves on another Peak Tours extraordinary adventure, or extraordinària aventura as they say in Catalonia!

This exciting and challenging tour provides another rewarding experience in a similar vein to our Portugal or Channel to the Med tours, with the 'magic van' providing refreshments throughout the week. Your bags will be transported for you each day and we will be having some fantastic lunches along with our famous 'brew stops' twice a day providing you with everything you need to keep you going - you certainly won't go hungry!

Highlights

- The impressive backdrop of the Monsterrat Mountains
- The stunning gorge climb up to Sant Miquel del Fai monastery
- The unusual landscape of the La Garrotxa Volcanic region
- Beautiful medieval villages, typified by Monells near Girona
- The Els Angels and St Hilari climbs from Girona



What's included?

7 night's accommodation, 7 breakfasts, 6 lunches

Refreshment stops with our famous red brew vans

Mechanical support including spare bikes and equipment

GPS files and route notes

Full logistical planning and support from the first to the last night including luggage transfers

2 back up vans and a guide cycling at the back of the group

Pick up from Barcelona airport on arrival day (Saturday) and drop off on departure day (Saturday)

Peak Tours cycle shirt and certificate

Lots of Fun!



Itinerary

Saturday: Non-riding day

We arrive to Barcelona with a cut off time of 17:30 for the latest flight and transfer 1 hr north to Mon Sant Benet. In the evening we will have a group meal at the hotel.

Welcome to the tour!

Sunday: Day 1 Mon Sant Benet Loop

Distance: 50 miles / 80 km
Elevation: 5080ft / 1548m

From the grounds of the hotel we pass through the town of Navarcles and up and out into the gorgeous, surrounding hills. We have the backdrop of the impressive Monsterrat Mountains as our companion for a large section of the day. The afternoon is spent through the distinctive, red, sandstone of the Parc Natural de Sant Lorenc before stopping for lunch at lovely Talamanca. There is time after lunch to explore this historic village as it's mostly downhill back to base at Mon Sant Benet.

Monday: Day 2 Mon Sant Benet to Seva

Distance: 50 miles / 80km
Elevation: 5247ft / 1599m

Our second day in the saddle is a challenging one but a cracker. We leave the monastery and hotel behind and head out back up into the, by now familiar, surrounding hills, repeating the first section of Sunday's climb. We then cut east over to the stunning gorge climb up to Sant Miquel del Fai monastery. After a well deserved lunch just after the gorge climb we head to our evening's accommodation with a chance for a dip in the pool!

Tuesday: Day 3 Seva to Olot

Distance: 54 miles / 87 km
Elevation: 4450 ft / 1356 m

Heading through the region of Osona in earnest now we explore this quiet region nestled between lush valleys and towering mountain peaks. The cycling here is a perfect balance of challenge and reward, with smooth, quiet roads leading you through picturesque hamlets. A final, tough climb of the day with stunning views of the eastern Pyrenees awaits along with our evening's destination of Olot with a 1km leg stretch into the centre to explore.

Wednesday: Day 4 Olot to Girona

Distance: 61 miles / 98 km
Elevation: 4785ft / 1458m

A longer day in the saddle today, but the elevation stretched over more miles, sees us heading into the wonderful region of Girona. We will spend the next 3 days cycling in this fantastic area, and we start with the unusual landscape and delightful riding of the La Garrotxa Volcanic nature reserve. Coming out of the reserve we head past Banyoles lake on some cycle paths and then on to Girona on a circuitous route taking us up the back of the Els Angels climb and into the beautiful city of Girona.



Itinerary

Thursday: Day 5 St Hilari Loop from Girona

Distance: 70 miles / 112 km
Elevation: 5126ft / 1562m

Heading out from the city on cycle paths straight into the surrounding peaceful roads, we head for Les Guilleries National Forest and on to the gorgeous climb up to St Hilari. This a long climb of around 14 miles, but averaging 3% for 9 miles and then around 2% for the next 5 and is a lovely ascent. The next 12 miles is spent enjoying the gentle downhill before winding our way round to some link roads to take us back into Girona with it's vibrant nightlife.



Friday: Day 6 Els Angels Loop from Girona

Distance: 40 miles / 62 km
Elevation: 3,114 ft / 949m

Our final day in the saddle sees us ascending the fantastic Els Angels climb from Girona. We tackle the climb from the opposite direction we came down on day 4 so I hope you took notes! After the climb and a great descent we have the chance to stop for a morning coffee at the very pretty, medieval, Monells. The final ascent of the trip comes at around 20 miles in followed by a lunch on the outskirts of Girona, before a mixture of cycle path and minor roads take us back up to the hotel where a glass of the 2nd best prosecco we can find awaits, along with group hug, basket weaving and zumba.



Saturday: Day 7 Departure Day

A coach will pick us up at 08:00 from the hotel and take us back to Barcelona airport for 09:30.



Tour Logistics

The start of the tour

The arrival day for the tour on Saturday in Mon Sant Benet (transfer 1 hr from Barcelona airport) and finishes at Girona (transfer 1hr 30min back to Barcelona at the end). There will be a welcome meal at 20:00 on the first evening.

There are different options for arriving to Barcelona:

Plane: There are many flights to Barcelona airport.

Train: Barcelona airport has a train station.

The cut off time for your flight arrival time to Barcelona is 17:30. We will meet you and transport you and your luggage to your first night's accommodation.

The end of the tour

The final cycling day is on Friday and in the evening we have a final meal together. On the Saturday departure day a coach will come at 08:00 to the hotel in Girona to transfer us to Barcelona airport for around 09:30 for you to continue with your onward travel.

If you are taking your bike back with you on the plane then we will transport your bike to Barcelona for you and hand it to you at the airport. If you booked for the European Bike Transfer (£60) we will take it back to our HQ in Glossop for you to collect at a later date.

If you choose to have your bike couriered back to you from Glossop when back in the UK (please contact the office for a quote) then your bikes will be packed & couriered back to your address in the UK for you.

Support

Usually each tour has 3 guides:

- One driving the 'brew van' - each day will usually have a morning and afternoon 'brew stop,' with a table full of snacks and drinks. You will also bring a small bag/rucksack to the morning brief and leave this in the 'brew van' which can be accessed throughout the day.
- One driving the 'luggage / lunch van' - transporting your luggage from hotel to hotel, as well as setting up your lunches.
- One riding at the back of the group - you will have detailed route notes so that you can go slower or faster than the leader if you prefer or you can cycle with the tour guide at the back so that you don't have to navigate at all.
- Mechanical support: we carry a range of spare parts so that repairs can be made en route and we also have spare bikes available in the event that your bike has a serious breakdown. If we can't fix your bike then we will get it to the nearest bike shop.



What's Included?

- 7 nights' accommodation, 7 breakfasts, 6 lunches
- Refreshments from the brew van
- Mechanical support including spare bikes should these be needed
- GPS files and route notes
- Full logistical planning and support from the first to the last night including luggage transfers
- 2 back up vans
- A guide cycling at the back of the group
- Pick up from airport / station on arrival day (Saturday before 17:30) and drop off on departure day (Saturday)
- A Peak Tours cycle shirt and certificate
- Lots of fun!

Food

Breakfast

Breakfast in Catalonia is usually a fairly simple affair and varies from place to place, but the hotels we use for this trip all have a nice selection on offer. You can expect a very good selection of continental fare and also some cooked options too.

Lunch

All of your breakfasts and lunches are included in the price of the trip. Lunches (but not drinks) will be provided each day, and will generally be at a restaurant or cafe with pasta, salads, sandwiches and local fare etc. As mentioned on the website, the timings of when to eat are different to what you may be used to in Catalonia and is something we have to work around as it is generally later than we are used to. We will endeavour to do our best to get the lunches at a similar time to our other trips, but it does tend to be later for breakfast lunches and evening meals in general.

Evening meals

Evening meals are not included and can be bought at the hotels for the first few nights, and out in Girona later on in the tour, which has some excellent restaurants. We also have fruit, biscuits, nuts etc in the back up van that you are welcome to pick at throughout the day and if there are specific snacks you would like, as ever, just let us know.

Dietary requirements

Please let us know of any dietary requirements you have and we will ensure that all lunch stops and places we eat evening meals are informed. There will also be snacks on the famous 'brew van'.

What's not included?

- Evening meals / dinner
- Drinks at lunchtime
- Insurance
- Cycle hire (available for a fee)
- Garmin hire (available for a fee)
- Transport to the start and from at the end of the tour for you and your bike (available for a fee)

Accommodation

You have a choice sharing a double or a twin room. If you would like your own space then you can choose the single room option, or sole occupancy of a double. All of the rooms should be ensuite on this tour, but there may be an unusual scenario where your room isn't en suite (sole occ of a double & double is guaranteed en suite). All of the accommodation is in comfortable 4 star accommodation.

Kit list

Clothing for all weathers is recommended so waterproofs are essential.

A full recommended kit list is provided and we are always happy to answer any questions that you may have. You can see details of a kit list [here](#).

Luggage is restricted to a maximum of 18kg per person—we have to look after our guides and their backs as they will be carrying your luggage in and out of the hotels!

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out adequate insurance for your tour which, as an absolute minimum should cover accident & medical expenses if you are travelling outside the UK, cover for your bike and belongings and cancellation cover in the event that you have to cancel your tour for unforeseen circumstances.

You should be aware that if you have an accident or fall ill while on the tour you will lose the money paid for the trip. A travel insurance policy would

Am I fit enough?

Difficulty

The Catalonia Explorer tour is suitable for someone with a good level of fitness and who wants a challenge. The mileages are lower than some of our tours but the elevation is quite challenging as it is done over a shorter distance. This tour is classed as a grade 7 tour and is similar to our Portugal end to end. See details of difficulty rating [here](#).

You will be expected to be able to complete an average of 54 miles / 87 km per day.

You will be expected to be able to ascend an average of 4552ft / 1387m per day.

Most people on the tour will be active cyclists, and cycling the above distances on consecutive days will not be too challenging for them.

How fast do I need to be?

Generally, most cyclists completing this tour will be capable of cycling at 10- 12 mph / 16 - 19 kmph over the whole day, keeping in mind that some days are hillier than others, and you will be stopping for breaks and lunches

The start time for the Catalanian Tour will be a little later than usual as the lunches open later so we will have a start time of 09:00-09:15.

We ask that all riders are finished by 19:00 at the latest if possible, to allow you time to relax and explore the places that you stay in the evenings.

Are there any hills on the tour?

This is a hilly tour and you should be prepared for with adequate training, but the gradients are generally much more manageable ranging from around 3% to 6% typically but there are a number of steep climbs up to 10% with a number of long, sustained climbs so please ensure that you have done plenty of training to allow better enjoyment of your tour. For more information on the climbing and elevation you can follow the link [here](#)

Training

The fitter you are and the more training that you do beforehand will add to the enjoyment of your tour and improve your chances of succeeding the challenge.

If you need any advice about fitness please contact us and we will be happy to discuss any questions and concerns that you may

have.

We have a training document which has a suggested training programme, which you can access [here](#)

Bikes

The Catalonia Explorer tour can be completed by people on all types of bikes: it is important you ride on a bike on which you are most comfortable. Most people will choose to ride on a road bike for this tour.

The roads on this tour are generally of a very good quality with the occasional rougher section on some of the narrower back roads. Hard wearing 25mm tyres and up are fine.

You can transport your bike in the following ways:

- We can transport your bike for you if you can get your bike to us in Glossop in the Peak District (£60 charge)
- Bringing your own - most people using this option will arrive by hire car or train.

Please ensure that your bike is fully serviced and in good working order before the start of the trip. It is advisable to have your bike service a few weeks before the start of the tour. This will allow time to 'bed in' before you start your ride.

Alternatively you can hire a bike from us, please see our website for more information.

