

End to End Portugal

Tour Information

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1) Introduction

Welcome to the end to end Portugal tour, another classic Peak Tours production, designed by some of the keenest minds and sharpest wits in the whole of the village!

After our arrival to Porto, we will have a group meal, guide brief, show and tell, mini disco and knobbly knees competition before retiring to bed. Breakfast is from 07.00 and a coach will pick us up on the Wednesday morning at 08.15a.m. to drive us the 2hrs or so to get us to the start point near to the border in good enough time for the day's cycling.

The one outstanding feature of the Portugal trip is the sheer peace and quiet, there are times when it's just you, your breath, heartbeat and the sound of nature. You can't even hear a plane in the sky a lot of the time!

This lovely tour starts off in the hillier, wild north of the country with rugged landscape, steep sided vineyards, hill farming and rural communities, who may well get a shock when they see all the lycra! We make our way for the first few days through the valley systems up mostly manageable climbs of around 3% to 6% and also utilising flat, traffic free cycle path either side of Mondim de Basto. Day two sees us heading for the majestic Douro river that we waste a few miles going sideways on!

The next few days are also fairly hilly as we head towards the highest mountainous area of mainland Portugal, the Serra de Estrela National Park where we stay in the interesting Jewish enclave of Belmonte. All of this talk of hills might sound fairly daunting, but in reality we only skirt the national park and it provides us with a scenic back drop to a much more relaxed tour by Peak Tour's standards.

The evening's accommodations are great and some of them are in stunning hill top locations like Monsanto with its huge boulders strewn everywhere, or amazing Marvao with it's panoramic views or a grand old "Pousada" (old convent), perched on a promontory.

We make a couple of forays into Spain on this trip so the purists will have to shut their eyes! The reason for this is purely to keep the route along the best roads and to avoid some industrial areas and get the best access points into the national parks.

One such access point sees us crossing back into Portugal and heading for the stunning town of Marvao, which is, you guessed it, up a climb to a hill top, but worth every pedal stroke.

After Marvao we start to move into the gentler region of the Alentejo and the climbs get easier and the scenery more punctuated by olive groves, cork trees, white storks and hoopoes as we overnight in the stately town of Vila Vicosa before heading across wetland and nature reserves to the working town of Moura. Unusually for our tours we have a link day between two regions on the penultimate day of the trip. This is not to say that the cycling is not pleasant, it's just that it's two wheels, you and not much else for the entire day as we cross the Beja district from one side to the other to lovely Mertola on the Guadiana river, in place for our final day in the hills crossing up into the Faro hills before finally a majestic descent sweeps us down to the sea and another country crossed!

The tour will run in the same way as any Peak Tours guided adventure with the magic back up van providing refreshments, great lunches, bag transfers, quality accommodation and not forgetting our relaxed and jovial guides!

This tour is suitable for both road bikes and hybrids, and is a gentler tour compared to the Land's End to John O Groats trip or the Channel to the Med trip across France.

If you don't want the hassle of taking your bike with you then you can drop it off with us or post it to us and we will take it over for you. Likewise, at the end of the tour we will bring your bike back to the UK for you. More information on that is in the "Transporting Bikes" section below.

The tour is just over 663 miles long and the average comes out at around 60 miles a day.

Although this tour is a more relaxed one and the gradients are more like 2% to 6% for the most part, there are sections of harder climbing and some hill top climbs at the end of the day, so, as ever, a good amount of training will see your enjoyment of the trip increase.

2) Route Overview



3) Transporting bikes

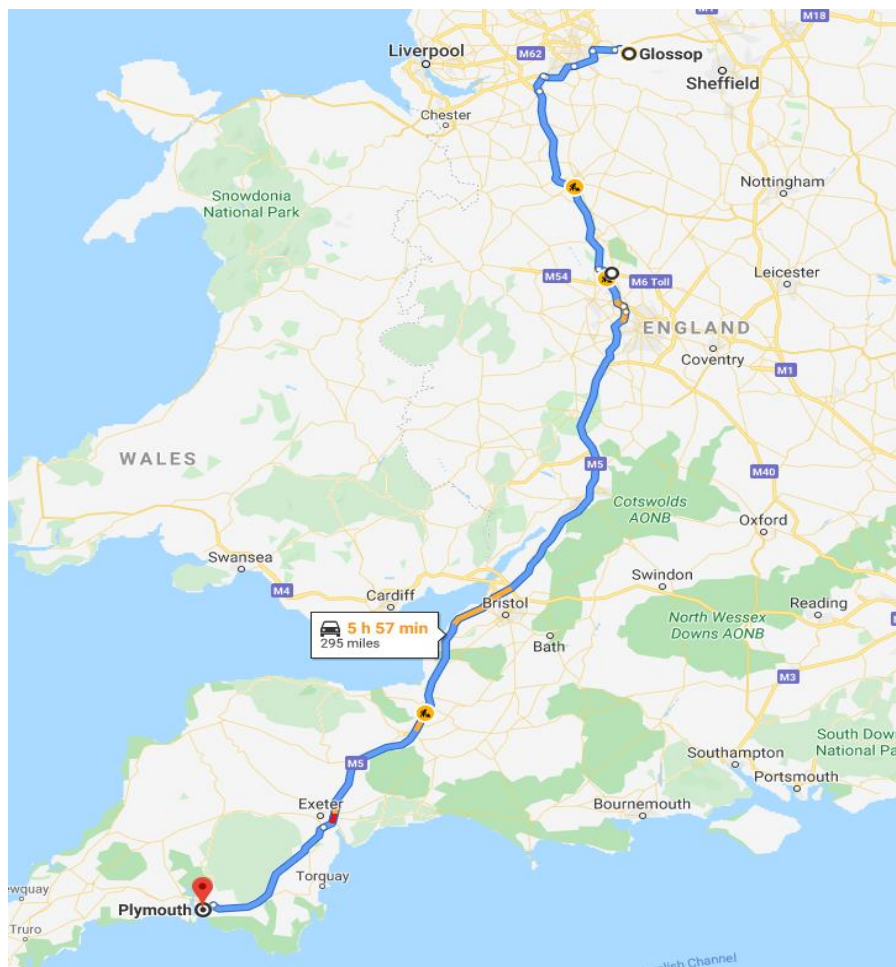
At the Start of the tour

The easiest way to get your bikes to the start point is to bring them to us and we will take them down for you. We are based in Glossop in the Peak District so this method isn't always suitable, especially if you live a long way from us. If you do drop your bikes off with us beforehand then we will take it down to Porto for you. N.B although we can take a few small items in addition to the bike (helmet, saddle bag etc) it's not possible for us to carry your main luggage in addition to the bikes in the van going to Porto.

Please note we will have to lower/remove your seat posts in order to pack all the bikes into the vans. We take great care packing the bikes and we will mark seat posts (with electricians tape) to ensure seat heights can be restored. We are aware that some of you will have DI2 battery systems in the seat posts. We can disconnect these carefully and reconnect them when we unpack the vans.

Motorway pick ups going out

For those wanting to meet the van on the way down it is a little more problematic for this tour as the guides will be taking the ferry to Santander from Plymouth on the Sunday at 16:30 as this is the only one available. The route they will be taking will be driven down from Glossop in Derbyshire on Saturday afternoon to Bristol and stay overnight in a hotel close to the motorway. Then they will continue to Plymouth on **Sunday morning**. If you can't meet the van anywhere along that route but still wish to drop your bike with us to take over then you could post it to us.



EU Bike Transport Charge information

We will now unfortunately have to charge a fee of £40 in total for bike transport to and from our tours running in the EU. The reason for this is that, as we are no longer part of the European Union, there are many extra pieces of paperwork that we now need to complete in order to get our vans across the border safely. The one that affects customers joining our tours is called an ATA carnet. This document details every piece of equipment that we take over to the EU and this must be the same when we return to the UK. This must be completed for every van that we take to/from the EU

We are also further restricted by the fact that what we take out must be exactly the same as what we bring back, so unfortunately there is no flexibility to offer one way travel. If that did happen, then we would be subject to a 20% charge of the value of the bike.

Each carnet is subject to a £300 fee and also a security payment which is dependent on the value of the bikes that we are carrying over in each van. It now costs approximately £1000 to take two vans full of bikes and equipment over to the continent and back (that isn't including the cost of the ferries). It is for this reason that we can no longer take bikes to/from the EU for free and will have to charge £40 per bike (the £40 covers both ways).

In addition to the fee, we will also need to collect details about each bike that we take. We will need this information from you a few weeks before the tour begins and will send out a form for you to complete when the time comes. Once we have submitted a carnet application, we cannot add anything to it, so it is important that we receive all the required information in good time.

Please note that if you are taking your bike yourself and we don't have any involvement in taking your bike then you don't need to complete this form. Also, if you are hiring a bike from us then you don't need to complete this form.

At the end of the tour

We finish our adventure at the sea in a lovely place called Tavira, and while you are celebrating another, hopefully successful tour, the guides will be packing your bikes away ready for the return leg. If you want to take your bike on the plane with you then you will need a bike box. Unfortunately, we don't have room to carry many hard case bike boxes for the duration of the tour (some exceptions are made for customers from the US, Canada, Australia, NZ etc). Exceptions can be made for a limited number of soft cases that can be folded up and stored in the van much more easily. If you have a flat pack cardboard bike box then this can be laid flat and transported in the van.

One option is that we take your bikes back to the UK in the van and you can collect your bike from us in Glossop, Derbyshire. Another option is that we can meet you at a motorway service station on the return journey.

As we have such a long way back from Portugal, we are not able to detour from our route home but can stop en route if you are able to come and meet us. Again, this option is only really suitable if you live somewhere near to our route home.

Another option is for us to take your bike back to the UK for you and we can then box your bike and post it to you. We will provide the bike boxes and packing material and generally will remove the front wheel, saddle and pedals and turn the handlebars around in order to fit your bike into the bike box. Please contact us for a quote.

4) At the Start and End of the tour

Please see the 'arrival details' sheet for some extra information about the start of the tour.

At the End of the tour

The final Saturday is a lovely day's cycle in the hills above the Faro district. The last 15 miles are mostly downhill so we should be at the finish point in good time. We will finish our tour at the beach in Tavira and there will be chance to take our end of tour photographs and skinny dip (last part isn't mandatory)!

After our celebratory group photo's the guides will be scurrying around organising the vans while you take your time and get ready for the final meal. We will meet for a final group meal at 19.30 before final speeches, hugs and tears, mostly from the guides.

If anyone needs to fly back on the Saturday itself, then they can have a shower at the hotel before jetting off. The guides and vans will be around Saturday evening sorting out bikes etc and can help with any packing etc but won't have time to take people to the airport. If anyone would like to leave on the final Saturday then they would need to take a taxi.

We will arrange a transfer for you from the hotel in Tavira to the airport in Faro. We have found that there are usually many different flights at different times so we collate everyone's departure times and then arrange taxis accordingly. Please note that Peak Tours will pay for the transfers on Sunday but not on any earlier or later dates.



5) What sort of accommodation should I expect?

We stay in really good quality 3 and 4 star hotels or Pousada's almost every night of the tour. We have found that we have been able to find some lovely accommodation on this trip and we hope that you will find it of a high standard.

We will send a full accommodation sheet to you nearer to the tour start date but if you would like to know where we will be staying in any particular place then just give us a call or send a quick email and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Not all hotel rooms seem to have Tea and Coffee making facilities so, if you just can't do without a Typhoo, then bring a mini kettle and adaptor and I'm sure we can find you some tea and coffee on the van.

6) What should I expect for breakfast?

You should expect to see a continental breakfast most days on the tour with a selection of cereals, yoghurt, fruit and various juices, teas and coffees. In addition to this some of the places have more in the way of the traditional eggs, bacon etc.

7) Is the route suitable for road bikes?

Yes. We have designed the route with this in mind, and there is generally a good cycling surface, with the occasional rougher, short section of road here and there. There are a couple of sections of hard compacted gravel on the first day along a mostly paved cycle path, but they will be fine

for a road bike and avoid us having to go on some cobbled roads. Due to the ubiquitous cobbles in every centre of town, village and city we would suggest that you use shoes with recessed cleats for safety, and also not use 23mm tyres. Most of the cobbled sections are short and a lot of them are not too bumpy but there are a few sections of rougher cobble, in particular the inclined driveway to the hotel on day one that, should you need to unclip and walk, would prove more hazardous in racing cleats. It seems that the centre of every town and village in Portugal is cobbled!

8) Do I need to bring a lock?

Although we will be on country roads and quiet villages for a large portion of the trip and you would probably be fine, the short answer is “Yes” if you would like to visit any of the villages or castled towns we pass by, or even pay a visit to the toilet then a small lightweight lock would deter any opportunistic would be thief.

9) Do I have to wear a helmet?

Yes. Although different countries have different laws regarding the wearing of helmets, we at Peak Tours request that all riders wear a helmet. We understand that occasionally some riders disagree with the science and psychology of the wearing of helmets but for us, as a professional cycling holiday company this issue is non-negotiable, no helmet, no ride.

10) Toilets

The short answer to this is “what public toilets?” Although there are some toilets in the tourist towns where we stay, the route in-between those places see very few public conveniences but we do pass a number of small restaurants and cafes and such like where you can practice your Portuguese! Also, parts of this trip are so sparsely populated that you can quite comfortably get back to nature without being rudely interrupted.

11) Safety Tips

Emergencies

112 is the emergency number for Portugal. The number 112 can be dialled to reach emergency services - medical, fire and police - from anywhere in Europe. This Pan-European emergency number 112 can be called from any telephone (landline, pay phone or mobile cellular phone). Calls are free and you can ask for an English speaking operator.

EHIC (or GHIC) – European Health Insurance Card

This card, at the time of writing entitles you to greatly reduced or free state medical services throughout Europe, including Switzerland. We recommend you send off for one of these before the trip and carry it with you. It's important to bear in mind that these cards are not a substitute for travel insurance and **adequate travel insurance is compulsory for this tour.**

This link will give you all the information you need about the EHIC.

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/Pages/about-the-ehic.aspx>

Tick-borne encephalitis

In general, no special immunizations or medications are necessary for travel to Portugal but it may be worth immunising yourself against ticks as, like Germany, Austria and France in wooded areas and rough pasture with long grass, ticks can be found. The risk is very low but it is possible to contract Lyme disease, tularemia, tick-borne encephalitis and rickettsial diseases from these little critters in the warmer months.

If you find a tick attached to skin, promptly remove it, preferably with a tick removal tool. Failing that, grasp the tick using fine-tipped tweezers as close to the skin as possible. Pull upward with steady, even pressure, do not twist or jerk the tick. After removing it, thoroughly disinfect the bite site and wash your hands. If you begin to experience a rash or fever within several weeks of removing a tick, see your health care provider.

12) Insurance

Insurance is compulsory for this tour. 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 allow you to reclaim most of the money as well as providing insurance in case you lose your bags or if your bike is stolen, broken etc.

Your policy should also cover **cancellation costs** if you cancel the tour within 8 weeks of departure. If this happens we will try to fill your space and return your funds to you but if we are unable to fill your place you will lose the funds paid for the tour.

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.

We've partnered with Yellow Jersey and agreed a 10% discount off their bicycle and cycle travel insurance products, both available on a short term or annual basis for all our clients. Use the code PEAK10 in the checkout to claim the discount. We would recommend that you also take a look at what other products are available.

Bicycle Insurance

Across three separate tiers of insurance, you can cover your bike(s) for theft, crash and accidental damage as well as third part liability, legal expenses and some personal accident cover. Depending on the level of cover, you can also have worldwide cover as well as cover for sportive, races and much more. They'll even cover your bike in transit. You can [see prices here](#).

Travel Insurance

This will cover your medical expenses and repatriation if you were to have an accident while riding your bike on one of our tours. It will also cover you for all the usual things you'd expect from a standard travel insurance such as lost luggage, flight delays and cancellation cover. You can [see prices here](#).

13) What do I do if I lose my passport?

1. Go to the police and get an incident report: You need to do this because The British Embassy will not issue you with a new/replacement travel document without a police report and your travel insurance policy will not reimburse you for costs incurred without a police report.
2. Go to the nearest British Embassy: Once you have filed a police report, head to the nearest British embassy to get the necessary paper-work. This includes an LS01 form, which cancels your current passport and prevents crooks from using it for identity theft.
3. Emergency Travel Documents: In the event of an emergency (like your flight home leaving that afternoon), travel documents can be issued for those who need to fly home immediately. For an emergency passport to be issued, you will still need some form of identification and a police report - for security reasons. This is not a replacement passport though - it will only be valid for your flight home.
4. Check your travel insurance as some insurance providers cover situations like this so it is worth ringing them up to find out

14) Cycling Tips

We'll start with the obvious one, cycling on the right-hand side of the road. You will be surprised at how many times you are cycling along thinking "somethings not quite right here" only to find a Renault heading in your general direction!

It takes time to break the lifelong habit of cycling on the left-hand side and it would be worthwhile keeping this ever present in your minds for at least the first few days.

Instinctively, at junctions and roundabouts, we Brits look for cars coming from the right. This habit must also be broken, and great care taken at junctions and roundabouts to look for the cars coming from your left and giving way to the left at roundabouts.

Another tricky manoeuvre that is counter intuitive to the British brain is turning left. This is perhaps the most confusing as we are so used to simply turning left.

To turn left we must cycle past the first half of the junction and turn left into the second half while at the same time taking great care for oncoming traffic (there is usually a blue arrow sign to remind you).

15) Bicycles

The most suitable bike for this trip is whichever bike you are most comfortable riding. The road surface is generally good overall, barring the cobbles that greet us at most every village and town centre, and any cycle path we use is majority paved, aside from a section of hard, compacted gravel and day one. This tour is suitable for 25mm tyres and up and you would benefit from recessed cleat shoes rather than any that stick out due to the cobbled sections usually being at the beginning and end of the day in the places we stay and you will need to walk safely around.

Obviously if you are on a lightweight road bike as opposed to a pannier loaded hybrid the difference in attainable speed will be significant unless you have iron legs! So, consider carefully how much weight you're carrying and if you have really thick hybrid tyres, have a think about if you could put slightly narrower tyres on as you will be surprised at the difference in performance.

Any changes to your usual set up should be tested though. If you put narrower tyres on, for example, there would be a change in the stability of the bike that you would need to become accustomed to before attempting the trip.

Whichever type of bike you use there are usually around 80-90% of the group on road bikes and the others on touring or hybrid bikes, with the occasional tandem, recumbent, recumbent tandem or once, a cross trainer bike!

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.

You are going to cycle just over 660 miles so it is important that your bike won't let you down. You may want to fit new brake blocks, tyres and inner tubes before you start the ride and also bring 3-4 spare inner tubes, pump, puncture repair kit and multi-tool to carry with you each day. If possible, it is recommended that you also bring a spare mech hanger for your bike. This small but important piece of metal attaches your rear mech to your bike frame and they come in many different shapes and sizes, so we are unlikely to have the exact hanger for your bike. It is no

problem for us to fit a new reach mech, but we are often unable to do without the correct mech hanger.

It is recommended but not essential that you know how to change your brake pads. **It is essential that you are able to fix a puncture.**

It is also advisable to have front and rear lights on your bikes, even in Summer, as a rainy day can dramatically reduce visibility. **It is highly recommended that you have high visibility clothing and lights on your bike.**

Your tour leader will carry a reasonable tool kit to help with any minor problems and the support vehicle will carry a small number of tubes, tyres and brake blocks for sale, but we cannot carry spare parts for every type of bike that will be on the trip. If your bike has any obscure or unusual parts, it is recommended that you bring spares with you that can be carried on the support vehicle.

We will carry 2-3 spare bikes so that you can keep moving if you do have any serious bike problems. We will endeavour to help to fix any problems that do occur, but it may be necessary to find a local bike shop if it is something that we are unable to fix on the road.

It is also recommended that you think about carrying water/energy drinks either with 2 water bottle holders or by using a camel back. **It is very important to keep hydrated.**

A bar bag or map holder is very useful to put on your handlebars so that you can read your route notes on the move, although you should avoid reading them as you whizz downhill! We have found that Rixen-Kaul Clickfix make good, easy to fit, waterproof route note holders for flat handlebars and drop handlebars too. A bell is also very handy on the cycle paths.

A milometer is essential if you are navigating with the route notes. Garmin users also need to carry their route notes as they contain accommodation directions and other info.

16) Cycle Hire

Our road bikes are Cannondale Synapse 1 bikes. All new road bikes are the 2022/23 models.
Details of all the **road bikes** are as follows:

£250 Cannondale Synapse 1 - [View Here](#)

We also have the **touring bikes**:

£200 Dawes Super Galaxy - [View Here](#)

£150 Dawes Galaxy Plus - [View Here](#)

The Galaxy Plus has flat handlebars and the Super Galaxy has drop bars. It should be noted that the Galaxy Plus comes with drop bars as standard but we have changed the handlebars as the braking system wasn't as effective with drop bars and some people prefer flats.

The cost of the cycle hire includes the use of any extras you may require such as panniers, map holder, pump, puncture repair kit, spare tubes, helmet etc. Often people who hire bikes from us like to use their own helmet, pedals and saddle. The touring bikes have a rear rack fitted whereas the road bikes have a small saddle bag.

If you would like to bring your own pedals and/or saddle, then our guides will help you to switch them over at the start of the tour.

If you would like to hire a bike, then please let us know which bike you would like and we'll reserve one for you. Please also specify which size you would like. The sizes are as follows:

Synapse 48, 51, 54, 56, 58, 61

Super Galaxy 48, 53, 58

Galaxy Plus 48, 53, 58

17) Support

On most tours we have three tour guides. One of the tour guides cycles with the group each day and will usually be at the rear of the group so that if any problems occur, they will be on hand to help. If you don't want to navigate yourself then you can cycle with the tour guide at the back if you prefer.

Usually, we will also have two back up vehicles with the group as well. One of the vans will collect your luggage in the morning and deliver your bags to your accommodation for you in the afternoon and be on hand to help during the day. The other van (the 'brew van') will have a range of snacks, fruit, nuts, biscuits, tea/coffee, water etc which you are welcome to pick at during the day. The van doesn't follow the group but will be on hand in the morning and will stop a few times each day to provide assistance and refreshments.

Often people will bring a small bag/rucksack to the morning brief and leave this in the 'brew van' which can be accessed throughout the day. After the last brew stop of the day the brew van will then drop these bags off at the B&Bs for you. **Please ensure you have name tags on all pieces of luggage**

Each tour leader will carry a first aid kit and we carry a first aid kit in the support vehicle but it is recommended that you have a basic kit yourself to carry with you as the back-up driver may be some miles away or out of phone signal.

Mobile phone numbers for the tour leader and the back-up driver will also be provided at the start of the tour.

For smaller groups you might only have one guide that cycles with the group and one back up driver or for groups of 12 or less just one tour leader will provide back up for you.

18) Navigation

We provide detailed route notes and also gps files if you have your own device. If you would like to hire a Garmin gps then we have them available for hire for £50 for the duration of the trip – all you have to do is follow the line!

Each morning your tour leader will give a quick brief to advise you about the ride for that day and point out any problem areas etc. You have tour notes and/or Garmin files so that you can navigate yourself or you can cycle with the tour leader if you prefer.

We are confident that our route notes and our cycling guide will ensure that navigation is clear and effective. However, it is essential that clients brief themselves prior to the next day's cycling and that notes are carried for the appropriate leg on the bike. In addition, cyclists may wish to bring their own mapping material as a supplement to our resources.

19) Food

We will have a designated lunch stop each day in either a restaurant or café or hotel. We will try to make this interesting with a good variety. Please let us know if you have any special requirements or if there is anything in particular you would like in the van and we'll get it for you (caviar and lobster are a couple of things we may not stretch too)!

In the evening we will either book somewhere to eat as a group or provide details of local restaurants so that you can eat as and where you like. There are plenty of people travelling alone so you can always arrange to go for an evening meal with other members of the group if you would rather not eat alone. We have found Portuguese food to be a little on the greasy side if you're not careful about where you eat so we have endeavoured to find you the best places we can and hope you have a good experience eating out.

All breakfasts and lunches are included in the tour price as well as food from the back up van throughout the day.

20) Clothing

Most of the time you will be comfortable in shorts and T-shirts but it can get cold any time of the year. You should bring wet weather gear and something warm to wear as well as your normal cycling clothes and evening wear.

High visibility clothing is recommended for cycling and anything that will make you more visible so that motorists can see you. Even in the middle of summer it can get dark if it is stormy and rainy, it is better to be seen than worry about fashion! If you would like a high visibility vest providing for the tour, please let us know and we will hand one to you at the start of the tour (there is no charge for this).

It is important to carry a waterproof and maybe a fleece with you as it is easy to get cold. It is advisable to take a pannier or a small rucksack to carry the day to day items with you. It is

recommended that you use waterproof overshoes to try and keep your feet as dry as possible – putting wet shoes on in the morning isn't the best start to the day!

21) Washing

In general, you will find it difficult to get your clothes washed and dried at the hotels in Portugal. A good tip for hand washing your stuff is to wring it out in a towel before hanging it out to dry. Some people chuck their stuff in the shower with them and stand on it to save doing it in the sink!! As the weather tends to be better on the Portuguese trips, drying your clothes gets a little easier too. You can get portable clothes rails that can be hung over radiators or window frames

22) Luggage

There is limited space in the back up van to store luggage. We therefore request that you try to keep your luggage size to a minimum and try not to bring too much with you. Washing clothes can be done en-route so you shouldn't need to bring a clean set of clothes for every day. The ideal size for luggage is 70 x 50 x 30 cm and a weight of 10 to 15kg (or less). **Please try not to exceed the maximum luggage weight as there are plenty of steep staircases to ascend and not all our guides are in the first flourish of youth!** Unfortunately, we are unable to carry bike boxes in addition to your luggage.

Each day your luggage is carried in the back up van. Please ensure that each piece of luggage has your name on (including day bags). The backup driver will load your luggage into the van each day so please bring your bags down from your rooms and leave them somewhere that is easily accessible and visible.

Once your luggage has been loaded into the van it will be difficult to get at throughout the day. If you wish to carry items that are accessible, please bring a small bag to put anything that you may want access to throughout the day.

Please ensure that you put your name is on all your pieces of luggage.

23) Weather

Generally, the weather will be warm or hot, especially in the south. Having said that it can be relatively cold anytime of the year, especially in the hills of the north. The first day's cycling starts just north of one of the highest villages in Portugal at 1200m, and the first day's cycling has quite a lot of descent in it too, so it would be beneficial to bring some layers for the first few days at least and keep an eye on the weather report each day. It is always worth carrying a warm layer and a waterproof layer at all times as situations and weather conditions can change rapidly and unexpectedly. Sun Cream is a must and a hat is also highly recommended.

24) Itinerary

Day 1	Wednesday	Paradela to Mondim de Basto	44 miles / Elev 4123ft / 1256m
Day 2	Thursday	M.de Basto to The Douro River	55 miles / Elev 4480ft/1365m
Day 3	Friday	The Douro River to Freixinho	52miles / Elev 4530ft/1380m
Day 4	Saturday	Friexinho to Belmonte	65 miles /Elev 5144ft/1567m
Day 5	Sunday	Belmonte to Monsanto	51 miles / Elev 4735ft/1443m
Day 6	Monday	Monsanto to Alcantara	67 miles / Elev 2223ft / 677m
Day 7	Tuesday	Alcantara to Marvao	50 miles / Elev 4000ft/1219m
Day 8	Wednesday	Marvao to Vila Vicosa	75 miles / Elev 3284ft/1000m
Day 9	Thursday	Vila Vicosa to Moura	65 miles / Elev 2727ft / 831m
Day 10	Friday	Moura to Mertola	66 miles / Elev 2276ft / 693m
Day 11	Saturday	Mertola to Tavira	57 miles / Elev 5087ft/1550m

25) Costs

All your accommodation, breakfasts, lunches are included in the tour price. You will need to allow for evening meals and drinks/snacks throughout the day (although you can eat as much as you like from the back up van). All back up, bag transfers and route notes are also included in the tour price.

We often get asked about estimations for spending money for your evening meals over the length of the tour to help people budget. This is sort of a 'how long is a piece of string' question, as some will eat and drink much more than others, but as a rough guide we would recommend budgeting around €20.00 per day per person for a 2-3 course evening meal plus a drink and, knowing yourself what you are likely to eat and drink, you can adapt that accordingly.

26) Suggested kit, tips and routines

The Rider

- Get the miles in – train as much as you can, hours in the saddle rather than speed are key.
- Ride or train (on an exercise bike if you have to) at least 3 times per week.
- Ride back to back days – use these to practice things related to recovery, taking care of you, taking care of the bike, since both body and bike will require maintenance.
- Drink, even on cold or damp days since you will be losing fluids, take small drinks at regular intervals.
- Eat well and try to avoid hard to digest food.
- Balance your diet, protein and carbohydrate in balanced proportions are said to overcome cramps.
- Look after your bum!
 - a. Keep shorts clean, wash them regularly
 - b. Smooth out creases in your shorts or longs
 - c. Stand up every now and again and shift your position on the saddle
 - d. If things get sore use Sudocrem, chamois cream or Siopel.
- Find some long hills, learn how to ride them – it's all about getting the right gear, finding a rhythm, and switching off (don't worry about it, look around and enjoy the views or admire the tarmac)

- Don't be a "gear snob" and ride in a gear that feels comfortable.
- Sleep and rest are important, get to bed early.
- Stretch - learn how, and what to stretch. Do it properly and don't over stretch and injure yourself.
- Learn and practice the skills you will need; navigation, maintenance and repairs.
- Find out what foods and drinks suit you, make sure you can get these on the ride.
- Keep warm and dry.
- Don't push yourself too hard, always ride so that you feel you are in your comfort zone.
- Eyes may get sore from wind and salt from sweat – take some eye drops, wear glasses think about using a sweat band, a bandana or a cap.
- Watch out for sunburn.

The bike

- It should be comfortable - ideally get fitted (this need not involve having a bike made for you since stems, saddle height, and crank length can all be changed).
- Get mudguards (proper ones if you can) a wet bum and a body covered in road dirt, or worse, is no fun
- Choose some sensible tyres. 25mm Gatorskins, Swalbe Marathon are good hard wearing tyres.
- Fit a good bag to carry things that you will, or might need, don't use a backpack.
- Have some good bar tape – gel tape is really comfortable two layers even more so.
- Use pedals that you are comfortable with. I would really recommend SPDs and touring shoes (make sure these are wide enough since your feet will swell)
- Get a good saddle.
- Fit a cycle computer and bell.
- Get a triple chain set, or failing that a low gear.
- Waterproof map holder (for route notes)- Rixen-Kaul Clickfix are good.
- Fit a front and rear light – on busy roads in rain use it.
- Before you go service your bike, or have it serviced (in any event check it) ensure it has;
 - Tyres with a good deal of life left in them.
 - New brake blocks.
 - A good and newish chain.

- Everything properly lubricated and adjusted.
- All the bolts tightened down properly.
- Everything is working as it should.
- The headset properly adjusted.

Kit

- Good waterproofs – jacket, trousers and overshoes.
- Shorts gel padded - three pairs to allow them to be washed.
- Cycling tops short sleeve – 3. Either wool/ acrylic wool. Merino has a natural resistance to developing odours and is neither too hot or cold.
- Arm warmers and leg warmers – these aren't essential but can be useful if the weather is a bit changeable as they can be taken on and off easily.
- Vests / Baselayers.
- Long bottoms
- Gloves and Mittens with gel palms.
- Underwear. As they don't take up much room it is useful to bring enough to last the tour.
- Buff - good for so many things; hat, glasses cloth, neck warmer, and seal to stop water running down your neck.
- Sunglasses.
- Cap – worn under your helmet; keeps rain off glasses, stops sweat running into eyes.
- **Helmet – Compulsory!**
- Garmin or gps device. Not essential as we provide detailed route notes but they are handy.
- Map holder (if using the route notes to navigate).
- 750 ml drink bottles rather than 500ml.
- Mobile (cell) phone with charger.
- Euro adapter plug
- Pump (we have track pumps but it is useful to have a pump with you).
- Multi tool (make sure the allen keys will fit all of your bolts).
- Good quality puncture repair kit (one with tapered patches not square cut edges).
- Good quality light inner tubes.

Routines

- Wear your cycling gear to breakfast, there is no point in having to rush away from breakfast to change and pack.
- Pack the night before and put your kit for the next day ready in the morning you should only then have to pack nightwear and wash kit.
- Before you leave anywhere take a good look around for anything that has been left.
- Stretch when you can.
- Look over your bike each night for any problems. There is more time to deal with these at the end of the ride even if you are tired. It can be tight for time the following morning and if it turns out to be a fiddly problem to fix, that can impact on your days riding.
- Clean your bike when you can, ideally before it dries. If it has been raining it is good to use a water repellent and oil to keep the water away and lubricate your machine.
- Pump tyres every morning and do your checks of brakes etc.
- Wrap some tape around your saddle stem to mark where it enters the frame. Over time it may slip down ruining the fit of the bike.
- Check to make sure you know where you are staying each night.
- Store leaders and other riders' numbers in your phone.
- Dry clothes by rolling them in a towel and then treading on it before hanging them out to dry
- Charge everything every night.

27) Language Tips

Although we at Peak Tours are loathe to make sweeping general statements, we're going to anyway! You will find that not as many people, away from the beach resorts and major cities speak English in Portugal, as you would have thought. We are staying in tourist places where the hotels and restaurants should mostly speak English, but not always, and in-between is largely rural, and you will find fewer people able to speak English. French is probably a little more widely spoken in these areas than English so if you have a grasp of French this can also come in handy.