

Spain: Santander to Cape Trafalgar



... a voyage of diversity , finishing with a view of Africa!

Ride from the Bay of Biscay to Cape Trafalgar near the historic city of Cadiz on our epic two week ride south through Spain. This carefully crafted route embraces the best that this wonderful country has to offer and is timed to avoid the heat, instead enjoying the late summer warmth and offering a fantastic late season excursion to savour before hanging up the bike for winter!

Spain is a wonderful country for cycling with wide well maintained roads almost completely devoid of traffic; what little there is tends to be very courteous to cyclists.

Our Spanish end to end ride will take you across fantastic countryside from the beautiful Picos de Europa in the north all the way to the south western tip at Cape Trafalgar, where you can wistfully gaze across the Strait of Gibraltar to Morocco on the other side. We will take you to some of the most sublime countryside, some of the best climbs, longest views and most impressive mediaeval towns along the way, passing some of the finest castles and fortresses and staying in historic palaces, monasteries and other interesting hotels – of which we are particularly proud on this trip. With an average of 71 miles a day over this 13-day epic you will climb some 17,000m, generally with of a couple of harder days followed by a couple of easier ones.

Imagine the satisfaction of ending your ride gazing at Africa across the Straits of Gibraltar. For a true traveller there can be few more evocative endings to a fantastic journey!

At a glance:

- 13 days' riding
- 933 miles (1,493km)
- 17,000m ascent
- Daily distances from 52 to 89 miles (83 to 143 km)
- 13 nights in comfortable 3***+ hotels, many in historic buildings of importance
 - 11 dinners
- 2 nights dinner not included
 - 5 picnic lunches included
- Snacks, drinks and cakes along the way
 - Coffee & Cake stops
 - Fully supported

Highlights include:

- The coastline of Cantabria
- Stunning Picos de Europa mountains
- Hotels of huge character in former monasteries, convents and historic manor houses
- Wonderful Segovia with its Roman Aquaduct and famous Alcazar
- Amazing architecture and castles of Avila, Penafiel and Trujillo
- Sherry and tapas in Jerez
- Beautiful Andalucia
- Perfect climate for end of season holiday
- Quiet traffic free roads with good surfaces
- Cake & Coffee stops



The Route:



The map will not show all of the towns and places we go through but is intended to give an overview only. Daily distances can be found under the daily itinerary pages and elevations charts are towards the end of this guide.



Itinerary

Day 1: From Santander the route tracks the coast with glimpses of the sea. It is hilly here with sharp, but short, lumps to negotiate. Once in Arces it is flatter for 10 miles or so. After this there are 3 good climbs. The gradients are not steep but they are longer – typically 4 or 5 miles. The last 20 miles to the overnight stop is through simply incredible countryside which makes you understand why the Picos have such a reputation for natural beauty. The extremely nice hotel is a spa from bygone times, and has all of the charm that one would expect of it. (79 miles / 127km. Ascent: 3248m CQ: 25.6)

Day 2: It is gentle to the outskirts of Potes, travelling through a deep gorge which eventually opens out. From the turn at about 8 miles it is a long and steady climb to coffee; the gradient is a manageable 5% so it is one for finding a gear and keeping the pedals turning – it would be a surprise if you were in your easiest gear at this point. From the summit there is plenty of time for your cake to digest as a prolonged descent takes you through more unbelievably beautiful countryside. After lunch, it is more or less flat all the way to the finish. (65 miles / 105km. Ascent: 1980m CQ: 18.9)

Day 3: After the climbs of the last 2 days the high hills are now behind us for a while. We are now on the high level plateau that is the Meseta with big skies and wide horizons. It is not completely flat but there is nothing to be concerned about in climbing terms. Our destination town is on the Camino de Santiago and has been an important



centre for centuries; our hotel is in an old abbey. (68 miles / 110km. Ascent: 869m CQ: 7.9)

Day 4: The first 24 miles are straightforward, along long, straight (but empty) roads. It is a long day so save something for the afternoon which is a little hillier, but not excessively so. Our super hotel tonight is housed in an old monastery with views of the wonderful castle which sits on a hill the other side of the river. (80 miles / 128km. Ascent: 1071m CQ: 8.4)

Day 5: More gently undulating countryside again today, and you should continue to make good progress with a decent average speed. Of course, our coffee stops will bring that average down a little, but the cake is there to be eaten! We avoid the busy roads into Segovia, and once there you are sure to agree it was well worth it. This fantastic town is famous for the Alcazar (Royal Palace) which is often named the most beautiful building in Spain. There is also an awe-inspiring Roman aqueduct and a very impressive cathedral – a beautiful city skyline which can be admired from our hotel on the other side of the valley. (64 miles / 103km. Ascent: 899m CQ: 8.7)

Day 6: Once out of Segovia a lovely section of road twists and turns on the way south. Where it emerges there is a busy section before El Espinal, but after that some truly sublime cycling along deserted roads with quite superb views. There are a couple of



long climbs (4-5 miles), with steady gradients, but the views more than compensate for any energy exerted. Avila is a fantastic old city and we stay in its heart, within the old walls which are the longest of any in Spain. (69 miles / 111km. Ascent: 1873m CQ: 16.9)

Day 7: There are some good climbs today including one featured regularly in the Vuelta including Hinault's classic ride in 1983. It has its moments but the 16 mile descent afterwards is sublime and is a watershed moment on this ride as suddenly you are in the land of figs and olives; psychologically today is the day you will start to realise that this ride is within your grasp. The last 20 miles are flat and there are some long descents. (89 miles / 143km. Ascent: 2311m CQ: 16.2)

Day 8: A fast start to the day will soon see 10 miles under your belt without any effort and will help eliminate any residual stiffness from yesterday's long stage. The middle third is the section with the most climbing with one longer one; again, the countryside is beautiful with great views of mountains which we manage to avoid; Trujillo is an ancient town where many of the New World Conquistadors were born; they returned home in their latter years and built many palacios which make this one of the prettiest towns in Spain; indeed the mediaeval square is often described as the prettiest in the country. We stay in a wonderful old monastery 20 yards from the square. Of all the nice towns we stay in, this may well be your pick of the crop. It is quite simply lovely. (79 miles / 127km. Ascent: 1972m CQ: 15.5)

Day 9: A straightforward day across easy countryside, with fine views to the sides of mountains which we manage to avoid. Our hotel is in a larger town and the shorter day means plenty of time to explore or just relax. (62 miles / 100km. Ascent: 518m CQ: 5.2)

Day 10: A nice day over gently undulating countryside with long roads, long views and easy navigation including some very strangely shaped but interesting ripple-like hills. Tonight's hotel is a former palacio with great rooms and a good breakfast (as Spanish ones tend to be); the main square of this small town is a one-minute walk away and has bars with shaded arcades in which to sit and relax. (68 miles / 110km. Ascent: 1319m CQ: 12)

Day 11: Generally an easy day with a long gentle climb to Guadalcanal and then into the Andalusian hills where there is a lovely gently rolling road past the gates to impressive Fincas. Our overnight stop is a fantastic hotel in a lovely old town, with plenty of small squares in which to enjoy refreshments and to watch the world go by in the warm evening. (74 miles / 119km. Ascent 1220m: CQ: 10.3)

Day 12: Coming off the hilltop from Carmona you will see the plain stretching out before you and can be confident that no mountains lurk unseen along the way! As you approach Jerez there are a couple of smaller hills but by and large this is a flat and fast day that will see you in the capital of sherry in good time to enjoy a schooner or two. (78 miles / 126km. Ascent: 474m CQ: 3.8)

Day 13: An easy last day will get you to Cape Trafalgar in good time to enjoy an afternoon on the beach or taking refreshments in one of the beach bars with views over the Strait of Gibraltar to Morocco. We stay in a typical Andalusian white village not far away and will enjoy a fun evening eating outside and enjoying the climate, reliving the adventures of the last fortnight with hills getting smaller and easier with each telling. (52 miles / 84km. Ascent: 679m CQ: 8.1)

Day 14: Departure.



Elevation Charts

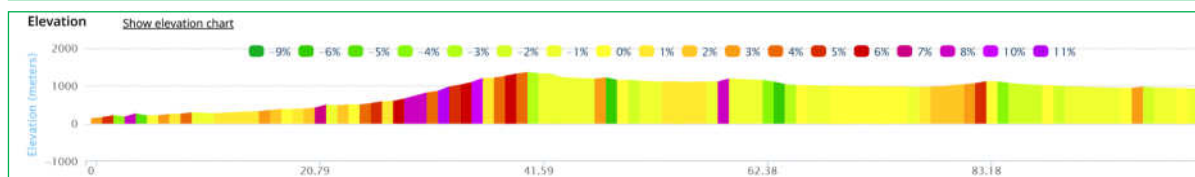
1

79 miles
3248 m



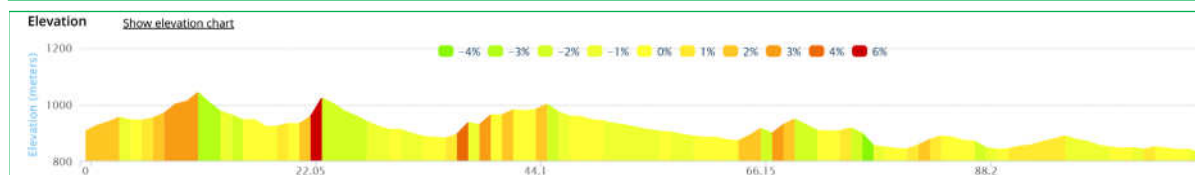
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65 miles
1,980 m



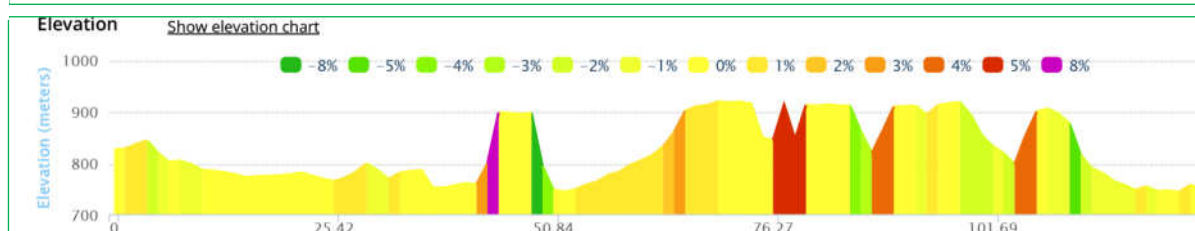
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68 miles
869 m



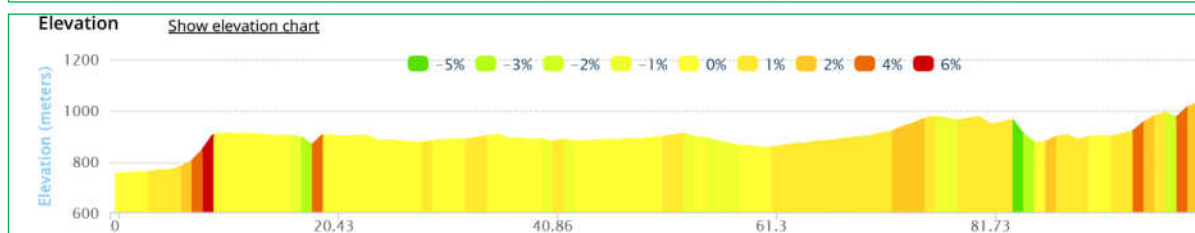
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80 miles
1,071 m



5

64 miles
899 m



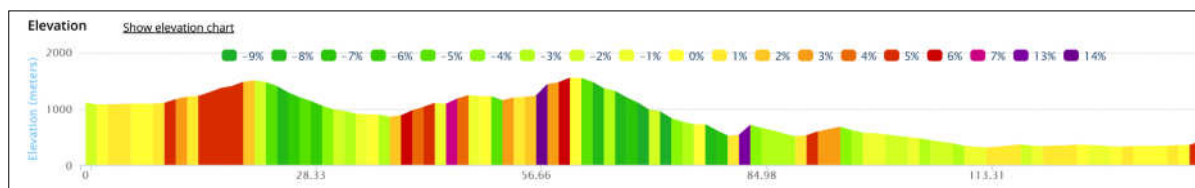
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69 miles
1,873 m



7

89 miles
2,311 m



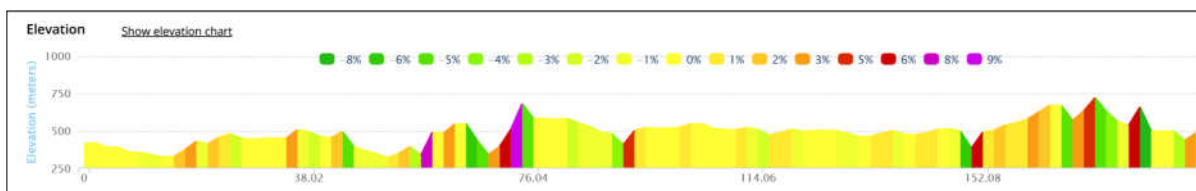
For general identification only. Actual route may vary. Note different scales for each day. Distances on graphs are km. Elevation is calculated by MapMyRide which produces significantly higher figures than Garmin. No two systems will produce the same figure but the visuals will let you know what to expect.

Starting elevation 0m. Finishing elevation 0m. Average overall gradient therefore 0% !

Elevation Charts

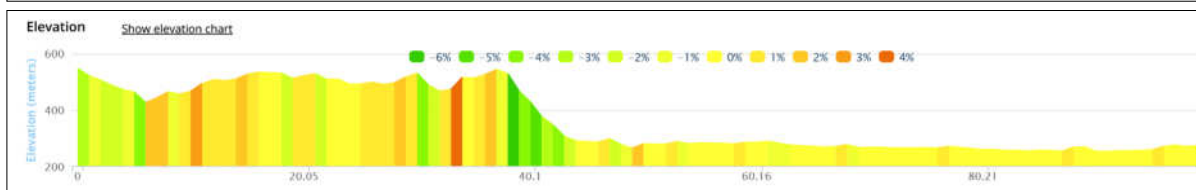
8

79 miles
1,972 m



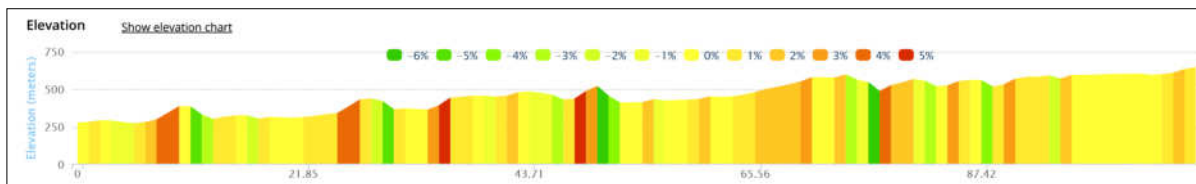
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62 miles
518 m



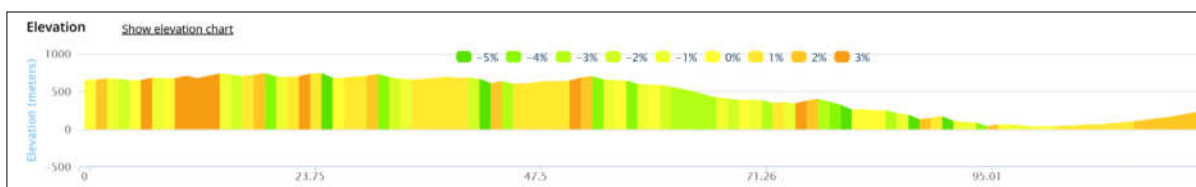
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68 miles
1,319 m



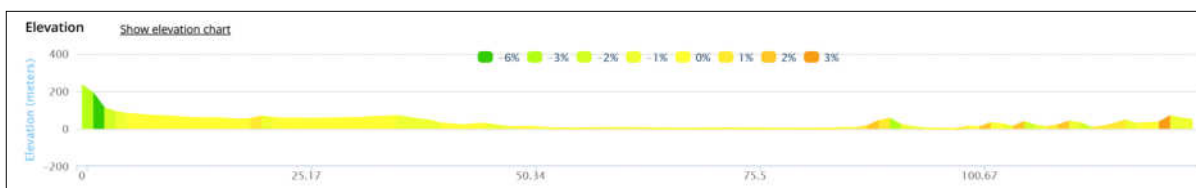
11

74 miles
1,220 m



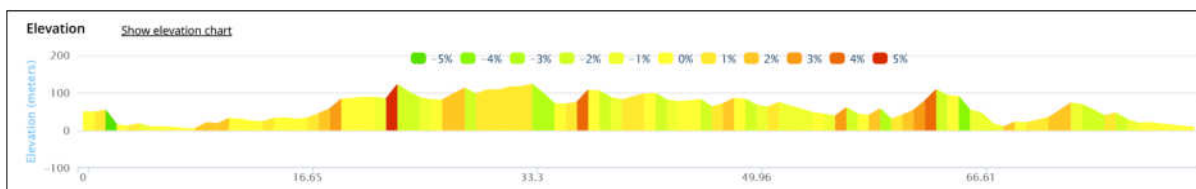
12

78 miles
474 m



13

52 miles
679 m



For general identification only. Actual route may vary. Note different scales for each day. Distances on graphs are km. Elevation is calculated by MapMyRide which produces significantly higher figures than Garmin. No two systems will produce the same figure but the visuals will let you know what to expect.

Starting elevation 0m. Finishing elevation 0m. Average overall gradient therefore 0% !

‘The most enjoyable cycling holiday I’ve been on in 15 years - quiet but well-maintained roads, beautiful and occasionally stunning scenery, overnight stops in hotels and towns with character, and even bags carried up to rooms.’



BIKES, NAVIGATION & EQUIPMENT

This tour is one on which to bring your best bike. We recommend road or touring bicycles, although we have had people complete our rides very happily on mountain bikes with road tyres (‘slicks’). All bikes are secure at night. You won’t need panniers or bar bags as you will frequently see the vans.

We provide a printed route card with turn by turn instructions, and we will also tell you which maps cover the areas we pass through. However, by far the best way to find your way is with a GPS and we provide tracks; you will save so much time and the ability to find yourself geographically uncertain is reduced by a huge amount.

We send you out a kit list in advance of your holiday so you know what to pack. It’s easy to take too much but we will give a list of what you should need on your holiday.

A number of our hotels have swimming pools which is a lovely way to end the day! Your full itinerary, sent out about a fortnight before your trip, will detail all this and much more.

TRAVEL TO / FROM THE TOUR

Travel to and from the start and end of the tour is not included in our prices due to the vast range of places our riders come from.

Travel out: The easiest way to get to Santander is on the ferry from Portsmouth or Plymouth. It is worth arriving a day in advance if possible as the town justifies it. You could also fly to Bilbao or Biarritz (France), or alternatively Madrid which is about 4 hours from Santander by direct train. We start riding at 8.30am on the Monday morning so you will need to arrive before then; the Saturday ferry from Portsmouth to Santander would be perfect but be aware this route always sells out quickly. We can suggest accommodation in Santander near the start.

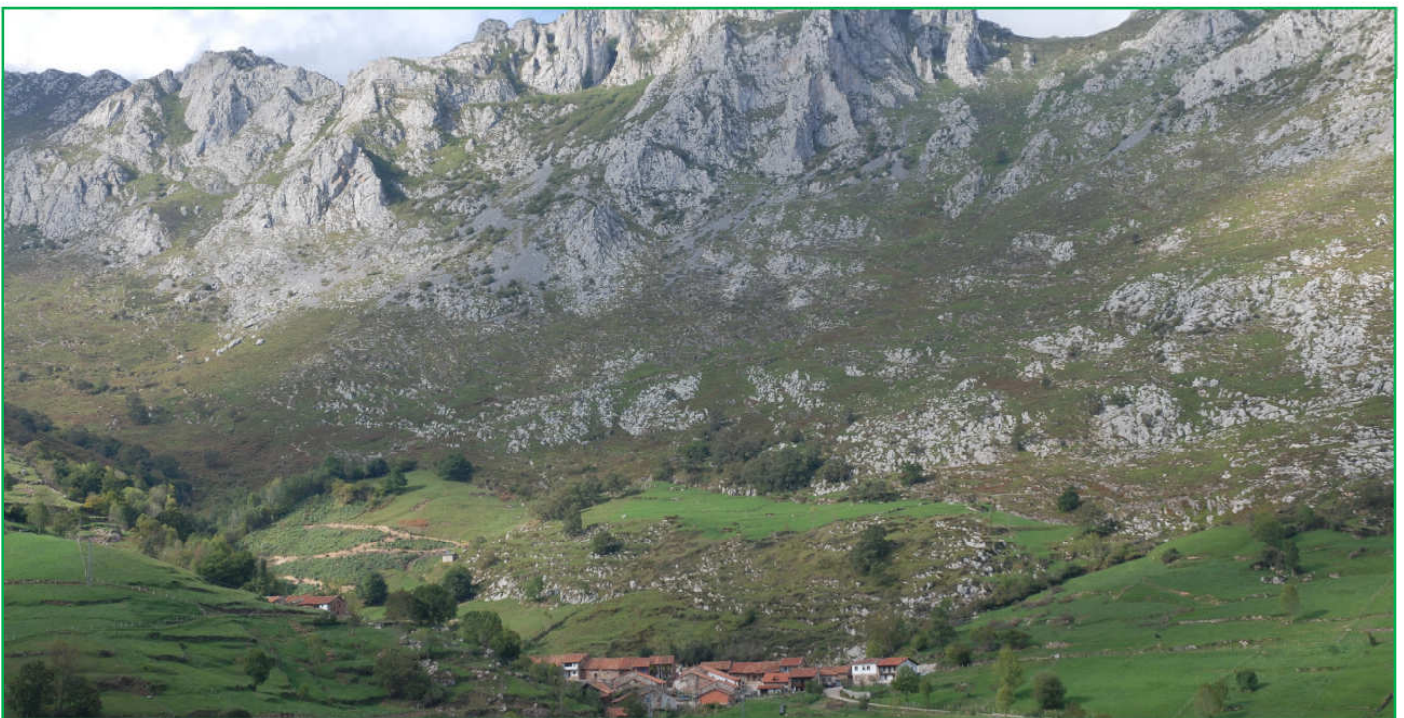
Return travel: Going back, we will have limited spaces available in the van for riders and their bikes, sold on a first come first served basis with full payment at the time of reservation to enable us to secure the necessary cabins on what is a very popular ferry route that always sells out quickly. These bikes will take priority. These spaces will be sold on a 'return travel pack' basis and include: van transport from Cape Trafalgar to Santander, overnight hotel in Salamanca (including breakfast) to break the journey (it is a 10-12 hour drive), ferry passenger fare and cabin on board. You will have an afternoon and evening to explore Salamanca which is probably Spain's most beautiful city. Single supplement rate: £250 per person; Double / twin rate £175 per person. You would arrive back in Portsmouth on the Tuesday afternoon.

For those flying back there will be an early morning transfer to Cadiz and Seville airports on the Sunday. Those returning by train can be dropped at Cadiz station at the same time.

BIKE RETURN SERVICE: We are able to bring unaccompanied bikes back to the UK. The charge for this is £50 per bike. You do not need a bike box or to dismantle your bike for this service. If you cannot collect it from us in Dorset we can arrange onward transmission with ParcelForce (usually c£50) extra or you can arrange for a courier to collect it. If we bring back a lot of bikes originating from one area of the country we will arrange a mutual meeting point to hand them over (cost subject to number & location), but we cannot guarantee this until we know where our riders are coming from.

TERRAIN: This tour takes the country as it comes and there are some hard days. It is undeniably beautiful and you will get a real feel for the diversity of this historic, stunning and varied country. Generally, there are a couple of harder days followed by a couple of easier ones. The most difficult day is perhaps the first into the Picos, but as with many European roads the climbs are longer and more gradual, rather than shorter and steeper. You should ride as much as possible in the months before your trip, and definitely do a couple of consecutive weekends of long back to back days of 60-70 miles each day, over hilly terrain, to ensure proper preparation.

The key to success on this ride is patience, and riding at your own pace. To get the most out of this ride you will enjoy the variety of terrain on offer. If you have never done a trip like this you will find some days harder than others – and not always the ones you expect to! On other days you will find your legs and enjoy blissful riding along some of the quietest and most beautiful roads you are ever likely to ride along.



Thanks for taking us on a fantastic trip from St Malo to Sete. It was a real cycling challenge, right up there with LEJOG. We passed through places I never dreamt of visiting on quiet roads, saw some amazing scenery and made new friends. All in all, it was an excellent 10 days cycling!



Two vans operate on this trip to cater for all speeds of rider and are there to provide everything you need to make your trip easier, so that all you have to do is pedal. We provide a coffee stop in the morning and snacks throughout the day but you will see us far more frequently than that as we sit by the side of the road to see you all through a tricky junction or to dispense suntan lotion. Everyone loves our homemade cake (you have to eat it all, because we get in trouble if we take any back at the end of the trip) and we also have a range of spares on board. You can leave a daybag in the van with waterproofs, gels, your iPad or whatever you may need to get at throughout the day—you will see us every hour on average and we are always only a phone call away. Various referred to by riders as ‘the mothership’, the ‘tuck shop van’ and ‘ride HQ’, our vans are all this and more (OK, no tuck shop, but the Fortnum & Mason hamper does contain a lot of other goodies!).

GROUP RIDING

You do not need to ride as a group as our support vehicles will cater for everyone's speed. You will usually find someone else who rides at a pace that you are comfortable with, even if you did not know them before the holiday began. If you find yourself riding in a large group and are not familiar with group riding, ask us, or other riders, to explain about warning signals and how to pass information about hazards on the road between yourselves.

If you are a slower rider you can still complete the route at your own pace, although on longer days you may want to set off a little earlier – we always advise completing 60% of the daily distance by lunch time. It is important to ride at your own pace, not someone else's.

Our group sizes vary from 4 up to 12. Sometimes we go to 14, but we are keen to keep the personal service that our returning customers love. On our feedback form a lot of people have told us that we should stress the benefits of small groups—so we have!

'Of 6 companies that we have used for this format of holiday you are far and away the best.'



We are a specialist family run company and we care deeply that you have a good time. It's more than likely that one of the business owners will be leading your trip. This isn't just a livelihood for us, it's a vocation, so we'll do whatever we can to look after you and make sure you have fun! We're mad keen cyclists and want to pass on the joys of a cycling holiday. This means is that if you want to ring us at 9pm on a Sunday with some questions, please do. If we can't come to the phone we will get back to you surprisingly quickly. You'll probably be speaking to the person who planned the route and has actually ridden it, or chose the hotels. If you have any questions at all, please call us on +44 (0)1300 350555 or email info@greenjerseycycling.co.uk.

HOTELS

We use hotels of character (avoiding chains wherever possible) where a generous breakfast is offered. All have en suite facilities. The average rating is 3 or 4-star. Final confirmation of actual hotels is decided in January / February each year. Accommodation is on a half board basis on the majority of nights—see the 'At a glance' section on page 1 for precise details. If a hotel does not have a restaurant for dinner then we eat out (cost included in tour). We arrange tables together for the evening meals although you are of course free to come and go as you please. If you have any dietary requirements please let us know in advance. On nights when dinner is not included you are free to make your own choice but we will of give you pointers.

MEALS & DRINKS

Breakfast and usually dinner is included in the cost of your holiday (see 'At a glance' on page 1 for number of dinners included) and we also include your first drink (beer, soft drink or glass of wine) when it is. Pre-dinner drinks, extra wine and coffee afterwards are not included and you should pay for these yourself at the time.

For lunch, we will tell you where you will find places to eat / buy food. On several days on this tour we provide a picnic lunch (included in the cost of the holiday) where facilities are scarce due to the rural nature of our route.

DATES AND PRICES

Please see our website.

BESPOKE DATES

If you can rustle up a group of 8 or more we can put on a bespoke date just for your group.

TO BOOK: [Our booking pages can be found at http://greenjerseycycling.co.uk/contact](http://greenjerseycycling.co.uk/contact)

Green Jersey British & Continental Cycling Tours, March 2020

