

Cycling Safaris

Andalucia Coastal Explorer 2010

Roll with us through Southern Spain's finest countryside as we integrate beautiful National Parks, remote white villages and rides along the beaches of the Costa del Luz (coast of light). From Bandit hide-a-ways to Pirate coves and the battle of Trafalgar site - this is an exciting part of the world still very undiscovered - offering one of the finest blends of cycle touring in all of Europe.

The Coastal Explorer takes you places others rarely see. Expect five days of completely diverse riding over some of Andalucia's most historic and culturally varied routes including a rest day in the charming white washed village of Vejer de la Frontera.

Highlights of the tour include exploring the White Villages, National Parks, vineyards, scenic coastal roads and classic routes of the Torro (bull) and Sherry. Charming hotels and tasty authentic food en route add to the experience. Riding is a combination of quiet back roads and stunning parkways. Andalucia is a hilly region yet we have done our best to guide you through the most beautiful areas without shattering you on the climbs! The seaside riding days and views to the African continent are especially rewarding...

Above all we consider this tour to be *more* than just a cycling holiday. We invest a lot of time and effort in offering our guests a true glimpse of Spanish life. Every opportunity is taken to sample the variations in local cuisine, taste the wines and Sherries, perhaps visit a Feria (Fiesta) and act spontaneously should an interesting event occur! It's what we feel your holiday should be, well rounded and diverse!

Road surfaces have all been upgraded in the past few years and this tour gets better every season! As a bonus, your trip leader offers a free nightly interpretive tour at each destination to ensure you get the most from your experience. The sense of accomplishment by riding one of the most scenic tours in Spain is one that will stay with you forever!

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 Sunday (collection 1600 hours / Terminal II Arrival Zone / near Tourist Information window)

Pick up Malaga Airport / 1 ¼ hour shuttle to our first night in Casares - a beautiful Moorish village steeped in history and charm with fine views to the Med and Africa. Here your leader will take you on short walking tour through the village's narrow lanes to the castle. This is followed by an orientation chat and a welcome group dinner.

If you are arriving into Malaga by bus or train it is easy to hop on the 20 minute shuttle train to the airport to meet the group and minibus. Please remember that our minibus leaves the airport for Casares at 4.00pm and will return to the airport *around* 10.00am when you are returning home. For your comfort and convenience please bear these times in mind when you are booking your flights.

Please note late arrivals will need to make their own way to Casares. This can be done by taxi direct from the airport (around €100). An airport bus option to Marbella from the airport is also available (€4), then you can taxi to Casares from here for about €50.

If you arrive early to the airport there is plenty to do. You can take either the shuttle bus (frequent), or train (every ½ hour) into Malaga city centre (15 min / 1-2 euros max). Here you can visit the Picasso Museum or enjoy a tapas around the Cathedral, rest on the beach or wander up to the Moorish Alcazar castle for fine views. Alternatively, you can train or bus 20 minutes to the seaside resort of Torremolinos for a day at the beach, lunch or shopping in this bustling coastal town. Please note – there are NO baggage storage areas at Malaga airport. Bags can be left at either Malaga or Torremolinos bus stations in self-paid lockers (reliable).

DAY 2 Monday Casares to Jimena de la Frontera 41 km

A gentle start to our week as we pass through orange and avocado groves of the Guadiaro River then along the winding, tree-line lanes that border one of the Med's most important National Parks. Easy country lanes in lush surroundings! Dinner is not included tonight but the guide can recommend many tasty options!

Level: Easy to Moderate – Gravel section 5 km

DAY 3 Tuesday Jimena to Alcala 51 km

Today we cycle the charming Jimena to Alcala parkway through the stunning Alcornocales National Park. We experience rolling countryside protected by cork forests, river valleys and glimpses of wildlife such as wild boar, deer and vultures. Quiet tarmac roads with plenty of scenery on route! Group dinner provided this evening.

Level: Moderate – Challenging with some extended climbs (this is the most difficult day!)

DAY 4 Wednesday Alcala to Vejer de la Frontera 58 km

Our journey today rides through pretty, open landscape and traditional bullfighting countryside via the lovely Medina Sidonia pueblo. As we near the Atlantic coast, our final destination is the historic Vejer de la Frontera, a former Moorish stronghold set in a stunning backdrop with fine cafes and tapas bars. Group dinner included - you can look forward to our tapas & sherry orientation tour this evening!

Level: Moderate with some hill passes before lunch and final climb to Vejer

DAY 5 Thursday REST DAY - Vejer de la Frontera

Your Rest Day offers a wide range of options. In Vejer you can relax and do a little sight seeing and sample the local tapas and vino. Alternatively, you could visit a sherry bodega, the nearby beaches of El Palmar or Conil or see the famous equestrian show in Jerez (home of Flamenco). Cadiz and Seville cities are now a short bus ride away if an urban escape is what you desire. Or, if you wish to ride more, we offer a lovely self-guided day trip to the beach (approx 16km each way). Dinner is not provided today and there is a wide selection available in Vejer. *Please refer to the last page for options on this day.*

DAY 6 Friday Vejer de la Frontera to Zahara de Las Atunes 40 km

This morning we set off on a charming coastal route following a network of beach roads, pine forests and lovely parkland through some historic landscapes. We pass Canos de Mecca where Lord Nelson's navy fleet defeated the French and Spanish in the Battle of Trafalgar and then onto the Pirate backwaters of Barbate where Franco himself regularly vacationed away from the madness of rule in Madrid! There are many opportunities to swim today! We arrive to the beach side resort of Zahara de las Atunes and enjoy an evening Atlantic sunset with views to the African continent. Group dinner included.

Level: Moderate to easy – rolling with some climbs and flat coastal road to finish

DAY 7 Saturday Zahara de las Atunes to Tarifa 45 km

From Zahara we ride the colourful beach paths and coastal routes to Bolonia where we visit a magnificent Roman site before carrying on through the inspiring landscapes, dunes and forests leading to Tarifa – the most southerly point of Europe and the gateway to Africa. Tarifa is like nowhere else in Europe. It blends Moorish African culture with a thriving adventure tourism

industry centered on the surf and wind sports. It is also the main corridor for migratory birds between Africa and Europe and offers insight into flora and fauna that is unique to the entire continent! The vibe here is tremendous and it leaves a very fond impression of Spain – especially in light of the overdeveloped Mediterranean side. Dinner is not included tonight but your leader will organise a final celebratory meal together.

Level: Moderate – easy: rolling and undulating countryside with many flat areas to coast!

DAY 8 Departure based on group travel time

Return morning shuttle to Malaga Airport (depending on group needs) for your continuing travel or return home. We usually depart for the airport around 8.00 a.m. for the 2 hour shuttle. For those wishing to travel onto Seville or other destinations in Spain, Tarifa (and Algeciras) offer very good transport hubs.

Please note - Itinerary is subject to slight changes and/or direction of travel but quality will not be effected.

TOUR PRICE 2010

€995 per person sharing

€1,095 for single occupancy

(if you are travelling on your own we will endeavour to find a room mate for you)

TOUR DATES 2010

May 16, 30

September 12, 26

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- ❑ **Lodgings** – 7 nights’ quality en-suite accommodation in quaint village hotels and guesthouses. Rooms are based on twin sharing with single supplements available.
- ❑ **Meals** – Meals are generally taken within your hotel (and sometimes in the villages). Dinners (4 included) normally include a choice of starters, main courses, a light dessert and a drink of your choice. Breakfasts are traditionally Spanish and simple and include coffee/ tea, juice, toast and sometimes fruit (*very light for some, so you may wish to supplement with fruit / snack later in the morning!*). For lunch (not included), there are a number of village and countryside Inns on route where you can sample some authentic Spanish cooking or we can assist by organising a picnic for you!
- ❑ **Transport** – Airport shuttles at designated times, baggage and bike transfers (airport and between hotels). Please remember flights and other transportation to our designated starting point (Malaga airport) are not included in the price. A sag wagon is available for periods should you wish to take a break from cycling.
- ❑ **Guide Service** – We provide an experienced guide during the riding days who drives the support vehicle. With larger groups, two guides may be present – one driving and one cycling. The guide ensures that hotel, meals, transport and the riding goes smoothly. This person also deals with the general well being of our guests, looks after bike maintenance and keeps a close watch on road conditions and any route information / changes. Please note, the sag wagon / support vehicle is generally with the group throughout the day providing full support and back up to the riding group.
- ❑ **Trip Notes and Map** – We provide detailed route information and a map so that you can cycle at your leisure.
- ❑ **21 speed touring bike and helmet** – see below for more details.

GENERAL DETAILS:

- You cycle, we look after all other logistics and provide back-up support too.
- Our routes are "unguided" in the sense that you are free to ride at your own pace. We provide the route information and have a daily support vehicle on the road but otherwise you're free to explore at your leisure – with no group pressure!.
- Groups vary from a minimum of 4 to a max of 16. Larger tour groups can easily be accommodated to.
- You need only carry water, snacks and route information. We look after the baggage shuttles and stick close to you while on the road!
- Just get yourself to Malaga airport and we do the rest from there (except ride the bike for you!).
- Worried about over-exerting yourself? No need, we have alternative routing days and our sag wagon for the weary!

WHAT TO BRING

- * Comfortable cycling clothing – shorts, shoes, gloves etc
- * Water bottle (optional) there is a bottle included with each bike
- * A set of light waterproof clothing (not needed between June 1 and Sept 1)
- * Hat, sunglasses and bathing suit
- * Light walking shoes / sandals for evening visits
- * Beach wear and towel for stops along the coast
- * OPTIONAL – personal cycle helmet and gel seat (these are provided at no extra cost)

REST DAY OPTIONS

Vejer de la Frontera is a beautiful village situated on a high gorge overlooking olive and orange groves in one direction and the Atlantic 'Costa del Luz' in the other. The coast and some stunning beaches are 8 km away, but can easily be accessed via a regular bus services or on your bike (if you fancy an extra riding experience!). As a rest day base, there is lots of choice - from having a lazy day of exploring the old town and its maze of lanes, alleys, artisan shops and tapas bars or venturing off to Cadiz, Jerez or Seville cities (an easy bus journey from Vejer).

Vejer and REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

- A. *Relax in the Vejer city area*
 - Visiting monuments
 - Relaxing in plazas, etc.
 - Gentle countryside ride or walk
- B. *Beach relaxation day*
 - Bus or ride to Canos de Mecca, El Palmar or Conil Beaches!
- C. *Day return visit to Cadiz city*
 - Oldest city in Europe
 - Good mix of beaches and architecture
- D. *Day return visit to Seville*
 - Cathedral visit
 - Alcazar Palace visit
 - Flamenco shows
 - City tour of old quarter and Barrio Santa Cruz
- E. *Day return visit to Jerez de la Frontera*
 - Sherry Bodegas (Tio Pepe, Sandemans, Osbourne, etc.)

- Flamenco culture
- *Equestrian show (prebook!)

Your tour leader can assist you with maps and options...

**IMPORTANT - If you are interested in the famous Jerez Equestrian show it is highly advisable to book in advance for tickets <http://www.realescuola.org/ing/home.htm>. Alternatively you can do this by calling:*

Real Escuela Andaluz del Arte Ecuestre (34) 956 31 80 08 (English spoken)

Or, for a Bodega (Sherry) tour of Jerez, please let your tour leader know in advance to secure a booking. Osbourne / Gonzalez Byass / Harveys / Sandemans / Domecq and many more...

BIKE AND FITNESS

We use a number of types of bicycle models to suit your needs. Largely we stock new 'hybrid' models. These bikes are designed for road touring and are also suitable for light trail riding and dirt/gravel roads. Most of our hybrid bikes have front and seat suspension, a wide range of gears (21 speed), comfortable saddles, optional toe clips, light alloy frames and quality 'Shimano' components. At times we may also use lightweight mountain bikes with 'slick' tyres for road-riding. Like our hybrid models, many riders favour this style of bike for its comfort and riding security.

All bicycles have a small soft bag on the handlebars (big enough to carry a poncho / rain coat and a light snack). All bikes also have a rear carry rack, water bottle holder and a single water bottle. There is really no need for any extra baggage on your bikes as the support van is always within 30 minutes of the riders and does plenty of sweeps on route. Women's bicycle frames are also provided.

Please let us know in advance if you require any of these EXTRAS – otherwise they will NOT be included with the bikes (these come at no extra charge).

- Lady's bike frame?
- Toe clips (indicate with or without strap models)?
- Gel seat pad?

The general rule on active holidays is to enjoy yourself. Sure there is physical exertion involved but you wouldn't have chosen this excursion if you weren't aware of this fact! On the other hand, a bit of mental and physical preparation could help you enjoy your week even more. We suggest that you put in some riding time at home (or spin classes), in the weeks building up to your holiday. Try to get out for a few hours at the weekends on varied terrain and if possible on hills, not that the tour is overly strenuous - it's simply a good idea to put in a few miles beforehand!

GENERAL INFORMATION

Personal Money

Outside of the meals not included in your holiday price, you may wish to have some Euros for other purposes. This could include visits to taverns for tapas snacks and beverages or extra drinks during/after dinner, local souvenirs, entry fees, tipping and the bus/train journey on the rest day and any sites you may visit.

Exchanging money between your currency and the Euro is easy. Some options are:

Buy or bring Euros from your bank at home

Use your normal bankcard here in Spanish bank machines (good rates of exchange and low charges)

Buy Euros from banks and moneychangers here in Spain (poorer rates of exchange)

Pay with your credit card (used everywhere) (note - travellers Cheques can be an expensive burden in Spain!)

Telephoning from Spain

Credit Cards may be used for International calls or a Spanish Phone Card can be purchased for a certain value. Additionally, you can access an International Operator by dialling 025 from any phone.

Flights

We encourage our guests to arrange their flights / arrivals to and from Malaga Airport. In addition to Malaga - Seville, Jerez and Granada have more and more regular international arrivals. Please remember, the airport transfers included in your holiday are to/from Malaga airport.

ACCOMMODATION - Please note that confirmation in these places is subject to availability

Below are brief descriptions of the lodgings for your riding holiday week. Should anyone wish to contact you while riding, you will find the contact details:

DAY:	HOTEL NAME:	VILLAGE:	TELEPHONE:
Sunday:	<i>Hotel Rural Casares</i>	Casares	(34) 952 895 211
Monday:	<i>Hotel Anon & Other*</i>	Jimena de al Frontera	(34) 956 640 113
Tuesday:	<i>Hotel San Jorge</i>	Alcala de los Gazules	(34) 956 413 255
Wed & Thurs:	<i>Casa de la Califa & Other*</i>	Vejer de la Frontera	(34) 956 447 730
Friday:	<i>Hotel Porfirio</i>	Zahara de las Atunes	(34) 956 449 515
Saturday:	<i>Hotel Alameda</i>	Tarifa	(34) 956 681 181

**Pending availability*

Hotel Information:

HOTEL CASARES -Centrally located in this "very photographed" Moorish village. Great views of the Med, Africa, Arabic castle and the entire village from your room & balcony. Typically Andalucian, this quality hotel has clean, charming facilities and a great atmosphere with unique Moroccan décor.

HOTEL ANON -A converted Moorish House with all its quirky charm in tact in the centre of Jimena village. One of the most popular boutique inns of the week in a pretty white village set on the edge of the Alcornocoles National Park.

HOTEL SAN JORGE -A modern, comfy village hotel with spacious rooms right in the centre of Alcala village. From here we can explore all aspects of the village and sample the local cuisine, sherry and cured hams.

HOTEL CASA DE LA CALIFA - A popular boutique inn located in the heart of Vejer de la Frontera, one of Spain's rising coastal villages that has maintained it's charm and historical elements.

HOTEL PORFIRIO - A very comfortable and modern hotel with Andaluz charm located near the beach in this lazy Atlantic coastal town. Minutes walk to the white sands and 'chiringuito' beach bars of the Costa del Luz.

HOTEL ALAMEDA - Located centrally in Tarifa's old town, minutes from the white sand beaches, the Fortress - Castillo de Guzman el Bueno and in the center of many fine cafes surrounding a pretty open plaza. Tarifa boasts a vivid day and night atmosphere with a frontier like feel being within such short range of Africa.

Please note - hotels subject to change depending on availability / group size. At times we have to utilize village houses, apartments and other hostals in the smaller villages.

Transport Connections to/from Malaga:

Train:

There are fast connections from Madrid and all major Spanish centres. Booking can be done easily and far in advance using www.renfe.es website (English option now available on this website).

Bus:

Many bus connections connect direct to Malaga from all major centres (Madrid, Seville, Jerez, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Granada, etc.

Spanish bus companies websites:

www.ctsa-portillo.com;

www.alsinagraells.es; <http://www.busstation.net/main/busspa.htm>; <http://www.continental-auto.es/index.do>