

Cycling Safaris

Northern Spain - Cantabrian & Asturian Coast 2017

Self guided Tour
126 km | 7 nights / 8 days



A beautiful ride along the Cantabrian and Asturian coast. The rich green countryside contrasts with the blue sea and the magnificent unspoilt beaches. Picturesque villages with flower bedecked houses, fishing harbours & the backdrop of the magnificent Picos de Europa.

The terrain of this cycle consists of gently rolling hills along the coast and then a fine mountain descent of the River Miera. Easy to moderate.

TOUR ITINERARY

Day 1 **Transfer to Santillana del Mar**

Pick up from arrival point and transfer to the charming medieval village of Santillana del Mar. Introduction to bikes and route briefing. Spend the rest of the day walking round the cobbled streets of this beautiful village, visit the modern museum of the Altamira Caves or enjoy a ride around the country lanes and down to the coastline.

Day 2 **Santillana del Mar- San Vicente de la Barquera** **36km**

Leaving Santillana, our route heads westwards through green meadows and the hills and valleys of Cantabria with its marvellous unspoilt coastline and beaches nearby. We soon arrive at the charming village of Novalles, set amidst lemon groves and with its fine typical rural architecture. Next stop is the seaside village of Comillas. Here a visit to the fine beach, the small harbour and the pretty village square with its pavement tapas bars and restaurants is a must, not to mention the architectural sights of El Capricho by the famous Catalan architect Gaudí and the Palace of the Marqués de Comillas.

After leaving Comillas, cycle through the Parque Natural de Oyambre and along the beautiful beaches of Oyambre and Merón. We are finally greeted by the stunning view of San Vicente and the Picos de Europa in the distance.

Day 3 **Free day in San Vicente de la Barquera**

Spend time getting to know this pretty fishing village with its many seafood restaurants and magnificent setting. Take a ride on one of the free day routes, or visit the lovely mountain village of Carmona. Alternatively, enjoy a ride through the unspoilt hill country behind the village, or you may just prefer to spend a lazy afternoon on the beach.

Day 4 **San Vicente de la Barquera to Llanes** **46 km**

Leaving San Vicente the route heads westwards along the coast. After a short distance, cycle around the beautiful headland of Pechn with its magnificent views of the coastline. Crossing the River Deva in Unquera we enter the province of Asturias with its markedly different flavour. The village of Colombres is home to the sumptuous villas of the indianos, emigrants to the Americas who made their fortune and returned to show it off at home. From here the route continues between the coast and the dramatic mountain backdrop of the Sierra de Cuera, foothills of the magnificent Picos de Europa.

A beautiful descent through eucalyptus forests brings us back to the coast where we cycle past beautiful and unspoilt beaches, so typical of Asturias, to arrive at the charming fishing village of Llanes.

Day 5 **Free day in Llanes**

Cycle westwards and visit a string of fine beaches including the incredible landlocked beach of Gulpiyuri. Another beautiful route can take us through the most beautiful hills and valleys behind Llanes. Alternatively we can give the bikes a rest and take a canoeing trip on the Deva or Sella Rivers, or a hike through the dramatic and renowned Cares Gorge in the very heart of the Picos de Europa. Take a train to Ribadasella and visit the Caves of Tito Bustillo with their prehistoric paintings before cycling back to Porra. Enjoy the busy atmosphere of the fishing village of Llanes, so popular with Spanish tourists.

Day 6 **Llanes to Somo** **44 km**

Today we transfer to the Cantabrian Mountains, and begin our descent of the Miera Valley to our final stop in Somo. Pick up after breakfast and drive to the starting point at 822 metres / 2697 feet above sea level. From here, a marvellous ride through the stunning limestone valley of the River Miera takes us down to the farmland around Somo and the Bay of Santander. Visit the mountain village of San Roque de Riomiera and the spa village of Lirganes with its charming old quarter.

Day 7 **Free day in Somo**

Enjoy the marvellous beach with its miles of golden sand. Take a short boat ride across the Bay to visit the lively and elegant city of Santander, capital of the province of Cantabria. Enjoy the belle époque atmosphere of El Sardinero, the beach resort of the city, where Alfonso XIII and his court spent the summer months in the early 20th century. Stroll around the town centre for some last minute shopping. Take one of the free day routes to visit the beautiful beaches of Loreda, Langre or Galizano. Ride through the green country lanes, where a surprise awaits you round every corner, to the village of Ajo, famous for its paellas. Visit the Nature Park of Cabrceno with wild animals from all over the world, and bizarre scenery resulting from its one time use as a Roman mine.

Eat freshly grilled sardines in the seaside restaurants of Pedrea, birthplace and home of the famous golfer, Severiano Ballesteros.

Day 8 **Transfer from Somo to departure point**

End of trip. Pick up from Somo hotel and transfer to departure point.

DATES AND PRICES 2017

Begins any Saturday from April to October 2017

€1,095 per person sharing **high season** (1 July - 1 September)
€1,380 for single occupancy **high season** (1 July - 1 September)

€960 per person sharing **low season**
€1,230 for single occupancy **low season**

5 or 12 night option available. Please contact the office for more information.
info@cyclingsafaris.com

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 7 nights accommodation on B&B basis
- Set transfer on Day 1: Bilbao / Santander - Santillana del Mar*
- Set transfer on Day 8: Somo - Bilbao / Santander*
- Transfer on day 6 (Llannes / Miera Valley)*
- Information pack and maps with route details
- Luggage transport
- Bike included (e-bikes and tandems available)

*Please note that in the case of differing arrival times, cyclists will be transferred at the same time to start point and departure point.

BACK-UP SERVICE

As this is a self led trip you do not have the back-up of a guide and support van. Our aim is to allow you feel like an independent traveller, free to cycle each day at your own pace while at the same time having the security of knowing that your luggage will be waiting for you in your next accommodation. On some stages cyclists are also transferred part of the way to avoid unnecessary climbs (details in individual route descriptions).

Our "On Call" service means we are always available for help or advice.

BIKES



Ladies bike (Trek 7.2)



Men's bike (Trek 7.2)

http://www.trekbikes.com/us/en/bikes/road/fitness/fx/7_2_fx/#

You are provided with hybrid-type tourist bicycles from Trek with conventional handlebars and with triple chain ring and easy-to-change gear ratios for comfortable and easy cycling. Road bikes may also be available on request. We can also provide tandems, children's bikes, tow bikes and child seats for those with children.

Hybrid bikes will carry a handlebar bag, useful for carrying money, documents, camera and lots of other useful items which may be needed close at hand. This bag is easily removed from its click fastening and carried around with the shoulder strap. They are also equipped with a rear luggage rack and one or two panniers, or a rear rack bag to carry just what you need for each day's cycling. Road bikes carry a seat post bag if required.

In addition, all cycles are equipped with pump, spare inner tube, water bottle, bike lock and basic toolkit. Extras such as lights or toe clips are available on request.

If you wish to bring your own bike there is a reduction of €100

You can rent an e-bike for an additional €60. Tandems available on request.

WHAT TO BRING

Specialized cycle clothing may be handy but not strictly necessary. What you do need (among other things) is the following:

- shorts/ long trousers/ track suit/ legging
- shirts/ sweater/ rain clothing
- gloves (only when you book a tour in April. It can be chilly in the morning that time of year!)
- good shoes
- sunglasses/ cap/ swimming costume
- extra towel
- soap/ insect repellent

GENERAL INFORMATION

Route Guide and Maps

You will be provided with our Route Guide which includes detailed route instructions along with interesting information on landscapes, towns and villages, monuments, alternative route suggestions, timetables for local trains and buses, tips on eating and drinking, an exhaustive gastronomic dictionary and a host of other useful information and suggestions to keep cyclists occupied. Routes are carefully described so no time is wasted on unnecessary deviations. Maps of the area are also provided to support the Route Guide.

Trips that include more than one night in the same destination include optional round rides of differing lengths for these free days so cyclists will never be at a loose end.

Weather and Climate

Many people are put off coming to Spain on a cycling holiday due to the weather. They think it's going to be just too hot - and they are probably right! During the summer months Spain is one of the hottest and driest countries in Europe with temperatures climbing up to 40°C - 105°F or even more - too much for your average cyclist.

However, the coast and mountains of Asturias and Cantabria are the exception to the rule. Summer months are a lot milder and not as dry as in the rest of Spain and mean that cycling is a pleasure and the landscape is kept fresh and green. Our tour program here begins in spring and runs right through to autumn.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Best arrival points:

Airports - Bilbao or Santander

Ferry ports - Bilbao or Santander

Bus / train stations - Bilbao or Santander

By Air

Travellers on the routes of Asturias and Cantabria and also the Rioja route generally arrive at Santander or Bilbao Airport where they are met by our pick up service. Some companies fly directly to Santander or Bilbao from the UK and other European airports.

It is often possible to take connecting flights through Spanish airports such as Madrid or Barcelona or through other European cities. Our nearest airport is Santander connecting with Madrid and Barcelona, although flights are not so frequent. RyanAir has now opened a new route from London, Stansted to Santander Airport, actually closer to our starting point in Santillana del Mar.

You may like to extend your holiday with a mini-cruise. Brittany Ferries runs a service from the UK to Santander and P & O Ferries sail from the UK to Bilbao.

Please note that we do not get involved with travel arrangements as we feel that the customer will get the best possible deal either by searching the Internet or asking the local travel agent to check all possibilities.

By Ferry

Another alternative for these routes is a mini-cruise on the ferry. P & O run a service from Portsmouth to Bilbao which takes 36 hours. Brittany Ferries sail from Plymouth to Santander. The new ferry being brought into service in 2004 will do the crossing in 19 hours. Again, we will pick you up from the Santander or Bilbao ferryports.

Most companies will allow you to transport your own bicycle - check with individual companies for their policy on this.

Trains & Buses

If you are travelling within Spain, there is an excellent network of road transport. The Spanish Intercity train service is called Renfe. The local train service along the coast of the Basque Country, Cantabria & Asturias is called FEVE. The major coach companies, depending on where you are travelling, are Alsa and Continental Auto.