

# EXPLORE!

**Cycle Marseille to Barcelona**  
8 days

France, Spain - Trip code CFS

## Cycle Marseille to Barcelona

Join us on this cycling exploration of the Mediterranean coast from Marseille to Barcelona. Along the way we discover medieval towns and villages, the wild beauty of the Camargue, the Canal du Midi, vineyards, cork oak forests, Greek and Roman remains and the inviting beaches of Catalunya. We also travel by train and bus as we cycle the most interesting sections between the historic port cities of Marseille and Barcelona.

### Trip highlights

- ★ **Marseille and Barcelona** - travel by bike, train, bus and ferry between two major cities
- ★ **Mediterranean culture** - compare and contrast the French and Catalan (Spanish) Mediterranean coasts
- ★ **Camargue wetlands** - Cycle on dirt roads through the Rhone delta wetland
- ★ **Canal du Midi** - Cycle along a section of the waterway
- ★ **Emporda** - Cycle through the lovely landscape of Catalonia
- ★ **Salvador Dali** - Chance to visit Dali's Theatre-Museum in Figueres
- ★ **Greek ruins** - Chance to visit Spain's most important Greek archaeological site at Ampurias

#### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

##### Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

**CYCLING GRADE:****Moderate**

Medium length rides suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. Mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

**GROUP SIZE:****10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Trip starts in Marseille

Arrive Marseille and check into our hotel. There will be time for an introductory briefing either before or after we settle into our rooms. Time to relax and unwind and enjoy our first evening meal (not included).



**Accommodation: Ibis Gare St Charles** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Explore old Marseille on foot; cycle protected wetlands of the Camargue

After breakfast we plan an orientation walk around old Marseille - including the old port, Place de Lenche, Place de Moulin, Notre-Dame de la Garde Basilica and the historic Panier district. Later this morning we leave the city in our bus and drive for just over an hour to Porte-Saint-Luis-du-Rhone where we take a short Rhone river ferry crossing. It is here that we commence our first cycle ride into the protected lowlands of the Rhone delta alongside dikes and saltwater lakes, always close to the sea until we reach Saintes Maries de la Mer where we spend the night in the heart of the Camargue. All the cycling today is on good gravel roads. Our support vehicle has limited access to us today due to the cycle route. Strong Mistral winds can affect the region we are cycling in today and tomorrow. Please note that it may therefore be necessary to adjust, shorten or change the rides if the weather is bad.


Our total cycling distance today is approximately 31 kilometres on the flat.



**Accommodation: Hotel Bleu Marine** (or similar)



Standard Hotel

 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 3 - Explore Camargue nature reserve by bike; visit medieval Aigues Mortes

Today we continue cycling on a mixture of paved and unpaved roads through the rivers, lagoons and canals of the Camargue and Rhone Delta. The area has rich birding opportunities and we will keep our eyes peeled for wildlife including the evocative white horses and Flamingos (seasonal). On our route we will visit the fortified medieval town of Aigues Mortes. Finally today we reach Sete where we check into our hotel in the new part of town and you have a chance to swim in the Med. Sete is an ancient port and the old part of town is just 20-30 minutes away by foot. Our support vehicle has limited access to us today as cannot access our cycle route.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 87 kilometres (300 metres total accumulated ascent and descent).




**Accommodation: Hotel Imperial** (or similar)

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 Standard Hotel

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 4 - Cycle the Canal du Midi to Bezier; train to Collioure

We leave the Camargue today and cycle to Bezier along back roads and a stretch of the famous Canal du Midi. Today's cycling ends in historic Bezier where we get on a train (1hr 30mins) to the medieval port town of Collioure. This picturesque town has a backdrop of the Pyrenees and is set around a quiet Mediterranean bay. It is known for the impressive Chateau Royal de Collioure which dominates the waterfront.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 51 kilometres (270 metres total accumulated ascent and 220 metres descent).




**Accommodation: Hotel Princes de Catalogne** (or similar)

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 Standard Hotel

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 5 - Cycle into Spain to Figueres, optional visit to Dali museum

Our cycle ride today involves some longer climbs and there are a few busier sections of road to be covered in the first 11 km. We then cycle inland on quiet back roads over the Banyuls pass, which marks the border between France and Spain. Entering Spain, we cycle south to Figueres, where we spend the night. The afternoon is left free for you to explore the town and you may choose to visit

the famous Salvador Dali theatre-museum.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 50 kilometres (750 metres total accumulated ascent and 700 metres descent).



**Accommodation: Hotel Europa Figueres** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Cycle Emporda region; optional visit to Greek ruins in Ampurias

After breakfast we cycle from our accommodation off across the rolling hills of the Emporda region of Catalonia. We will take a rest stop in Empuries where you have the chance to visit the remains of one of the most important Greek settlements in Spain. The beaches here are inviting and you have the chance for a swim. We continue by bike to our hotel located a few kilometres outside Torroella de Montgri and close to the beach.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 58 kilometres (270 metres total accumulated ascent and 320 metres descent).



**Accommodation: Hotel Picasso** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - Cycle through Peratallada and La Bisbal. Drive to Barcelona

This morning we cycle from our hotel through diverse scenery including stops at the lovely medieval villages of Peratallada and La Bisbal. Our route continues across low hills covered with oak tree forests before reaching the port town of Palamos. Our bus ride to Barcelona should take one and a half hours. After checking into our hotel you have the rest of the afternoon free to explore this marvelous city.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 50 kilometres (470 metres total accumulated ascent and descent).



**Accommodation: Hotel Sant Pau** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

## DAY 8 - Trip ends in Barcelona

The trip ends this morning in Barcelona after breakfast.

# Cycling information

## DAILY DISTANCE



### General cycling information

On this trip we cycle 327 km over six days (an average of 55 km per day). We usually use backroads with little car traffic with the occasional need to use busier roads for short sections. Overall 65% of the trip is cycling on tarmac and 35% on gravel roads (on days 2-4 in the Rhone Delta and along the Canal du Midi). The cycling starts on very flat sections in France and gradually becomes hillier towards the border. Day 5 features some longer uphill sections. The Explore leader cycles with the group each day and there is a support vehicle throughout (limited vehicle access to cycle route on days 2-4). We have graded the route as moderate.

### Bike included

27 gear Stevens Galant SX or similar hybrid bikes.

Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

### Bike information

Your included bike is a 27 gear Stevens Galant SX Hybrid or similar make and model and will be the correct frame size for your height. A pannier and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle carries the luggage from point to point. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet and water bottle.

Electric bikes (available for an additional cost) will be the same Stevens Galant bike fitted with an Urban Fun e-bike kit upgrade. Please note this is with a unisex step-through frame. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

### Cycling grade

Moderate



## Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 7



### Transport

Bus  
Bicycle  
Ferry  
Train



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Cycle guide  
Driver(s)



### Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

## Trip information

### Country information

### France

#### Climate

Across France, from April - August, weather conditions are generally warm and pleasant with moderate rainfall; Autumn temperatures are a bit lower and the winter months (though colder) remain mild. The summer months on the Mediterranean Coast in the south tend to be warmer than the rest of France and have less rainfall, and also more mild winters; freezing conditions are nearly unheard of. The mountainous areas of the Alps, Juros and Pyrenees can be quite different. During summer the morning and evening temperatures are considerably cooler and it becomes much colder in winter with heavy snowfall. Western France, along the English Channel, there can be very strong winds and frequent rain during the winter months Nov - Apr. Wine harvesting takes place in late August/early September.

#### Time difference to GMT

+1

### Plugs

2 Pin Round

### Religion

Catholic

### Language

French

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## Spain

### Climate

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a Spanish trip - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The high central plains suffer from fierce extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. Spain's Islands the Canaries and Balaerics experience very mild winters and warm summers making them ideal year round destinations.

### Time difference to GMT

+1

### Plugs

2 Pin Round

### Religion

Roman Catholic

### Language

Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Barcelona - Entrance to the Sagrada Familia €12 pp, Picasso Museum €10 pp, Casa Mila €14 pp, Casa Battlo €17 pp  
Empuries - Roman Ruins €5 pp

### Clothing

When cycling: quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts, lightweight wind and water proof jacket and warmer breathable layers where local conditions require.

General: Pack essentially for warm weather depending on the time of the year.

### Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to trips that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

### Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike.

## Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. It is a legal requirement in Spain to wear a helmet that meets current safety criteria. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn.

Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

### Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip. Accordingly, you should allow €20.

## Country Information

### France

#### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

##### Lunch price

£11

##### Dinner price

£16.00 - 18.00

##### Beer price

£4

##### Water price

£1.3

#### Foreign Exchange

##### Local currency

Euro

##### Recommended Currency For Exchange

Pounds Sterling and US Dollars can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change. Please change currency into Euros prior to arriving in France.

##### Where To Exchange

Bureau de Change can only be found in major cities and large airports. Many French banks no longer exchange Foreign currency.

##### ATM Availability

In cities and most major towns

##### Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants (make sure you have informed your credit card company that you are travelling abroad as some companies will reject payments)

##### Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are no longer commonly accepted and can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change.



# Spain

## Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

**Lunch price**

£8.00 - 12.00

**Dinner price**

£16.00 - 20.00

**Beer price**

£1.50 - 2.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)

**Water price**

£1.4

## Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Euros

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

We recommend you take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

**Where To Exchange**

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

**ATM Availability**

In cities and most major towns.

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

**Travellers Cheques**

Not recommended.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle, Ferry, Train

### Accommodation notes

**Booking a Single Room**

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Accommodation and service levels in France and Spain are generally very good. We try to use smaller, family-run hotels and pensions that might not offer the same luxuries as larger chain-style hotels, but they do provide a warm welcome, a comfortable place to stay and the chance to gain a better understanding of local life. One thing to be aware of in Spain is that breakfast tends to be a small affair, usually with fruit juice or coffee and a pastry.

## Essential Information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

#### Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### Visa and Passport Information

France: Visas are not required by UK, EU, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

Spain: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, US, New Zealand, US or Canadian citizens.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure \lang1033 . \lang20572

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

### Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

### Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

#### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

#### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

### Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for

your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom. Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## France

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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## Spain

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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