

# EXPLORE!



## Cycle Seville to Porto

PORTUGAL, SPAIN - TRIP CODE CEX

CYCLING

### Why book this trip?

A cycling adventure across the vast and scenic landscapes along Europe's oldest border between Spain and Portugal. Discover the legacy of Roman Iberia, the Moors and the land of the conquistadores. Finally we travel by train along the Douro Valley into Porto.

- **Cycle off the beaten track** - Discover the little-visited regions of Extremadura and Alentejo
- **Seville and Porto** - Explore these two fascinating and beautiful cities
- **Douro Valley** - Enjoy the scenery and relax on a train journey



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 7



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour  
Leader / Cycle  
guide  
Driver(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Bus  
Bicycle  
Taxi  
Train



**ACCOMMODATION**  
5 nights premium  
hotel  
2 nights  
comfortable hotel



**CYCLING GRADE:**  
Moderate To  
Challenging



**GROUP SIZE:**  
10 - 16

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Join trip in Seville, one of Spain's finest cities

Our trip starts in Seville, the capital of Andalucia and a city which overflows with life and variety. It has a popular quarter in Triana and a high-born area in Santa Cruz. Ramparts dating back to the 13th century, the Alcázar and the Giralda, all remind us of earlier Moorish occupation and later buildings reflect the Mudejar architectural style, a mixture of Moorish and Christian styles. In the early evening we plan an orientation walking tour around the city. Seville is a fascinating city with many attractions so we recommend booking some extra time before the tour starts. If you have any free time we suggest a visit to the Alcázar, a wonderful Moorish and Mudejar royal palace, and the impressive Cathedral with its imposing Giralda tower - originally a 13th century minaret.

No cycling today.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Hotel Macarena (or similar)

**Grade: Premium Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE**





MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## DAY 2 - Cycle through a landscape of cork oak estates to UNESCO listed Elvas

We start this morning with a two hour drive to visit the fascinating medieval town of Jerez de los Caballeros, located in the province of Extremadura. The old town is surrounded by a Moorish wall with six gates. Its staple trade is in agricultural produce, especially in ham and bacon from herds of pigs which are reared in the surrounding oak forests. Afterwards it is 1 hour drive to the start point of today's cycle ride at Cheles in Spain. On our bikes for the first time we make our way through a landscape of cork oak estates and farms to the Portuguese border town of Elvas. A well-preserved ancient settlement, still partially enclosed by medieval walls, Elvas has UNESCO World Heritage Status and is home to a Roman temple and aqueduct from a much later period. The middle section of today's ride will test your fitness with two short climbs. We finish our cycle route with a final climb to our accommodation right in front of the Amoreira aqueduct.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 55 kilometres (750 metres total accumulated ascent and 600 m descent).



### ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Dom Luis (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 3 - Scenic ride criss-crossing the border to medieval hill-top village Marvao

Today we set off by bike directly from our accommodation and our route is mostly on very good tarmac roads and across a rolling landscape. Criss-crossing the Spanish-Portuguese border we cycle through some lovely Alentejo scenery to Marvao, a dramatic medieval hilltop village. The narrow cobbled streets are lined with whitewashed houses, some dating back as far as the 15th century, featuring characteristic terracotta roofs and decorative wooden doors and windows. The houses wind their way up along a steep ridge to one of the best preserved castles in Portugal, dating from the 13th century. We recommend a visit to the castle in your free time where the views are superb, giving a panoramic vista far over the wild rocky landscape towards Spain and the Serra da Estrela Mountains in Portugal. Today is the most challenging ride (and possibly the most rewarding!) with some hills along the way. The final 5km has an average gradient of 5% and there are a couple of steep climbs to end the day.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 87 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 1400 metres, total accumulated descent 950 metres).



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel El Rei Dom Manuel (or similar)



Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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#### DAY 4 - Cycle to the Spanish city of Alcántara and its impressive Roman bridge

After breakfast we have a scenic and undulating ride across a high plateau enjoying wide-open spaces on our way to our final destination at Alcántara (derived from the Arabic word for 'the bridge'). Alcántara is famous locally for its six-arched Roman stone bridge built across the Tajo River. The border is locally known as 'la raya' (the line) and the condition of the roads on our ride tend to be slightly better on the Spanish side. The town is also home to a hydroelectric dam and reservoir, surrounded by pretty holm oak and cork oak forests. Alcántara lost all its importance in the 19th century, when the religious order's properties were secularized. Its depopulation was halted only in the 1960s, when the dam and electricity plants were built. However, its economy was not boosted, and the town is still part of one of the less developed areas of Spain.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 82 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 850 metres, total accumulated descent 1500 metres).



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hospederia Conventual (or similar)



Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



## DAY 5 - Cycle the hinterland of Extremadura to the Sierra de Gata Mountains

Departing from Alcántara we start the day with a warm up climb and then continue to ride along the edge of the Extremadura region of Spain, an area dotted with big finca estates and farmland. In the second half of the day we encounter more hills as our cycle route leads us up into the Sierra de Gata Mountains. The ride culminates with a demanding ascent to reach our night stop in the town of San Martin de Trevejo, still in Spain and located in a beautiful valley setting between mountains against a backdrop of olive groves and oak woodland.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 77 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 1200 metres, total accumulated descent 950 metres).



### ACCOMMODATION:

Hospederia Conventual Sierra de Gata (or similar)

**Grade: Premium Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 6 - Ride through the Sierra de Gata Mountains to Aldea del Obispo

Today we have a slightly more challenging ride as we pass through the Sierra de Gata Mountains, offering us excellent views as we follow the border northwards into the Spanish province of Salamanca. We start the day with a long and steep climb (9km with an average gradient of 5%). The very particular isolation of Sierra de Gata has contributed to conserve two linguistic fossils - Fala and Extremeño - and this mountainous area has remained one of the most untouched and natural areas on the Iberian peninsula. The area is also known for wild mushrooms and many locals are aficionados; heading off into the forests in season, basket in hand. Our cycling involves some harder climbs today, but there are lots of places to rest and enjoy the scenery and we will be rewarded with exhilarating downhills as we go. Tonight we will stay in a lovely hotel in the village of Aldea del Obispo in Spain.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 75 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 1000 metres, total accumulated descent 800 metres).



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Domus Real Forte (or similar)



**Grade: Premium Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

### **DAY 7 - Douro Valley train ride. Explore Porto and celebrate with some Port tasting**

We start this morning with an early 2 hour bus transfer across the Portuguese border to Pocinhos. From here we take a three and a half hour train ride on a winding route amid lovely scenery along the Douro Valley past countless vineyards all the way into Porto, arriving mid-afternoon. After a short walk to our hotel we check in. After a short orientation tour on foot, we visit the Sandeman wine cellars where we enjoy a port wine tasting. This evening we celebrate the end of our journey in this lovely city with a final group meal.

No cycling today.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Moov Hotel Porto Centro (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST



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## DAY 8 - Trip ends in Porto

Our trip ends this morning in Porto after breakfast.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### Country information

#### Portugal

##### Climate

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a trip to Portugal - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The northern high plains has both 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. The islands have very different weather patterns due to their positioning and can have sudden rain falls throughout the year so waterproofs are recommended even in the summer.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
0	2 Pin Round	Roman Catholic	Portuguese

#### 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	Plugs	Religion
+1	2 Pin Round	Roman Catholic

##### Language

Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

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## **Budgeting and packing**

### **Clothing**

When cycling: quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts, lightweight wind and water proof jacket and warmer breathable layers where local conditions require. Be prepared for some colder days on the bike on departures in April, May and October.

General: Pack essentially for mild or hot 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 tours 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 Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

#### **Local crew**

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized 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 Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

## Portugal

### 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.

#### Dinner price

£18

#### Beer price

£2.00 - 3.00 depending on your location, well touristed areas are usually slightly more expensive.

#### Water price

£1.4

### Foreign Exchange

#### Local currency      Recommended Currency For Exchange

Euro.

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

Cash-point machines are available in all major towns. Bankcards with the Cirrus logo are accepted.

#### Credit Card Acceptance

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

#### Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques can be exchanged in all major towns but are not recommended due to the high rate of commission.

## 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.

<b>Lunch price</b> £8.00 - 12.00	<b>Dinner price</b> £16.00 - 20.00	<b>Beer price</b> £1.50 - 3.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)
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**Water price**  
£1.4

## Foreign Exchange

<b>Local currency</b> Euros	<b>Recommended Currency For Exchange</b> We recommend you take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.
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### Where To Exchange

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### 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.

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## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle, Taxi, Train

### Accommodation notes

Premium - Hand-picked and chosen for their character, location or local importance, these properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

Comfortable - 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.

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## 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**

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

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

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply 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 complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the

joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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.

## **Portugal**

### **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

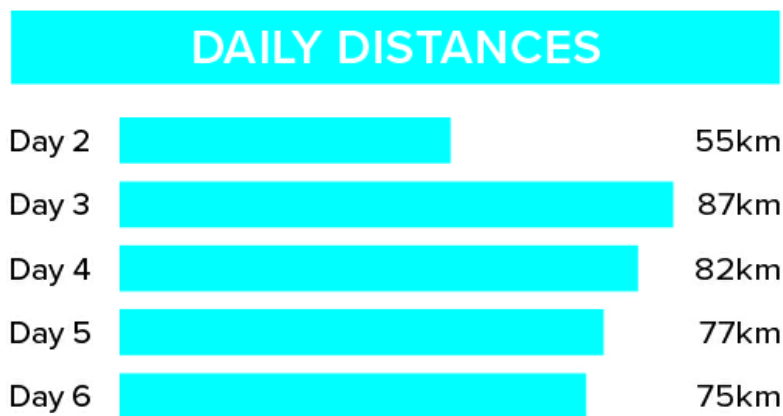
vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

## 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.

### Cycling information



CEX\_DistanceChart

### General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 376 km over five days (an average of 75 km per day). We generally cycle on quiet tarmac roads and most of the rides are through hilly terrain. The steepest and most challenging climbs are on days 3 and 6. Each day a support vehicle carries the luggage from point to point, accompanying the ride wherever necessary while the Leader cycles with the group. We have graded the route as moderate to challenging.

### 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 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. 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 either the same Stevens Galant bike fitted with an Urban Fun e-bike kit upgrade OR a Haibike sDuro Trekking 4.0. Please note this is with a unisex step-through frame. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

### **Cycling grade**

ModerateToChallenging

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### **Additional Information**



## 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.

## Reviews





**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**