

EXPLORE!



Why book this trip?

Join us on this short break exploration of Belarus by bike. Discover the capital by bicycle and on foot. Explore the countryside on a cycle ride between UNESCO castles. Learn about life in modern day Belarus, the partisan war in WWII, soviet times, folk music and folklore.

- **Minsk** - The Belarussian capital: a superb example of Soviet urban planning
- **Nesvizh and Mir Castles** - Visit these two impressive UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- **Belarus by bike** - cycle across the capital; ride between fortresses



INCLUDED MEALS

Breakfast: 4
Lunch: 1
Dinner: 1



TRIP STAFF

Explore Tour
Leader / Cycle
guide
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



TRANSPORT

Bus
Bicycle



ACCOMMODATION

4 nights
comfortable hotel



CYCLING GRADE:

Easy



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 Minsk

Your trip starts this evening in Minsk. Almost completely razed to the ground in the Second World War, much of Minsk was constructed in Soviet times often with grand Stalinist architecture. Set on the banks of the Svislach River, the city was first settled by the Early East Slavs back in the 9th century AD. The reconstructed downtown suburb of Trinity is pleasant to wander through and gives a feel for how Minsk looked before the war. Our hotel in Minsk is conveniently located just a few minutes' walk from the Partyzanskaya Metro Station and it's then a 15-20 minutes journey into the very centre of the city. Close to our hotel is a very large tractor factory, dating back to Soviet times, which employs an astonishing 17,000 people. The hotel and the surrounding area have a very Soviet layout and give us a glimpse into what normal local life is like in the city.

No cycling today.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Tourist (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

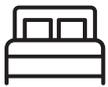


MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Explore Minsk by bike and on foot

We have planned a full and busy day to make the most of our time in the capital, starting with a short drive into the suburbs to start our bike ride. After being equipped with our bikes and making any necessary adjustments we spend the morning discovering Minsk on two wheels. On our exploration we will ride mostly on a bike path that runs across almost the entire city from northwest to southeast, following the Svisloch River. We will need to occasionally ride on the pavement as many roads do not permit bicycles. Along the way we plan to see places of interest such as Pobeditelei Avenue, Brazilian street art, Victory Park, Yanka Kupala Park, Loshitskiy Park and Gorky Park. We end the cycle tour at the fascinating Great Patriotic War Museum where you have time to visit (unguided, 1 hour). After some free time for lunch we continue our day without the bikes, walking and using the tour bus to get around town. We plan to visit the central market and tractor plant area. If time and energy permit we may even take a short walk around Minsk after dinner when buildings are illuminated.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 20 to 27 kilometres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Tourist (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Cycle between UNESCO-listed Mir and Nesvizh Castles

The drive to Mir town should take us around 2 hours. Upon arrival we have a guided visit to the UNESCO listed castle of Mir. Construction began here at the end of the 15th century and it has sections in Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque styles. After the visit to take to our bikes again and cycle on paved roads, past forest and farming land to the impressive UNESCO World Heritage Site of Nesvizh Castle, which has been home to the Radswill Family for over 400 years. The terrain is generally flat and traffic levels are quite low becoming slightly busier close the castles. Our ride ends at Nesvizh and we plan to have a guided visit of the fortress on arrival. Our hotel for tonight has a great location set within the walls and compound of the castle itself.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 41 kilometres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Nesvizh Palace (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 4 - Cycle to eco-village and try local produce

Another day to explore the countryside around Minsk we start with a two hour drive to Ivenec where we start our cycle ride. Today's bike route goes on a mixture of paved and unpaved roads and the first stop is after about an hour or so at the community of Rosy village. There are around 40 self-sufficient homesteads that farm around 5 acres of land with crops and livestock. A local representative will introduce us to this alternative way of life, explaining the history of the place and it's inhabitants and we may get the opportunity to try some of the local produce, for example organic tea, bread and honey. We continue cycling and our next stop is for lunch at Martinova Goose - a farmstead providing simple rural accommodation and meals. Along the way we will learn something about the remarkable 'partisan' war waged against the Nazis from the nearby forests. We end the ride today at the town of Piarshi. From here we drive to a farm created by local musician and artist Ales Los where we have the chance to learn about Belorussian folk music and folklore, which have made a revival since the end of Soviet rule. Finally we travel the final 55 km back into Minsk by bus which should take around 1.5 hours. A final chance to see Minsk tonight.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 24 kilometres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Tourist (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

DAY 5 - Trip ends in Minsk

The trip ends in Minsk this morning after breakfast.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

Belarus

Climate

Belarusian climate is moderately continental, a transitional form from maritime to continental climate with mild and humid winters, warm summers and damp autumns. Average July temperatures range from +17 C to +18.5 C, January temperatures vary from -8 C to -4.5 C. In the Naliboki Forest area temperatures in winter can fall as low as -25 C.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+3	2 Pin Round	Orthodox	Belarusian

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.

General: Pack essentially for warm or mild weather depending on the time of the year plus some warmer clothes for colder nights.

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. Remember that you'll have to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. 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. Bring an eye mask for sleeping during white nights. 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 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 Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

International Departure Taxes

None

Belarus

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£6	£11	£2.00 - 4.00	£0.4

Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Ruble	USD or Euro

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

You might find it difficult to obtain money from some ATM machines using Maestro and Visa cards due to difficulties in reading the card.

Credit Card Acceptance

Restaurants and shops in major towns.

Travellers Cheques

Are difficult to cash on this tour.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle

Accommodation notes

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.

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

Belarus: All national passport holders from the UK and Ireland, USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada (except those entering on a diplomatic or official passport) can now enter Belarus for a maximum of thirty days without a visa. Please note that the day you arrive counts as day one, regardless of your arrival time and entry and exit will only be permitted at Minsk International Airport. On arrival you will

need to show your passport, documentation proving that you have medical insurance valid in Belarus and valued at a minimum of €10,000, and funds equivalent to €25.00 per day (so €125.00 in total for five days). This can be in the form of cash, credit cards or travellers cheques in any currency. You should ensure that your passport has at least three months' validity from the date of entry into Belarus.

A maximum of 90 days stay in Belarus in any one calendar year is permitted. If you wish to stay longer than thirty days then a visa is required. If you're travelling from/to any Russian airport then this visa-free arrangement doesn't apply and you'll need a visa.

There are 80 countries in total that the visa free arrangements apply to and a full list of these and further information can be found on the Belarus Embassy website:

http://uk.mfa.gov.by/en/consular_issues/visas/

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant embassy prior to departure.

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 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.

Belarus

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Rabies, Tetanus, Tick-borne encephalitis, Tuberculosis and Typhoid. 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



CBE distance chart

General cycling information

On this trip we cycle 85 km over three days (an average of 28 km per day). We mostly follow quiet paved and unpaved roads, some cycle paths and the routes are generally on the flat. A support vehicle will accompany our rides except in Minsk and transports our luggage throughout the trip. We have graded this route as easy.

Bike included

7 gear Kalkhoff hybrid bikes with front suspension or similar.

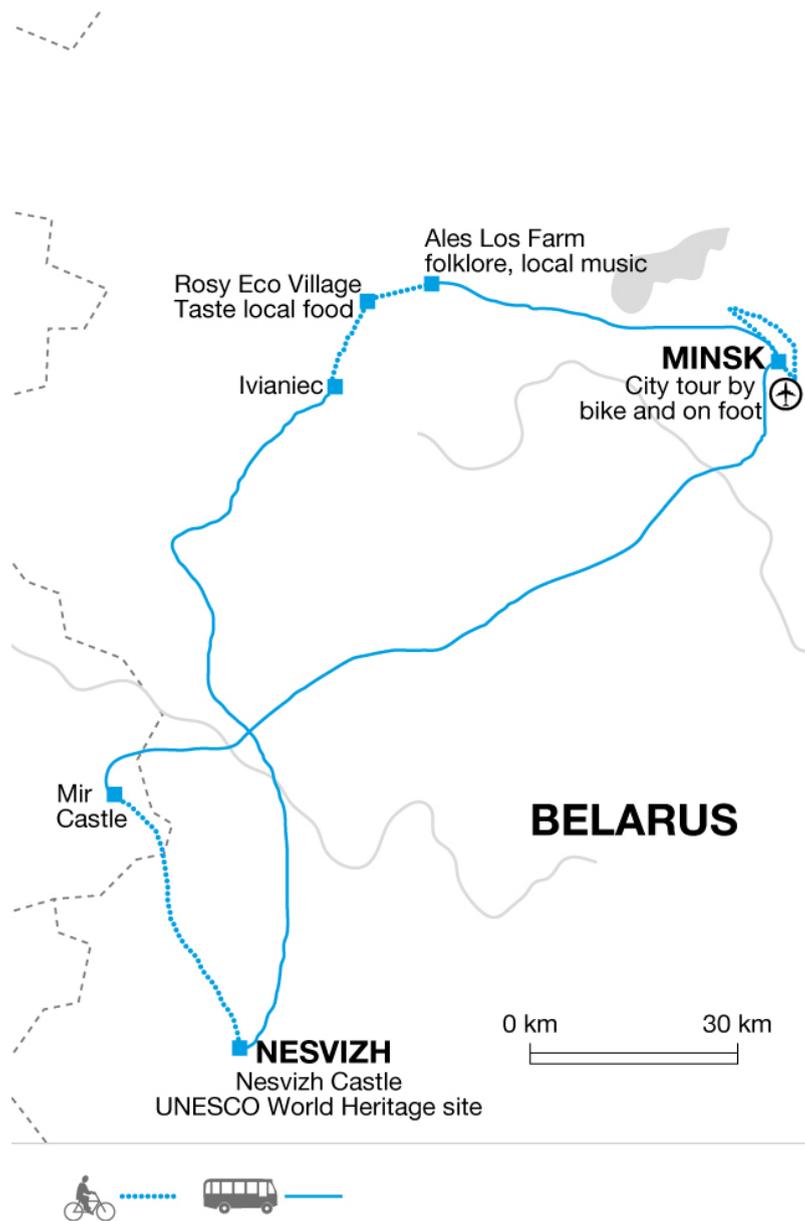
Bike information

Your included bike is a 7 gear Kalkhoff hybrid bike with front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. A rear pannier is included and there is the facility to fit your own saddle (male frame stem size 27.2 mm; female frame stem size 30.4mm) if you wish to bring it. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour except in Minsk. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Cycling grade

Easy

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.



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**