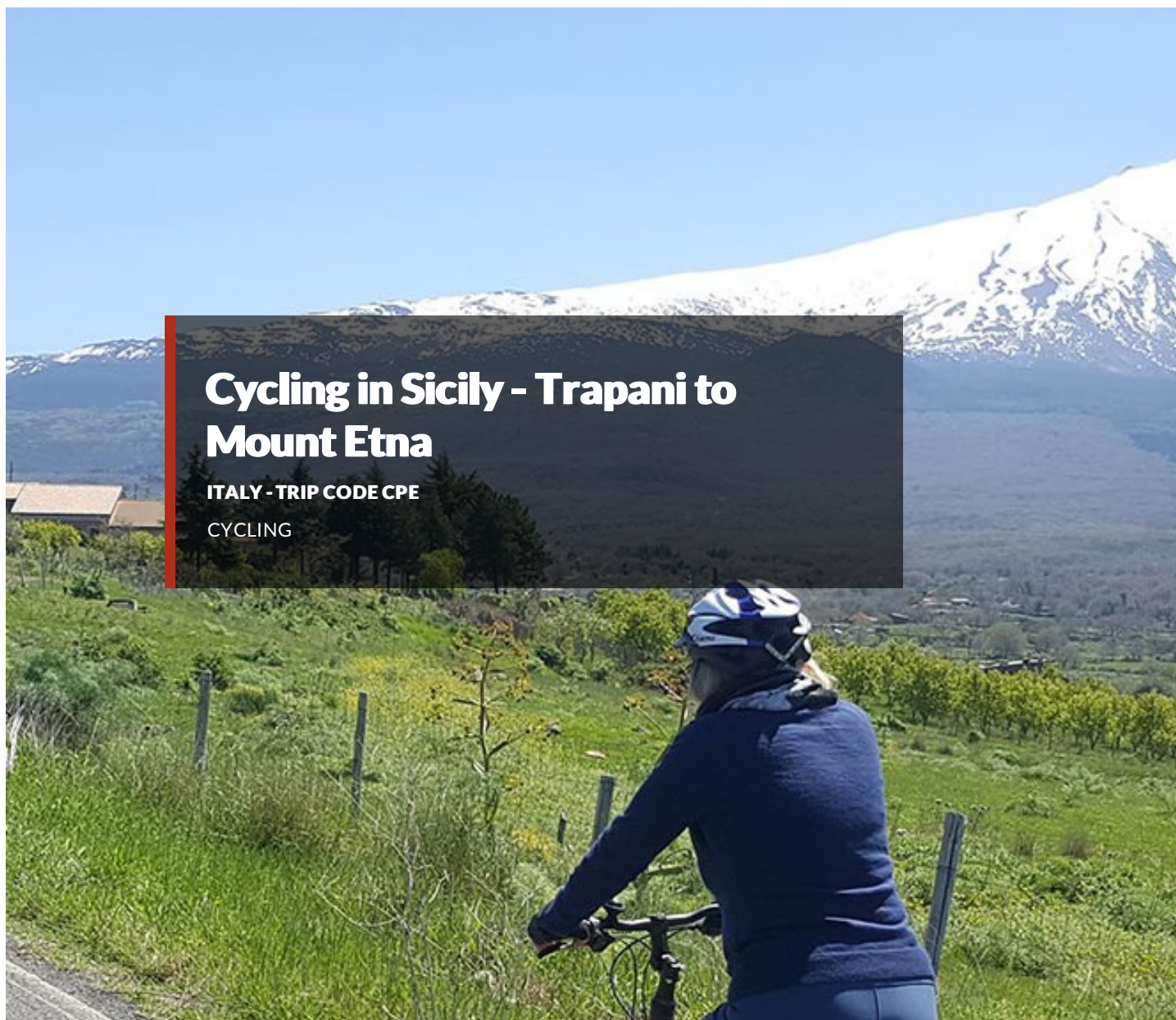


EXPLORE!



Cycling in Sicily - Trapani to Mount Etna

ITALY - TRIP CODE CPE

CYCLING

Why book this trip?

A varied and scenic journey by bike and bus discovering the highlights of Sicily. We cycle along a ruggedly beautiful coastline, discovering traditional fishing ports, fascinating ancient Greek ruins and inviting beaches. Ride between beautiful Baroque towns before culminating our journey with a ride around the flanks of Mount Etna.

- **Cycle Sicily** - Picturesque landscapes with dramatic coastlines and the rugged interior
- **Mount Etna** - Ride around the volcano and optional ascent by cable car and 4WD
- **Gastronomic Sicily** - Delicious culinary specialties, accompanied by superb local wines



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 10



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



TRANSPORT
Bus
Bicycle



ACCOMMODATION
10 nights
comfortable hotel



CYCLING GRADE:
Moderate



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 Trapani

Our trip starts today in lively Trapani. We recommend a stroll to explore the 12th century, pedestrianised historic centre. If arriving earlier today you may choose to take the cable car up to the ancient town of Erice, said to have been founded by exiled Trojans, for impressive views of the coastline. Tonight will be your first opportunity to sample Sicilian cuisine and wine. Despite being just a couple of miles from the mainland, Sicilian wines have a rich viniculture all of their own and the island is the second largest wine producing region of Italy.

No cycling today.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Moderno - Trapani (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Coastal cycle to Mazara del Vallo; salts pans and Marsala optional wine tasting

After breakfast we spend some time getting comfortable with our bikes and making any necessary adjustments. Our first ride heads south as we make our way around the western tip of Sicily. Close to Marsala we cycle through the salines or salts flats - a patchwork of shallow coastal lakes and salt pans lined with ancient windmills - where we can learn more about the traditional process with a visit to a family-run business and museum. We should reach Marsala town itself around lunchtime and there will be a chance for an optional tasting at Florio to try the famous fortified wine. Our route continues after lunch, cycling along the coast to Mazara del Vallo where we spend the night. Founded by the Phoenicians in the 9th century BC, Mazara became an important commercial harbour and centre of learning in times of Moorish rule and the city centre, known as the Kasbah, retains Arabic architectural influences. As with much of Sicily, later influences from Normans through to the Baroque can be seen throughout the old city and its port gives shelter to the largest fishing fleet in Italy.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 68 kilometres (310 metres total accumulated ascent and 345 metres descent).



ACCOMMODATION:
dAngelo Palace (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Coastal ride to Selinunte, visit the Greek Archaeological site. Drive to Sciacca historic port

After breakfast we leave Mazara and start cycling, along or close to the coast, to the vast site of Selinunte. Perched on a plateau overlooking the sea, Selinunte was the most westerly of the Greek colonies, and became a powerful and wealthy city well over two thousand years ago. We plan an unguided visit to explore the ancient city where tumbled ruins litter the landscape and one of its main five temples has been partially re-erected. Selinunte was eventually razed by the Carthaginians in 250 BC, after which the site was effectively abandoned. Next we drive for around 40 minutes to reach the laid-back port town of Sciacca. The local hot springs brought early Greek settlers and the town's name is most likely derived from the Arabic words 'from the water' (Xacca). We will explore the old part of town on foot while the bus takes our luggage to the hotel.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 45 kilometres (280 metres total accumulated ascent and descent).



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Aliai (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Coastal and hinterland ride to wonderful beach; cycle to Agrigento

We leave town by bus this morning and our first visit is to Castello Incantato, a quirky sculpture garden, before we drive another short distance to the start of today's ride in Seccagrande. Our final cycle route in the west of Sicily alternates seascapes with sections further inland, encountering a few more inclines than the previous days. After stopping for lunch at a wonderful beach near Eraclea Minoa we continue riding to our hotel in the small town of Porto Empedocle overlooking the Strait of Sicily, with Tunisia just 90 miles away, and an ideal base to explore nearby Agrigento.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 52 kilometres (650 metres total accumulated ascent and descent).



ACCOMMODATION:
Casa Vacanze L'Ancora (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Free day. Optional visit to impressive Valley of the Temples. Walk to Scala dei Turchi cliffs

Today has been left free to relax and explore. The outstanding Greek ruins of Agrigento are just a short taxi ride away and once formed one of the most prosperous cities in Sicily. The ancient Acropolis, now a modern city, overlooks the southern ridge where seven Doric temples stand providing a perfect and evocative setting as the golden-hued temples encircled by almond and gnarled silver-grey olive trees look out over the sea. The Temple of Concordia is thought to be one of the finest examples of Greek

civilization existing today. This afternoon we recommend a walk along the beach from Porto Empedocle to the impressive Scala dei Turchi white cliffs that have been eroded into curious layered forms. Its name means 'Stair of the Turks' and most likely derives from the frequent coastal raids carried out by the Saracens.

No cycling today.



ACCOMMODATION:

Casa Vacanze L'Ancora (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Drive into hilly interior to beautiful Palazzolo Acreide. Cycle to the Baroque pearl of Ragusa

We start the day with a scenic drive, swapping the seascapes of the past few days with landscapes of the interior in the south eastern corner of the island. After around 3 hours we reach the lovely town of Palazzolo Acreide. Although its roots are much older, the town was largely destroyed by an earthquake in 1693 and much of what we see today was slowly rebuilt in the following centuries including a number of impressive Baroque palaces built by wealthy noble families. The pastry shops here are famously good, employing centuries-old traditions using local crops such as almonds, walnuts, pistachios, honey and oranges. Back on the bikes, today's ride leads us through beautiful valleys amid the rocky peaks of the Iblean Mountains, finally climbing into the highlands to reach the magnificent hilltop city of Ragusa. As with every other place in the region, the old town collapsed in the 1693 earthquake and a new town, Ragusa Superiore, was built on top of the hill. The oldest part of town, Ragusa Ibla, was rebuilt by the old aristocracy and upon arrival we will explore the narrow alleyways, baroque palaces and charming piazzas on foot before heading to our hotel for tonight. The two towns were later joined and became the provincial capital.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (660 metres total accumulated ascent and 880 metres descent).



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Montreal - Ragusa (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Scenic cycle to the Med through Baroque gems of Modica, Scicli and Noto; chocolate tasting

After breakfast we cycle from our hotel on scenic roads and after about an hour we reach another Sicilian Baroque gem in Modica, nestling at the foot of a deep gorge. Also famous for its Aztec-inspired chocolate introduced during the Spanish rule of the island, we plan to visit a traditional chocolatier. Our ride continues as we descend along a ravine to our next stop in Scicli. We will stop for a coffee and to explore this charming town. Those familiar with the Italian TV series Inspector Montalbano will be able to visit some of the places featured in the show. Cycling further south we will stop at Gli Aromi to learn about the use of endemic plants and aromatic herbs in medicine and cuisine. Our final stretch on the bikes is a descent to reach the sea at Pozzalo. A short drive brings us to Noto where we spend the next two nights. Noto is possibly the most beautiful Baroque city in Sicily, completely rebuilt between 1715 and 1780 (following the devastating 1693 earthquake) and still preserves a unified and homogenous architectural style and town plan, little affected by later developments. Its tufa stone has mellowed to a golden brown colour and its unique buildings leave visitors with an impression that is hard to forget. Sicily makes some great sorbets and you may like to try a local variety made with almonds, often served with a brioche.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 51 kilometres (500 metres total accumulated ascent and 980 metres descent).



ACCOMMODATION:
Grand Hotel Sofia (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Free day. Optional visit to the remarkable ancient Greek capital of Syracuse and Ortygia Island

Today has been left free to relax and explore. There is plenty in Noto to keep you entertained for a day

but for those interested we recommend a visit to Syracuse (45 minutes away by train). A colony of Corinth, it once rivalled Athens as the most important and beautiful city in the Greek world. You can visit Neapolis Archaeological Park with its famous Greek theatre hewn out of the hillside and the fine Roman amphitheatre where gladiators once fought. The small island of Ortygia is linked to the mainland by bridges and you can explore the atmospheric narrow streets to find landmarks such as the Fonte of Aretusa, Temple of Apollo ruins, Maniace Castle and the Jewish Quarter with its old baths found under the Residenza Alla Giudecca Hotel. Ortygia Island is also a great place to go to a local cafe or restaurant and sit and watch the world go by. Perhaps try cannolo, a traditional Sicilian dessert, a crisp shell filled with sweet ricotta and chocolate chips topped with candied fruits.

No cycling today.



ACCOMMODATION:

Grand Hotel Sofia (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Spectacular bike ride around the northern flanks of Mount Etna

Leaving Noto after breakfast we drive north for about 2 hours around the western side of Mount Etna to reach Malletto. It is from here that we start our last cycle ride around the northern flanks of Etna with a downhill bias and fine views of the mighty volcano as we make our way around to our hotel in Mascali close to the sea. Standing at around 3330m Etna is one of the most active volcanoes in Europe and the largest outside of the Caucasus. Etna is derived from the Greek word for 'I burn' and its craters and form has constantly been changing through numerous eruptions. In 1928 a lava flow almost entirely destroyed the town of Mascali.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 57 kilometres (340 metres total accumulated ascent and 1350 metres descent).



ACCOMMODATION:

Atlantis Palace (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Free day. Optional ascent of Mount Etna and visit Taormina

Today has been left free to relax and explore. This morning, you have the opportunity to join a tour to explore the lunar landscape, craters and lava fields of Mount Etna. We drive from our hotel to the cable car base at Rifugio Sapienza, which is on the south side of Etna and 1,900 metres above sea level. Here there are several cafes and gift shops and you can also see the old Silvestri Craters. From here you can board the cable car up to 2,500 metres where you can have a walk around or take a 4WD coach drive up to 2900 metres to take a short walk (around 45 minutes) with a mountain guide to view the craters formed in the 2002/3 eruptions and the fumaroles at around 3000 metres, which is as close to the summit as we're currently permitted to go. In the afternoon you may choose to visit Taormina, Sicily's most famous resort - a favourite place during the days of the 'Grand Tour'. The Greek Theatre offers possibly the most famous view in Sicily - with snow-capped Etna acting as a backdrop to the remarkably well preserved columned stage.

No cycling today.



ACCOMMODATION:

Atlantis Palace (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 11 - Trip ends in Mascali.

The tour ends in Mascali this morning after breakfast. Arrivederci Sicilia!



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

Italy

Climate

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/September are the hottest months. Showers are common in Autumn.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+1	2 Pin Round	Roman Catholic	Italian

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.

Agrigento - Valley of the Temples - 20-25 Euros (taxi and entrance fee)

Syracusa and Ortygia - 8 Euros train ticket

Taormina - 6 Euros by public bus

Three different options for the Mount Etna tour on day 10:

1. Bus to 1,900 metres €32 per person
2. Bus to 1,900 metres plus cable car to 2,500 metres €64 per person
3. Bus to 1,900 metres, cable car to 2,500 metres plus four-wheel drive coach up to 2,900 metres €96-120 per person

Due to the volcanic dust and sulphur fumes on Mount Etna, we ask asthma sufferers or customers with heart conditions of any kind to take these factors into consideration when deciding if this optional excursion is right for you.

Due to the colder temperature on Mount Etna it's possible to hire equipment at the top of the cable car: Quilted jackets €3.00 per person and walking boots €3.00 per person.

In windy conditions the cable car might not be running, in which case the four-wheel drive coach normally operates from 1,900 metres up to 2,500 metres.

Clothing

When cycling: quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts, lightweight wind and water proof jacket and warmer breathable layers where local conditions require. Cycling gloves are strongly recommended as they will protect you from sunburn and may also help protect your hands if you fall.

General: Pack essentially for hot or mild weather depending on the time of the year. A warm sweater or fleece and long trousers are advisable for the evenings especially in early and late season when the weather tends to be cooler. A rain jacket is also recommended.

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 so please check the trip notes.

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 you are expected 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. 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.

Accordingly, we recommend approximately GBP 15 per person for tipping.

Italy

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
£10.00 - 15.00	£20.00 - 25.00	£2.00 - 4.00	£1.00 - 2.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Euro.	GBP.

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	Credit Card Acceptance
Major towns.	Larger hotels and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Only in major towns. Please note, the exchange rate for cash and Travellers Cheques is poor.

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

Italy: 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 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.

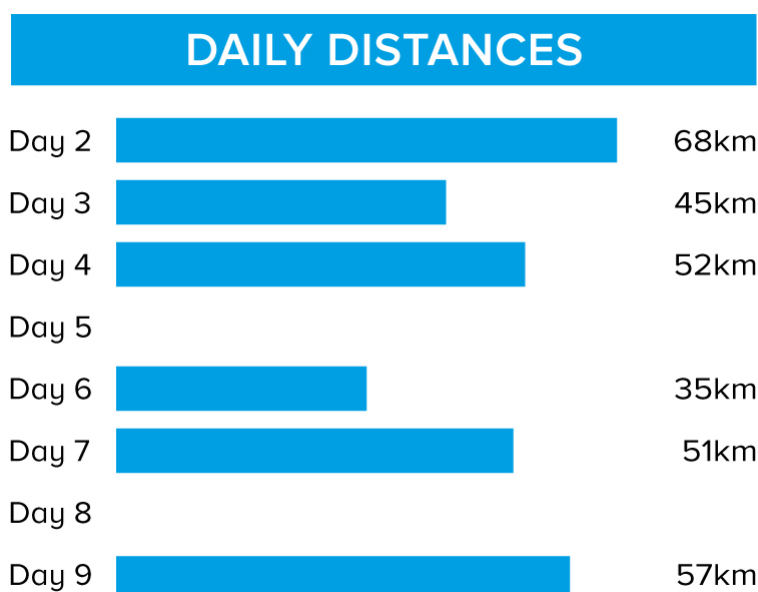
On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Italy

Vaccinations

Nothing required. 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.

Cycling information



General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 308 km over six days (an average of 51 km per day). We generally cycle on quiet tarmac roads except for 2km of good quality dirt road on day 9. Days 2 and 3 are on flatter terrain with small climbs and other days are on undulating terrain with more pronounced but short uphill sections on days 4, 6 and 7. Each day a support vehicle (with room for 2 passengers) carries the luggage from point to point, accompanying the ride wherever necessary while the Explore Leader cycles with the group. On the final ride the Leader drives the support vehicle and provides clear directions to follow. We have graded the route as moderate.

Bike included

27 gear Stevens Galant SX or similar hybrid bike.

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

Moderate

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**