



BEST SELLER

Cycling the Baltic States

ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA - TRIP CODE CBS

CYCLING

Why book this trip?

Explore the Baltic States by bicycle on this guided route through Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Cycle through national parks, coastal scenes and medieval towns; past feudal castles and picturesque fishing villages.

- **Three Baltic capitals** - Explore Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn
- **Coastal scenery** - Discover Lahemaa and Curonian Spit National Parks
- **Trakai Castle** - Cycle around the Historical National Park



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 8



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



TRANSPORT
Bus
Bicycle
Boat



ACCOMMODATION
8 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 tour Vilnius, Lithuania

We start the trip in Vilnius, our base for two nights. Vilnius is known for its old town of beautiful Baroque architecture, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994. It has a strong historical Jewish influence and Napoleon named it 'the Jerusalem of the North' as he was passing through in 1812. In the year 2009, Vilnius was the European Capital of Culture, together with the Austrian city of Linz.

The Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 7.00pm for the welcome meeting and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner.

If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Vilnius Airport (VNO), which is a 20-30 minute drive from the hotel. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.



ACCOMMODATION:
Panorama Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



DAY 2 - Trakai Historical National Park and castles

This morning we drive 28 kilometres from Vilnius to Trakai Historical National Park. Outside the capital we find a peaceful land of forests, lakes, rivers and farmsteads. Our first stop is to visit Trakai island castle. Trakai was an important seat of power in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the 14th and 15th centuries, ruling an empire that stretched all the way down to the Black Sea. After our visit we continue to Senieji Trakai, or Old Trakai, to prepare our bikes for the first ride and check that everybody is happy and comfortable. We cycle back through town and the Trakai peninsula, where there are many cafés and restaurants to choose from for a lunch break. Our ride continues away from Trakai and around the shores of the lake, along a mixture of asphalted back roads with light traffic and dedicated cycle paths to Uzutrakis Manor House.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 13 kilometres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Panorama Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Cycle Curonian Lagoon, Bird watching and Klaipeda

This morning we see more of Lithuania's countryside with a 4 to 5 hour drive towards the Baltic Sea to Kintai village where we have lunch before getting our bikes ready. After lunch we cycle for about 10 km on the flat and beside the Curonian Lagoon, along a quiet paved road to Vente Cape. Vente Cape is a small peninsula on the eastern side of Curonian Lagoon. More than 50,000 visitors come each year in order to get acquainted with one of the most important spots for bird migration in the region. We make a visit to Ventes Ragas and 19th century lighthouse and the Ornithological Station where the migration patterns of many bird species are tracked and recorded. Huge nets are used to catch the birds they tag. We then cycle back the same 10 km route to Kintai village. From here we join a forest bike track and continue along this bumpy gravel track through the fishing villages of Priekule, Surmai to Dreverna where the group ride finishes and we rejoin our vehicle for the transfer to Klaipeda. Klaipeda is the third biggest city in Lithuania, an important port and Lithuania's chief gateway to the Baltic Sea. It has a long history from a tribal fishing village and later arrival of German Crusaders who seized this land and built their castle here in 1252, later known as Memel.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 39 kilometres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Amberton Klaipeda (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Curonian Spit National Park

Today we take a short ride by bus to the harbour and take the 5 minute ferry ride to Curonian Spit National Park (UNESCO World Heritage Site) then drive for about 1 hour to Nida. We stop en route briefly at the Hill of Witches in Juodkrante to see a colony of grey herons and cormorants. Nida is a charming fishing village with a number of well-preserved old wooden fisherman's houses. A peaceful and relaxing atmosphere pervades throughout the Curonian Spit. We get on our bikes in Nida to explore the village, visiting a giant sundial and the highest dune for views over the surrounding landscape. We continue by bike along the spit through forests on paved bike paths mostly on the flat. We will cycle alongside giant sand dunes, hundred year-old pine forests and white sand beaches; learning about its unique culture and architecture and you may like to try some of the typical local smoked fish. We leave the bikes for a short walk up the Dead Dunes beyond Pervalka where a panoramic view of both the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon opens up. After relaxing in Juodkrante you have the choice to take the bus to our hotel or cycle the remaining 12 km from Juodkrante to Smiltyne then take the ferry back to Klaipeda harbour, ending with a final 2 to 4 km to the hotel.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 36 kilometres, with a further optional 22 km available.



ACCOMMODATION:
Amberton Klaipeda (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - To Sventoji via Palanga by bike then drive to Riga

After a short drive from our hotel in Klaipeda we cycle along the coastline on a dedicated and paved cycle route through the Giruliai Forest to the popular summer resort of Palanga. Along the way we visit the Seaside Regional Park including the Dutchmen's cap - a 24-metre-high cliff - the fishing village of Karkle, Plaze Lake and the former lifeguard station in Nemirseta. Before lunch we explore Palanga Botanical Park and the biggest Amber Museum in the Baltics. Palanga's population swells enormously in the summer months as it is the premier beach destination in Lithuania and boasts a beautiful sweeping beach. From Palanga after lunch we continue cycling a further 15 km on cycle paths and finish in Sventoji town before we drive to Riga - a journey of 4 to 5 hours. Riga is the capital and largest city of Latvia and the Baltic States. It boasts superb architecture spanning over six centuries and has an impressive collection of beautifully decorated Art Nouveau buildings.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 37 kilometres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hanza Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Cycle Jurmala sandy beach

After breakfast we drive to Jurmala - one of the largest resort towns in the Baltics with 32 km of white sandy beach fringed by pine forests old wooden summer cottages and more recently built villas. Jurmala's reputation as a spa destination began in the late 18th and early 19th centuries as many sanatoriums were built to take advantage of the sea breeze, pine aroma, mineral springs and beach. We explore the town by bike for around 12km, followed by some free time for ice cream, coffee, a cycle on the beach on hard packed sand or even a swim. We return to Riga by bus or there is the option to cycle the 25km back to the city. The rest of the day is left free to discover beautiful Riga.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 12 kilometres, with a further optional 25 km available.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hanza Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Bike trails in Lahemaa National Park

This morning we drive for about 6 hours to Lahemaa National Park, Estonia's first and largest national park. The park is an interesting mix of coastal bluffs, dense forest, 7000 year old bogs, 18th century manor houses, fishing villages and numerous lakes and rivers. The rocky coastline is strewn with erratic boulders, some very large, that were carried here by glaciers thousands of years ago. Most of the cycle routes are on well paved roads that have little traffic. Once we arrive we check into our hotel then head out on our bikes on a circular route to explore the park.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 41 kilometres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Park Hotel Palmse (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Lahemaa National Park, drive to Tallinn

This morning we continue to explore the vast natural beauty of Lahemaa National Park by bike. Established in 1971, it was the first national park in Estonia and two-thirds of the land is covered by forest. There are four large peninsulas in Lahemaa and one of them constitutes the northernmost point of continental Estonia. The park is home to moose, boars, brown bears, lynxes, foxes, beavers, the Ural Owl and Black Woodpecker. We plan to cycle another circular route before rejoining our bus. When we have finished in the park after a short lunch in a local cafe we drive for about 1.5 hours to Tallinn. Today's cycle route is planned first thing in the morning so we can check into our hotel in Tallinn in time to enjoy a free afternoon in this wonderful city.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 37 kilometres.



ACCOMMODATION:
St Olav Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Tour ends Tallinn

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Tallinn.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Tallinn at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to depart from Tallinn Airport (TLL), which is a 20 minute drive away.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

Estonia

Climate

Summer days in Estonia are warm though changeable with the occasional thunderstorm. Temperatures are commonly around 20-25°C, but can reach 30°C or more especially in July. At night temperatures are cooler. Winters can be harsh with very low temperatures, especially in January. Sometimes it drops as low -30°C, but more commonly it'll be around -5°C. Snowfall usually starts in November and lasting through to March. Being a maritime climate it can rain at any time of the year and it can be foggy in the autumn.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	2 Pin Round	Evangelical Lutheranism	Estonian

Latvia

Climate

Summers in Latvia are generally hot and sunny and less humid than in Central Europe, with temperatures commonly around 18-22°C, but can reach 30°C. Summer is normally the rainiest time of year on a count of the afternoon thunderstorms that occur on some days. It can be windy on the coast at any time of year. Temperatures begin to drop in autumn and September can quite cold with temperatures between 8-15°C. Winters are normally below freezing with the first snows starting in November and lasting to the end of February. Temperatures regularly reach as low as -5°C, but can go down as far as -35°C.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	2 Pin Round	Christian	Latvian

Lithuania

Climate

Summer days in Lithuania are warm though changeable. Temperatures on the coast are usually around 19°C and between 22-23°C further inland, but they can reach over 30°C. At night temperatures are cooler. Winters are cold, with temperatures regularly below freezing, so be prepared for snowy and icy conditions. Temperatures regularly reach as low as -5°C, but can go down as far as -35°C. Snowfall usually starts in November and lasting through to March. Being a maritime climate it can rain at any time of the year.

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

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.

N/A

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 hot or mild weather depending on the time of the year plus some warmer

clothes for colder nights. Ladies should take a headscarf for entering churches. You may want to pack a swimsuit and towel, depending on the time of year, as there will be some opportunities to swim.

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

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that has done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It is a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we would recommend £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

Local crew

Although 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. Accordingly, you should allow approximately £20 of local currency for tipping.

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.

International Departure Taxes

None

Estonia

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	£15	£2.4	£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Euros.	EUR, GBP or USD

Where To Exchange

US Dollars, GBP Sterling and Euros can be changed in most places.

ATM Availability

Cash can be drawn from ATM's in most cities.

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are generally accepted only in the larger hotels and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are not always easy to exchange.

Latvia

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	£15	£3	£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Euro

Recommended Currency For Exchange

We suggest you take most of your spending money in cash (in small denominations). US Dollars and Euros are more easily converted than Pounds Sterling. N.B. US\$ notes should be in good condition (not torn or marked). Notes prior to 1990 (of any currency) are often not accepted.

Where To Exchange

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

ATM Availability

Cash can be drawn from ATM's in all major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants and shops.

Travellers Cheques

Are very difficult to cash on this tour.

Lithuania

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	£15	£1.5	£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency Recommended Currency For Exchange

Euros EUR, GBP or USD

Where To Exchange

US Dollars, GBP Sterling and Euros can be changed in most places.

ATM Availability

Cash can be drawn from ATM's in most cities.

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are generally accepted only in the larger hotels and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are not always easy to exchange.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle, Boat

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

Government Travel Safety 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, Commonwealth & Development 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

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

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

Estonia: 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 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.

Estonia

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus and hepatitis A. Tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. 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.

Latvia

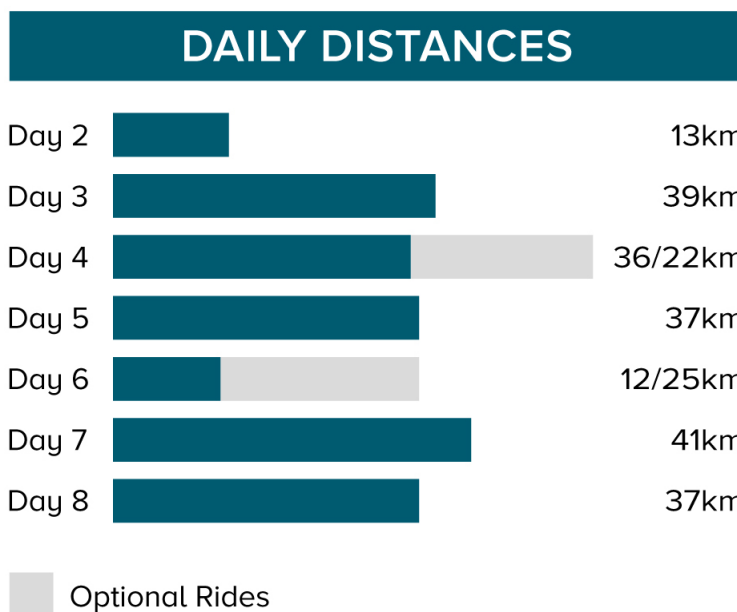
Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A, polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for further advice. tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. 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.

Lithuania

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus and hepatitis A. Tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. 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.



Daily Distances

General cycling information

On this trip we cycle 221 km over seven days (an average of 32 km per day) with a further optional 48 km available. We generally follow flat cycle paths and quiet asphalt roads. A support vehicle will accompany our rides where possible and transports our luggage throughout the trip. We have graded this route as easy.

Bike included

21 or 24 gear Merida Crossway hybrid bike with front suspension.

Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday. You will be required to pay a refundable deposit upon collection of the e-bike in country. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

Bike information

Your included bike is a 21 or 24 gear Merida Crossway hybrid bike with front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. A pannier bag is included and there is the facility to fit your own saddle if you wish to bring it. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday and would be a Kalkhoff Endeavour. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike. As the frame sizes are small and medium, we anticipate that this is suitable for those between 150cm and 182cm in height.

Cycling grade

Easy

Additional Information



Map (click to enlarge)

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**