

EXPLORE!



Self-Guided Catalonia Cycling

8 days

Spain - Trip code CSPM

Self-Guided Catalonia Cycling

Discover Catalonia on this self-guided cycle trip that travels from the foothills of the Pyrenees to medieval Girona and on to modernist Barcelona. Ride through a forested landscape past dormant volcanoes and picturesque villages in the low Garrotxa and along the cycle path to the gothic city walls of Girona. Ride on Barcelona's cycle paths to see the beaches, parks and Gaudi's famously quirky architecture.

Trip highlights

- ★ **La Garrotxa Volcanic Zone Natural Park** - Easy cycling through peaceful and picturesque landscapes
- ★ **Girona** - Explore the medieval backstreets of the atmospheric old quarter
- ★ **Barcelona** - Guided city cycling tour and two full days of bike rental to explore the city on your own
- ★ **Catalonian cuisine** - the best restaurants just steps away from your hotel
- ★ **Foothills of the Pyrenees** - Beautiful views from the saddle

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

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

CYCLING GRADE:

Easy To Moderate

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate rides on the same tour. You'll be cycling through flat or gently undulating terrain, with the occasional more energetic ascent.

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Trip starts in La Garrotxa

Your holiday starts in the foothills of the Pyrenees, among the volcanic spires, craters and basalt fields of La Garrotxa. Situated within this natural park, your hotel base for the next three nights is rural and hospitable, boasting an outdoor swimming pool. Your bike will be delivered either today or tomorrow morning and you will be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike. It is just minutes away from one of the best restaurants in La Garrotxa.



Accommodation: Hotel Mas Can Blanc (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Explore La Garrotxa Natural Park

Today, you can choose between several different cycling routes to explore the La Garrotxa Natural Park. Here, you will pass through lush countryside, oak woodlands and past craters of long-extinct volcanoes. Optional walking excursions are also possible to extend your route, should you so wish. You may choose to ride through the beautiful protected woodland of Fageda d'en Jorda to the former quarry of El Croscat. Another option is a visit to the Santa Margarida Volcano, where you can walk to a chapel situated right in the heart of the crater.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 25 kilometres, although this is obviously dependent on the route you choose.



Accommodation: Hotel Mas Can Blanc (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Optional rides through Pyrenees or countryside

Today you have the choice between a circular route in the foothills of the Pyrenees, or an easier ride through the flat countryside south of Olot. The first route follows the Riera de Banyà River, where hundreds of strange basalt formations rise up out of the water. As you ride towards the Pyrenees, you pass the lovely village of Castellfolit de la Roca, perched atop an enormous basalt rock formation above the Fluvià River. The gentler route to the south of Olot takes you through lovely countryside at the foot of two small mountain ranges - the Serra de la Cladera and the Serra de les Comelles. In Sant Privat d'en Bas, you have the option of doing a two-hour walk to the waterfall of Sallent, where you can cool off in its refreshing waters.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 48 kilometres for the Pyrenees ride, or 38 kilometres if you choose the easier route.



Accommodation: Hotel Mas Can Blanc (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Cycle along a Via Verde to Girona

You can look forward to a traffic-free ride today on your route along one of Spain's famous Via Verdes. Pedalling to Girona along this converted old railway track, you will pass under old train trestles and through tunnels. Along the way, you'll pass pretty Catalan villages, such as San Feliu de Pallerolles, where you can stop off for a typically-Spanish 'café con leche' with 'pan tostado'. Tonight's accommodation can be found in the heart of Girona's historic centre. With the cathedral and Sant Domènec Square on its doorstep, this small family-run hotel boasts Roman foundations and 8th and 9th century walls. Later, you may choose to explore the labyrinth of narrow lanes in the historic city centre, enjoying dinner at one of the many excellent restaurants serving a host of Catalan specialities.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 60 kilometres.



Accommodation: Hotel Historic (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Public transport to Barcelona

For your journey from Girona to Barcelona, we recommend taking the train. A taxi transfer is included from the hotel to the train station but you will be required to purchase your own train ticket as this is not included in the holiday package. There are regional and intercity trains that depart every 30 mins (duration between 40mins and 2hrs). Arriving into the Plaza Catalunya in Barcelona, you can either take a taxi or walk to your hotel - it is just a ten minute stroll away. After checking into your well-positioned hotel

which will be your base for the next three nights, your afternoon is free to explore this characterful city.



Accommodation: Hotel Sant Agusti (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Guided bike tour of Barcelona; free afternoon

Barcelona is noted for its excellent network of cycling paths - one of the best ways to discover the city. This morning, on a three-hour tour by bike, a local guide will show you some of Barcelona's major landmarks. After pedaling through a labyrinth of lanes in the Gothic quarter and past the famous cathedral, you will visit the lovely Ciutadella Park. Your route also takes in the monuments of the Gaudí Route, such as Casas Batlló and Milà, and the impressive Sagrada Família. This afternoon is free to explore more of Barcelona at your own pace. If you want to continue cycling, you can choose the shorter self-guided route outlined in tomorrow's itinerary.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 10 kilometres.



Accommodation: Hotel Sant Agusti (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Explore more of Barcelona by bike

Today, you have the choice between two routes. The shortest option takes you through the district of L'Eixample - a mecca of modernism, as well as the green hills of Montjuïc - home to some intriguing buildings from the 1929 International Exposition and the 1992 Olympics. From the Botanical Garden, you ride out to Port Vell. This "Wooden Wharf" at the end of Las Ramblas has lovely views out to the sea. The second route explores three of the lesser-known quarters of Barcelona. Most of the ride is on flat, quiet lanes and cycling paths.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 13 or 23 kilometres, depending on the route you choose.



Accommodation: Hotel Sant Agusti (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Barcelona

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

DAILY DISTANCE



General cycling information

On this journey you cycle 156 km over five days (an average of 31 km per day) with further optional rides available. The terrain is gently undulating with some downhill and flat sections mixed in. In Garrotxa you ride on quiet country roads and some wide gravel tracks. The route to Girona is a dedicated cycle path and in Barcelona you ride mostly on cycle paths. We have graded the route as easy to moderate.

Bike included

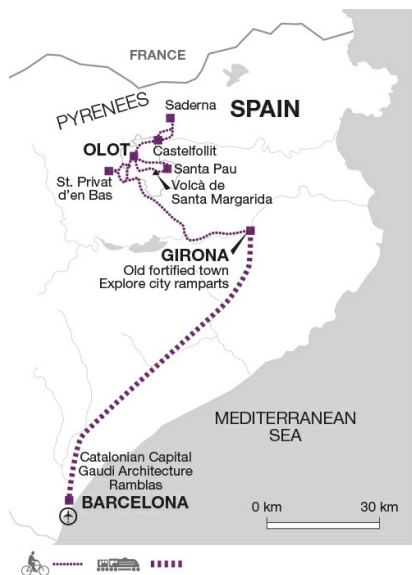
21 gear hybrid bike in Garrotxa and a simple fixed gear bike in Barcelona.

Bike information

Your included bike on days 1-4 is a 21 gear Conor Leyton hybrid bike or similar with front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. Women's frames available but limited in number - please request at time of booking. Each bike is fitted with a lateral pannier bag (30 litre capacity) as well as a 6-litre handlebar bag that doubles as a map note holder. A water bottle holder is provided as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle post if you wish to bring them. A lock, pump, spare inner tube and puncture repair kit with tyre levers will be provided. In Barcelona your included bike is a single gear simple city bike with a 25 litre pannier bag. You will be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bikes. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Cycling grade

EasyToModerate



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 pump, lock, spare inner tube and tyre levers. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bicycle
Car
Train



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Spain

Climate

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

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

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

Day 3 - If you choose the shorter cycle route today there is the option to do a walk to a good swimming spot. Alternatively the longer cycle route gives the option of a walk up to a picturesque waterfall.

Day 4 - On arrival into Girona perhaps visit the Cathedral museum and cloisters (costs around 5 Euros) or the Arabic Baths (costs around 3 Euros).

Day 6 - There is lots to do and see in Barcelona. Visit the Sagrada Familia (entrance costs around 12 Euros), the Picasso Museum (costs around 10 Euros), Casa Mila (costs around 14 Euros) or the Casa Battlo (costs around 17 Euros).

Clothing

Bring cycling gear such as quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts and cycle gloves. Remember that the weather is slightly more changeable in northern Spain, and it can be cool, especially at night and at the start and end of the season, so bring a warmer jacket/fleece. A waterproof cycle jacket is recommended in case of rain.

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: On tour

Bring one main piece of baggage as per your airline luggage allowance, maximum 20 kg per person. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage if using public transport so don't overload yourself. Luggage transfers between hotels are normally arranged by the hoteliers. Please note luggage transfers are restricted to 15 kg per person, any additional weight will need to be packed in your day bag or pannier bag. Mark your bags clearly and leave them at the place and time arranged with them. When travelling on public transport you should always take your luggage with you.

Luggage transfer

Included between each hotel. You need to take your own luggage on your transfer from Girona to Barcelona.

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, insects, pollen, sun etc) , cycle gloves (padded for more comfort) and a water bottle or water delivery system (eg camelback or platypus). Please note that it is a legal requirement to wear a helmet while cycling in Spain. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies (explore included) are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Helmet hire is included and will be provided with the bikes, but you may prefer to bring your own. 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. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced map we recommend the following:-

Mapa comarcal de Catalunya, scale:
1:50000, published by Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya
n° 19 Garrotxa

Tipping

Local fees

The journey on Day 5 from Girona and Barcelona is not included in the holiday price and you will need to pay for this locally. There are regional and intercity trains and the price varies from 9 to 16 Euros per person.

Local city tax may be required to be paid in cash upon check in to the accommodation. The amount varies from 1 to 3 Euros per person per night, with the higher amount relating to higher category hotels. It is only applicable to a number of towns and cities in Spain, but it is being rolled out to cover more places in time so please allow accordingly in your budget.

Country Information

Spain

Food and drink

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

Lunch price

£8.00 - 12.00

Dinner price

£16.00 - 20.00

Beer price

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

Water price

£1.4

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euros

Recommended Currency For Exchange

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

Where To Exchange

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

ATM Availability

In cities and most major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

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

Travellers Cheques

Not recommended.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bicycle, Car, Train

Recommended airport

Barcelona or Girona.

Flying to your destination

We'd recommend return flights into Barcelona or Girona Airports which are served by both budget (including Easyjet, Ryanair) and non-budget airlines (including British Airways) from multiple airports in the UK.

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

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

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

Arrival and departure information

At the start of your trip you can fly into Barcelona or Girona Airports.

By public transport from Girona airport to Olot:

From Girona airport to Girona bus station (city centre) you take the Sagales bus 607 departing every hour between (April to October) 5.30am and 11.30pm (duration 30mins, 10Euros) There are fewer services from November to March.

www.sagales.com

From Girona bus station to Olot there are approx. 14 buses on weekdays and 6 on weekends. The Teisa 100 service takes 1-1.5hrs approximate cost is 9.50Euros.

www.teisa-bus.com

In Olot you can take a local taxi to the hotel (5 Euros)

By public transport from Barcelona airport to Olot:

From Barcelona airport you take the Cercanías/Rodalies train line R to Passeig de Gràcia station, which is just a 5 minute walk from the TEISA bus stop. Trains depart every 30mins between 5.40am and 10.30pm (duration 30 mins, 2.50Euros).

From Barcelona TEISA bus stop (Calle Pau Claris, 117) to Olot there are 4 direct buses on weekdays and 3 on weekends (duration 2hr30mins, 19Euros) www.teisa-bus.com

In Olot you can take a local taxi to the hotel (5 Euros)

If you cannot find a convenient connection via Barcelona city centre, then check the timetable of Sagales Lines 602 and 661 for direct buses between Barcelona airport and Girona bus station (duration 2hr30mins)

www.sagales.com

At the end of your trip you can fly back from either Barcelona or Girona.

By public transport to Barcelona airport

Firstly take a short taxi ride or ten minute walk to Plaza Catalunya where you can catch the Cercanías/Rodalies train line R to the airport. Trains depart every 30mins between 5.40am and 10.30pm (duration 30 mins, 2.50Euros).

By public transport to Girona Airport

Firstly take a short taxi ride or ten minute walk to Plaza Catalunya where you can catch the train to Girona. There are regional and intercity trains that depart every 30 mins (duration between 40mins and 2hrs, 9 to 16 Euros).

From Girona bus station to the airport you take the Sagales bus 607 departing every hour between 5am and 7pm (duration 30mins, 10Euros)

www.sagales.com

More information on the various transport options available please go to: <http://www.aena.es/en/girona-costa-brava-airport/index.html>

Private airport arrival and departure transfers can be arranged (at additional cost) from Barcelona or Girona airports.

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, US, New Zealand, US or Canadian citizens. 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 consider applying 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 transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

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

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

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

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom. Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

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

Flight Information

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

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

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

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

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.
