

# EXPLORE!



## Why book this trip?

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Ride past white-washed villages and Moorish towers, endless orchards, ancient irrigations channels and layers of history on this self-guided cycling holiday in Murcia. Pedal along country lanes, peaceful cycle paths and quiet roads, enjoying historic towns and a striking variety of landscapes.

- **Pueblos Blancos** - Picture-perfect white washed villages of Cieza and the Ricote Valley
- **Caravaca de la Cruz** - One of the world's 5 holy cities and home to the medieval castle of Santa Cruz
- **Moorish Castles** - Calasparra, Cieza and Moratalla home to restored Moorish castles



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 6



**TRIP STAFF**  
None



**TRANSPORT**  
Bicycle



**ACCOMMODATION**  
6 nights standard hotel



**CYCLING GRADE:**  
Moderate

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Trip starts in Murcia

Your cycling holiday starts in Murcia, a small but bustling university town packed with culture. The city of Murcia sits in a fertile plain surrounded by mountains and is in the heart of the region. You will stay at a centrally-located hotel, the ideal base from which to visit some of the city's great sites. Walk the historic streets to the impressive Murcia cathedral, Bishop's Palace and Church of San Nicolas de Bari, past elegant 'fin-de-siecle' palace and the social club known as 'El Casino'. You will need to collect your included rental bike today or tomorrow morning depending on your arrival time.



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

**Grade: Standard Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**MEALS PROVIDED: NONE**

### DAY 2 - Gentle ride on dedicated cycle path to Caravaca de la Cruz

Today starts with a 45 minute drive to Bullas, from where you get on your bike and follow a gentle route along the Via Verde del Noroeste, a disused railway line converted to a cycling trail. The cycling trail

leads you to Caravaca de la Cruz, one of the world's five Holy Cities according to the Vatican (the others are Rome, Jerusalem, Santiago de Compostela and Santo Toribio de Liebana). Pilgrims can obtain Eternal Forgiveness by visiting the Church in Caravaca de la Cruz during a Holy Year (every seven years, 2024 is the next Holy year). The church is part of an impressive fortress founded in 1617. Along the way you will have time to visit the hilltop village of Cehegin, with its fascinating old quarter. Then you can decide whether to continue along the Via Verde to Caravaca or do an extra loop on quiet country roads, cycling past flower and vegetable farms along the River Argos.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 25.5km (with an optional extra 13.5km) (total 300m ascent and 330m descent)



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hospederia Rual Almunia (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 3 - Circular route around Caravaca de la Cruz

Enjoy a circular ride around the beautiful and culturally rich area of Caravaca. Cycling past irrigation channels and Elm groves, your route will take you from fountain to fountain passing Roman and Christian sanctuaries and unique sites with remains of Paleolithic, Argaric, Iberian, Roman and Medieval settlements. The route starts with a long but gentle climb to reach the Iberian-Celtic village of Archivel. From here you pick up a way-marked path, which will lead you past tiny villages and farmed fields cycling downhill to La Encarnación and back to Caravaca. On the last section you follow a well-marked unsurfaced track. Back in Caravaca we recommend you take some time to stroll around the square at Plaza del Arco with its statues of 'Moros y Cristianos'(Moors and Christians).

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 45km (total 450m ascent and 450m descent)



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hospederia Rual Almunia (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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#### **DAY 4 - Cycle via Moratalla's fortress to the hill top town Calasparra**

Today's cycling starts with a quiet section on a country road, pedalling through fields and olive groves with great views of the nearby mountain ranges, Sierra de Segura and Sierra de la Pila. The Moorish village of Moratalla, with its huge castle, comes into view early. We recommend you stop here for lunch and explore the town's steep narrow lanes and 15th century fortress on foot. Leaving Moratalla you cycle through agricultural landscapes filled with huge olive groves, almond trees and farmed fields. Wherever you find a bit of water and a river nearby, the orchards and vegetables gardens reappear, as do the rice fields as you near Calasparra.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 44km (total 450m ascent and 740m descent)



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Constitucion (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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#### **DAY 5 - Bike along peaceful country roads to reach the lively town of Cieza**

This morning, we strongly recommend you add 13km to your ride with a visit to the Sanctuary of 'la Virgen de la Esperanza' (Our Lady of Hope) and enjoy superb views over the rice fields. Once you get going, heading for Cieza you will encounter very few villages, enjoy peaceful country roads with views to the hills, and the lovely Alfonso XIII Reservoir. As you reach the River Segura the landscape turns into a patchwork of almond and apricot orchards, particularly beautiful in March and April. The last section of today's ride follows a quiet road along the river to reach the lively town of Cieza with its Moorish hilltop castle, huge cisterns and aqueduct remains.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 32.5km (with an optional extra 13km) (total 350m ascent and 475m descent)



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel San Sebastian (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 6 - Cycle to Archena then along cycle path to Murcia

The Segura River and ancient irrigation channels will mark your way from Cieza to Archena, while offering a complete change of scenery. The Ricote Valley was once a Moorish enclave for which a 10 year battle was fought between the Kingdom of Castile and the Andalusian ruler Ibn Hud. It is characterised with contrasting dry slopes above the green river, and oasis-like orchards studded with palm trees. The white-washed villages of Abarán, Blanca, 'd3jos and Ulea were Murcia's last Moorish stronghold in the 15th century. From Archena you will follow inland roads and sections of the Via Verde (cycle path) back into Murcia, crossing some industrial areas and busy towns before a peaceful final section of 12 km along the banks of the river Segura.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 57km (if you wish to shorten this you can arrange to be picked up after 28km) (total 200m ascent and 340m descent)



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Cetina (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 7 - Trip ends in Murcia

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end. If you have booked another night (and day of bike rental) in Murcia, you can do a short 18 km circular route to the Sanctuary of Murcia's patron Saint Fuensanta and enjoy the views over the city and its surroundings.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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

##### Language

Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

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### Budgeting and packing

#### Clothing

Bring cycling gear such as quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts and cycle gloves. A waterproof cycle jacket is recommended in case of rain. A light windproof jacket is always useful.

#### 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. 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.

## 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). 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:-

## Tipping

### Local fees

There are no local fees for this trip.

## Spain

### Food and drink

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

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

**Water price**  
£1.4

### Foreign Exchange

**Local currency    Recommended Currency For Exchange**

Euros                      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.

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**Transport, Accommodation & Meals****Transport Information**

Bicycle

**Recommended airport**

Alicante, Valencia or Murcia

**Flying to your destination**

We'd recommend flights into and out of Alicante, Valencia or Murcia Airports which are served by both budget (including Easyjet, Aer Lingus) and non-budget airlines (including British Airways) from multiple airports in the UK.

**Accommodation notes**

Standard - 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.

**Arrival and departure information**

For this trip you can fly into and back from Alicante (ALC), Valencia (VLC) airports or Murcia (RMU)

From Murcia airport (RMU) you can take a bus into the city centre. There are several services a day. A single ticket costs around € 5.00 and you buy it on the bus. The journey takes 1 hour.

From Alicante airport (ALC) to Murcia

For information on Alicante airport (ALC), please go to:

<http://www.aena.es/en/alicante-airport/index.html>



### By Bus

You can get a bus direct from Alicante airport to the city of Murcia. There are several departures a day. A single ticket is approximately €6 and you can buy your ticket on the bus. Travel time is one hour. This service is run by ALSA. For further details, please go to ALSA online at [www.alsa.es](http://www.alsa.es)

### By Taxi

From the bus station in Murcia, it's just a short taxi ride to your hotel.

### From Valencia airport (VLC)

From Valencia (or Valencia airport) you can get a bus to the city of Murcia. These services are run by ALSA. There are several departures a day from the city centre and at least 2 a day from the airport. A single ticket Valencia-Murcia is about €18 and travel time is 3 to 5 hours, depending on the type of bus you take. For further details, please go to [www.alsa.es](http://www.alsa.es).

### Optional airport transfers

A private transfer can be arranged (at additional cost) to and from Alicante or Murcia airport and must be booked in advance.

### From Murcia back to Alicante airport (ALC)

### By Bus

You can get a bus from the city of Murcia to Alicante airport. There are several departures a day. A single ticket is approximately €6 and you can buy your ticket on the bus. Travel time is one hour. This service is run by ALSA. For further details, please go to ALSA online at [www.alsa.es](http://www.alsa.es)

### To Valencia airport (VLC)

You can get a bus from Murcia to Valencia (or Valencia airport). These services are run by ALSA. There are several departures a day to the city centre and 2 or 3 each morning to the airport. A single ticket Murcia-Valencia is about €18 and travel time is 3 to 5 hours, depending on the type of bus you take. For further details, please go to [www.alsa.es](http://www.alsa.es).

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## Essential Information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

### Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under

18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

## Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

## Visa and Passport Information

Spain: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, 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](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and [Booking Conditions](#).

## Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers. If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

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

## **Insurance**

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

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

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

### **Flight Information**

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

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

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

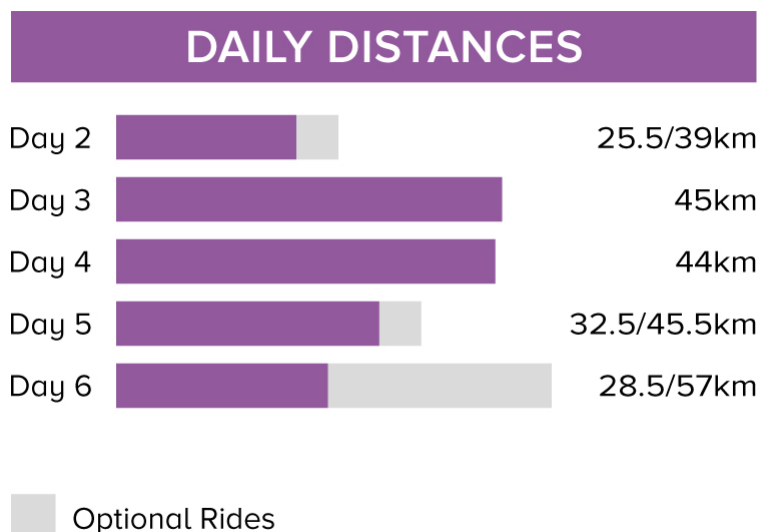
On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Spain**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

## Cycling information



CSSM Distance Chart

### General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 175 km over five days (an average of 35 km per day). We generally cycle on quiet tarmac country roads with little or no traffic, dedicated cycle paths and a small section on a well-marked unsurfaced track. There are occasional hills and uneven surfaces. We have graded the route as Moderate.

### Bike included

27 gear Mountain Bike with lockable front suspension.

### Bike information

Your included bike is a 27 gear mountain bike with lockable front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. Various models are possible, each of a similar standard, eg Megamo Phoenix 2.0 or Bergamon Horizon 6.0. Each bike is fitted with a pannier bag (25 litre capacity). A water bottle holder is provided as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A lock, pump, spare inner tube and puncture repair kit with tyre levers is included. All you need to bring is your own helmet. You will be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike.

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.

### Cycling grade

Moderate



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**