Why book this trip?

Cycle the rugged coastline and beautiful winelands of the Western Cape on this cycling holiday through South Africa. Ride on the side of the iconic Table Mountain and along the famous garden route from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth.

- **Stellenbosch winelands** - Cycle through stunningly beautiful vineyards and farmlands
- **Oudtshoorn** - Freewheel down the dramatic Swartberg pass
- **Cape Agulhas** - Cycle to the southernmost point of Africa.
Itinerary

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

**DAY 1 - Join trip Cape Town; optional introductory ride**

Arrive in the wonderful city of Cape Town. Cape Town embodies the feeling of energy and hope that South Africans feel for the future of their country - with its spectacular natural assets, modern high-tech city centre and mixed population. Cape fur seals can often be seen playfully frolicking in the harbour waters.

For those arriving on time today our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 2pm for the welcome meeting and to take us on our first bike ride. The ride will most likely be on the face of Table Mountain for spectacular views, then back to our hotel. This will be our first encounter with some of the unique and colourful flowers from the Cape Floral Kingdom, which has more indigenous plant species per square metre than anywhere else on earth.

If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Cape Town International Airport (CPT), which is a twenty minute drive from the hotel.

Please note that if you wish to join the bike ride today, you must be ready to leave the hotel by 2pm. If you are booking your own flights, we recommend giving yourself at least one hour to clear the airport. From the airport to the hotel is around twenty minute drive, so therefore the latest your flight can arrive is 12pm. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 12 kilometres with 200 metres total ascent (optional).
Lady Hamilton Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Drive to Cape Point Nature Reserve via Hout Bay; cycle to Kommetjie, or Simon’s Town

The focus of our activities today is the area of the Cape Peninsula. The Cape of Good Hope was first seen by a European in 1488 when Diaz sailed round it on his search for a sea route to the East Indies. A century later Sir Francis Drake described it as ‘the fairest cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth’, but it was another century before the Dutch East Indies Trading Company established a permanent settlement to supply ships with cattle and water traded from the indigenous Khoi who reared livestock in the land around the coast. In Hout Bay, weather permitting, you have the option to take a boat ride to view Seal Island, where a population (7,000 approx!) of Cape Fur Seals have made their home. There might be whales or even pods of porpoises there too. From Hout Bay we drive over Chapman’s Peak to Cape Boulders beach where we get a close up view of Africa’s only resident penguin species, the African Penguin. From here we continue by bus for around one hour to Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope for lunch and a chance to explore this stunning wild place. After lunch we cycle back through the Nature Reserve and head out along the Atlantic seaboard to the seaside village of Simon’s Town or Kommetjie, depending on the wind direction. Finally we drive back to our accommodation in Cape Town, with time to relax this evening.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 33 kilometres, with 250 metres total ascent.

ACCOMMODATION:
Lady Hamilton Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE
DAY 3 - Drive to Stellenbosch; cycle through wine farms to Jonkershoek Reserve

An early start today enables us to walk up Table Mountain (cable car optional) before heading out of Cape Town to explore the Stellenbosch region. To the north and east of Cape Town are the Cape Winelands, whose rugged mountains rise steeply from rolling green valleys, neatly planted with vineyards and dotted with whitewashed manor houses. This is an image more reminiscent of a central European fairy tale than 'Darkest Africa'! A settlement was first established in Stellenbosch in 1679 following the discovery of a river running through a fertile, green valley by Simon van der Stel, then Governor of the Cape. Grapes were planted in the fertile valleys and soon Stellenbosch became the centre of the wine industry. It now produces some of the finest New World wines that have been honed over several centuries by the Afrikaans wine growers. We cycle today from Lazerac to Jonkershoek Nature reserve firstly along tarmac roads and then on gravel tracks through the forest, before returning to Lanerac. After enjoying a cycle ride through the stunning scenery you may like to reward yourself by sampling some of the latest vintages with an optional wine tasting. After wine tasting we have a short drive to our hotel in Stellenbosch.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 18 kilometres, with 250 metres total ascent. There is the option to extend the cycling for another 7 kilometres (150 metres additional total ascent).

ACCOMMODATION:
Stellenbosch Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

DAY 4 - Visit Cape Agulhas; evening at a river camp

We start early with a two and a half hour drive to the wild and dramatic Cape Agulhas, the southernmost
point in Africa. Now marked by a stone plaque, the 'Cape of Needles' was once a point of grave danger to European navigators and is now home to the resulting shipwrecks. From here we will get on our bikes and continue towards Swellendam. The route takes in fantastic open farmland, indigenous fynbos (shrubland) and other types of vegetation. After approximately 40 kilometres on the bike we will drive to Bredasdorp for a lunch stop. After lunch we continue by bus for one hour to Malgas where we once again get on the bike, leaving the main road to follow a gravel track to our river camp where rustic, wooden A-frame huts line the banks of the Breede River. This accommodation offers a chance to enjoy the surrounding nature. Many of the team here come from the nearby town and offer a real insight into their life on the Western Cape. You can chat with the friendly team at the bar or around this evening's camp fire, or find a relaxing spot along the riverbank to enjoy the peace and quiet.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 60 kilometres, with 119 metres total ascent.

Accommodation:
Round the Bend Lodge (or similar)
Grade: Comfortable Cabins
Single room available
Meals provided: Breakfast and dinner

Day 5 - Visit Cango caves; Cycle Swartberg Pass

We start today with a scenic three hour drive along Route 62 to the Little Karoo and a visit to the huge, limestone caverns of the Cango Caves. These caves are an underground wonderland of extraordinary structures, millions of years old. The combination of dripping rainwater and limestone has led to the creation of ancient stalactites, stalagmites and mighty rock columns. Allegedly, a local European farmer first discovered the caves late in the 18th century; however, there is research which proves these caves have been used by humankind as far back as the Early Stone Age. En route we pass through the heart of the verdant Breede River Valley, the largest of the Western Cape's fruit and wine producing valleys. As we continue eastwards along the world’s longest wine route, passing through Barrydale and Ladismith the scenery changes dramatically to the stark and arid landscapes of the Little Karoo. After our visit we drive into the beautiful Red Stone Hills at the foot of the Swartberg Mountains. Here we take to our bikes and explore the area on gravel tracks with some steep sections, marvelling at the dramatic panorama of ancient red and orange sandstone the area is famed for. From Cango we are driven with our bikes as far up the Swartberg Pass as possible and from here we descend back to Cango and cycle to De Poort where we spend the next two nights.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 46 kilometres, with 840 metres total ascent (Swartberg pass), an easier option of 30 kilometres and 250 metres total ascent is available.

Please note: in high summer this ride can be very hot and exposed. Your Explore Leader may substitute another route if necessary.
DAY 6 - Cycle the Meiringspoort Pass; gorge ride with waterfall stop

After a 30 minute drive out of De Poort we jump on our bikes and explore the Mieringspoort Pass where soaring cliff walls with spectacular rock formations line the 25 km tarred road which winds along the floor of the gorge, crossing the Groot River 25 times. Each crossing, or drift, has its own name and story - we stop and rest to learn more at the Waterfall information site. The road is a remarkable engineering feat, but the overwhelming features are the wonders of nature. The folds of the Table Mountain sandstone strata tower above the road, constantly changing colour as you move through sunlight and shade. Hardy plants, including indigenous pelargoniums, cling to the precarious rock faces while birds, baboons and smaller fauna abound in the protected Kloofs and crevices. We return by bike to De Poort for our second night.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 36 kilometres, with 200 metres total ascent.
MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

**DAY 7 - Drive to the foot of the Prins Alfred Pass; cycle and drive to Knysna**

Today starts with a two hour drive to the foot of Prins Alfred’s Pass, a well-travelled road for both South Africans and international tourists linking the Little Karoo with the coast. With four biomes on the pass it provides a home to an abundance of indigenous fauna and flora. The road crosses the river 7 times while winding through the mountains. This spectacular 88km mountain pass route is also the home of the Middle Keurbooms Conservancy. Concerned landowners started the conservancy in June 2006. Today it covers more than 30,000 hectares, protecting indigenous fauna and flora and participating in various eco-tourism and eco-farming activities. It is the only pass in South Africa where people live alongside the road and trade in the pass. We explore approximately 58 kilometres of this lovely winding road by bike; be warned that you will be charmed by its beauty. We continue the last few kilometres our journey to the quaint seaside town of Knysna by bus which will take approximately one hour.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 58 kilometres

**ACCOMMODATION:**
Lagoona Inn (or similar)

*Grade: Comfortable Hotel*

**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**

**SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE**

**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST**

**DAY 8 - Explore Knysna; drive and cycle to Tsitsikama National Park**

Knysna was originally a harbour, as well as a forestry and mining centre. Today it is noteworthy as an artists' retreat and adventure activity base. After some exploration and lunch here we have an exciting ride through part of the indigenous Harkerville Forest and on to our rustic camp at Storms River in Tsitsikama National Park. Tsitsikamma NP is a pristine marine and forest reserve stretching for 50 kilometres from Nature’s Valley across to the mouth of the Groot River. This evening’s simple chalets are nestled amongst the trees just minutes from the sea front and there will be ample time to try some fresh seafood in the restaurant or cook up a traditional braai at one of the communal barbeque areas by the
The forest huts consist of 2 single beds, communal ablutions and communal kitchen. The communal ablutions, which are serviced daily, are kept neat and tidy with private shower cubicles. Male and Female ablutions are kept separate.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 12 kilometres, with 200 metres total ascent. Optional additional 30 kilometres cycle ride (200 metres total additional ascent).

ACCOMMODATION:  
Natures Valley Huts (or similar)  
Grade: Simple Cabins  
SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE  
MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

**DAY 9 - Circular ride in Tsitsikama National Park**

Today's circular ride lets us explore Tsitsikama National Park and Storms River. We ride through the magnificent Tsitsikamma Forest along the Bloukrans and Nature's Valley Passes. The descents through the forest are a real highlight of the trip. Tsitsikamma, South Africa's first coastal National Park, is an area renowned for its astonishing variety of marine and bird life. From within the park we are able to view where Storms River cuts through the Outeniqua Mountains on its journey to the Indian Ocean. In a relatively small area we have waves crashing against rock pools, sugar white sand, plunging water-falls and towering forests filled with a tremendous variety of trees, the most well-known being the Outeniqua Yellowwood. Wherever you stand in Tsitsikamma there is nothing in front of you but the sea rolling in with the tide, the breath-taking backdrop of the Outeniqua Mountains and the unending cacophony of birdsong.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 65 kilometres.

ACCOMMODATION:  
Natures Valley Huts (or similar)  
Grade: Simple Cabins
DAY 10 - Drive to Port Elizabeth where our trip ends

Departing Natures Valley Rest Camp this morning we drive two and a half hours to Port Elizabeth Airport (PLZ), where we will arrive at about 12pm and this is where our trip ends. The earliest your flight can depart is 3pm.

Trip information

Climate and country information

South Africa

Climate
Mild throughout the year and can thus be visited year round. The Western Cape has a Mediterranean-type climate, with warm, dry summers and cold winters with rainfall. Summer runs from November to March, with temperatures averaging 72°F to 93°F. The months of April and October are generally warm and sunny. Winter is also a good time to visit as towns and sites are not so crowded and the countryside is more verdant, but it can be cold. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable.

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<td>3 Pin Round</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Afrikaans, English</td>
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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.
Table Mountain Cable Car - R330 per person return / R190 per person one way
Bike Ride to Table Mountain with Tour Leader - no charge
Jobkerskoek Valley wine tasting - R70 per person
Cape Peninsula - Seal Island boat trip R90 per person (minimum 15 people required)
Stellenbosch Wine Tasting - Approx. R100 per person
Cango Caves - R120 per person

Clothing

In general pack for warm and hot weather. However, you must bring a warm sweater or jacket for cycling on cool days and for wearing during the evenings. We recommend you bring padded cycle shorts, cycle gloves and quick drying cycle shirts. In case of rain, waterproofs are essential.

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 trips that combine sightseeing with cycling.

Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage

15Kg

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.

It does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company.

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.
While tap water in South Africa's urban area is drinkable, some people may take a few days to acclimatise and thus may experience traveller's tummy. Therefore we recommend for you to travel with a reusable filtered water bottle such as the ones featured at Water-to-Go: http://www.watertogo.eu/

**Tipping**

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

**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, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow £15.00 per person for group tipping.

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**South Africa**

**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.

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<tr>
<td>£6</td>
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**Foreign Exchange**

**Local currency**
Rand.

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**
Take your money in a combination of cash and an ATM card. Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged at the airport.

**Where To Exchange**
Most towns or cities, your tour leader will advise you. If your trip is wildlife based and visits rural regions we strongly recommend to exchange money at the airport upon arrival for your trip.

**ATM Availability**
Cash can be drawn on debit cards from ATM's in most South African towns.

**Credit Card Acceptance**
In large shops and restaurants.
**Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

**Transport Information**

Bicycle, Minibus

**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.

Tsitsikama National Park

In Tsitsikama national park we stay in basic forest huts consisting of 2 single beds, communal ablutions and communal kitchen. The communal ablutions, which are serviced daily, are kept neat and tidy with private shower cubicles. Male and Female ablutions are kept separate.

**South Africa**

**Food and drink**

Dietary requirements: Most restaurants and hotels in South Africa do not have a wide selection of vegan and vegetarian choices. There is usually a choice of salads and one main vegetarian and/or vegan main dish on the menus, but choice will be limited especially in more remote locations. If you have specific dietary requirements we do recommend for you to bring some food with you.

**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.

**Visa and Passport Information**
Travelling with Minors via South Africa (including transits)

Regulations affecting all children aged under 18 years that are travelling to, from or via South Africa have been updated (Nov19). The law states that visa exempt children travelling for tourism purposes with one or both parents and/or an adult who is not a biological parent require to present a valid passport for each child on arrival. We strongly recommend you to refer to the South African House website for full information and to travel with a copy of these requirements.

South Africa: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, US and Canadian citizens. New Zealand ordinary passport holders do not require a visa, all other passport holders please consult your local consulate for full information.
Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visitors should ensure their passport is machine readable, has a minimum of 6 months validity from your arrival date into the country and has two blank pages when entering and leaving South Africa. The South African Immigration officials will not allow child/infant pages to be used for this purpose and visitors without the stipulated blank pages will be denied entry.

You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore’s recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

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

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

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

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the ‘Land Only’ arrangements will 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.

**South Africa**

**Vaccinations**

Please note that you will be required to supply a yellow fever certificate that has been issued at least 10 days prior to arrival in South Africa if you have traveled from or via a country where yellow fever is endemic. We recommend protection against hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid, polio and diphtheria. According to various travel health sources, the Western Cape is not regarded as a malaria risk area. If you
are traveling to other areas in South Africa please check with your doctor about malaria requirements. 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 traveling.

Cycling information

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Optional Rides

General cycling information

On this trip we cycle 340 km over nine days (an average of 38 km per day) with further optional rides available. We cycle on minor roads and good tracks (45% dirt roads, 40% tarmac, 10% cycle paths). A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the trip. We have graded the route as moderate.

Bike included

24 gear Silverback mountain bike with front suspension

Bike information

Your included bike is a 24 gear Silverback mountain bike with front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. A water bottle holder is included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour and can transport your day bag if you prefer to cycle without this. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.
Cycling grade
Moderate

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