

EUROPEAN CYCLE CHALLENGES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How fit do I need to be?

This trip is a huge **endurance** test and it is therefore essential that you put in the training for this challenge! It is important to make time to keep your fitness levels up and remember that while any exercise helps, the best form of preparation is to get cycling up and down hills, for good periods of time. Wherever possible, try to follow up a good day's cycling with another ride the next day. You will enjoy the challenge far more if you have a good level of fitness! This ride is achievable for most people provided they train well in advance.

Keep in mind that this ride has been designed to be a **challenge** and many people will find elements of the trip difficult at times, whether it is the physical cycling, changing weather, missing home comforts or something else. It is great if you can work as a team and help each other out during any difficulties. While there are challenges, **the enjoyment and rewards that come from achieving this epic challenge are unforgettable.**

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners will find themselves waiting for the others. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their goals.

What will the cycling be like?

The cycling is mainly on small country roads. You should make sure you are fit enough to manage the distances, and have plenty of experience handling your bike on rolling hills and descents. Traffic is light on most of the roads but always exercise caution. You should be used to cycling in some traffic, as you will feel more confident. French drivers, in particular, are generally far more considerate to cyclists than here in the UK. In France, in particular, drivers are generally more cyclist-friendly than here in the UK.

How accurate is the mileage?

Distances quoted are approximate and may vary depending on hotel location and any deviations. Please be aware that all measuring devices vary slightly and even tiny variations are amplified over long distances, so please do not feel cheated if your mileage does not agree with ours!

How will I know the route and what happens if I get lost?

You will be provided with a link to a detailed Google map prior to the trip. You will also have a printed map provided for the trip and the route will be marked. You will have contact telephone numbers for the crew in the rare case you go off route and get lost. We advise that you buddy up and try to cycle together in small groups. The crew will be in vehicles driving amongst the group and there will always be a vehicle at the back.

Will there be GPX files provided for the route?

GPX files of the route will be sent to you prior to the trip departure for each individual day, should you wish to upload these on to your own personal navigation device. It is not essential to have a GPS.

What type of bike is most appropriate for this cycle?

Road bikes are the most suitable on this trip and it is imperative that you train on the bike that you intend to use. You need to be comfortable on your own bike and well accustomed to it.



What if I have a problem with my bike?

There will always be crew on your trip who are very handy mechanics, and a range of spares in the vehicle (please note the spares are chargeable) along with a full tool kit. There are also good bike shops en-route if need be. We can usually deal with most problems that come up.

It is vital that your bike is **in good order** before departure. If you're not sure, ask a bike shop to service it for you. The crew are there to help with unforeseen incidents affecting your bike, not to sort out general wear and tear. If you turn up with a bike which needs attention straightaway you may end up missing some of the ride, which is obviously not how you want to start your challenge.

What about cycle safety?

We know that not everyone chooses to wear a cycling helmet all of the time, but would like to point out that on this ride it is obligatory. Please do bring a **helmet** with you and have it fastened at all times whilst you are cycling. We also strongly recommend wearing a high visibility cycling top, and having lights on your bike. Wearing a hi-vis jacket with reflective strips in bad visibility is compulsory for cyclists in France and the jacket must be fully certified to BS EN471 Class 2 standard (with the correct certified label). Police are likely to stop you and issue a fine if you fail to do so. You are encouraged to cycle at a pace that you are comfortable with throughout the trip. It is always safer and good for company as well to cycle in small groups with others of a similar pace to you. There is usually always someone else cycling at a similar speed!

What are the travel arrangements?

You will be responsible for your own travel arrangements to the start point of the cycle and returning from where our services end. You may wish to make your own way to the start the day before the cycle is due to begin as it is usually an early start in the morning. You will receive more detailed joining instructions nearer the time.

What are the transport arrangements for my bike?

You will be responsible for the transport arrangements of your bike to the start of the cycle and at the end.

On trips where we drive bikes back to the UK in our vehicles, please rest assured they will be well-packed and protected during transit. If you have an expensive or delicate frame, you may prefer to bring extra lagging for additional protection, or a soft bike bag. Hard case bike bags are **not suitable** as we do not have space to store them. We take the utmost care over packing the bikes, fully understand that they are often your pride and joy, and our crew treat them as they would their own. However, we **cannot be held responsible for any cosmetic damage**, such as small scratches, that may have occurred during transit or at any point on the ride. If you are concerned about this please bring extra protection for your frame and hand it to crew ready-wrapped for transit back.

Can you help me to courier my bike home?

If you prefer, we offer an **optional courier service** for your bike to be returned to your home (mainland UK only) at the end of the challenge at additional cost. The crew will take your bike from you at the end of the ride; it will then be packaged up at our offices and returned to you in **7 working days**.

Please note that someone will need to be available at the delivery address to sign for the bike, otherwise it will be taken to your nearest depot. Bike boxes are included with the courier service. This must be requested in writing in advance, with payment; a form will be sent to you in the lead-up to your trip. Please ask for details if you would like to know more at this stage.



Can you help me to book pre-trip accommodation?

We do not offer pre-trip accommodation, however we can usually advise you on a variety of nearby hotels if that helps.



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What is the accommodation like?

We usually pick hotels for their proximity to our route; they are generally **2-3* standard**, and slightly out of town. They are usually quite large hotels to accommodate group size; for very large groups we may have to split into different hotels. Standards may vary slightly but they are all generally good – though not luxurious as that's not our style! Rooms are usually twin-share and have en-suite facilities. Be prepared for variety! If you are travelling alone, you will be paired up with someone of the same sex and similar age – please let us know if you wish to share with a particular person, if you have not already done so.

Can I request single accommodation?

There may be a limited number of single hotel rooms available, depending on numerous factors. These are subject to request, at an additional cost, and on a first-come, first-served basis. Please contact us if this is important to you, but remember that sharing a room is a really good ice-breaker if you don't know anyone else on the trip, so don't worry too much about it! If your route involves an overnight ferry crossing, the single supplement does not apply to cabins, only actual hotel rooms.

Who accompanies us on the cycle from Discover Adventure?

Your trip will be led by **experienced Discover Adventure leaders**. They are chosen for their experience and knowledge, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first-aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. The number of crew and support vehicles looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but the team will be looking after every aspect of your trip whether that's transporting your luggage, ensuring your route is well-marked, making you lunch and sorting out any mechanical problems. At Discover Adventure we pride ourselves on our high leader: cyclist ratio and believe it leads to greater trip enjoyment as well as excellent trip safety. Depending on group size and the contract agreement, an expedition doctor or medic may accompany the group.

What if the weather is bad?

We carry on cycling! We carry gazebos so that we can provide some shelter at water-stops, but if it's raining you'll get wet – it's all part of the challenge! Because of this, it's vital that you follow the kit recommendations in our kitlist and are prepared, whether it's very hot, chilly, or wet. You don't have to spend a fortune on the best kit by any means, but you should be comfortable in all conditions – it makes a huge difference to your enjoyment on the day and may even make the difference between succeeding and not.

What will I be eating?

You will have breakfast in your hotels each day, and usually dinner as well. Lunch will be provided for you mid-way through the day. Lunch stops are usually buffet-style and food is **varied and plentiful** so do make sure you eat enough to give you the energy you will need for your exertions. With smaller groups we may sometimes eat lunch at restaurants.

I have a specific dietary need; will there be enough for me to eat?

Being vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free or having other dietary requirements is usually not a problem provided you **let us know well in advance**. There is usually lots of choice, and our crew will ensure there is plenty for everyone to eat. Bear in mind that being vegetarian is often not as widely understood or accepted in Europe as it is in the UK – particularly in France – so meals in hotels may not be as varied as you are used to and you may find it quite repetitive. If you feel you aren't getting enough energy because of your dietary requirements please talk to the leaders on the trip – they can't help unless they know there's a problem. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Do I need to bring snacks?

You may wish to bring some of your own favourite treats and snacks with you for the ride. Bringing a combination of treats will keep you interested in snacking as consistent energy levels are important.



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How much do I need to drink?

Drink, drink, drink! There will be plenty of water provided for you throughout the trip and at the snack stops so please ensure you stay well hydrated. We do not recommend energy gels for a ride of this nature; it is not a race. If you opt to bring your own, please ensure you get used to them while training, as they can cause stomach upsets.

What about toilets?

You may be getting used to being out on your bike for long periods of time and noticed that toilet facilities are not always in the most convenient of places. This is also true of the ride itself. There may be occasions where you may need to discretely stop in a natural area at the side of the road. You will need to take baby wipes, nappy sacks and paper in order to make sure you leave no trace. These can then be discarded in the nearest bin. You can also quickly stop and ask at a local café and buy something small to keep the owner happy!

What can I do to prevent illness during the challenge?

Illness can spread through the group very quickly when you are living closely together so it's important to bring **antiseptic hand sanitiser** for use after the toilet and before eating to minimise the spread of germs. Also, avoid sharing water bottles and sharing each other's food or sweets as this spreads germs very easily, even if you are being careful.

What if I have any issues during the trip?

Our leaders are very experienced and work very hard to ensure your trip runs as smoothly and enjoyably as possible, and we're sure that you'll have a wonderful time. If you do have any concerns or problems during the trip **please talk to the crew and give them the opportunity to explain or rectify things while they are able**. They are all very approachable!

What will happen in the case of an emergency on this challenge?

Your leaders will be equipped with mobile phones, first-aid kits and other safety apparatus where necessary. They always have access to our 24-hour emergency back-up in the UK. Our leaders are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary should local conditions dictate. If you are feeling unwell on this trip, tell your leaders and listen to their advice as **your health and safety is our top priority**.

How much money will I need to bring with me?

We recommend that you take extra money for **personal expenses** as there will be opportunities to buy souvenirs on the trip, and please take a credit card in case of an emergency. You will also need to **set aside funds** for any meals not included in the trip itinerary, and anything you might choose to do in any free time. Where meals are not included there is always plenty of choice for all budgets. Alcohol is not provided, so allow for that if you want to try out the local beers in the hotel bar! You may also wish to stop at cafés during the day to soak up the continental atmosphere! It's up to you, but bring enough to cater for your requirements – everyone is different!

If for reasons due to fitness, illness or any unforeseen circumstances, you have to depart from the group arrangements, you must ensure that you have enough funds to cover any resultant costs – for example, extra hotel accommodation or meals. Some of these may be recoverable through your travel insurance, depending on your cover and the circumstances.

Will there be Wi-Fi, phone reception and charging points?

The Wi-Fi in the hotels may not be as fast as you're used to at home and phone reception may be limited in some locations. You will only have access to power for charging devices when in the hotels.

Do I need travel insurance?

As part of your booking conditions, it is **compulsory that you ensure you have adequate travel insurance cover** to cover you for cycling. Participants residing in the UK can purchase insurance through our website with Insure2Travel via [this link](#); otherwise you are able to source your own preferred cover with a company of your choosing.



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When will we know the meeting details?

The exact meeting arrangements are usually confirmed several months prior to the trip departure so that you can make your travel arrangements in good time.

What do I need to bring?

Refer to the **Kit List** sent to you to ensure that you have all the essentials for a comfortable trip. It is best to wear cycle jerseys with a wicking property as cotton tends to retain water and can be uncomfortable. Don't forget your charity tops too! If you are still to buy some kit don't forget that Cotswold Outdoor, Snow and Rock, Cycle Surgery and Runners Need offer all Discover Adventure participants **15% off** any purchases you make with them. Please ask us for the code if you do not have this already.

What do I need to carry?

You'll need to carry whatever you want with you when you're cycling as you won't have access to your main luggage. You can stow items such as a jacket in one of the vehicles if you no longer want it, but bear in mind that vehicles could be sorting out a problem some distance away when you may want it again! Many people try to ride light and fit whatever they need in their back pockets, but it depends on the weather and your personal preference – many ride with a small backpack or waist-pack.

What happens to my luggage during the cycle?

Our vehicles take your luggage to the hotel each day. Space in the vehicles is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft rucksack or expedition-style kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already.

What are the passport and visa requirements?

A valid 10-year passport is essential; with at least six months remaining before expiry. There are no visas required for UK nationals currently, you can refer to the foreign travel advice [given here](#) for more information if you would like to. If you do not have a UK passport, it is your responsibility to check the entry requirements with your own embassy, so please do so in good time.

How can I find out more about the requirement for vaccinations?

You will need to ensure that you have the vaccinations required for this trip prior to travel. You can find some guidance and information on the www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk website. Always consult your local GP or travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements.

Passenger Portal

We have a **Passenger Portal** which will enable you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

Download the app!

We use the **VAMOOS travel app** that can be downloaded from the App store to your smartphone. The app can be used offline, and allows you to access all of your challenge documents from your phone. Just download the app and enter your unique code at the prompt (**please ask for your specific code if you do not have it**).

