

Tour Organiser: John Upton

Saturday 17th to Saturday 24th October 2026

A fixed-base inland road tour centred around the town of Cocentaina, about 30 miles north of Alicante.

This area of Spain is a beautiful, varied landscape in the Alicante province, characterised by the mountainous terrain of Serra de Mariola, with its fertile valleys of olive groves, almonds, and citrus, crisscrossed by quiet roads perfect for cycling. All centred around a historic town with Moorish and Christian influences, a castle, and rich traditions. It offers a mix of nature, gastronomy featuring local produce like nisperos, history, and vibrant festivals, serving as a hub for outdoor activities.

This holiday is half board (breakfast and evening meal provided) including some of the local wine and beer.

Itinerary

Saturday 17th October 2026 Arrival

Arrivals to Alicante airport will be picked up by prior arrangement and driven back to the accommodation. You can then relax and enjoy the rest of the day, getting to know your fellow cyclists as they arrive

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Guest house
- Meals: (D)

Sunday 18th October 2026 Bocairent

Easing us into the first day in the saddle, something relatively short. A steady climb takes us to the historic town of Bocairent. We return along a former railway line and have an exhilarating descent back to Muro then Cocentaina.

- Route distance: 47.0km
- Route altitude gain: 515m
- Accommodation: Guest House
- Meals: (B, D)





Monday 19th October 2026 Carrasqueta

The Carrasqueta is a classic climb often used on La Vuelta a España. It is a long climb but well graded. The most challenging part is having lunch halfway up!

- Route distance: 69.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1374m
- Accommodation: Guest House
- Meals: (B, D)

Tuesday 20th October 2026 Coll de Rates

A challenging ride but a classic for cyclists everywhere. Not to be missed is its mountain top restaurant with wild boar stew and apple strudel. Note, this is the longest, hardest day but, as it is an out-and-back route with a couple of loops, there is the option to cut out for example the middle ~45km and head back early if the prospect of nearly 2000m of climbing does not appeal on the day!

- Route distance: 105.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1872m
- Accommodation: Guest House
- Meals: (B, D)

Wednesday 21st October 2026 Rest Day

Plenty of ways to enjoy a day off cycling: visit the iconic castle perched at the top of the hill; visit one or more of the local museums, galleries or churches; wander around the town and enjoy the general medieval ambiance; experience one or more of the local cafes or bars; sit on the roof-top terrace at the guest house with your favourite tipple and a good book. Alternatively, if there is enough interest we can go on one of a handful of other local rides for part or all of the day

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Guest House
- Meals: (B, D)

Thursday 22nd October 2026 Beniarres Lake & Millena

Thursday is market day in Cocentaina. We will therefore do two relatively short loops, so that those wishing to visit the market can do so by missing the morning loop, but still come out cycling with the group in the afternoon. Morning loop - Beniarres Lake - 42km, 606m elevation - quite an easy ride but no less spectacular for that. Some people ride this in the afternoon of arrival day if they arrive early enough. Afternoon loop - Millena - 54km, 1043m elevation - A fairly local ride taking in numerous small villages and including the infamous 'Wall of Tollos' a short but challenging climb. Lunch can be taken in Millena, after which a mostly downhill ride takes you back to Cocentaina.

- Route distance: 96.0km



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- Route altitude gain: 1649m
- Accommodation: Guest House
- Meals: (B, D)

Friday 23rd October 2026 Back of Benicadell

As its name suggests this ride goes right around the Sierra Benicadell. A stiff climb near the end leaves us with an easy last 20kms or so.

- Route distance: 83.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1244m
- Accommodation: Guest House
- Meals: (B, D)

Saturday 24th October 2026 Departure

Transfers back to Alicante airport

- No cycling
- Accommodation: None
- Meals: (B)

Dates and Prices

Cost

- Land only price: £825

Payment Schedule

Deposit to be paid on booking, final payment by 17/07/2025

Price includes:

- Transfer from Alicante Airport to Guest House on 17-Oct-2026
- Transfer from Guest House to Alicante Airport on 24-Oct-2026
- 7 nights guest house, half board, sharing room
- Local wine and beer
- Bike hire collection and return
- Secure overnight bike storage
- Washing and drying of cycle clothing each day
- Bike wash/maintenance area

Price does not include:

- Lunches
- Coffee stops or snacks



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- Admittance to any tourist attractions similar
- Flights
- Transfer to/from any where other than Alicante Airport
- Bike hire
- Single room supplement - £300

Cancellations

Written Notice Received	Cancellation Charge
17/07/2026	100
17/10/2026	Full amount

The price of £825 (land only) is based on a minimum number of 4 people taking part in the holiday. If there are insufficient bookings by Friday 17th July 2026, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

Holiday Information

Grade and Area Covered by the Holiday

This Holiday is classed as Energetic.

From our base in Cocentaina we will explore the surrounding countryside in a series of day rides.

The terrain is rarely flat and often mountainous, with olive groves, lakes, valleys and gorges.

We will be travelling through the El Comtat region.

Travel and Communication

The tour starts and finishes at the guest house in Cocentaina. There will be a free minibus service to collect and return you to the airport in Alicante which will run several times per day and can accommodate bicycles should you bring one. For any of you not planning to travel via Alicante Airport, please aim to arrive after 3pm and depart by 11am.

Travel to the start and from the finish is not included in this holiday except where stated. It is very important that you note that neither your Tour Organiser nor Bikexplore are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting point. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you may incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before finalising travel arrangements, you should ensure that the tour is definitely going ahead.



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Should there be insufficient bookings or pandemic travel restrictions are re-imposed, we reserve the right to cancel the tour at any time. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and accommodation or wait until you have been told the tour will go ahead. In the event of the tour being cancelled we will not be responsible for any losses incurred outside what you pay us.

We will use WhatsApp to communicate details like café stops, meal arrangements, places of interest and any emergencies on route. Ideally everyone will bring a smart phone and be happy to be included in the group.

If you are unable to join the WhatsApp group I can only communicate with you in an emergency.

Accommodation

The maximum number of participants will be 12 not including the Tour Organiser.

We will stay in a bike-friendly traditional guest house with with a variety of different rooms with different configurations possible.

In addition to the bedrooms, it benefits from:

- * A roof terrace
- * 2 lounge areas
- * 2 dining rooms, also available outside of meal times
- * Wifi
- * Secure bike storage
- * A bike wash area
- * Bike maintenance facilities

The house is in the 'casco antiguo' (old quarter) in a quiet area of Cocentaina, but within a 5 minute walk of local amenities such as shops, banks, bars, pharmacies etc. There is a small bike shop 5 minutes walk away, and a Decathlon within a 30 minute walk.

There is a small health centre for minor illnesses or injuries, with the major hospital in the city of Alcoy

Meals, Health and Diet

Evening meals are provided. These will accommodate dietary requirements as long as stated at the time of booking.

Basic self-service breakfast is provided, e.g. muesli, yogurt, cereal, fruit and toast.



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We will frequently be travelling through rural areas and will stop at cafes during the rides whenever possible but you should buy and carry sufficient food and drink for lunch in case of emergencies. There will be somewhere to buy food at least once per day.

Check which meals are provided in the Payment Schedule and ensure you have access to sufficient monies to cover any meals you will need to buy.

Check that you have informed the Tour Organiser of any dietary requirements in your Booking Form.

Please remember to pack any medications that you need to take regularly.

Health – please check the current Foreign Office advice for Spain

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/spain/health>

Cycles and Equipment

A touring cycle, hybrid, tandem, recumbent or lightweight road bike would all be suitable for this holiday, since we will endeavour to avoid tracks if possible.

You should ensure your cycle is well maintained, paying particular attention to wheels, tyres and brakes.

A low bottom gear (eg. small chainring the same size or smaller than the largest cog on your rear wheel) is recommended; if unsure about gears, please talk to the Bikexplore Organiser about them.

Mudguards are optional but demonstrate respect to those who are following you in wet weather.

Lights are recommended in the very unlikely event of arriving back late. A bell is advised and bring a bike lock for security. Water bottles are required to ensure you are hydrated at all times.

You will be expected to carry sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs, including a spare inner tube. There may not be many bike shops on route and they are never when you need them.

You are advised to use 28mm tyres, or larger, to suit the variable terrain.

You will not need to carry luggage, but a rack-top pack or bar bag will be useful for carrying wet weather gear, spare clothing needed for the day, camera, emergency rations and a map.

For those of you wishing to hire a bike, we will arrange for collection and return from either <https://www.xabiasbike.com/alquiler-de-bicicletas> or <https://www.cafeciclista.com/bike-hire-in-costa-blanca/>





Rides, Rest Days and Fitness

The holiday is for 6 whole days and has 1 rest day, with 7 nights accommodation.

This is a centre based holiday with led rides available each day, on 5 days.

Most of the roads are minor and used by rural traffic and will be hilly in parts. We may need to use some busier roads at times but avoid them as much as possible.

Part of the route may take in greenways or similar.

Most of each cycling day may be spent cycling. People will be expected to ride at their own pace and often in loose groups, at around 12-18 kmph on the flat (though in truth this is aspirational as there are very few flat roads!), slower up hills, usually meeting up at cafes for lunch and refreshment breaks. You will be notified of the two or three available or recommended refreshment stops each day.

It is expected that you may want to stop for photographs, look at the view or explore and this is okay. You are on holiday.

Inevitably, you might consider parts of the route hilly, and there is no back-up vehicle so you need to be fit to get the most out of this tour.

It is essential to get out on your bike and do comparable rides before the tour starts.

There may be steep descents too, so you should be able to negotiate these safely.

Please note it may not always be possible to follow the itinerary exactly due to road works or weather etc, as things do not always go as planned. In these circumstances, you will be advised of alternative arrangements.

The Organiser will not always be at the front of the group but may be anywhere within it, as circumstances require, so you will need to be aware of the route and likely stopping places each day.

Weather, Clothing and Culture

Lightweight clothing, suitable for a range of temperatures is needed and possibly smarter, warmer clothing for the evenings.

Lightweight waterproofs/windproofs will be needed.

Sun cream, lip balm and sun glasses are recommended along with insect repellent and bite cream.

My packing list is available on request - advisable if this is your first tour.



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The temperature in October is likely to be around 22 degrees in the day, dropping to around 12 degrees at night. On average some rainfall can be expected on 1-2 days of the tour with an average total of 3.7 mm of rain per month.

The weather can be variable, with a possibility of both heat waves and cold, wet weather, so be prepared for all possibilities including storms.

The best protection from the sun is to cover up. Daytime temperatures are likely to be cooler in the hills. You may need a windproof/thermal for evenings and for early morning descents from hill stations as it can feel cool.

Maps and Guides

A gpx file covering each day's route will be provided before the start of the tour.

If you have any other mapping needs, please let the Tour Organiser know at least 1 month before the start of the trip.

If you would like a map of the area, the Michelin Costa Blanca 123 covers it.

Travel Insurance and Vaccinations

For UK nationals traveling abroad, travel insurance is essential. Please check if your insurer has requirements for cyclists eg wearing a helmet.

Current Covid and Influenza vaccinations are recommended for participants of 75 years of age and over and those deemed medically vulnerable.

You should ensure that you have a valid GHIC card and that you bring it with you:

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>

Passport, Visa and Monies

UK citizens must hold a passport that is still valid for at least 3 months at the end of the tour.

At the time of writing, UK citizens do not need an ETIAS travel authorization. However, this is due to come into operation in the last quarter of 2026, so please check <https://travel-europe.europa.eu/en/etias> regularly before booking on the tour, before booking flights, and before the tour itself.

EES will already be in place, which may lead to some delay on arrival.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-entryexit-system>

Holders of non-UK passports are advised to check whether they require a visa.

The local currency is the euro.





Tour Organiser Contact Details

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