

Andalusian bike and explore

Tour Organiser: John Upton

Sunday 18th to Monday 26th April 2027

Ever wished that you had a bit more time to explore the places you are cycling through? Thought there should be a bit more to touring that ride-eat-sleep-repeat?

Not only does this tour visit some truly spectacular towns and villages, but each overnight stop is for 2 nights, giving you the chance to explore and get a feel for the place.

Average temperature for the area in April is low 20s and with relatively low rainfall, we can hope for some great cycling weather.

This is a 9 day trip, with 5 of those moving on in the saddle. A variety of walks have been planned for the other days to help you explore, but you can join these or otherwise as you see fit.

This is a road-based trip, keeping to cycle lanes and quieter roads wherever possible.

Itinerary

Sunday 18th April 2027 Malaga to Monda

We will meet at the Bike2Malaga bike-hire shop on Calle Hoyo de Esparteros in the centre of Malaga at 10:30am. Those who wish to can hire from them - I have used them many times and always found their bikes and service excellent. I aim for us to leave at 11am, sticking to the dedicated cycle lanes for the first 7km to the outskirts of the city, then relatively quiet roads winding up into the mountains. Lunch will be at a restaurant along the way and then on to our destination for the next 2 nights: the 4 star Hotel Castillo de Monda, including an outdoor swimming pool. It's quite a climb to get there, but truly worth it for this magnificent converted castle perched on the hill above the town. <https://hotel-castillo-de-monda.bookstaygo.com/>

- Route distance: 46.0km
- Route altitude gain: 820m
- Accommodation: Hotel Castillo de Monda
- Meals: Self-Catering

Monday 19th April 2027 Exploring Monda

I've planned a walk of 17km walk which includes the ancient Roman road, but it can easily be shorted to 13km or 8km as you wish as it circles around the town. Either join one of these or explore on your own, perhaps heading for the local museum, winery or olive mill, or maybe trying to find all of the towns fountains.<https://castillodemonda.com/things-to-do-in-monda/>

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel Castillo de Monda
- Meals: (B)

Tuesday 20th April 2027 Monda to Ronda

Our longest (and certainly hilliest!) day. Hard work, but surely worth it to reach Ronda with it's beautiful old city perched on the edge of a cliff. We'll stop for lunch in El Burgo, then it's a long climb through the wilderness before a welcome decent to our destination, with some breath-taking views and mountainside-hugging roads along the way. Our rooms for the next two nights are at the 4 start Hotel Don Miguel, located next to Ronda's famous New Bridge, overlooking the gorge. It has a café and terrace with spectacular views.<https://donmiguel.hotelronda.org/en/>

- Route distance: 84.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1755m
- Accommodation: Hotel Don Miguel
- Meals: (B)

Wednesday 21st April 2027 Exploring Ronda

With the exception of Malaga, Ronda is the largest town that we are visiting. There are countless shops, bars and restaurants as well as old churches and of course the stunning views from the cliff top and down into the gorge. As in Monda, join the planned walk of about 15km (again with shorter options) and/or just get lost in this vibrant metropolis.<https://alisononfoot.com/the-best-things-to-do-in-ronda/>

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel Don Miguel
- Meals: (B)

Thursday 22nd April 2027 Ronda to El Chorro

Back in the saddle, the first half of our day is the reverse of afternoon we spent getting to Ronda with a long but steady climb out of the town followed by a giddy decent to El Burgo for lunch. The afternoon is slightly flatter and more inhabited than the morning, so we'll likely stop in Ardales for refreshments before heading on to El Chorro. Keep an eye open for Skull Rock on the final decent! The 3 start La Garganta Hotel is my favourite of the trip. Located in a converted flour mill, it's rooms are large, comfortable and to a high standard.

The views into the gorge are spectacular, even when swimming in the open air pool. Oh, and the food's not bad either!<https://lagarganta.com/en/>

- Route distance: 60.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1060m
- Accommodation: La Garganta Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Friday 23rd April 2027 Exploring El Chorro - Caminito del Rey

One of the highlights of the trip is surely the walk through the Caminito del Rey, famous cliffside walkway pinned along the steep vertical walls of the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes (Gaitanes Gorge). If anyone doesn't fancy this and/or there is time, there are other walks in the area. Alternatively, the hotel is so nice, perhaps just spend the day reading by the pool.<https://www.caminitodelrey.info/en>

- No cycling
- Accommodation: La Garganta Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Saturday 24th April 2027 El Chorro to Antequera

The first (main?) option for today is to spend the morning walking the 9km circular walk taking in the Arabic steps - an ancient pass through the mountains. After lunch, we'll then take the 30km route up to Antequera, another beautiful old town. If you don't fancy the walk, then why not take a longer (and slightly flatter) 40km route to Antequera? This one takes you passed the entrance to the Caminito del Rey and sprawling reservoir that is Embalse del Guadalhorce. Why not stop in at one of the bars and enjoy the view, or even go for a swim? Our destination for the next 2 nights is Hotel Manzanito, a charming but relatively basic hotel in the bustling old town.

- Route distance: 30.0km
- Route altitude gain: 650m
- Accommodation: Hotel Manzanito
- Meals: (B)

Sunday 25th April 2027 Exploring Antequera

Antequera is another beautiful town, and this one quite large, you could quite happily spend hours wandering the streets. Of particular interest could be:

- * Alcazaba de Antequera - an 11th century moorish castle at the top of the town and its surrounding buildings
- * Dolmen de Menga - a megalithic tomb and burial site dating back thousands of years
- * Torre del Hacho - a watch tower atop a hill just outside of the town
- * Antequera bullring

Alternatively, if you fancy something more energetic, there is the option for a 5km ride to the base of El Torcal de Antequera - a World Heritage Site national park. It has interesting

rock formations and great views, there is a planned 15km hike, though shorter options are possible.

<https://antequera.co.uk/alcazaba-antequera>

<https://en.andalucia.org/listing/dolmen-de-menga/15920101/>

<https://turismo.antequera.es/en/interest-points/bullring/>

<https://turismo.antequera.es/en/activity/the-torcal-of-antequera/>

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel Manzanito
- Meals: (B)

Monday 26th April 2027 Antequera to Malaga

The morning of our last day is sees us climb 500m in the first 10km to get over the impressive El Torcal de Antequera. From then on it's downhill (nearly) the whole way back to Malaga. The usual quieter roads until we hit the outskirts, then largely cycle lanes to take us back to the bike hire shop. There are a few small towns along the way were we can grab some lunch and/or snacks.

We'll aim to be back at the by 4pm, but say 5pm to be on the safe side. The airport is 30 minutes away on the underground.

- Route distance: 58.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1000m
- Accommodation: None
- Meals: (B)

Dates and Prices

Cost

- Land only price: £1000

Payment Schedule

Deposit to be paid on booking, final payment by 01-Mar-2027

Price includes:

- Breakfasts
- Entrance to Caminito del Rey

Price does not include:

- Any food other than breakfast
- Admittance to other unplanned attractions
- Alcohol

- Flights
- Taxi/transfer costs
- Bike hire
- Single room supplement - £600 extra (all singles are actually doubles or twins to yourself)

Cancellations

Written Notice Received

Cancellation Charge

01-Mar-2027

£200 (deposit)

02-Mar-2027 onwards

Full amount paid

The price of £1000 (land only) is based on a minimum number of 4 people taking part in the holiday. If there are insufficient bookings by Monday 01st March 2027, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

Holiday Information

Meals, Health and Diet

Breakfast

Breakfast is provided within the price of the tour. In the first 3 hotels, it will be whatever they provide. The last hotel does not provide breakfast, so we will go to a local cafe around the corner.

Lunch

We'll get lunch on the road. This will be in cafes and bakeries where available, otherwise restaurants. Lunches are not covered in the price of the tour. Please ensure you have access to sufficient monies to cover these.

Dinner

Dinner will either be in the hotel in which we are staying, or in a restaurant close by, though there is no obligation to have dinner with the group if you prefer otherwise on some of the evenings. It is not included within the price of the tour.

Snacks and drinks whilst cycling

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 snacks and drinks in case of emergencies.

Health



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

Please check the current Foreign Office advice for Spain: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/spain/health>

Diet

Please informed us of any dietary requirements in your Booking Form.

Passport, Visa and Monies

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

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

You can visit Spain without a visa for up to 90 days in a 180-day period, for tourism or business.

At the time of writing, ETIAS is still not live, but this may change before the start of the tour: https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias_en

The local currency is the euro. I recommend you bring 100 euros for emergencies, though pretty much everywhere takes card payments these days.

Note that ATMs can be (in fact, in my experience are always) expensive. I recommend bringing a visa/mastercard and using that whenever possible. Personally I have a Wise card that I can top up with euros easily from a phone app.

Cycles and Equipment

You are of course welcome to bring your own bike, but I suggest you consider hiring as it is convenient and (depending on your choice of bike) maybe cheaper than paying bike luggage on some of the budget airlines. Bike hire is not included in the price of the holiday. I have hired from Bike2Malaga (<https://www.bike2malaga.com/en/>) several times and have always found them excellent, though there are other bike hire places not far away.

Personally, I will likely go for one of the trekking bikes, but feel free to go for one of the gravel or road bikes if you prefer. If you want to use an E-bike, that's completely fine too.

If you hire and you want to bring e.g. saddle or pedals, that's fine, though note Bike2Malaga can provide most pedal types.

Helmets are mandatory, bring one or hire as you like.

Every hire bike comes with a pump, tyre levels, a spare tube and a lock (though the locks are heavy, so you may want to bring your own 'cafe lock'). I will have a puncture repair kit and some basic tools. If you do bring any tools, I would recommend ones that you are prepared to lose - I lost my favourite multitool to Customs a year or two back :(If you bring your own lock, a 'cafe lock' should be fine as all overnight bike storage is secure.





Lights are recommended - it is unlikely we will need them, but better to be safe than sorry.

You will need at least 1 water bottle, but I would recommend 2.

Grade and Area Covered by the Holiday

This holiday is classed as 'Energetic'. From Malaga we head northwest, then loop east, coming back into Malaga from the north.

Travel and Communication

The tour starts and finishes at the Bike2Malaga bikeshop on Calle Hoyo de Esparteros in the centre of Malaga. We meet at 10:30am and we'll aim to arrive back by 4pm (say 5pm to be on the safe side).

Travel to the start and from the finish is not included in this holiday, though I will find out all of our arrival and departure times at Malaga Airport and share this around.

I will be travelling over from the UK the day before we start and going home the day after we finish, staying both times at the 'Holiday Inn Express Malaga Airport', mainly as I will be getting an early flight home and it is a 15 minute walk from the airport. If you are doing similarly, feel free to book at the same hotel, we can meet up. For anyone wishing to bring their own bike, this hotel will also store bike box at a charge of 5 euros per day as long as you stay there at least 1 night.

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.

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.

Maps and Guides

Gpx files will be provided of each day's cycling as well as the walking options as specified in the itinerary.





It is recommended that you have your own means of navigating in case you do need to cycle on your own for any reason.

Rides, Rest Days and Fitness

The holiday is for 9 whole days, 5 of which are cycling, every other day being for exploring the town/area in which we are staying.

It is a moving-on tour and you will be expected to carry your own luggage. Most days will will aim to leave at 9am after breakfast, to arrive by 5pm.

Most of the roads are minor and used by rural/tourist traffic and as you will appreciate from the elevation that we gain on many of the days, it will be hilly. We may need to use some busier roads at times, but avoid them as much as possible. Roads are generally good, but like with everywhere else, some are less good.

Most of each cycling day will be spent cycling. People will be expected to ride at their own pace and often in loose groups, at around 10-12 mph on the flat, slower up hills, usually meeting up at cafes for lunch and refreshment breaks. You will be notified those available or recommended refreshment stops each day.

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

It is essential to get out on your bike and do some 60km 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 Tour 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.

Tour Organiser Contact Details

Tour Manager: John Upton.

Email : jupton100@gmail.com

Mobile: To be supplied before the start of the tour.

I have been leading for Bikexplore for the last 5 years.

<https://bikexplore.co.uk/About-us/John-Upton>





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.

See <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/spain/health> for vaccine recommendations and health risks.

Weather, Clothing and Culture

Lightweight clothing, suitable for a range of temperatures is needed. Warmer clothing (i.e. what you likely be wearing when you leave the UK!) is likely to be needed for the evenings.

A lightweight waterproof jacket should be brought.

Sun cream, lip balm and sun glasses are recommended along with insect repellent and bite cream. Note that there is a range of toiletries and sun creams in the guest house which you are free to use.

The temperature in November is likely to be between 20 and 25 degrees. Rain is certainly possible, perhaps on one or two days, but unlikely.

The weather can be variable, with a possibility of both heat waves and cold, wet weather, so be prepared for all possibilities including storms - please check the forecast a few days before and pack accordingly!

The best protection from the sun is to cover up. Daytime temperatures are likely to be cooler in the hills - and there should be little or no rain (best to bring a light rain jacket just in case). You may need a windproof/thermal for evenings and for early morning descents from hill stations as it can feel cool.

Culture – please check current Foreign Office advice for Spain:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/spain/safety-and-security>

Accommodation

The first 3 hotels that we are staying in are (in my opinion) superb - spacious, comfortable, finished to a high standard. The last one is slightly more basic, but in a nice area and entirely adequate. Both the one in Monda and the one in El Chorro have an outdoor pool.

The maximum number of participants will be 10 including the Tour Organiser.

All the rooms booked are either double or twin. Anyone booking single occupancy will get one of these to themselves.





Rooms will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis with larger rooms typically going to those who are sharing. If you are a single person and wish to not share a twin room, please indicate this on the booking form and pay the supplement and be prepared that you may have a smaller room.

Prices are based on two people sharing a room.

When booking with a partner, please specify if you prefer a twin or double bed, I will accommodate if I can. Most of the reservations are for twin beds, but many can be switched to doubles if I know beforehand.

Each of the hotels has WIFI.

