



White Villages Tour: Tour around Los Pueblos Blancos

Introduction:

These spring and autumn tours around Los Pueblos Blancos is a ride to remember, a five day ride through the gloriously scenic southern province of Andalusia. We run these tours in the spring and autumn as they are the perfect time to cycle in Andalusia, summer is a no go for us cycling in southern Spain. We have four dates where you can join but you can also book this tour as a private tour for six people or more, we also have other routes in Andalusia, please contact us for information. The two tours have different daily distances; Tour A is around 30 miles or 50 km per day, while Tour B is around 40 miles or 65 km per day. We can adapt the tour and distances for private tours, just let us know what kind of daily distances you're looking for.

Starting in Jerez, the home of sherry, we head straight towards the sierra and the first of the famous pueblos, Arcos de la Frontera in the foothills of Sierra de Cadiz. After which we get into the sierra proper, with a few tasty hill included, and pass through El Bosque, Grazalema, Zahara, Ronda, Olvera, Osuna, Carmona amongst others, Tour A finishes in Osuna while Tour B finishes in Seville. Both tours are supported, Tour A has a cycling guide and a support vehicle while Tour B has a support vehicle. Tours include all bed and breakfast, lunch, daily luggage transfers and transfer to beginning and from the end of the tour to and from Jerez, Seville and Málaga.

Details:

Duration: 5 days in length for fixed date tours, for private tours we can adapt the length of the tour to suit your needs. We can also organise extra nights accommodation before the tour starts and when it ends.

Distance: Tour A: 137 miles/ 221 km

Included in tour:

- Bed and Breakfast in cycling friendly accommodation

- Daily luggage transfers
- Cycling Guide and/or Support Vehicle
- Support Vehicle with Tea/Coffee/Water/Snacks and spare parts
- Lunch
- Return transfer to Seville, Málaga or Jerez
- Extensive maps (paper and digital)
- Emergency contacts
- Meet and greet at the beginning of the tour including tour introduction with the chance to take a few photos before you leave.

Extras:

- Bike rental
- Electric bike
- Extra night(s) accommodation (before, during or after)
- Single room supplement

Date: Tours are available from October to April, with four fixed date tours. Please let us know when you would like to travel.

Tour Highlights:

Stunning views and vistas of La Sierra de Cadiz.

Amazing cuisine of Andalucia

Sherry tasting in Jerez

Giralda and the old city of Seville

The amazing Moorish architecture and history dotted around Andalusia

For those GOT fans, the bullring in Osuna, Italica in Santiponce and the Alcázar in Seville.

Off-route and other pit stops:

For our fixed date tour, if you would like to extra mileage please let us know and we will advise you on available detours. For private tours, we can build the tour around your requirements, please let us know.

Setenil de las Bodegas and its town built into the cliff face.

Sample 5 Day supported Itinerary:

Day 1: Jerez to Arcos de la Frontera: 23 miles / 38 km - 971ft / 295 meters ascent

The first day is a nice ride into Sierra de Grazalema, and the shortest day of the tour. You'll leave Jerez around 10.30am and it's a gentle ride out of Jerez toward Barca de La Florida. It doesn't take long to be in the countryside, the road here is very good and even though it's not busy you have a nice hard shoulder to cycle on. After Barca you join a smaller road heading through some villages and hamlets to Junta de los Rios. Here you join the Arcos road, which climbs slightly to where you get your first views of Arcos perched on a cliff across the fields. The toughest climb today is the climb into the centre of Arcos itself.

Day 2: Arcos to Grazalema: 36 miles / 58 km - 4774ft / 1455 meters ascent

Day one is to gently ease you into your cycling holiday, whereas day two is a challenge. It begins by descending out of Arcos and heading towards the pretty village of Algar, where we'll stop for a coffee. The route here is up and down, with the more general direction being up. After which we head towards El Bosque, we are now at the base of the main climb and we'll inside the Sierra de Grazalema. The climb to Puerto de la Boyar is around 14km of vary steepness and cut backs, with stunning scenery and so many photo opportunities. Look out for the circling Griffon Vultures as you get closer to the top, an awesome sight, and if one is circling close overhead listen for the beat of it wings. Once you reach El Boyar it's photo time

before descending the 2km into Grazalema, the town that gives the mountains its name.

Day 3: Grazalema to Ronda: 31 miles / 50 km – 4104 ft / 1251meters ascent

Grazalema to Ronda is another stunning day around these southern mountains. It starts off with a choice: you can begin by immediately descending out of Grazalema down to the Zahara Reservoir or, and this would be my recommendation, begin by climbing the 4km to Puerto de Las Palomas before descending into Zahara. Both rides are fantastic but dropping down from Las Palomas to Zahara is stunning, with the road zigzagging below you all the way to the castle at the foot of the mountain. It is a technical 10km descent and care needs to be taken, but it is a fantastic road to descend. Zahara is another picturesque village and was voted prettiest village in Spain a number of years ago. From here you head along the reservoir before heading up to Puerto de Montajaque, a shorter and less steep climb than yesterday's version. Here you're passing by vineyards looking out at the mountain peaks you've just passed over. From Montajaque you join a bigger road which drops down to La Indiana, which sits underneath the cliff where Ronda sits.

Day 4: Ronda to Olvera: 20 miles / 32 km – 1447ft / 441meters ascent

Day four see a lot more downhill than uphill, heading out of Ronda you head down to Arriate until you hit the river, here you begin your climb up to the border of Cadiz and Malaga provinces from where you descend into the village of Setenil. Setenil is a very cool place to visit, a village that grows out of caves in the cliff face, which are now local bars and cafes where you can enjoy a nice coffee. From Setenil you climb out of the village before continuing to descend down towards Olvera. Olvera is another stunning town built around an ancient Moorish fortress.

Day 5: Olvera to Osuna: 30 miles / 48 km – 2191ft / 668meters ascent

From Olvera you're heading into olive producing country. The terrain is rolling with some nice climbs into and out of Algimitas, a sleepy white village. From Algimitas you climb into El Saucejo before joining a bigger road with a nice hard shoulder for you 16 km descent out of the mountains and into Osuna. Osuna is an ancient Moorish castle, it's a great setting with the plains of Seville surrounding it. It was also used recently in the hit series 'Game of Thrones' where it was used as Meereen City, where its Plaza del

Toro was used for Dazak's Fighting Pit! A perfect place to finish a fabulous cycling tour.

Clothing

Although you will be cycling in southern Spain, we do advise you to bring cold weather clothing as you will be spending your nights mainly in the mountain towns which can be quite cool outside of summer. We also advise you to bring rain gear for cycling, you may not need it but if you don't you can keep it in your luggage that gets transferred each day. Also, early morning cycling might be a bit cooler than the middle of the day so a few extra cycling layers are always a good idea, and extra layers can be handed over to the support driver for safe keeping.

For update advice on the weather please consult the Spain's met office's forecast in English here: <http://www.aemet.es/en/portada>

Bikes

You're more than welcome to bring your own bikes, the route is suitable for most bike types, but if you wish we can arrange bike hire for you. Our partner in Seville rents road, hybrid and mountain bikes and all come with helmets. Some people take their own saddle and pedals and swap them for that extra comfort!

Accommodation

We take pride in the b&b accommodation we work with on our cycling tours, they are chosen for being cycling friendly, welcoming and comfortable, all include a Spanish breakfast. The accommodation will also provide secure bike storage.

Fitness

Even our most leisurely tours will have some element of climbing so you will benefit from having done a sufficient amount of training prior to the departure. You will know yourself how far and how long you are able to cycle, so we hope that you have chosen a tour accordingly. You can allow yourself extra time by having an early start if needed, but please be mindful of daylight hours. All our bikes will be fitted with lights, but we would advise to try and finish the day's cycling before it gets dark.

And if a hill is too steep, walk the bike up or give your support vehicle a call! Having scaled the Rocky Mountains without ever being beaten by a 'hill', I have had to push

a bike up a 200 metre long climb in Shropshire, and there's no shame in it!

Food

A cyclist's best friend. We would suggest stocking up on snacks whenever you get a chance, also the support vehicle will have a supply of snacks, tea, coffee and water. Most of the towns and villages will have at least one cafe or pub for extra stops; and we will stop everyday for lunch which is included in your tour's cost.

Roads and Route

Please remember if coming from the UK or Ireland that Spain drives and cycles on the right hand side of the road, this is obviously important to remember, and more so at junctions which can seem to catch people out at first. Parts of our tours will take place on roads and you will be sharing that road with cars. We ask you to be mindful in this case. For example: Signal when you're changing lanes or turning corners and don't cycle more than two abreast.

Here are some of the main Spanish Cycling laws, they will mostly be the same or similar to your country or are otherwise obvious.

- In Spain, bicycles are classified as vehicles and hence have to abide by similar rules and regulations that other vehicles on the road have to.
- Although many of the cycling rules are self explanatory, a number of them are a little ambiguous and most definitely open to interpretation.
- The current law which was updated in May 2014, states that cyclists under the age of 16 are obliged to wear a helmet at all times, whether cycling in urban or non-urban areas.
- Adults over the age of 16 must wear a helmet outside of urban areas, but are exempt when riding up steep hills, are riding during excessive heat or if they are professional cyclists. So does that mean that if you are hot, riding up a hill or a professional cyclist, you are less likely to have an accident?
- All cyclists must ride on the right hand side of the road and never ride against the flow of traffic.
- Cyclists must use any designated bicycle lanes and trails and ride at no more than 30 km/h.

- You must not cycle in a bus lane as they are only intended for public transport.
- Using a mobile phone while cycling is prohibited.
- You are not allowed to listen to music while cycling through headphones or earbuds.
- You must keep both hands on the handlebars when cycling other than to signal.
- You must use hand-signals to indicate your intention to turn or change direction
- You should park your bicycle in designated spaces and must not attach it to trees, benches, traffic lights, street lights and waste bins etc.
- Unauthorised racing is not permitted.
- When riding in bicycle lanes or similar areas, you must take care when approaching junctions which are used by pedestrians or other vehicles.
- Cyclists must not exceed the speed limit of the road or make abrupt or dangerous movements.
- When cycling close to a building, you must allow at least 5m between you and the buildings facade.
- All bicycles must be fitted with a bell, rear reflector and have front and rear lights.
- Reflective clothing must be worn between sunset and sunrise.
- Children under 7 must be carried in an approved seat and must wear a helmet.
- Riding a bicycle on pavements, sidewalks, public parks and other similar pedestrian areas is also not permitted, except at a speed of less than 10 km/h and when the following conditions apply:
 - There are no cycle lanes available to use
 - There are no signs prohibiting cycling.

- The pavement or sidewalk is over 3m wide
- The sidewalk is not crowded and you are able to cycle at a distance of at least 1m from any pedestrian and can cycle in a straight line for more than 5m.
- When pushing a bicycle, you are classed as a pedestrian and can therefore push your bike on the pavement.

Transfer

Each tour includes a transfer from the beginning of your tour to Jerez from Seville or Malaga and at the end of your tour back to Seville, Jerez or Malaga for you, your bike and luggage.

Further Questions

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any other questions on the route or the tour. You can contact us on the following:

Call us at 01524840072

Email us on info@openroadopenskies.co.uk

Tweet us @oroskies

Facebook us www.facebook.com/oroskies/

We also have an FAQ page for you to look through <http://www.openroadopenskies.co.uk/info/faqs>

Enjoyment

We want you to enjoy this adventure. It is, after all, a holiday. Relax, enjoy the ride, take in the country, stop off at areas of interest, chat to the locals and, most importantly, go at your own pace!

May the wind be at your back!

