

Carcassonne To Barcelona Cycle



Duration: 6 days

This challenging, spectacular ride takes us from the beautiful fortified city of Carcassonne, through the rolling hills of Cathar country before reaching the mighty Pyrenees. Here we tackle the long twisting climb of the Port d'Envalira (2408m), in the tiny mountainous kingdom of Andorra; as you reach the top you've have emulated the pros from the Tour de France and Tour of Spain - a huge achievement. From Andorra we cross into Spain, riding south through the stunning Catalan Pyrenees to wonderful Barcelona.

This is a challenging ride over beautiful, testing terrain - you'll be glad to reach Barcelona and celebrate your achievements in this iconic city.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Carcassonne/Toulouse

We meet at our hotel in the ancient fortified city of Carcassonne,* a wonderful place to start our challenging ride. After assembling and checking your bike for tomorrow, any free time can be spent exploring the castle and narrow streets of this fabulous city. We meet up in the evening for dinner and a detailed trip briefing before getting a good night's rest in preparation for tomorrow's efforts.

(Lunch not included)

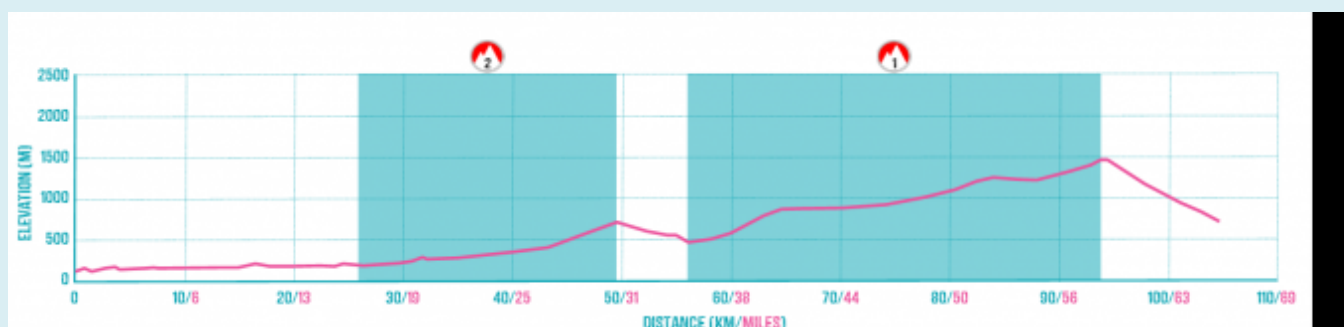
**Transfers are at your own arrangement. It is easiest to fly to Carcassonne and make your own way to the hotel. Toulouse (approx one hour away) may also be an option. Within an agreed time frame we will have crew at Carcassonne airport (and/or train station) to collect and transfer your bike so you only have to worry about your personal luggage. Outside of this time then you'll need to arrange the bike and luggage transfer to the hotel.*

Day 2: Carcassonne – Ax-les-Thermes

An early start takes us south through the foothills of the Aude. This is countryside synonymous with the Cathars, and there are crumbling hill-top ruins scattered around this region, as well as ancient abbeys and churches. Our rolling roads give us a gentle warm-up, and it's beautiful countryside. This is wine country, and we pass photogenic vineyards as we head closer to the Pyrenees. Our terrain becomes hillier as we pass the halfway mark, culminating in the Col de Marmare, a gradual climb bringing us to 1361m. It's a gentle climb and shouldn't be too much for anyone, but it's long and a good benchmark for our first day. From here it's a wonderful descent on hair-pin bends down to the spa town of Ax-les-Thermes. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 115km (70 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE

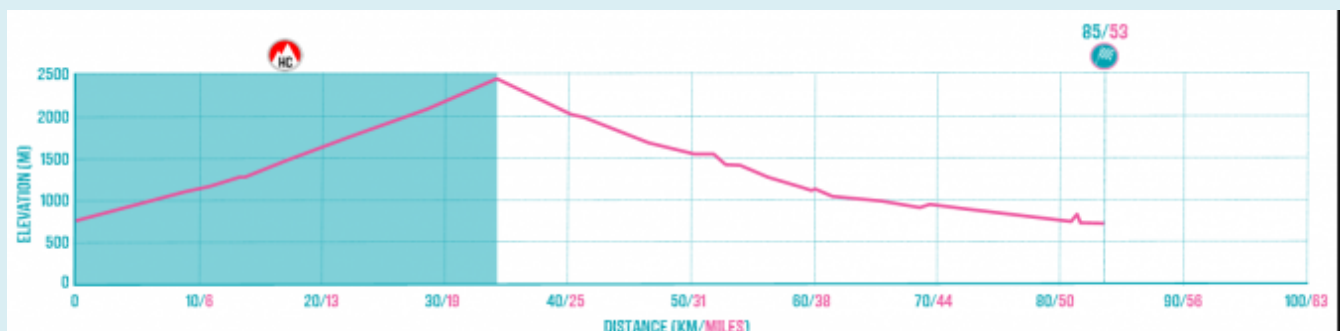


Day 3: Ax-les-Thermes – La Seu d'Argell (Spain)

Today is a day of three countries and two halves – up and down! We set off south from Ax, heading through a gently rising valley; this is a nice warm-up, as the gradient ramps up a little as we near the border with Andorra. It's not until the second half of the climb that the gradient becomes more challenging, so it's all about pacing yourself. The views of the mountain scenery around us are spectacular, with high peaks visible ahead; you may still be able to see snow on their summits. The Port d'Envalira has featured in the Tour de France and Tour of Spain, and is the highest paved road in Europe. As we near the border with Andorra most of the traffic heads through the tunnel, leaving us to appreciate a largely traffic-free finale to our climb. It's a huge achievement as we reach the top, at 2408m. The rest of the day is downhill! We set off down sweeping hair-pin bends which soon settle into a steady descent, passing through small towns and villages as we cross Andorra. We cross into Catalan Spain; our hotel lies in the small town of La Seu d'Urgell, a short distance after the border. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 90km (55 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE

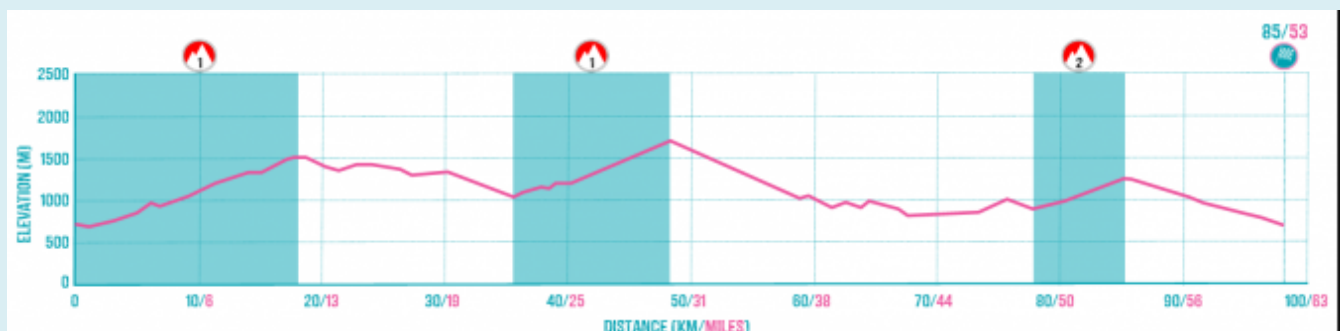


Day 4: La Seu d'Argell – Berga

Another stunning and mountainous day ahead of us, as we ride through the beautiful Catalan Pyrenees. On quiet roads, we pass through shady pine forests and steep rocky mountain slopes – much of the area borders a Natural Reserve. We head uphill almost from the start, to our first col. It's a steep climb in places, but much shorter than yesterday's big effort. A gentle descent gives us some respite before the gradient ramps up again for our next climb – again, quite steep in places. We pass picturesque mountain villages, and there is plenty to take our minds off our legs! Reaching the day's highest point at 1671m, we enjoy an exhilarating descent to Sant Llorenç de Morunys, a lovely mountain town with its 11th-century church and monastery. Our route now rolls along over undulating roads, passing through wooded valleys; the most rugged part of the mountains is now behind us. A short climb throws a last challenge before we have a wonderful downhill ride into historic Berga. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 100km (63 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE



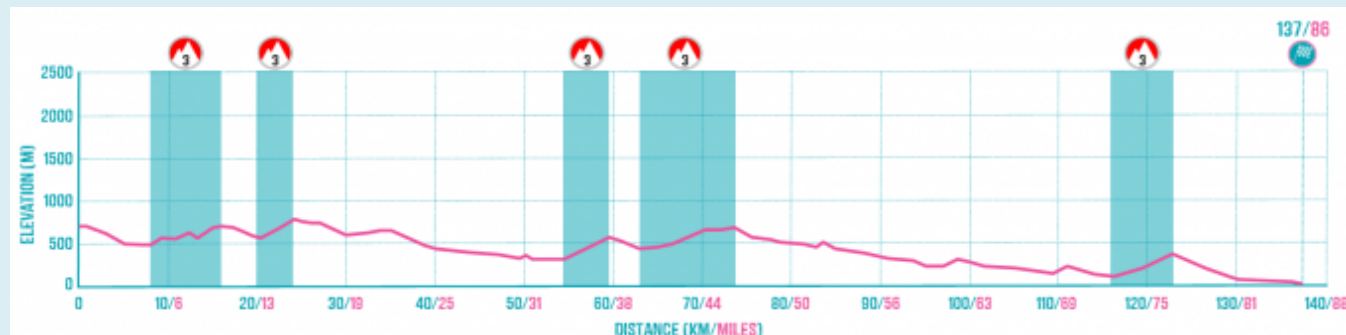
Day 5: Berga – Barcelona

Our last day brings us out of the mountains, on a diverse, undulating day through lovely rural scenery. We pass traditional Catalan villages and small towns with ancient churches as we ride through wooded valleys and farmland. It's a beautiful day and our spirits will be high with the mountains conquered and Barcelona ahead of us. We stop at a viewpoint overlooking the city, then descend and ride together into this wonderful, vibrant city. Scattered with impressive and iconic buildings and monuments, it's one of Europe's most popular cities, with a

cultural heritage including artists such as Dalí, Picasso, Miró and Gaudí. We see the iconic spires of Gaudí's Sagrada Familia basilica on the skyline as we ride, and finish at this unique and impressive symbol of the city. After time to freshen up at our hotel, we head out for an evening of celebrations to mark our monumental challenge. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 130 km (80 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 6: Depart Barcelona

After a leisurely breakfast, you may have time to relax or see the sights, depending on your return flight schedule.

(Lunch not included)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Meals except where specified
- Lunches & Snacks en-route
- 5 nights hotel accommodation on a twin-share basis
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependant on group size)
- Bike transfer from Carcassonne airport to start hotel (with agreed time frame)
- Vehicle support
- Mapping, GPX files and route information

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Transport (inc flights) to Carcassonne and from Barcelona
- Bicycle, cycle helmet (compulsory) and water bottles
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Travel insurance
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | ORANGE

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)



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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 25 Apr 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.