



CYCLE PORTUGAL

PORTUGAL • CYCLE • ORANGE 1

ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

Cycle the length of Portugal! This classic journey follows the fabled N2, Portugal's answer to Route 66, for over 700km from historic Chaves in the north to Faro in the sunny south.

This extraordinarily scenic ride takes us through terraced vineyards and fields of olive and cork trees, along river-banks and over winding hills with sweeping valley views. The undulating landscapes of the Alentejo, with its traditional white-painted houses, give way to the citrus orchards of the Algarve and the breeze of the Atlantic Ocean.

With long days in the saddle offset by shorter ones, and the long, steady climbs rarely steep, this challenge ticks all the boxes – the epic achievement of pedalling the length of a country, at an achievable pace with a hefty dose of cultural discovery!

CYCLE PORTUGAL • 8 DAYS

Day 1: Fly to Porto; transfer to Chaves

On arrival in Porto, we meet our vehicle and drive inland and north to historic Chaves, just a few kilometres south of the Spanish border. Settled before Roman times, the fortified town is known for its hot springs and ancient Roman bridge; the historic quarter is a joy to wander if you have time. We gather for dinner and a briefing, and ensure our kit and bikes are fully prepared for the start of our challenge tomorrow. Night hotel.

(Lunch not included)

Day 2: Chaves – Lamego

A wonderful first day on the bike as we head south through this traditional area of northern Portugal. We pedal through small villages and towns, many of which are fortified with thick walls of castles. The abundant spa towns grew up around the mineral water treatments – popular in the 19th Century despite the lack of paved roads. The road surfaces are good now! Our route is rolling with very little flat and, although there are a few sharper inclines through the day, most hills are fairly steady with plenty of freewheeling descents to keep it varied. Pedalling among the sloping terraced hillsides of the photogenic Alto Douro wine region forms one of today's highlights; the micro-climate here is perfect for port wine grapes. This is the oldest controlled wine region in the world and has World Heritage status. After crossing the wide Douro River itself, which flows from Spain into the Atlantic at Porto, it's uphill to the lovely town of Lamego, dominated by its hilltop medieval castle. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 97km (60 miles)

Day 3: Lamego – Barragem Aguieira

Lamego sits part-way up Montemuro, a low, green mountain which dominates the countryside between the rivers Douro and Paiva. Though a gradual climb, it is one of the longest of our trip and brings us to the highest point on our trip near Bigorne (960m) - though we continue to undulate across the plateau until a wonderful descent with far-reaching views brings us to the bridge over the Paiva River. The rest of the day undulates, with more downhill than up, as we pass through countryside of woods and farmland dotted with palm trees and white-painted terracotta-roofed villages. As we head south we pass through outskirts of larger towns, seeing a more modern Portugal, still with the ever-present backdrop of rolling green hills. As we near the end of our day we cross the River Mondego and end our day near the impressive Aguieira Dam. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 124km (78 miles)

Day 4: Barragem Aguieira – Abrantes

Our longest day takes us over some very lumpy terrain through central Portugal, but after the past two days our legs will be ready for the challenge! Riding alongside the Mondego, Portugal's longest river, for a short stretch, winding roads and short climbs bring us to the pretty village of Góis, where the first significant climb of the day beckons. The wooded slopes are beautiful, and every now and then the trees open up to views over the surrounding remote hills and green valleys. Descending, we traverse this ruggedly beautiful central region, crossing the impressive Cabril Dam and tackling a series of hills through the Serra da Lousã range. Well-preserved villages nestle between granite hillsides and pine forest, while on the climb of Melriça Peak is a monument marking the geodesic centre of Portugal. Though tough at times, today motivates us with its stunning wild scenery, and a visible halfway mark! Our day ends in the attractive town of Abrantes, on the banks of the River Tejo. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 153km (95 miles)

Day 5: Abrantes – Montemor-o-Novo

Crossing the Tejo river, the longest on the Iberian Peninsula, marks a change in scenery and terrain as we ride south on rolling roads through the beautiful Alentejo region. Known for its undulating fields of wheat and cork trees, olives groves and vineyards, it's wonderful cycling country through small towns and villages – and although still hilly, the hills are considerably lower! We pass another reservoir at Montargil, crossing the dam, and head south and gradually uphill to the historic town of Montemor-o-Novo, overlooked by its crumbling castle. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 116km (72 miles)

Day 6: Montemor-o-Novo – Castro Verde

Typically described as flat, the Alentejo disproves that myth today as we continue through beautiful, rolling landscapes which have no significant hills, but very little flat either! As we progress further south, cork becomes more prevalent though we still pass the ubiquitous olive groves and sun-parched corn fields. It's a tiring day, but the charming villages and small towns of white-painted houses, often featuring impressive cathedrals and hermitages, give us plenty of excuses for photo-stops as we head gradually uphill towards historic Castro Verde. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 123km (76 miles)

Day 7: Castro Verde – Faro

We make the most of the predominantly flat morning as we ride through the lower Alentejo, and start ascending once we cross into the Algarve. The landscape becomes greener and wilder again as we cross our last mountain range, the Caldeirão, and enjoy the views from Barranco do Velho, which has featured many times in the Tour of the Algarve professional cycle race and is a fitting place for our last challenge. From here it's downhill to Faro, a wonderful cruising descent of approx 30km, all the way to the end of our ride. Our finish lies on the banks of the Formosa River, where you can smell the salt of the Atlantic Ocean! We meet again for our final dinner together to mark our achievements this week. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 95km (60 miles)

Day 8: Fly Faro - London

After a leisurely breakfast, you are free to explore (depending on flight times) until it's time to transfer to the airport.

(Lunch and Dinner not included)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All meals except where specified, and accommodation on a twin-share basis
 - Flights to Porto and from Faro; and all transfers
 - Aluminum frame road bicycle of a good standard (option to upgrade to carbon frame at extra cost, please ask for details)
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- Discover Adventure leader; local guides/mechanics and drivers
- Full vehicle support throughout the trip
- Local support and back-up equipment

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Cycle helmet (compulsory) and water bottle
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

CYCLE TRAINING WEEKENDS

£180 Special Offer - Only when you book at the same time as registering for your main challenge

Discover Adventure Cycle Training Weekends take place in and around the valleys and ridges of the chalk downs around Salisbury. They are designed to gauge your fitness so that you can be confident you are well prepared for the challenge ahead!

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 23 Feb 2019, and the challenge is subject to change.