

## Cycle Portugal



Duration: 8 days

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!

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### 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.

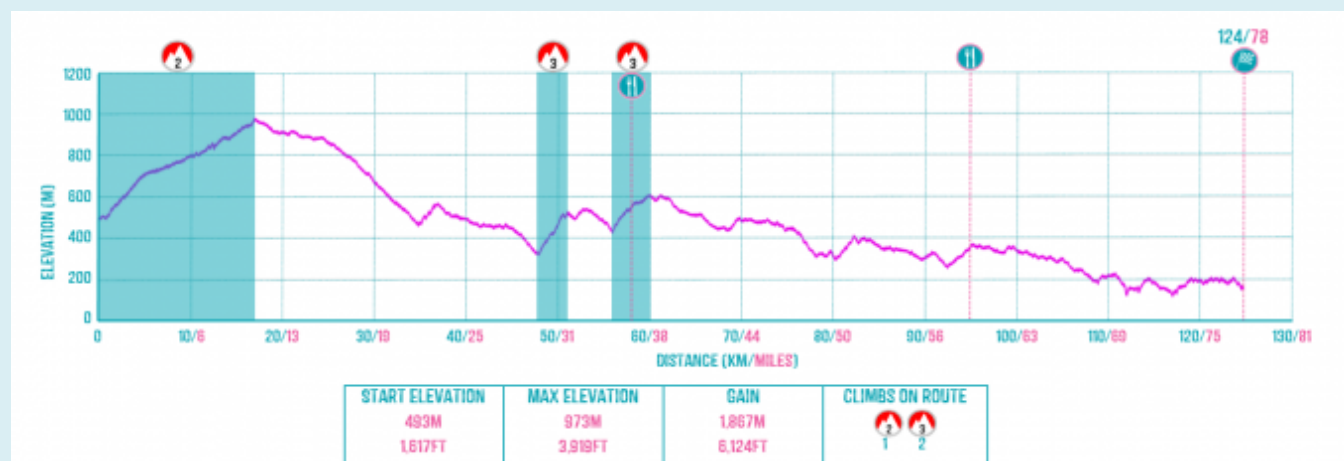
**Cycle approx 101km (62 miles)**

### 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 127km (78 miles)**

## ROUTE PROFILE



### Day 4: Barragem Aguieira – Sertã

Some very lumpy terrain awaits us today as we head through central Portugal. 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; though tough at times, today motivates us with its stunning wild scenery. We finish in the attractive riverside town of Sertã. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx 112km (69 miles)**

## ROUTE PROFILE



### Day 5: Sertã – Montemor-o-Novo

Our longest day sees us leaving the mountains of northern Portugal and crossing into flatter southern Portugal. First, however, we tackle Melriça Peak, where a monument marks the geodesic centre of Portugal. With the day's main challenge behind us so soon, we can enjoy a long stretch of predominant descent (with a few small climbs just to keep it varied!) to Abrantes, on the banks of the River Tejo. The longest river on the Iberian Peninsula, the Tejo 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 and easier! 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. 176km (109 miles)**

## ROUTE PROFILE

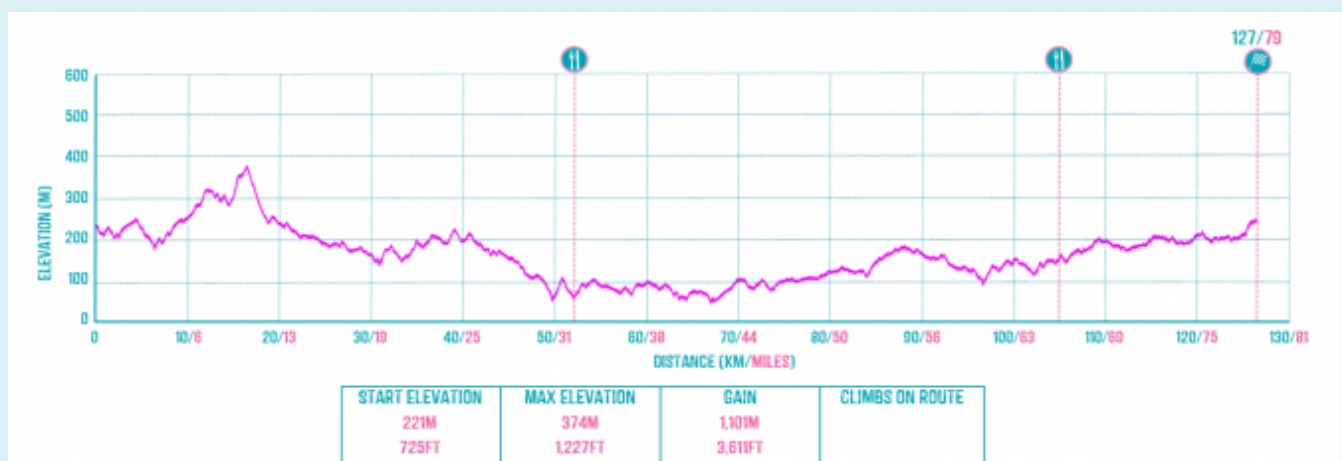


### Day 6: Montemor-o-Novo – Castro Verde

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. 127km (78 miles)

## ROUTE PROFILE



### Day 7: Castro Verde – Faro

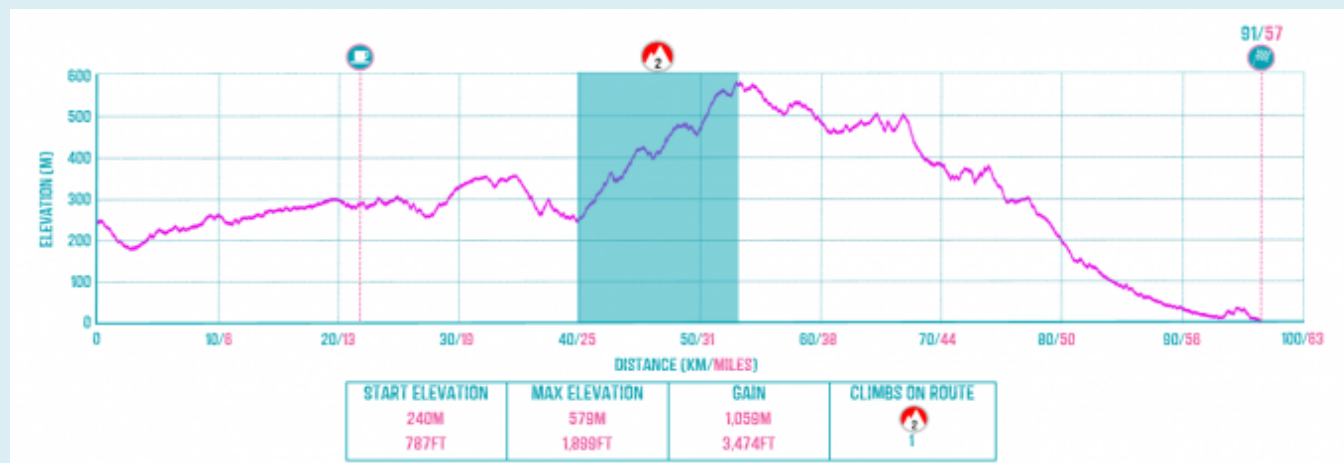
We make the most of the predominantly flat morning as we ride through the lower Alentejo, and start ascending



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. 96km (60 miles)**

## ROUTE PROFILE



## 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)
- 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

## 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](#)

# CHALLENGE INFORMATION

## DETAILED INFORMATION

### Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by an experienced team including Discover Adventure leader, local guide and support crew. The in-country crew know the area and conditions well, and are a great source of knowledge about the regions we pass through. The Discover Adventure leader works closely with the team to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely. Our leaders are selected for their knowledge and experience, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises; they are also trained in first aid. The crew will have mobile phones, medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. The number of crew and support vehicles looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but the team will be looking after every aspect of your trip whether that's transporting your luggage, making sure you are well-fed, and sorting out any mechanical problems. Support vehicles are with the group all of the time, and carry all luggage and spares.

### Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

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## Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick but may also depart from regional airports, and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination and low cost airlines may be used for short haul flights. If you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details.

By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

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## Accommodation

Accommodation is usually in well-located, comfortable 2-3\* hotel(s); standards are generally very good though there may be some variation.

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## Roomshare Arrangements

Accommodation is usually on a twin-share basis in hotels or camp. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation. Please tell us if you know somebody else on the trip that you would like to share with and we will try our best to accommodate your request. If you don't know anyone else in the group don't worry, we always pair you up with someone of the same gender, and a similar age where possible. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

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## Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 20-30 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

**Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.**

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## Food & Dietary Requirements

We like to support local businesses and will source food locally. Lunches will be in restaurants along the route and dinners are usually eaten at the hotel. Do make sure you eat enough to give you the energy for your exertions. Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. If you

know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply.

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## Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by post or email. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration fees, amendment fees and insurance premiums are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

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## PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

### Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

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### Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. To find out if you need a visa you can check your requirements using our partner, Visa Machine, website [here](#); please ensure you allow plenty of time.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check [Fit For Travel](#) for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

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### Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital



you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, as well as details on useful discounts you are entitled to as a Discover Adventure customer. We are always available if you need advice.

If you are still to buy some kit don't forget that Cotswold Outdoor, Snow and Rock, Cycle Surgery and Runners Need offer all Discover Adventure participants **15% off** any purchases you make with them. Please ask us for the code if you do not have this already.



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 17 Sep 2021, and the challenge is subject to change.