



CARCASSONNE TO BARCELONA CYCLE

FRANCE, SPAIN • CYCLE • ORANGE 3

ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

KING OF THE MOUNTAINS CYCLES

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.

CARCASSONNE TO BARCELONA CYCLE • 6 DAYS

Day 1: Arrive Carcassonne/Toulouse

Depending on your flight arrangements, you can either take the group transfer from Toulouse or meet at our hotel in Carcassonne*. The ancient fortified city of Carcassonne is a fabulous sight and a wonderful place to start our challenging ride. Make time to ensure your bike is properly assembled and comfortable for tomorrow. Any free time can be spent exploring the castle and narrow streets of Carcassonne. 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)

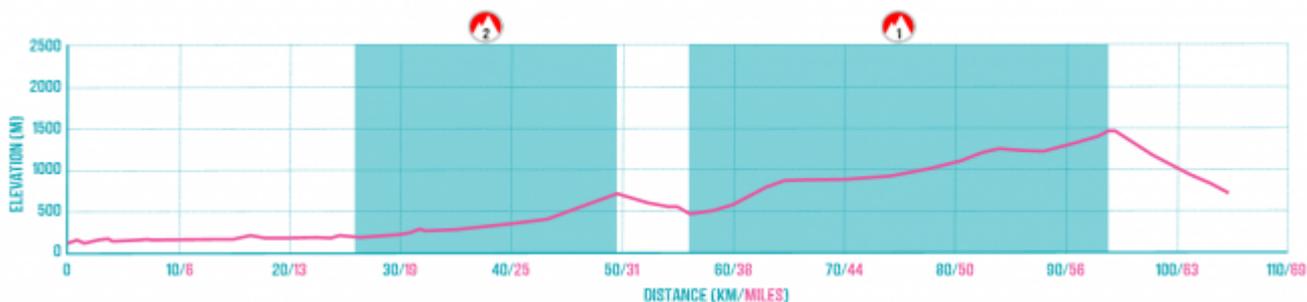
**It is easiest to fly to Carcassonne and make your own way to the hotel. Toulouse (approx one hour away) is also an option. One airport transfer from Toulouse to Carcassonne will be provided at a pre-arranged time.*

Day 2: Carcassonne – Ax-les-Thermes

An early start takes us south out of Carcassonne, and 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. *(Lunch not included)*

Cycle approx 115km (70 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE

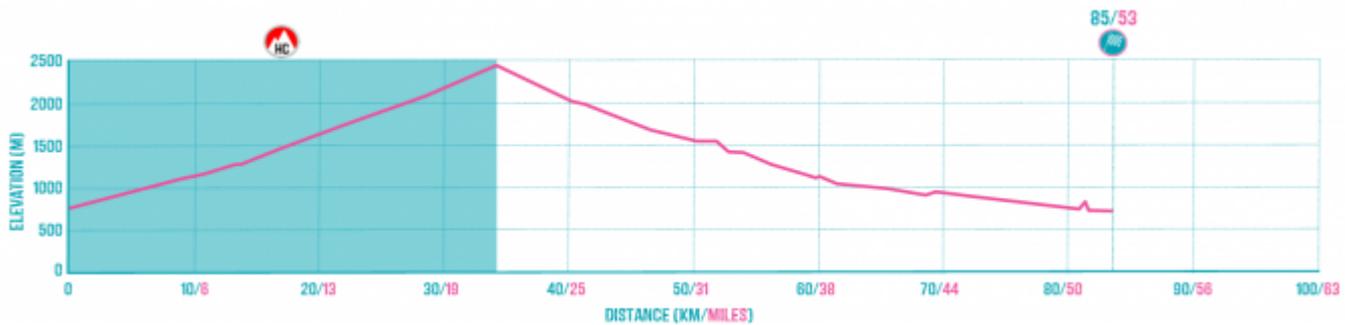


Day 3: Ax-les-Thermes – La Seu d'Argell (Spain)

Today is a day of two halves – up and down! – and three countries! 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. *(Lunch not included)*

Cycle approx 90km (55 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE

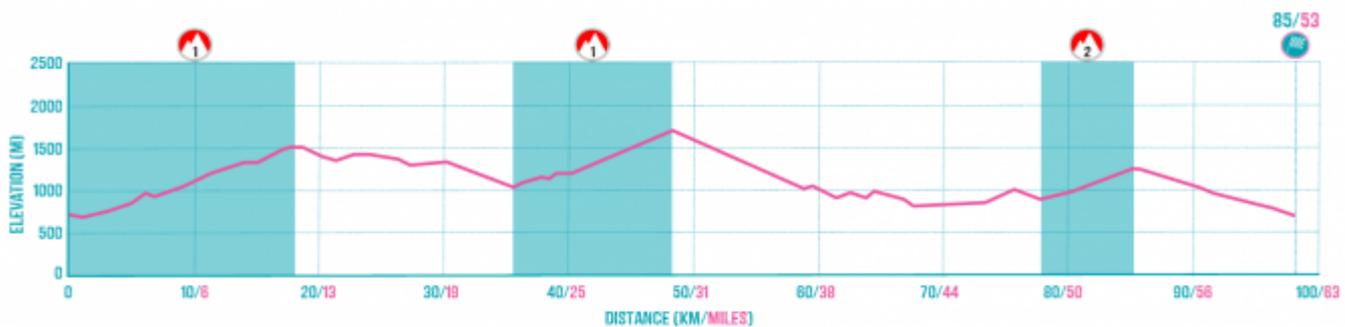


Day 4: La Seu d'Argell – Berga

Another mountainous day ahead of us, as we ride through the beautiful Catalan Pyrenees. On quiet roads, our surroundings are stunning, passing through shady pine forests and steep rocky mountain slopes – much of the area borders a Natural Reserve. We start heading uphill almost from the start, taking us up 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 wooden 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. *(Lunch not included)*

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 wonderful 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. *(Lunch not included)*

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.

A group airport transfer is available, please note this will be chargeable and needs to be requested prior to the trip departure.

(Lunch not included)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Meals except where specified (breakfast and dinner will be provided at hotels each day)
- Snacks en-route
- Accommodation on a twin-share basis
- One airport transfer from Toulouse to Carcassonne will be provided at a pre-arranged time
- Discover Adventure leader and roving crew member for mechanical support/ coaching and support vehicle
- Mapping, GPX files and route information

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Lunch (opportunity to buy lunch to carry with you, or stop in a café en-route) and any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Flights to Carcassonne/Toulouse and from Barcelona
- A return group airport transfer is available, please note this will be chargeable and needs to be requested prior to the trip departure
- Bicycle
- Cycle helmet (compulsory) and water bottles

- 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](#)



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 27 Mar 2019, and the challenge is subject to change.