

## Spain: Girona & Costa Brava

### Bike Vacation Only

With our deep Spanish roots, we bring you the authentic Catalonia—on easy cycling routes and low-traffic country roads that others miss. As you pedal Costa Brava’s charming bucolic landscape, you’ll pass farmland and orchards—stopping at a local home where you’ll enjoy lunch with a family, eating ingredients straight from their garden. Spin through ancient medieval villages—pausing by a secluded, spring-fed lagoon for a traditional Catalan BBQ lunch cooked over an open fire. Here, your charming local host serves authentic seasonal specialties—such as *calçots*, *pa amb oli*, and wild-foraged mushrooms. You’ll also experience the sophisticated side of Costa Brava as you explore the cycle-centric city of Girona, take a boat ride to L’Estartit, and discover Púbol Castle—where Salvador and Gala Dalí lived and left their indelible mark.

### Cultural Highlights

- Learn about the personal life of artist Salvador Dalí during a visit to Púbol Castle.
- Pedal a rural landscape past fields of sunflowers, fruit orchards, and rice fields.
- Enjoy lunch at a typical *mas*—a small Catalan farmhouse—featuring dishes crafted from our hosts’ organic farm.
- Admire one of the finest amphitheaters outside of Rome on a guided audio tour of the Greek and Roman ruins of Empúries.
- Enjoy a scenic private cruise along the Costa Brava.

### What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of easy terrain and moderate hills and is ideal for both beginner and experienced cyclists. Our VBT support vehicle is always available for those who would like assistance with the hills.

**Tour Duration:** 7 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 15-35 miles

**Average Cycling Time:** 2-4 hours

**Group size:** 14-20 max

### Climate Information

**Average High/Low Temperature (°F)**

March 61°/44°, April 64°/47°, May 69°/54°, June 76°/54°, September 78°/62°, October 71°/55°

**Average Rainfall (in.)**

March 1.6, April 1.9, May 2.3, June 2.3, September 3.4, October 3.6

## **DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Girona Old Town Walking Tour / Lake Banyoles Warm-Up Ride / Welcome Dinner**

This morning, meet your local guide and fellow travelers at your first hotel (contact information will be included with your final documents) at 9:00 a.m., then set off on a captivating walking tour of Girona's Old Town. Cross the Onyar River into one of Europe's largest and best-preserved Jewish quarters, and pass notable landmarks such as the Church of St. Felix and Girona's majestic Cathedral—home to one of the world's widest Gothic naves.

After your stroll, change into your cycling attire and shuttle to the nearby Pyrenees foothills, where you'll meet your VBT trip leaders.

Upon arrival, your leaders will lead a brief orientation and bike-fitting before you begin a warm-up ride through scenic mountain valleys and along the shores of tranquil Lake Banyoles. Pause lakeside to enjoy a charming picnic lunch.

This evening, return to Girona for a festive welcome cocktail reception with your fellow travelers, followed by a delicious dinner at your hotel's prestigious restaurant.

### **Today's Ride Choices**

Morning: Warm-Up Ride — 12 km (7 miles)

### **What to Expect:**

Get acquainted with your bike as you cycle on easy paved roads, similar to those you'll experience throughout your Costa Brava bike tour. You'll ride on a mix of quiet two-lane country roads and some busier stretches with light to moderate traffic. Occasionally, you'll follow designated bike paths. This easy, scenic ride brings you to the shores of Lake Banyoles—Catalonia's largest natural lake and the rowing venue for the 1992 Barcelona Summer Olympics, now a popular training spot for rowers.

Cumulative Distance Range: 12 km (7 miles)

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 2: Púbol Castle Visit / Cycle to Platja de Pals

The first full day of your Costa Brava bike tour begins with a scenic ride into the heart of Catalonia's historic Baix Empordà province, where you'll stop in the medieval village of Púbol. Here, you'll visit Púbol Castle, the former home of Gala Dalí—purchased by Salvador Dalí in 1970 as a gift for his wife. Step into the surrealist world of Dalí as you explore original paintings, sculptures, and custom-designed furniture. You'll also find a collection of Gala's haute couture dresses, created exclusively for her by Christian Dior. The castle served as Gala's final resting place, and she is buried in the mausoleum beneath it.

Afterward, continue riding through lush farmlands and tranquil villages, pausing for lunch at your leisure at a local café. This afternoon, pedal to the coastal village of Platja de Pals, where you'll spend your first night along the Costa Brava. This evening, enjoy a special dinner at your hotel's celebrated restaurant.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Púbol to Ullastret — 18 km (11 miles)

Afternoon: Ullastret to Sa Punta Hotel — 16 km (10 miles) | Begur Challenge Loop PLUS — 14 km (9 miles)

### What to Expect:

From Púbol, cycle through the scenic Catalan landscape along narrow country roads that wind past farms and forests, with some rolling hills. For a longer ride, continue through the countryside—occasionally sharing the road with local traffic—for additional mileage and rewarding elevation gain before arriving at your hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 18 – 48 km (11 – 30 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 3: Pals and Peratallada

This morning, you'll ride into the village of Peratallada. Its name translates to "carved stone"—a fitting

label, as much of the town was built from stone quarried from the moat that still partially encircles it. Designated a historic artistic monument, Peratallada is dominated by its impressive castle, which dates to 1065 AD. Restoration efforts at this now privately owned residence revealed traces of a Bronze Age settlement.

After exploring this remarkable village, continue cycling through a lush rural landscape dotted with sunflower fields, fruit orchards, and rice paddies. Soon, you'll step back in time once again as you coast into more of Baix Empordà's medieval villages. In Pals, you'll be charmed by cobbled stone streets and the impressive Gothic Quarter, where facades display distinctive windows, stone balconies, and semicircular arches. The town's Roman wall with its four square towers and the Romanesque clock tower—Torre de les Hores (Tower of the Hours)—dates to the 4th century. Enjoy lunch at your leisure and browse local artists' galleries before cycling back to your hotel.

This afternoon, take time to relax by the swimming pool or stroll down to the nearby beach. This evening, enjoy a sumptuous dinner in your hotel's elegant dining room.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Hotel to Torrent and Peratallada — 26 km (16 miles)

Afternoon: Peratallada to Pals and Hotel — 23 km (14 miles)

#### What to Expect:

Enjoy a morning of easy riding as you glide into Peratallada, followed by an afternoon ride to the village of Pals. After exploring Pals, additional riding is available for those who wish to extend their journey. You'll cycle along narrow country lanes and some busier roads, passing medieval villages before ending with an uphill ride back to your hotel. Today may also offer an additional independent ride for experienced cyclists—ask your trip leaders for details.

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 – 49 km (16 – 30 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 4: Apple Orchards / Organic Farm Lunch / Ride to the Mediterranean**

After breakfast, you'll cycle toward your home for the next three nights on the Mediterranean. Today's leg of your Costa Brava bike tour winds through scenic countryside with the spectacular, snow-capped Pyrenees in the distance. Your destination is the province of Alt Empordà (Upper Empordà), located north of Baix Empordà (Lower Empordà).

Pause your ride after passing through a picturesque apple orchard and enjoy lunch at a traditional *mas*—a small Catalan farmhouse. Your hosts, Eva and Marc, will treat you to a delicious meal featuring ingredients from their organic farm, including rice harvested nearby in Pals.

In the afternoon, continue your ride past a medieval water mill before arriving in the village of Parlava. From here, you may choose to continue cycling or shuttle to your Mediterranean beachfront hotel. Once there, stroll along the seaside bike path into the town of L'Escala, or indulge in one of the hotel's many spa offerings.

This evening, enjoy dinner on your own at one of the hotel's restaurants or follow the beachside path to a nearby restaurant in the village of Sant Martí d'Empúries. First settled by the Greeks in the 6th century BCE, and later a key medieval political hub, the village retains much of its historic charm—offering a glimpse into Catalonia's storied past.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Hotel Sa Punta to Lunch — 19 km (12 miles)

Afternoon: Lunch to Parlava — 14 km (9 miles) | Parlava to Hotel PLUS — 22 km (14 miles)

#### What to Expect:

A glorious morning ride traverses apple orchards framed by the snow-capped Pyrenees. After lunch, you may choose to shuttle to your Mediterranean beachfront hotel or continue cycling past a medieval water mill and through the village of Parlava, where a shuttle is also available to your hotel in L'Escala.

Cumulative Distance Range: 19 – 55 km (12 – 35 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 5: Vineyards and Cork Trees / Picnic Lunch / Peralada & Vilabertran / Empúries Ruins

After breakfast overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, shuttle approximately 45 minutes to the bucolic mountain town of Cantallops, near the French border, for the start of today's ride. Cycle through a rural landscape of vineyards, olive groves, and cork trees before meeting your trip leaders for a lovely picnic lunch prepared just for you.

Later, continue riding to one of the region's most notable sites: the perfectly restored Peralada Castle. Along the way, explore the village of Vilabertran, known for the Santa Maria de Vilabertran monastery and for being the subject of Dalí's 1913 painting *Vilabertran*, created when he was just nine years old. You'll complete today's ride in the village of Castelló d'Empúries, where you can either opt for a few extra miles back to your hotel or take a shuttle.

After returning to your hotel, enjoy the spa (additional cost), stroll to the nearby beach, or explore the neighboring ruins of Empúries—some of the most important Greco-Roman archaeological remains on the Iberian Peninsula. Admission is included as part of your VBT tour and comes with a self-guided audio tour of this exceptional site, which features one of the finest amphitheaters outside Rome. The large terraces of your garden-view spa room provide the perfect spot to unwind and take in the beautifully landscaped surroundings.

Dinner tonight is on your own. Choose from one of the hotel's restaurants or walk along the beachside cycle path to enjoy a quiet meal in the nearby village of L'Escala.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Cantallops to Lunch — 20 km (12 miles)

Afternoon: Lunch to Castelló d'Empúries — 22 km (13 miles) | Castelló d'Empúries to Hotel PLUS — 34 km (20 miles)

### What to Expect:

Cycle through a rural landscape to Peralada Castle, finishing in Castelló D'Empúries. At the end of the ride, you may choose to extend your cycling with additional miles or shuttle back to the hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 – 76 km (12 – 45 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 6: Mediterranean Cruise / L'Estartit / Torroella de Montgrí / Farewell Dinner

This morning, you'll shuttle to the nearby marina in L'Escala, where you'll embark on a private cruise along the scenic Costa Brava coast. As you sail past stunning coves and the dramatic, craggy rock formations of the Islas Medes, you'll witness one of the most important marine reserves in the western Mediterranean—its crystal-clear waters teeming with biodiversity.

At the end of your cruise, your trip leaders will meet you in the port of L'Estartit with your bicycle ready for the day. Today's ride takes you past the impressive Montgrí Massif, said by locals to resemble a sleeping bishop. Perched on its summit, the ancient Montgrí Castle keeps watch as you cycle below. Stop for lunch on your own in the quaint town of Torroella de Montgrí, nestled along the banks of the Ter River. Once a royal port for the Kings of Aragon, it still retains its medieval core and fortified walls.

This evening, celebrate your Costa Brava journey with a festive farewell reception and dinner at your charming beachside inn. Much of the menu is sourced from the hotel's organic garden, and you'll enjoy thoughtfully paired Catalan wines during this special meal.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: L'Estartit to L'Escala — 26 km (15 miles)

### What to Expect:

From the port of L'Estartit, you'll cycle through town before joining quieter country roads that connect the medieval villages featured on today's ride. Some sections may have more traffic than previous days, but the route remains easy and scenic.

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 km (15 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 7: Travel to Figueres / Visit the Dalí Museum / Continue to

## Barcelona / Your VBT Vacation Ends

This morning, VBT provides transportation to Figueres, birthplace of Salvador Dalí, for an included visit to the captivating Dalí Theatre-Museum—a surrealist masterpiece and one of Spain’s most unique art experiences.

After the tour, continue on to our Barcelona Post-Tour hotel, where your VBT trip concludes at approximately 2:30 p.m. Please note that transportation to the Barcelona airport is not included. We recommend scheduling departing flights no earlier than 5:00 p.m. If you have an earlier departure, you will need to make your own arrangements to reach the airport from Girona.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

### Nord 1901 (Day 1)

Located in the historic heart of Girona, the Nord 1901 Hotel was completely renovated in 2009 to offer sophisticated flair and modern amenities while still preserving the ambiance of its Old Town setting. Intimate and family-operated, it is within walking distance of Girona’s main attractions, including the colorful houses along the River Onyar, the Plaza Independencia, the Jewish quarter, the cathedral, and a wide range of popular restaurants and cafés. Enjoy breakfast on the garden terrace and take advantage of the only garden in the city center with a swimming pool. Each luxurious room is equipped with climate control, a safe, hot-water kettle for coffee- and tea-making, flat-screen TV, free WiFi, and a private bath with shower, bathrobe, slippers, and hairdryer.

### Hotel Sa Punta (Days 2-3)

Hotel Sa Punta is a charming retreat nestled in a pine grove less than a 15-minute walk from the beach of Pals in Costa Brava. Recently renovated, this stylish 4-star property blends relaxed “Beach House” comfort with modern design and warm hospitality. Each of the 34 spacious rooms and suites features air conditioning, free Wi-Fi, and a private terrace—many with sweeping views of the Medes Islands, part of a protected natural park. Guests can unwind in the beautifully landscaped gardens, swim in the semi-Olympic saltwater pool, or gather at the poolside bar and lounge for cocktails, foosball, or a game of pétanque. The onsite restaurant, Dalia at Sa Punta, offers fresh Mediterranean cuisine featuring locally



sourced ingredients, complemented by a curated wine list. A generous breakfast buffet is served daily on the garden terrace. The hotel's peaceful setting in the heart of Costa Brava's Golden Triangle makes it an ideal base for both exploration and relaxation.

### **Hostal spa Empúries (Days 4-6)**

Situated directly on Portitxol Beach and on our route, overlooking the Bay of Roses, the Hostal spa Empúries stands on an ancient settlement, beside the Greek and Roman ruins of Empúries, and is within easy walking distance of the medieval towns of Sant Martí d'Empúries and L'Escala. The air-conditioned resort hotel is dedicated to sustainable tourism and also to the health and well-being of its guests. The property features lovely gardens of native vegetation, an outdoor terrace overlooking the sea, and landscaped areas to stroll through. Gym facilities are complimentary, and optional spa services and indoor pools are also available.