

Spain: Girona & Costa Brava

Bike Vacation Only

Cycle along shimmering coasts and castle-crowned villages during VBT's Costa Brava bike tour. The vast Mediterranean Sea greets you as you reel past picturesque farmlands, coastal vistas, and fruit orchards. Along the way, explore quaint medieval villages and immerse yourself in local life. Dive into the thriving art community in the stone village Peratallada; allow gentle winds to carry you through the cobbled stone streets of Baix Empordà; learn about cider production during a private tour and tasting; and explore the ruins of Empuries, some of the most important Greek and Roman ruins on the Iberian Peninsula. Each ride of your journey is framed by lush farmlands, sunflower fields, and stunning mountain views.



Cultural Highlights

- Embark on a walking tour of the Old Town of Girona.
- Bear witness to the personal life of artist Salvador Dali during a visit to Púbol Castle.

- Pedal a rural landscape past fields of sunflowers, fruit orchards, and rice fields.
- Stroll the cobbled streets of Pals, admiring the town's Gothic and Romanesque architecture.
- View the artists' galleries and 11th-century castle of Peratallada, a moated town built of stone.
- Pause in a lovely apple orchard to sample ciders and learn about their production.
- Savor a delicious, home-grown lunch as the guest of a small Catalan farm.
- Enjoy the breeze as you stroll the beachside cycling path from your hotel in L'Escala.
- Admire one of the finest amphitheaters outside of Rome on a guided audio tour of the Greek and Roman ruins of Empuries.
- Enjoy a scenic private cruise along the Costa Brava.
- Toast your travel mates with some of Catalonia's finest wines during a festive farewell dinner.

What to Expect

This tour offers easy terrain throughout the trip and is ideal for beginning cyclists; however, there may be some challenging hills for non-enthusiastic riders. VBT's van support shuttle is always available for those who would like assistance. Some roads may have busier traffic during the popular months of June and first two weeks of September.

Tour Duration: 7 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 15 - 35

Average Cycling Time: 00:45 - 02:30

Group size: 20 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Mar 61°/44°, Apr 64°/47°, May 69°/54°, Jun 76°/60°, Sep 78°/62°, Oct 71°/55°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Mar 1.6, Apr 1.9, May 2.3, Jun 1.6, Sep 3.4, Oct 3.6

DAY 1: Bicycle Vacation begins / Walking tour of historic Girona

Meet your VBT representative in Girona at the hotel Nord 1901 at 9:00 a.m. The contact information for the hotel will be included with your final documents. Please contact the hotel to advise them of any travel delays or changes so the staff can alert the VBT Trip Leaders. Enjoy a guided walking tour of the Old Town of Girona before shuttling to the foothills of the Pyrenees, where you will meet your VBT Trip Leaders for lunch. Please be dressed for cycling for your warm-up ride before departing Girona.

Back in Girona tonight, your small group gathers for a welcome cocktail reception before enjoying a delicious welcome dinner poolside at the hotel (weather permitting).

Hotel: Nord 1901

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Warm-up: 12 km (7 miles)

What to Expect: Get acquainted with your bike as you cycle on easy paved roads similar to the route conditions that you will have throughout Costa Brava this week. You will ride on a combination of two-lane country roads with less traffic and at times on more heavily trafficked roads. Occasionally, you will have opportunities to ride on a designated bike path, as well. This easy scenic ride takes you to the shores of Lake Banyoles, Catalonia's largest natural lake. The lake was used for the rowing location in the 1992 Barcelona Summer Olympics and today is a popular training location for foreign rowers.

DAY 2: Púbol / Castell Dali Gala

Your first full-day journey of Costa Brava bike tour begins with a scenic ride into the heart of the historic Baix Empordà province of Catalonia, where you'll stop at the quaint medieval village of Púbol. Here, you'll visit Púbol Castle, purchased by Salvador Dali in 1970 as a gift for his wife Gala. Enjoy a glimpse into Dali's personal life and witness his many talents as you see some of his original paintings, sculptures, and custom-designed furniture. You can also admire some of Gala's haute couture dresses, designed by Christian Dior exclusively for her. Gala continued to live here until her death in 1982. She chose her beloved Púbol Castle as her final resting place and is buried in the cellar's mausoleum.

Later, ride through lush farmlands and small villages where you may enjoy lunch at leisure in one of the village cafés. After lunch, you'll cycle to the coastal village of Platja de Pals for our first nights on the Costa Brava. Tonight, meet the hotel owner before enjoying a special dinner in the hotel's well renowned restaurant.

Hotel: Hotel Sa Punta

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 30.9 km (19 miles) – 44.6 km (27 miles)

Morning

Púbol: 30.9 km (19 miles)

Afternoon

Púbol Plus: 44.6 km (27 miles)

What to Expect: From Púbol, ride through Dali's scenic Catalanian landscape. Your ride will take you on narrow country roads past farms with some rolling hills through forests. If you desire a longer ride, enjoy extra cycling through the countryside, occasionally sharing the road with passing cars.

DAY 3: Pals and Peratallada

This morning, you'll ride into the surrounding rural landscape past fields of sunflowers, fruit orchards and rice fields, pausing throughout the day to step back in time into a few of Baix Empordà's medieval villages. Coasting into Pals, you will be charmed by cobbled stone streets and an impressive Gothic Quarter whose facades feature pointed arched 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)—date to the 4th century. After you explore this historic village, enjoy lunch at your leisure.

In the afternoon, continue cycling to the village of Peratallada. Its name translates into "carved stone"—an apt label, as most of the buildings were built from stone taken from the moat that still encircles parts of the village. This atmospheric town has been declared a historic artistic monument. Its dominant structure is the Castle of Peratallada, dating to 1065 AD; restoration of this now privately owned castle revealed traces of a Bronze Age settlement. Take some time to visit some of the artists' galleries here before getting back on your saddle for your return ride to your hotel. The afternoon is at leisure to relax by the lovely swimming pool or stroll down to the nearby beach.

This evening, enjoy a sumptuous dinner in your hotel's elegant dining room.

Hotel: Hotel Sa Punta

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 26.7 km (16 miles) – 47.7 km (28 miles)

Morning

Pals Loop: 26.7 km (16 miles)

Afternoon

Pals Loop Plus: 47.4 km (28 miles)

What to Expect: Enjoy a morning of easy riding as you glide into Pals. In the afternoon, continue cycling to the village of Peratallada. Additional riding is available after your exploration of Peratallada. Cycling on narrow country roads and some busier roads, you will pass medieval villages before ending with an uphill ride to your hotel.

DAY 4: Cider farm visit / Home-hosted lunch

After breakfast, you'll cycle toward your home for the next three nights on the Mediterranean Costa Brava. Today's Costa Brava bike tour leads you along scenic countryside vistas overseen by the snow-capped Pyrenees in the distance. Your destination is the province of Alt Empordà (upper Empordà), north of Baix Empordà (lower Empordà). Take a break from riding as you pass through a lovely apple orchard and learn about the cider production in this special region of Spain. Also enjoy lunch here while tasting some of the local cider.

After lunch, enjoy a scenic ride past a medieval mill before arriving in the village of Parlava. Here, you may opt to continue riding or shuttle to our Mediterranean beachfront hotel. Once at the hotel, wander along the waterside cycling path into the town of L'Escala. You may also want to splurge and treat yourself to one of the hotel's many spa options.

This evening, enjoy dinner on your own in one of the hotel's restaurants or walk along the beachside cycling path to a restaurant in the neighboring village of Sant Martí d'Empúries. This small village was first settled by the Greeks in the 6th century BC and was an important medieval political center. Today, it maintains much of its medieval charm, so it's easy to imagine what life may have been in that bygone era.

Hotel: Hostal Spa Empúries

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 20.5 km (12 miles) – 56.4 km (35 miles)

Morning

Hotel Sa Punta to Alt Emporda: 20.5 km (12 miles)

Alt Emporda to Parlava: 34.3 km (21 miles)

Afternoon

Parlava to L'Escala: 56.4 km (35 miles)

What to Expect: A glorious morning ride traverses apple orchards framed by the snow-capped Pyrenees. After lunch, you may shuttle to your Mediterranean beachfront hotel, or continue cycling past a medieval mill and on through Parlava and back to the hotel in L'Escala.

DAY 5: Vineyards and cork trees / Picnic lunch / Peralada and Vilabertran / Empuries

After breakfast overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, you will shuttle 45 minutes to the bucolic mountain town of Cantallops near the border of France for the starting point of today's ride. You will cycle through a rural landscape of vineyards and olive and cork trees before meeting your Trip Leaders, who will have prepared a lovely picnic lunch for your enjoyment.

Later, continue riding to one of the most important sites in the area: the perfectly restored Peralada castle. You will complete your cycling today in the village of Vilabertran, famous for the Santa Maria de Vilabertran monastery as well as the setting for Dali's 1913 painting Vilabertran, which he painted when he was nine years old.

Later, shuttle back to the Mediterranean coast and after checking in to your hotel, enjoy its spa (additional cost) or nearby beach, or explore the neighboring ruins of Empuries, some of the most important Greek and Roman ruins on the Iberian Peninsula. Admission to the ruins is included, and you may take as little or as much time as you wish with an audio self-guided visit of this archaeological site, including one of the finest amphitheaters outside of Rome. The large terraces of your garden-view spa rooms are ideal for relaxing and enjoying the beautifully landscaped native vegetation surrounding the hotel.

Please Note: The Dali Museum is closed on Mondays; if our regularly scheduled visit to the Dali Museum falls on a Monday, we will visit the museum this morning, prior to your ride.

Dinner tonight is at your leisure. Dine at one of the hotel's restaurants or walk along the beachside cycle path to enjoy a quiet meal in the village of L'Escala.

Hotel: Hostal Spa Empuries

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 20.4 km (12 miles) – 35.3 km (21 miles)

Morning

Cantallops to Lunch: 20.4 km (12 miles)

Afternoon

Lunch to Vilbertran: 35.3 km (21 miles)

What to Expect: Cycle through a rural landscape to Peralada castle, finishing the ride in Vilabertran. At the end of today's ride, the group will shuttle back to the hotel.

DAY 6: Mediterranean cruise / L'Estartit / Torroella de Montgri / Farewell dinner

This morning, you'll shuttle to neighboring L'Escala's marina. Here, you'll embark a chartered boat for a private cruise along the scenic Costa Brava. During this thrilling tour, you'll cruise past gorgeous coves and the dramatic, craggy rock formations of the Islas Medes jutting into the sea. These crystal-clear waters nurture a significant biodiversity, making it one of the most important marine reserves in the western Mediterranean.

Your Trip Leaders meet you at the end of your cruise in the port of L'Estartit, with your bicycle ready for the day. Your ride today is watched over by the massive Montgri Massif, which to some locals looks like a sleeping bishop. You'll see the ancient Montgri Castle perched on its summit as you pedal along. Stop for lunch on your own in the medieval town of Torroella de Montgri, resting on the banks of the Ter River. Once a royal port for the Kings of Aragon, it retains its medieval core and stalwart walls.

This evening, trade stories of your Costa Brava bike tour alongside your Trip Leaders and travel mates during a festive farewell reception and dinner at your lovely beachside inn. Much of the menu is harvested from the hotel's organic garden, and you will sample some of Catalonia's finest wines over this special meal.

Hotel: Hostal Spa Empuries

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

L'Estartit to L'Escala: 25.5 km (15 miles)

What to Expect: From the port of L'Estartit you will cycle through the town before joining quieter country roads that link the various medieval villages you will enjoy on today's ride. There will be some cycling on busier roads than previous days, but the rides are easy and scenic.

DAY 7: Transfer to Figueres / Dali Museum / Transfer to Barcelona / Bicycle Vacation ends

In Figueres, the birthplace of Dalí, enjoy an included tour of the Dalí Museum. Continue on to Barcelona. Post-trip Extension guests will fly to Mallorca today.

VBT provides a morning transfer to Figueres, the birthplace of Salvador Dali, for an included tour of the Dali Museum (Note: The Dali Museum is closed on Mondays; if our regularly scheduled visit to the Dali Museum falls on a Monday, we will visit the museum the morning of Day 5, prior to your ride.)

After the tour, transfer to Barcelona's Hotel 1898. The tour concludes here at approximately 2:30 p.m. You will need to make your own transfer arrangements to the Barcelona airport. Departing flights prior to 5:00 p.m. are not recommended. If you have an earlier departure, you will need to make your own transfer arrangements to Barcelona.

Meals: Breakfast