



# Spain - Peaks of Valencia

## INTRODUCTION

Possibly the greatest singletrack in Spain has been uncovered in The Marina Alta Mountains of southern Valencia. Since we began our trips here in 2000 we've hosted journalists from the biggest UK magazines and they all said the same thing – this place is fantastic!

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Amazing Mozarabic singletrack trails
- En-suite rooms in lovely guesthouse
- Qualified guides with good guide:client ratio
- Stay in a rural village with trails on the doorstep

## OUR SPANISH MTB PARTNERSHIP

Our Spanish guiding team are some of the most experienced, qualified and highly professional mountain bikers you could ever ride with. Trained in the UK to the highest standards through the SMBLA awards scheme both Gary and Sarah know how to lead, where to lead and how to guarantee that each day is a great day out. They are based in Spain for most of the year, so when they're not guiding they're out cutting back undergrowth to uncover yet more singletrack for future guests, or the many who return each year, to sample and enjoy.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT HOLIDAY

At CycleActive we carefully grade our trips according to both the level of fitness you need and, for mountain biking, the level of skill you need. We also offer personal advice to anyone who needs it, by email or on the phone, to ensure that you find a holiday suitable for your abilities and desires.

### This trip is Fitness Grade 3

You need good fitness from regular exercise sessions and time spent actively involved in cycling. The trip involves full days on the bike with some challenging climbs.

### This trip is Skill Grade B & C

On the holiday there is a mixture of rocky, technical singletrack riding, double track mountain trails and some gravel tracks over loose stones and some rough ground. You should be confident over steep and rocky ground, or be ready to learn some new skills with our expert instructors. There is the chance to avoid the most demanding trails by riding with the second guide for parts of the day.

## SUMMARY ITINERARY

### From the UK

**Day 1 (Saturday).** Fly to Alicante where we collect you for the 2 hour transfer to our guesthouse, up in the mountains.

**Day 2.** The first ride day gets you straight onto the famous Mozarabic Singletrack, including some short coaching sessions to help you get the most out of this fabulous, challenging terrain.

**Days 3 & 4.** A breathtaking two days of biking, as selected by our guides to suit your fitness, skill level and desires. We take you for full days out with one or two leaders, showing you the best of The Marina Alta Mountains.

**Day 5.** Rest day with optional morning ride (unguided) or mountain hike.

**Day 6.** Ride or transfer a short way to the Tollos region, thick with plantations of oranges, lemons, figs and more. Plus great riding!

**Day 7.** Summit to sea day – a ride that goes across the mountains and descends all the way to the Med.

**Day 8.** Transfer to the airport for flights home.

**Full details of dates, prices and what is included can be found on our website.**



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## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 1 - Arrival

You fly from the UK to Alicante airport, where you can arrive at any time before around 6pm to ensure that we make the 2 hour journey up into the mountains in good time. We bring you and your bikes to our guesthouse and we should have time to build up the bikes before dinner. If you're renting a bike our guide will get it fitted up for you to test out. After dinner our guide will brief you on what's to come during your week with us.

### Days 2 to 4 - Explore the Marina Alta

From our base in the village of Castell de Castells we ride straight from the door and into superb biking terrain, as well as breathtaking scenery. We'll lead you along narrow donkey trails through steeply terraced fields, into the highs of the Sierra Serella then racing down forest tracks in the Aixorta range.

This whole region was once populated by the Moorish people, a nation of great traders who cut many twisting trails through the rugged limestone mountains. Now just rocky tracks, these trails are perfect for off-road bikers - they give us access to the most remote mountains, forests and hidden villages, providing some exciting riding along the way.

During the first 3 full days we will also lead you into other regions out of the Marina Alta range. With our expert guides on hand to plan the best routes for the group, or to allow the group to split to allow for different abilities, we'll take you deeper into the Valencian landscape. You'll ride through ancient fields, dotted with olive, almond and carob trees, then sweep down into valleys filled with vineyards. The possibilities are endless.

### Day 5 – Relaxation or Singletrack Challenge

Wednesday and the one free day for our staff and a day of choices for you. If you are not a regular mountain biker then we recommend that you take a day off from the bike to rest and recover so you can really enjoy the second half of the week. However, if you'd like to do some unguided riding we can give you some good ideas for places to go, such as the two superb singletrack descents which cut right down the mountainside above the village.

If you'd like a change of pace we also have details of some lovely walks in the area. However, you might just decide that a wander through the old village streets, a lazy café lunch and an afternoon siesta on the roof top terrace are more your thing!

## Further Info

*Our guesthouse is a beautiful old town house, facing onto the cobbled streets of the village. Just round the corner is our bike store and workshop, where we can get the bikes assembled and checked.*

*Your guides are SMBLA qualified, highly experienced mountain bike leaders and instructors. If you want to develop your skills or just pick up some riding tips during the week then they will help you to get the most out of your time with us.*

*Usually on the first morning the guides will run some short skills sessions to get everyone used to the dry, loose, rocky terrain of the Mozarabic trails. This helps to set you up for the week ahead.*

*The unguided rides on offer today have been used as locations for several major photoshoots, and for good reason. These highly technical singletrack trails feature tight switchbacks, steep, loose, rocky sections and fast swooping sections on tight lines through the stones. If you want a challenge instead of a rest today, this will do it!*



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### **Day 6 – Tollos**

Today we head across to the slopes of Tollos, using the vehicle to access this beautiful region just a short drive from the Pension (or you can start a little earlier and ride across). The shape of the mountains has changed now and the valleys are dotted with old villages and patches of forest.

Of course this means the biking changes too and we'll have a full day exploring the hidden trails and twisting narrow tracks which criss-cross the region. With the vehicle ready to pick us up at the end of the day we can take as long as we want and cover as big or small a distance as we want to. Those who tire early can head to one of the small villages to enjoy a lazy afternoon munching tapas, sipping drinks and waiting for the others to finish.

### **Day 7 – Head for the Med!**

Today we enjoy the classic Marina Alta ride - a breathtaking journey that brings you out of the mountains and down to the shores of the Mediterranean. We head out from the Pension after breakfast, spinning through the village before cutting off on a favourite donkey trail. From here onwards it's a rollercoaster journey towards the sea, still involving some climbs, but enjoying a succession of stunning descents.

The climate zones and ecosystems change around us as we lose altitude. From the steep mountains we roll into sloping vineyards and then the tangy smelling citrus groves, thick with oranges and lemons, watched over by gnarled and ancient olive trees. In the midst of this is Algar Falls, where we can take a cooling dip along the way.

Our destination is the shoreline of Altea. Here we can swim in the clear waters, enjoy a game of beach volleyball, stroll around the fascinating old town and sample the delights of a few good bars and cafes too! After your fill of food, drink, sun, surf and sand the vehicle takes us back up to the Pension, to get ready for our last night together.

### **Day 8 – Heading home**

This morning we get the bikes and bags packed up ready for the journey home. Depending on flight times you might just squeeze in a quick unguided ride, but otherwise you can enjoy a lazy start before the journey down to Alicante, then home.

*This is a flexible day with lots of different riding and different terrain to explore. The vegetation and whole environment seems different here, and as we ride down into the valleys you'll see the fruits of the Mediterranean growing all around.*

*Being a Friday the bars and cafes will be bustling with life. If you have not yet enjoyed the local night life then now is the time – there's no biking in the morning! You can relax into a long evening of great food, wine and company*



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## TRAVEL FACTS

### Geography and Climate

This tour is based in the Marina Alta Mountains, which are on the Mediterranean coast of Spain. The mountains are little known and as a whole are very untouristed. The villages are still quite traditional, with good local bars, shops and cafes in the village where we stay. This region enjoys a good climate almost all year as the region is location on the east coast of Spain it guarantees sunny, warm weather for most of the year.

### Our Pension in Castell de Castells

We stay in the "Pension Castells", a 200 year old renovated guest house in the heart of the village. With comfortable twin or double bedded en-suite rooms, superb meals each night (with a good supply of local wine, straight from the barrel!) and its roof top terrace overlooking the village streets and mountains beyond, this is the perfect place to be based.

### Cycling Support

While cycling in Spain you need to be able to carry your own basic provisions and tools, as the vehicle cannot follow us during the rides. Our leaders carry a good toolkit and will help to fix most bike problems, and if the problem is too serious we are usually not far from assistance or a road. Our vehicles will be permanently based at the Pension, should anyone need to be collected from a distant valley due to a medical or technical problem. Note that while we do have a well-equipped workshop, we cannot guarantee to be equipped for all repairs and there are no bikeshops nearby, so you must ensure that your bike is in good working order before coming on the tour.

### Cycle Rental

If you want to use your own bike it is usually easy to find flights which are suitable and we will send you our guideline packing instructions. If you prefer to rent one for the trip we offer excellent bikes from DMR and Kona, with retail values from £750 to £950. Please call us to discuss bike hire so that we can find what's best for you.

### Flights and Transfers

We can book your flight through an ATOL bonded agent and you will have a separate contract for your flight with them. Alternatively you can book your own flights through Easyjet, BMI, Monarch or Thomson who cover most regional UK airports now.

With a transfer time of around 2 hours from airport to guesthouse we can only make one journey on arrival day and departure day. This is usually time to fit in with flights arriving mid to late afternoon and departing at a similar time. If you wish to arrive early you may be able to take a taxi to a beachside bar or just relax at the café in Alicante airport. If you need to arrive late please let us know so we can organise a taxi for you (additional cost approx £75 as it is a 2 hour drive). On departure day you will need to reserve an extra transfer with us if you intend to fly home earlier than the afternoon transfer allows – please check availability and prices before booking your flights.

### Passports and Visas

For entry into Spain, UK citizens need a full passport, but a visa is not required.

### Clothing and Equipment

On booking, a detailed list of useful and essential items will be sent to you. You must bring your own cycle helmet that must be worn for all cycle rides.



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