

# Pure Adventures Biking Guide



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## The Joys of Self Guided

*First of all,* we would like to remind you that the biking and hiking tours we offer are **Self Guided**.  
*So what does this mean, exactly?*

### *This means:*

- Your accommodations are booked for you for the length of the tour. Breakfast is always included. Check the description of your tour for lunches and dinners.
- Each time you change hotels on your tour your luggage will be transferred for you accordingly.
- You are provided with all the maps, road books and directions needed to achieve the day by day legs of your trip.
- You are provided with an “emergency” number, in case of unexpected and unsolvable problems.
- It also means that there is no schedule – except for the luggage transfers. You will be asked to have your luggage ready in the lobby of your hotel no later than 9:00 am. Other than this you are free to leave the hotel whenever you feel like it and reach the next place “whenever you arrive” ! If your luggage is not at your hotel by 5:00pm, please call the emergency contact number so that we can confirm it is on its way.

There is no guide with you and no other clients. All tours have an **orientation** included, meaning that an English speaking person will welcome you at your 1<sup>st</sup> hotel or airport/train station based on chosen tour in-person and inform you about the tour and answer any of your questions.

## Biking Vacations: The Speed of Going Slow

This is a vacation, regardless of what you do in your regular life; you should begin getting yourself ready to slow down the moment the plane lifts off for your destination. Bicycling is slow relative to other forms of transportation and while you could be a racer, this is not going to be a race. It may take all day to cover 30 miles. In between points A and B you can expect to see some magnificent sights, some famous and some commonplace—absorb them, drink them in, and you will experience all that you seek in your destination.

People today are time conscious, goal-oriented, and results driven. Your only goals on this trip should be to relax, learn, have fun, get refreshed and discover. If the experience isn't dropped in your lap, go look for it! Every turn in a village has something new to offer. Do your best to speak with the locals, and take the time to understand their way of life. Simply going into a café, ordering a coffee and observing the local customs will be an experience.

The whole point of a bicycle vacation is to take things slower, observe and enjoy all that the region has to offer. Keep an open mind, have fun, and remember the “speed of going slow”!

## Bringing Your Own Bike

### Bicycle policy for non-renters

We are happy you have booked a tour with us and that you have chosen to bring your own bicycle to be more comfortable on your tour. Based on our experience, we want to remind you of a few things that you need to consider before traveling to Europe with your own bike:

You should be very comfortable with disassembly and reassembly. We do not assemble and disassemble the bikes for you.

#### We are not responsible in any way if:

- Your bicycle is damaged in route to/from Europe
- Your bicycle is delayed in route to /from Europe
- Your bicycle is delayed in route to/from the bicycle tour (within the country where you are traveling).
- Your bicycle breaks down, needs tools, transportation or any other service while on tour.

We will do our best to help you resolve any situation above or other situation that may arise, **but you will be responsible for any additional costs incurred.**

Because of the above reasons, **we generally do not advise bringing your own bicycle if you have never traveled with your bike before.**



Most of our tours are one week. The extra burden of carrying and worrying about your own bike is easily offset by the low cost of our rentals. Don't forget you are on vacation; so don't unnecessarily complicate your experience!

Before bringing a bike, make sure that it is in top mechanical condition—lubed, bearings & chain in good or rebuilt condition, wheels true, cables tight, brakes adjusted and, if a new bike, ridden at least 200 miles & had adjustments made after that.



Traveling by high speed train in Western Europe with a bike, such as the TGV, has its limitations. **For TGV trains, the bike must be in a hard side box no greater in dimension than 1.2m x 0.9m.** They are very strict about this, and if the train is full, it may have to be shipped on other trains. All other trains are much less restrictive about transporting bikes. If you are sure you want to bring your bike, but aren't sure how to go about packing it, visit your bike shop or give us a call.

**Bike boxes** If you bring your bike you will have to obtain a bike box. There are several sources for a box including your local bike shop and the airlines. You will have to break your bike down to travel. **It is strongly suggested you do this yourself, and put it back together prior to actually leaving.** You must bring the necessary tools with you to reassemble your bike upon arrival at the tour starting point.

## Road Rules and Suggestions

*First of all*, plan to keep your *own* fuel tank full and your engine well oiled! Meaning, **eat well and ensure your water bottles are used.**

### Hydration is key to keeping your energy levels high.

Pay attention during the summer periods, as temperatures will rise creating the need for more water. Water should be plentiful and for the most part it is OK to drink from the fountains that flow in the villages, unless it says **“non-potable.”**

**Road signs are straight forward. For example, stop signs are recognizable by their red octagonal shape and most say STOP. See “Road Signs in Europe” at the back of this packet for more examples.**

In Europe, stop lights are not always overhead but on a pole to the right of the road. You do not have the right to turn right after stopping at a light. You may only advance when lights are green, or a flashing yellow arrow is illuminated for right hand turns. A round red sign with a white hash mark in the middle indicates a one-way traffic lane. Do not enter a one-way unless you walk your bike.

If you are on a road, but can't find the road number, the signs indicating the next villages usually solves the problem. **You may even get off the specific road that is suggested, and pick it up again later if you follow the villages.**

**If you feel lost**, consult the maps you are given, and don't hesitate to ask the locals for help - they are usually friendly! If you stop to read your map, get well off the road. Also, after visiting so many small villages, the midsize villages will feel like big towns! Don't worry, and if you get disoriented trying to find your route back out, you can always follow the signs back to “Centre Ville” and get re-oriented or ask for help at the Tourist Office.

While on the road each day it is important to observe normal rules of safety and common sense. **In Continental Europe, the rule of the road is to yield the right of way always to your right. But it is to yield the left of way in roundabouts.** Don't assume anything, yield as a bicyclist. Remember in small villages to use caution as the roads are narrow and seeing around corners is difficult. Also use caution around pedestrians. In larger villages, traffic may pick up and may become intimidating. **Use caution and don't over assert your bicyclist rights.**

*In Western Europe, the roads are excellent for the most part, but it is wise to ask the hotel staff if they know of any construction or road closures.*



In addition, the direction of the next village or larger town is usually indicated on signs along the roads as well as the road number. This will help you follow the route. Check your maps and cue sheets to see what the next town you should be arriving in and by doing so you can follow both signs for the village and the road markers. Generally, you will see small little concrete slabs that almost look like gravestones which mark the roads and they usually contain the road number as well as the distance to the next town, but each country is unique with slightly different road signs. Departmental signs have yellow tops, and national have red tops. You should for the most part only be on D, or Departmental roads.



# Rules of Safety

1. Continental Europe drives on the right side of the road, like North America.
2. Wear a helmet, even if the Europeans are not wearing helmets.
3. Use common sense—stay alert of your surrounding traffic conditions.
4. Ride in a straight line and not abreast.
5. Do not make sudden moves and avoid surprising drivers.
6. On descents, use caution—go slow. Use both breaks intermittently and allow space between riders.
7. If you stop along the road, be at least 10 feet off the pavement, from traffic.
8. Be extra cautious on wet roads or in gravel: slowing sooner, cornering more slowly and gradually.
9. Watch for parked cars and car doors that may open.
10. Obey all road signs and if unsure about the meaning, error on the side of caution.
11. Cross railroad tracks at right angles.
12. Use a mirror if you have one—they are well worth it.
13. Do not ride after sunset without proper illumination. We prefer that you never ride after dark!
14. Do not ride on sidewalks.
15. USE THE BIKE LOCK THAT IS PROVIDED IF YOU RENT HYBRID BIKES WITH US.
16. Never park or lean your bike against glass, or block a passage.
17. Don't forget any valuables inside your pannier when you decide to visit a site!

*In Europe the bicycle garner respect, but do not assume anything and always use caution.*

Along the road, nearly every village will have a Tourist Office or an information center. We suggest checking it out and see if there are any special activities for that day, or during the week. It may be a market day, and if it is, you are in luck! Don't pass up the chance to visit the local outdoor markets. This is your opportunity to get fresh fruits, cheeses, meats, breads and anything else for your lunch/picnic and perhaps a souvenir to take back home.

**Guided Tours** If you are on a guided tour, you must follow the directions of the guide. People in the company of a guide will sometimes let down their guard and pay less attention to what they do because they have the guide looking after them. **Do not make this mistake and endanger yourself or others in the group.** We wish for you to have a good time, so follow our guides' directions and make your own safe decisions when necessary!

Make sure you have sunscreen, your next hotel's phone number and the local emergency contact number before leaving your hotel!

## Picnics

This is a great way to have a lunch or snack along your route. Europeans love to picnic so your doing so will not be an uncommon site.

However, please be respectful of private property, and look for a sight that is either public domain, or won't be a hazard to other traffic. **Take ALL trash and remnants with you**, including anything such as "peels" which might be biodegradable, but offensive to others to find lying on the ground.



## Road Book & Rental Bike

### *Your road book & routes*

No matter if you are self-guided or guided, you will most likely be carrying a road book of maps and route instructions. Our road books can in some instances have funny translations. Our local guides have developed most of our routes and have chosen excellent roads in combination with interesting sites. **However, despite our efforts to eliminate strangely translated words or even locally used terms, it isn't always crystal clear to every person what the road book may say at a given point in time.** Everyone explains and interprets things differently so it is possible that you may find it a little difficult to understand the directions the first day, but by the second and succeeding days you will understand much more clearly the methodology of the road book. So be patient on that first day, and have fun. It will get easier!

**Dress** On the bike, we always recommend comfortable and breathable cycling clothing, but many people are comfortable in shorts, a T-shirt, and sneakers. At the hotels and for dinner, the standard dress is dressy casual. Generally, you can go to dinner in slacks and a collared shirt or blouse. You may have other plans while on your trip that would require more formal attire.

You can keep your road book materials as a souvenir, but do not lose them while on tour as a replacement will result in additional costs.

*If you have any questions, be sure you ask them before leaving. This is considered your notice of liability for your rentals*

### Your rental bike

Most likely the bicycle you are going to use is a hybrid bicycle, which is a cross type of bicycle that combines certain features of mountain bikes and those of road/racing bikes. **If you did not request a road bike, then you should expect a hybrid.**

Your bike is equipped with multi-speed gearing, in a ratio that is conducive to the type of riding you will be doing—that is, carrying more gear on the frame such as panniers, racks, etc. **The hybrid bikes come with upright steering, no drop handlebars.** Hybrid bikes are equipped with repair kits, an extra tube, a lock, an odometer, a water bottle, pump, a handlebar bag, and sometimes a pannier. These bicycles are very good for their purpose, and are maintained by professional mechanics.

*You will be responsible if your bicycle is lost or stolen,* or if parts come up missing. Take good care of your rented bike. **Use your bike lock!!**

**REMEMBER!** *If you are bringing your own pedals, make sure to bring a pedal wrench so you can remove them from your bike at the end of the tour.*

On some tours a Pure Adventures guide does NOT come to meet you on the last day, so you are responsible for taking your pedals off of your rental bike. We cannot guarantee pedals to be returned and if they have to be shipped back to you, you will be responsible for the shipping costs.

## Your Bike in Action...

### Getting the *most* from your ride...

**1. Know how to change a flat tire before coming on tour! We will not come out to fix a flat.**

**2. Learn how to shift gears.**

Your bike is equipped with index shifting (which means it clicks across the rear cogs or front chain rings; one gear for each click). Be sure to click through the gears slowly to allow the chain to smoothly proceed across the gaps. NEVER turn the gear shifter all the way across from a high gear to a low gear in one fast movement. You can easily cause your chain to skip off the cogs, get jammed, or worse, break or deform the derailleur. Also, when beginning a climb or an uphill section that requires lower gears, NEVER change gears while standing on the pedals or when forcing the crank around from a gear that is too low. The torque and forces involved can cause damage to any of the gear mechanisms or chain. You should always be moving forward, making gradual changes in gears as you slow down, feeling resistance from the lower gears. This will not only make climbing easier, but it also makes your bike work better. Your speed should always be regulated by gradual and constant gear shifting so that you never have to change more than one gear at a time to keep your momentum.

**3. Ride with gears in the proper ratios.**

Your bike is equipped with 3 chain rings, one of which is often called the “granny” gear for those tough uphill. This gear is the small chain ring in the front, near your pedals. The big chain ring is for going downhill, or when you want to go faster. Most of your riding should be in the middle chain ring. Keeping your chain on the middle ring while regulating speeds on the back cogs will allow you ease of riding most of the time. Note that you will use all chain rings at different times, however, your chain should NEVER be completely crossed from one extreme in front to the opposite corner in back. This will create underperformance in the bike and place unwanted forces on the system. If you cross your chain up like this, it is easy to cause it to slip off or become stuck; at the very least it will cause chain rub and make an awful noise.

***If your chain comes off:*** STOP pedaling and come to a complete stop. You should be able to use your finger to simply lift the chain onto any of the cogs in back or the smallest chain ring in front. It doesn't matter which one you put it on as the gearing system will place it back on the right gear - if you start out slowly. DO NOT try to force the pedals as this will lodge the chain and create more difficulties. If you are on a hill and your chain comes off, it is easiest to slip the chain back on and pedal downhill for 10-20 feet while the chain gets seated in the proper gear before turning back uphill. Anytime you touch the chain you will get dirty. You may want to have a small rag with you, just in case!

**Other bicycle tips:** Always leave your bike upright when you lock it up or leave it unattended. Never drop the bike, or lean it against something that will scratch paint and accessories. If you must lay it down, leave the chain side up. You may wish to bring a small tube of chain lube (Tri-Flow is perfect for chains, pedals, and derailleurs), however piling too much on causes dirt to collect and that undermines performance. A backpack might come in handy in order to keep your personal items with you instead of in your pannier on the bike, should you desire to leave your bike to visit a site.

## How to Repair your Flat Tire

A step by step guide to help (but, practice makes perfect!)

Flat tires can and do happen commonly on bicycle rides. **Before you leave on your tour you should be aware of how to remedy this situation by yourself without help. Don't worry, it's easy!** This short description is intended for reviewing the steps to follow and can help refresh your memory while you are on your trip.

**Note:** A well patched tube is just as good as new. However, wet tubes, wet glue, and poorly applied patches will not hold. Also, take note of your valve: Schraeder is larger, Presta is smaller (P=Petite).

- 1. If you have a low tire, pump it up.** For example, if in the morning you notice a small loss of air, pump up the tire. If you keep the recommended pressure in the tire during your ride, you will be less likely to get a flat.
- 2. If you puncture while on a ride, your tube will go flat very quickly.** (Note: all rental bike tires have tubes and come with repair kits and essential tools.) In this case you will need to fix the puncture or replace the tube.
- 3. Drop the wheel out of its "dropouts" by opening the quick release.** (Some bikes may have a nut to be loosened). Before opening the quick release, make sure you open the brakes by lifting off the cable, or pushing up the lever. For rear wheels you may turn the bike over, but make sure to keep the chain and derailleur out of the dirt.
- 4. Let the balance of air out of the tube at the stem valve.** Then go to the opposite side of the tire and use your levers to lift off the tire from inside the rim. You only need lift off one side (bead). Once started, you can get the rest off by hand. You can then pull the tube out of the tire.
- 5. TIP: On the road, put in a new tube and keep going.** You can find and fix the puncture at leisure when you arrive at your hotel.
- 6. If the puncture point is obvious, you may want to scan the tire for the "offender" if it is still in the tire.**
- 7. To repair a puncture: Clean the area well, and then using the sand paper from the kit, rough up the surface around the puncture.** Spread an even layer of glue over the puncture area and allow it to dry. You may want to apply a second layer – its up to you. Make sure it is dry. Then apply a patch of sufficient size to cover the puncture and make full contact with the glue. Smooth it down with your thumb or tire lever.
- 8. Apply a little air to the tube and ensure its holding, and reinsert the tube into the tire, ensuring that it is flat, straight, and subject to be pinched between tire and rim.** Once in, deflate and then work the tire bead back onto the rim starting at the valve. Try to use hands only to get the tire back on to avoid damage to the tube.
- 9. Once on, go around the rim a few times pinching and squeezing the tire to ensure the tube is well seated and all is in place.** Pump the tube about 30% and then check again that all is in order, valve straight, and then finish pumping. Take note of the recommended pressure on the side of the tire. NOTE: Wider tires take less pressure than thinner tires because they have more surface area.
- 10. Reinstall the wheel in the dropouts.** Make sure that before you tighten down the quick release that your wheel is not rubbing against one of the brake pads, but is straight in the middle of the breaks.





## Stay Warm, Dry & Comfortable!

### Luggage Allowance

**Keep your baggage to be transferred to one bag if possible.** If you are on an extended stay, visiting other parts of the same country or multiple countries before or after your bicycle tour, you will need to plan to secure additional bags elsewhere. For our circle tours where you end in the same town in which you start, arrangements can usually be made with the first hotel. For non-circle tours, you can leave bags in the train station and return to that station or have them forwarded to your destination by other means. For goods you acquire along the way, we will make every effort to accommodate their transport. Large, bulky items may require alternative arrangements be made by you. Mailing such things home from that point is one suggestion.



#### ***Rain gear is important!***

It is well known that the best rain gear is expensive Gortex. You may choose to get wet in the rain, or overheating in non-breathable materials, but we recommend bringing quality gear to keep you comfortable and happy during your rides, even if its raining!



*Feel free to contact us with any questions!*

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## Let's Keep in Touch!!

We would love to hear from you before, during and after your trip!

While you're getting ready and excited about your trip, check our social network pages to see pictures from other travelers, and interesting facts regarding the countries we offer.

During your tour, please feel free to post pictures and comments on our pages, that way other travelers can get a preview of what they'll see on their tour from your point of view (and others may dream about going on that trip someday!).

After your tour, if you could share some pictures and videos with us, we would really be grateful! Your snapshots and short films are always appreciated, and we love seeing our clients have fun on tour since we rarely get to see you in person!

Please don't be shy and feel free to gloat about your great vacation!



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