

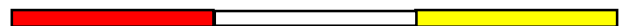
Cazorla Gravel Tour

Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas Natural Park (Andalusia, Spain)



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CAZORLA



Cazorla Gravel Cycling Tour (Andalusia, Spain)!

This gravel cycling tour opens the window to the spectacular Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas natural park. This 'interior paradise' is Europe's biggest protected natural space and the lungs of southern Spain.

If you like the idea of combining road and gravel cycling away from the coast and masses then this is the place to escape. The cycling available includes a total of 720km with a good 30% of this on quality gravel grinding tracks!

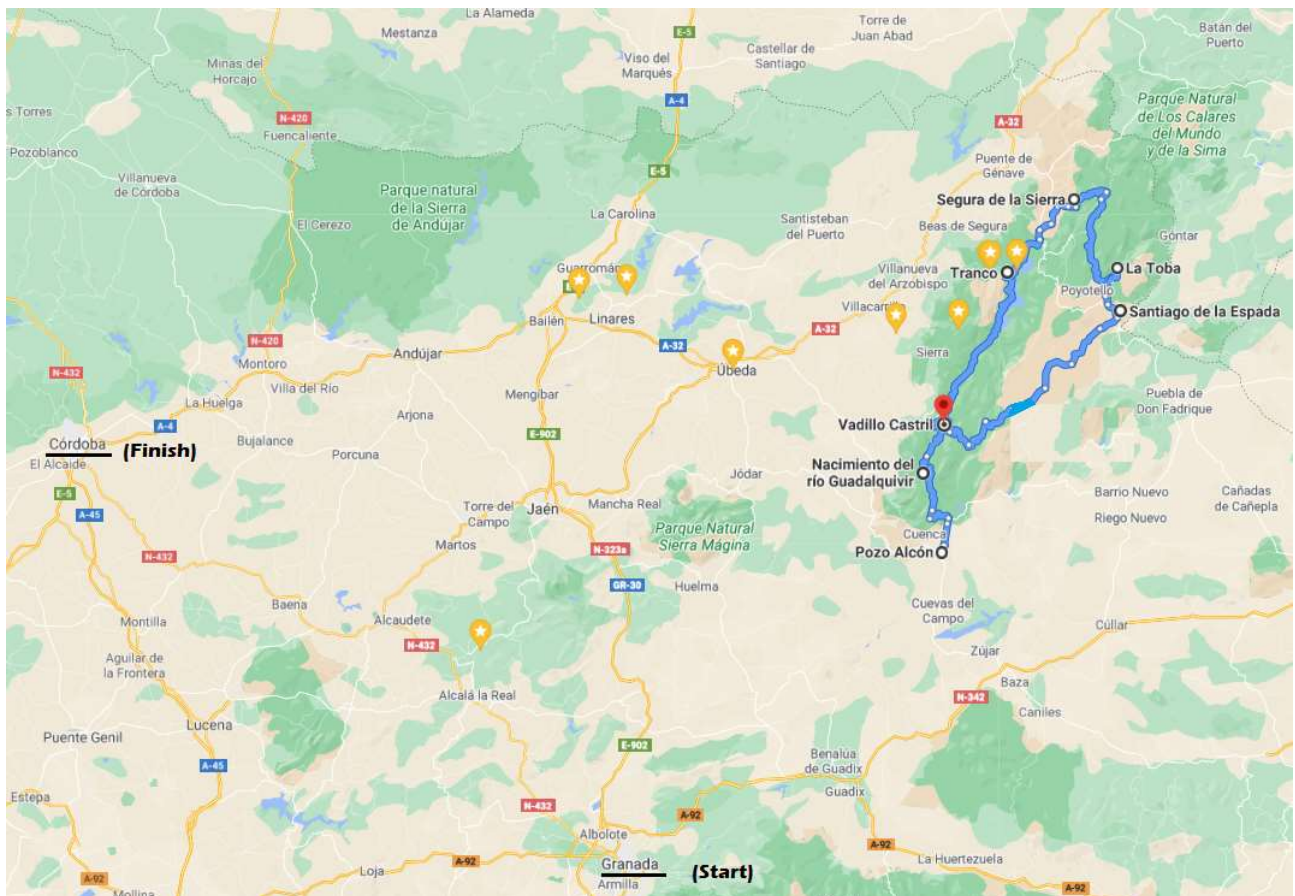
Imagine spectacular mountain scenery, a huge diversity of plant life, great opportunities for wildlife watching, whitewashed villages, castles, quiet roads, excellent cuisine and Andalusian folklore all rolled together! The cycling routes also follow fresh mountain streams and reservoirs, high mountain plateaus resembling lunar landscapes, river valleys and dense Mediterranean forests. The terrain includes many peaks around the 1000-1500m elevation with 'El Yelmo' the biggest challenge standing at 1800m.

By starting in Granada and finishing in Cordoba this cycling tour also provides our guests with the chance to visit two historic Spanish cities. The Sierra Nevada mountains tower above Granada and the impressive La Alhambra fortress while the mesmerising mosque in Cordoba means there is no shortage of pre- and post-tour activities.

GRAVEL TOUR PHILOSOPHY

Cazorla National Park has been selected as one of our main 'gravel' destination thanks to the enormity of the park and its rich biodiversity. The opportunity to ride your bike in such a remote environment helps to awaken the senses. Diverse landscapes, distant horizons and a good blend of gravel and asphalt to help you move across this vast countryside is what sets Cazorla apart from other cycling regions. When navigating each of its mountain curves one would be more likely to encounter an animal than a car. With over 200 species of mammals, breeding birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish it's no wonder its one of Europe's richest natural habitats.

A gravel bike trip removes the background noise so one can fully focus on living in the moment. The secret of this type of tour is the connection with nature, the bicycle and the environment. Freedom, peace and only having to enjoy yourself are other positives!



ITINERARY

DAY ONE – Saturday 19 October 2024 – Granada, Spain

We will be available to meet you at Granada Train Station at 9am. There is plenty to do in Granada so we recommend you arrive early. If you have any pre-tour questions please let us know.

From Granada we will drive 1.5hr into Jaen province which is home to castles, battles and olive oil! There will be time for a briefing, bike set-up and light lunch. Following lunch the ride almost immediately heads off-road onto 4WD tracks which intersect the source of the Guadalquivir River. The Guadalquivir River is the second longest river with its entire length in Spain and is the lifeline of Andalusia. Its irrigative capacity supports Andalusia's rich agriculture.



Watching the river bubble up from under some rocks is very curious when one considers that 650km away it enters the Atlantic Ocean at over 1000m wide! The ride through to our secluded hotel in the middle of the natural park crosses the Guadalquivir river a couple of times. Many cyclists are tempted to stop for a dip in its cool pristine waters.

Today's Ride: 55km cycling / 1400m elevation gain

Gravel Sections: 35km (≈60%)

Meals: Lunch & Dinner provided

Accommodation: Cazorla N.P. (Andalusia, Spain)



DAY TWO – Sunday 20 October 2024 – El Tranco Reservoir

The Sierra Cazorla reserve is a dream cycling destination and today you will understand even further why this is such a special place! Cycle down to the turquoise coloured Tranco reservoir, through small Andalusian villages and ride up and down quiet mountain roads with spectacular views!

From the town Hornos, which is perched high up on the hill, the route swoops down to the banks of the reservoir in search of gravel. A very enjoyable sinuous gravel track, which is actually named after one of Spain's best-known field naturalists (Felix Rodriguez de la Fuente), hugs the banks of the reservoir back to our accommodation. Content with our dose of Vitamin-G it is now time to relax in the quiet settings of the natural park.



Today's Ride: 95km cycling / 1850m elevation gain
Gravel Sections: 25km (≈30%)
Meals: Breakfast & Dinner provided
Accommodation: Cazorla N.P. (Andalusia, Spain)

DAY THREE – Mon 21 October 2024 – ‘Lunar’ mountain crossing

Cycling from the hotel and you quickly arrive at an old sawmill installation which marks the start of a big day on the gravel. What were previously old logging routes are now perfect tracks for off-road adventures. It is a lovely ride up to the escarpment where the cameras are sure to come out at a couple of lookout points.

Arriving at ‘Campos de Hernan Perea’ is where things get particularly interesting. This is a desolate rocky landscape void of vegetation. With its limestone geology the feeling is like riding on the moon! The mountain plateau is the most extensive in Europe and the elevation typically hovers around 1600m. In fact, being so far away from major cities makes it one of the best places in Europe to stargaze. Pollution free!



After what has now been nearly 50km of continuous gravel cycling we arrive at Pontones. With the plateau crossing now complete we follow quiet asphalted roads through to the hilltop hamlet named Segura de la Sierra. It is a 2km climb up to the township which is neatly positioned with amazing views across to the very distinctive and picturesque 'El Yelmo' peak. El Yelmo is the highest peak in the natural park and will be our biggest cycling challenge in a couple of days time.

Today's Ride: 100km cycling / 2150m elevation gain

Gravel Sections: 45km (≈45%)

Meals: Breakfast & Picnic Lunch provided

Accommodation: Segura de la Sierra (Andalusia, Spain)



DAY FOUR – Tues 22 October 2024 – Segura de la Sierra loop

‘Segura’ and its surrounds is a region to ride and get lost. Well not really! But the aim of the route which we have in store for you today follows that concept at least. The idea is to take you to places off the beaten track and today’s route is why we began designing gravel cycling tours.

Following a gentle 10km warm-up out of town we hit a continuous stretch of 25km of white gravel roads. Forget Tuscany as the old ‘Segura de la Sierra dirt road’ will be sure to please. The winding roads snake their way between the vegetation and it is quiet and spectacular. Just another day cycling through this interior paradise.

Today’s Ride: 105km cycling / 2400m elevation gain

Gravel Sections: 25km (~25%)

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner provided

Accommodation: Segura de la Sierra (Andalusia, Spain)



DAY FIVE – Wed 23 October 2024 – ‘El Yelmo’ and KOM points

Just like all the rides on tour, today is another hotel to hotel ride. The aim is to spend as much time as possible in the natural environment and enjoy the quiet roads.

Today is one of the shorter rides on offer (75km) but it still packs a punch with 2000m of elevation gain. The reason being is the climb to the highest peak in the Cazorla, Segura & Las Villas natural park is waiting. El Yelmo rises up to 1800m altitude and the 15.7km climb includes 1050m of elevation gain with a 6.7% average gradient. The true test though comes in the final 3km where the gradient never drops below 10% and there are many 12-15% ramps to contend with. A spectacular finish sees no less than 6 stunning switchbacks in the final kilometre and 360 degree views at the summit that look down over the entire park.

Just for good measure El Yelmo was used as a Category 1 climb during Stage 3 of the 2021 Vuelta a Andalusia road race!

Today's Ride: 75km cycling / 2000m elevation gain

Gravel Sections: 10km (≈15%)

Meals: Breakfast & Picnic Lunch provided

Accommodation: Segura de la Sierra (Andalusia, Spain)



DAY SIX – Thursday 24 October 2024 – Puerto de las Palomas climb

After already spending some nights within the park and the ‘Segura’ hamlet today we would like to guide you through to Cazorla township. Cazorla is the most recognised town in the park and in many ways is the gateway to the outdoor adventures. This small town has a great selection of tapas bars and restaurants and the cuisine is just another reason for visiting Andalusia.

This is another classic route for all gravel cycling enthusiasts with nearly half the ride on 4WD trails. On the arrival into Cazorla the route passes the Puerto de las Palomas climb. This 14km climb ascends 375m at an average grade of 2.5%. This pass boasts spectacular views over the Guadalquivir Valley but is also an interesting spot to take out the binoculars and look for eagles and falcons.

Today’s Ride: 125km cycling / 2500m elevation gain

Gravel Sections: 55km (≈45%)

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner provided

Accommodation: Cazorla (Andalusia, Spain)



DAY SEVEN – Friday 25 October 2024 – Puerto de Tiscar climb

While there is no gravel today there will still be a couple of broken up asphalt climbs thrown-in to keep things interesting. Two small teaser climbs to Alto de Ceal and Hinojares offer special landscapes that resemble Grand Canyon formations and the white cliffs of Dover.

This is our favourite ‘road cycling’ route in Cazorla natural park and is a classic straight from Stage 7 of the 2018 Vuelta a España (La Vuelta).



The challenge for today is the Puerto de Tiscar climb. 'Tiscar' is a Category 2 climb (8km with a constant 6% grade) and offers amazing views of the surrounding valleys and peaks. The 10km descent down to Quesada is one of the most enjoyable cycling experiences around! The afternoon has been left as free-time for those who would like to explore Cazorla on their own or relax in its stress-free atmosphere!



Today's Ride: 90km cycling / 2150m elevation gain
Gravel Sections: 0km (simply put a must-do epic road ride route)
Meals: Breakfast & Picnic Lunch provided
Accommodation: Cazorla (Andalusia, Spain)

DAY EIGHT – Sat 26 October 2024 – El Chorro: home to the vultures

El Chorro gorge high above Cazorla township is an amazing landscape which is also home to one of the park's special inhabitants. The vultures that live in the limestone caves provide a serious wow factor. Riding on gravel tracks up to this mountain escarpment and watching the vultures flying overhead is incredible. As the vultures dive down to the rock ledges to feed their young you will practically be able to measure their 3m wingspan!

Tonight will include a special celebration dinner. A week cycling through the pristine Cazorla national park on the best of its asphalt and gravel roads will be something to savour!



Today's Ride: 65km cycling / 1750m elevation gain

Gravel Sections: 20km (~30%)

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner provided

Accommodation: Cazorla (Andalusia, Spain)

DAY NINE – Sunday 27 October 2024 – Transfer to Cordoba

After breakfast we will be available to transfer you 2hr to Cordoba. The Sierra guides will have you at Cordoba Train Station by 12 noon at the latest. Please let us know if you would like any post-tour accommodation organised in Cordoba.

Did you Know? During the 10th Century Cordoba was Europe's intellectual centre. Its old town is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. The fast train line also connects Cordoba to Malaga and Madrid in only 1-1.5hr.

Meals: Breakfast provided



TOUR DETAILS

REGION: Cazorla Gravel Tour
(Andalusia, Spain)

PRICE: 3150 € (PP & twin share)

TOUR DATES: 19 - 27 October 2024

SINGLE ROOM: 550 €

DURATION: 9 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS

OPTIONAL EXTRAS:

Gravel Bike Hire: 400 €

HOTELS: Cazorla Natural Park (x2),
Segura de la Sierra (x3), Cazorla (x3); Min.
3 Star Hotels

INCLUDED

Arrival & Departure transfers
8 nights accommodation (twin share)
8 guided cycling stages
All breakfasts
4 lunches (3 are picnic lunches)
5 dinners with beer & wine included
Mechanic & accompanying support van
Commemorative cycling jersey
Olive Oil Tasting

NOT INCLUDED

Pre or post tour accommodation