

LA VUELTA

Asturias, La Rioja & Madrid (Sept 2024)



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LA VUELTA



La Vuelta a España – Asturias, La Rioja & Madrid!

Week 3 of the 2024 Vuelta a España (Tour of Spain) will see our tour start and finish in Madrid. The tour will immediately move north to Asturias which is considered by many as the spiritual home of the modern Vuelta. Get ready for the Stage 16 summit finish on the emblematic Lagos de Covadonga climb! After testing yourself on some of Europe's most challenging climbs the tour enters the award winning La Rioja wine region. The mountains dividing La Rioja and Basque Country will help shape the general classification. Enjoy your medieval base as terraced vineyards, quality asphalt roads and passionate Basque supporters combine to create an exceptional Vuelta experience.

Two 3-night bases in Asturias & La Rioja is a highlight of this Vuelta cycling tour!

As an official tour operator there will also be access to 3 VIP Vuelta experiences! On this tour you will see three high altitude finishes; Stage 16 at *Covadonga*, *Alto Moncalvillo* during Stage 19 and the Stage 20 finish atop *Picon Blanco*. The tour concludes by heading south and arriving to Madrid in time for the Stage 21 Individual Time Trial. This is an innovative finish which will find you enjoying VIP access as the 2024 Vuelta champion is crowned.

What a week of cycling watching Spain's premiere road cycling race!

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Cycle the 'Picos de Europa National Park' – Spain's versión of the Dolomites with its alpine limestone peaks, pristine forests, lakes and deep canyon roads!
- Enjoy our *balneario* (spa resort) in the Asturian mountain landscape
- Test yourself on L'Angliru one of Europe's toughest road cycling climbs. We think it is harder than the Mortirolo & Zoncolan in Italy, so that is saying something!
- 5 live encounters with the 2024 Vuelta; 3 summit finishes, 1 mid-stage viewing and 1 individual time trial. Get up close and personal to all the Vuelta action with our VIP inside race access!
- Visit La Rioja and its famed terraced vineyards. There will be plenty of time to sample the award winning tempranillo red wines.
- Enjoy a Stage 20 'cross-the-finish-line' experience courtesy of our VIP inside race access!
- Stop-over in Burgos which is one of Spain's best preserved medieval cities.
- Watch the 2024 Vuelta celebration ceremony from the heart of Madrid.



ITINERARY

DAY ONE – Sunday 1 September 2024 – Transfer to Oviedo

Our guides will be available to collect you from central Madrid at approx. 10:00am. From Madrid we drive 4hr to the edge of the Somiedo National Park (Asturias). Here there will be time for lunch and to set-up the hire bikes before our first official ride.

While this is essentially a transfer day, we are pleased to offer you all a fantastic first-up ride. To set the scene, you will begin on the 'Puerto Ventana' climb (note - *puerto* or *alto* in Spanish is equivalent to *col* in French). This 7km climb at 4.8% is a constant climb without any steep ramps, so it will be a great way to get rid of any cobwebs!

From the summit, the ride follows some great backroads (practically all downhill and flat) through the '*bear gorge*' to our spa resort hotel on the outskirts of Oviedo. You are now in prime position for the upcoming Stage 16 summit finish on the nearby Lagos de Covadonga peak. This evening over dinner listen-in to the amazing week of Vuelta cycling we have in store for you!



Meals: Dinner included

Destinations: Oviedo

Today's Ride: 65km / 800m elevation gain

Accommodation: Oviedo (Asturias, Spain)

DAY TWO – Mon 2 Sept 2024 – The mythical L'Angliru

Road cycling enthusiasts will know all too well that Asturias since the 1980's has been home to some of the most iconic Vuelta stages. In no time at all climbs such as Lagos de Covadonga, La Cobertoria and El Angliru have become household names.

Today is all about taking advantage of the Vuelta rest day and visiting L'Angliru. Are you ready? El 'Alto del Angliru' is not part of the 2024 Vuelta race edition. It was first introduced by La Vuelta organisers during 1999. The 12.5km climb with 10.2% average grade we think puts it in the top 3 of all European road cycling climbs. Sounds tough right! But wait for it, the final 6.5km average 13.5% with half a dozen extended ramps ranging between 19 to 23.5%. '*Un autentico infierno*' as the locals would say! As soon as L'Angliru made race news, it spread like a wildfire across the cycling world. There have now been 9 stage finishes since 1999 and Alberto Contador is the only rider with multiple stage wins. Primož Roglič won the stage during 2023 as the whole 'who is leading Jumbo-Visma dilemma' unfolded!



Meals: Breakfast & Dinner included

Destinations: L'Angliru

Today's Ride: 80km cycling / 2000m elevation gain

Accommodation: Oviedo (Asturias, Spain)

DAY THREE – Tue 3 September 2024 – Stage 16: Lagos de Covadonga

In 1936 La Vuelta arrived to Asturias for the first time. Now you too are here to ride and watch as the 2024 race moves deeper into Asturias. Today the pro peloton has a date with destiny, and it goes by the name Lagos de Covadonga! Whether you are a photographer, nature lover, hiker or cyclist everyone must visit Lagos de Covadonga (*lago* = lake). The majestic lakes which are found at the summit return to the 2024 race edition.

In the morning there will be a 45min transfer towards the Cantabrian Sea. The first climb on the cards is the impressive Mirador del Fito (*Mirador* = Lookout). Get the legs going with this 7km climb at 7.9% average grade. The work needs to be done when the double-digit grades strike between KM 3-5. With green vegetation all around and a snaking road up to the lookout, the Asturian coastline views will be sure to impress!

The descent now delivers you to the base of the Picos de Europa National Park. These mountains are commonly referred to as '*Pequeño Dolomiti*' (Little Dolomites). 14km of constant climbing (7% average) takes you up to the towering limestone peaks. There is a testing 3km stretch during the mid-section which constantly hovers around 11% average. Make sure you are ready to cover any stage defining attacks! Lagos de Covadonga was first included during the 1983 Vuelta race. During the last 40 years there have been no less than 21 epic stage finishes. It is one of the most loved climbs with the '*aficionado*' and Spanish and French champions Pedro Delgado and Laurent Jalabert respectively are the only riders to have taken out multiple stage wins.

The Fito / Covadonga double was last used during Stage 15 of the 2018 Vuelta when Thibaut Pinot took line honours over Miguel Angel Lopez and Simon Yates. What will happen out on the road in 2024? The chance to take in VIP race hospitality at the summit finish will be a major highlight for our tour group!

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner included

Destinations: Lagos de Covadonga

Today's Ride: 75km cycling / 2200m elevation gain

Accommodation: Oviedo (Asturias, Spain)



DAY FOUR – Wednesday 4 September 2024 – Cuitu Negro

Today we head 'back in time' in search of the 2024 Stage 15 Vuelta finish. A few days ago the peloton finished a gruelling climb up to Cuitu Negro. We will use our Asturian base to also tackle this beast. Following a 25min drive we will be near the base and ready to ride to the summit away from the race. It is a narrow asphalted road which finishes at the top of the Valgrande ski station.

Cuitu Negro has only been used once before at La Vuelta. The 4WD track was asphalted specially for the 2012 Vuelta! The summit of the climb is situated 3km above the Puerto de Pajares climb. The two climbs when combined include 19km at a 7% average grade. It is the 3 final kilometres though which are gruesome. An inconsistent 13% average awaits with a number of ramps touching 20 and 22%. Now that you have added another summit to your cycling CV it will be time to enjoy the ride and descend towards Leon.

Post ride there will be a 3hr drive to our new base in La Rioja wine region. Our base for the next 3 nights borders between Basque Country and La Rioja. As La Vuelta race organisers know well, La Rioja is the perfect location for cycling as the short distances between medieval towns and old and new wineries make for some very scenic viewing. Remember, you have now set foot in the award winning La Rioja wine region. It would be rude not to taste test a glass of the tempranillo grape. Una botella de tinto por favor!

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner included

Destinations: La Rioja

Today's Ride: 90km / 1350m elevation gain

Accommodation: La Rioja (Spain)

DAY FIVE – Thur 5 September 2024 – La Vuelta: Stage 18 - La Herrera

Today you will cycle some of our favourite roads in Spain. Riding from Laguardia you will follow 50km of the Stage 18 Vuelta course. The route today follows the medium mountains along La Rioja / Basque Country border. 'Alto de Rivas de Tereso' and 'Puerto Herrera' are Category 2 and Category 1 climbs respectively. The plan is to tackle both of these climbs and be in position to watch the race as it passes mid-stage. Puerto Herrera is the most challenging of the two climbs with its 6km averaging 8.2% average grade. The views from the 'Balcony of La Rioja' road are exceptional!

After watching the race pass the descent back to the terraced vineyards will be one to remember. We will have you back in the hotel in time to watch the Vuelta Stage 18 finish on TV with a cold drink! As the early evening approaches our guides will be pleased to show you all the medieval walled town of Laguardia which has hardly changed since the 13th Century. The sunset from the watch tower with the Sierra de Cantabria mountains in the background is not to be missed. This village still today houses a rabbit warren of underground wine cellars and there will be time to visit a private cellar directly beneath the old impenetrable walls. Back on street level and a selection of tapas will be the perfect way to round out an excellent day!

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner included

Destinations: Rioja Balcony Road

Today's Ride: 95km / 1600m elevation gain

Accommodation: La Rioja (Spain)

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LA VUELTA 1 – 9 SEPT 2024



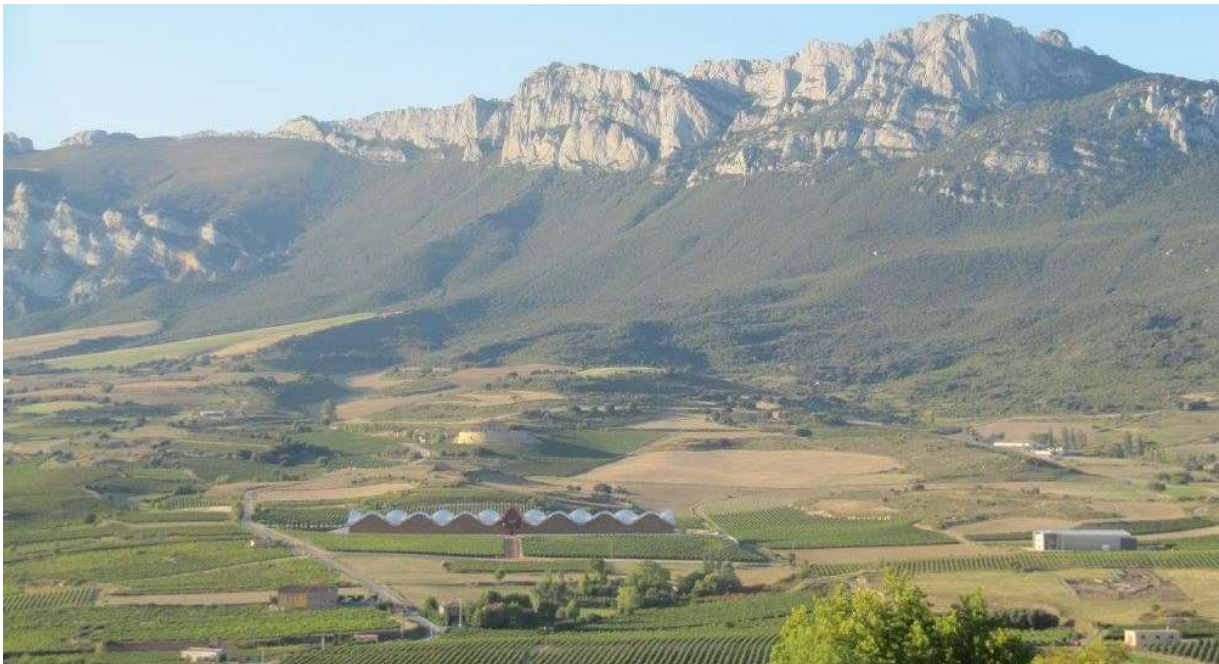
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DAY SIX – Fri 6 Sept 2024 – La Vuelta - Stage 19 – Alto Moncalvillo

Following breakfast we set off from the hotel and cycle past terraced vineyards and through small villages. There are no extended climbs within the first 80km but the ride does follow an undulating course with plenty of vantage points for the photographers in the group. There are some modern wineries along the route that the guides will point out. It is remarkable how the eye-catching architecture still blends in so well with the natural landscape.

Our cycling route today links up with the final kilometres of the Vuelta Stage 19 course. We have left the best for last as you will climb 'Alto Moncalvillo' just like the pro peloton. The final 8.5km to the stage finish packs a punch and it's 9% average grade is sure to create some decisive attacks. The distance to Madrid is closing so these shorter, sharper stage summit finishes will provide fantastic roadside viewing! Post-stage there will be a 30min drive back to the hotel.



Meals: Breakfast & Dinner included

Destinations: Elciego

Today's Ride: 90km / 1750m elevation gain

Accommodation: La Rioja (Spain)

DAY SEVEN – Saturday 7 Sept 2024 – Vuelta Stage 20 – Picon Blanco

Stage 20 of the 2024 Vuelta is the *out-and-out* Queen stage of this Vuelta edition. Six categorised climbs lead to the base of the ‘Picon Blanco’ climb on the outskirts of Espinosa de los Monteros. A quaint town in the Burgos province which has seen plenty of pro racing with this climb used many times at the Vuelta a Burgos stage race. It has now been given a recall in 2024 as it was last rolled out at the 2021 Vuelta a España when Rein Taaramae won Stage 3 and took the leader’s jersey.

This morning we will set off from Laguardia with a 45min van transfer. Our ride heads north-west crossing between the Basque Country and Castile y Leon provinces. Solitary roads and woodlands will accompany you through to Espinosa. All that awaits now is the brutal finish up to ‘Picon Blanco’. The 8.4km provide an average grade of 9.2%. There are up to 20 ramps though with pinches between 13-17% which will test you all the way to the finish line. Through our VIP race connections you will be able to savour the effort expended with a ‘cross-the-finish-line and podium’ experience. Arriving a couple of hours before the pro peloton will allow some time to enjoy a celebration drink and snacks in a privileged location overlooking the plains below!

Post-stage we will drive 1.5hr south to Burgos which is a beautifully preserved medieval city. Sitting down to a quality paella dinner in front of the 13th Century gothic cathedral is always a fantastic experience for our guests!

Meals: Breakfast included

Destinations: Sierra Guadarrama mountains

Today’s Ride: 100km / 1500m elevation gain

Accommodation: Burgos (Spain)

DAY EIGHT – Sunday 8 Sept 2024 – La Vuelta – Stage 21 – Madrid

This morning following breakfast there will be a 2.5hr drive to Madrid. We will have you in the Spanish capital by approximately 12 noon. There will be time for a walk around the nearby Retiro park, some shopping and/or lunch. During the afternoon experience VIP hospitality at the Individual Time Trial finish. As the sun starts to set over Paseo de la Castellana (Spain’s version of the Champs Elysees) the wizz of the wheels will return to Madrid. After many difficult closing mountain stages the surviving GC contenders will need to go for broke. A 22km individual time trial is all that now awaits! The post-race celebrations around the Cibeles fountain are spectacular.

Sepp Kuss was a somewhat surprise winner of the 2023 edition. Will he be back to defend his title in 2024 or will he need to ride in a support role? Viva La Vuelta!

Meals: Breakfast included

Destinations: Madrid

Today's Ride: Transfer

Accommodation: Madrid (Spain)

DAY NINE – Monday 9 September 2024 – Adios from Madrid

Following breakfast our guides will be available to transfer you to Madrid Airport. We can have you at the airport by 10:30am so please keep that in mind when organising any onwards flights. We trust you have enjoyed your Vuelta cycling experience and we look forward to seeing you again soon!

Meals: Breakfast



TRIP DETAILS

REGION: ASTURIAS, LA RIOJA & MADRID

PRICE: from 3350 € p.p.

TOUR DATES: 1 – 9 SEPTEMBER 2024

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: On request

DURATION: 9 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS

OPTIONAL EXTRAS:

Road Bike Hire: Price on request

HOTELS: Oviedo (x3), Rioja (x3), Burgos (x1) & Madrid (x2); 3/4 Star Hotels

INCLUDED

Arrival & Departure transfers (Madrid)
8 nights accommodation (twin share)
8 breakfasts included
6 dinners (beer & wine excluded)
7 guided cycling stages with van and mechanic
Food & drinks during cycling stages

NOT INCLUDED

Airfares & Train Tickets
Pre or post Tour Accommodation