

Spain, Portugal, Morocco: 20 days

Information Kit

Spain, Portugal, Morocco & Gibraltar: A ride through the pages of fabled history via the back roads of Southern Europe and Northern Africa



Join us on a ride that explores Southern Europe and Northern Africa, a ride from the hills of Lisbon to the sands of the Sahara, from twisting mountain roads to labyrinth medinas and ancient Kasbahs. Where else can you have breakfast in Morocco, lunch in Gibraltar and dinner in Spain, all in one day, other than our classic all paved Spain, Portugal, Morocco & the “Rock of Gibraltar” trip?

Itinerary

Joining Day: Lisbon

Your Lisbon airport transfer will take you directly to our joining hotel, ready for an early start tomorrow. Today you will meet your crew for your tour briefing and welcome dinner.

Day One: Sagres

Leaving Lisbon we ride due south getting occasional glimpses of the Atlantic Ocean. We pass through the beautiful Parque Natural do Sudoeste Alentejano e Costa, a landscape of lush greenery and towering Atlantic cliffs. We reach the renowned Algarve region and overnight at the remote wild fishing village of Sagres that stands on a cliff high above the Atlantic.

Day Two: Tavira

It's a short ride today as we leave the coastline and ride inland over the beautiful Serra de Monchique, via a wonderful road that twists and turns to the village of Monchique with its narrow cobblestone streets and plaza de armas. The afternoon is spent riding the back roads of the beautiful Algarve region through remote villages high in the mountains. We eventually arrive at one of the Algarve's most stunning villages of Tavira, with castle ruins and Roman bridges amongst its historical highlights. Along the banks of the Gilão River are grand 18th-century mansions, while in the cobblestone backstreets and little plazas are traditional tiled or painted houses

Day Three: Arcos De La Frontera

A bigger riding day today as we cross into Spain, entering the region of Andalucía, one of the most exotic & colourful regions of Spain. We ride amongst the farmlands that border the Rio Guadalquivir skirting Seville as we ascend into the mountains and overnight at a wonderful 15th Century hacienda near the stunning Arcos de la Frontera.

Day Four: Chefchaouen

It's an early morning ride to Tarifa where we catch a ferry, cross the Straits of Gibraltar, and enter Morocco. Entering this Northern African country is



a world apart from what we have just experienced. We ride out of the port city of Tangiers and into the rugged Rif Mountains on our way to Chefchaouen. Chefchaouen is spectacularly located beneath the peaks of the Rif Mountains and is one of the most striking towns in Morocco. Its narrow alleyways are lined with blue painted buildings and red tiled roofs. We spend a night here allowing us to soak up the Moroccan atmosphere.

Days Five & Six: Fez

Perhaps no other Moroccan city is more evocative than Fez. Crossing the rolling plains under the Central Atlas Mountains we arrive at the magnificent 1200-year-old Fes-el-Bali, as it is known locally. Two nights are spent here allowing us time to explore this fascinating city. A city guide is included who will take us deep into the labyrinth of the "Medina", a maelstrom of over 9000 narrow alleyways crammed with craftsmen, tanneries, cafes, shops, donkeys hauling carts loaded with goods, its fantastic!! We enjoy an evening dinner & drinks overlooking the medina at a wonderful Riad listening to the "call to prayer", its inspiring stuff.

Day Seven: Midelt

Riding south we cross the Middle Atlas Mountains, a landscape of forests, peaks & valleys populated by shepherds tending their flocks. We may see the Barbary Ape en-route. Today's ride is a little reminiscent of Mongolia with its broad valleys and wild landscapes. We overnight in the market town of Midelt.

Day Eight: Merzouga

It's a beautiful ride today south through a landscape of Kasbahs (adobe fortresses) and valleys full of date palms surrounded by rugged mountainsides. We get to within 20ks of the Algerian border at Erg Chebbi, a breathtaking landscape of towering orange sand dunes on the edge of the mighty Sahara. We will take a camel ride into the desert to watch the sun set over the Sahara before arriving at our 5-star accommodation deep within the sand dunes. A memorable night in the Sahara!

Day Nine: Todra Gorge

Leaving the Sahara we ride the legendary "Route of 1000 Kasbahs", a ride littered with ancient Kasbahs and oasis villages spectacularly set in tight valleys full of palm trees and rose gardens. We overnight at the wonderful Todra Gorge, an immense canyon sided by two towering orange limestone cliffs with a river coursing its way through the middle.

Days Ten & Eleven: Marrakesh

We turn north now and ride into the High Atlas Mountains, land of the Berbers, via the amazing Tizi n'Tichka pass. En-route we will visit the Ait Ben Haddou; a magnificent Kasbah used in many a movie such as Gladiators and Game of Thrones. We arrive into the exotic, alluring, Marrakesh late afternoon and have two nights here allowing us time to explore this mighty city. A city guide is included as we visit the medina with the incredible Djemaa el Fna, especially amazing at dusk when it explodes into life with pop-up food stalls, countless street performers, snake charmers and an endless variety of entertainment, it has to be seen to be believed.

Day Twelve: Beni Mellal

Departing Marrakesh we ride north via an amazing set of twisties up through Western High Atlas National Park en-route to our overnight stop at Beni Mellal. This city is surrounded by olive and pomegranate fields and boasts a beautiful park and the El Kasbah Ain Asserdoun Beni Mellal that overlooks the city. The riding today is spectacular as we descend from the Atlas Mountains to Beni Mellal

Day Thirteen: Meknes

An early start today as we ride north via some amazing back roads amongst the mountains, some of these roads rarely see visitors and the locals excitedly wave as we pass by. We arrive late afternoon in the UNESCO listed imperial city of Meknes. Meknes features winding narrow streets, a classic medina and grand buildings that hail back to its time as the capital of Morocco. The Bab el-Mansour is the impressive gateway to the city and the finest in all of North Africa.

Day Fourteen: Asilah

Leaving Meknes it's only a short ride until we reach the best-preserved Roman ruins in all of Morocco at Volubilis. A guide is included to bring to life this amazing series of Roman ruins set in a field outside of Meknes. Riding north we reach the shores of the Atlantic at Asilah. A beautiful seaside village with a collection of white and blue painted buildings atop a rampart that edges out to the ocean below. It's a big day sightseeing and experiencing the many shades of Morocco.

Day Fifteen & Sixteen: Ronda

Departing Morocco we cross the Straits of Gibraltar again back into Spain & the Andalucía region. We leave our bikes at La Linea before walking across into Gibraltar for a 2-hour tour and some great English grub of fish and chips, all a little strange here on the southern tip of Spain!! The ride continues on through the renowned Costa del Sol before turning north for 45ks of superb twisties to one of the highlights of Spain, Ronda. Ronda is an amazing city perched on top of El Tajo Gorge. The town stands precipitously on the edges of a 100mt of El Tajo Gorge, so impressive that Ernest Hemmingway & Orson Welles, to name a few, stayed here to gain inspiration. We have a full day here to explore this magnificent old town including one of the most famous bullrings in Spain, the ancient Arab Baths and wander the labyrinth laneways of the old city.

Day Seventeen: Granada

Short in direct distance, we spend the best part of the day exploring the empty back roads of Andalucía zig-zagging our way toward Granada. It's a wonderful days of mountain passes, empty roads and remote villages. We arrive late afternoon and check in to our hotel only 100mt away from the stunning Alhambra.

Day Eighteen: Cordoba

We start the day off with a visit to the world-renowned Alhambra. This utterly spectacular fortress & palace is some the finest examples of Islamic architecture on earth, you will be awestruck! Leaving Granada we ride what is known as the "Caliphate Way", from the two most important Moorish cities of Granada & Cordoba, a wonderful route through rolling hillsides laden with olive trees and numerous small villages most seemingly with a hilltop fortress, one of which we visit. We reach the stunning Cordoba and have a chance to explore what Lonely Planet describes as a "*natural film set*", a superb city with some more of the world's finest Islamic buildings and the wonderful Jewish and Muslim quarters. If you never see another church or mosque in your life, the mighty Mesquita will leave you dumbfounded; it is an absolute must on any visit to Spain.

Day Nineteen: Evora

Leaving Cordoba we ride west and quickly ascend into the Sierra de Hornachuellos and ride an utterly spectacular series of endless single lane twisties on a completely deserted road. We leave Spain and once again enter Portugal via the superb walled village of Monsaraz. Our destination tonight is one of the most beautiful small towns in Portugal and UNESCO listed, Evora. Evora is a medieval walled city with stunning Roman and Gothic antiquities and was the sight of some sorry episodes of the Inquisition.

Day Twenty: Lisbon:

Our final day will see us depart Evora late, after some exploring of this stunning city, including the not to be missed, somewhat macabre, Capela dos Ossos (Chapel of Bones). As per usual we take the road less travelled as we ride into Lisbon via a series of backcountry roads through Cork & Eucalypt forests. We shall return our bikes and enjoy our last night of the ride where we shall celebrate what has been an absolutely amazing, diverse and historically rich, ride experience.



Ride Grade: 2

99.9% The vast majority of the roads are in superb condition, however we do spend considerable time on mountainous roads that are winding and twisting and very narrow with blind corners, generally these roads are empty. Moroccan roads are far more challenging with significant road subsidence in some areas, some sections with massive potholes broken and tall shoulders, narrow and winding roads with tall drop-offs and drivers that are a little less careful than what we may be used to.

0.1% We may encounter some roadwork's in Morocco where a new road is being built and could experience sections of up to 100mts of dirt around machinery or roadwork's. Additionally a particular 8ks section of road in Spain is in terrible condition and slowly returning to a gravel surface.

Distances

The biggest riding day is 430ks / 270ml with the shortest being 185ks / 115ml. Most riding days we average around 200 – 250km / 125 – 160ml with numerous rest days included where the bike is available for more riding if desired, (subject to any maintenance requirements). The total distance is approximately 4530km / 2830ml, although not huge kilometres, 250ks in Morocco is a big day and there is LOTS to see on this tour!

Bikes

We operate a brand of bike that needs no introduction, the venerable BMW. Our fleet consists of near new BMW F700 GS / F800 GS, R1200 GS and 1200GSA. All bikes come equipped with a top-box.

Experience required

No off road experience is required as this is an all paved tour however, as mentioned, there is the possibility of some limited sections of dirt / gravel if road works are being undertaken, especially in Morocco, so any off road experience you might have can only help but certainly not a requirement. This ride is completely suitable for 2-up riding. All riders **must** have a valid motorcycle license.

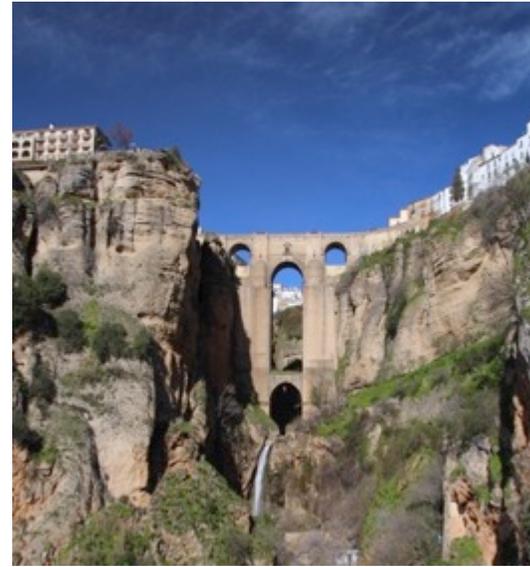
Weather

September / October in Portugal & Spain will be cooling down as autumn arrives, expect mid 20 to early 30 degrees Celsius. Morocco will also be cooling down with low 30 degrees Celsius but cool nights, especially in the desert. Generally the weather will be clear and sunny but some rain could be experienced as we cross the High Atlas in Morocco.



Highlights

- The south west most point of Europe
 - Stunning back roads of Portugal's Algarve
 - Riding the back roads of Spanish Andalucía
- The mighty Atlas Mountains of Morocco
 - A night in the Sahara
- Medinas of Fez & Marrakesh
 - Morocco's Kasbahs
- The unparalleled beauty of Ronda
- Granada's Alhambra and Cordoba's Mesquita
- Roman ruins of Volubilis



Meals

The food options on the Spain, Portugal & Morocco tour are as varied as the landscape. Many types of western style meals are available, particularly in Spain & Portugal, as well as endless local delicacies such as the famous Tapas or Paella of Spain, Codiza a Portuguesa (stews) of Portugal and the wonderful Tagines of Morocco, not forgetting fish & chips in Gibraltar! On ride days we include picnic lunches that are wholesome and filling and at night our selected restaurants offer tasty traditional meals. Of course all breakfasts are included, some are offer more basic continental choices.

Breakfasts: **21**
Lunches: **14**
Dinners: **15**

Accommodation

Our hotels are generally 3 & 4 with even a 5 star and are chosen for their location, cleanliness, suitability for motorcycle group and ambience. On a couple of nights, in Morocco, the accommodation will be more basic. Some hotels have restaurants & bars attached. Accommodation is an important part of your ride experience and we believe we offer a superb mix of excellent boutique, family owned hotels, although we do stay at a couple of international chain hotels in Morocco. You will also experience 1 night "Glamping" in the Sahara; the tents have hot showers & toilets inside so we aren't roughing it.

Accommodation: **21 nights**

Tour Inclusions

- Airport Transfers
- Motorcycle rental as per your selection
 - 21 nights accommodation
 - All meals mentioned in the itinerary
 - Fuel
 - Support vehicle with passenger carrying ability
- Services of ride leader and support vehicle driver
 - Pre-departure material and route maps
 - Access to satellite phone, pay per minute
 - Compass Expeditions polo shirt
- Entrances to all monuments / palaces / Ruins and Kasbahs mentioned in the itinerary
 - Sahara Desert Excursion
 - Fez city guide
 - Marrakesh city guide

Your Responsibilities

Riding equipment

You will need to bring the following riding gear:

Riding jacket and pants: The high passes of Morocco can be cold and some rain could be experienced therefore a multi layer jacket / pants is essential. The jacket / pants ideally needs to have internal removable liners and have Kevlar crash protection and a waterproof pocket for your documents and small camera. Ideally your jacket / pants should be 100% waterproof or carry a set of waterproofs in your topbox.

Helmet: Your helmet should be full faced and of a good quality. Ensure you have a spare visor or replace before departing if scratched. Motocross style helmets are unsuitable for long distance rides, on what may be sometimes dusty surfaces, as you will experience considerable dust ingress. Internal drop down tinted visors are great, but not so if you need prescription sunglasses.

Boots: Ideally, motocross style boots would be best, but bulky and impractical to carry. When choosing a boot, it is essential to choose a boot that offers the most rigid ankle protection possible; ankle injuries are the most common injuries we experience. Pack a set of walking boots in your top-box for those off bike excursions.

Gloves: We recommend the use of both summer and winter (ideally waterproof) gloves, as the weather is extremely changeable.

Additional items: Silk neck warmer, great for keeping the wind out. Earplugs, great for keeping the noise out.

Travel insurance

It is compulsory to have travel insurance to tour with us. It just makes sense! Your insurance must cover you for any incident you may have whilst riding a motorcycle 700 cc and over. We have negotiated a 10% discount with various insurance providers around the world, who WILL offer coverage for you, for the activity of riding a motorcycle 700cc and over in foreign lands. For more information return to the "tour page" and click on the "insurance" tab.

Passport & Visas

Your passport will need to be valid for at least six months **AFTER** completion of your ride. Your passport should have at least one full page available, for each country you will be visiting. Compass Expeditions has teamed up with the world leaders in visa procurement, CIBT, who have created a special Compass Expeditions visa application page. They have offices in Australia, USA, Canada, UK, Mexico, Brazil, Singapore and numerous European countries. Tour participants can obtain their own visas if preferred, however, for a small charge, CIBT can obtain your visa and negotiate any issues that might arise:

Australia: <https://visalink.com.au/compassexp>
Canada: <http://www.cibtvisas.ca/compass>
USA: <http://www.cibtvisas.com/compassexp>
France: <http://www.cibtvisas.fr/compassexp>
UK: <http://cibtvisas.co.uk/compassexp>

Most nationalities do not require a visa for Spain, Portugal & Morocco. It is the participant's responsibility to ensure they have any visas that may be required. This ride visits Spain, Portugal, Morocco and Gibraltar (part of the UK).

Vaccinations

We highly recommend that you speak with your doctor, and/or check out the World Health Organization website at www.who.int/country and have a look at their excellent International Travel and Health book, available online. In Australia, visit the Australian Medical Centre website at www.traveldoctor.com.au or phone 1300 65 88 44. For our U.S clients, visit www.cdc.gov/travel/ and for our U.K clients, go to www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice/, for travel health recommendations in general, go to www.mdtravelhealth.com, now part of red travel.



You've made a booking, what happens next?

Once a booking has been made, you will receive an automated booking confirmation. Soon after, you will receive a "welcome" email, and then receive our comprehensive pre departure booklet in the post. This booklet will prepare you for your adventure and has more details on what to bring and what to expect. We email a "tour dossier" 90 days before departure; this dossier is full of information, including historical and country information. The more you read, the more you will get out of your ride.



Thanks for spending your time reading this information kit. We hope it has inspired you to challenge yourself, if not riding with us then just riding and enjoying this remarkable world that we live in.

If you have further questions, please contact us.

Compass Expeditions

Email: info@compassexpeditions.com

Phone: + 61 3 9747 2379 (international)
1300 887 327 (within Australia)

Website: www.compassexpeditions.com

