



RIDE4FUN
EDELWEISS TOURS

PYRENEES EXTREME

” On this tour, we explore the Pyrenees and experience motorcycle heaven. ”

RIDING DAY 1 : CASTELLDEFELS - OS DE BALAGUER

Standard Route (376 km / 234 miles)

We leave Castelldefels on small side roads, to get used to the motorcycles and the countless curves. A short section on the motorway and we can already see the Holy Mountain of Montserrat in front of us. A very curvy road winds around and up into the bizarre rock formations, unfortunately, there is always a lot of traffic here, but the view from above is worth it.

Less than an hour later we reach the castle of Cardona, which is an old castle from the outside but a luxurious Parador from the inside. We do not stay overnight, but there is also a very nice café for our lunch and a tower for a great panoramic view.

In the afternoon we continue through the foothills of the Pyrenees, the road climbs further up into the mountains. In Berga, we turn left and follow a magnificent stretch of road, which leads over the Coll de Jou and is partly daringly carved into the rock face.

We cross the C-14, which connects Spain with Andorra and tackle THE pass highlight of the day. The Coll de Boixols is the pinnacle of riding fun today, incredibly winding, hardly any traffic, and beautiful views.

Highlights:

#1: Abbey Santa Maria de Montserrat



The “sawed mountain” which reaches up to 4,000 ft., makes a magnificent setting for Catalonia's holiest location, the monastery of Montserrat. Surrounded by chapels and eremite caves, it dates back to the 9th century. After Napoleon's troops destroyed it in 1811, the main complex was rebuilt in 1844. Under Franco it was a bastion of the Catalanian resistance. Today the monastery is inhabited by

monks of the Benedictine order. Most famous for this area is the black Madonna, which was supposedly made by the evangelist Luke, and brought here by St. Peter.

#2: Coll de Jou (1.462 m)



It's about 50 miles or 75 km from Berga to where the L-401 ends, close to the town of Coll de Nargó. The very twisty and very scenic ride culminates at 1,480 m (4,850 ft) above sea level at the mountain pass named Coll de Jou but it spends much of its time above 1000 m, carved into the side of the mountain and offering stunning views. There's no space to stop anywhere, so you should have your GoPro

ready to go.

#3: Coll de Boixols (1380 m)



At about 1,380 m (4,150 ft.) elevation, the Coll de Boixols is not one of the really high pass roads in the Pyrenees, but it is one of the best as far as the riding is concerned. Excellent road conditions and hardly any other vehicles on the road make this pass an outstanding riding experience.

RIDING DAY 2 : OS DE BALAGUER - PAMPLONA

Standard Route (389 km / 242 miles)

Today we are heading to the center of the Pyrenees which boasts the highest peak, the 3,408 m high Aneto. This is a fantastic ride in stunning scenery, the snow-covered, over 3,000 m tall peaks of Benasque National Park within sight. This park is a quiet nature reserve, a paradise for hikers, and its surroundings are an excellent motorcycle territory.

The passes stay below 1,500 m, but that does not mean a shortage of curves, just the opposite is true. Instead of many hairpins like in the Alps, we enjoy tiny little roads with countless corners of every kind.

In the afternoon we go through Jaca and follow the shore of a huge storage lake on wide sweeping roads in excellent condition. A "cerveza" at the romantic square in Pamplona is the perfect finish of a wonderful day.

Highlights:

#1: Benasque National Park



Benasque National Park is located in the heart of the Pyrenees and is one of the larger parks with some of the highest peaks. But it is less developed than others - there is only one little ski resort and no connection to neighboring France. On the other hand, there is plenty of unspoiled nature for hiking and hardly any traffic.

#2: Jaca



Jaca, a ford on the Aragón River at the crossing of two great early medieval routes, was the fortified city out of which the County and Kingdom of Aragon developed: Jaca was the capital of Aragon until 1097 and also the capital of Jacetania. The main attractions in Jaca are the medieval walls and towers surrounding an 11th century Romanesque cathedral and the citadel, a fortification dating to the late

16th century.

RIDING DAY 3 : PAMPLONA

Standard Route (327 km / 203 miles)

There are, as usual on rest days, two choices today. Pamplona with its narrow alleys and the picturesque market square is well worth spending some time in, the gothic cathedral is stunning. You can watch the pilgrims on the Compostela, dragging their tired feet through the city, exhausted from the difficult section across the Pyrenees. Or why not visit the legendary Café Iruña on Plaza Castillo and drink some Cognac with vanilla, just like Ernest Hemingway used to do when he was here as a guest back in the 1920s? You will find it no problem to spend your time in this beautiful city.

If you want to ride, we recommend a trip to the Atlantic Coast. San Sebastián, or Donostia as it is named in Basque, features a gorgeous golden beach in a sheltered bay and a very relaxed atmosphere. On the other hand, there is quite a bit of traffic...

To get out of Pamplona we use fast main roads, but soon turn off into the mountains. The roads stay twisty until we reach the outskirts of San Sebastián and right after lunch, they will be twisty again. We cross the border to France and back twice, then make our way back to Pamplona. This is a full-day loop and quite challenging, but once we're back in Pamplona we can relax, go out for dinner, and explore the restaurants and bars in the historic center.

Highlights:

PYRENEES EXTREME

#1: Pamplona



Situated in a small, high plain in the foothills of the Pyrenees at the River Arga, the town is shaped by the huge and well-preserved Citadelle and a Cathedral. The historic Plaza del Castillo, with its connection to the old markets (burgos), in front of the city hall at the Plaza Consistorial, marks the centre of the city. Pamplona is famous for its annual Sanfermines from July 6th to 14th, which is held in honor of the Patron Saint Firmin from Amiens. During the procession, people are all dressed in white and wear red scarves. The biggest attraction of the Sanfermines are the stampedes (spanish: encierros), even more attractive than the bullfights themselves. The stampede takes place every morning through the streets connecting the stables at the edge of the city centre with the bullfighting arena. The origin of this custom was a cattle market during the Patron Saint festival, where the butchers drove the cattle to the market every morning. The stampede is a great spectacle, where the men of the region can prove their courage, but it is also dangerous and controversial. Every year some get wounded and sometimes even killed.

#2: San Sebastián (Donostia)



From the year 1914, at the beginning of the First World War and beyond, the Basque capital of San Sebastián developed into the cosmopolitan center of Europe. Celebrities such as Mata Hari, Leo Trotzki, and Maurice Ravel were regular guests in the city's world-famous casino. From 1940 to 1975, the Spanish dictator Francisco Franco had his summer residence in San Sebastián. In the 1950s, Juan Carlos de Borbón, the later Spanish King Juan Carlos I, spent his summer holidays there, too. Today, San Sebastián is a glamorous beach resort with great beaches and fantastic restaurants. You can find the highest density of Michelin-star restaurants in the world there.

RIDING DAY 4 : PAMPLONA - LUZ-SAINT-SAUVEUR

Standard Route (319 km / 198 miles)

Pamplona is the first city that pilgrims on the Saint James' Way reach after crossing the mighty Pyrenees. Today, we follow that famous trail for a while, just in the other direction. Don't forget to wave at the pilgrims! In Zubiri, you can take a look at the medieval bridge Ponte de la Rabia, then we tackle our first cluster of curves today.

Parallel to the French border, we head east until we reach our lunch place, a secluded 'hostal' in the mountains.

After lunch, we cross into France and you will immediately experience some changes: the little villages look nicer and cleaner, the roads are narrower and bumpier, and of course, the food won't be the same. The ride on the French side of the Pyrenees is more challenging, and in parts even more spectacular than on the Spanish side. The two mountain passes we cross today both have an interesting story to tell, the first has to do with cows, the second with bicycles. Be aware of bicycles along the route, some of those riders are all over the road and may even overtake us on their way down the pass.

Our destination today is the small twinned town of Luz-Saint-Sauveur/Esquièze-Sère, both very picturesque. Don't miss out on some 'savoir-vivre' and enjoy your 'vin rouge'...

Highlights:

#1: El desafío del Camino de Santiago (The way of St. James - the challenge)



No matter where pilgrims of the St. James Way have started their journey, or how long they had been on their way, their "task of pilgrimage" is only completed by either riding a bicycle, a horse or a donkey on the last 125 miles before Santiago de Compostela or by walking the remaining 62 miles. Naturally, this doesn't need to be done on the main route through Northern Spain. Of course, there are various other routes to choose from. The last section of 125 miles of the Camino Francés starts in Castile-León right at the city of Ponferrada. Passing by Villafranca del Bierzo, the St. James Way leads over green hilly landscape and through small typical villages to the final goal of each pilgrim - Santiago de Compostela. Portomarín is the point of reference for the last 62 miles. As proof of journey, the pilgrims can collect stamps in different places, such as hostels or churches along this last section. Once they have arrived in Santiago de Compostela, the pilgrims can receive the traditional certificate, the „Compostela“, by showing their stamped pilgrimage booklet at the office of pilgrimage. This is the official certification for having "done" the St. James Way.

#2: Col de la Pierre St Martin (1.760 m)



Col de la Pierre Saint-Martin is a very famous 1760m (5800ft) mountain pass which is the borderline between France and Spain in the central part of the Pyrenees. Climbing up from the French side the average gradient is 11% with some parts of even up to 16%. The pass was part of the Tour de France in 2007 and 2015. For more than 600 years the French cows have been aimlessly wandering on the roads and crossing the border while grazing in the Valleys of Roncal on the Spanish side. In return, the French farmers donate every year 3 two-year-old cows to the Spanish border community. This donation is dated back to 1375 in an agreement which is known as the „La Junta de Roncal“. This agreement, therefore, is the oldest international valid contract in Europe. Each year on July 13th the donation takes place on the pass, followed by a typical local „fiesta“.

#3: Col d'Aubisque (1.709 m)



The Aubisque is one of those classes of passes that makes the Tour de France legendary. The climb up to 1709 m consists of 3 parts. The first is fairly easy, then at Eaux-Bonnes, you get to the real climb. This part up to Gourette, is much more difficult. Finally the hardest part, swings of 8 - 10 percent gradients are waiting for you, so be prepared. There have been 42 crosses over this pass since 1947,

which makes this the second most visited mountain pass in the history of the Tour de France.

RIDING DAY 5 : LUZ-SAINT-SAUVEUR - TARASCON-SUR-ARIÈGE

Standard Route (262 km / 163 miles)

Today is the day of passes; no fewer than 10 passes in one day, that is quite a challenge! Turns, turns, turns, turns ... just enjoy the ride!

Right outside the hotel we climb up the Col de Tourmalet, one of the legendary Tour de France passes. What a fun ride! But it is also the scenery that impresses us - rugged mountains, green meadows and sleepy little mountain villages. There are 9 more passes to come. Now that we know the Pyrenees, who needs the Alps? Isn't it incredible that we are almost alone on these roads?

Highlights:

#1: Col de Tourmalet (2,115 m)



Col du Tourmalet (6,939 ft.) is the highest road in the central Pyrenees in the department of Hautes-Pyrénées in France. It is one of the most famous climbs in the Tour de France. It has been included more than any other pass, starting in 1910, when the Pyrenees were introduced. The Tourmalet is also one of the passes that Lance Armstrong never came in in first place in all the years he won the race!

RIDING DAY 6 : TARASCON-SUR-ARIÈGE - MAÇANET DE CABRENYS

Standard Route (330 km / 205 miles)

Our last Tour de France pass of this tour, the Port de Pailheres, is the first climb in the morning. This very narrow road with tight switchbacks is something special. The view from the top is just incredible.

This is only the beginning of another perfect riding day. The Collada de Toses is the next riding highlight, a stretch of 40 km really twisty pass road in perfect condition. And the curves do not stop until we reach our hotel in a little village in the Spanish border region near the coast, but up here we are far away from the busy beach life and can enjoy the mountain views.

Highlights:

#1: Ax-les-Thermes



Ax (from Latin Aquae – water; French Thermes – hot springs), is well known for its sulphurous hot springs (77 - 172 °F), of which there are about sixty. The waters, which were used by the Romans, are claimed to treat rheumatism, skin diseases and other maladies. The springs were developed in the medieval period on the orders of Saint Louis to treat soldiers returning from the Crusades afflicted with leprosy. From the 19th century, a spa tourism industry developed. The Bassin des Ladres (Lepers' Pond), in the center of the town, is fed by hot springs supplying water from the ground at a temperature of 170 °F. The pond was built in 1260 by Roger IV, Count of Foix, during the reign of Saint Louis. Every year on St John's Day (June 24), the Axéens, having been daubed with ashes, bathe in the Lepers' Pond for fun.

#2: Port de Pailhères (2,001m)



The Port de Pailhères or Col de Pailhères is a pass in the Ariège department of the French Pyrenees and known from the Tour de France. The summit is at an altitude of 6,560 ft., so it is one of the few pass roads over 6,000 ft. in the Pyrenees. It is located on the D25 between Mijanès and Ax-Les-Thermes. From Mijanes to Ax-Les-Thermes, the Col de Pailhères is 18.1 miles long. Over this distance, the climb is 2,860 ft. on one side and 4,200 ft. on the other side with a

maximum gradient of 10.4%. The climb has been used in four stages of the Tour de France cycle race in 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2010.

#3: Collada de Toses



The Collada de Toses, "Pass of the Winds" in English, is a road that connects Puigcerda with Ripoll, reaching an elevation of 1800 meters. Years ago, this road was quite important and heavily used, which is why it is wide and well maintained. But after a tunnel was built through the Sierra de Cadi, most people take this easy way now to get to Barcelona and there is hardly any traffic left. Now this pass

is an insider tip for enthusiastic riders.

#4: Col d'Ares (1,513 m)



Col d'Ares, or Coll d'Ares in Catalan, straddles the border between Spain and France and reaches 1,513 m in elevation.

In 1691, during the Nine Years' War, the Spanish passed over the Col d'Ares and tried to occupy Prats-de-Mollo, the first town on the French side, but without success. Today it is an excellent motorcycle road with a great view of the Mediterranean from the top.

RIDING DAY 7 : MAÇANET DE CABRENYS - CASTELLDEFELS

Standard Route (320 km / 199 miles)

Today we will return to Barcelona, not along the busy coast, but through the mountains!

On spectacular roads we make our way south. First we ride through the Garrotxa Nature Park, where a picturesque landscape of long extinct volcanoes awaits us. Later we reach Sant Hilari Sacalm, a small town famous for its mineral water. There are countless springs nearby.

But we are more interested in the winding roads in the area and there are many of them. A gem is the stretch from Osor to Sant Hilari, so many curves per kilometer are rare, a real festival of curves! The last stretch through the Montseny Nature Park is another scenic highlight before we reach the outskirts of Barcelona. Now it is only a short section to our base hotel in Castelldefels, where we review the tour again with a beer at the pool. Is this unbelievable motorcycle tour really already over?

Highlights:

#1: Parc Naturel de la Volcanico de Garrotxa



The Garrotxa Volcanoes Natural Park, 120 km² in size, a landscape of more than forty forested volcanoes, is located in the Girona region. The park has around 40 volcanic cones, up to 160m high and 1.5km wide. They can best be seen from the air. About 11.500 years ago the volcano Croscat erupted for the last time. In 1985, the volcanic zone was declared a natural park by the Catalan Parliament. This fascinating area invites you to go on long hikes in summer.

#2: Parc Natural del Montseny




The Montseny is a mountain range in Catalonia Northeast of Barcelona.

1978 it was declared as a nature park, covering an area of 301 km². The name Montseny has a Latin origin and means:

signal mountain, probably because of the significant shape, which can be seen from many places in Catalonia.

The highest peak is the Turó de l'Home with 1,706 meters in the Vallès Oriental and many more peaks reach more than 1,000 meters. Meanwhile, this mountain range is a popular spot for hikers and nature lovers.

Because of the natural conditions on one hand and the cultural influence, on the other hand, the UNESCO declared the region as a biosphere reserve.



We wish you a wonderful tour.

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