

**GET READY**  
For the Time of Your Life  
**GUIDE**



# Foreword

*by Lauren Hefferon*

For 30 years, Ciclismo Classico—the Bicycle Tour pioneers—has delivered exceptional travel experiences to our guests. Because we know that your travel experience begins long before we meet you on day one, we want you to get super excited and ready to have your very own unique, personal adventure and experience. To help you best prepare for this trip—and in the most seamless way possible—our Ciclismo Classico team both here in North America and in Italy have put together the most important information you will need to enhance your bicycle vacation. Checklists, tips on traveling responsibly, FAQs, daily schedules, advice on how to prepare on and off the bike, and more are all here to ensure your peace of mind. Marvel, engage, and delight all your senses as you pedal away on a Ciclismo Classico tour.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to give us a call. We always love to hear from our guests!

Buona pedelata,



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# Pre-Departure



# Pre-Departure Checklist

Use this checklist to guide you through a few essential steps that need to be completed before embarking on your Ciclismo adventure. **Please note that the first six items need to be completed now.**

## ACT NOW!

Make sure you fill out and return the following essential forms to our U.S. Travel Consultant as soon as possible. Simply click on the check boxes to access the forms:

**Terms & Conditions form**

A completed booking conditions form is required for each traveler. This includes important information, such as our payment and cancellation policies.

**Guest Information form**

This includes your passport information, your bike measurements, and special requirements (such as dietary restrictions and medical conditions) that our staff needs to prepare for your trip. **Be sure to write down your name exactly as it appears on your passport.**

**Waiver form**

This is our Participant Agreement & "Acknowledgement of Risk & Photo Release" waiver form. It must be filled out by every participant of the tour.

**Travel Insurance**

We highly recommend that you purchase some form of travel insurance within 15 days of your initial trip deposit. Our recommendation is World Nomads.

**Check your passport.** Passports should be valid for at least six months after the date of entry into your upcoming destination, and should contain a full blank page for the visa of each country to be visited. Don't put your passport in your check-in baggage for flights.

**Read Frequently Asked Questions**

The FAQs section of this book will help you to have the most seamless trip possible.

**100 days before departure,** our U.S. Travel Consultant will email you a reminder about final payment.

**90 days before departure,** our U.S. Travel Consultant will email you a final payment confirmation.

**60 days before departure,** our U.S. Travel Consultant will email you our Travel Plans [form](#) to fill out, along with details about pre- and post-tour shuttles.

**45 days before departure,** our U.S. Travel Consultant will email you final essential documents: an updated detailed itinerary, hotel list, participant list, last-minute tips, and phone numbers.

**30 days before departure, make sure to:**

- Make photocopies of important documents.** Passport, visas, tickets, credit cards, debit cards, prepaid cards, traveler's checks, drug prescriptions, and other critical documents should be photocopied and carried separately or saved in an easily accessible, digital form.
- Write down important numbers.** On a business card and in your mobile phone, write down any important numbers: credit cards, license, passport number, etc. We also recommend that you write down all our hotel telephone numbers on another card and keep it with you at all times.
- Review adapters and transformers for your electrical appliances.** The electrical current in Europe is AC, the voltage is 220 and the cycle is 50Hz. Most consumer electronics (i.e., phones, digital cameras and music players) have adaptable power supplies, so all you'll need is an adapter plug for your phone charger. Plugs should have round prongs, not flat ones. ([Here](#) is one that we like.) A tourist bringing electrical appliances to Europe may also need a transformer (voltage converter), either obtained before leaving the U.S. or purchased at a local electrical appliance shop upon arrival.
- Plan your budget for your trip.** (Budget for tips, souvenirs, beverages, and emergency funds.)



## CICLISMO TIP

Get in shape! No need to overdo, but every bit of training will help you ease into the riding and bring you more joy. Physical requirements vary greatly according to the trip, but at a minimum, you should exercise briskly for at least one hour, four times a week for two months before departure. We recommend that you ride or walk the average daily distance of the trip you are signed up for. Please note that the hills in Europe tend to be longer and more gradual than in the Northeastern U.S., so prepare yourself to ride steady and at your own pace.

# FAQs

## **Q: Will we have some downtime each day?**

**A:** Our goal for you is to relax, enjoy the ride, and have the best vacation ever. We understand that some daily downtime, strolling the village, window shopping, having a glass of wine, reading a book, or taking a nap are all things you may like to do after the day's exhilarating ride has ended. Our guides do their best to be sure you have some free time before dinner. However, some days are a bit longer and more packed with activities than others.

Remember Ciclismo Classico designs our tours to offer the curious traveler many educational and outdoor options throughout the day. If you do want downtime, than you may have to forgo an activity.

Finally, because all the wonderful places and people you meet along the way as you ride is why bicycle travel is so magical, we encourage you to remember that it's about the journey and not the destination. So whether it's sampling ice cream, taking photos, exploring tiny villages, practicing your foreign language skills with the locals, or just slowing down to take in the incredible views, take your time and please Pedal YOUR Passion. You may never pass this way again!

## **Q: What are the meals like on tour?**

**A:** *Delizioso!* Each tour includes all breakfasts, some amazing picnics, lunches, and most dinners. We also offer super snacks throughout the day—not just energy bars, but yummy local snacks like fresh figs and cookies. Because our days are full and most European restaurants don't start serving until 7:30 pm, we typically will have dinner at 8 pm, so plan to have that afternoon gelato or snack to carry you over. Dinners are as much about conviviality as they are about the delicious food. Our menus are crafted to deliver that culinary experience that makes a Ciclismo Classico tour memorable, both on and off the bike. All special requests (i.e., vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free) will be accommodated. Dinners consist of several courses at fine restaurants and local trattorias, but at times we also opt for a less formal feast, like a local "mom and pop" establishment. We strive to serve what's local and in season, and we are flexible when it comes to accommodating specific dietary needs.

**Q: My partner doesn't bike much. Do you accommodate non-riders?**

**A:** We absolutely accommodate non-riders and, actually, we get this request quite a lot. Ideal tours for non-riders are those that include double-night stays at each hotel. This provides ample time for a non-rider to explore the town and area on their own. The non-rider can ride in the shuttle van and enjoy hanging out with our guides and all the views along the way.

**Q: Can I ride in the van if I get too tired to continue riding?**

**A:** Of course! That's what the van is there for. It's a moving support vehicle, snack bar, musical uplift, mobile mechanic shop, resting place, and chill-out post. You are welcome to hop in the van at any point during your ride, but the focus of the guide-driver is to assist and support all the cyclists on the road.

**Q: How can I be sure you're going to fit me to the right bike?**

**A:** We've been fitting our guests to bicycles for 30 years. If you're using one of our bikes, we fit you based on your height and seat height. We don't ask you for your bike frame size, because different manufactures calculate frame sizes differently. If you've been professionally fit and have a bicycle that is custom to your exact measurements, please share this with our office and we'll do our best to provide a bicycle that is similar to these measurements. However, we can't promise a custom fit. All bikes are checked before and after your tour by our professional bicycle mechanics.

**Q: Would you recommend I bring my pedals, shoes (for clipless pedals), and seat?**

**A:** YES! If you have a clipless pedal system then please pack them for the trip and we can install them on the first morning. Our bikes come with standard pedals with clips. Our bicycle seats are very comfortable and guests rarely bring their own, but if you're absolutely certain that you can't do without your own comfy seat, than please bring your own (no need to bring the seat post, just the saddle).

**Q: I have a lot of camera equipment or other gear I want to keep with me on the bike. Will I find a rear-rack bag on the Bianchi?**

**A:** Our Bianchi road bikes come with front-handlebar bags. On request, we can also mount a rear rack in most cases. Do keep in mind that our support van will be with you along the route, and you'll have easy access to a backpack or other bag at any rest stops.

**Q: Should I bring my own bike and equipment on tour?**

**A:** Whether to bring your own bike on tour is a personal decision. Some riders are determined to ride their own bikes. Of course, knowing your own bike is a huge plus. However, there are hassles inherent to shipping or bringing it as luggage on the plane, not to mention the substantial cost. You may prefer, instead, to simply bring your pedals, shoes, and saddle—and leave the rest at home.

**Test all your equipment:** Don't buy anything (cameras, pedals, seats, helmets) without testing it first!

**Q: Do you provide helmets?**

**A:** No, not unless you ask. Because there are so many kinds of helmets to choose from, helmets have become a very personal item. Over the years, we have found that guests prefer to bring their own helmets. Because you will wear your helmet for 100% of your biking day, having a better fit and wearing one that appeals to your personal taste (color, shape, brand, fit) is important. When you bring your own helmet you have one that exactly fits you in every way. If you're unsure if your helmet fits you properly, ask our guides. We are happy to make sure that yours is adjusted properly. If you do want us to provide a helmet, please let us know prior to the tour.

**Q: How can I ship my bike?**

**A:** A good resource for shipping a bike overseas is [www.luggagefree.com](http://www.luggagefree.com). To ship domestically, try [www.shipbikes.com](http://www.shipbikes.com).

**Q: Will there be assistance in assembling my personal bike? What about transporting its case?**

**A:** The guides are usually very busy organizing the tour and working on the rented bikes. If they have time they can also give you a hand with your personal bike, but it depends on your arrival and when you meet them. We charge a \$30 handling fee for the bike case on tour, which is to be paid before you arrive.

**Q: If we're late for the trip, who or where do we call to leave a message?**

**A:** You'll receive a hotel list (included in this packet) when you receive your final itinerary with all the properties listed on it. If you're running late on Day 1 of the trip, please contact the first hotel on tour and speak directly with the guide or leave a message for them.

**Q: Is wine included in my trip cost?**

**A:** Wine is considered an essential part of the meal. Local enology is part of the cultural experience Ciclismo Classico delivers. This fermented nectar has been part of human civilization for thousands of years and is still very much linked to the land and to local cultures. We strive to offer the best wines that each production area can offer. On top of that, many of our guides are wine connoisseurs and some are trained sommeliers. The best way to guarantee that the wine experience on tour is unparalleled is to keep the cost of the wine separate. Also, not everybody likes to drink wine. For those reasons, wine and other alcoholic beverages aren't included in the cost of the tour. We suggest two options to deal with the wine and other alcoholic beverages we consume at dinner as a group:

1) *Join the Wine Kitty and let your guides decide!* On the first night of the tour, your guides will collect a designated amount of money (depending on the length of the tour and average wine price) to go into the "Wine Kitty." During each group dinner, guides will select wines that showcase the best production of the region, and in some cases, the best local beers.

2) *Select and purchase wine and beer on your own each night.* You'll be responsible for keeping track of the bill and should be prepared to pay in cash each night for any beverages you drink.

**Q: How much out-of-pocket money should I bring to spend?**

**A:** Make sure you have enough spending money for coffee, snacks, and lunch. Light lunches on your own average \$15-\$25. Depending on your style of travel, expect to spend from \$20-\$40 additional per day. Add in a bit more if you expect to purchase high-level wines in the evenings at dinner.

**Q: Will my cell phone work over there?**

**A:** It's not so often we need to make a call from a landline (like a hotel or private phone, for example). With Messenger, WhatsApp, Skype, and Facetime apps on our phones we can speak for free anytime, anyplace. This is great as it keeps us connected to friends and family as we travel and has revolutionized communication in travel.

However, there will be moments when you just don't have WiFi or cell service and must use a landline telephone to make a call.

Before traveling, be sure to check with your provider to make sure that your phone will work and that your international rate will be reasonable. Common practice is to purchase international coverage for the length of your stay. Another option is to buy a cheap cell phone and prepaid SIM card at the airport upon arrival. It's a good way to have a cell phone for emergency at a cost of \$40-\$70.

**Q: How can I make an international call if I don't have access to WiFi and I have to make a call from a fixed phone or landline?**

**A:** If you're dialing from Italy to another country like France or Spain, for example, be sure to add the appropriate country code listed below before the number you're dialing.

**Italy:** +39

**France:** +33

**Spain:** +34

**Belgium:** +32

**Ireland:** +353

**Switzerland:** +41

**England:** +44

**Czech Republic:** +420

**Austria:** +43

**Portugal:** +351

**Germany:** +49

**Croatia:** +385

**Slovenia:** +386

**The Netherlands:** +31

When the party answers, introduce yourself with, “Good day, do you speak English?”

**Italian:** “Pronto,” introduce yourself with, “Buon giorno, parla Inglese?”

**French:** “Bonjour/ Allô,” introduce yourself with, “Bonjour, parlez-vous Anglais?”

**Spanish:** “Alo,” introduce yourself with, “Buenos dias, habla Ingles?”

**Croatian:** “Halo,” introduce yourself with, “Dobar dan, govornite li Engleski?”

**Slovenian:** “Halo,” introduce yourself with, “Dober dan, govornite Angleško?”

**German:** Party will normally answer by stating their name and/or business. Introduce yourself with, “Guten tag, sprechen sie Englisch?”

### **Calling the U.S. from Italy:**

To call from Italy to the U.S., you must dial the “Foreign Call” code 00 or “+” (double zero or plus sign), followed by your country code (USA = 1), then your city code and phone number. From a mobile phone, you may also try +1 and then the number.

### **Q. Can we expect internet service at hotels in Europe?**

**A:** Many hotels have WiFi service, though speeds are often not as fast as in North America. Most hotels will also have a business center or at least a PC in the lobby with internet access for checking email.

# Budgeting & Money Matters

## **ATMs in Europe**

The best way to get cash is through ATMs, which are widely available. You might have difficulty finding them in the countryside, but you can always ask your guides for help. Most ATMs limit withdrawals to \$300 per day. The best place to get cash when you arrive is at the airport ATM. Don't worry about shopping around for the best exchange rate. Exchange rates with credit card withdrawals are very competitive. Visa and Mastercard are the most widely accepted cards, and be sure to contact your bank before traveling abroad so they don't place a hold on your account for suspicious activity.

## **Credit Cards**

Credit cards are widely accepted in Europe, but many establishments still insist on accepting only cash. The safest bet is to ask or look for the credit card sticker.

## **Traveler's Checks**

Some places will accept traveler's checks (as well as most banks), but we recommend cash or credit cards, because most hotels, restaurants, and shops will not accept them. Traveler's checks may be exchanged for cash for a fee at most banks or American Express—all requiring long lines and a lot of time. You'll also need your passport when you want to use a traveler's check.

## **Tipping**

Guests often ask us for current tipping guidelines. Needless to say, a tip is always appreciated by taxi drivers, porters, and restaurant staff. A tip is never obligatory and percentages vary, but in Europe it's customary to tip in the same instances as in the U.S.



## **CICLISMO TIP**

Credit cards are widely accepted in Europe, but still many establishments insist on cash only. The safest bet is to ask or look for the credit card sticker.

### **Tipping in Restaurants**

It's customary to leave a small tip by simply rounding the bill up to the next notch or leave about 5%. If the service has been very good, then you can add on 10% for a tip. The more expensive and elegant the restaurant, the more one is expected to leave. Some restaurants will add on a 10% or 15% service charge (servizio incluso) to the bill, in which case you don't have to leave any tip at all. Please note that we as a company cover tips for all group dinners.

### **Tipping Guides on Tour**

Tips are greatly appreciated. We recommend 8-10% of the trip price per person for each guide team, which is typical for European adventure travel trips. The guides then split your tip evenly. Typically, tips are given at the end of the trip to thank guides for their exceptional service and expertise. It's customary to tip tour guides on guided tours. If you feel your guide(s) did an outstanding job and would like to reward them for their efforts, then a tip is appropriate. Gratuities should be paid in the local currency if possible, and are given individually or sometimes the group members organize themselves and pool the tips and present the guides with an envelope.

# Packing List

These items are suggested to make your ride as safe, comfortable, and fun as possible. We created an extensive list, but feel free to add your own items as well. For additional items suggested for specific trips, please see the end of this section. Use discretion and heed the wisdom from our previous guests: Don't overpack!

## Clothing

- 2-4 casual evening outfits. If traveling to Italy, the style there is very casual and comfortable. We say "smart but casual" works well. Jacket and tie are absolutely not necessary, but feel free to bring something dressy if you'd like.
- 1-2 lightweight sweaters
- 1-3 casual evening outfits
- 4-8 pairs of socks
- Sun hat, sunglasses
- Sleepwear
- Waterproof windbreaker or light jacket
- Comfortable shoes for evenings in town

## Personal Items

- Passport and photocopies of your passport
- Airline tickets information
- Language phrase book or dictionary
- Film or digital camera memory cards
- Reading material/journal/field guides
- Electrical converter and adapter plug for hair dryers, shavers, and other electronics
- Toiletries and a case
- Prescriptions or other medications, like ibuprofen
- Glasses wearers: Extra pair of glasses, prescription, or contact lenses (disposables are ideal)
- Ear plugs

- Tissues
- Travel alarm clock
- Bathing suit, towel, and other beach items for trips with lots of swimming
- Laundry soap/clothespins/string—the easiest way to clean your clothes on tour.
- Plastic Zip-lock bags—useful in storing wet clothing that has not yet dried
- Photos of the family, your house, etc.
- Sunscreen and mosquito repellent

### On the Bike

- 3-4 pairs of cycling shorts with chamois lining (one pair isn't enough)
- 2-5 bicycle jerseys: Choose ones with bright colors for visibility by cars and your tour guides
- 3-5 pairs of athletic or cycling socks
- Sunglasses and spare prescription sunglasses (if you wear them)
- 1-2 pairs cycling gloves
- Cycling shoes: Try for a hard-soled, comfortable shoe that is stiff for riding yet comfortable for walking—try them out before you travel!
- Walking shoes: If your cycling shoes are difficult to walk in, bring an extra pair of slipper-type shoes that you can change into on rest stops
- Rain gear: Waterproof windbreaker or Keeway, rain jacket, and rain booties
- Bicycle helmet: Please adjust your helmet properly before you arrive
- Sweatband or handkerchief
- Small backpack or bag for storing personal items that you may need throughout the day

*For alpine tours, pack warmer clothing, waterproof gear, warm gloves and a hat. For hiking tours, pack hiking boots and hiking socks.*

## Optional Items

- Roadside toolkit:** Our van's main toolkit has all the necessary tools, and each leader carries their own. However, it doesn't hurt to have the basics with you if you know how to use them. If you have any bike gadgets that require specialized tools, please bring them. Suggested tools: metric allen wrenches (for stem, derailleur, and seat bolt); adjustable wrench, spoke wrench, tire irons, and extra tubes if you're bringing your own bike.
- Special saddles (we don't have anatomical saddles).** You might opt to bring your own seat or a gel seat cover that slips over your seat to soften the ride.
- Pedals:** Clipless pedal owners should bring their own pedals and shoes. Make sure that your pedals and shoes are compatible and that you have tried out both for at least 50 miles.
- Mirrors:** It's important to get used to turning, making eye contact with drivers, and looking at traffic rather than depending on a small mirror to give you the complete picture. Don't substitute the mirror for turning around and getting a full view.
- Energy bars, energy drinks, powders, and gels:** The guides will have various local snacks, but if there's something specific you prefer, we recommend you bring it.

## Cycling Clothing Recommendations for the Seasons

Early spring and fall tours: Have warmer layers and gloves handy for chilly descents.

Summer tours (June to August): Even though the weather is very warm, be prepared for occasional thunderstorms. Bring a light rain jacket.

Later fall tours (October to November): Evenings can be cool, so bring an extra sweater or jacket. While it's not necessary to have an extra pair of gloves or shoes, many guests have found them handy in case of rain.

# Weather Conditions

For weather information for every region of the world, visit Weather Underground [here](#).

Please note that while it's not necessary to have an extra pair of gloves or shoes, many guests have found them handy in case of rain. If you have an extra pair of each and additional room in your luggage, take them along.

## **Austria & Czech Republic (Salzburg to Prague)**

Summer in Austria is ideal for cycling, but because of its close proximity to the mountains, a shower and fresh breeze is pretty common and the weather may change quickly during our rides. We recommend that you always bring arm warmers, a vest, and a waterproof jacket ready to use on descents, stops, and when it rains. The daily average temperature from August to September is around 65°F. Mornings in the fall can be a little chilly, so you should always have arm warmers and a vest with you. Wearing a long-sleeve base layer underneath your jersey is also a great idea.

## **Belgium (Bike Across Belgium)**

Daytime temperatures can reach 73°F, and at night it can go down to 57°F. It's often windy in the northernmost region and summer showers are common, too. Be ready with layers and waterproof gear. A rain jacket, shoe covers, gloves, and a hat to wear under your helmet are all recommended for rain and cold descents. Bring a light jacket for night walks.

## **Bike Across Southern Italy & Bike Across Italy**

On these tours, we go from the very warm, humid, and windy seaside to more remote villages inland, so the temperatures may vary quite a bit. Bring different light layers with you, along with rainproof gear and a light jacket for night walks. A heavier jacket is suggested for the evening.

## **Croatia (Croatia's Istrian Peninsula)**

Despite this Mediterranean climate, the Croatian coastal region still remains susceptible to periodic downpours during the summer months, so be prepared with layers. A light jacket is recommended for our evening walks, and a vest and rain jacket will always come in handy.

**Dolomites and Veneto, Pyrenees, & French Alps (Majestic Dolomites, Pyrenees: Sea to Sea, & French Alps to French Riviera)**

Be prepared for mountain weather—temperatures and conditions can change quickly and evenings tend to be cool and fresh. Be prepared with layers for cool descents and rain gear for possible rain showers. Arm and leg warmers, a vest, and rain jacket should always be in your bag, along with a dry base layer and jersey in your day bag to carry with you in the van. Be ready to use shoe covers and gloves on rainy and long descents. A heavier jacket is suggested for the evening.

**England or Ireland (Bike Across England & Ireland's Dramatic West Coast)**

Summer temperatures range from the 50s to 70s. Always remember that rain is possible at any time of the year—the weather in Ireland is very unpredictable! It's a good idea to bring a light rain jacket, as well as different layers. And remember: If you don't like the weather there, just sit down and wait 10 minutes! A rain jacket, shoe covers, gloves, and a hat to wear under your helmet are strongly suggested, both for rain and cold descents. A heavier jacket is suggested for the evening.

**France (Bike Across France)**

On our *Bike Across France* tour, the route is actually one of the sunniest in the country, with over 300 days of sunshine a year. Average temperatures are between 60°F and 68°F. Rainfall is always a possibility, so be prepared with the proper rain gear so that you can best enjoy your vacation. A vest and arm warmers are suggested for the morning rides.

**Germany (Munich to Verona)**

Germany has continental weather, with average summer temperatures between 55°F and 75°F. It gets a little windy sometimes because of the mountains, so bring a variety of light layers and a rain jacket. We also cross the Alps chain on the *Munich to Verona* tour, so bring layers for cool descents and rain gear for possible rain showers. Carry arm and leg warmers, a vest, rain jacket, dry base layer, and jersey in your day bag when we're traveling in the van. We suggest a heavier jacket for the evening.

**Portugal (Northern Portugal)**

June in Portugal is perfect for cycling, and average temperatures are between 64°F and 80°F. September is often hot and dry, so we recommend you bring light jerseys, sunscreen, and stay fully hydrated by drinking a full water bottle every hour on the road. A vest is always suggested to have in your pocket or bag, since Portugal can get a little windy.

### **Puglia, Sardinia & Corsica (La Bella Puglia & Mediterranean Island Hopping)**

In these destinations, you can expect warm daytime temperatures in the spring (70°F-80°F) with evenings usually 10 degrees cooler. Fall is warmer with daytime temperatures reaching the mid 80s, but evenings remain cooler. Wind along the coast is to be expected, so bring light layers and a wind or waterproof shell. We also strongly recommend sunblock.

### **Spain (La Costa Brava, Andalucia, and Marvelous Mallorca)**

Spring is typically warm, often with a cool breeze and an average temperature of 60°F to 75°F. The late summer and fall temperature average is 75°F in September and 70°F in October, perfect for cycling. There may be occasional showers though, so we recommend that you bring a lightweight waterproof jacket in your handlebar bag, ready to use on descents. Arm warmers and a vest for the morning are also suggested, along with a dry jersey and base layer in your day-bag, too.

### **Switzerland (Bike Across Switzerland)**

This region is surrounded by mountains, so the climate never gets too hot or humid. Average temperatures are 54°F to 72°F during the day. However, the weather may change quickly, and summer showers are usually during the months of July and August. We suggest you bring arm warmers, a vest, a long-sleeve jersey, and waterproof jacket with you. Also, bring a heavier jacket for the evening.

### **Tuscany & Piedmont (Heart of Tuscany, Assaggio Toscana, Tuscany Green, L'Eroica, Liguria & Toscana, & Piedmont: Barolo & Truffles)**

Spring and fall in Tuscany and Piedmont are usually clear and sunny, with warm daytime temperatures (75°F-90°F), and evening temperatures 10-15 degrees cooler. A jacket or wrap will be useful in the evening. Summers are warmer, with warm daytime temperatures (80°F-95 °F). Rain is always a possibility, however, so come prepared with wet-weather gear.

# Our Bianchi Bicycles

Bianchi. It's the legendary blue steed that made Fausto Coppi the "champion of champions" and Marco Pantani the king of the hill. It still turns heads around the world, from the peaks of the Giro d'Italia to the bike lanes around our beloved U.S. base-camp near Boston. It's your personal bicycle, your new best friend as you pedal your way to exciting adventures.

Stylish, a little racy, and quintessentially Italian, all our bikes are custom-built for Ciclismo Classico. Bike rental is included on all of our tours.

Bike fit is important for an enjoyable ride, and your expert guide will make sure your bike is properly set to your body dimensions before the start of your tour, based on information that you provide to us. We offer a variety of bicycle options to suit different riding styles. We're happy to answer questions to help you choose the bicycle that will serve you best.

## **Our bikes are equipped with the following:**

- Garmin Edge Touring GPS with preloaded routes
- Two large water bottles; there are two water bottle cages on our bikes
- Map holder on handlebars
- Front handlebar bag on road bikes
- Small seat bag with spare tube and tire irons
- Hand pump
- Combination lock



### ***Bianchi Intenso***

The Intenso carbon frame guarantees maximum performance with minimum stress for the riders, thanks to Bianchi's special C2C (Coast to Coast) frame design/geometry and different material combination. Available on Intermediate and Advanced tours.

#### **Frameset**

Frame: C2C Intenso Carbon

Fork: Full carbon 1.1/8"-1/5" with Kevlar

#### **Wheels**

Wheels: Fulcrum Racing Sport

Tires: 700x25

#### **Drivetrain**

Shifters: Shimano Ultegra 11sp with 11/32 cassette

Derailleurs: Front, Shimano Ultegra 11sp; rear, Shimano Ultegra 11sp

Crankset: Shimano Compact 50-34

#### **Components**

Saddle: San Marco

Seat post: Repart Corse SP-TEC-2 alloy

Handlebars: Repart Corse JD-RA35A

Stem: Reparto Corse AN700N Alloy

Headset: Fsa Orbit CE Plus

Brakes: Shimano Ultegra



### ***Bianchi Vertigo***

The Vertigo was created for the rider who desires all-day comfort. It features Bianchi's Coast-to-Coast geometry, placing the rider in a more relaxed riding position for longer rides. Available on Easy and Athletic Beginner tours.

#### **Frameset**

Frame: Carbon fiber monocoque C2C geometry

Fork: Fork Alu Carbon

#### **Wheels**

Wheels: Shimano

Tires: 700×25

#### **Drivetrain**

Shifters: Shimano 105 11 speed, 11×32 cassette

Derailleur: Shimano 105 11 speed

Crankset: Shimano Compact 50×34

#### **Components**

Saddle: San Marco

Stem: Reparto Corse Alu

Brake: Reparto Corse



### ***Bianchi C-Sport 2.5***

The C-Sport 2.5 has the spirit of a true racing bike with the control of a city bike. Its lightweight, hydroformed aluminum frame delivers quick acceleration and precise handling, while its Shimano disc brakes improve stopping power in all conditions.

#### **Frameset**

Frame: C-Sport hydroformed aluminum

Fork: Bianchi aluminum post-mount disc

#### **Wheels**

Wheels: Bianchi custom alloy 700 c

Tires: 700×35

#### **Drivetrain**

Shimano Acera 8sp, 42x34x24 crankset, Shimano HG200 12-32T

#### **Components**

Saddle: WTB Speed V

Brake: Shimano M315 hydraulic disc



### ***Bianchi Manhattan***

The Manhattan levels the playing field for active couples with different riding abilities. With a Shimano Steps central motor unit and a top speed of 16 mph, this bike will give you the extra boost when you need it.

#### **Frameset**

Frame: Aluminum rigid frame  
(specific design for Shimano Steps  
central motor unit)

Fork: Carbon alu rigid fork or alu rigid  
fork

#### **Shimano Steps Properties**

Power Rating: 250

Rated voltage: 36V

Top speed: 25 km (16 mi)

Central motor unit

418 Wh battery unit

Torque: 50 Nm

Driving modes: Eco, Standard, High,  
and e-Walk

Charging time: 100% in approx. 4  
hours

Range: Eco – 125 km (78 mi) / Standard  
– 85 km (53 mi) / High – 60 km (37 mi)

LCD display with remote control



### ***Cannondale Road Tandem RT2***

Channelling the power of two riders into one sweet, synchronized whoosh of speed, the Cannondale Road Tandem 2 bike offers the same quality construction of other Cannondale bikes with room for two.

#### **Frameset**

Frame: 6061 SmartFormed aluminum

Fork: Cannondale Fatty tandem

#### **Wheels**

Wheels: 700 c

Tires: 700x25

#### **Drivetrain**

Shifters: Shimano 105

Derailleurs, front and rear: Shimano 105

Crankset: FSA Gossamer Tandem, 52/39/30, 42t timing

#### **Components**

Saddle: Prologo T2.0

Seat post: Cannondale C3

Handlebars: Cannondale C3

Stem: Cannondale C3

Headset: Tange Custom

Brakes: Tektro hydraulic disc brakes



### ***Honey Tandem***

This tandem is specifically designed for Ciclismo Classico. It's light and responsive and experienced tandem teams will really appreciate the way it handles. Its geometry fits a wide range of rides.

### **Drivetrain**

Shifters: Shimano Ultegra 6700 STI 30sp

### **Components**

Brakes: Tektro hydraulic disc brakes

### **Wheels**

Size: 28" slick tires



### ***Co-Motion Periscope Torpedo Tandem***

This premium tandem is designed to accommodate a smaller team or even a kid. Its oversized steel frame and periscope seat tubes allow lots of stand-over clearance.

#### **Drivetrain**

Shifters: Shimano Ultegra STI 30sp

#### **Components**

Brakes: Avid BB7 discs

#### **Wheels**

Size: 28" slick tires



### ***Cannondale MT 800 Tandem***

This tandem is specifically designed for an upright position. It's light and responsive with big tires and room for comfort, and is built to ensure the utmost safety. Its geometry fits a wide range of rides, and we have two models: One large-medium and one medium-small.

### **Drivetrain**

Shifters: Shimano Acera 27sp

### **Components**

Brakes: 2 disc brakes (front and back),  
3<sup>rd</sup> post cantilever

### **Wheels**

Size: 26" slick tires

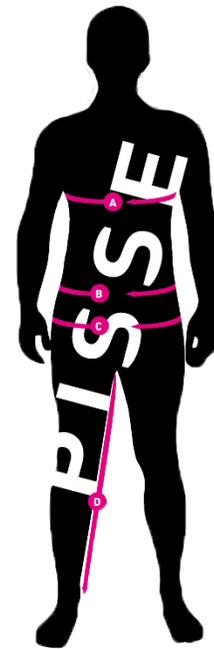
# Our Stylish Jerseys

We offer a variety of sizes of our Pissei-brand jerseys to ensure that you find the perfect fit! For more information on jersey sizing, please see the chart below.

Measurement in Inches

	XS	S	M
A Chest	34.5	36	37.5
B Waist	30	31.5	33
C Hip	35.5	37	38.5
D Inseam	31.5	32	32

	L	XL	XXL	XXXL
A Chest	39.5	41.5	43.5	45
B Waist	34.5	36.5	38.5	40.5
C Hip	40	42	44	46
D Inseam	32.5	33	34	34.5



# Our Expert Guides

Our guides proudly delight in immersing you in local culture. There's no end to the ideas they conjure up for *dopo il giro* (after the ride), from gelato strolls to spontaneous serenades to moonlit dips in the Mediterranean. Even dancing the tarantella in the local piazza!

What inspires our guests to return year after year? Why do they refer their closest friends to us? That's easy. We can thank our exceptional guides, truly the world's greatest. Experienced and professional—their average tenure is 10.6 years with us—they all have an unquenchable sense of fun that stems from their love of people and their homeland. Most were born and raised in the countries where they guide; those who weren't are long-time residents and local experts who often know more about a place than the natives!

We know that our guides raise the standard. The staff at Ciclismo Classico is proud of our consistently amazing, joyful, colorful, talented, and top-rated guides. They run every single trip to the hilt—putting no less than 100-percent into the experience. That's why we repeatedly receive an endless stream of positive testimonials singing their praises. Our team's quality, expertise, and passion is second to none.



# Guest Testimonials

"I love what I call the 'culture' of Ciclismo tours: the quality of guests that Ciclismo uniquely attracts and the guides who are wonderful people, eager to share their communities, grace, skills, and companionship... A traveler can easily pay more, but will not have a richer experience." -*Juliann T.*

"The guides were the essence of our trip experience. This was all about how they extended themselves to each and every one of us. Their passion for biking and Italian culture; *joie de vivre*. Their spirit, kindness, and attention to service made this experience incomparable, surpassing any other vacation experience." -*George H.*

"Ciclismo's claim of their guides as their 'secret sauce' was proven true, and we loved loved LOVED the total immersion into culture with visits to *agriturismi*, small *vinitori*, and dinner at Serena's outside Siena. Our trip was magical! Thank you!" -*Keith S.*

"You have exceeded my expectations in all areas. I cannot think of a thing that you could improve. Your outstanding guides definitely set you apart and make you the very best tour company. I look forward to my next adventure with you!" -*Sandra G.*

"One of my most memorable trips ever! The guides are top-notch in every aspect. I was the eldest biker (81-years-old) and the kindness and helpfulness of our guides went way, way beyond the call of duty. The imaginative organization of activities, the incredible feasts, and the famous Tuscan landscapes combined to make the most unforgettable time." -*Zenith G.*

# On Tour



# What to Expect on a Ciclismo Classico Tour

## The Daily Schedule

A typical Ciclismo day typically starts with a hearty breakfast between 7:30 am and 8:30 am. Every morning, our guides go over the day's route on a map and prepare the group before we get on the road. After stocking up on snacks and water, the group sets off with one guide leading the way, and the other guide(s) following in the support van. Everyone rides at their own pace, with regrouping stops every 20 miles. Please note that on days where we're moving to a different property, your bags need to be placed in the lobby when you come to breakfast.

Lunch is either an organized picnic lunch or on an individual basis in a pretty village along the way. After lunch, we take off again for more riding.

Cultural visits and activities are included during the mornings or the afternoons or both, depending on the distance to be covered. We typically roll into our overnight stop around 3 or 4 pm, so there's plenty of time to relax and explore. On most days, dinner is included and usually starts around 8 pm. All activities are optional.

Each Ciclismo Classico tour has at least two guides, with a third guide for any group of 18 or more guests. Our average group size is 14, unless you're doing a private or custom tour. Our support van is always available for anyone who needs to take a break from riding. Cycling clinics are offered throughout the trip, sometimes before the start of a day's ride and—depending on the terrain—along the way. Where relevant, every tour also features language lessons, which take place three times over the course of the tour, usually during an informal pre-dinner cocktail hour.

Dinner is typically set for 7:30 pm or 8 pm in the evening, as the restaurants don't open before then. Dinners can get a little long, but we do our best to try to keep them moving along. It's a different cultural pace! The amount of food can seem abundant, but we mostly want for you to be exposed to a great variety of dishes available within the region you're visiting. The possibilities are quite endless and the food so intensely delicious. Each night we offer a starter, first course, second course, and dessert—all paired with or accompanied by local wines.

Each evening after dinner, we'll make announcements regarding morning map review time and departure. It's best to stick around at dinner until the guide makes the announcements.

We'll begin our daily map review promptly in the morning at 8:30 am (some days at 9 am), so it's best not to be late or you could miss important info. If you'd like to do additional miles or take the van shuttle, talk to us on the previous day and we can easily make arrangements.

### **Maps and Route Notes**

When we go over the route each morning, you might want to have a pen ready to take additional notes. The route maps and instructions are meant to be used together. If you're ever confused on where to go when on the route, wait for one of the guides or until someone comes up from behind—two heads are better than one. Also, if you're at a designated turn-off that's easy to miss, there's a conflict in the instructions and map, or you interpret our instructions differently than we intend, it's nice to wait for the next cyclist and let them know where to turn. In cycle touring lingo, this is called "dropping at a turn," and it helps to guarantee that everyone stays on course.

We have .gpx files available for download for GPS navigation. At your request, we'll send you a link to download the tracks to your device. Road markings are in kilometers on the Garmin Edge Touring GPS, which is included on all bikes. 1 km = 0.62 miles. To make it simple, just multiply km by 6 and move the decimal point. Example: 10 km x 0.6 = 6 miles.

### **Regroup Spots Throughout the Ride**

Throughout the route notes, we have regroupings (usually every 15-20 miles) that are natural resting points. You're not obligated to stop, but we have found that groups tend to appreciate our designated regrouping spots as a chance to get a snack, take pictures, or share adventures. This regroup also keeps the group together. The van will also be at the regrouping spots, unless they're busy assisting cyclists or delivering luggage.

# Keeping Healthy Abroad

## Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend you consider travel insurance to protect your investment. It's available through our partner, World Nomads. For specific questions about coverage, benefits, and the policy best suited to your needs, please contact World Nomads directly [here](#).

In Italy, less serious problems can be treated at the Emergency Room—*pronto soccorso*—at the hospital.

## Pharmacies in Italy

*Farmacie* are typically open from 8:30 am to 1 pm, and then from 4 pm to 8 pm. Pharmacists are trained to give advice for minor illnesses. All larger towns will have at least one pharmacy that remains open for 24 hours; others take turns staying open (the rotation schedule is posted on the front door). We recommend that you bring all prescription medicines with you, as some drugs need a doctor's request.

## General Emergencies

If you ever have an emergency—you have an injury, mechanical breakdown, or get lost—please try to call the guides on their cell phones. If you can't reach them immediately, call the hotel of our destination and leave your name, where you are and the nature of the emergency. If you're not lost but have accidentally gotten off route, assume that we are worrying and are searching for you, so please call the hotel and tell them that everything is OK. Remember to speak slowly, clearly, and in basic English. If you think you're lost, retrace your tracks backwards rather than continue ahead. If you're on the road and have an emergency and there isn't a guide around, try involving the locals.

Your guides will give you a card with their cell phone numbers and the country's emergency number. This card will also have some handy phrases in the local language to help you communicate.

**Emergency Numbers in Our Various Destinations**

**Italy:** 118

**Spain:** 061

**Switzerland:** 144

**Austria:** 144

**England:** 999

**Ireland:** 999

**Croatia:** 93

**France:** 112 (Also available: English-language crisis line, **01 46 21 46 46**)

**Belgium:** 112

**Germany:** 112

**Slovenia:** 112

**The Netherlands:** 112

**Czech Republic:** 112

**Portugal:** 112

# Safety First

## Basic Safety Rules

- Ride on the correct side of the road. To ride opposite traffic is against the law and exceedingly dangerous.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals. This includes stop signs, one-way streets, stoplights, and caution signs.
- Ride in single file. Always ride in single file near the edge of the road.
- Ride in a straight line. Don't swerve from side to side or weave through traffic.
- Be constantly alert. Anticipate the movements of surrounding traffic, particularly cars that pull into your path out of parking spots, driveways, or side streets. Be vigilant for the actions of pedestrians. Watch far ahead so that you will not be taken by surprise.
- Listen constantly for traffic approaching from all sides as well as out of your line of vision.
- Slow down at street crossings. Look both ways to check traffic before crossing.
- Use hand signals to warn those behind of your intention to turn or stop. Use audible signals to warn those of your approach. Yell out a very loud "hey" if a car or pedestrian doesn't see you.
- Maintain full control at all times. Don't carry items that interfere with your vision or encumber your steering. Don't ride with your head down.
- Maintain your bicycle in mechanical perfection with brakes, wheels, tires, saddle, gears, nuts, and attachments securely tightened.
- See and be seen. At night, have a light that will enable you to see and to be seen. Wear bright clothing or reflective tape at night and bright colors or fluorescent tape by day.
- Be courteous to other road users, but don't assume that all drivers you meet will be as well mannered and observant as you are. Always remember that you are the lighter vehicle.

## **Cycling Courtesy**

- Don't ride too close.
- Give hand signals.
- Point out broken glass, grates, and other road hazards.
- Aid a cyclist having trouble.
- Give warning of your approach. For example, say, "Passing on your left."

## **Courtesy to Motorists**

- Don't hog the road.
- Obey all stop signs and traffic lights.
- Use hand signals.
- Ride in a straight line.
- Give motor vehicles a wide berth.
- Get all bikes off the road when you stop for a break.

## **Courtesy to the Public**

- Give pedestrians a wide berth.
- Don't block doorways or entrances.
- Don't lean your bike on parked cars.
- Don't park your bike against plate-glass windows (or on fruit stands in markets!).

## **Be Alert**

Cycling is the ultimate awareness sport. The more you cycle, the more this road awareness becomes almost second nature. The cardinal rule of cycling alertness is to never assume that a car will see you or that it will obey traffic rules. The great thing about cycling in Europe is that it is appreciated as a form of transportation. Vehicle drivers in Europe are used to sharing the road with cyclists, and they will provide you with plenty of room as well as respect.

While you must have respect and courtesy for vehicle drivers, cyclists must assume their places on the road. On a bicycle, you basically follow the same rules as in a car.

The bicycle is a small vehicle. The driver who is not “in tune to cyclists” will make sharp turns into a driveway, parking lot, or intersection immediately after passing the cyclist. (S)he will also make left turns into the cyclist’s path, stop short, or pull in front of the cyclist. Ride as though the other drivers are unaware of you. Don’t assume!

## **Ride Defensively**

Watch the wheels of cars that approach or pass. Note the sound of the exhaust of the car in front. A change in tone or the slightest deviation of the front wheel indicates a change in speed or direction. Contained within a fraction of a second, an extra warning can prevent an accident. Recognize items that divert your attention from the road and consciously break away from them to glance ahead for an instant. These distractions include store displays, bright lights, or gorgeous views that merit your attention.

Observe factors that will divert drivers’ attention: narrow roads with opposing traffic, signs and displays, or scenic views.

Observe conditions that decrease drivers’ ability to perceive you: approaching auto headlamps, particularly on narrow roads or when your visibility is decreased either by the lack of contrast in your clothing or by distracting foregrounds into which you blend. Particularly dangerous is the setting or early morning sun. When low in the path of the motorist, the sun greatly reduces his or her ability to see you.

Look far ahead for intersections, driveways, and pedestrians who may step off the curb. Give yourself extra time to maneuver by constantly scanning the roadway from close in front to far ahead. It is particularly important to scan farther ahead the faster you ride.

As you approach a car coming toward you—head on or from either side—try to catch the driver’s eye to see if (s)he perceives you. If (s)he doesn’t look at you for an instant, it’s a safe bet that you haven’t been noticed and that additional caution is necessary.

## Potential Road Hazards

- Slippery road surfaces: A light rain is enough to make a road surface slippery. Brake with both brakes and ride slower.
- Wind gusts: A sudden gust of wind can take you off balance. Gusts can occur naturally or when a large truck passes. In both cases, keep your weight low and hold on to the handlebars. Brace yourself to maintain a strong balance on the bike. In cases of severe wind, dismount or do as sailors do: steer your “sail” (your front wheel) into the wind.
- Gravel, rocks, and twigs—on turns or on the side of the road—can prove hazardous.
- Sewer gratings: Always cross gratings with the wheel perpendicular to the grates.
- Railroad tracks: Cross railroad tracks perpendicular to the tracks.
- A few ways to deal with dogs: Stay calm and ignore them, try to out-sprint them, depending on the dog and its reaction, talk or bark commands at them, or stop and place the bike between you and the dog.

## Tips for Riding in Bad Weather

By Enrico Pizzorni, *Ciclismo Classico Top Guide* since 1999

Having been with *Ciclismo Classico* for almost 20 years and completed seven big-stage races around the world, I consider myself an expert in riding in all conditions. Fortunately at *Ciclismo*, we're blessed from the weather gods—on all our trips, the sun shines just right. However, if it happens that the weather isn't so sunny, you can still have a fantastico cycling adventure by following these tips:

### **1) If the temperature is very warm, don't overdress.**

Rain is just a bike handling issue and skin is waterproof, so let the rain soak you. The fewer clothes you have on, the faster you'll dry. On those rainy days, avoid wool and cotton and wear synthetic materials instead.

### **2) If the temperature is mild, being too wet might feel uncomfortable.**

Protect your feet and hands. In a pinch, you can wear surgical gloves on your hands as well as plastic bags between your shoes and socks.

**3) Remember to eat and drink more than usual, don't stop, and keep a steady pace until you reach your destination.** If you have a jacket, use it rationally: open or remove it when going up and close it tight when going down. If you have one designed to breathe, keep it closed.

**4) I advise against wearing shower caps over the helmets when it's hot,** as they may cause cramps or overheating. The head is the chimney of our engine and nobody puts a potato in their exhaust pipe—better to wear a cotton or merino wool cycling cap under your helmet. Merino jerseys and socks are wonderful, as they stay warm even when wet.

### **5) If it's cold, you don't want to get wet; proper equipment is mandatory.**

You'll need good shoe covers, rain tights, a real vented and breathable rain jacket ([eVent](#) and [GORE-TEX](#) are my favorites), cycling full-finger gloves, a balaclava, and an helmet cover.

**6) Keep a steady pace, but try not to sweat.** Otherwise, instead of getting wet from the outside, you'll get wet from the inside.

**7) Eat and drink regularly.** If possible, have hot drinks in an insulated water bottle or small thermos. A cover for the cap prevents accidental drinking of mud and debris.

**8) My favorite clothing brands are [Endura](#) for pants and jackets and [Sealskinz](#) for waterproof socks, hats, and gloves.**

**9) General tips for riding in the rain:**

Remember that in rain, road conditions vary greatly. There will be less grip under your tires, so whether you're cornering, braking, or accelerating, everything will need to be done progressively and smoothly. Avoid sudden, fast moves, don't lean too much when cornering, and don't stand up when pedaling. Or at least, do it gradually, keeping more distance between riders and using lights or bright colors to be more visible to drivers.

Rain also causes debris on the road, which means more flats and dirt on your chain. Inspect your tires and chain every so often to remove suspicious material. Also, be sure to look over your bike after rainy rides.

# Basic Cycling Tips

## Posture in the Saddle

Basic riding technique starts with your posture on the bike; it affects how efficiently you will ride. Use the following tips to ensure your riding is as comfortable as possible!

- *Hand position:* When sitting in the saddle, rest your hands on the tops of the brake hoods. This position is favored because it is safe; your hands can easily reach the brakes and it is comfortable. Keep a relaxed grasp, not a grip. Occasionally flutter your fingers. When climbing, always keep your hands on the tops of the handlebars, as it facilitates breathing and helps open your rib cage.
- *Wrists:* Let your wrists remain straight, not locked in a bent position.
- *Elbows:* Let them remain slightly bent, not locked in place. This position consumes less energy because you will be more relaxed. Locked elbows make your steering rigid, so keep your arms bent, relaxed, and ready to respond.
- *Shoulders and back:* When you sit upright, keep your shoulders square, not rounded. This facilitates breathing. Do not let your shoulders hunch up to your ears; keep them relaxed. To keep your back from being rounded, concentrate on stretching from your lower back. Your goal is to have an elongated flat back, square shoulders, bent elbows, and a light touch on the handlebars. With this position, you are more aerodynamic, more comfortable, and more in control. That means you are safer, faster, and able to ride longer.
- *The drops:* When you ride faster—you will want to be in the drops of the handlebars. Put your hands deep into the drops, keeping the brakes within fingertip reach. A common mistake is to ride with the hands on the far back flat part of the handlebar drops, which puts your hands too far from the brakes and is not as efficient as in the hook of the drops.
- *Standing out of the saddle (standing and pedaling):* This is a very useful technique. If you don't know how to stand, your tour will make the perfect practicing ground. Ask your guide to teach you. It actually comes quite naturally after a while, and it really helps stretch your muscles. It also allows you to use your weight to push the pedals when you get tired.

## Standing Basics

Before you stand up, put your hands on the tops of the brake hoods. When you come up off the saddle, you should be evenly balanced, not just supported by your arms.

Try to keep your shoulders and head fairly upright. Pull your bike slightly from side to side, so you get your weight on the pedals. Keep your body motion to a minimum.

## Pedaling Style

Strive to pedal with as smooth a stroke as possible by spinning and consciously thinking of dropping your heel at the bottom of the stroke and pulling back. Think of the ball of your feet tracing around in a circle. Your goal is to have a circular motion. Consciously work to drop your heel as you pedal, but don't stab with your heels or your toe. Watch your gearing too since over-gearing (pushing too hard a gear) tends to lead to less-efficient ratchet-style pedaling, early fatigue, and knee injuries.

Aim to have a high cadence (spinning with an easier gear). Calculate your cadence by counting the down stroke of one leg for ten seconds, using your wristwatch (which you can easily mount on a padded section of your handlebars for easier viewing), and multiply that number by six to get your RPMs. A count of fifteen will give you an RPM of 90; seventeen will translate to 102 RPMs. Once you get the feel for your cadence, you can guess it fairly accurately, which helps you make easier and wiser gearing selections.

## When you spin, you:

- Improve your overall form
- Build better muscle tone and work on fast-twitch muscles
- Improve your aerobic capacity
- Are more likely to last all day long

Minimize extraneous movement on the bicycle at any cadence. Keep your torso steady. Let your legs do the work. On a properly fitted bicycle, your hips should not rock or bob from side to side.



## CICLISMO NOTE

One of the most common mistakes made by our cycling guests is that they pedal in too difficult of a gear. They're usually the first to tire out and have knee problems. Remember, you want your muscles to have endurance and agility, not brute strength. If you're unsure whether you are spinning properly or at the right cadence, ask your guide to watch you.

## Cornering Your Bike

*Keep your inside foot up and your outside foot down.* By maintaining the inside foot up (12 o'clock position), you don't run the risk of striking the pedal on the pavement or curb. For example, if you turn to the right, keep your right foot up (if turning left, keep the left up). As a consequence, your opposite foot would be down (6 o'clock position). Try adding a small amount of pressure to the "down" foot to counterbalance the turn.

*Stay in the brake drops, not on the hoods.* Most people like to hold onto the brakes by the hoods. That's fine if you're riding in the flats, but for descents you need to be in the "drops" or the curled bar of the handlebars. This position helps in three ways: 1) It creates a more efficient braking level (grabbing the end of a lever requires less energy than grabbing the fulcrum); 2) It creates a "cage" around the hand so the hand won't fly off if you hit something; and 3) It lowers the center of mass, making the turn easier. Try applying a little pressure to the inside handlebar to counterbalance the pressure to the "down" foot mentioned above. It helps direct the bike into the turn.

*Keep your eyes forward: Look into where the turn opens up.* Keep obstacles and debris in your peripheral vision. Look where you want to go: don't look at objects you want to avoid. With practice, you'll begin to feel how you can balance the bike in relation to what you see and how fast you're going. Make sure to look a couple of yards in front of you. Don't look miles down the road and don't look directly at the front wheel. Balance comes from that "sweet spot" of vision placed from 3-5 yards up the road.

*Brake with the rear brake before you enter the turn, then release the brakes at the apex.* When approaching a turn, check your speed. Most American bikes have the rear brakes set on the right side of the bike. Favor the rear brakes when approaching a turn and feather the front brakes as you enter the turn. Try to maintain a balance between inkling the bike and the speed at which you are traveling. To maximize efficiency, as you approach the apex of the turn, release the brakes as the turn unfolds before you. This way you'll gain speed coming out of the turn as you lost speed coming into it.

*Relax!* Have fun descending and enjoy the scenery. Relax your hands and shoulders and don't tighten up as you come downhill. If you feel tight in the hands and back, stop completely on a turn and stretch out. Remember: descending is easier when your mind is relaxed, so practice!

### **Climbing Tips**

Most cyclists new to European terrain tend to try to do the hills too fast and, as a result, get tired out and/or discouraged before the top. Finding your own pace and having the right attitude about hills is key. Ride the hill like it will last all day (in other words, don't be in a hurry for hills to end). Also, think about how great you'll feel when you get to the top, how gorgeous the view will be, and the thrill of the downhill.

### **Helmet Tips**

You always need a helmet whenever you ride. Even a low-speed fall on a bicycle path can cause serious (and fatal) brain damage. Make sure your helmet fits. If the helmet doesn't fit, it will not protect you adequately.

To determine a good fit, the helmet must be level on your head, and it should feel comfortably snug, not tight. The front and back straps should be adjusted so their junctions are underneath your ears. You shouldn't be able to move it much in any direction or pull it off, no matter how hard you try. The helmet shouldn't sit on the back of your head like a cap; it should fit squarely over your head, covering the top of your forehead. Most people don't wear their helmets correctly. Be sure to ask your guides to check the fitting of your helmet. For more information on helmets, visit Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute at [www.bhssi.org](http://www.bhssi.org).

# Responsible Tourism

To travel responsibly in Italy, France, or Spain (and most of our other destinations in Europe), it's important to try to support local sustainable tourism—from culture to cooking—and there are plenty of ways to do that. When you're in Italy on tour, spend money in rural communities—buy local produce, eat in village restaurants, stay in rural accommodations (when possible) owned by the host, family, or that employ local people. Engaging could be as simple as leisurely enjoying a proper long Italian lunch. A few more tips:

- *Tap water is safe to drink in Italy and throughout Europe.* Bring refillable bottles and reduce your waste.
- *If visiting churches or convents, dress respectfully*—no beachwear and “not too much flesh” on display. Be mindful that if you're traveling to Italy that it's a Catholic country and these are general rules of respect.
- *Familiarize yourself with the rules for different parks or reserves if you encounter them.* You may be expected to stick to the main cycling roads, routes, or trails when walking (for example, in some countries, wild camping is hardly allowed, and bathing in rivers or lakes is not always permitted). These rules are there to preserve the biodiversity and the natural beauty of the place.
- *Eat in smaller, local restaurants, and avoid places where the menus come with pictures of the food*—it's usually not a good sign. Eat in places recommended by our guides or go where the locals eat (follow them into the *trattoria* if you're in Italy!).
- *Buy local food and drink whenever possible.* If in Italy, look for denominations like DOP on products, as they indicate it's good quality and locally produced.
- *Learn to say basic phrases in the native language, and don't be afraid to use it*—speaking in the destination's native tongue will help you to mix in more with the locals. Even if your accent isn't the best, you'll at least be showing them that you're making the effort, which they'll appreciate!
- *Always ask permission before taking a photo of people.* It's considered rude in many cultures and could also be a violation of their spiritual and cultural beliefs. Plus, by asking them first, you get the opportunity to have a conversation and connect with them, which is a major bonus when traveling. To take your kindness even further, offer to send them back copies of the photos you took to help make it a more mutually beneficial exchange.

# Get Inspired!

Subscribe to our blog for expert advice on all things cycling, plus the latest details on Ciclismo Classico's deliciously authentic travel adventure vacations.

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