

# Raid Sardinia

Explore the best of mountainous Sardinia on a Raid challenge, taking on 900km and 16,000m of ascent in 6 days

## Summary

**WHERE:** Sardinia  
**DISTANCE:** 900km  
**TIME :** 6 days  
**PRICE :** see website  
**DATES:** May / Oct



## Highlights

Stunning coast of Ogliastra & the Oriental Sarda road where mountains meet sea

Gennargentu Massif & punishingly steep Monte Limbara

Raid certificate & souvenir

Italian hospitality & 3 and 4\* hotels



## Raid Sardinia

The island of Sardinia is still little known in the cycling world. And we wonder why! Sardinia features beautiful mountain scenery, pristine countryside, fantastic weather conditions, white sandy beaches and vast sparsely-populated mountainous areas with almost traffic-free roads.

Its unspoilt rugged and wild heartland and stunning coastal roads make the perfect location for a Marmot Raid route. Starting on the southeast coast near Cagliari you will discover the varied Mediterranean landscapes, touch on all the highest mountains of the island and journey from the rocky peaks and deep canyons of the karstic formations of Ogliastra and Supramonte in the Gennargentu Massif to the huge granite boulders of Monte Limbara. Traversing ancient archeological sites, pasture lands and quiet mountain villages in the island's wild and solitary interior you will finally reach the stunning west coast road near Alghero to arrive in Bosa Marina.

The Raid is a cycling challenge, but it is also your holiday. Marmot Tours has been supporting clients on our Raid challenges for a decade now and ensuring that you have a great time is what we are passionate about. You will love the ride, the country and the route, enjoying some great banter along the way. We leave no stone unturned in preparing for your holiday and making it the best it can be. Which is why you just have to eat, sleep and turn the pedals....



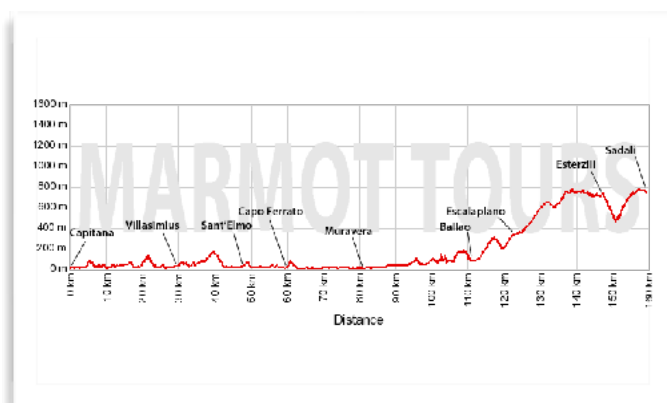
## Your Raid Route

### Day 0 - Travel Out

We offer included transfers from Cagliari airport to the start hotel, just outside Cagliari (approx 30mins). Meet your guides, and assemble then test out your bikes before relaxing to enjoy the 4\* hotel facilities (swimming pool & private beach). You will have a welcome briefing followed by a good dinner in the evening and can ask your guides any questions you have about the holiday.

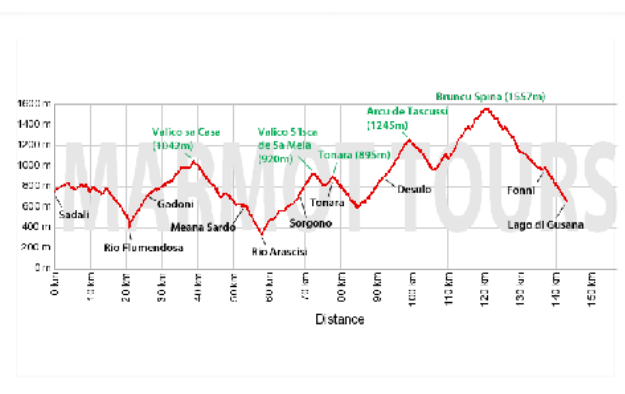
### Day 01 - Cagliari to Sadali 160KM WITH 2600M ASCENT

You begin your Raid by undulating around the stunning southeast coast road to the traditional coastal village of Villasimius for your first control and a slurp of coffee. Here the road meanders through a rugged landscape dotted with olive and eucalyptus trees, the scent of which will waft after you, reminding you that you are on holiday! After around 90km you meet the river Flumendosa, which you follow into the mountains on a good road through constantly changing and rather spectacular scenery. Your destination is the mountain settlement of Sadali, where Veronica and Battista offer us a warm welcome in their charming Albergo hotel with incredible views from the terrace.



### Day 02 - Sadali to Lago di Gusana 144KM WITH 3000M ASCENT

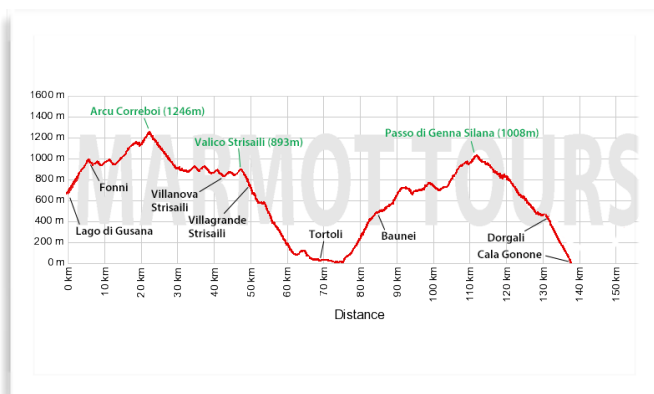
Today you explore the wilder mountainous interior of the western side of the Gennargentu National Park. Road cycling really doesn't get much better than this; empty roads, good surfaces, huge views and interesting villages. As the stats suggest, today's ride is no walk in the park. You take in the Válico sa Casa (1042m) and



the Válico S'Isca de sa Mela (920m) before heading up the Arcu de Tascussi (1245m) with its welcome café at the top. The main event of the day is yet to be conquered: the climb up to the the refuge of Bruncu Spina (1570m). This is the highest surfaced road on the island and the refuge serves the islands only ski lift (skiing in Sardinia!?) From here you will be pleased to know, it is down hill all the way to our 4\* hotel with swimming pool, situated on the shore of the Lagi Di Gúsana, just west of Fonni.

### Day 03 Lago di Gusana to Cala Gonone 138KM WITH 2300M ASCENT

You start the day by climbing gently into the heart of the mountains on the 'old road' to Arcu Correboi (1246m).



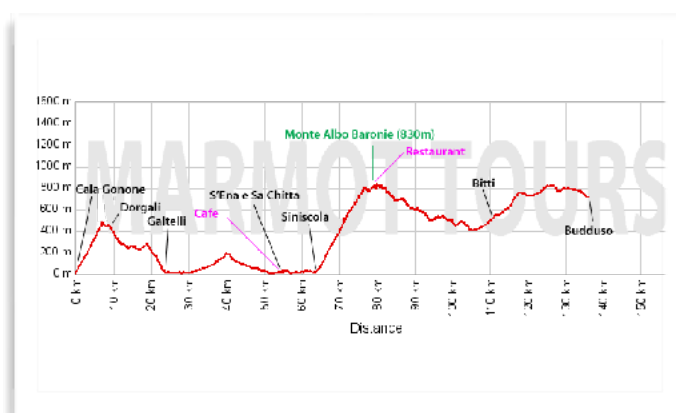
This lines you up nicely for a fantastic descent over the **Válico Strisaili (893m)** and down to the coastal plain. It's a Raid so you don't get to linger for too long on the flat before joining the magnificent Orientale Sarda road. Built in the 1800s by merchants so they could extract the oak trees for charcoal industry, it is an incredible feat of engineering, climbing up to the **Passo di Genna Silana (1008m)**. Our destination is the hotel Bue Marino in Cala Gonone; a quiet coastal village once only accessible by sea. Luckily for us they bored a hole in the mountain and laid a fantastic series of hairpins guaranteed to deliver you to the coast with a smile on your face.

**Day 04 - Cala Gonone to Budduso**  
136KM WITH 2400M ASCENT

Start by reacquainting yourself with the fantastic series of hairpins you sampled the yesterday,

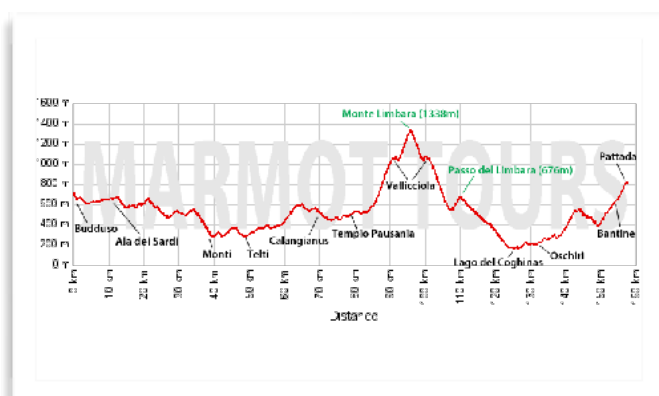
leaving the picturesque costal melais of Cala Gonone behind you as you climb. From here you undulate down through a handful of small settlements and onto the costal plains that lead us along to Siniscola, nestled at the foot of a massive white limestone ridge known as **Monte Albo**, your nemesis for the day! You begin your ascent of this quiet and winding road being treated to both mountain and sea views, the latter soon disappearing as you turn inland once again ticking off the final few kms to the restaurant just over the summit.

Suitably fed, meander with a downhill bias along and into the picturesque pastoral village of Bitti, famous for its Tenores, before climbing up into the cork plantations and along to your hotel.



## Day 05 - Budduso to Pattada

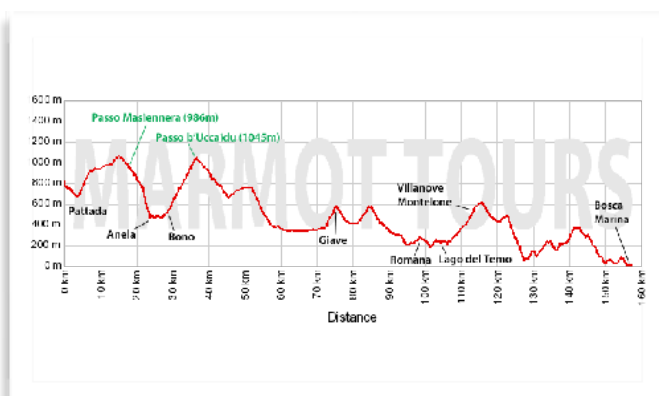
### 158KM WITH 3000M ASCENT



The northern end of Sardinia is dominated by **Monte Limbara (1338m)**. Being the highest point around, the summit has been adorned by a forest of antenna and aerials...and a surfaced service road! With 45 hairpins and gradients of up to 15%, there is no doubt that this climb is the toughest on the island, but the views are breathtaking and it is well worth the effort to go to the top. This will be a memorable climb for many reasons! The surrounding countryside is dominated by forests of cork oak trees and a rough rocky granite landscape - all with its unique rural beauty. Rather unbelievably, you end up this evening just 10 km from where you started this morning, in a 3\* hotel on the edge of town of Pattada, known for its production of Sardinian knives (resolzas).

## Day 06 - Pattada to Alghero

### 163KM WITH 2800M ASCENT



Today you head westwards towards the coast and your final destination of Bosa Marina, but being a Raid of course, there are still a few cheeky climbs to be conquered before you see the lapping waves! The Passo Masiennera (986m) is a delight, but is followed by the Passo b'Uccaidu (1045m) which is sure to test the legs a bit! Recover as you roll through farmlands to the town of Villanove, built on hills of ancient volcanic origin and up your final climb to a view point 500m above the coast road. You will be pleased to hear that the only way from here is down and the labyrinthine of hairpins that awaits you is one of the most memorable delights of the trip. The fun hasn't finished yet though as you still have a 36km stretch of road, described by Cyclist magazine (Sept 15) as "a rollercoaster, cresting rugged cliffs and skirting remote coves". You end your tour in Bosa Marina, a lively fishing town, with all the facilities to ensure a well-deserved celebration!

## Party Time!

### Day 07 - Travel Home

All good things must come to an end. We offer included transfers to Cagliari airport (2hrs 45 mins). Please see the Travel Section of this document for airport transfer timings.

## How does it compare?

The Raid Sardinia is probably comparable with the Raid Pyrenean and Raid Alpine N-S, perhaps a little easier than the Raid Corsica, Raid du Massif Central and Raid Dolomites. It has overall less climbing than our other Raids, but some sneaky gradients and some epic climbs that shouldn't be missed.

This Raid is a challenge but also has a great holiday feel. The mix of coastal riding and traverses through the rugged interior of the island make for an ever changing landscape. The daily distances and climbs are 'steady'... there is no one day which will be a killer, allowing you to get into the rhythm of this Raid and the island itself.



## Start & End

Start: Hotel Setar, Quartu Sant Elena, Sardinia (Tel +39 070892031)

End: Sporting Hotel Stella Maris, Bosa Oristano, Sardinia (Tel +39 0785 375162)

## Travel

Marmot Tours includes airport transfers from the most convenient airport for the start of your trip. Transfers are timed to fit in with as many flights from as many UK regional airports as possible.

### Finding flights

We recommend using a comparison tool such as [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net) when searching for direct or indirect flights from various airports/regions/countries. It can be helpful if you search for 1-way flights, giving results of all direct routes available eg 'UK to Cagliari'.

If you are travelling in a group of 6 or more and are unable to join the group airport transfers we may be able to organise a private transfer for you. Please contact us to discuss.

### UNDER YOUR OWN STEAM...

If you are going to meet us at the start hotel or are leaving independently at the end of your trip to go on elsewhere then do let us know and we may be able to help you with your travel plans.

If you are flying long haul we strongly recommend arriving at least a day early in order to get over any jet lag before you start your trip and are happy to book you into the start hotel for an additional night, or you can of course choose and book your own hotel nearby. NB: we can generally only offer an airport transfer on the start/finish days of the itinerary but can certainly arrange a taxi transfer

for you (payable direct to your driver) on other days.

## 2019 Airport Transfers

Transfers from and to Cagliari airport (CAG) are included in the holiday price. The transfer time at the start of the trip is around 30 mins and at the end of the trip around 2 hrs 45 mins.

If you arrive earlier than the given group transfer time then you will need to wait at the airport for your pick-up. If flights are delayed then transfers may also be delayed. If your flight is significantly delayed or cancelled then you may need to get public transport or a taxi to the start hotel and make a claim on your travel insurance, or to your airline.

You will find our most up to date transfer times on the Holiday Details page on the Link (once you've made your booking). If you need to know the timings before booking, please get in touch via email: [cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk](mailto:cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk).

## 2020 Airport Transfers

Please hold off booking your flights for 2020 as we won't have fixed our new transfer times until all airlines have released their new flight schedules. We expect to publish them in October 2019.

### Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice).

## Navigation

We provide you with colour maps, altitude profiles, detailed directions with distance markers and GPS files for those of you with a unit. Our guides will also endeavour to be at any 'easy to miss' junctions.

GPS files are provided a few weeks prior to your trip, and are available in .gpx, and .tcx formats from The Link.

The files can be downloaded onto any Garmin unit and in their most basic form provide a 'purple line' to follow, however with the more recent units you will also receive a set of visual instructions as you approach a turning. Our GPS tracks take you from hotel to hotel and are updated regularly.

## Am I fit Enough?

It is possible (some would say probable) that the seed of doing a Raid was planted in your mind when you had a drink in hand, chatting with mates. In the light of day it is normal (and only right) that you should consider whether or not you are fit enough to take it on! All our Raid routes are challenging and you need to be a regular road cyclist in order to enjoy and get the most out of this trip. We only want you to book on this holiday if it is right for you.

Many of our riders are club cyclists or have done cyclosporives or some longer distance rides. However by no means all of them have, and we have had many clients who have been fairly new to road cycling (but who have a good level of fitness, perhaps from a different sport) who have effectively trained for the trip and successfully completed our Raid routes. As a first Raid most people tend to start with the Raid Pyrenean as it is just 4.5 days in the saddle, however, this challenge would also be a great introduction to the world of Raiding.

## Pacing

The key to success on the Raid Sardinia as with our other Raids, is pacing yourself and we are very keen to emphasise that you don't need to be cycling super fast in order to manage the daily routes. The absolute worst thing is to push yourself to cycle beyond your normal pace on the cols, or early on in the trip. This ends up becoming very tiring and can cause problems on

later days. The joy of any Marmot Raid is that you have 2 support vehicles per group so that you are supported regardless of whether you are a rider at the front or the back of the group.

## Strava

Many cyclists nowadays are using apps like Strava and Garmin Connect to track their progress, and to compare themselves to their peers using 'segments', for instance.

These apps make for great training tools and interesting post-ride analysis but there are obvious risks associated with competitive cycling styles, pushing yourself beyond your usual tolerance, and focusing on live feed information whilst on the bike.

We therefore encourage our clients to avoid such 'Live Segment' features when cycling on a Marmot Tours holiday or Challenge, especially descending, and to focus on the road at all times.

## Training

You owe it to yourself to train for the Raid... we want you to achieve your goals and to enjoy the whole experience. The fitter you are the more you can relax and take note of the stunning route and throw yourself into the Marmot group banter. It can be difficult finding extended climbs for the training in the UK, but generally if you can build up your comfort in doing long daily distances, and your stamina, then you will really benefit when it comes to the Raid itself. We can't pretend to offer practical help when you are spinning on the turbo in the garage, or cycling up a short sharp UK climb in the driving rain, but know that we are with you in spirit, and that everyone else doing a Raid is going through what you are - in fact why not share your training joys and miseries on The Link - you are not alone!

If, after reading this, you really can't banish the doubt then it may be worth you looking at one of our Classic Cols style holidays as a starter. You get to climb the same climbs but there is ultimate flexibility on the holiday as you can choose your route each day from the options: a 'Classic' route with perhaps one col a day, or the 'Challenge' route with optional extras and gruelling stage endings. We offer Classic Cols itineraries in the Pyrenees, Alps, Dolomites, Picos, Corsica, Gran Canaria and Tenerife!

## Guiding

“Our best ever Raid and the support from your team was 1st Class” J Wright

Supporting you on your holiday will be 2 of our highly experienced, fun, approachable and knowledgeable guides, plus an additional guide and vehicle managing hotel bags. Despite being passionate about cycling, both guides will be in support vans as this holiday is all about you and your needs. Two vehicles means you do not need to stay together as a group so you can cycle at your own pace whether that be speedy or steady. It also means that wherever you are in the group (front/back or in-between), you will have access to your personal kit, snacks and water, and any mechanical or first aid support. In the event that you need help for a mechanical (for example) there are 2 vans on the road so one will be able to quickly get to you with full tool kits, spare back wheels and even a spare bike. We hope you won't need us for anything serious but being prepared for all eventualities is what we do exceptionally well. Our multi vehicle system also enables us to ensure your luggage is at the hotel before you arrive.

You can expect to see a support van between 5 and 10 times a day so you don't need to carry much on your bike unless the weather is exceptional!

“The Raid was absolutely fantastic. I don't have enough superlatives to describe the trip.. Rani and Debbie were always in the right place at the right time with excellent support” P Murray

It is worth a note about **speedy cyclists who don't like stopping**. It is in your favour if we can plan with you how to balance your needs against those of others in the group so you can have upmost flexibility regarding pacing etc. If you think you are going to be very fast then contact us to talk about this and what we can offer you as someone way ahead of others in the group.

## Group Dynamics

Your group will be any number up to a maximum of 20 clients. This number works really well - it's big enough for you to find others to cycle with at your pace, but not so huge as to feel impersonal! We get lots of clients booking alone, and lots of small groups of friends. If you think you can get a group of 18 - 20 people together then we can offer you a custom departure date.

We love that we also get a really big variety in terms of cycling experience... from club cyclists, people training for other events, those raising money for charity, ex-pro cyclists and people who are relatively new to cycling who like to challenge themselves on holiday!



## Accommodation

You stay in a selection of 3\* and 4\* hotels with en suite facilities in Sardinia. One night is in a stunningly located Ecolabel hotel (unstarred). Three of the hotels have swimming pools. The hotels have all been selected for their customer service towards cyclists and their location.

You will be sharing a twin room with another client (of the same gender) unless you book a single room for a supplement (contact [cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk](mailto:cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk) for availability). Each hotel has a garage/locked room to ensure that your trusty steed has a comfortable night too.

## Food

### Breakfast

No surprise that this is the crucial meal of the day. We supplement hotel breakfasts with Dorset Cereals and fruit. Some hotels (not all) offer cheese & meats for your protein kick start.

### Lunches

You know what you like to eat when you are riding, and it is not likely to be the same as what the other guys and gals in your group will want to eat. We don't include lunches so there are no enforced group stops. You can get access to the tasty local cuisine on offer in local cafes and restaurants which is great for you, and for them. We can point out some cycle friendly places en route and will be sure to have a van there so you can have your midday faff!

### Snacks

Your support van aka snackshop will be well stocked with a variety of tasty delectables: cereal bars, cakes, fresh fruit (bananas obviously!), dried fruit & nuts & sweets are the staples but your guides grab whatever opportunity presents to have fresh bakery products and summer fruits on board for that mid afternoon 'pick me up'. We suggest you bring your own favourite energy powders/gels/bars with you as these will not be easily available en route and we find clients are quite 'brand' specific in terms of what they like. We have asked our hotels to also provide fresh semi-skimmed milk as a recovery drink on arrival at the hotel. Not all hotels will be able to manage this but where possible, it will be there!

## Dinner

We eat as a group in the evening - either in the hotel or at a nearby restaurant. Italian cuisine being world renowned, expect 3 or 4 courses (and generous portions) which are tailored to the needs of cyclists. Dinner will be served at around 19.30. Wine at dinner is included both during the trip and on the last night of celebrations. You've earned it! Coffees/soft drinks and beers are however not included (we'd be broke!)

## Special diets

Please contact us with any special dietary requirements. We work hard to influence the hotels we use to encourage them to respond positively to special dietary needs, and they have gradually improved their services to vegetarians. We need to give them plenty of warning however, and need clients to be **firmly** either vegetarian for the trip or not - they (and the guides) find it hard if clients are vegetarian for some meals and not for others. Coeliacs and other intolerances can also be provided for and we can communicate with you individually and prepare to make sure you have the right food throughout your trip.

## What's Included?

- 6 days supported riding
- Airport transfers @ specified times
- Route notes/directions/maps/GPS files
- Raid Sardinia registration + certificate & souvenir for successful Raiders
- 7 nights half board accommodation & table wine @ dinner (includes celebratory meal on the last night)
- 2 customised & well stocked vehicles with experienced guides, offering moral, mechanical & medical support, plus snacks & water.
- Raid Sardinia Pack: Raid musette, 750ml water bottle, Raid Sardinia velopac and Marmot Tours RideGuard Ass Saver



## Insurance

Holiday insurance is **essential** for all Marmot Tours trips. Anyone without insurance will be unable to take part in the cycle so please make sure you arrange cover. We recommend sorting your insurance when you book so that if you have problems during training and need to cancel, you are covered.

Your insurance needs to cover you for non-competitive road cycling (cycle touring) with the following fairly standard inclusions:

Medical Expenses  
Repatriation

Some clients also like to ensure they have the following optional items:

Cancellation cover  
Loss or damage to their bike.

NB if you are hiring a bike from us there is an insurance element in the fee so you will not need additional cover.

We will ask you to complete a form with your policy number and emergency contact details for the trip but in the meantime we don't need any confirmation of your cover.

## Bike Hire

Marmot Tours has an excellently maintained fleet of custom built titanium framed bikes available to rent for your holiday. Advantages of rental include:

- avoiding hefty fees levied by airlines for transport
- worry free travel (knowing your trusty steed is safely stored away at home!)
- the chance to try a titanium bike built specifically with climbing cols in mind (gearing!)
- relinquishing responsibility for cleaning and maintenance to our experienced team.

Prices: £40/day on the bike including an insurance fee and VAT. For full spec and dimensions, please see our website Bike Hire page.

## Financial Protection

Marmot Tours are members of ABTA, the Association of British Travel Agents.

ABTA and ABTA members help holidaymakers to get the most from their travel and assist them when things do not go according to plan.

As part of our membership contract we are obliged to maintain a high standard of service to you by ABTA's Code of Conduct.

- In line with our ABTA membership (no Y6184), we hold an insurance policy that gives you full financial protection for all funds you pay us for your holiday
- We have full Tour Operators Professional and Public Liability Insurance with specialist brokers Campbell Irvine
- We carry out risk assessments on all of our holidays to ensure we have thought through every detail
- We employ staff with the correct experience and skills to ensure you have a safe and fun trip, and have a thorough training programme each season.
- We comply with the legislation and Tourism Code for the countries we work in. Accordingly, in France we are registered with ATOUT France, the French registration body for Tour Operators. Marmot Tours holds a Tour Operators License (IM UK 15 0001) awarded by ATOUT (Sept 2015) .

For further information about ABTA, the Code of Conduct and the arbitration scheme available to you if you have a complaint, please contact ABTA, 30 Park St, London, SE1 9EQ (Tel 0203 117 0500)

## How to Book

1. Email [cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk](mailto:cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk) to check availability for your preferred departure date
2. Bag your spot with a provisional booking for a week or so while you get planning
3. Log on or Register with our online booking system, The Link ([link.marmot-tours.co.uk](http://link.marmot-tours.co.uk)) to complete your booking form.
4. Pay your £300 deposit by BACs or online via The Link. Receive a confirmation email
5. Await contact from Kate in the office regarding authorisation of your final trip invoice.
6. We'll post regular holiday information and updates on the Link (you'll receive an email notification)
7. Optionally meet your fellow holiday makers via The Link and share training / travel plans etc

