

Tour of Gran Canaria

Explore this stunning island with sea views, cheeky climbs, varied landscapes and a fabulous climate. The perfect winter cycling holiday with Marmot Tours.

Summary

WHERE: Gran Canaria
DISTANCE: to suit you
TIME : 6 cycling days
PRICE : see website
DATES: Jan/Feb/Mar



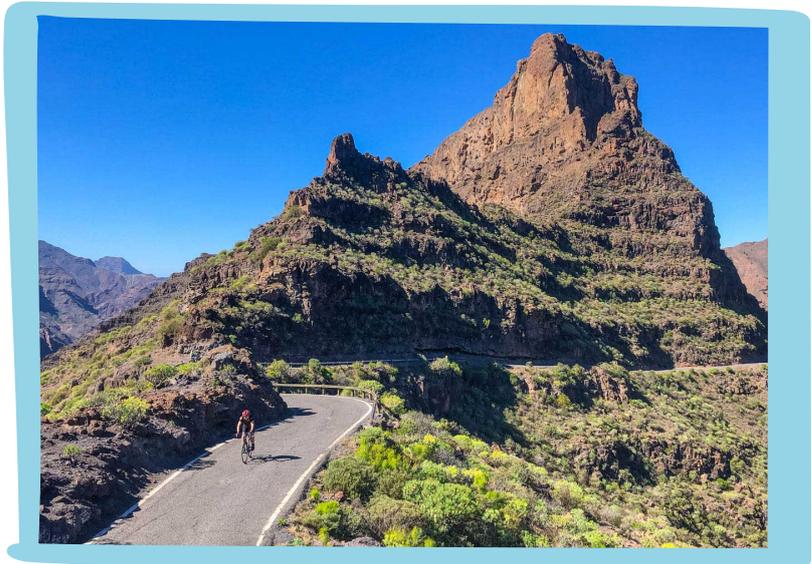
Highlights

Split across just two 4* hotels with pools

Flexible itinerary to suit everyone

2 Marmot vehicles & experienced, energetic guides

Winter sun: average of 18 - 20 degrees



Tour of Gran Canaria

Using the inside knowledge, experience and language skills of our late guide Pedro Mireles, who spent his childhood on Gran Canaria, we have carefully crafted one of our popular Classic Cols style itineraries to include the most scenic areas and challenging climbs on this stunning island in the Canaries.

As you can see from the map, there are few places on the island that you won't have the option of visiting; we've got all the best spots covered! Each day there are 'optional extras' increasing the possible daily ascent, making this holiday suitable for those looking to really push themselves and take on our Challenge Route as well as those preferring the gentler Classic Route. It is ideal for mixed ability groups or couples and even for non-cycling partners as there's plenty to entertain them too.

Unlike some other Marmot Trips which 'move on' each night, this holiday is set across just 2 excellent 4* hotels, away from tourist resorts, so also offers the opportunity for relaxing off the bike.

Regardless of whether you opt for the Classic or the Challenge route (or a few days of either!) this week is definitely a 'holiday', riding on quiet roads with stunning views of the coastline and mountainous interior of the island. The gradients, however, are cheekily steep!

We offer Classic Cols holidays in the Alps, Picos, Dolomites, Pyrenees and in Corsica, Sardinia, Slovenia, Andalusia and Catalonia too, so do check our website for details. For cyclists new to the mountains, we suggest starting with our Tour of Tenerife & Teide or our Pyrenean Classics Route.

Itinerary

Day 0 - Travel Out

Included transfers from Gran Canaria airport to your 4* start hotel with pool (1hr). Meet your guides, assemble your bikes and have a welcome briefing and great dinner. Cycling to the hotel from the airport through the mountains is an option [45km, 1250m ascent], or transfer to the hotel and go for a warm up ride from here [20km, 600m ascent circular loop].

Day 1: Barranco de Arguineguin & Climb to Risco Grande & Ayacata

Descend from the hotel (975m) into the beautiful palm tree oasis of Fataga. A short climb up to the Degollada de las Yeguas follows, from where you can enjoy the breathtaking views of the canyon. A quick, swooping descent takes you to the southern coastal road where you ride towards the beautiful Barranco de Arguineguin. You'll be tempted to take a plunge into the ocean but almost as refreshing will be the gentle climb to Cercados de Espino! That is, until you hit the 'wall' that is the 9km climb to Risco Grande (Paso de Tauro, 911m) with some serious ramps at 10, 12 and 14%!

From there, the road undulates (with an uphill bias!) for another 15km through remote pine woods and the reservoir of Presa de las Niñas to arrive at the picturesque crossroads town of Ayacata (1310 m). After a deserved lunch at any of the popular cyclist stops in Ayacata, it's just a gentle 'up & down' ride to reach the hotel at San Bartolomé.

The optional extra today is a 25km loop including a short punchy climb to Monteleon (Cima Pedro Gonzalez, 490 m) and a beautiful gentle descent in the Barranco de Ayagaures, to discover the hidden oasis and idyllic palm tree islands of the reservoirs.

Easy route:

This includes a 4km transfer in the van to cut out the steepest section of the climb up to Risco Grande [81km, 1800m ascent]

Classic route:

Risco Grande + Ayacata + Cruz Grande [85km, 2000m ascent]

Challenge route:

Ayagaures + Risco Grande + Ayacata [110 km, 2500m ascent]

Day 2: Ingenio to Pico de las Nieves

The highlight of today's ride is the climb to Pico de las Nieves from its toughest side: a summit finish to be ridden during La Vuelta España 2017. The climb to the top of the island from the south/east is considered to be one of the most challenging climbs in Europe. It is as long as Galibier or Stelvio and ramps up like the Angliru or Zoncolan: 23kms long with 1675m altitude gain (including a brutal 5km long section at an average of 11% between La Pasadilla and Cazadores)!

From the summit you descend through the pine forest of Los Llanos de la Pez and the Natural Park of Roque Nublo which is a massive volcano chimney rock that also happens to be the symbol of Gran Canaria. You arrive in the town of Ayacata before continuing your loop to finish back at the hotel.

On the Challenge route the optional extra features the 9km climb to the natural site of Barranco de Guayadeque (955m). Waiting for you at the end of this long and beautiful road are some seriously cheeky gradients (10% and more) as well as the Prehispanic troglodite cave dwellings and restaurants!

Easy route:

[65km, 1000m ascent]

Classic route:

Pico de las Nieves (from the SE)
[80km, 2000m ascent]

Challenge route:

Barranco de Guayadeque + Pico de las Nieves (from the SE) [95km, 2800m ascent]

Day 3: Across the Island: Caldera de Tejada & Pinar de Tamadaba

Today you leave the mountain village of San Bartolomé de Tirajana behind and head towards the northwestern coastal town of Puerto de las Nieves. Our route takes in some stunning and varied scenery en route to the mountain hamlet of Cruz de Tejada, where a welcome restaurant awaits.

The views down the road into this massive volcanic depression with its abrupt gorges will give you some insight into the challenges to come during the next few days. For now, you cycle through the ancient pine forest of Tamadaba (1320m). You then descend on the greener northern slopes of the island to reach sea level at Puerto de las Nieves.



From the hotel pool you can enjoy a beautiful sunset & the cliffs of Anden Verde whilst psyching up for the following day's challenges.

The optional extra today is a circular loop starting from Cruz de Tejada (1560m) and taking you back up to Pico de Las Nieves from the north. This loop gives you a good insight into the different microenvironment of the heart of the island.

Easy route:

The easier option today cuts out the loops to Cruz de Tejada (1560m) and Tamadaba (1315m) [70km, 1200m ascent]

Classic route:

El Aserrador + Cruz de Tejada + Pinar de Tamadaba [95km, 1600m ascent]

Challenge route:

El Aserrador + Cruz de Tejada + Las Nieves + Tamadaba [120km, 2700m ascent]

Day 4: Roller-coaster Ride in the Green North: Las Medianias, Montañón Negro & Pinos de Galdar

Discover the green lush valleys, terraces and the infamous 'leg-breaking' roads of the 'Medianias' in the North of Gran Canaria. Rising up from its surroundings is the highlight of the day, Roque Nublo, viewed from Mirador de Pico de la Gorra (1625m), your high point of the day. You arrive here on an 'uphill bias' ticking off La Laguna (890m) and Cruz de Tejada (1516m) as you go.

A long and in places undulating descent takes you past Mirador de Pinos De Galdar (1340m) all the way back to sea level & your hotel in Puerto de las Nieves.

The optional extra on the Challenge Route takes you off to further explore the valleys and barrancos on this lesser known area of the island. It includes the climbs of Cruce de Ariñez (950m) and Las

Rosas (1240m) before joining the classic route at the junction just before Cruz de Tejada (1516m). The 'gentle option' is a short ride up the remote Valley of Agaete to explore the orange orchards, a coffee plantation or a local wine cellar at the foot of the impressive cliffs of Tamadaba. The road finishes at El Sao (516m) just past the Mirador (527m) and leaves you plenty of time to return for a splash in the hotel pool.

Easy route:

Barranco Agaete + El Sao [20km, 560m ascent]

Classic route:

Laguna de Valleseco + Cruz de Tejada + Mirador de Pico de la Gorra [80km, 2000m ascent]

Challenge route:

La Laguna + Cruce de Ariñez + Las Rosas + Cruz de Tejada + Mirador de Pico de la Gorra + Mirador de Pinos De Galdar [125km, 2900m ascent]

Day 5: Anden Verde, Valley of the Tears & Pico de las Nieves (from the west)

You have a big day ahead! You undulate along an impressive coastal road this morning through the Parque Natural Tamadaba along to Los Caserones - with the option of nipping up to the viewpoint of Mirador del Balcon (360m) as you go. Los Caserones is the official start of The Valley of The Tears - a wild and remote climb, renowned for its punishing gradients: 10.8km with an average 9%!

From the top at El Aserrador (1350m) the road flattens for a bit, passing Ayacata, a perfect lunch spot for cyclists. The classic route takes you from here to the familiar and welcoming hotel in San Bartolomé de Tirajana.

The optional challenge ride today means climbing all the way from the sea to the top of the island at Pico de las Nieves (1950m) using the road from Ayacata to the Natural Monument of Roque Nublo. It's an extra 11km climb with tough hairpin bends and ramps up soon after leaving Ayacata.



Easy route:

Vehicle transfer up the steepest section of VOTT. El Aserrador [65km, 1800m ascent]

Classic route:

VOTT + El Aserrador [73km, 2400m ascent]

Challenge route:

Mirador del Balcon + VOTT + El Aserrador + Pico de las Nieves [99km, 3200m ascent]

Day 6: Southwest: Barranco de Mogán & Climb to San Bartolomé

Still as yet unexplored by us, today you head towards the rugged and almost uninhabited landscapes of the Southwest, via the cycling mecca of Ayacata. From here, incredible descents made up almost entirely of switchbacks twist and turn their way down to the coast, offering you the option of ticking off the well-surfaced Veneguera (430m) and **Degollada de la Aldea (658m)** climbs en-route.

The coast road from Puerto de Mogán to Maspalomas provides you with ample opportunities to refuel before you turn inland again and onto your final climb to San Bartolomé de Tirajanas. 'Enjoy' the punchy climb to the viewpoint of Degollada de las Yeguas (478m), then the canyon and oasis of Fataga and back to the hotel to celebrate the end of an epic holiday!

Easy route:

Vehicle transfer to Cruz Grande. Ayacata + Cruz de San Antonio (970m) + San Bartolomé de Tirajana [86km, 1650m ascent]

Classic route:

Ayacata + Cruz de San Antonio (970m) + San Bartolomé de Tirajana [98km, 2000m ascent]

Challenge route:

Ayacata + Veneguera (430m) + Degollada de La Aldea + San Bartolomé de Tirajana [123km, 2600m ascent]

Day 07 - Travel Back

At the end of your holiday we drop you back at Gran Canaria airport (LPA) for your return flight. Transfer time is under 1 hour.

Start(& end!)

Hotel Las Tirajanas: 35290 San Bartolomé de Tirajana (+34 928 566 969)

Travel

Marmot Tours include 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 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 LPA'. NB: Search results may change as airlines release their schedules for the following year at various times.

If you are flying long haul, we recommend arriving into Las Palmas a day or two early to help you get over any jet lag before you start cycling. You could explore the capital before joining us for our scheduled airport transfers back at the airport, or book yourself into our start hotel for an extra night. As we don't generally get a preferential rate, the best way to do so is via a site like booking.com. We are here to help if you need us, however, we need to charge a booking fee if we make the booking on your behalf. NB: we can generally only offer an airport transfer on the start/finish days of the itinerary but can certainly help with arranging a private taxi transfer for you (payable direct to your driver) on other days.

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, please let us know so we can plan accordingly; we may also be able to help you with your travel plans, so do get in touch if you need assistance.

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.

Airport Transfers

Transfers from and to Gran Canaria Las Palmas airport (LPA) are included in the holiday price. The transfer time to/from the start/end hotel is just under an hour.

Pick-up: We offer regular transfers on the arrival day between 11am - 6pm (about every 2 hrs).

Drop off: We drop off regularly between 9am - 4pm (about every 2 hrs).

If your flight times are outside of those hours, please contact us prior to booking to discuss: cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk

If you arrive earlier than the 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 flights are significantly delayed or cancelled then you may need to take a taxi to the start hotel and make a claim on your 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.



Tour of Gran Canaria

Navigation

We provide you with colour maps and altitude profiles, as well as detailed directions of where to go. Our guides will even aim to be at those 'easy to miss' junctions and as you will see the van and guides regularly, navigation does not tend to be an issue.

For those of you with GPS units, we have GPS files available and will post them on The Link a few weeks before departure, in .gpx, and .tcx formats.

The files can be downloaded onto most units, including Garmin and Wahoo and in their most basic form provide a 'purple line' to follow. 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 normal (and only right) that you should consider whether or not you are fit enough for a cycling holiday in the mountains.

We have created our Classic Cols range of holidays in order to open up the world of road cycling in the mountains to couples and mixed ability groups where you each have slightly different aims in terms of distance and ascent.

Our Classic Route is an achievable goal for regular cyclists though if you are new to climbing and descending in the mountains, we would suggest starting with our Tenerife itinerary which has gentler gradients overall.

Our vehicles and guides are on hand to support you on your holiday and can offer advice, moral support and lifts in the van if you are tired.

Our goal at Marmot Tours is to create an ambience of non-competitive cycling with no pressure to 'keep up' with anyone else. It is about achieving your own individual goals and having a fabulous time doing it.

Am I too fit?

We have designed our Classic Cols style holidays to be accessible to a wide range of riding ability. Having a quick peek at each day's stats for the Challenge route should reassure you that even if you are a very fit and experienced road cyclist, there will be plenty to entertain you on this holiday.

With our daily route options you have the opportunity to cycle all day, every day, making yourself very tired indeed! If you opt for our Challenge route each day then you are looking at 690km+ with 16700m of ascent during your week, which is right up there with some of our Raid trips.

What is so nice about this range of holidays is that you can come along with people who are either less or more experienced than you and you can each get out of it what you want by choosing the daily route for you.

Pacing and Training

As with all sports holidays, the fitter you are, the more you can relax and enjoy the stunning route.

It can be difficult finding extended climbs for training in the UK, but generally, if you can build up your comfort on the bike (ideally on consecutive days) and your stamina and cardiovascular fitness overall, then you will really benefit when it comes to the holiday itself.

As well as training before the holiday, pacing yourself will go a long way towards you achieving your goals. The joy of a group holiday is that you are likely to find someone to cycle at a similar speed to you, so you don't need to try and keep up with your partner/friend/room mate. The quickest way to injure yourself or burn out is to cycle faster than you feel comfortable going.

We can't emphasise enough that this is your holiday and so, if you want a lift up the hill for whatever reason, your guides will be happy to help.

We can't pretend to offer practical help when you are spinning on the turbo or cycling up a short sharp UK climb in the driving rain, but know that we are with you in spirit and that others are also pushing themselves in preparation for their holiday. Why not share your training ideas and pre holiday plans with your group on The Link...



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 ask 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**.

Gearing/Bikes

Mainly, climbs are not particularly steep (compared to a lot of hills in the UK) but they do go on for a very long time. It is best to make sure that your bike will be suitable for your level of strength/fitness.

Most people 'get away with' a compact (smallest ring on front having 34 teeth), fitted with a 30 or 32 cassette on the rear. It is possible to fit your bike with larger cassettes, using a rear hanger extender, like the WolfTooth RoadLink.

If this all sounds too complicated then we do have some excellent titanium framed bikes for hire, which are fitted out with SRAM 50-34 at the front with 11 speed 11-36 toothed cassettes.

Guiding

Supporting you on your holiday will be two of our experienced, approachable, knowledgeable and fun guides. Despite being passionate about cycling, both guides will be in support vans as this holiday is all about you and your needs. Between them they will have knowledge of the area and the language and be skilled at bike mechanics.

Having two vehicles per group (regardless of the number of bookings up to a group size of around 20) is what allows us to offer you freedom to cycle at your own pace and a level of independence on this holiday. One van stays on the Classic route and one van covers the Challenge route. Due to the distances involved, those cyclists doing the full challenge route may need to be more independent than the less experienced cyclists on the Classic Route. Our guides are experts at advising you on the routes, where you can expect to see the van and what you might need with you.

In the event that you need help for a mechanical (for example) one of the vans 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.

You can expect to see a support van with water, snacks and your personal day bag 2 - 4 times a day, so you don't need to carry much on your bike, unless the weather is exceptional!

Group Dynamics

Your group will be any number up to around 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 try something new on holiday.

Accommodation

This trip is unlike some of our other Classic Cols itineraries as it is set across just 2 fabulous 4* hotels, meaning less moving on and more relaxing as well as a more luxurious hotel environment compared to some of our summer itineraries (both hotels have swimming pools). The hotels have 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 for availability). Both hotels have 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. Expect continental style breakfasts with cheese & meats for your protein kick start. We also supplement the breakfasts with Dorset cereals and fruit. Generally breakfast is at 08:30 (the Spanish don't do early mornings!), so we don't leave the hotel till around 09:30. Remember, this is a holiday!

Lunches

You know what you like to eat when you are riding and it is not likely to be the same as other guys' and gals' preferences. We don't include lunches, so there are no enforced group stops. We strongly advise that you stop for 'proper' food at lunchtime (well, Spanish lunchtime, which is more like 14:00!).

Each day we recommend a suitable place serving cyclist friendly food which is great for you and they appreciate your custom. We will be sure to have a van there so you can have a van faff too!

Snacks

Your support van aka snack-shack will be well stocked with a variety of tasty delectables: fruit/nut bars, cakes, fresh fruit (bananas obviously!), dried fruit, nuts & sweets are the staples. 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.

Dinner

We eat as a group in the evening in the hotel restaurants. Expect 3 courses (and generous portions) which are tailored to the needs of cyclists. Dinner will be served at around 20:00-20:30 (this is Spanish culture, so you may want to bring some recovery bars, etc. to keep you going until then). Up to half a bottle of wine at dinner is included every night. Coffees, soft drinks and beers are extra (we'd be broke!).

Special diets

Please note any special dietary requirements on your booking form. We can cater for most dietary needs/allergies/preferences if we know well in advance.

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 at specified times
- Route notes/directions/maps/GPS files
- 7 nights half board accommodation & table wine during dinner (up to half a bottle per person)
- 2 customised and well stocked vehicles with experienced guides, offering nutritional, moral, mechanical and first aid support, plus snacks & water
- 750ml Marmot Tours water bottle and a Marmot Tours Velopac to keep your phone/cards/cash safe during your ride



Insurance

Holiday insurance is essential for all Marmot Tours trips. Anyone without insurance is not able 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. We have a very high cancellation rate so are unable to deviate from our cancellation policy.

Your insurance needs to cover you for non-competitive road cycling (cycle touring) at altitude 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.

Once you have arranged your cover, please add the relevant details to the Before you go... section of your holiday on The Link. Unlike your passport and emergency contact details, you will need to add insurance details for every trip you are taking.

This helps ensure we have the most up to date information and are able to quickly help in case you have an accident on your holiday.

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 include an insurance fee and VAT. Please see our [Bike Hire webpage](#) for details as well as full specs and dimensions.

Please note that despite the size of our fleet steadily growing, we cannot guarantee that we will have a bike in your size available. If you would like to hire a bike, please check availability before booking your holiday.

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 (IM009120008) awarded by ATOUT (July 2012) .

For further information about ABTA, the Code of Conduct and the arbitration scheme available to you if you have a 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 to check availability for your preferred departure date. Remember to also check availability for single room and bike hire if they are your preference.
2. Bag your spot with a provisional booking for a week or so while you get planning.
3. Log on to or register with our online booking system, The Link (link.marmot-tours.co.uk) to complete your booking form.
4. Pay your £400 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.

