

# Classic Cols of Sardinia

Enjoy the Highlights of Sardinia, exploring it's coastal and mountain regions with flexible route choices each day

## Summary

**WHERE:** Sardinia

**TIME :** 6 days

**PRICE :** see website

**DATES:** May/Sept/Oct



### Highlights

Coastal and mountain riding: Pass Genna Silana & the Orientale Sarda road

Ultimately flexible holiday with classic, intermediate & challenge route options

Italian hospitality & 4\* hotels with pools



## The Classic Cols of Sardinia

holiday has been put together due to popular demand by our Raid Sardinia clients who were blown away by the cycling on this island. Despite a 2017 Giro visit, Sardinia is still little known in the cycling world despite it's 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 Classic Cols holiday. As usual with our Classic Cols holidays, the Classic Routes can be made more challenging each day by adding extra loops and ascents to make this trip suitable for those that are fairly new to cycling holidays in mountainous terrain or equally for those who are out to push themselves.

Whether you opt for the Classic or Challenge Route (or a few days of either!) this week is definitely a 'holiday'.

We also offer Classic Cols holidays in the Alps, Picos, Dolomites, Catalonia, Gran Canaria, Tenerife, Corsica and Pyrenees. For cyclists new to the mountains we recommend starting with either this itinerary, Tenerife or the Pyrenean Classic Route.

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....



# Itinerary

## Day 0 - Travel Out

We offer included airport transfers from Cagliari Airport to the 4\* Spa Resort Hotel **SaMuvara** (1hr 45min). Situated up at 800m on the edge of Arritzo in the heart of the Gennargentu mountains, the hotel provides you with the perfect environment to start and end our holiday. Meet your guides, and assemble then test out your bikes before relaxing to enjoy the 4\* hotel facilities. 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. For those arriving early, the afternoon

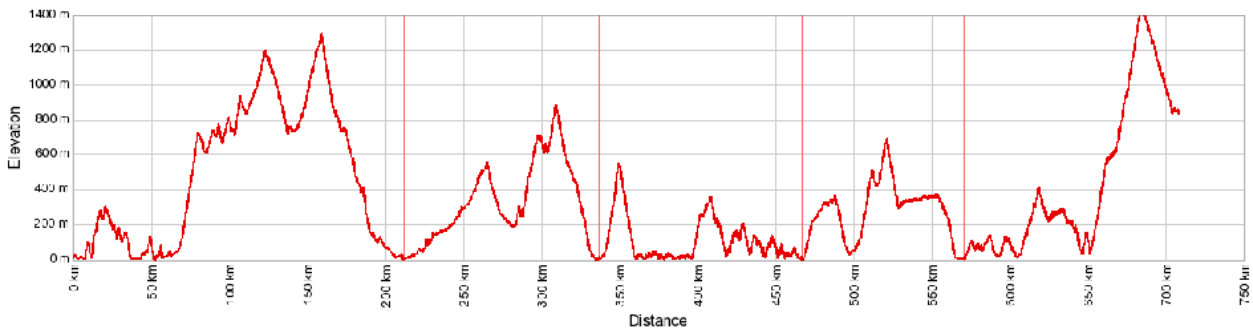
can be spent relaxing by the pool, or there are several good rides that can be done from the hotel.

## Day 01 - Arritzo to Valico Strisali

Today's ride is the perfect introduction to cycling in Sardinia. You circumnavigate the Gennargentu Massif on a series of quiet roads to Arcu Correboi (1246m). The views from here are spectacular and the descent on the 'old road' is an absolute gem. It was built to take trucks (which now go through a huge tunnel), so the gradients are constant, the corners are sweeping and it is virtually traffic free! On reaching the valley bottom you undulate through a sparse landscape of rock and ancient oak trees.

# Classic Route

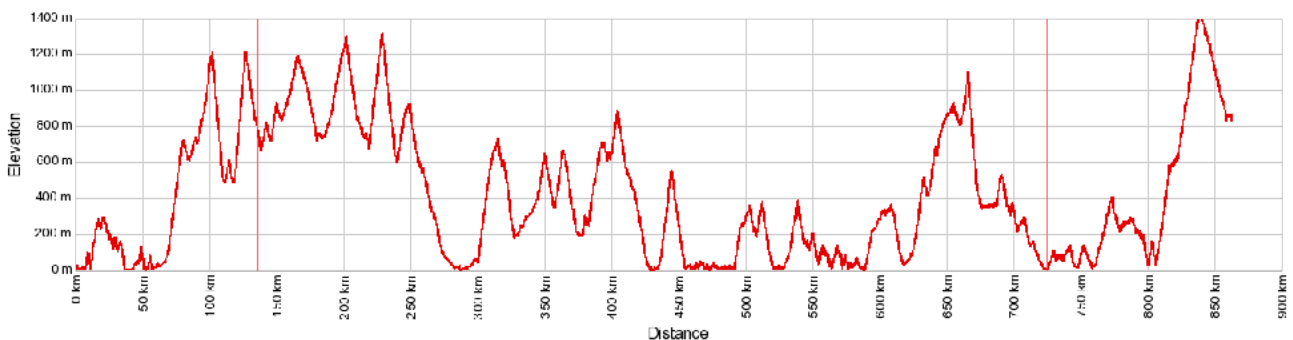
Marmot Tours :: Classic Cols of Corsica :: Classic Route



Created by GPSVisualizer.com

# Challenge Route

Marmot Tours :: Classic Cols of Corsica :: Challenge Route



Created by GPSVisualizer.com

Our destination is the 4\* Orlando Resort Hotel [<http://www.hotelorlandoresort.com>] nestled in the forest of the of the Santa Barbara National Park. With a fine kitchen, spa facilities and colourful building set around an extensive pool, you will be pleased to hear that we stay here for the next two nights. Retiring gracefully to the lounge is a good option, but as always there is more cycling to be done and the Arzana loop will certainly test your legs.

**Classic Route:** Col de Mela to Zonza (91km with 1550m ascent)

**Challenge Route:** Col de Mela + Col de Bavella S (109km and 2000m ascent)

## Day 02 - Tour of Monte Tonneri

The mountainous landscape to the West is our playground for today. The scenery is ever changing as we undulate our way around the craggy flanks of Monte Tonneri on a narrow road that was built, it seems, solely to please cyclists. A vast reservoir, vertical limestone cliffs, ancient forests, olive plantations and massif rock columns are all on the menu. Needless to say, there are a few cheeky little climbs towards the end of the day, to ensure you build up an appetite ready for another feast at the Orlando Resort.

Today's optional extra takes you down the western side of the mighty Rio Flumendosa through several mountain hamlets on an epic descent that takes you almost to sea level.

Given that our hotel is up at 900m, the only option is to dig deep and take on the 16km climb up and the Eastern side of the valley. It is however a stunning climb through terraced plantations and vineyards.

**Classic Route:** 83km with 1400m ascent

**Challenge Route:** 123km with 2300m ascent  
Day 03 Lago di Gusana to Cala Gonone

## Day 03 - Valico Strisali to Cala Gonone

Leaving our mountain retreat behind, we climb gently to Válico Talána (1100m) for a breathtaking view of the coastal plane way below us. The only way is down and this descent has style! Next 'up' is the magnificent Orientale Sarda road, which was showcased by the Giro D'Italia in Spring 2017. Built in the 1800s by merchants so they could extract the oak trees for charcoal industry, it is a feat of engineering and climbs up to the Passo di Genna Silana (1008m).

Your destination is the beach front hotel Bue Marino [Link - <http://www.hotelbuemarino.it/calagonone-sardegna/en>] in Cala Gonone; a quiet coastal village once only accessible by sea. Luckily for you 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.

If relaxing on the beach with a cocktail is not your thing, then at the end of the day there is the rather silly option of taking on the locally famed



'Strava segment' up the concrete road that scales the cliff to the North of town. It is only 2.2km, but with average gradients of 10%, it is sure to get your heart pounding!

**Classic Route:** 79km with 1300m ascent  
**Challenge Route:** 122km with 2150m ascent

### Day 04 - Cala Gone to Bitti

You (optionally) kick off the ride by reacquainting yourself with the fantastic hairpins of yesterday evening, leaving the picturesque costal melais of Cala Gonone behind you as you climb.

From here, undulate down onto the costal plains that lead you to Siniscola, situated at the foot of Monte Albo (820m), a massive white limestone ridge. The climb is 'jaw dropping', benefitting as it does from both mountain and sea views. Continue on this quiet and winding road before turning inland once again, ticking off the final few km to the restaurant just over the summit.

Suitably fed and watered, you meander with a downhill bias into the picturesque pastoral village of Bitti, famous for its Tenores (and nothing to do with Little Britain!) and the fabulous boutique style 4\* **Hotel Sul Lithu**. As always there are a few optional climbs for those wanting a bit more at the end of the day, making the most of the limestone ridge.

**Easier Route:** 100km with 1550m ascent  
**Classic Route:** 110km with 2000m ascent  
**Challenge Route:** 143km with 2700m ascent

### Day 05 - Bitti to Lago Di Gusana

It could be hard to draw you away from the hotel facilities but the promise of empty roads with good surfaces, huge views and interesting landscapes should do it!

Climb gently through cork plantations before enjoying a delightful descent to cross the central plane of the island. A couple of sharp climbs take you to the town of Saule, where the day's options start. The most direct route takes you via the historic town of Gavoi, which is well worth exploring. The Classic route skirts around the edge of Lago di Chucchinadorza and the Challenge route takes you over the mountains of Teti and Tiana.

All roads lead down to the Lago Di Gúsana and the 4\* **Hotel Taloro** built on a peninsula jutting out into the reservoir.

**Easier Route:** 76km with 1300m ascent  
**Classic Route:** 96km with 1800m ascent  
**Challenge Route:** 127km with 2400m ascent

### Day 06 - Lago di Gusana to Aritzo

For your final day on the island, it seems fitting to cycle up the highest surfaced road in Sardinia. Your destination is the refuge of Bruncu Spina (1570m) which is the islands only ski resort (more of a shed with couple of lifts!).

Climbing directly from the hotel (650m), the forests give way to open moorland and you are rewarded with some spectacular views. The climb itself is full of character and although the gradients are generally kind, there are a few short challenging sections (up to 12%). It is well worth the effort though and the descent is exquisite.

A short climb takes you back up the Arcu de Tascussi (1245m) for lunch. Here you have the option of heading directly to the Hotel SaMuvara where your adventure began or taking the long way home which includes a few more short climbs. Then it's time for a party!

**Classic Route:** 66km with 1650m ascent  
**Challenge Route:** 94km with 2300m ascent

## Party Time!

### Day 07 - Travel Home

We offer included transfers to Cagliari airport (2hrs)

## Navigation

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

For those of you with GPS units, we will post GPS files to the Holiday Forum on The Link 2 weeks prior to your trip, in .gpx, and .tcx formats.

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 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 those who may not have experienced it before. Our itinerary warms you up gently to the altitude, the extended climbing and to the technique of descending.

Our Classic Route is an achievable goal for regular cyclists who have never climbed a mountain on a bike before, though we would suggest starting with our Pyrenean itinerary which has even more route options available. The Alpine route is considered one of the harder of the CC choices.

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?

Have a quick peek at page 2 of this document - the week's profile of the Challenge Route. This 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 choice of routes each day, you have the opportunity to cycle all day and every day of the holiday, as you desire, making yourself very tired indeed! If you do our Challenge Route each day, you are looking at 600km with 16000m of ascent for the week, which is more climbing than on many of our Raid trips. The Alpine Challenge route, to allow you to compare, is probably slightly easier than the Pyrenean Challenge route in terms of overall ascent, but none of the climbs are rudely steep (unlike in the Picos and Dolomites)

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 routes for you.

## 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.

## 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 the training in the UK, but generally if you can build up your comfort on the bike (ideally on consecutive days) and your stamina and cardio vascular fitness generally, 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 pace 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, then that is fine by us.

## Gearing/Bikes

The 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 strength/fitness.

Most people 'get away with' a compact (smallest ring on front having 34 teeth), with the largest ring on the rear cassette having 27 teeth. If you are worried about getting up the hill then the cheapest way to get even lower gears is to change your rear cassette and chain.

Campag, Shimano and SRAM produce 11 speed 32 toothed cassettes that will get you up anything! For most of these big cassettes you may need to have fitted a rear derailleur with a long reach.

You may already have a triple fitted on your bike. If so, great! You will appreciate being able to drop down to a granny gear and twiddle your way up the steeper sections.

If this all sounds too complicated then we do have some fabulous titanium framed bikes for hire, which are fitted out with SRAM 50-34 at the front with a 11 speed 11 - 32 toothed cassettes - perfect for our tours.

## Guiding

“Just coming down to earth now after an unforgettable week of amazing scenery and new friendships made”. R Bill

Supporting you on your holiday will be 2 of our highly experienced, fun, approachable and knowledgeable guides. Despite being passionate about cycling, both guides will be in support vans as this holiday is all about you and your needs. They will know the area, one at least will speak the language and one at least will be a bike mechanic.

Having two vehicles per group (regardless of the number of bookings up to the maximum group size of 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) 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.

You can expect to see a support van with its water, snacks and your personal day bags 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 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 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. 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
- 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.
- 750ml water bottle, and Marmot Tours RideGuard Ass Saver



## Start & End Hotel

Hotel SuMuvara (4\*), Fontana Rubia, (Tel +39 0784629336)

## 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 Classic Cols of Sardinia

itinerary but can certainly arrange a taxi transfer for you (payable direct to your driver) on other days.

## 2019 Airport Transfers

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.

Transfers at set times from and back to Cagliari airport (CAG) are included in the holiday price. The transfer time to/from the start/end hotel is just under 2 hours.

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.



## 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.

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 insurance and VAT. For full spec and dimensions, please look at 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 cyclists via The Link and share training / travel plans etc

