

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: March



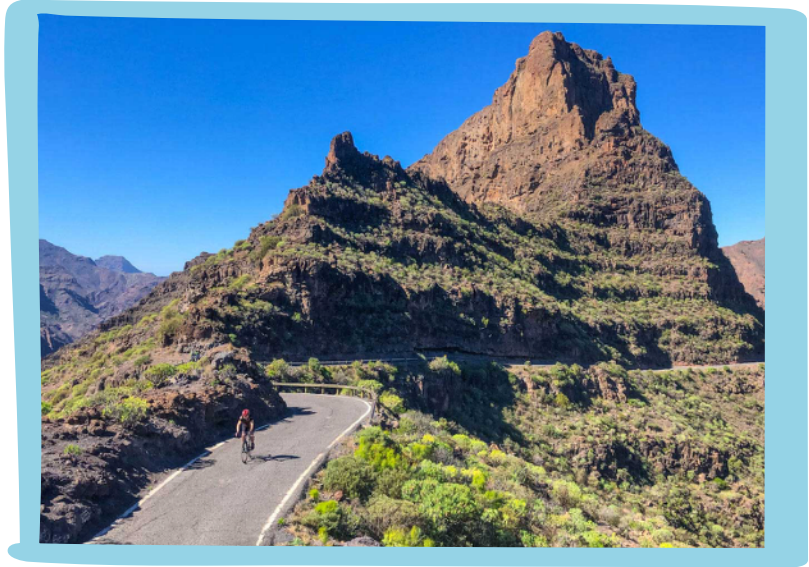
Highlights

Best climbs of the South, incl. Valley of the Tears

Hidden gems of the North & Pico de las Nieves

Support from two of our experienced and fun Marmot guides

Winter sun: average of 18 - 20 degrees



A top winter road cycling destination, Gran Canaria boasts a fantastic climate, quality roads, challenging climbs, and a striking landscape to make it the perfect location to escape the winter and build your physical strength at the start of the cycling season. This superb road cycling holiday follows our Classic flexible pace format with route options daily, offering plenty of miles and elevation, but you choose the intensity! Every day there are 'easier' routes that allow you to skip some of the steeper climbs – perfect for those wanting a more relaxed winter cycling experience, whilst still making the most of the fantastic terrain. For those wanting to push themselves further, there are tougher routes each day that will really test your mettle!

You'll experience wonderful cycling across the whole of the island, through lush valleys filled with banana plantations, through remote villages, rugged massifs and canyons, and stunning coastal cliffs. The 'Valley of The Tears', Pico de las Nieves, and the nature reserve of Roque Nublo are just a few of the climbs and rides you can explore. During this fabulous, fully supported cycling tour you'll stay in superb 4* hotels, all of them exceptional and offering a level of luxury not common on most of our tours. The Parador, for example, is well-known as the pros' base while training on Gran Canaria. All four hotels have excellent facilities so at the end of the day, you have the opportunity to fully relax after a tough day in the saddle.

Seasoned Marmoteers will notice the absence of our cherished Marmot vans, as due to local regulations we are unable to bring them to the island! All transfers, although organised by us, will be done by local companies and we will hire support vehicles locally for our guides to support you in the usual Marmot way.

Itinerary

Day 0 - Travel Out

We offer included transfers from Gran Canaria Airport (LPA) to our start hotel in San Agustín several times throughout the day, with a journey time of just 30 minutes.

The 4* **Gloria Palace San Agustín** is a wonderful hotel to spend the first two nights of your cycling holiday. It is within walking distance of the beach and boasts two beautiful swimming pools, and a spa (extra charges apply). The hotel even hosts a hire bike centre, with an excellent range of bikes to suit all budgets. This is a great additional service if you don't want to bring your own bike, but we advise booking in advance.

You'll have time to assemble your bikes before we gather in the early evening. Our two guides will brief you on the week ahead and how the holiday will work. This will also give you a chance to meet your fellow riders, before enjoying a fantastic dinner.

Day 1: Day ride from San Agustín to San Bartolome de Tirajana and the SE

You'll start your week of cycling on the CG-60 climb out of Maspalomas, the most cycled road on the island. It's a beautiful ride through an ever-changing landscape on gloriously smooth tarmac. After 27km of generally uphill pedaling over the **Alto de Fataga (927m)**, you reach the town of San Bartolome de Tirajana – the perfect time for a coffee, some cake, and a decision!

Those wanting more can tackle the extra climb to the viewpoint at **Cruz Grande (1236m)**. All routes then descend back to the coast on a spectacular road cut into the side of the Barranco (canyon) de Tirajana.

Part way down the descent, the Challenge route detours on a fabulous loop, taking in the **Alto de Cañadillas (824m)** via Agüimes.

All routes finish with a relatively flat 20km ride to the sumptuous surroundings of the Gloria Palace for a second night. Time for a dip in the pool, maybe?

Classic route:

[68km with 1300m ascent]

Harder route:

[80km with 1860m ascent]

Challenge route:

[118 km with 2550m ascent]

Tour of Gran Canaria

Day 2: Barranco de Ayagaures, Passo Taro to Puerto de Morgán

You start today by cycling along the coast to Santa Agueda, where we head inland and climb gently up the Barranco de Arguinequin. This is a wide and arid valley, apart from a narrow strip where you'll see citrus trees and prickly pear cacti thriving. The cycling gets more challenging after Las Filipinas, so the detour to the cafe/restaurant in Soria is a good pitstop.

Next up is the **Risco Grande / Paso de Tauro (911m)** climb, with a few short, sharp sections. Rest assured that this single-lane road has glorious views to distract you from the challenge!

Our destination is the luxurious Hotel Cordial Mogán Playa which is located in the idyllic seaside town of Port Mogán. Those wanting to relax and appreciate the facilities can head straight to the hotel but there are extra cycling options available for those wanting more of a challenge.

The first detours north from the coast and takes you on a classic loop up the Ayagaures Valley and over **Alto de Pedro Gonzalez (489m)**.

The second option is near the end of the day, when you can head up the GC605 climb to the cafe in **Ayacata (1317m)**. We know you'll love the mind-blowing descent to the coast from here!

Classic route:

[64km with 1190m ascent]

Harder route:

[89km with 1610m ascent]

Challenge route:

[119km with 2210m ascent]

Day 3: The canyons and rugged west coast to Puerto de las Nieves

The west of Gran Canaria is strikingly different from the rest of the island. Its volcanic landscape has been sculpted by erosion, leaving some deep valleys and imposing cliffs. This is a magnificent place to explore on two wheels, given the impressive roads that are cut into the mountainside and which connect remote communities.

You'll start the day by climbing to **Degollada de la Aldea/Mirador de San Nicolás (673m)** where you'll be rewarded with a fantastic view. This is followed by a descent to the unspoilt coastal village of Los Caserones for lunch on the beach. This is the start of the well-known GC200 cliff-top road that partially collapsed into the sea a few years ago



An amazing cycle-friendly tunnel has replaced most of it, but you can still ride up to the Mirador del Balcón (350m) for a taste of what the road used to be like. From here our Classic route heads to our destination for the night, the spectacular 4* Hotel Roca Negra in Agaete. This is another wonderful hotel with a sizeable pool, spa facilities, and a black-sand beach, so there's plenty to appreciate if you're in need of relaxation.

As always there are a few options today. From La Aldea de San Nicolás, head inland up the spectacular narrow gorge of the 'Valley of the Reservoirs' to the Mirador del Molino (510m). From here, you can catch a glimpse of the 'Valley of the Tears' to mentally prepare yourself for day 6!

The other option can be tagged on to the end of the day. It is a beautiful ride up the remote Valley of Agaete through orange groves, coffee plantations, and vineyards to El Sao (516m) at the foot of the impressive cliffs of Tamadaba.

Easier route:

[65km with 1460m ascent]

Classic route:

[71km with 1670m ascent]

Harder route:

[90km with 2220m ascent]

Challenge route:

[123km with 2930m ascent]

Day 4: The lush northwest and sea-to-summit challenge to Cruz de Tejada

The north of Gran Canaria is lush and verdant. The lower flanks of the mountains are covered in banana plantations, but these give way to terraced fields and villages, and then pine forests clinging on to the cinder-covered mountainsides. Our destination today is the Parador de Cruz de Tejada hotel, at 1560m, and it's a truly fabulous place to spend two nights, with wonderful facilities.

There are many infamous 'leg-breaking' roads of the 'Medianias' in the north of the island, but we've chosen the gentlest way to gain altitude, and your ride can always be punctuated by stopping at any of

the many local tavernas. En route to the summit, we pass through Cruz de Tejada, so you may wish to retire to the hotel's hydrothermal pool – with a spectacular view!

However, the Pico de las Nieves (1930m) is a truly magical place with extensive views of the island and beyond to Tenerife, so it is well worth the effort.

The Challenge route adds a classic loop down to Ayacata, then over El Aserrador (1345m) before climbing back up to the Cruz de Tejada (1560m) from the southeast.

Whichever route you choose, you'll be rewarded with superb accommodation and facilities at the Parador when you finish pedalling for the day.

Classic route:

[41km with 1820m ascent]

Harder route:

[58km with 2340m ascent]

Challenge route:

[83km with 2910m ascent]

Day 5: Day ride of Pico de las Nieves and the challenging climbs of the northeast

The Pico de las Nieves (1930m) from Ingenio is arguably the toughest road cycling climb on Gran Canaria. It's 26km long and gains 1730m, which is hard enough, but it also includes a brutal 5km 11% section, with some bits ramping up to 20%! This certainly makes for an epic Challenge route! The base of the climb is reached by a wonderful descent via San Mateo and Telde, so it's not all bad!

We appreciate that this type of 'fun' is not for everyone, so we've made sure the other routes on offer are especially pleasant and explore the picturesque mountainous heartland of the island (included on the day 4 Challenge route). Both routes start by descending to Tejada over El Aserrador (1345m) to the delightful cafe in Ayacata. From here, you take on the Pico de las Nieves (1930m) on the popular GC-600, passing through the Nature Reserve of Roque Nublo – a massive volcanic rock chimney that is the symbol of Gran Canaria.



After enjoying the view, you can head directly back to the Parador to chill out for a second night, cycling via the **Mirador Degollada de Becerra**. Alternatively, explore a bit more of the north of the island and take on the upper part of the CG-15 climb.

Easier route:

[42km with 1090m ascent]

Classic route:

[50km with 1370m ascent]

Challenge route:

[80km with 2190m ascent]

Day 6: Valley of the Tears, Cruz Grande and the GC-60 descent to San Agustín

It's your final day of cycling and today is an absolute corker! Whichever route you choose, you're sure to arrive back at the fabulous Gloria Palace San Agustín having had an unforgettable day!

You'll start with a fast descent, before picking up a balcony road past Artenara, which has constant views of the rugged volcanic landscape. You'll then enjoy a thrilling descent into the Aldea canyon. Wow – what a ride! This takes you to the base of the aptly named 'Valley of The Tears' (VOTT). This wild and remote climb is renowned for its punishing gradients (averaging 12%, with some sections over 20%) and ranks highly in the list of must-do cycling

climbs in Europe. Rest assured that if you find it too much, you can always catch a lift in one of our support vehicles.

You will eventually head over **El Aserrador (1345m)** back to Ayacata for a hearty lunch. Here, those on the Challenge route have a decision to make, as there is still one ascent of the **Pico de las Nieves (1930m)** that needs to be tackled – the GC-600 past Roque Nublo.

For those who don't fancy the VOTT, our (unsupported) easier route takes you via the **Cruz de Los Llanos (1723m)** to Ayacata.

From Ayacata, all routes head to **Cruz Grande (1236m)** and back to San Bartolome de Tirajana. Here, you'll pick up the GC-60 and enjoy descending the wonderful road you first climbed six glorious days ago.

Easier route:

[52km with 570m ascent]

Classic route:

[80km with 1550m ascent]

Challenge route:

[103km with 2220m ascent]

Day 7 - Travel Back

After a wonderful cycling experience, we transfer you to Gran Canaria Airport (LPA) for your return flight. Transfer time: around 30 minutes.

Start(& end!)

Hotel Gloria Palace: C/ Las Margaritas, s/n.
35100 Playa San Agustín (Tel. +34 928 128 500)

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 one-way flights, giving results of all direct routes available, eg. 'UK to LPA'. Search results may change as airlines release their schedules for the following year at varying times.

If you are flying long haul, we recommend arriving a day early in order to get over any jet lag before you start cycling. 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.

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 & Development Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Airport Transfers

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

The transfer time from/back to **Las Palmas Gran Canaria airport (LPA)** is about 30 minutes.

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).



Navigation

The Marmot Tours App provides you with maps, altitude profiles, general information and safety notes, as well as detailed directions of where to go (via RWGPS). Your holiday will be available to view on the App from 7 days before and until 7 days after your holiday.

Our guides will also aim to be at those 'easy to miss' junctions and you will see the van and guides regularly.

Additionally, we provide you with GPS files in .fit and .tcx formats for your navigation devices. They will be available on The Link a week or so before the start of your holiday.

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.

If using a Garmin, please ensure you download the base map of the country you're visiting before you go as this helps greatly with your navigation.

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 626km with 15010m of ascent during your week, perfect for some serious winter training.

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.

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 in Gran Canaria is an achievable goal for regular cyclists, although this trip is harder than our Tour of Tenerife as the gradients are generally a bit steeper.

Our vehicles and guides are on hand to support you on your holiday and can offer advice and moral support.

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.

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 cardio vascular 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 need a lift up the hill for whatever reason, your guides will be happy to help.



Strava

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

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, 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 it is easy to hire a bike locally. Please check our Bike Hire section on page 8 for more information. If you are hiring from Free Motion (located at the start hotel Gloria Palace) please do let us know.

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 vehicles 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 22) 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 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!

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

Group Dynamics

Your group will be any number up to around 22 riders. 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 around 20 people together then we can offer you a custom departure date.

We love that we 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 to 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 four superb 4* hotels with amazing food, stunning views, beautiful pools and spa facilities, allowing for a more luxurious hotel environment compared to some of our summer itineraries. 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). All 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. Breakfast in Spain is generally from 8:30am, so we don't leave the hotel till around 09:30.

Lunches

You know what you like to eat when you are riding and it is not likely to be the same as what the others in your group will want to eat. We don't include lunches so there are no enforced group stops. We strongly advise that you stop for proper food at lunchtime.

Each day we recommend a suitable place serving cyclist friendly food which is great for you, and the locals appreciate your custom.

We will be sure to have a van there for your midday faff! Bear in mind that this is Spain, so lunches are generally served from 2pm.

Snacks

Your support van aka snack-shack will be well stocked with a variety of local, tasty delectables: Salty crisps, bars, cakes, fresh fruit (bananas obviously!), 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.

Dinner

We eat as a group in the evening - either in the hotel or at a nearby restaurant. Expect three 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). Wine at dinner or up to 2 beers or 2 soft drinks are included, however, coffees are not.

Special diets

Please note your special dietary requirements on the booking form or contact us. Our hotels can cater for most dietary needs and allergies if we know well in advance. Please note that we request that you stick to your dietary preference for the entire trip, as it is very complicated for the hotels (and guides) if an individual is vegetarian for some meals and not for others.

What's Included?

- 6 days supported riding
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure days at specified times
- Access to Marmot App with daily holiday info, directions, maps and GPS files
- 7 nights half board accommodation and table wine during dinner (up to half a bottle per person), or up to 2 beers or 2 soft drinks
- 2 experienced and enthusiastic guides, driving locally sourced support vehicles, offering nutritional, moral, mechanical and first aid support, plus snacks & water

Insurance

Holiday insurance is **essential** for all Marmot Tours holidays and anyone without insurance is not able to take part in the trip. Please arrange your insurance cover at the time of booking, as this will ensure that you are covered if you incur an injury during training and are unable to go on your holiday. 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

Once you have arranged your insurance, 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 ensures we have the most up to date information and are able to assist you in case you have an accident on your holiday.

Bike Hire

Bike hire in the Canaries is a little different to our other holidays as we are unable to bring our vans, and therefore our fleet along on the trip.

However, there is a great alternative at a great price! For this trip you are able to book your bike hire directly with Free Motion who have a shop at the Gloria Palace Hotel in San Agustín (<https://www.free-motion.com/>). They have various types of bike available depending on your requirements, including e-bikes!

Please note that if you're hiring an e-bike you may travel a lot faster than the general group. We recommend you bring a small backpack for provisions to enable you to be independent from our support, if you wish. Our support is geared towards the cyclists on pedal bikes.

To book, head over to [Free Motion's website](#), then select Gran Canaria (they operate in Tenerife too) and the type of bike you want to hire.

Check in date: arrival day, or first day of riding if you're arriving late

Check out date: last day of riding

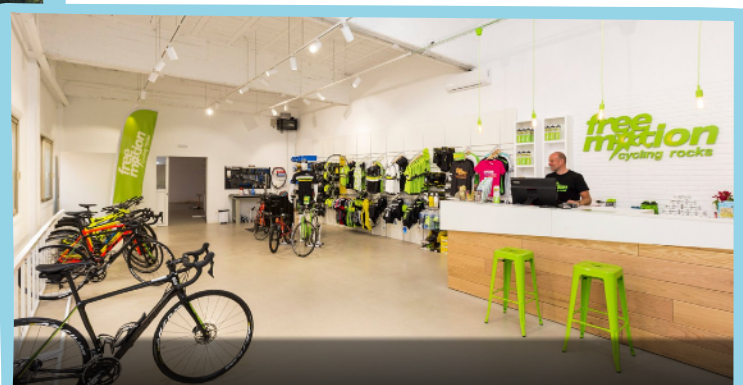
Pick up place: **San Agustín, Gran Canaria**

Once booked they will send you a link, which you have to click to confirm your booking.

Please let us know that you've booked your bike with Free Motion as that helps greatly with our logistics!

As Free Motion are conveniently based in the hotel grounds, you can pick-up and drop off your bike in person. They charge a deposit for the bikes either in cash or by card, which will be refunded to you upon returning the bike.

Please note that the brakes are set up in the EU format, with your left hand operating the front brake. This cannot be changed.



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.

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 to check availability for your preferred departure date and single room, if that is your preference.
2. Bag your spot with a provisional booking for a week or so while you get planning.
3. If you are planning on hiring a bike, please check availability with [Free Motion](#) before making your booking.
4. Log on to or register with our online booking system, The Link (link.marmot-tours.co.uk), to make your holiday booking.
5. Receive a confirmation email and pay the £400 deposit by BACS or by card online.
6. Confirmed single room supplements are being added manually to your balance invoices, so may take a day or two to appear.
7. We'll post regular holiday information and updates on the Link (you'll receive an email notification).
8. You can meet your fellow holiday makers via The Link Forum and share training / travel plans etc.

