# SPICEROADS

CYCLING





# RIDING THE COLOMBIAN ANDES

Tour Code COL-BCA **12** DAYS NIGHTS

**Destinations** 

Tour Meets Tour Ends

Fly in to Fly out of

**PRICING** 

Group Size Minimum Age

Bogota, Colombia Bucaramanga, Colombia

El Dorado International Airport (BOG) Palonegro International Airport (BGA)

4-12 riders

18 (on scheduled departures)

Price Bike Hire (Mountain Bike) Single Supplement

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- SpiceRoads jersey
- Water bottle
- Support vehicle
- Guide(s)
- Meals (as indicated)
- Airport drop off
- Hotel drop off
- Accommodation
- Snacks and drinks
- Entrance fees

#### Colombia

US\$ 4,950 US\$ 400

US\$ 850

## WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- International flights ×
- Domestic flights X
- Airport pick up
- Visa fees
- Alcohol X
- Tips

# **ACTIVITY PROFILE**



Cycling days

46km Avg distance / day

410<sub>km</sub> Total cycling distance

1176 Avg climbing / day

## **DEPARTURES**



07 December - 18 December 2025 11 January - 22 January 2026 08 February - 19 February 2026 05 July - 16 July 2026 16 August - 27 August 2026 13 September - 24 September 2026 11 October - 22 October 2026

06 December - 17 December 2026

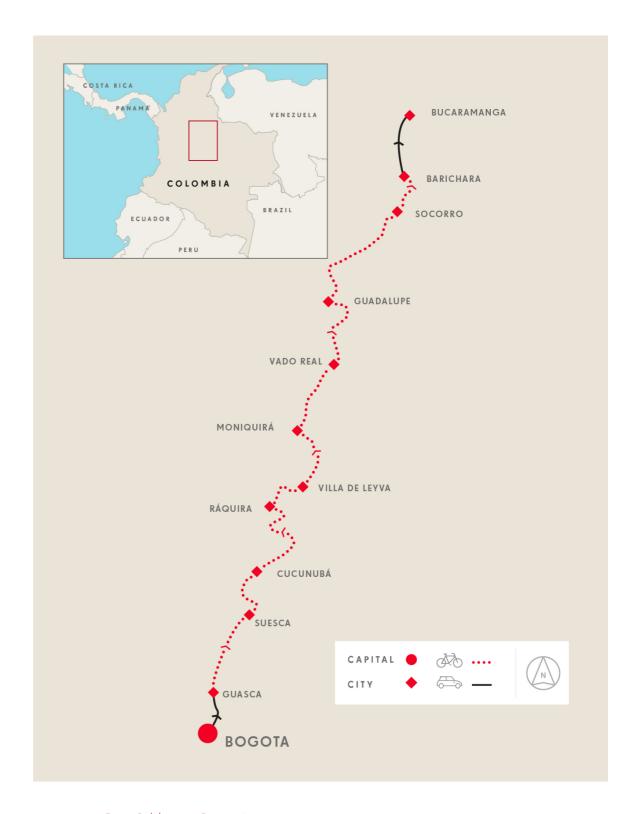
#### TRIP PROFILE

We ride a total of 410 km over 9 cycling days. Except for a transfer on Day 2 to the cycling start location outside of Bogota and on Day 12 from Barichara to Bucaramanga, all of our rides are point-to-point. We ride on a mix of gravel roads and paved secondary roads in the highlands of Central Colombia. This is a challenging but very enjoyable journey, ideal for intrepid mountain or gravel bikers looking to get off-the-beaten-path in one of Latin America's most enchanting (and misunderstood!) travel destinations. Our ride takes us through the Andean foothills, with elevations ranging from 1,500 to over 3,000 metres above sea level. If you're prone to altitude sickness, arriving in Bogotá a few days early is recommended to acclimatise. While the Colombian Andes are not as high as other Andean regions, some riders may experience mild symptoms. Staying hydrated and pacing yourself can also help ensure a comfortable journey. We spend our nights in character-rich and cosy accommodations, though keep in mind that in the more remote regions there may not be hot water or a consistent phone & Wi-Fi signal. In areas with a well-developed tourism infrastructure, such as Villa de Leyva and Barichara, you can expect to be more pampered. Besides enjoyable cycling routes everyday, you can also look forward to immersing yourself in the rich artisanal traditions of the Andes including, of course, local cuisine. Coffee lovers are in for a real treat as you are cycling in a region renowned for its high quality brews!

The trip is fully supported, and your guide's expert knowledge of the area and terrain means that you always know what is coming up in terms of distance and difficulty. This makes a tremendous difference, as does the constant supply of water and refreshments along the way.

Suitability: The tour is suitable for cyclists possessing a good level of physical fitness. While the average distance is just around 46 km, the average climb per day is more than 1000 m. Fitness will be a huge asset on those challenging climbs. The downhills are just as prominent. You should be comfortable on a mountain or gravel bike and have experience navigating on rocky roads for extended periods. There are some challenging technical sections with particular care required on some steep downhill sections. There are no rest days, though we have the afternoons free to relax and recharge and our last day is spent exploring the beautiful town of Barichara on foot. Less experienced riders are welcome but should prepare themselves in advance to manage the climbs and technical sections comfortably. The tour is guided and fully supported, and a transfer is possible at certain points during each stage for any weary riders.

Biking Conditions: This route has been designed specifically for mountain and gravel bikers and so we ride on a mix of gravel and secondary asphalt roads. The conditions of the roads vary widely, ranging from hard-packed and level to loose and bumpy. Occasionally, we ride on main interprovincial roads which tend to be well-paved but potholes and debris are common. Throughout all days, the terrain is hilly and changeable with flat sections and a lot of climbs and descents. Some climbs can be gradual while others are short but steep. The same goes for the downhills. For the most part, you can expect very little traffic in the countryside but coming in and out towns, as well as near popular tourist attractions, we will share the roads with cars and buses and rules of traffic must be observed. While rainfall is uncommon during the months we schedule our tours, showers can occur at any time – we generally ride rain or shine though, based on the guide's discretion or your level of comfort, modifications to the planned route can be made. When it rains, the roads can become muddy and when it's dry, dusty. It's all part of the adventure!



# Day 1 Meet in Bogotá

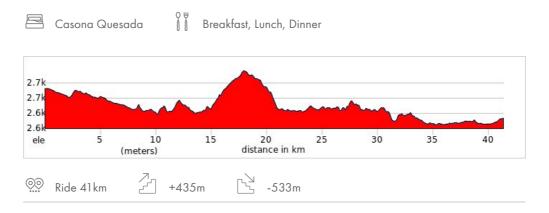
Welcome to Bogotá, Colombia's buzzing capital, located at an altitude of 2,640 metres in the heart of the northern Andes! We suggest arriving a day or two before the tour begins to acclimate yourself to high-altitude living and exploring Bogotá, a city awash with vibrant street art, fascinating museums, lively cafés & bars, and a rich blend of colonial and modern architecture. On arrival day, we meet at our tour hotel in the late afternoon and head out for a trip briefing and welcome dinner. Please let us know if you require assistance with airport transfers and pre-tour hotel bookings.



# Day 2 Bogotá - Guasca - Suesca

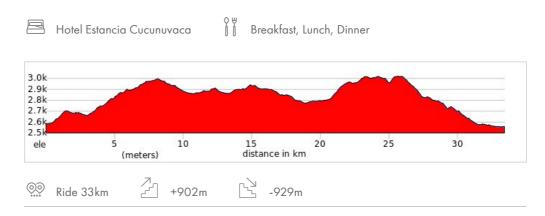
This morning, we transfer around 1.5 hours out of Bogotá to our cycling start point in the municipality of Guasca. Our first ride offers a gentle introduction to the agrarian landscapes of

the Andean foothills, with a route that's neither too steep nor technical. We start with a 10 km stretch passing cattle ranches before climbing the slopes surrounding Tomine Lake, an expansive reservoir nestled among lush green hills. After descending to the tree-lined lakeside and skirting along the shore for about 10 km, we spill back out onto the plains, where a final stretch leads to the charming town of Suesca. Known for its rugged cliffs, Suesca is a haven for rock climbers. As for us cyclists, we'll take it easy and soak in the laid-back atmosphere of this small Colombian town, nestled in the Andean highlands.



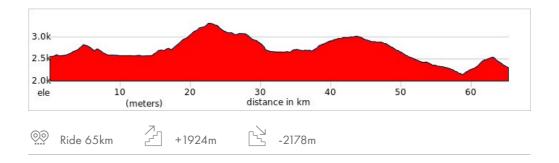
# Day 3 Suesca - Cucunubá

Today's route kicks off with a literal rocky start! Departing from Suesca, we head north, tackling an 8 km ascent along a narrow gravel road that winds through rolling hills. This climb brings us close to 3,000 metres above sea level, where we're greeted by a landscape of vast open pastures interspersed with patches of montane forest. From there, we ride 20 km along quiet farmer roads that rise and fall gently with the contours of the highlands, part of the time riding alongside a ridge that offers views over scenic Suesca Lake. The final 5 km is a fun, fast descent straight into the municipality of Cucunubá, where we stay at a peaceful rural hotel. Known for its renowned wool craftsmanship, this area offers a chance to visit local artisans who handcraft traditional ruanas, thick Andean ponchos.



# Day 4 Cucunubá - Ráquira

Today's ride takes us from one small Andean town to the next, transitioning from agricultural landscapes of potato fields and dairy ranches to the rugged mountains of the Ráquira region. From Cucunubá, a short but spicy climb brings us to Lenguazaque. After some time on a provincial road, at the 15 km mark, we veer onto gravel roads etched into the valley slopes, facing a challenging yet memorable climb followed by a technical descent — this section is optional and can be skipped by continuing along the flatter provincial road. We regroup in Guacheta and continue on a quiet provincial road, conquering another climb into forested hills before a gradual descent into Ráquira. Known as the "capital of pottery," Ráquira is famous for its colourful, hand-painted ceramics, blending indigenous, colonial, and contemporary styles. After exploring its labyrinthine streets, we take a final 2 km climb to our cosy highland BnB-style hotel. Unwind with a cold cerveza and enjoy the stunning views!



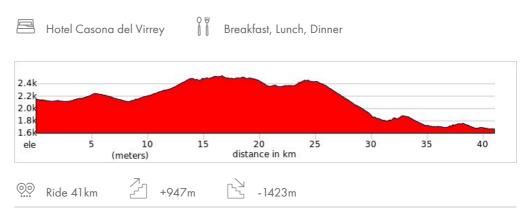
# Day 5 Ráquira - Candelaria Desert - Villa de Leyva

From our mountain hotel, we retrace yesterday's uphill ride in reverse (with a short initial climb to get started!). We then face the crossing of the Candelaria Desert, an arid, high-altitude moorland, also known as the "desert of souls" due to its tranquil atmosphere, providing a stark contrast to the surrounding vibrant landscapes. After 20 km, a tough climb takes us into the heart of the desert, with striking visuals surrounding us. At the top of the first ridge, we stop to pause at the mystical "El Patio de Brujas" or "Witches Yard," an indigenous astronomical observatory. From here, we encounter a few undulations as we traverse the barren lands, but by the 26 km mark, we begin our descent, with some technical sections that test our focus and agility. Back on level ground, we enjoy a gentler, mostly paved stretch into Villa de Leyva, one of Colombia's best-preserved colonial towns, renowned for its historical charm, cobblestone streets, and vibrant cultural life. The afternoon is free to explore the town and visit the Terracotta House, a unique structure built entirely of clay.



# Day 6 Villa de Leyva - Moniquirá

From the edge of the montane desert, we gradually ascend to Gachantivá along a scenic route that reveals the mountains surrounding Villa de Leyva in all their rugged charm. Riding at an easy pace, we savour the crunch of gravel beneath our wheels! At 25 km, we pause by a peaceful lagoon nestled in forest, then set off downhill through mildly technical turns, descending to the rocky banks of the Moniquirá River. The final 10 km takes us through rolling hills dotted with pastures, farms, and small villages, arriving in the quaint town of Moniquirá, known as the "Sweet Capital of Boyacá," famous for bocadillo veleño, a traditional Colombian guava jelly snack. In the afternoon, you can head to a local artisanal producer to sample this tasty, energy-boosting treat—a favourite among cyclists across Colombia!



Day 7 Moniquirá - Vado Real

Today's ride takes us through the hidden paths of the Santander region, filled with coffee fields, sugarcane plantations, and a variety of other crops draped across the landscape. Starting from Moniquirá's lively central plaza, overlooked by a beautiful church, we enjoy mostly smooth pavement for the first 15 km. Once we reach the small town of Togüi, nestled into the hillsides, we switch to gravel for the next 15 km, delving deep into this remote, rural hinterland in the Andean foothills. The ride is peaceful, interrupted only by the occasional vehicle, donkey, or cow crossing our path! A few kilometres after passing through the town of Chirataque, we switch from narrow backcountry roads to the provincial throughway, following it for a short distance to the charming village of Vado Real, where we saddle off for the day and immerse ourselves in the rustic charm of Colombia, far off the beaten path.



# Day 8 Vado Real - Guadalupe

If you're up for an early challenge, then the morning's steep 4 km climb out of Vado Real is sure to get your heart rate up! For a more relaxed start, take your time with a cup of coffee and hitch a ride with our support vehicle to the top of the pass. From there, we enjoy an undulating ride with sweeping views of Santander's lush coffee fields and vast sugarcane plantations, culminating in a thrilling 3 km downhill on a paved road. Then it's back up again to reach the magnificent Los Caballeros Waterfalls, where the water cascades dramatically over the cliffs. After a break here we continue along tree-lined gravel roads, climbing higher to a ridge which then has us floating above the valleys for 10 blissful kilometres. Finally, a smooth paved descent brings us into Guadalupe, with its picturesque plaza and stone church.



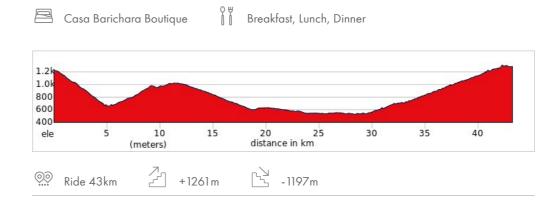
# Day 9 Guadalupe - Socorro

We head out of Guadalupe with an exhilarating 8 km downhill into the wilds of the Suárez River Canyon. Then, it's uphill on the other side! We pace ourselves during an 8 km ascent with steep climbs and hairpin turns, all while enjoying stunning views. After regrouping in the mountain town of Contratación, we continue on a 40 km jaunt through the picturesque highlands of Santander. The ride trends downhill overall, but there are enough climbs to keep our legs busy until we meet the Suárez River again at the 58 km mark. Here, you have an option: tackle a gradual 10 km climb or hop in the support vehicle to reach the lively town of Socorro where we end today's ride. Be sure to visit the town's stone basilica, famous for its remarkable architecture, both inside and



# Day 10 Socorro - Barichara

Our final riding day starts with another scenic traverse of the Suárez Canyon, featuring a thrilling 5 km plunge down to the valley floor, followed by a tough 5 km climb up the hillsides. We wind our way along the cultivated slopes before a gentle downhill brings us back to the banks of the Suárez River by the 20 km point. We cross an iron suspension bridge and enjoy a flat zip on a gravel road cutting across the lush valley floor. A final, leg-testing 10 km climb on a winding paved road takes us to the top of Mesa de los Santos, a plateau with breathtaking views overlooking the Suárez Canyon. Once we complete the climb, the final few kilometres are a real treat, as the road is carved into the steep cliffs, offering stunning views as we make our way into Barichara — one of Colombia's most beautiful heritage towns, where we'll spend our last two nights. Riding through Barichara to reach our boutique hotel, we get our first taste of the cobblestone streets, tree-lined plazas, clay-tile-roofed houses, and laid-back charm that make this town such a gem!



# Day 11 Barichara Exploration

After 9 days of cycling through the Colombian Andes, today we rest our legs as we discover historic Barichara on foot. Barichara ranks among Colombia's most stunning towns, recognized as one of the country's 17 Pueblos Patrimonio — historic towns celebrated for their well-preserved culture, traditions, and architecture. Starting from the peaceful central square, we'll step into the town's Cathedral, with its simple yet elegant colonial design. We then stroll through the town, paying attention to the conservation of traditional house-building techniques using native terracotta-coloured soil and bamboo. We also visit the town's cemetery to see the intricate, colourful tombstones that celebrate life rather than mourning death. Finally, we visit a viewpoint overlooking the Suárez River Canyon, where we not only enjoy stunning views but are also reminded of the epic cycling we've done through this beautiful region. In the afternoon, you have time to go cafe hopping or relax at the hotel before we reconvene for a well-deserved farewell dinner.



# Day 12 Barichara - Bucaramanga (Departure)

The tour ends with a transfer to Bucaramanga (around 3 - 3.5 hours), where we'll drop you off at your post-tour hotel or the airport. Please let us know if you need assistance with hotel bookings or airport transfers. If it's your first time in Colombia, we suggest spending a day or two in Bucaramanga, the lively capital of Santander Department, filled with scenic parks and a vibrant coffee culture. The city is also the gateway to Chicamocha Canyon, one of Colombia's most dramatic natural wonders, best appreciated via a cable-car ride.

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Disclaimer: The adventure cycling tours we operate often go beyond the beaten track, and the countries where we ride are not always predictable. Due to these reasons, it is occasionally necessary to reroute or update itineraries. Our guarantee is that we will not change a trip unless for safety or to improve it. Our listed hotels are always accurate at the time of writing, but should we have to change any hotel, it will always be for a similar or better one.

## **NUTS & BOLTS**

#### **Bikes**

Because some people can't imagine going on a trip without their own beloved bicycle, we do not provide them as part of this tour. However, you can hire bikes locally for the price listed in the tour pricing section. We can provide well-serviced Specialized Rockhopper (2017) mountain bikes in S, M and L sizes.

If you bring your own bike, please make sure it is a mountain or gravel bike in good mechanical order. Gravel bikers, please be aware that the gravel roads in Colombia are far from smooth — you and your bike should expect rocky paths, loose surfaces in dry conditions, and muddy tracks if it rains. Potholes and uneven sections are common.

## **Bike Repairs**

Basic spares and tools are carried by the guide and on the support vehicle, though we cannot guarantee having spares for every conceivable problem. Carrying a basic tool kit, a spare tube and a pump while riding is recommended.

#### Safety

Wearing a helmet is required on all our biking adventures and is non negotiable. If you do not wear a helmet you will not be allowed to cycle. Your tour leader is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

#### Guides

You will be led by a local English-speaking guide and if the group is 9 people or more we will add another guide to the tour. All our guides are well informed in the history, culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your guide is also medically trained and an experienced cyclist, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

#### THE NITTY GRITTY

#### Passports and Visas

Travellers from Australia, the United Kingdom, US, Canada and the EU do not need a visa to enter Colombia for a visit of fewer than 90 days. You must be able to show an onward or return ticket valid within the 90-day period. Citizens of certain countries need to present a tourist visa to gain entry. These can be processed at the Colombian embassies and consulates abroad. You can check if you need a visa or not in the link <a href="here">here</a>. If you require a visa, please contact the embassy/consulate nearest to you and do not leave it to the last minute.

All travelers must fill out a pre-registration form (called Checkmig) before departure to Colombia. Travelers must complete the form within 72 hours before departure. Travelers must show confirmation of registration before boarding. **Please fill out the Checkmig form here.** Please keep a copy of the Checkmig form on your phone, as this may be checked by Colombian immigration.

### Health

 help you prepare. Please speak to your doctor/physician for the most recent information.

#### Weather

One of the most surprising things about Colombia for foreign visitors is the relatively constant climate throughout the year. Located on the Equator, the country experiences consistent daylight hours, with the sun rising and setting at the same time every day. Unlike most other countries, Colombia doesn't have traditional seasons but instead has dry periods (from December to March and July to September) and rainy periods (from April to June and October to November). However, rain can occur at any time, so it's essential to bring a waterproof jacket and pants. In Bogotá and other high-altitude areas, temperatures can be chilly, especially in the mornings and evenings. A fleece and cold-weather cycling gear, such as arm warmers and a gilet, are recommended for these cooler days. Due to the strong UV rays near the Equator, sun cream and a head covering are also necessary for protection.

### Food

Meals are included as per the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner. Most meals are local and feature traditional Colombian highland dishes. Any special dietary requirements can also be catered for. Please let us know at the time of booking. In remote areas, options may be limited, but we always do our best to accommodate your needs.

#### Drink

Keeping you completely hydrated is a job we take very seriously. Water, refreshments and soft drinks are included in the tour price while riding. Soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, and other beverages during meals are NOT included. Beer and other alcohol drinks are almost always available but are not included.

#### Solo Travelers

SpiceRoads does not require you to pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

## **Extra Expenses**

We recommend that you tuck away a few extra US Dollars for possible incidentals that might arise. It is always wise to have some paper currency in case of ATM absence or credit card problems. This will save you a lot of unnecessary worries. It is also customary to tip local tour guides and drivers; however, the amount you give should be dependent on the level of service you receive.

## Money

The Colombian peso (COP) is the legal currency of Colombia, denoted locally by the symbol \$. Coins in circulation include denominations of 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1,000 pesos, while banknotes come in values of 1,000, 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 50,000, and 100,000 pesos. What works best for most people is exchanging some money as soon as you arrive at the airport and then you can top up as needed with ATM withdrawals in some of the bigger towns. Don't expect to find money exchange places outside of Bogotá on this tour. If you are exchanging USD (or any other currency), make sure that your bills are in good condition (no tears, crumpling, or scribbling) as they may not be accepted otherwise.

# Be Aware

Colombia, like many countries, has areas where petty crime can occur, especially in larger cities and tourist hotspots. Common crimes include pickpocketing, bag snatching, and theft in crowded places. It's advisable to stay vigilant, particularly in busy areas, transportation hubs, or when using ATMs. Avoid displaying valuables such as expensive jewelry or large amounts of cash.

## **GENERAL BOOKING INFO**

If this is the tour for you here's what you need to do to confirm your place:

#### FLEXIBLE BOOKING CONDITIONS

Booking a SpiceRoads cycling adventure is easy and we try to do everything possible to make sure you have full flexibility and peace of mind. We do not require a deposit to hold your place on a tour and once full payment has been made your money is protected in our client account and you have the flexibility to cancel or change your booking if needed.

#### CONFIRMING YOUR BOOKING

Just complete our online booking form or send your booking details offline (email or post), and we will confirm your participation. No deposit is needed to confirm your place on a SpiceRoads tour.

You are advised to read our <u>Booking Conditions</u> in full before you make your payment and should you require further clarifications of any of the conditions below, please <u>email us</u> or call our office.

### **TRIP STATUS**

There is a minimum number of participants (usually 2) required to enable the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to Depart'. Once a trip is guaranteed to depart you are free to book your flights and make other travel arrangements. If the trip status is 'Limited' will mean we have only a small number of spaces available for booking. If you are unsure about the trip status, please <a href="mailto:em

#### **BOOKING ONLINE**

From the tour page, click the 'Book Now' link. All departures for this tour will appear, just select the date you'd like to travel. For the next steps, you'll need to know the names of the people travelling. If you wish you can also provide extra details such as passport numbers, height (for bike hire), or you can add that later by logging into Manage My Trip (we'll set up an account for you automatically if you don't already have one). Our system will contact you from time to time to fill in the missing information, as it will be required before departure. However, if the trip that you are booking offers a child discount, you will have to fill out the date of birth of each rider (so we can calculate the appropriate discount).

If you are having any problems <u>please send us an email</u>, or give us a call (+66 026 3295) and one of our travel specialists will assist you with your booking.

#### **BOOKING OFFLINE**

Just call us or send an email indicating which trip you want to join and we will happily send you a list of questions and process your booking for you.

#### **DEPOSITS AND PAYMENTS**

We do not require a deposit or full payment to book a place for you on a tour.

The balance of the tour's cost (final invoice) will need to be paid 60 days before the departure date with fees for any bicycle rental(s), single supplement(s) and extra hotel nights.

In the case where a booking is made when there are less than 60 days until the tour departure date, the tour's cost should be paid in full within 72 hours of receiving an invoice from SpiceRoads. Payment can be made by credit card using our online payment gateway or by bank transfer. When making payment online you will need to confirm that you have read these booking conditions during the "checkout" process, which equates to agreeing to the terms of services and stipulations as indicated in this document.

In all cases, tour fees need to be paid "in full" before participation in a tour. No person(s) will be allowed to join a tour without fully settling their invoice and receiving a confirmation number from SpiceRoads.

The exception can be made for last-minute miscellaneous fees that can be paid locally (visas, additional local hotel bookings, etc.) can be settled on the day of arrival.

# FULL FLEXIBILITY FOR TOUR CANCELATIONS

If the tour is cancelled or postponed by SpiceRoads because we didn't make the trip numbers and the tour can't run, we will make a full cash refund (by bank transfer or on your credit card).

If the tour is cancelled for any other reason, including due to Covid related travel restrictions, we will give you a full credit (with no deductions for admin or any other small-print item) to use on any SpiceRoads tour with no time limit. (Exceptions being flights, special permits and other non-refundable items and these will be advised when booking the trip).

Before paying for your tour, you can cancel your booking with no charge and up until 40 days before departure, you can change your booking to another travel date or move your booking onto another SpiceRoads tour with no charges.

If you need to cancel after you have made full payment, please see our cancellation policy.

## Loyalty Riders Club

For those who have been on several long tours with us, we reward customer loyalty by offering repeat customers a special discount off the tour price (excludes single supplement and bike rental). If this is your fourth scheduled tour or more you will receive a 5% discount. If this is your eighth scheduled tour or more we will extend a 10% discount. The discount will be reflected in your online booking, but please contact us if any questions. Loyalty discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Note: Only tours of 7 days or more will be applicable for a loyalty discount.

# International Flights

International flights, to and from the start and finish points are not included in the tour price. Once your tour is Guaranteed to Depart you can book your flight. Please contact us for advice before arranging flights for the best arrival and departure times. We would only cancel a trip for an extreme circumstance, but in that case, where we cancel your trip, we cannot be liable for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made. Please claim any losses from your travel insurance that you acquired when you booked your holiday.

#### Newsletter

Our adventure travel <u>e-newsletter</u> is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from SpiceRoads, be sure to subscribe.

# **CONTACT US**

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