

# SPICEROADS

## CYCLING



**MACEDONIA TRAILS**

Tour Code  
**MKD-EDO**

**8** DAYS  
**7** NIGHTS

|  |                           |  |
|--|---------------------------|--|
|  | Destinations              | Macedonia  |
|  | Tour Meets<br>Tour Ends   | Skopje<br>Skopje   |
|  | Fly in to<br>Fly out of   | Skopje Alexander the Great Airport (SKP)<br>Skopje Alexander the Great Airport (SKP) |
|  | Group Size<br>Minimum Age | 2-12 riders<br>18 (on scheduled departures)  |

### ACTIVITY PROFILE



|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>6</b><br>Cycling days           | <b>285</b> km<br>Total cycling distance |
| <b>57</b> km<br>Avg distance / day | <b>m</b><br>Avg climbing / day          |

### PRICING



|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Price                     | US\$ 1,650 |
| Bike Hire (Mountain Bike) | US\$ 200   |
| Single Supplement         | US\$ 195   |

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ SpiceRoads jersey
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Support vehicle
- ✓ Guide(s)
- ✓ Meals (as indicated)
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Snacks and drinks

### WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Domestic flights
- ✗ Airport pick up
- ✗ Airport drop off
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tips

### DEPARTURES



02 June - 09 June 2019  
01 September - 08 September 2019  
31 May - 07 June 2020  
30 August - 06 September 2020

## TRIP PROFILE

This is a challenging mountain biking tour and is for those who want to test their climbing stamina. We ride a total of 285 km and ascend 5700 m in just 6 cycling days! We ride primarily on dirt and gravel roads, as well as some single-track trails and a few sections of paved roads.

Though the daily distances aren't long, the terrain and altitude will provide the challenge. We will be riding at 2,000 m on two days, making sure your lungs get a full work out.

On this trip, we will be soaking up the natural highlights of Macedonia's mountains and lakes, which means we'll be riding in remote areas where vehicles can't always follow.

**Suitability:** This trip is for those who are fit and have the stamina and endurance for sustained climbing. On some days, we'll have the option to shorten the riding distance and ascent if the terrain proves to be too much. The guide will offer this option during the tour.



**Biking Conditions:** This tour follows a mixture of dirt roads, single-track trails, and gravel paths, as well as sections of tarmac. Off-road riding experience is required, though there will be no tricky technical sections. As in any mountainous region, the weather can also be unpredictable, so please be prepared for quickly changing conditions. A support vehicle will not be following us on all our rides. Some days we will meet up at points during the day, other days we will only see the support vehicle at the beginning and end of the day.




### Day 1 Skopje Loop – Popova Shapka

We meet after breakfast for our first ride to nearby Vodno Mountain. A short transfer brings us to a cable car that will whisk us up to the top where we'll be at the base of the Millennium Cross, a 66-m high monument to 2,000 years of Christianity. We then hit single-track trails and a short ride on a quiet road to Matka Canyon, a popular outdoor destination for hikers and kayakers. The canyon is also home to several historic churches and monasteries. We stop for a visit to the 14th century monastery of St Andreja built by the son of the famous medieval King Volkashin. After lunch, we transfer an hour to

Popova Shapka, a ski resort in the Shar Mountains to be well positioned for our morning ride.



 Snow Patrol Lodge  Lunch, Dinner



 Ride 40km  +800m

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## Day 2 Shar Planina- Leshnica Valley – Mavrovo

Today's ride takes us into the mountains of Shar Planina, where we follow dirt roads close to the border with Kosovo. We cycle into wild Leshnica Valley and discover a hidden paradise with astonishing views of one of Europe's secret mountain regions. Over 44 species of game are present on this mountain including lynx, bears, and wild boar. Eagles, falcons, and hawks are also common and riding on dirt trails at high altitude will bring us close to nature. On our way back to the road, we ride by way of Ceripashina and the ski centre, then continue to the city of Tetovo. We take a short break for Turkish coffee and fresh squeezed juice and visit the Painted Mosque, unique in the area for its beautiful façade, before driving to our hotel in Mavrovo.



 Villa Lazareski Leunovo  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



 Ride 34km  +1000m

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## Day 3 Mavrovo National Park

After yesterday's ride, we're warmed up for a new challenge as we cycle through the stunning Mavrovo National Park, home to Macedonia's highest peak, Mt. Korab (2,764 m). An ever-changing combination of asphalt, compact gravel, and dirt roads leads us through this fairy tale scenery of grassy meadows, birch and pine forests, snow-capped peaks, and the gorgeous Radika River. After a traditional lunch, we return to our hotel to relax.



 Villa Lazareski Leunovo  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



 Ride 50km  +950m

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## Day 4 Bistra Mountains – Ohrid

Biking into the Bistra Mountains takes us alongside the emerald green Mavrovo Lake, with visits to the villages of Nikiforovo and Leunovo. We continue off-road riding through green pastures dotted with ancient sheepfolds. We stop in one of those sheepfolds to try fresh cheese and pavlaka. We take a break at Galicnik to admire the well-preserved traditional architecture, including an amphitheatre. A long downhill through a forest leads to the village of Tresonche, where the way of life has changed remarkably little since the 19th century. We continue along the Tresoncehka River to Debar Lake, where we are picked up and transferred to our hotel in Ohrid.

 Villa Mesokastro  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 70km  +1000m

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## Day 5 Ohrid Rest Day

We take a well-earned day in the picturesque and relaxing setting of Ohrid. Notable for once having 365 churches, one for each day of the year, Ohrid is a UNESCO World

Heritage Site, listed for both its cultural and natural attractions. In the morning, we tour the highlights of St. Sofia Church, Plaoshnik Complex, the Amphitheatre, and Tsar Samuel's Fortress. The afternoon is free to stroll through the alleys, swim in the lake, or just sit in a cafe and soak up the pure, unique delights of this rich, ancient town.



Villa Mesokastro



Breakfast

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## Day 6 Galicica National Park – Pelister

Refreshed from a day's rest, we return with our bikes to the mountains. Tackling the grand Galicica Mountain, we cycle through beautiful pastures and the bright floral life native to these slopes, as we ride under the shadow of Magaro Peak (2255 m). We stop for photos as we will have stunning views of Lake Ohrid and Lake Prespa. Then, as we begin our descent, we will enjoy a mix of off-road and backroad biking with some sweet single tracks. From Peshtani, we drive to the picturesque fishing village of Trpejca for lunch and try the famous Ohrid trout. We'll transfer to Pelister National Park where we overnight in the heart of the park.



Hotel Teatar



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 50km



+1100m

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## Day 7 Pelister – Skopje

Beautiful forests line our morning ride through Pelister National Park. We cycle through a rich variety of flora, from beech and oak woods to numerous healing herbs and various fruit, including strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries. Our route takes us through fabulous countryside as we head to the Big Lake, a glacial body of water, which, along with its smaller companion, are known as the Pelister Eyes. To get our daily ration of climbs, we'll ride to 2300 m, just shy of Pelister Peak's summit. We will have an urban finish to our day with lunch in Bitola, Macedonia's second city, before transferring to Skopje to meet up for a farewell dinner of traditional fare.



Residence Inn



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 41km



+850m

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## Day 8 Skopje

Our tour ends after breakfast. If time allows, you can explore the centre of Skopje before your onward journey.



Breakfast

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## 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. The bikes are Corratec hard tail mountain bikes with lightweight alloy frames, 27-speed gearing, disc brakes, and Shimano components and front suspension. If you bring your own bike, please make sure it is a mountain bike, preferably with front suspension, in good mechanical order.

## **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**

Citizens of EU member states and of the signatories to the Schengen Agreement may enter Macedonia with a valid ID card issued by the competent authorities of the concerning countries. All remaining nationalities require a valid passport for entry into the country. Please ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from date of entry. If staying less than 90 days a visa is not required for nationals of more than 70 countries. Please check the [Macedonian government](#) website for details applying to your status.

### **Health**

No vaccinations are needed.

### **Weather**

Macedonia generally has sunny and warm weather during the spring and autumn, dry hot summers and cold and rainy winters. May-October is an excellent time to visit, as it's the warmest and driest part of the year. July and August have the most sun and are the best months to visit the lakes. Average temperature in the summer is 73 F/23 C, but a sweater may be needed in the evenings and at higher altitudes. Please also be aware that weather in the mountains is unpredictable and can change quickly.

### **Food**

Meals are included as per the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner. Macedonian cuisine is noted for the freshness of salads and for its use of red capsicum and beans. Macedonian pastries are well-known and are extremely popular and eaten on a daily basis. We shall make sure you sample as much local cuisine as you wish. Any special dietary requirements can also be catered for as well. Please let us know at the time of booking.

### **Drink**

Keeping you completely hydrated is a job we take very seriously. Cold water, some energy-restoring local fruit and soft drinks are included in the tour price while riding. But you may also want to bring electrolyte in powder or tablet form. Soft drinks and other beverages during meals are not included. Alcoholic drinks are available everywhere, but are NOT included in the price.

### **Accommodation**

As Macedonia is an emerging tourist destination with limited hotel capacity there is a chance we may have to substitute listed hotels with ones of equal or higher rating. We

will inform you of any changes in advance.

## Solo Travelers

SpiceRoads does not require you to pay a surcharge for traveling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveler 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 euros/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. As a general guide we suggest that Euro 4-5 per person per day is appropriate.

## Money

Macedonia's currency is the denar (MKD) and is not convertible outside the country. Restaurants, hotels and some shops will accept payment in Euro (usually) and US dollars (sometimes). Small private exchange offices throughout central Skopje and Ohrid exchange cash as do the banks. ATMs can be found in all of the major towns and tourist centres but not in out-of-the-way places. Travellers cheques are a real hassle to change and we advise against relying on them, except as a form of emergency back-up money. Credit cards are widely accepted, but don't take it for granted, even at a hotel or restaurant.

## GENERAL BOOKING INFO

### Booking

If this is the tour for you here's what you need to do to confirm your place: Read our [Booking Conditions](#)

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. 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 you are unsure about the trip status, please [email us](#) or call our office. For the next steps you'll need to know the names of the people traveling and have either a Visa or a MasterCard. If you wish you can also provide extra details such as passport numbers, height, 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). However, if you wish to get a children's discount, please do fill out the date of birth of the riders. If you are having any problems, [please send us an email](#), or give us a call (+66 2 381 7490) and one of our travel specialists will assist you with your booking.

### Deposit

For Long Tours (7 days or more) to guarantee your place we require a 30% or 500 USD deposit, whichever is the greater. For Short Tours (6 days or less) we require full payment to guarantee your place. We also require that you take out [travel insurance](#) when you book your holiday. Besides covering you during your holiday it will also enable you to claim for any money that you have paid to us, including your deposit, should you have to cancel your trip.

### Balance

Full payment must be paid 45 days before the departure date with fees for any bicycle rental(s), single supplement(s) and extra hotel nights. Our confirmation will include personal details you provided us (including your flight information), visa application

advice, a packing suggestion list and a detailed tour itinerary. It will also include a checklist to ensure you get everything ready for your holiday.

## Cancellation Policy

On the rare occasions when we, SpiceRoads, must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be 100% refunded, which constitutes full settlement. There will be absolutely no deductions. If you, the client, must cancel your reservation, your cancellation fee will be determined according to when you cancel. For full details, please read 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 can not be used in conjunction with any other offer. Note: Only tours of 7 days or more will be applicable for 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 [e-newsletter](#) 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.

The information in this document is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Please note that the itinerary is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, however, we will always do our best to adhere to this original itinerary

## CONTACT US

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