SPICE ROADS
CYCLING

TOURING

CYCLING HIGH TATRAS TO BUDAPEST

Tour Code
MCT-PTB

7 DAYS
6 NIGHTS

Destinations	Slovakia and Hungary
Tour Meets	Strbske Pleso
Tour Ends	Budapest
Fly in to	Poprad Airport (TAT)
Fly out of	Budapest Ferenc Liszt airport (BUD)
Group Size	4-16 riders
Minimum Age	18 (on scheduled departures)

ACTIVITY PROFILE

5 Cycling days	**373** km Total cycling distance
75 km Avg distance / day	**602** m Avg climbing / day

PRICING

Price	US$ 3,500
Bike Hire (Mountain Bike)	Included
Bike Hire (E-Bike)	US$ 350
Single Supplement	US$ 435

**E-bikes are in limited supply, please enquire to reserve one.*

DEPARTURES

11 Oct - 17 Oct 2026
16 May - 22 May 2027
13 Jun - 19 Jun 2027
12 Sep - 18 Sep 2027
10 Oct - 16 Oct 2027

WHAT'S INCLUDED

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

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

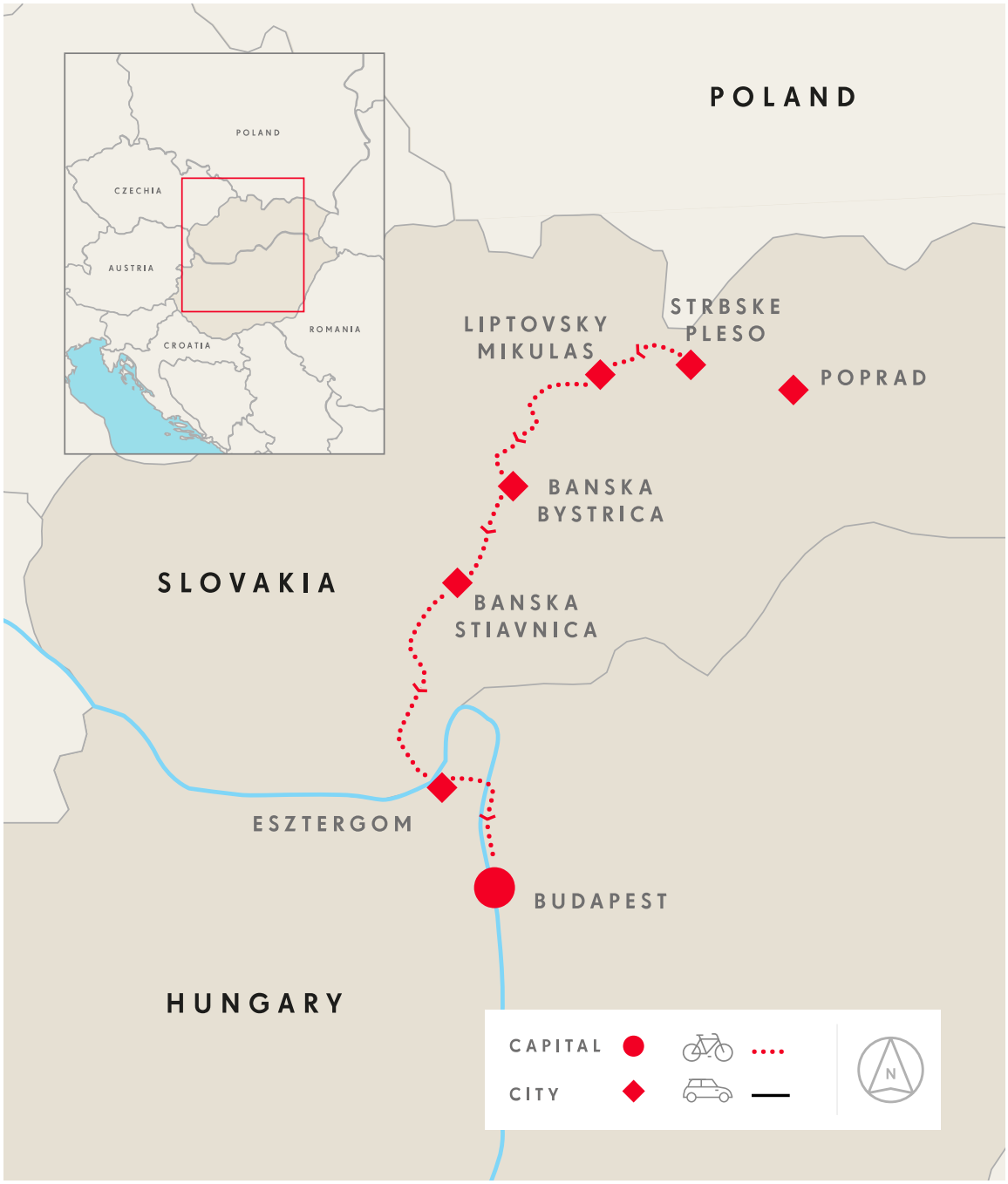
- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Domestic flights
- ✗ Airport pick up
- ✗ Airport drop off
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tips

TRIP PROFILE

This tour covers 373 km over 5 days of riding. We cover a varied geography, from the mountainous region of the High and Low Tatras in northern Slovakia, the rolling hills of central Slovakia, and the plains of southern Slovakia and Hungary along the Danube River. We ride primarily on paved backcountry roads though a generous sprinkling of gravel and forest paths are also thrown into the mix. The first 3 riding days are entirely hilly with up-and-down sequences to be expected throughout, while the last 2 days are primarily downhill and flat. We generally ride from the morning to the early afternoon, with the remainder of the day at your own leisure to immerse yourself in the charm of towns bursting with history and the beauty of untamed wilderness. Please note that entrance fees to castles, museums, other types of heritage sites, as well as chairlifts, national parks, etc. that require payment to enter are not included in the price. Your guide will discuss options for independent afternoon explorations in the town's visited. 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: This is an active level tour and riders can expect to be challenged by the route and terrain in a variety of ways. We climb an average of around 600 m per day, though there are only two days where the elevation gains are more than the losses! While there is nothing overly technical, good handling skills are an asset on unpaved sections. The average distance is 75 km per day, with the longest ride being 100 km, though it is mostly downhill and flat. A basic level of physical fitness, comfort on a mountain bike, and adept handling skills enhance the enjoyment of the tour. A support vehicle is available at all times to provide refuge for weary riders. As the majority of the riding takes place on paved roads, this tour is not suitable for any riders seeking off-road experiences.

Biking Conditions: Around 75% of the route is on paved roads which are mostly in good condition, though broken asphalt, road debris, and potholes do present themselves. The remaining 25% are on gravel roads, forest paths, and some off-road trails. The riding takes place predominantly on quiet backcountry roads with minimal traffic though occasionally we'll also be on the shoulders of main roads. 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. It's all part of the adventure!



Day 1: Meet in Strbske Pleso

Welcome to the High Tatras Mountains, the highest mountain range in Slovakia and the Carpathians as a whole! We suggest arriving a day or two in advance and taking advantage of the great hiking and wellness opportunities on offer in the area. On arrival day, we meet at our tour hotel in the late afternoon for a trip briefing and welcome dinner. The hotel is located on the shores of the montane lake of Strbske Pleso, around 30 minutes from Poprad Airport, 1.5 hours from Kosice Airport, and 2.5 hours from Krakow Airport. The breathtaking backdrop of the lake, framed by the snow-capped peaks of the High Tatras Mountains, is like a living painting. Please let us know if you require assistance with airport transfers and pre-tour hotel bookings.

Hotel Solisko Dinner

Day 2: Strbske Pleso – Liptovsky Mikulas

Our first ride leads us into the wilds of High Tatras National Park, an expanse of dense forests and one of Europe's few remaining untouched landscapes where wolves, lynxes, brown bears, and endangered eagles roam freely. The route, mostly downhill, allows us to acclimate slowly and fully absorb the natural beauty of the national park as we traverse a mix of paved roads and forest trails. Our destination is the charming town of Liptovsky Mikulas, located near the shores of Lake Liptovska Mara and surrounded by the towering High Tatras to the north and the rolling Low

Tatras to the south. Following lunch, you'll have the afternoon to explore Liptovsky Mikulas's town square, historical museums, and the 13th-century Gothic Church of St. Nicholas. Alternatively, you can venture a little further afield to discover the Demanovska Cave of Liberty, renowned for its underground lakes and striking, colorful rock formations. A soothing soak at a mineral spring is also an option!

Hotel Janosik | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Ride 47km | +420m | -1162m

Day 3: Liptovsky Mikulas – Banska Bystrica

Today's ride takes us through the Low Tatras Mountains. The first half of the route is mostly flat as we cycle through the farmlands of the Liptov Basin and enter the valley of the Revuca River. Around 30 km into our journey, we arrive at the idyllic mountain village of Vlkolínec, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its centuries-old folk architecture nestled amidst pastures and fields. We'll take a break here before continuing southward, where the terrain becomes more hilly, culminating in a climb up to the Donovaly Pass. Along this stretch, we'll enjoy alternating views of dense forests, expansive mountains, and lush valleys. The final 20 km of our ride lead us downhill along gravel trails and paved country roads to the city of Banska Bystrica, located in the geographic heart of Slovakia. The afternoon is free to explore Banska Bystrica's beautiful town square. With plenty of restaurants to choose from, dinner is on your own tonight.

Hotel Penzion Kuria | Breakfast, Lunch

Ride 84km | +918m | -1144m

Day 4: Banska Bystrica – Banska Stiavnica

The first 25 km of today's ride is flat as we follow the course of the Hron River, Slovakia's second-longest waterway, to the town of Zvolen. We'll cycle past Zvolen's mighty medieval castle before heading south into a terrain of low-rising, forested mountains and cultivated valleys. This is a glorious and challenging backcountry ride in the heart of Slovakia. A final ascent brings us to the picturesque town of Banská Štiavnica, etched into the hillsides of the Western Carpathians. The prosperity from centuries of gold and silver mining near Banska Stiavnica is still evident in the UNESCO World Heritage-listed historic townscape of burgher houses, grand churches, and ornate public buildings. This afternoon, wander through the town's narrow streets to admire Renaissance and Baroque architecture, visit the central Holy Trinity Square, and take in panoramic views from the Old and New Castles.

Penzion Kachelman | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Ride 57km | +834m | -584m

Day 5: Banska Stiavnica – Esztergom

Starting from Banska Stiavnica, we initially wind our way up the hillsides before enjoying a long and meandering descent down the foothills of the Western Carpathians. Within 30 km, we transition to the flat farmlands of the Nitra region, following rural roads through forests, farms, villages, and vineyards to reach the banks of the mighty Danube River. At Sturovo, we cross the iconic Maria Valeria Bridge to enter Hungary and the city of Esztergom. Crowning the city is the Esztergom Basilica, the largest church in Hungary, boasting beautiful classicist architecture and interior decorations. You can also visit Esztergom Castle which, perched on a hill, offers splendid views over the Danube and the city. We celebrate our arrival in Hungary by treating ourselves to a wine-tasting included with dinner tonight.

Bellevue Hotel | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Ride 100km | +520m | -1003m

Day 6: Esztergom – Budapest

On our final day of cycling we ride the "Great Bend" of the Danube, one of the most scenic stretches along the entire valley. Here, the river winds its way through forested hillsides and rugged cliffs and the banks are dotted with historic villages and towns. We'll ride through Visegrád, with its medieval castle peering down from a cliff face, and stop in Szentendre, known for its vibrant arts scene and elegant baroque architecture. And finally we reach the "Queen of the Danube", Budapest, where we end our bike tour. In the evening, Hungary's capital city glitters and sparkles as its facade of stately landmarks are lit up. We'll convene for a final Hungarian feast and bid our farewells.

NH Budapest City | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Ride 85km | +318m | -316m

Day 7: Budapest Departure

Our cycling tour has ended but we suggest you extend your stay to explore Budapest. Please let us know If you require assistance with airport transfers and post-tour hotel bookings. Heading back to Vienna via a river cruise on the Danube is also possible.

Breakfast

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

Bikes are included for this tour and are well-known makes of hardtail mountain bikes with Shimano component's and front suspension. Helmet hire is included, however you are welcome to bring your own seat and/or pedals, and we'll fit them to your bike for the tour. E-bikes are available at additional cost.

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

SLOVAKIA

Passports and Visas

Slovakia is a member of the Schengen Area. Citizens of the UK, US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand do not require a visa for short-term tourism. All visa-exempt travellers must obtain a valid ETIAS approval prior to arrival. This digital registration links to your passport and remains valid for three years. The Entry/Exit System (EES) operates at all borders, requiring a biometric registration of facial images and fingerprints upon entry into the Schengen zone. For citizens of the EU, Switzerland, and Norway, entry is permitted with a valid National ID card or passport. Ensure your passport remains valid for at least three months beyond your intended date of departure.

Health & Insurance

No specific vaccinations are mandatory for entry to Slovakia. We recommend remaining current on standard boosters such as Tetanus and Hepatitis A/B. As cycling routes often traverse dense forests, be mindful of ticks and consider a vaccination for tick-borne encephalitis if you plan significant time in the backcountry. Comprehensive travel insurance is essential and must specifically cover cycling activities and medical evacuation. EU citizens should carry a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), while UK citizens should carry a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC).

Weather

The prime window for cycling in Slovakia spans from May to September.

- **The Best Window:** June and September offer the most stable conditions and comfortable riding temperatures, typically ranging between 17°C and 23°C.
- **Summer Peak:** July and August provide the warmest weather, though sudden afternoon thunderstorms are common in the High Tatras.
- **Mountain Climate:** Temperatures drop significantly at higher elevations; snow can persist on mountain passes into late May.
- **Gear:** High-quality waterproof layers and thermal mid-layers are essential for mountain descents and unpredictable alpine shifts.

Food

Slovak cuisine is hearty, rustic, and designed for mountain life. You must try the national dish, **Bryndzové halušky** (potato dumplings with salty sheep cheese and bacon). Other staples include **Kapustnica** (a thick sauerkraut soup) and various smoked meats. The mountain regions produce exceptional sheep cheeses, which feature heavily in local menus. For a sweet treat, look for **Šúľance** with poppy seeds. All dietary needs are managed upon notification at the time of booking.

Drink

Slovakia possesses a strong brewing and distilling tradition. Local lagers such as **Zlatý Bažant** are excellent, while the more adventurous should try **Borovička**, a potent juniper-based spirit. In the southern regions, Slovakian wines—particularly the white varieties—offer a crisp, sophisticated alternative. Tap water is safe to drink throughout the country and is often sourced from natural mountain springs. Alcohol during meals is not included in the tour price.

Solo Travellers

SpiceRoads welcomes solo adventurers and does not charge a mandatory single supplement. We arrange for you to share a room with another traveller of the same gender in twin-share accommodation. If no match is available, you receive a single room at no additional cost. If you prefer to guarantee your own private room for the duration of the trip, a single supplement is available at the rate listed in the tour pricing.

Extra Expenses

Slovakia remains one of the more affordable Alpine destinations in Europe. Budget for personal incidentals such as traditional wood-carved folk art, high-quality outdoor apparel, or local herbal liqueurs like **Tatratea**. Tipping is standard practice; rounding up the bill or adding 10 percent for good service in restaurants is expected. Small gratuities for your support crew are also a common gesture of appreciation.

Money

The currency is the Euro (€).

- **Card Acceptance:** Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in hotels, restaurants, and shops in Bratislava and major regional hubs.
- **ATMs:** Cash machines are plentiful and accept most international cards.

- **Rural Cash:** In smaller mountain villages and remote guesthouses, a cash-based economy remains common. It is essential to carry Euro notes for use in local taverns and for small purchases in the countryside.

HUNGARY

Passports and Visas

Hungary is a member of the Schengen Area. Citizens of the UK, US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand do not require a visa for short-term tourism for stays up to 90 days. All visa-exempt travellers are required to obtain a valid ETIAS approval prior to arrival. This digital registration is linked to your passport and is valid for three years. The Entry/Exit System (EES) is operational at all borders, involving a biometric registration of facial images and fingerprints upon entry into the Schengen zone. For citizens of the EU, Switzerland, and Norway, entry is permitted with a valid National ID card or passport. Ensure your passport is valid for at least three months beyond your intended date of departure.

Health & Insurance

No specific vaccinations are mandatory for entry to Hungary. It is advisable to be current on standard boosters such as Tetanus and Hepatitis A/B. When cycling in forested regions or near the marshlands of the Danube, be mindful of ticks and consider a vaccination for tick-borne encephalitis if you are planning extensive backcountry riding. Comprehensive travel insurance is essential and should specifically cover cycling activities and medical evacuation. EU citizens should carry a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), while UK citizens should carry a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC).

Weather

The prime window for cycling in Hungary is from April to October.

- **The Best Window:** May, June, and September offer the most comfortable riding temperatures, typically ranging between 18°C and 24°C.
- **Summer Peak:** July and August can be hot, with temperatures on the Puszta often exceeding 30°C, making early morning starts essential.
- **Autumn:** October is often beautifully crisp with stable weather, perfect for riding through the changing colours of the Tokaj and Balaton wine regions.
- **Gear:** A lightweight waterproof shell is recommended for occasional summer thunderstorms.

Food

Hungarian cuisine is soulful and famously seasoned with local paprika. The national dish is **Gulyás** (goulash), a rich meat and vegetable soup, while **Pörkölt** is a thicker, slow-cooked meat stew. On the shores of the Danube or Lake Balaton, look for **Halászlé**, a spicy fisherman's soup. For a quick snack, **Lángos** (fried dough with garlic and cream) is a staple at local markets. All dietary needs are managed upon notification at the time of booking.

Drink

Hungary has a legendary winemaking tradition. You must sample the world-famous **Tokaji** dessert wines or the robust **Egri Bikavér** (Bulls Blood) from the Eger region. For a traditional aperitif, **Pálinka** is a potent fruit brandy distilled from plums, apricots, or pears. Tap water is of high quality and safe to drink throughout the country. Coffee culture is prominent, particularly in the grand kávéház (coffee houses) of the larger towns. Alcohol during meals is not included in the tour price.

Solo Travellers

SpiceRoads welcomes solo adventurers and does not charge a mandatory single supplement. We arrange for you to share a room with another traveller of the same gender in twin-share accommodation. If no match is available, you receive a single room at no additional cost. If you prefer to guarantee your own private room for the duration of the trip, a single supplement is available at the rate listed in the tour pricing.

Extra Expenses

Hungary offers excellent value for money compared to Western Europe. Budget for personal incidentals such as hand-painted Herend porcelain, traditional embroidered lace, or high-quality tins of Kalocsa paprika. Tipping is a common practice; it is standard to leave 10 to 15 percent for good service in restaurants if a service charge is not already included. Small gratuities for your support crew are also a common gesture of appreciation.

Money

The currency is the Hungarian Forint (HUF).

- **Card Acceptance:** Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in hotels, shops, and restaurants in Budapest and major regional hubs.
- **ATMs:** Cash machines are readily available and accept most international cards.
- **Rural Cash:** In smaller villages on the Puszta or in remote wine cellars, a cash-based economy is still prevalent. It is essential to carry Forint notes for small purchases, local snacks, or entrance fees to smaller rural baths.

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 Booking Conditions in full before you make your payment and should you require further clarifications of any of the conditions below, please email us 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 email us or call our office.

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 please send us an email, 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 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.

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