



R I D E & S E E K

Your Ride & Seek Epic Adventure is just around the corner. This guide contains all you need to know to get the best out of your upcoming tour.



ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PREPARING FOR YOUR ADVENTURE

Ride & Seek **Tour Essentials**

Travel assistance

If you require help with pre and post hotel bookings in the hotels we use on tour, please contact us at office@rideandseek.com. We are hesitant to say we can get the cheapest deal in this age of cut-price internet deals. However, what we can offer are our own favourable group booking rates, a preferential cancellation policy and a guarantee that you'll be able to stay in the same room as when you are on the tour.

For flights, our travel partner is Angela Lyons at Travel Associates who manages many of our tour travel arrangements. Contact Angela and her team on **1800 612 192** (free call within Australia) or from overseas on **+61 2 5908 7300**. Alternatively, you can email – angela_lyons@travel-associates.com.au. Simply mention the tour you are on and she will be very happy to organise your flight arrangements and any pre or post-tour travel that you might need help with. Angela has demonstrated to us that she can help with travel plans wherever you may be based, so feel confident to contact her even if you are not based in Australia.

Insurance

On all Ride & Seek tours, you will need to ensure that you have comprehensive medical insurance. The minimum that we require is coverage for the costs of medical treatment and evacuation in the event of an emergency. Extra cover will also cover you for loss of luggage and a host of other issues. We recommend that you take out insurance as soon as you have booked your tour as full cover will cover any costs that you may incur should you have to cancel your trip.

As is standard with bike tours, we also require you to sign a risk waiver and fill out a medical questionnaire before the tour starts. This is an important acknowledgement of the risks that are involved with going on a bike tour. It is fundamental to us that we run a safe tour, but it is also important that all participants are aware of what is involved and have sufficient insurance cover in place.

If you require assistance with obtaining insurance, please get in touch as we have recommended suppliers in most countries.



Everyone seems to have a different take on what to bring on tour, so we have tried to present a picture of what we consider to be the essentials. The nature of the tour is such that you will want plenty of bike gear as it won't be easy to get stuff washed and dried along the way. You'll find a way to wash your kit but as we are changing hotels most days it is important that you bring a few spares of all your bike gear. There's nothing worse than soggy nicks on a chilly morning! Once a week, there is a rest day which provides an opportunity to wash all your kit either at the hotel or a Laundromat.

In terms of evening wear, there is nowhere that we go that has a dress code and casual wear is the order of the day. However, bear in mind that we will be eating in some nice restaurants but there is no need to pack any really smart stuff.

Warm weather clothing is an important consideration. The length of the tours and the varied topography encountered mean that variable weather conditions need to be accounted for so bring kit to suit all conditions. As such you should also bring decent wet weather gear, at a minimum a waterproof windbreaker that will wrap up to a size that can fit in your jersey pocket if rain is forecast. If it does rain you are free to choose what to do as the van is always available. With heavy rain, we usually recommend sitting it out until it passes, but so long as there is no lightning, we are happy to give you the choice on whether to ride or not.

Regarding bike equipment, we carry a full tool kit along with spare inner tubes, tires and wheels. If you are bringing your own bike please remember to bring any spares that are specific to your steed. Please read the section on Bike and Bike fitting for a recommended list of spares. It is also worth having a multi-tool on your person for those small adjustments on the road and any other additional items you usually carry when out riding, such as a pump. We also recommend that you bring lights to increase your visibility, especially on days with poor weather conditions.



Luggage recommendations

1 suitcase and a day bag – like an aeroplane we have limited space.

Your suitcase will travel in the back of the van or the trailer and be available to you once you check into the hotel. Your day bag will travel in the front of the van or tour car for easy access during the day. Ideally please bring a drawstring bag as your day bag as they are perfect for just the essentials.

Bike bags and cases

We appreciate the difficulties involved with transporting bikes and on tour, space is at a premium. We ask that, if possible, you travel with a bike case that folds down or rolls up. Our personal recommendations are the Scicon, EVOC and Thule semi-rigid bike cases. If you wish to bring a hard bike case, we may need to ship your box to the end of the tour as space is at a premium in the support vehicles. Please get in touch with us first if you wish to do so as there will be a cost associated with the shipping.

Suggested packing list

On the bike:

- 2-3 Pairs of cycling bibs
- 2-3 Cycling jerseys
- Bike helmet (clipped onto a carry-on)
- Cycling pedals to match your shoes
- 3 pairs of athletic socks
- Bike gloves (short and long-finger)
- Windbreaker or rain jacket
- Insulating long-sleeve bike jacket
- Athletic shoes or cycling shoes
- Bifocal riding glasses if required to view Garmin routing instructions

Off the bike:

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Long-sleeve shirt
- Lightweight clothing that can be layered
- Sweater or jacket
- Pyjamas/sleepwear
- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses, small sunscreen
- Swimwear
- Small bag/backpack to use as a day pack
- Toiletries & medications
- Private first-aid kit
- Smartphone and charger
- Booking info for air, rail, etc
- Passport /ID (and photocopy)
- Debit/credit cards
- Health/travel Insurance info
- Electric converters and adapters
- Cash for incidentals and guide gratuities

Optional

- Arm and knee/leg warmers
- Shoe/toe covers
- Favourite energy gels
- Camera, charger and memory card
- Insect repellent
- Portable sunblock
- Journal/laptop/tablet
- GPS device/Garmin and charger
- Portable charger for devices
- Eye mask and earplugs
- Laundry kit (soap, stain remover)
- Laundry bag
- Cash in local currency
- Scripts for additional medications

Items we provide

- Ride & Seek Jersey or jersey and bibs/shorts depending on the length of the tour.
- Water bottle (1 or 2 if required)
- Garmin 1000 Edge computer – feel free to bring your own
- Luggage tags
- Snacks on tour
- Electrolyte powder



A few apps that we have found to be useful, particularly for your travels pre- and post- tour:

Google Maps – World's most comprehensive navigation app. The option to choose your routing option between driving, walking, public transport and sometimes cycling, is particularly useful in foreign cities. There is also an option to preview available public transport options ahead of time and select options like fewer transfers and the preferred mode, e.g. bus or underground metro. There is also an ability to share your location.

Maps.me – Download offline maps that are searchable and provide navigation (in English).

Google Translate – Download the offline language file, it will allow for offline text translation. Use your camera for instant text translations, great for reading menus. Conversation mode allows two-way instant speech translation. All of these can be a good resource for communicating and connecting with the locals as well as giving you more independence and confidence navigating a foreign country.

WhatsApp – Equivalent to Messenger, Skype or Wechat. Connected to your phone number rather than a profile such as Facebook.

- Simple, secure real time messaging and group chat
- Share photos and videos with family or other tour members
- Send voice messages instead of text
- Share your location or specific places
- No fees as it operates over data. Data roaming will need to be turned on to use this app when not connected to wifi. Data charges may apply, check with your phone provider
- It is useful way to connect with your Ride & Seek support team on tour as well as accurately and easily share your location with them

Strava – Track your ride, view your performance and analyse your stats over time. Share your ride and on-route photos with friends. The paid version allows you to share your live location.

Relive – Tracks your ride and creates 3D video stories that you can share with friends, family and through social media. If you take photos with your phone throughout your ride it will create an amazing video of your day which will be hard to beat. The paid version allows you to edit the video and add music.

Triposo – Free offline country travel guide and map with images, history, attractions and more.

Guides by Lonely Planet – Free offline curated city guides. Offline maps, must-see sights, a local phrasebook, transport info and save your favourite places with bookmarks.





Safety is key to every great cycling trip. Take a moment to review all the safety guidelines below:

We will endeavour to make your environment as safe as possible, however, once you are out on your bike you are responsible for your safety.

- Wear a helmet at all times and ensure that it is fitted correctly
- Obey and familiarize yourself with the local traffic laws and signage
- Check bike regularly, essential if disassembled for transport or involved in an accident. If unsure check with one of our guides. Key areas to check are the brake assembly, the tightness and alignment of quick-release levels, seat and handlebar, alignment of the rear dérailleur and the condition of the tyres
- Be seen. Wear bright clothing and use lights especially in tunnels and ideally when riding in low light conditions and when heading into the sun
- Ride and descend to your ability and to the conditions of the road and weather
- Be aware. Know what is ahead and behind you. Expect the unexpected and have an escape plan
- Only ride two abreast when safe to do so. Watch for white lines on the road, an unbroken line is a good indicator to return or remain single file and also a legal requirement
- If you notice that traffic is accumulating behind you, return their courtesy, and pull off for a moment to let traffic pass
- Make your presence known, and make eye contact with motorists when possible
- Operate your bike consistently and predictably, avoiding erratic movements. Maintaining a straight line is the best way for motorists and other cyclists to predict your movements and pass safely

Riding as a group:

- *Continue to think for yourself*
- *Communicate your actions and dangers verbally and/or with understood hand signals (E.g. 'right turn', 'left turn', 'slowing', 'stopping', 'rolling', 'car up', 'car back', 'gravel')*
- *Keep your front wheel to the left or right of the rear wheel in front and know which way to swerve if something suddenly happens*
- *Try to understand the cycling patterns of each rider, and don't make any sudden or uncharacteristic moves*
- *Hold the handlebar securely and cover both brakes in case of an unexpected bump or reduction in speed*



Gear for your bike

Hire bike:

- Helmet
- Your pedals of choice (standard pedals supplied are flat pedals)
- Lights preferably rechargeable, front and rear
- Your own water bottles if you wish
- Your own bike seat if you wish

Your Own Bike:

- Helmet
- Spare tyre
- Lights preferably rechargeable, front and rear
- Your own water bottles if you wish
- The following 4 items will be specific to your bike and are best ordered in advance from your local bike shop. They are all small, light and of no great cost, but will provide you and our bike mechanic great peace of mind knowing you have them at hand
- 1 x spare front spoke
- 2 x rear spokes – drive side and non-drive side
- 1 x rear dérailleur hanger

Bike fitting

For those bringing their own bike make sure it is given a full service so you can be confident that it is in the best possible condition for the ride ahead. On your first day there will be time to set your bike up and the guides will be at hand to help.

If you are riding one of our bikes you will be fully covered in terms of maintenance and spares during the tour. All of our bikes offer a great range of gearing, having been built in consideration of the tour's elevation profiles.

If you have bike fit measurements please send these through in advance so we have them on hand when we fit the bike to you. Our fleet bikes come with flat pedals as standard. If you have your own pedals you should bring them with you and we will fit them to the bike for you on the first day. The same goes for saddles.



Tour structure

All our Epic tours follow a standard format. The first day of your trip will be a warm-up day, whether you are starting at the beginning of an Epic tour or joining us for a single stage. On these days you will lunch with the guides who will give you a rundown of the tour ahead. Then you will have a short ride to ensure your bike has travelled well, or if you are riding one of our bikes, that it fits you well and is comfortable.

The next morning the cycling begins in earnest! We will ride 5 to 7 days before having a rest day. The format for each ride day on the bike is similar. We breakfast then aim to leave the hotel at 08:30–09:00. We ride for around 2 hours, have a coffee and snack break, ride another 2 hours, have lunch, then ride anything from 1 to 3 hours to the hotel. In the afternoons there are often options for extra riding.

Once we are in the hotel, between 14:00–16:00 you will have some free time to explore or alternatively rest. Before dinner we will have a drink together and have a briefing about the following day's riding and the guides will speak about the local area, highlights on route or history. After this aperitif and briefing, we dine together.

The rest days, which can be in the middle of a Stage (when the stage is 2 weeks longer or more) or at the end of one. Rest days at the end of a stage can also be changeover days where riders join or leave the group if they are only riding certain stages. Rest days give riders the chance to explore the town we are staying in and get the essentials, such as the week's laundry, done. For this reason, we try to stay in interesting towns which have all the practical facilities available (laundromats, ATM's etc). This doesn't mean you aren't free to take your bike out for a spin or that you cannot take a rest on any other day. The van is always available.

After the rest day, this rhythm of 5–7 days cycling then a rest day repeats for the duration of the tour.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

All our accommodation comes with breakfast included. As some of you may be aware though the 'continental' breakfast is not always the most filling in some hotels. We try to account for this by keeping the snack supplies in the van up so that you will never start a day hungry. In this respect, the van also acts as a mobile café and if there is anything that you are particularly partial to let us know and we'll make sure we have it at hand.

Lunch, for the majority, is on us and we tend to keep it simple with the guides setting up picnics along the way with sandwiches, salads, fruit and assorted snacks. Occasionally we will stop in a town, for a change of scene, where lunch will be at your discretion.

With dinner, the menus we select are aimed at providing a 'taste' of the regions we travel through with setups ranging from haute cuisine to more rustic farmers' tables. We try to eat as early as we can in accordance with the norms of the country in which we are travelling. Once a week and on scheduled rest-days no dinner is provided, giving you the opportunity to explore (with recommendations from us), eat that specific dish you might be craving, or simply have some time to yourself.

Drinks

Drinks in restaurants, other than water, are not included in the package price. In the case of wine, we usually account for this by setting a wine kitty that is aimed at covering 'basic' requirements. By this, we mean that the guides will select wine each evening that represents the area we are travelling through but are not at the top end of the wine list. By choosing young, easy to drink wines we can set a reasonable wine kitty each week. The guides will be on hand to provide recommendations for more expensive options if you so desire but the cost of this will be borne by the individual. With regards to other drinks taken at dinner, soft drinks, beers etc, we ask that you pay for these directly at the restaurant, placed on your room's bill or given to the guide.

Navigation

We navigate our tours through a combination of Garmin GPS units and printed Day sheets which contain essential information and a map for the day's ride. On the road, there will always be at least one guide on a bike and one in the van (often 2 guides and 2 vehicles). If you have your own Garmin/Wahoo unit and you'd like to use it to save your data, just let us know and we will send you the routes to upload onto your device or load them for you on Day 1. Please remember to travel with the mapping in your unit that corresponds to where we'll be riding.

Strava

Love it or loathe it, there is no getting away from the fact that Strava is a phenomenon. Indeed, we have our own Ride & Seek club that has become a great way for riders to keep in touch after the ride – <https://www.strava.com/clubs/ride-and-seek>. This is a members only club and we'd love you to join. Simply click on the link and submit your request to join.

Tipping

In terms of everyday tipping in restaurants and hotels, we have got that covered. However, we work in an industry in which tipping of the guides is standard and as such we suggest that if your guides have done a good job that you tip them at the end of your tour. We appreciate that different cultures have different ideas on what constitutes a reasonable tip and as such we don't suggest a set figure. If the guides have met your expectations any additional financial recognition is always appreciated.

Phones

We will provide you with our in-country phone numbers when you arrive; prior to this, you can contact us on our regular numbers or by email. To call us whilst you are travelling with us, you will obviously be able to use your own phones if they are unblocked and roaming has been activated. With many of the roaming charges of yesteryear having been reduced or removed, using your own phone is no longer so inhibitive. Some guests also choose to buy a local SIM card which is an economical option. If you plan to bring your own phone to make and accept calls or use your phone's internet data we recommend that you inquire with your phone provider about charges prior to travelling.

Internet

All the countries we travel through are connected and there are only a handful of places where we will stay in which you won't be able to get online. Happily, pretty much all of these connections are free of charge. Please note though that high-speed internet is a luxury in many of the places we visit so don't always expect the connection to match what you might be used to at home.

Social Media

A few of you are already 'friends' with us on Facebook – www.facebook.com/rideandseek – and we recommend that the rest of you join us too. It's a great way to see the latest news; new tours we are scouting and the tours we are currently running. Keep an eye out for familiar faces. Facebook is also a great way to engage with your fellow riders as well as friends and family back home.

We are also active on Instagram and would love you to follow us, our handle is [@rideandseekers](https://www.instagram.com/rideandseekers).

Training

The grading for this tour makes it clear that it is a challenging endeavour and we hope that your training to date reflects this. That said, we are also aware that not everyone has the luxury of being able to dedicate themselves to training for a bike tour and consequently a few of you might be a little undercooked.

Probably the most important thing is simply preparing your body for sitting on a bike for multiple hours and then doing it again the day after. It is important to get that saddle time in so that when you're on the tour, you don't spend the first few days trying to avoid sitting down!

On our bike tours, it is not a race and you go at your own pace so, with a reasonable level of stamina, the distances shouldn't be an issue. In the lead up to the tour, we recommend you try and get some consecutive long rides in, to prepare yourself for the challenges ahead. This will really help with getting you prepared for riding multiple days on tour. At the same time, don't go too hard. You don't want to arrive on tour already overcooked, so remember to taper off a little towards the start of the tour. It is important to arrive fresh and with your energy levels conserved; don't think you can fit in all your training into the weekend before.

As a backup please note you will also have access to the van, which (among other things) acts as a sag wagon in case you want to take a break. There is absolutely no shame in taking advantage of this and we'd prefer it if you did so; rather than smashing yourself on one day and being out of action for the following two. You'll know what condition you're in, so don't be shy in signalling that you want a lift. The more prepared you are physically for this tour, the more you will enjoy it though. There is still plenty of time to get your fitness levels up before the tour starts, so get cracking!

Do you want more help with your training?

Our training partner Jo Palazzetti at Turbo Studio – www.turbostudio.com.au – can help in this regard. Jo has been working as a cycle coach for many years and has developed a series of bespoke training programs that can be undertaken both in person and remotely. Her programs can be done using power, heart rate or perceived effort. We are particularly keen on her 13 week program as a way of getting in shape for our Epic Adventures. Contact Jo directly – info@turbostudio.com.au – if you would like more information. She has our tour profiles on file and can design a training course to suit your fitness level and the tour you are on.



Tour documentation

As part of the lead up to your tour we will provide you with these documents:

- Tour Essentials (this doc)
- Tour Overview
- Itinerary, which includes hotel information
- Digital GPS route files
- Emergency Numbers List

We don't as standard send these documents as physical printouts as we find many of our guests prefer not to use paper. However, we are very happy to send these to you via mail if you wish, please just let us know.

On the first day of the tour we will provide you with printed daily maps and other tour specific documentation.

Further information

Hopefully, this document will have addressed most of the questions you might have. In addition we recommend you have a browse through our FAQ's (<https://rideandseek.com/faqs/>) and consult our terms and conditions (<https://rideandseek.com/terms-and-conditions/>).

You will also find more information about the tour regarding food and wine, history, the espresso grading system, recommended reading lists and testimonials on the website at www.rideandseek.com.

Expected weather

The dates of this tour have been chosen to align with the best possible weather for cycling. We aim for the year's 'Goldilocks' weather window, not too hot and not too cold, but of course we can't control the weather, which only adds to the excitement of this epic adventure. Due to the nature of this ride; travelling across multiple regions at many different elevations we recommend you prepare yourself for both hot and cold conditions, especially in regards to your cycling gear. For more specific weather and climate information visit www.worldweather.org.

Money matters

ATMs are found in all cities and larger towns along our route and are the most convenient means of getting cash. The easiest way to do this in preparation for the tour is to use the ATM machines at the airport you arrive in. The route does, however, avoid many large centres in the interest of better and safer cycling so we advise you have at least a week's worth of cash on hand.

Credit/debit cards are accepted at most hotels and restaurants we visit, but expect to pay in cash at local cafés and smaller shops. The extra costs to consider while on tour are drinks at cafés, alcohol and 1 or 2 lunches and dinners a week.

You may prefer to get some local currency on hand before you leave your country or purchase it at the airport.



MAKE IT THE EPIC LIST



CRO-MAGNON
Chauvet to Perpignan



CAESAR
London to Rome



NAPOLEON
Paris to Saint Petersburg



HANNIBAL
Barcelona to Gavi



IRON CURTAIN
Berlin to Budapest



SAMURAI
Honshu and Shikoku Islands



APPALACHIAN
Maine to North Carolina



CONQUEST OF THE MOORS
Fez to Cordoba



MARCO POLO
Venice to Athens



3 ISLANDS
Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily



STRZELECKI
Sydney to Hobart

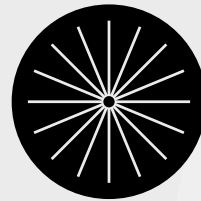


MAORI
Auckland to Queenstown

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Go to our website at: **www.rideandseek.com** to find out more information, a recommended reading lists, testimonials and much more for each of our tours.

Alternatively, contact us on **info@rideandseek.com** or **+61 (0) 2 8007 3161**



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