



3 CRUSADER CASTLES MOUNTAIN BIKING HOLIDAY

ITINERARY

Contact: www.cyprus-active.com / info@cyprus-active.com

DAY 1 ARRIVAL

Airport transfer to your hotel, where your bike is waiting for you. Today is a day to relax, enjoy a drink with your group and try out the bikes. In the evening there is a relaxed welcome dinner and orientation meeting.

Included: Airport transfer, bike hire, welcome drink, dinner

DAY 2 KANTARA CASTLE to ESENTEPE BEACH

After breakfast you will be taken by jeep to Kantara Castle. This legendary 10th Century Byzantine Castle was used as a look-out post against Arab raids, from the battlements there are tremendous views of the Karpas Peninsula, and both the North and East coast-lines of Cyprus, even Syria can be seen on the horizon on clear days. From the castle the day's ride begins, through the sleepy village of Kantara and then along a high (700m) ridge path overlooking the wooded escarpment down to the glitzening Mediterranean below. The path crosses from one side of the mountain crest to the other, so the views of the verdent Northern slopes and sea are interspersed with views to the South of the great Mesaoria plains and the Troodos Massif beyond. There is a break for a picnic lunch along the way, before continuing the ride to its grand finale an exciting down-hill cycle through the foothills and to the beach.

(approx. 49km.)

Included: bike hire, breakfast, picnic lunch, chilled water, entry to Kantara Castle, support vehicle, transfers to and from the hotel

DAY 3 BUFFAVENTO CASTLE to BELLAPAIS ABBEY

The tour begins at Buffavento Pass, there is a steep climb up 700 steps to this imposing fortress, and don't worry you don't have to carry the bikes up! Perched on the crest of the mountain, the name Buffavento is derived from the Italian 'defier of winds', at a height of 950 metres it is always surprisingly windy here even on calm days. The views and opportunities for photography here are nothing short of spectacular. After visiting the castle it's back on the bikes and the start of the day's riding. The ride takes you past the largest flag in the world, this is the Turkish Cypriot flag that is painted on the Southern slopes of the mountain. Then onwards to the deserted monastery and church of Absinthontissia, which is open to the public and free to explore. The path crests the mountain and then the wooded slopes wend their way down to the historic village of Bellapais. It was here that Lawrence Durrell made his home and also the location of the serenely beautiful Bellapais Abbey.

(approx. 32km)

Included: bike hire, breakfast, picnic lunch, chilled water, support vehicle, transfers to and from hotel, entry to Bellapais Abbey, (entry to Buffavento Castle free).

DAY 4 ST. HILARION CASTLE to GÜZELYALI BEACH

The day begins with a tour of St. Hilarion Castle, used as a summer palace for the knights. There are many rooms to explore including the royal apartments and a Byzantine Chapel. From the Castle there is a scenic ridge road that runs along the very crest of the mountains. The going is easy this day on a good road. Along the road you will see the odd ruin, ancient Roman olive groves, wild mountain goats and of course awesome views of the Mediterranean glitzening eternally around every bend. There is an abandoned army tank along the route, which has now been made into a monument. The road twists and winds down to Kozan, an idyllic mountain-top restaurant with commanding sea and mountain views. After enjoying a traditional village lunch, there is an easy down-hill cycle down through the foothills and then along the coast road to Guzelyali Beach. Where you can swim, or just chill out before getting your transfer back to the hotel.

(approx. 41 km)

Included: bike hire, breakfast, restaurant lunch, chilled water, support vehicle, transfers to and from hotel, entry to St. Hilarion Castle.

DAY 5 REST DAY

You have a wide choice of options for this day, whether you want to relax by the pool, jump off the mountain para-gliding, go on a boat-trip, or take a trip into town to see the beautiful Venetian harbour and explore the crusader castle of Kyrenia. There are these and many more options open to you.

Included: bike hire (if required), breakfast, all trips can be arranged with Cyprus Active for no extra fee

DAY 6 LAPTA TO GEÇİTKÖY

The day starts in Lapta village a bustling Cypriot village with narrow roads, lined with coffee shops and markets. At the start of this day there is a challenging up-hill 7 km ride on a firm stone track up the mountain. However once the mountain has been crested, the track winds down through the Northern slopes, to the sleepy mountain villages of Akçiçek and Alemdağ. These are the types of places, you feel that time has stood still, and offers a stark contrast to the lively modern feel of Lapta. The road takes you through the village of Kozan and into Geçitköy valley, and then past the beautiful ruin of the monastery and church of St. Catherine. The monastery is open and free for the public to explore, and now it is most often used as a shelter for shepherd's and their goats. From here is a short ride to Geçitköy reservoir, which is an area of outstanding natural beauty and a haven for migratory birds, more than 110 species have been spotted here alone. There is a good track around the reservoir and it makes for a very enjoyable end to the day.

(approx: 41 km)

Included: bike hire, breakfast, picnic lunch, chilled water, support vehicle, transfers to and from hotel

DAY 7 GEÇITKÖY TO CAPE KORUCAM

The ride begins by cycling through pleasant farm-lands, that are carpeted with wild flowers in spring-time. Then a short climb takes you to the Christian Maronite village of Korucam, with its imposing church and nearly all Christian and Greek speaking population it is an unusual place in Northern Cyprus. Heading towards the coast the high and winding road along the cliffs offers the cyclist some really enjoyable riding. The road takes you to Sadrazamköy, where you can stop for refreshments at the *Gönyeli* restaurant, before continuing onto the Cape. The track to the Cape is flat and leads straight to the point, where there is a light-house and an abandoned Carob warehouse. On a clear day there are lovely views of the Turkish mainland to the North and Güzelyurt bay spreads for miles and miles southwards, with views of the Troodos Mountains beyond. From here you have the option of taking transport to the hotel or cycling.

Included: bike hire, breakfast, picnic lunch, chilled water, support vehicle, transfers to and from hotel

Day 8 DEPARTURE DAY / EXTENSION

Today is the day to pack up your bags and head home, feeling a little fitter and a little more relaxed. Or today is the day to begin part two of your holiday! Whether you want to spend a week relaxing on the beach, or a few days exploring the Karpas and Famagusta, go sea fishing, have a gourmet dinner and wine tasting evening, or explore village life and culture on a village day; Cyprus Active is here to help you get the best out of your holiday.

Included: breakfast (depending on time of departure), airport transfer...if required!