

LA VUELTA

La Rioja to Madrid (Spain), 2019



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LA VUELTA

La Vuelta a España – La Rioja to Madrid!

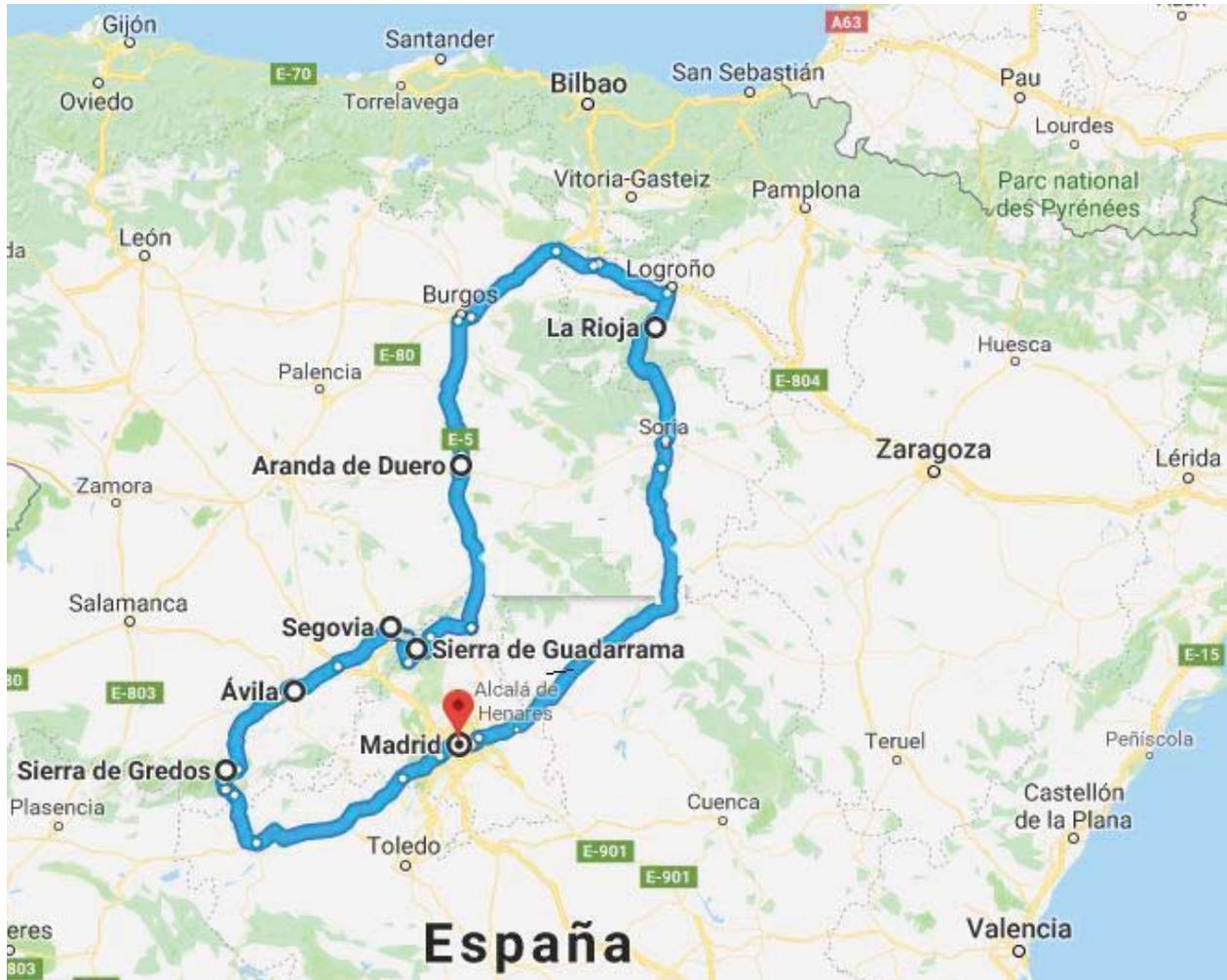
The 2019 edition of La Vuelta returns to a more traditional finish with race defining stages in the provinces surrounding Madrid. The final week of racing visits key tourist regions that showcase some of Spain's best gastronomy, wines, medieval architecture and history. This Vuelta cycling tour provides epic cycling stages through the terraced vineyards of La Rioja wine region (another glass of *tempranillo* anyone?), past the jaw-dropping 1st Century Roman Aqueduct in Segovia, inside the medieval walled towns of Pedraza and Avila and last but not least cycling routes which cross the mountain landscapes of the Sierra Guadarrama, Demanda and Gredos National Parks.

During this cycling holiday there will be the chance to witness four stages of the 2019 La Vuelta live! You will witness one stage start in Aranda de Duero, one mid-stage mountain climb to Navacerrada ski station, the decisive and penultimate mountain stage finish in Gredos and the race finale through the majestic boulevards of Madrid.

The tour suits cyclists looking to enjoy what is best described as 'mixed terrain cycling routes'. By beginning in La Rioja there are options for some excellent warm-up rides over undulating terrain. La Rioja is the perfect place to warm-up before the second half of the week where the categorised mountain climbs straight from La Vuelta begin to present themselves. Authentic classics, such as, Puerto de Navacerrada, Puerto de Cotos, Puerto de Navafria, Alto de la Paramera and Plataforma de Gredos will all be on offer.

Mountains, wine, history, medieval townships, national parks, sunny weather, mouth-watering gastronomy and La Vuelta all combine to make Spain the perfect cycling holiday destination!

VIVA LA VUELTA!



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Cycle and watch the 2019 Vuelta live (Stages 17, 18, 20 & 21)
- Visit La Rioja with time to explore the beauty of this famous wine region
- Cycle national parks including Sierra de Guadarrama and Gredos
- Tackle several big climbs including Navacerrada, Puerto de Herrera & Cotos!
- Impressive Spanish gastronomy including paella, 'asado' meats & jamon serrano!
- Visit Segovia & Avila – the jewels of Castile & Leon!
- Take a step back in time through the medieval walls of Pedraza

ITINERARY

DAY ONE – Sunday 8 September 2019 – Madrid

We will collect you from Hotel Mediodia or Atocha Train Station at 9am and transport you 2hr to the edge of the Sierra de la Demanda mountains. Even though there are still a couple of blips to get over, it's fair to say that we have designed today's route for the sprinters in the group! The ride meanders alongside small flowing streams and turquoise reservoirs and traffic is practically non-existent. As one rides into San Millan de la Cogolla your sense of history is sure to be awakened as we finish at the Monastery de Yuso (11th Century). This evening we stay in the award winning La Rioja wine region which is home to the tempranillo grape! The tour hotel is located in the attractive La Rioja Alava region which has hardly changed since the 13th Century!

Meals:	Dinner included
Destinations:	San Millan de la Cogolla
Today's Ride:	85km cycling
Accommodation:	Rioja (Spain)



DAY TWO – Monday 9 September 2019 – Explore La Rioja

Following breakfast we set off from the hotel and cycle past terraced wineries and small villages on an undulating course. For those looking for their first categorised climb there will be the option to climb 'Puerto de la Herrera' which has been used multiple times in the professional race 'Vuelta of Basque Country'.

During the afternoon there will be time to watch the Stage 16 Vuelta finish on the TV while enjoying a local wine or beer. As the early evening approaches be amazed as you visit some modern wineries with eye catching architecture!

We will also visit the medieval walled town of Laguardia where you can sample some tapas and enjoy a magical sunset from the watch tower.

Meals:	Breakfast included
Destinations:	Laguardia
Today's Ride:	100km cycling
Accommodation:	Rioja (Spain)



DAY THREE – Tuesday 10 September 2019 – Rioja to Vitoria-Gasteiz

This morning we ride out of the terraced vineyards and pass over the 'Alto de Rivas' climb which separates La Rioja region from Basque Country. This climb takes you up through a beautiful forest and it is not surprising that it is a major feature of the Orbea Vitoria Gran Fondo ride held every May. Along the way you will follow the shores of the Ullibarri-Gamboa Reservoir which is home and training ground to current Spanish cycling sensation Mikel Landa from Team Movistar. Considering La Vuelta riders enjoy a well earned rest day today you will spend the afternoon visiting Vitoria-Gasteiz which has previously been awarded winner of the Green Capital of Europe!

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner included
Destinations: Vitoria-Gasteiz
Today's Ride: 100km cycling
Accommodation: Rioja (Spain)

DAY FOUR – Wednesday 11 September 2019 – Vuelta Stage 17

Following breakfast the day begins with a 2hr van transfer to Aranda de Duero. 'Aranda' will play host to the Stage 17 start and this will be your first chance to rub shoulders with the pro peloton. After already three strong days on the bike the chance to rest this morning and soak up the race atmosphere will be a real highlight. Watch your favourite riders warming up at the team buses, grab a photo with the stars as they sign-on at the stage village and wait alongside the start line barriers and listen-in as the riders nerviously chatter away.... Once the peloton hits the road there will be the chance for our group to also enjoy an afternoon ride following fantastic back roads passing through many small agricultural towns, canyons and onto the medieval wonder of Sepulveda. We will finish at a local bar and find a TV to watch the final km as the sprinters have their chance to shine during Stage 18!

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner included
Destinations: Aranda de Duero
Today's Ride: 60km cycling
Accommodation: Segovia (Spain)

DAY FIVE – Thursday 12 September 2019 – Vuelta Stage 18

Stage 18 of the 2019 Vuelta immerses itself right in the heart of the Sierra de Guadarrama mountains. The race has returned to its traditional roots and who cannot forget Stage 20 during 2015 when Fabio Aru and his then Astana teammates ambushed Tom Dumoulin who slipped from first to off the podium in the blink of an eye. Back on the bikes though and you will be amazed as you ride under the 1st Century aqueduct in Segovia. This is the most important Roman archaeological site in Spain and it leaves many people speechless! The main challenge for our cycling group today begins as we intersect La Vuelta race route. The 11.5km climb up to 'Puerto de Navacerrada' finishes at 1860m elevation and our highest point on tour! The climb averages 5.5% with the final 7km averaging closer to 7%. Here you will have another Grand Tour experience as we watch the pro's clear the final mountain climb on route. This will be an exciting time as those riders at the front will challenge the stage win as all that remains is a break-neck 15km descent to the stage finish.

Meals: Breakfast included
Destinations: Sierra Nevada
Today's Ride: 100km cycling options
Accommodation: Segovia (Spain)



DAY SIX – Friday 13 September 2019 – Royal Segovia

After two consecutive days following La Vuelta we will take a short break from the race today and prepare ourselves for tomorrow's Stage 20 mountain finish. This morning there are no major mountain passes to contend with as we enjoy a recovery ride through 'Royal Spain'. The cycling begins with a visit to San Ildefonso and its Royal summer palace which is Spain's version of Versailles. Top up your bidons as you look out over these splendid gardens! Continuing around the outskirts of Segovia and the next stop are the beautiful settings and grounds of the Royal Palace of Rio Frío. This royal hunting residence was built in the Italian Baroque style and offers a stunning contrast to San Ildefonso.

Tonight the group will sleep within the medieval walls of Avila! This mountain region is also famous for its 'asado' cuisine (roasted meats) and fine steaks. You will taste test a traditional Castile & Leon dinner!

Meals:	Breakfast & Dinner included
Destinations:	San Ildefonso & Palacio Rio Frio
Today's Ride:	75km cycling
Accommodation:	Avila (Spain)



DAY SEVEN – Saturday 14 September 2019 – Vuelta Stage 20

Today's ride enters deep within the Sierra de Gredos National Park. Spanish champion and 2008 Tour de France winner Carlos Sastre has been instrumental in designing Stage 20 of the 2019 Vuelta. Sastre lives in the region and with no less than 5 categorised mountains included he has designed a stage worthy of crowning the 2019 General Classification winner! Our tour guides will assess the condition of the group as the climb to the mountain finish at 'Plataforma de Gredos' can be reached via a number of approaches all with varying difficulty. With only 50km to the finish line the professionals scale 'Puerto de la Peña Negra' and this 15km climb averaging 6% is strategically placed before the final explosive kick up to 'Gredos'. Being on the mountain to witness this race defining stage will provide long lasting memories. Who will wear the Red Jersey into Madrid?

Following the race finish there will be a 1hr 15min drive back to our hotel in Avila.

Meals: Breakfast included
Destinations: Gredos National Park
Today's Ride: 100km cycling
Accommodation: Avila (Spain)



DAY EIGHT – Sunday 15 September 2019 – Vuelta Stage 21

This morning we ride from the hotel in search of the royal monastery in nearby San Lorenzo el Escorial. Here one marvels at this architectural masterpiece which dates back to the late 16th Century and King Felipe II and includes a royal palace, church, pantheon, library and school. Before arriving to 'El Escorial' our cyclists will enjoy an undulating ride including two small categorized climbs and a wonderful winding descent through dense pine forest. After lunch there will be a 1hr transfer to watch the twilight race finish at Plaza de Cibeles. As the professional riders reflect on a tough three weeks you too will celebrate your cycling achievements over a quality paella dinner!

Meals:	Breakfast & Dinner included
Destinations:	El Escorial
Today's Ride:	80km cycling
Accommodation:	Madrid (Spain)



DAY NINE – Monday 16 September 2019 – Tour Farewell

Following breakfast the Sierra guides will be available to transfer you to Madrid Airport by 11am. If you would like to continue your stay in Madrid feel free to ask us for more information.

Meals: Breakfast included

TRIP DETAILS

REGION: RIOJA, CASTILE & LEON, MADRID

PRICE: 3100 € p.p.

TOUR DATES: 8– 16 SEPT 2019

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: 500 €

DURATION: 9 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS

OPTIONAL EXTRAS:

Carbon Road Bike Hire: 300 €

HOTELS: Rioja (x3), Segovia (x2), Avila (x2), Madrid (x1); 3/4 Star Hotels

INCLUDED

Arrival & Departure transfers (Madrid)
8 nights accommodation (twin share)
8 breakfasts & 5 dinners with beer & wine
8 guided cycling stages with van and mechanic
Food & drinks during cycling stages
Commemorative Sierra Sports cycling jersey

NOT INCLUDED

Airfares
Lunches
Pre or post Tour Accommodation