



Cycle Corsica
the beautiful island



7 day cycling tour with Alpine Cols
20-26 April & 6-12 September 2025

Corsica: l'Ile de la Beauté

A cycling trip you will never forget



Not for nothing do the French call Corsica the “island of beauty”. Its unique geology and position bless it with seven distinct ecosystems, ranging from sea-level to alpine, and regular rainfall, making it particularly rich and varied in vegetation.

The Corsicans are extremely hospitable people who delight in sharing their love for their island home. Read (or re-read) ‘*Asterix in Corsica*’ for some finely-drawn insights into the Corsican character!

The island’s turbulent human history has resulted in a large number of tiny, remote mountain villages where time has stood still for centuries.

Corsican food is legendary, with delicious hams, sausages and cheeses accompanied by sun-drenched vegetables and fruit, fish caught in the surrounding sea and of course a choice of excellent local wines, beers and other drinks.

Like the Pyrenees – but even more so – we frequently encounter livestock on the roads, including beautiful long-haired goats, sheep, cows and often-comical pigs, sometimes crossed (deliberately or not) with their wild brethren.

And the cycling? We have left the best for last...



For us, Corsica is THE best cycling destination in the Mediterranean, and is quite possibly the best island destination in the world. The combination of roads, scenery, hotels, food, weather and (relative) accessibility is quite simply unbeatable. We have been visiting Corsica for summer holidays for more than 30 years: we can’t wait to share it with you!

Is this trip for you?

This not a trip for beginner cyclists, but **you do not need to be either fast or young**. Similar trips have been completed by many men and women in their sixties and even seventies.

You can choose each day whether to ride the **Discovery route**, which is typically ~80km and 1,500m, or the **Challenge route**, which is tougher at ~110km and 2,100m per day. Options are available for rides of different lengths if you prefer.

Small groups will form and you will be able to ride with people of a similar speed.

The main quality required is endurance and the ability to ride for 4 to 7 hours per day for 7 days.

This is not a low budget trip. **We stay in the best available hotels (One 4*, two 3*, one 2*), eat excellent meals and provide a high level of service**. Our clients demand nothing less!

The rides are fully supported and at your own pace. **All our guides are qualified cycling coaches**. Their primary role is to ensure you have a safe and enjoyable experience.

You can of course **ask the coaches for tips and feedback on your cycling**, with suggestions for pacing, descending, nutrition and recovery. Equally, you are free to ride as you wish (so long as you do not endanger others).

The support vehicles are nearby if you need support, and you are welcome to jump aboard if you are too tired to complete the ride.

The trip is absolutely non-competitive. There will be plenty of time to take photographs or to stop for a coffee, if you so wish.



April and September

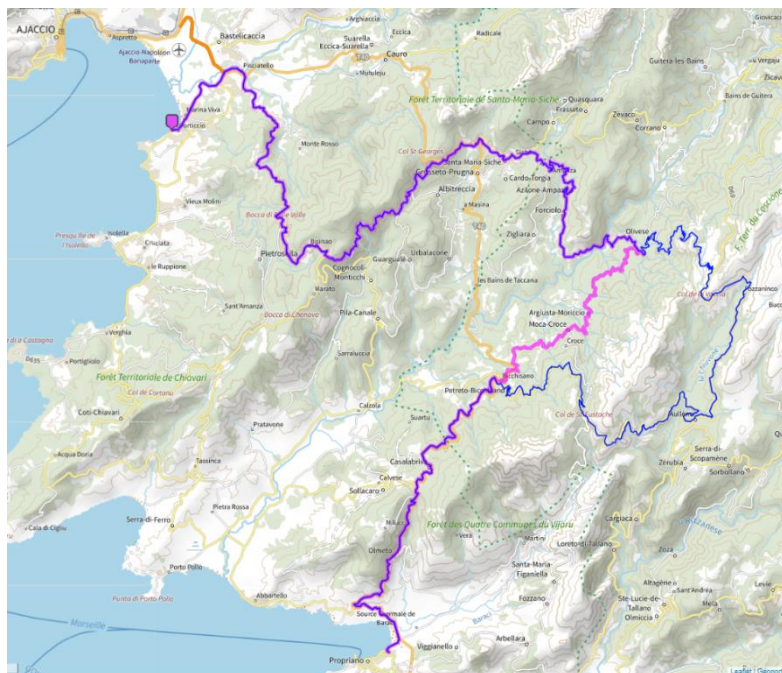
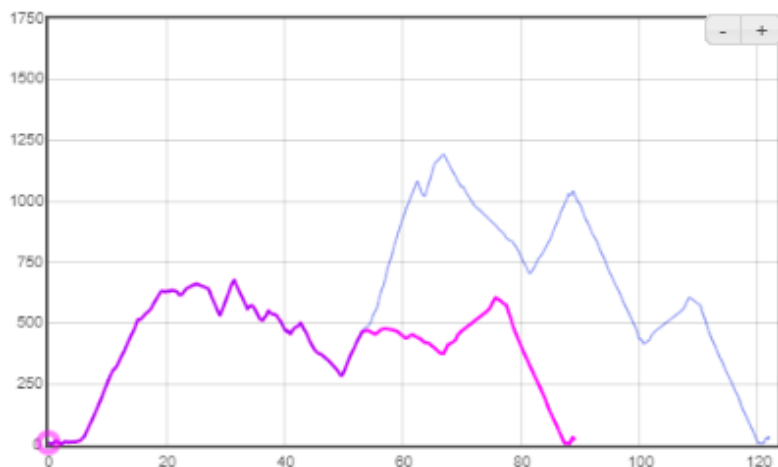
DAY	RIDE	DISCOVERY ROUTE		CHALLENGE ROUTE	
		KM	M+	KM	M+
0	<i>Arrival (nearest airport Ajaccio)</i>				
1	1. Porticcio to Propriano	89	1,440	122	2,495
2	2. Loop from Propriano	82	1,650	101	2,090
3	3. Propriano to Porticcio	69	1,100	94	1,650
4	4. Loop from Porticcio	85	1,370	123	2,250
5	5. Porticcio to Cargèse	64	940	91	1,590
6	6. Cargèse to Porto	82	1,790	109	2,425
7	7. Porto to Porticcio	99	1,935	121	2,710
-	<i>Departure (nearest airport Ajaccio)</i>	569	10,235	760	15,210

N.B. There are NO minibus transfers planned during your stay. However, the option to jump in the bus is always there if you are too tired, or if the weather turns bad. See next pages for details of each stage. Routes are subject to change depending on weather and road conditions. There are several options to add distance and climbing to the Challenge route, if desired.



Olivese, the start of the climb
to the col de la Vaccia (Stage 1)

Stage 1: Porticcio to Propriano



Our week begins on the beach in Porticcio, and takes us deep into the mountains before finishing once more near the beach in Propriano. The first climb to the col de Belle Valle is an easy one, taking us to the first of many delightful hilltop villages, Bisinao.

Next is a wonderful balcony road with views over the steep *maquis*-covered slopes to the south, shades of green and blue merging and fading into the distance. The road winds in and out of the folds in the hillside, while maintaining a fairly constant altitude for 6km or so. Descent to Ampaza through a cool green tunnel, the trees interlocking overhead.

Forciolo is another pretty hill-top village, with lots of pink oleander and a water fountain. During our recon startled pigs scampered before us on the road, darting left and right, squealing before diving for safety in the *maquis*.

The Discovery and Challenge routes diverge soon after. Those who are up for it will climb the steep, irregular climb to the col de la Vacchia, followed by the scenic succession of the col de la Tana and the col de St Eustache.

Discovery route: 89km | 1,440m

Col de Belle Valle 522m (km 15)
Col de Luminataia 642m (km 26.5)
Col de Celaccia 582m (km 77)

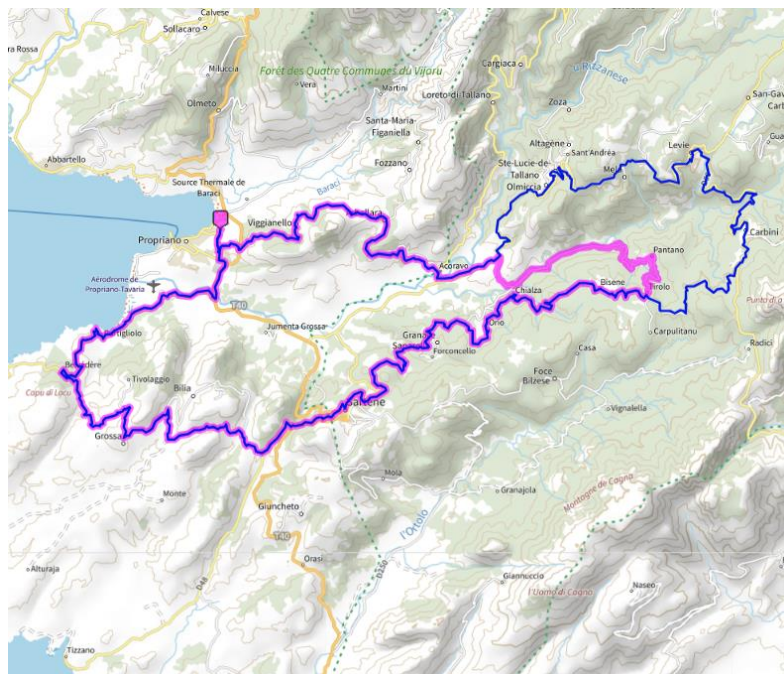
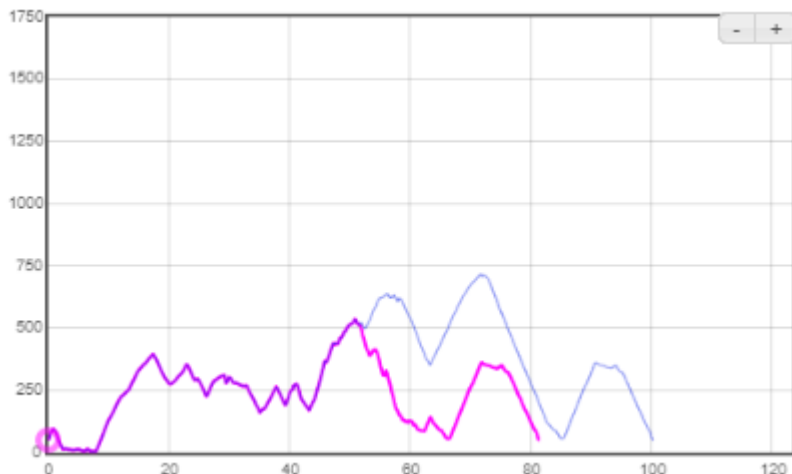
Challenge route: 122km | 2,495m

Col de Belle Valle 522m (km 15)
Col de la Vacchia 1195m (km 66)
Col de la Tana 975m (km 86)
Col de St Eustache 995m (km 89)
Col de Celaccia 582m (km 109.5)



Col de la Vaccja from
Olivese (Stage 1)

Stage 2: Propriano to Propriano



After a short climb around the back of Propriano we go back down and along the coast to the first climb, at km 8. The road twists and turns through the maquis with occasional glimpses of the sea. We pass a couple of small villages before Sartène at km 29.

Sartène is said to be the “the most Corsican” of Corsica’s towns. It is very unspoilt, the centre remaining much as it was in centuries past. Shortly after, we turn on to a series of minor roads.

The Challenge and Discovery routes separate at Tirolo, km 52. The Discovery route descends and crosses the valley to the final climb to Arbellara before opening out with stunning views across the gulf.

The Challenge route takes on the hardest climb of the day just after Chialza. It is very irregular with two descents in the middle and frequent pitches over 10%. Once over the route continues east, winding in and out, up and down through the maquis before Orone where it starts descending. There’s a remarkable 11th century Roman church and separate spire in Carbini. We pass several more charming, characterful hilltop villages before the final climb and descent back to sea level.

Discovery route: 82km | 1,650m

Côte de Grossa 395m (km 18)
Bocca di Bicelli 354m (km 24)
(Unnamed) 535m (km 51)
Côte d’Arbellara 361m (km 72)

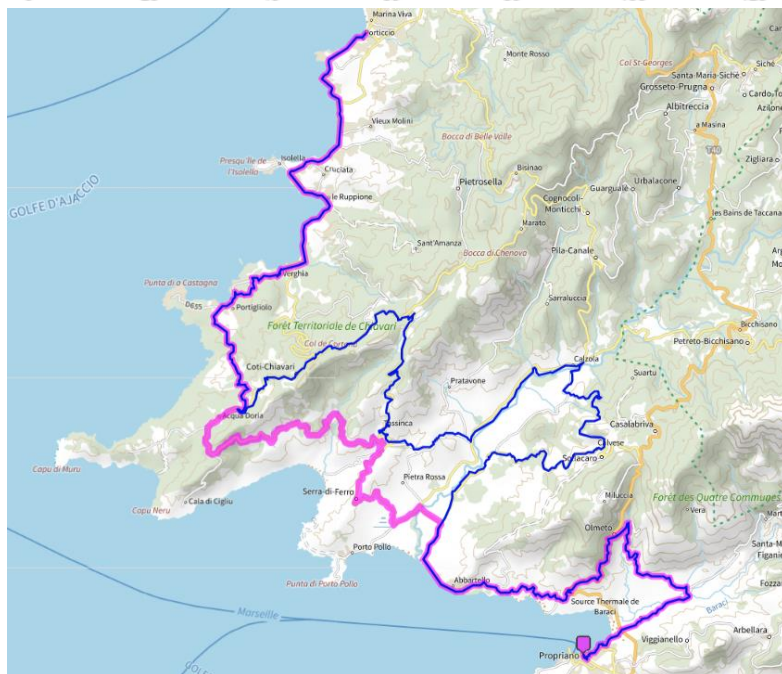
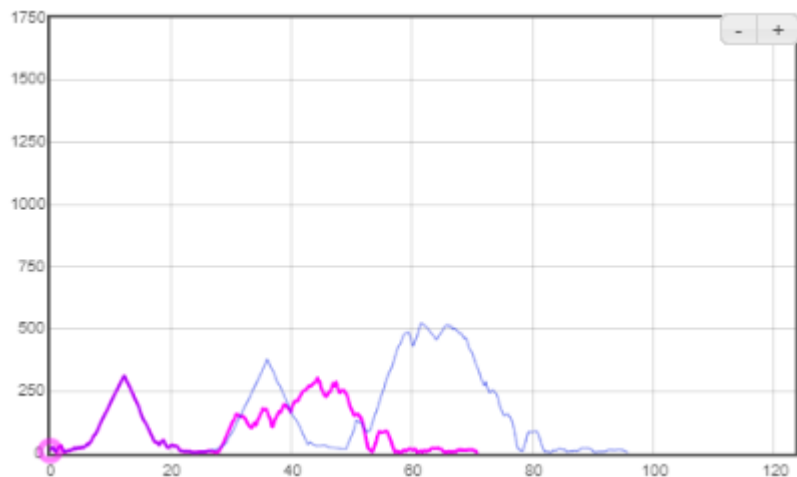
Challenge route: 101km | 2,090m

Côte de Grossa 395m (km 18)
Bocca di Bicelli 354m (km 24)
Valle Longa 630m (km 57)
Côte de Mela 717m (km 72.5)
Côte d’Arbellara 361m (km 91.5)



Levie (Stage 2)

Stage 3: Propriano to Porticcio



We get quickly off the main road and on to a quiet route, leading to a nice, easy climb to Olmeto. Built on the flank of a steep hillside, Olmeto has retained much of its original charm and character. The architecture is traditional. Prickly pears grow wild by the side of the road, the town is surrounded by olive groves and the gardens are full of flowers and fruit trees.

We redescend to sea level and follow the coast road, going up and down and in and out on the northern side of the gulf.

The Discovery route stays on this road, while the Challenge route makes an excursion up a couple of valleys and climbs. The first of these is to Calvese, on an excellent, wide road through mature olive groves. A delightful descent follows through the maquis, sometimes closing overhead like a green tunnel, and then vineyards at the bottom, part of the Ajaccio AOP.

The third climb is the longest, taking us to the highest point of the day at the col de Gradello (529m) at km 61.

The descent and final few kilometres to Porticcio provide lovely views across the rocky coast line and deep azur sea.

Discovery route: 69km | 1,100m

Côte d'Olmeto 311m (km 12)
Bocca di Cannicciu 305m (km 44)

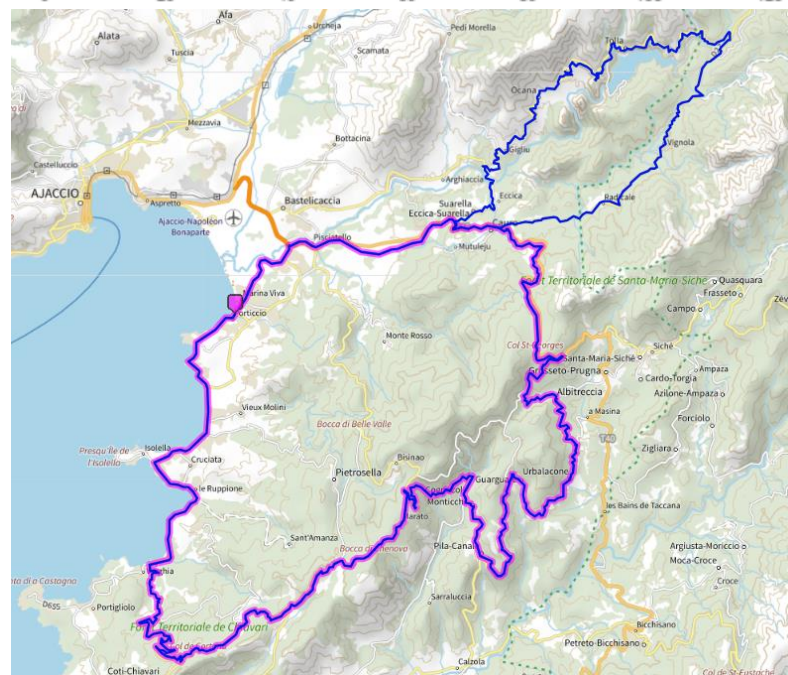
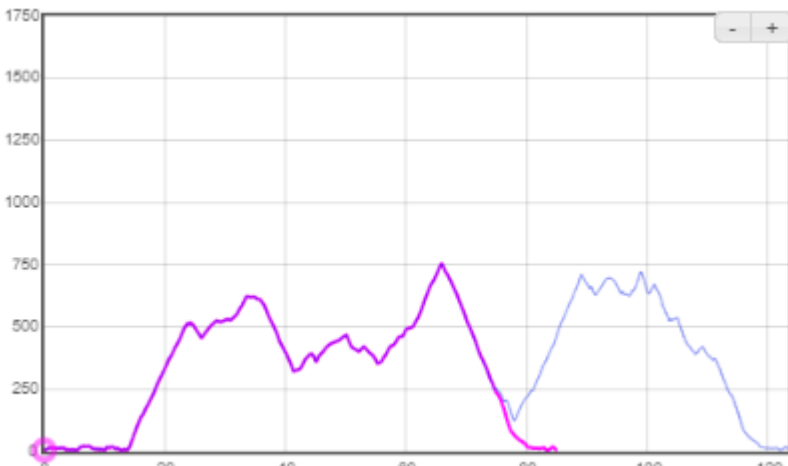
Challenge route: 94km | 1,650m

Côte d'Olmeto 311m (km 12)
Côte de Calvese 377m (km 36)
Col de Gradello 529m (km 61)



Emmanuelle on the
Col de Cortonu. (Stage 4)

Stage 4: Porticcio to Porticcio



The first 13km are along the coast, then we make a left turn on to the climb to the col de Gradella. This is a lovely, quiet, sinuous road with a steady gradient. The first 2km are lined by an avenue of eucalyptus trees. In a bend we pass a nineteenth century prison. Up higher the eucalyptus are replaced by the holm oaks, cork oaks, myrtle and strawberry trees of the *maquis*.

We continue on a minor road through several hilltop villages, traversing a hillside with a chaos of tumbling granite boulders, seemingly held back only by the thick, contorted roots of dense *maquis*. A bit higher up, there's plenty of shade from chestnut trees before the col Saint Georges (758m) at km 66.

From here there's a wonderful easy, fast descent. The Discovery route continues this all the way to Porticcio, while the Challenge route turns off up the Gorges du Prunelli for another climb.

It is a quiet, scenic road up the north-western side of the valley, well above the lake. We get two cols for the price of one, first at the head of the valley then the second shortly after turning back to the south west and the long descent back to Porticcio.

Discovery route: 85km | 1,370m

Col du Cortonu 523m (km 24)
Bocca di Gradello 529m (km 28)
Col Saint Georges 758m (km 66)

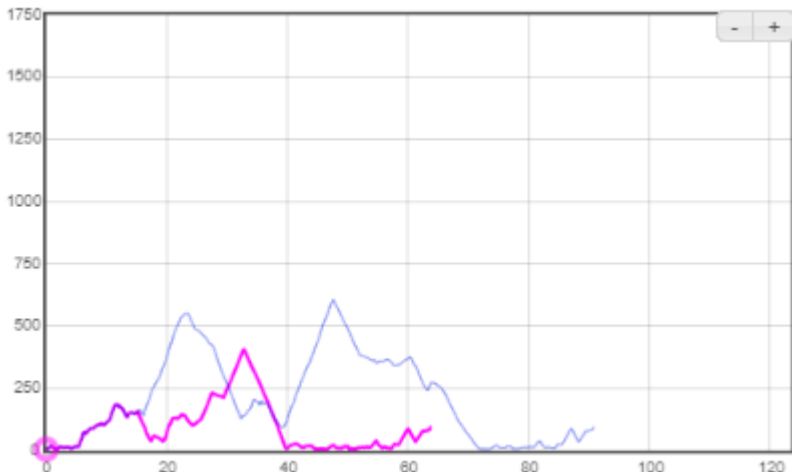
Challenge route: 123km | 2,250m

Col du Cortonu 523m (km 24)
Bocca di Gradello 529m (km 28)
Col Saint Georges 758m (km 66)
Bocca di Mercuju 715m (km 89)
Col de Cricheto 715m (km 99)



The coast road to
Cargèse (Stage 5)

Stage 5: Porticcio to Cargèse



After 4 days we need a bit of a rest, so this is the easiest day of the week. We turn off the main road 4km after leaving Porticcio and climb up and above the airport and the coastal plane. We ride through Bastellicaccia and a residential area on the ridge before the two routes separate.

The Discovery route drops back down to the valley floor and then makes a short climb to Afa, before joining the easy climb to the col de Linstincone (km 27) and on to the col de San Bastiano (km 32). From here there's a long, easy descent back down to sea level. From here on the route follows the coast road to Cargèse.

The Challenge route heads further inland and higher up to take on two other climbs, the Campianu at km 23 and the Sarzoggiu at km 47. These are quiet roads meandering through smallholdings and *maquis*, far from the tourist spots on the beach. The occasional village is replete with bougainvillea, oleander and the ever-present figs, and we pass several vineyards.

If the planned distance seems a bit short, we can easily add a loop to make the total ride 111km and 2,005m. You only have to ask!

Discovery route: 64km | 940m

Col de Linstincone (km 27.5)
Bocca di San Bastiano 413m (km 32.5)

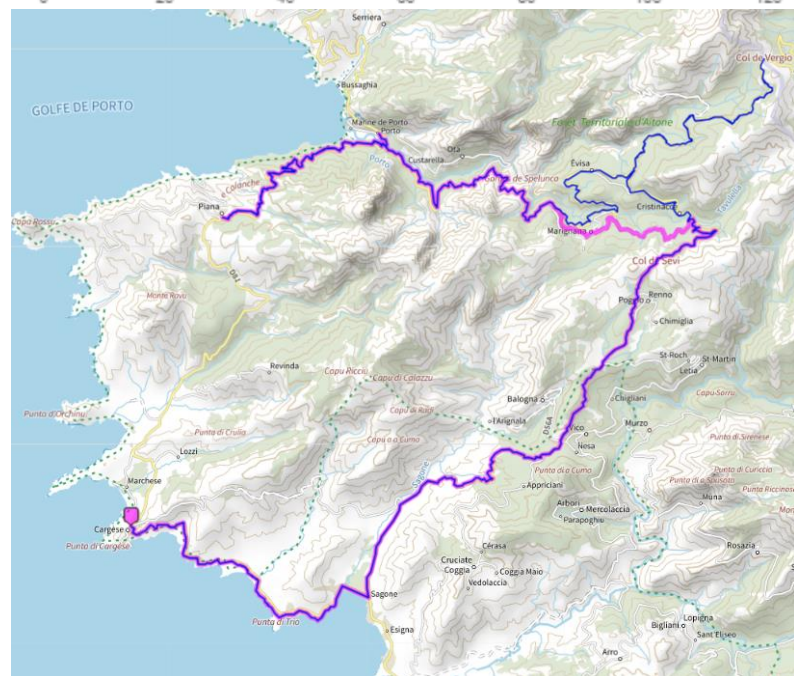
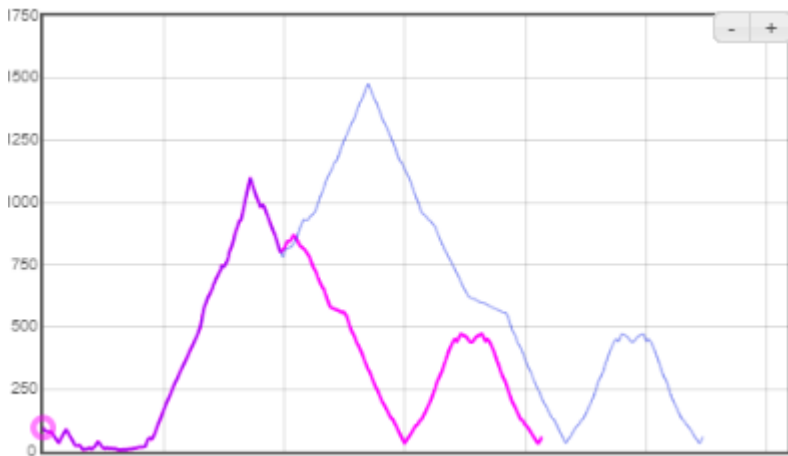
Challenge route: 91km | 1,590m

Bocca di Campianu 551m (km 23)
Bocca di Sarzoggiu 612m (km 47)
Bocca di Sant'Antonio 396m (km 61)



Descent of the Gorges
de la Spelunca (Stage 6)

Stage 6: Cargèse to Porto



If not quite the longest stage – we are saving that for last – this is definitely the most visually stunning.

Both routes begin by returning along the coast to Sagone, where we begin the 21km climb to the col de Sevi. This is an easy climb for the first 13km to Vico, from where the road gets significantly steeper, with several pitches at 13-14%. The climb is now far more irregular, with steep pitches interspersed with false flats and even slight descents.

The two routes separate in the descent. The Challenge goes on to climb the col de Vergio, the highest in Corsica, while the Discovery goes directly to the descent through the Gorges de la Spelunca.

This is a quite extraordinary scene of natural beauty: the rock formations are wild and dramatic, the red granite formed into fantastic shapes by the combined forces of tectonic plate movement and subsequent erosion by wind and water.

If possible, our final climb of the day is even more stunning than the gorges. We ride through the world-famous UNESCO heritage site of the Calanques de Piana, where the huge tortured red granite rock formations contrast against the deep azure sea.

Discovery route: 82km | 1,790m

Col de Sevi 1100m (km 34)
Côte de Piana 470m (km 69)

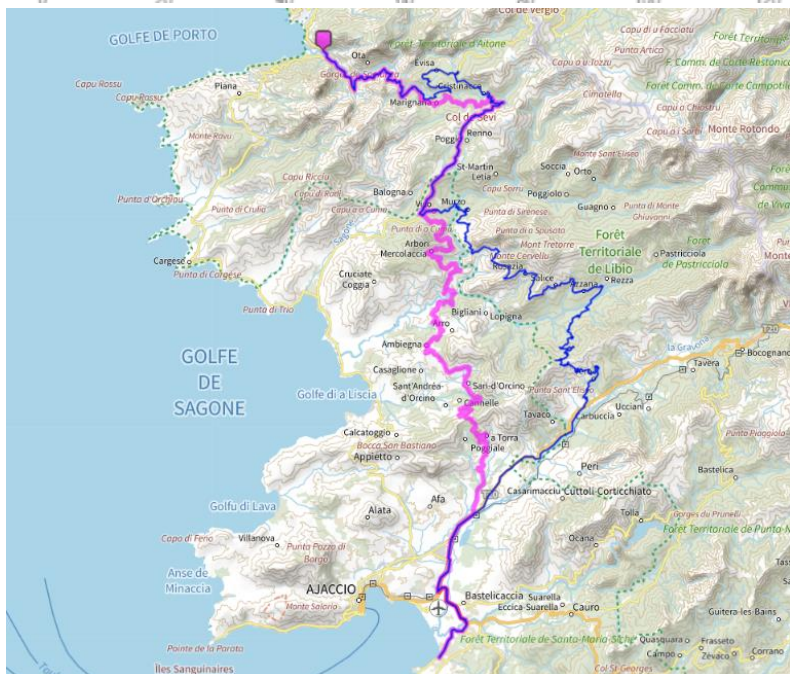
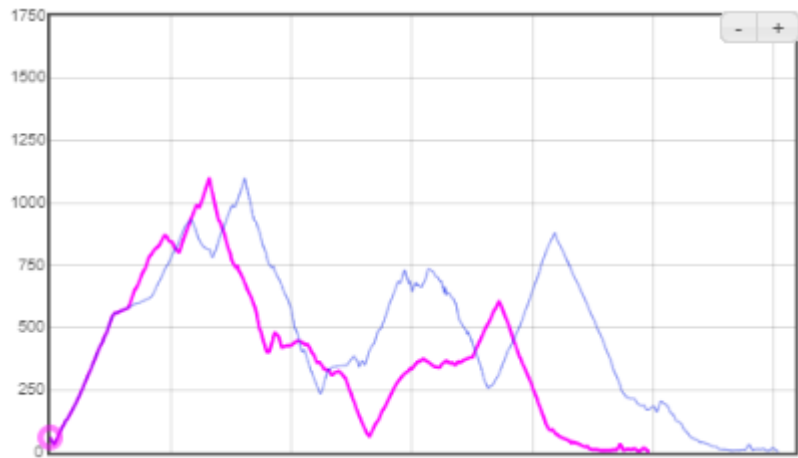
Challenge route: 109km | 2,425m

Col de Sevi 1100m (km 34)
Col de Vergio 1477m (km 53.5)
Côte de Piana 470m (km 96)



The coastline, viewed from the
Calanques de Piana (Stage 6)

Stage 7: Porto to Porticcio



Our final day is not only the longest, it also gives us the chance to see the fabulous Gorges de la Spelunca a second time. To add to the fun of this climb there is often an astonishing amount of livestock on the road. Black and brown pigs and piglets are anywhere and everywhere together with herds of long-haired goats, and higher up, cows and their calves. Beware, the piglets are very funny but can be a bit dangerous as they take fright, squeal and dart back and forth unpredictably.

Both routes go back over the col de Sevi and down to Vico, where the Challenge route takes a quiet meandering road into the interior before tackling the Bocca di Tartavellu, while the Discovery follows the more direct, but still quiet road over the Bocca di Sarzoggiu.

Both routes finish with a long easy run-in to Porticcio on a false-flat descent.

If anyone is feeling they haven't done enough, we can easily stretch this final ride to 134km and 3,175m by adding one more climb to enjoy before it's all over.

Discovery route: 99km | 1,935m

Col de Sevi 1100m 1100m (km 26)
Bocca di Sarzoggiu 615m (km 74)

Challenge route: 121km | 2,710m

Col de Sevi 1100m (km 32)
Bocca di Tartavellu 885m (km 83)



Dates and Hotels

APRIL	SEPT.	RIDE	HOTEL
Sat 19/4	Fri 5/9	<i>Arrival (nearest airport Ajaccio)*</i>	U Paradisu***, Porticcio
Sun 20/4	Sat 6/9	1. Porticcio to Propriano	Bartaccia****, Propriano
Mon 21/4	Sun 7/9	2. Loop from Propriano	Bartaccia****, Propriano
Tues 22/4	Mon 8/9	3. Propriano to Porticcio	U Paradisu***, Porticcio
Wed 23/4	Tue 9/9	4. Loop from Porticcio	U Paradisu***, Porticcio
Thu 24/4	Wed 10/9	5. Porticcio to Cargèse	Saint Jean**, Cargèse
Fri 25/4	Thu 11/9	6. Cargèse to Porto	Capo d'Orto***, Porto
Sat 26/4	Fri 12/9	7. Porto to Porticcio	U Paradisu***, Porticcio
Sun 27/4	Sat 13/9	<i>Departure (nearest airport Ajaccio)*</i>	

* You can arrive early and leave later if you wish; let us know and we will confirm the extra cost..



Services & Support

Daily briefing

- We provide a detailed briefing each evening, complete with a weather forecast, route profile and route conditions. During the ride we comment on local history, geology and of course the island's amazing vegetation and animal life.

Coaching

- Alpine Cols doesn't employ guides, only qualified cycling coaches. As such we are always available for coaching advice on any aspects of cycling performance.

Feed stations

- We provide two feed stations per day, the first mid-morning and the second early afternoon. The food is sourced locally, fresh and fully adapted to endurance cycling. Let us know if you have any special requirements or food allergies.

Support vehicle(s)

- If the group is at least nine persons, there will be two vehicles (otherwise just one). The vehicle(s) will transport your baggage between the hotels, set up the feed stations, deal with any mechanicals, and pick you up if you are too tired to continue.



PACKAGE PRICES

From **Sat April 19 to Sun April 27**

- Twin-share: **€3,125**
- Single supplement: **€325**

[BOOK](#)
[NOW](#)

From **Fri Sept. 5 to Sat Sept. 11**

- Twin-share: **€3,450**
- Single supplement: **€375**

[BOOK](#)
[NOW](#)

5% reduction for returning clients

10% reduction for a second trip in the same year

ADDITIONAL NIGHTS

Please contact us for your personal quote if you would like to stay additional nights in Corsica.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN YOUR PACKAGE

- Accommodation
- Meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- On-the-bike guiding, and coaching if desired
- On-the-road support vehicle with free energy drinks and snacks.
- Mechanical assistance
- Photographs taken during the week (digital copies)

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

- Travel to/from Ajaccio (Corsica)
- Airport transfers
- Bicycle hire: ask for help with this
- Minibar or drinks at the hotel bar
- Coffee or snacks during café stops
- Massages (optional extra)

Practical matters

Airport transfers

- The closest airport is Ajaccio. There are several daily flights from Marseille, Nice and Paris, and less frequent flights from other airports such as Brussels and Geneva. Taxis are available to take you to and from the hotel, which is just 15 minutes from the airport.

Weather

- The normal daytime maximum temperature in April is 18°C, whereas in September it is normally around 26°C. It is of course cooler at altitude.
- Rain is possible in either month but more likely in April.
- Bring cycling clothes appropriate for both wet and dry conditions and for temperatures between 5° and 30°C.

Shops, currency and language

- We have chosen the hotels carefully for their quality, their character and their location. There are always local cafés, pastry shops and supermarkets close by.
- The currency in France is the Euro. Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted or can be used to withdraw Euros from a bank machine.
- English is reasonably well understood, but not by everybody!

Staying over

- It would be a pity to arrive at the last minute and leave at the first opportunity: there is so much to see and do in this beautiful part of the world! If you would like to extend your trip, please let us know and we will suggest some options.



Filling water bottles
in Olivese(Stage 1)

Suggested Kit List

ITEM	CHECK
Bike (unless hiring)	
Spare tyres & inner tubes (2 each)	
Spare brake pads	
Spare derailleur hanger	
Any special tools or spare parts	
Lights (front and back)	
Charger for electronic gears	
Heart rate chest strap	
Cycling computer & charger	
Mobile phone & charger, adaptor	
Cycling helmet	
Water bottles (2)	
Base layer short sleeve	
Base layer long sleeve	
Cycling jerseys short sleeve	
Cycling jerseys long sleeve	
Cycling shorts	
Cycling tights $\frac{3}{4}$ or long	

ITEM	CHECK
Cycling socks	
Cycling cap or balaclava	
Cycling gloves (summer)	
Cycling gloves (long, waterproof)	
Cycling gloves (long, cold weather)	
Arm warmers and leg warmers	
Warm waterproof jacket	
Lightweight rain jacket	
Windproof jacket	
Cycling sun glasses	
Cycling shoes (with spare cleats)	
Waterproof overshoes	
Chamois cream	
Sun cream	
Personal pharmacy	
Insurance	
Medical certificate	
Day bag (for the van)	

Additional kit recommendations

Day bag

Your day bag should contain anything you might need during the day's ride but don't want to carry from the start. Bear in mind that the van may NOT be close to you later in the day when you need it, so you need to think ahead and be able to carry what you need on your bike. Autonomy is less risky than dependence!

- Overshoes
- Arm & leg warmers
- Gloves (at least two: waterproof and thermal)
- Neck warmer and riding cap/thermal bonnet
- Jackets & gilets: at least three: thermal, waterproof, lightweight.
- Spare parts: cleats, tyre, inner tubes, brake pads
- Bike lights, front & back (required for poor light conditions)
- Sunscreen and chamois cream.

The key to riding in the mountains in variable weather is layering. Several options of light, compact layers are much better than one heavy jacket.

Personal pharmacy

- Magnesium (may help with recovery)
- Multi-vitamins (may help with recovery)
- Skin-wound dressings (vital for dressing minor cuts, burns or road-rash; hydrocolloid are best)
- Anti-inflammatory pills (may help with soft-tissue injuries)
- Any other tried-and-tested personal items

Tips before travel

Preparing your bike

- Make sure you have appropriate gears. We recommend a **compact chainset (50/34)** and a **cassette suitable for steep climbs** (such as **11/32** or better).
- The bike should have new puncture-resistant tyres. Many of the roads have a rough, granular surface and sharp flints are common, especially if it has rained recently. We recommend at least 27mm tyres, better still 30-35mm. You can run these at lower pressure for increased comfort.
- Please get your bike serviced by a qualified mechanic. Tell the mechanic that you will be riding 700 km or so through the mountains so the bike needs a thorough check, including the bottom bracket, the head tube and the wheels as well as the obvious brakes, gears, cables & chain.
- Ride the bike for at least 50km after the service to make sure any stretch in the cables or other kinks are ironed out.

Travelling with your bike

- If you are new to travelling with your bike, give yourself plenty of time to pack it, preferably the day before travel.
- Follow the instructions of the bike box manufacturer carefully.
- Remember to reduce the pressure in your tyres and leave the CO2 cylinders at home.
- Include any special tools required to re-assemble your bike.
- If you need help setting up your bike on arrival we will be happy to assist.

Insurance

Accident & illness

Please note that you must have insurance in place in order to cover the cost of assistance and repatriation in the event of accident or illness. The insurance must provide specific cover for cycling and should cover the following risks:

- medical expenses,
- personal accident,
- personal liability,
- emergency rescue,
- repatriation if you become too ill to travel,
- cancellation or curtailment of your holiday,
- travel delay,
- loss or delay to your baggage,
- loss or theft of personal effects and legal expenses.

If you are based in the UK, we suggest you contact one of the specialist cycling insurance firms.

Cancellation

You should also take out cancellation insurance to cover the cost of your cycling holiday should you be forced to cancel for any reason. Cancellation charges will be applied on the following scale:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| – More than 8 weeks prior to your holiday start date: | Deposit only |
| – 4-8 Weeks prior to your holiday start date: | 50% of the total amount invoiced |
| – Less than 4 weeks prior to your holiday start date: | 100% of the total amount invoiced |



Speloncato,
one of the numerous
hilltop villages in Corsica