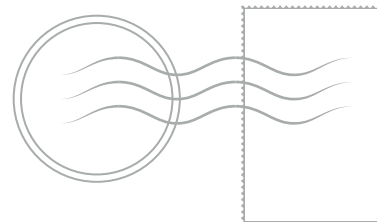


POSTCARD

Gibraltar



Go from heart-pumping highs to hair-raising lows on an active escape in Gibraltar, says **Juliet Dennis**

There's something to be said for cycling up a steep hill but not feeling so out of puff you can't enjoy the view. So the beauty of riding a state-of-the-art e-bike was not lost on me as I pedalled up the slopes of the Rock of Gibraltar.

I could enjoy the spectacular vista – the shimmering sea, harbour brimming with fancy yachts, sandy beaches and multicoloured houses fringed by a rainbow of beach umbrellas – while still keeping an eye on the rocky outcrop up ahead.

Stuart Hedley, founder of EBike-Gibraltar, was brimming with information about the island's history and anecdotes as we took in the Pillars of Hercules, the illuminated rocks inside St Michael's Cave, the Skywalk viewing platform and even a few of the famous Barbary macaques.

Gibraltar might not be the first destination that comes to mind for an active break, but with everything from hardcore adventures to more-chilled pursuits, exploring Gibraltar the active way may persuade clients to give it a try.

A tour of Lower St Michael's Cave, used as a military hospital in the Second World War, had the group at last year's Aito 'famference' donning helmets and headtorches to explore its array of underground caverns. There were stalactites and stalagmites, narrow passages to crawl through and rocks to climb up – just be ready for slippery footing and a wet bottom!

I opted to go up rather than down with a heart-pumping hike to the top of the Mediterranean Steps – no mean feat in the hot sunshine, but worth the effort. Each step up the hillside brought more impressive views, while our guide gave us a potted history of Gibraltar and its flora and fauna until we finally made it to the top, enjoying a true sense of fulfilment at having reached the summit.

Paddleboarding offered a glimpse of the region from a different but equally impressive perspective with guide Tom Cawthorn, the laid-back founder of In2adventures, who introduced the activity to Gibraltar 12 years ago.

With sea conditions as calm and chilled as our guide, we managed not only to stand up on our boards but also to avoid any embarrassing falls into the water – surely an achievement to write home about in itself? **TW**



BOOK IT

Visions Holiday Group offers three nights' B&B at the Sunborn Gibraltar Yacht Hotel Resort from £770, including easyJet flights departing October 16. The UK-EU Treaty on Gibraltar was signed in July, introducing a dual border check on arrival to facilitate easier access across the land border to Spain and the Schengen Area.

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TOP: View from the Mediterranean Steps
ABOVE: Exploring with EBike-Gibraltar

PICTURES: Juliet Dennis; Shutterstock/Mikhail Grachikov