



## EUROPEAN CYCLE ROUTES

Speed up your cycling sales with **Katie McGonagle's** round up of choice routes across the Channel



### SCENIC SPAIN

Make the most of the late summer sunshine with a cycling trip to Murcia, where bikers will find quiet backroads, gentle traffic-free paths and pretty, white-washed villages. Explore has a point-to-point journey starting in Murcia, visiting the holy city of Caravaca de la Cruz, stopping off at shrines and fortresses, and ending with a scenic cycle along the Segura River back to the city.

**Book it:** Explore's seven-day Cycle Southern Spain, rated moderate, starts at £870 including flights, six nights' accommodation, breakfast, bike hire and services of a tour leader/driver. [explore.co.uk](http://explore.co.uk)

### NO-FUSS NORWAY

Get closer to nature in the laid-back Lofoten Islands with a holiday that combines biking along its colourful coastlines with cruising on expedition vessel *Strønstad*. The Norwegian archipelago – home to charming harbour towns and rolling green landscapes – is ideal for an easy-paced biking holiday, with stops including the much-photographed white-sand beach of Uttakleiv and the pretty fishing village of Nusfjord.

**Book it:** Magnetic North Travel's Cruise and Cycle the Lofoten Islands starts at £2,415 based on two sharing a double cabin on a full-board basis, with guided cycling and hiking. Flights not included. [magneticnorthtravel.com](http://magneticnorthtravel.com)



### ROMAN HOLIDAY

From the timeless magic of Lake Bled to the timeless monuments of ancient Rome, the route from the foothills of the Julian Alps, on the shores of Slovenia's most famous lake, to the idyllic Italian coast is one of the most captivating in Europe. Expect lush forests and shady valleys, tranquil vineyards and tiny villages, ending on the Adriatic island of Grado.

**Book it:** Headwater offers a 10-night, 135-mile trail priced at £2,195, including flights from Heathrow to Ljubljana, accommodation and some meals. [headwater.com](http://headwater.com)

### FRENCH FANCY

Specialist operator Cycling for Softies has seen summer bookings to France grow by 21% year on year, with the Loire Valley its most popular. The self-guided Châteaux of the Loire tour takes cyclists past fairytale castles and riverside spots that were once the summer retreat of the French and English elite. The route takes in the Loire à Vélo cycle path and the manicured gardens of Château de Villandry.

**Book it:** The 'easy' self-guided trip takes between three and seven nights, starting at £615. The price includes hotel accommodation, dinners, route maps and luggage transfers. [cycling-for-softies.co.uk](http://cycling-for-softies.co.uk)



### BORDER CONTROL

Lake Constance – set at the point where Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein meet – offers some of the most scenic cycling in central Europe, with routes ranging from flat lakeside ambles to more challenging mountain ascents. A new digital map has plotted 17 cycling routes around the region, aimed at different abilities, with QR codes offering riders information as they go, along with clear details on distances, altitude, signposting and level of difficulty.

**Book it:** The Lake Constance Bike Route is a 170-mile path around the lake, travelling through Germany, Austria and Switzerland. [lake-constance.com/en](http://lake-constance.com/en)