



EXPERIENCEPLUS!
BICYCLE TOURS SINCE 1972

Bicycling Catalonia's Costa Brava May 22nd – June 6th, 2014

Day 1 – Girona

Highlights: Girona, Jewish Museum and Historic Center

We meet in the medieval town of Girona today. We highly recommend coming a day or two early to explore this city and begin your exploration of the Catalan culture. We'll fit bicycles this early afternoon around 2.00pm, and recommend a test ride along the river bike path. Afterwards we will enjoy our first dinner together. Mileage - optional

This evening's hotel:

**Hotel Històric
C/ Bellmirall 4A
17004 Girona**

(+34) 972 22 35 83

Tour Leader phone numbers:

**Philipp
Montse
Loic**

**(+34) 667982055
(+34) 650 818 499
(+34) 637 969 758**

In an emergency call 112

This is a toll free call from all Spanish phones. And English speaking service is available.

Today's schedule: We'll meet today at 2 pm in the Hotel Historic to fit our bikes. We'll meet for a soft drink, introductions and a safety talk, before fitting bikes. Afterwards those who want can go for a test ride.

Dinner: Dinner is together.

You Might Like to Know:

Welcome to **Girona**: a city with more history and changes in power than any other city in Europe. The first settlers here were the Iberians and they established themselves in villages around Girona. During the Sertorian wars in 82-72 BC, C. Pompey built an oppidum, a large settlement, specifically constructed to defend the area. For the next 900 years, the city underwent several upheavals and transfers of power between the Romans, the Moors, Charlemagne, and eventually incorporated into the countship of Barcelona in 878.

In the 12th century, Girona's Jewish community began to grow. The 13th century marked a robust time of growth for the Jewish community; the city hosted one of the most important Kabbalistic Jewish schools in Europe. The Kabbalistic School of Girona was where the noted Rabbi Nahmanides (or Bonastruc Ça Porta) became Grand Rabbi of Catalonia. Kabbalah, an esoteric discipline, emerged towards the end of the 12th century in the south of France and Spain during the mystical Jewish revival in Ottoman Palestine. The main focus of Kabbalah is to examine the relationship between the mortal universe and the eternal 'Ein Sof;' it serves as a foundation for Judaism's mysticism, but is not a denomination in itself.





Day 2 – Girona to Costa Brava

Highlights: Cycling the Via Verde, quiet roads, beach town,

We join one of the most extensive networks of bike paths and rail to trail systems in Spain today on part of our ride as we pedal south and east towards the coast. We'll weave through small farm roads and on the bike path through towns to avoid traffic on our way to our beach front hotel. Enjoy a dip in the Mediterranean, or some people watching this afternoon before dinner together. Distance: 46 km (26 miles).

This evening's hotel:

Hotel St Pol (+34) 972 321 070
Platja de Sant Pol, 125
17220 St Feliu de Guíxols

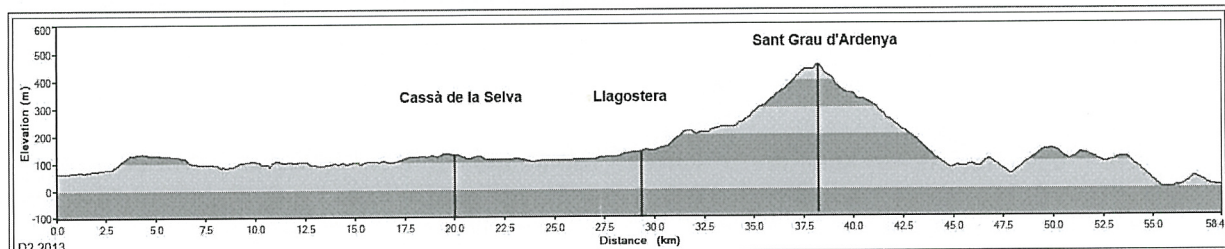
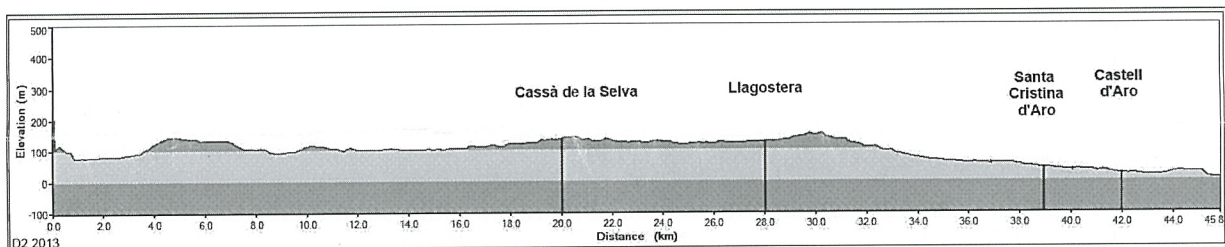
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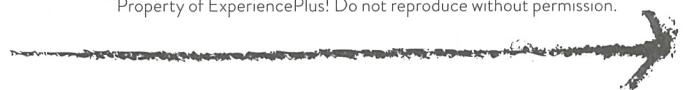
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Today's ride: We will exit Girona on the riverfront bike path before winding our way towards open farmland. From Llagostera (km 27) we will have two riding options. The first one is rail to trail converted hard packed bike path, perfectly accessible with any of our bikes to San Feliu. It winds through small towns all the way to the coast. The second option for those who feel like taking a climb is a ride up to Sant Grau d'Ardenya, a 350m climb takes us to a beautiful view of the coast (follow signs towards "San Grau"). After coming down, there are rolling hills along the coast to Sant Feliu de Guixols. This option adds 12 km longer to the route. Please let us know which route you intend to ride. We'll clearly mark the options at the turn off.



Lunch and Dinner: We recommend grabbing lunch in Llagostera no matter what ride you decide to take. Those who will climb the Sant Grau d'Ardenya should eat something in Llagostera or pick up



supplies there because afterwards there are not many options until kilometer 50. For those who will follow the rail to trail (or green way) there are other options between Llagostera and Sant Feliu, such as Santa Cristina d'Aro at km 38 or Castell d'Aro at kilometer 41. Dinner together tonight with a view of the beach!

You might like to know:

The coast was named Costa Brava by Ferran Agulló (in Català, Ferran Agulló i Vidal) in an article published in Catalan newspaper 1908. This term, according to Agulló, a journalist born in Girona, referred to the rugged landscape of the Mediterranean coast running from the river Tordera, near Blanes, to Banyuls. **Costa** is the Catalan and Spanish word for 'coast', while **Brava** means 'rugged' or 'wild'. This term was officially recognized and promoted in the 1960s as it was deemed suitable to promote tourism in the region. Before Costa Brava became the official name, other names were suggested, such as Costa Grega (Greek Coast), Costa del Corall (Coral Coast), Costa Serena (Serene Coast), Costes de Llevant (Levant Coasts) or Marina de l'Empordà (Empordà Marine).

Until World War I the beaches along the coast of Catalonia were frequented mostly by locals on the weekends. At the time global beach tourists had discovered the Côte d'Azur but the Costa Brava yet was unknown.

In the 1950s, the Spanish government and local entrepreneurs identified the Costa Brava a potentially interesting beach tourism destination as an alternative to the Côte d'Azur. The market would be Northern Europe and especially, the United Kingdom and France. The combination of a very good summer climate, nature, excellent beaches and a favorable foreign exchange rate was exploited and development started with construction of hotels and apartments in such seaside resorts as Blanes, Tossa de Mar, and Lloret de Mar.

While part of the Costa Brava coastline lent itself to this type of development on a very large scale, other parts have retained a more traditional appeal. We'll be riding by many of the smaller and more traditional towns on this trip but tonight's beachfront hotel is an example of the middle ground between highly developed beach resort and older historic fishing towns.

Spanish/Catalan Lesson of the Day: Directions: "*izquierda*" is left; "*derecha*" is right; watch out because "*derecho*" is straight (very similar to right!).

You'll notice that if you ask for directions people will use landmarks to give directions more than mileage-so you take a left at the tree and then a right at the church, etc. If you want to ask where something (a city, town or street) is, you can ask "*donde está...*" – remember, if you want to ask for a town down the road, ask for the next little town on the map.

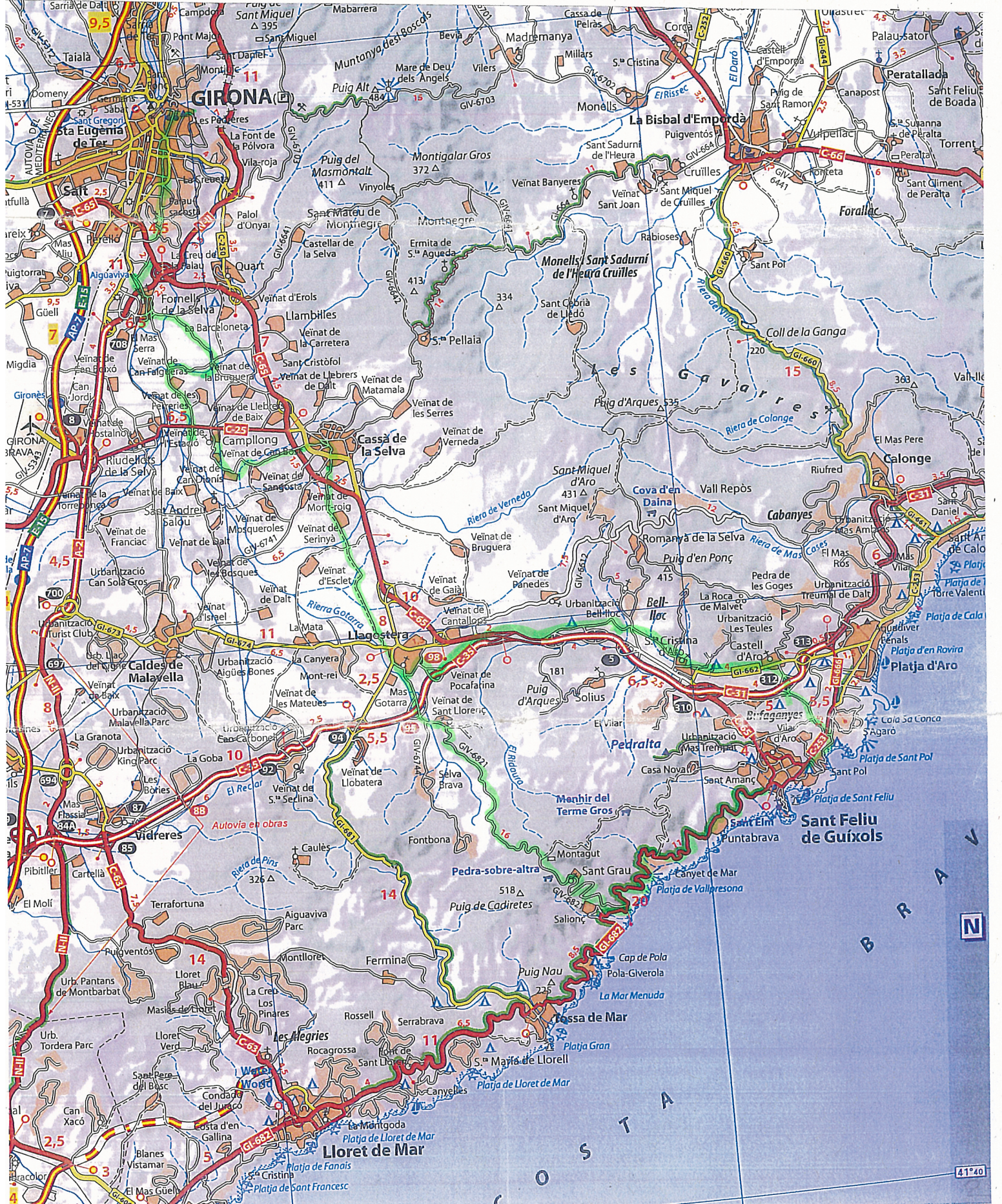
In catalan, "*esquerra*" is left and "*dreta*" is right, like in Spanish if someone says "*tot dret*" means straight, also Catalans use landmarks for directions. To ask where something is, you might say "*on esta...?*" or "*on es troba...?*"

Day 2: Bicycle to Sant Feliu de Guíxols. Bike path

Towns for navigation: Cassa de la Selva (20 km) Llagostera (29km) – Santa Cristina d’Aro (39 km) – Castell d’Aro (42 km) Sant Feliu de Guixols (46 km)

Day 2: Bicycle to Sant Feliu de Guíxols. Climbing St Grau

Towns for navigation: Cassa de la Selva (20 km) – Llagostera (29km) St Grau (Top of climb) (38 km) – Canyet de Mar (47 km) Sant Feliu de Guixols (58 km)





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BICYCLE TOURS SINCE 1972

Bicycling Catalonia's Costa Brava

May 22nd -28th, 2014

Day 3– Costa Brava - Monells

Highlights: Beaches, rural bicycling, castles and medieval towns

Today we'll ride along the coast to Palamos, a great coffee stop and perfect opportunity for one last dip in the sea before we head inland over rolling hills. Many of the towns we'll pass through on today's ride were once fortified Roman and medieval cities, so be sure to take time to meander the tiny streets. Monells, our destination this evening, is perhaps the best preserved as the center is entirely pedestrian and its main square is one of the most beautiful overall medieval towns in the area. We'll stay just outside of town and enjoy this little corner of Catalonia for the next few days. Mileage 52 kms (32 miles)

This evening's hotel:

Hotel els Arcs de Monells
Carrer Vilanova 1,
Monells (Girona)

Tel: 972 63 03 04

Tour Leader telephone numbers:

Philipp
Montse
Loic

(+34) 667 982 055

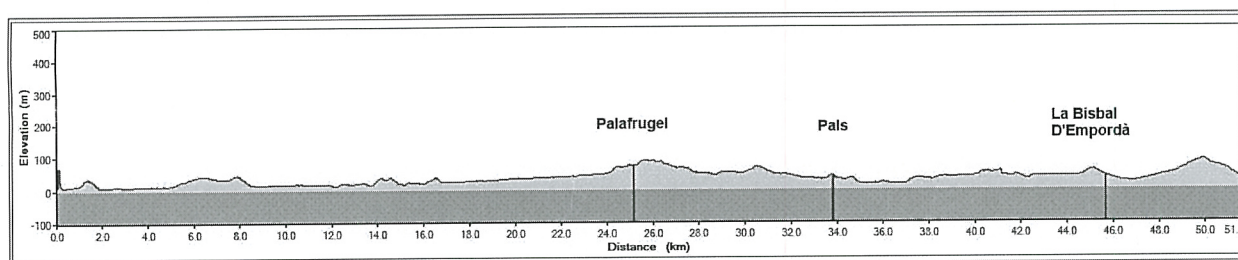
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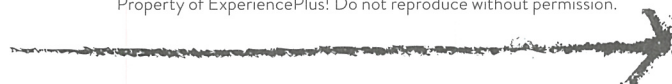
Today's ride: We start the day riding along the coast until we reach Palamós and then head into the beautiful "Cala fosca" beach, the last opportunity of the day of enjoying the beach. Around kilometer 21 there is a short unpaved section of compact dirt. Our route turns inland through some smaller towns, the biggest one is Palafrugell and we recommend enjoying lunch there. You'll see a few large wineries en route and in fact wine is an important product from this area. Around kilometer 39 there is a short unpaved section of compact dirt.



Lunch and Dinner: We suggest lunch in Pals (km 34). Dinner together.

You might like to know:

Monells is meant to be the medieval town with the most beautiful square, so as Peratallada is known for its magnificent medieval look. In 1975 the town was designated an Artistic and Historic town and restrictions on new modern looking buildings were set in place. Today it retains 3 different eras of defensive walls and its medieval style arcaded houses and narrow streets are its main attraction.



The walls were built between the XII and XIII centuries and are not perfectly circular due to the high amount of rock in the ground around town.

All medieval cities also must have a castle – and Peratallada does not disappoint. **The Castillo** is centrally located and a distinct visual landmark of town. The castle, which belonged to the lineage of Peratallada, was likely constructed around 1065 although with constant renovations in later centuries. From here the rest of town spreads out.

Also of note is the **Tower of the Hours**, the second highest building in Peratallada, named for once having a clock, the main instrument that marked the life of the inhabitants of the town. It was built in the twelfth century.

St. Stephen's Church, St. Stephen's parish-Sant Esteve in Catalan, is another gem of medieval architecture in Peratallada. Its construction, outside the city walls likely was from the late twelfth century into the thirteenth. Chapels on the sides date to the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, which gives the church a diverse set of architectural styles inside if you go visit it.

Spanish/Catalan Lesson of the Day: Tapas are one of the most common ways to eat, drink and snack in Spain. Sometimes the word “tapas” just refers to the size or portion of whatever food you are ordering (so you will see the “tapas” size or the “full” “*ración or media ración*” size on some menus). In many bars the cold tapas are in the display case and in a good café you’ll find a list of hot tapas on the wall (which they make in the kitchen). The term to eat tapas is to “*picar*” or “*tapear*”. You might hear a bartender ask if you want something to “*picar*” which means to snack on. Cold tapas often are cold salads made up of a combination of things including olives, eggs, green peppers, beans and other delightful tidbits. Warm tapas are usually made of meat in sauces, shell fish or other fish with tasty sauces or the famous *Tortilla Española* – Spanish Omelette made with potatoes and eggs.

In catalan “Tapas” are also called “tapas”, portion is called “*ració*” or “*porció*”, depending on portion size it might be called, full portion “*ració/porció*” or half portion “*mitja ració/porció*”. To eat tapas in catalan is called “*picar*” like in spanish, or “*tapejar*”. Potatoe omelette is called “*truita de patates*” few people would call it “spanish omelette”: “*truita espanyola*”.

Day 3 Bicycle to Monells

Towns for Navigation: Platja d'Aro (3 km) – St Antoni de Calonge (7 km) – La Fosca (15 km) – Palafrugell (24 km) – Pals (33 km) – Peratallada (42 km) – La Bisbal D'Empordà (45 km) – Cruilles (49 km) – Monells (52 km).

