

Bicycle Adventure Club Tips for First Time BAC Ride Participants

As a first time ride participant, there are important factors you should be aware of when considering any BAC trip. This is your vacation, and you will want to be fully aware of the significant difference between a BAC bike trip and a commercial bike trip. BAC trips are an excellent value. Many BAC trips cycle the same areas, and stay at many of the same hotels that commercial trips use. However, BAC trips cost less than similar commercial cycling trips.

The first thing you should do is familiarize yourself with the BAC ride ratings and decide what rating level trip best suits your cycling ability. When you have determined what trip ratings match your ability, look at the trips that have openings. If you find a trip that may interest you, contact the leader by submitting a Request to Participate on the BAC website. Do not send a deposit until requested by the ride leader.

Even the easiest level trip requires participants to be in good physical shape and do some training. A bicycling vacation is an excellent way to see a locale in a manner that few tourists do. However, a BAC trip does require participants to have a spirit of adventure, be independent, self sufficient and flexible. Commercial bicycle touring companies are accustomed to customers who are not “cyclists”, but who want to go on a bike vacation. BAC is a bicycle touring club and members are expected to be reasonably accomplished cyclists.

If you are interested in cycling in a foreign country, be aware that the customs, the people, the politics, food and accommodations are different than what you may be accustomed to at home. If you appreciate and respect these differences, you will get the most enjoyment from the trip.

Following are some key factors and expectations that BAC trip participants should consider.

- There is no standard BAC trip. BAC tour leaders have a great deal of latitude in planning a trip. Most trips are organized completely by BAC volunteer leaders, but some overseas trips are supported by commercial tour companies. The trips with commercial tour companies may include more support and amenities. Trip accommodations and meals may vary from high end to budget, depending on the ride leader and the cost of the trip. Carefully read the “Ride Description”. If you have any question about any aspect of the trip, contact the ride leader.
- BAC tour leaders are volunteers. The tour is also their vacation. They have generously given their time and spent countless hours organizing and planning the tour. They are responsible for making the hotel reservations, planning the dining options, the routes, providing maps, writing the cue sheets, renting the van and countless other details.
- The cost of the trip is usually based on two participants sharing a room. A single supplement may increase your cost substantially and will be available only at a leader’s discretion.

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- Participants must be in good physical shape. Riders must be able to ride from hotel to hotel in any type of weather. The cumulative affects of a multi-day bicycle tour in all kinds of weather are far more demanding than riding 50 miles on a club ride.
- Riders must train for the trips. The amount of training will depend on the ride rating level of the trip that you want to take. Training normally would consist of participants riding 3 to 5 days a week and averaging 75 to 100 miles per week. This training should last for at least two months before the trip and include hill climbing. Don't delude yourself and think that you can ride yourself into shape on the trip.
- Participants have to be able to read a map, use a compass, and navigate on their own. Participants don't usually ride in a large group, but often buddy up with other riders.
- Participants should be comfortable riding on roads with traffic. Although leaders take care to choose routes with minimum traffic, at times it's unavoidable.
- Participants are required to load and unload their luggage and transport it to their room. Most trips have a luggage restriction due to the size of the van.
- The van only has room for the luggage and isn't available to transport tired riders. The van is used solely for transporting the luggage and doesn't follow the route or support the riders. On BAC trips supported by commercial tour companies, SAG support may be provided.
- Ride leaders may have tour participants share the driving to minimize cost. Please check with the leader to find out if you'll be required to help with the driving.
- For overseas trips, tour leaders often choose hotels that reflect the character and charm of the region. Accommodations are often limited by what is available in the area. Each hotel may be unique, and the rooms usually vary in size. Most accommodations will have private bathrooms, with showers or tubs. Please be flexible if there is something that you don't like about your room.
- Ride leaders may discourage and may not accommodate special meals or dietary requests on evenings when they are planning group meals. However, this option is up to the discretion of the leader.
- Participants provide their bicycle, and are responsible for maintenance and repair of their bicycle. Participants must know how to fix a flat and do minor bicycle maintenance.
- Cancellations policies and refunds are determined by the ride leader. The BAC Ride Registration Fee is not refundable. If you cancel too late, it may be necessary for the ride leader to keep your entire deposit and possibly request additional payment.
- Review the following documents on the BAC website: "Waiver and Release of Liability, and Application for Ride"; and "What is BAC and How Does it Work?". To participate in a BAC trip, you must accept and sign both the Application for Ride and the Waiver and Release of Liability.