



# Tourissimo

ACTIVE TRAVEL IN ITALY

## A Quick Guide To Cycling Tour Levels

by Beppe Salerno



## A Quick Guide To Cycling Tour Levels

A cycling vacation or bike tour is one of the most exciting holiday activities you must try.

Yes, it is physically demanding, but the rewards are incredible: visiting scenic towns, ride through beautiful hillsides, dance with friendly locals, taste a breath of fresh air, enjoy a sense of camaraderie and have a unique experience not found in the urban jungle.



Some people even embrace a new, healthier lifestyle after a bike trip. Personally, I saw guests coming back the next year fitter and much more confident on the bike.

If you're new to cycling vacations, it can be a challenge to find a suitable package for you or your group.

**My goal is to help you sort through all of the “mess” and choose a challenging, yet fulfilling bike tour.**

## Typical types of packages

There are 3 types of tours available for you.

Although most companies come up with their own version, it basically boils down into 3 categories:

- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced

A beginner tour is usually 10 to 30 miles long per day. It is ideal for casual cyclists that engage in light to medium physical activities. Beginners ride along flat roads and occasional climbs. If you want to picture a beginner ride, imagine your mom or your kid riding with you and ask yourself:

“Which ride is perfect for them, something they’ll enjoy?” Chances are, you’ll choose a beginner tour. Typically, family tours fall into this category.

An intermediate tour is about 35 to 40 miles long per day. It involves up and down riding and occasional climbs. An intermediate cyclist engages in medium to advanced physical activities. They might even be riding for some time now and want to prepare themselves for a higher level of competition.





These tours are perfect for groups who enjoy a more challenging ride, but don't want a hammer fest.

An advanced tour is about 45 to 100 (or more) miles per day. These tours involve back-to-back riding days that can not be improvised. Advanced cyclists are in for a treat as they trudge up mountains, undulating pathways and rolling hills. They are top-flight athletes or individuals who engage in advanced physical activities.



## Different companies, different packages

You'll notice that most companies offering bike tours have their own metrics to gauge which package is perfect for you.

For example, Backroads, the largest active travel company, sets the standards and provides lots of objective data. Meanwhile, Duvine assesses your experience in cycling and your level of fitness. Both companies give you a good contrasting approach.

There might be other factors that affect your decision. For example, you're probably looking for the Objective factor – a certain number or tangible goal you'd like to reach. Some examples are: feet climbed and miles ridden. Most tours will list these figures.

Others might be looking for Subjective factors that answer questions like: "How does hitting those goals actually feel?" For example, sure you can ride 100 miles in a day on a tour. But if you're not going to be able to ride the next day, then you should pick an easier tour or focus on training.

As you can see, comparing types of packages can be a challenge already. **However, it's hard to buy into something without considering that one factor that directly affects you... your experience.**





## Experience matters

A set package is hard to quantify simply because each of us has unique physical characteristics.



For example, a 20 mile ride can be peanuts for me, but a big hurdle for you. A 3000-foot elevation gain is just a rehearsal for me, but could be a gruelling obstacle for you. A beginner's package for you might be an advanced level to the next person.

In my opinion, the best gauge is your own experience. **How or why you ride a bike before a tour is a good basis to come up with the perfect package for you.**

Ask yourself: Are you a casual, urban cyclist who rides around town during lazy, Sunday afternoons? Are you an office worker whose daily ride involves a mad dash in the middle of morning rush hour? Do you ride 2 to 3 times a

week to stay healthy or have fun with your friends? Or, are you a serious triathlete who happens to treat cycling as part of a workout?

It's also important to note that each route has its own difficulty and challenges. So, if you're used to ride around a paved, covered parkway, then, a day's worth of riding on a hilly back road may not be suitable to you.

Someone who doesn't ride up mountains won't be able to ride up mountains for a whole week. You don't want to pick a tour where there's a lot of climbing if you mostly train on flat land.

But whether you're an experienced rider or not, there is an important tool available to make your way around tours.





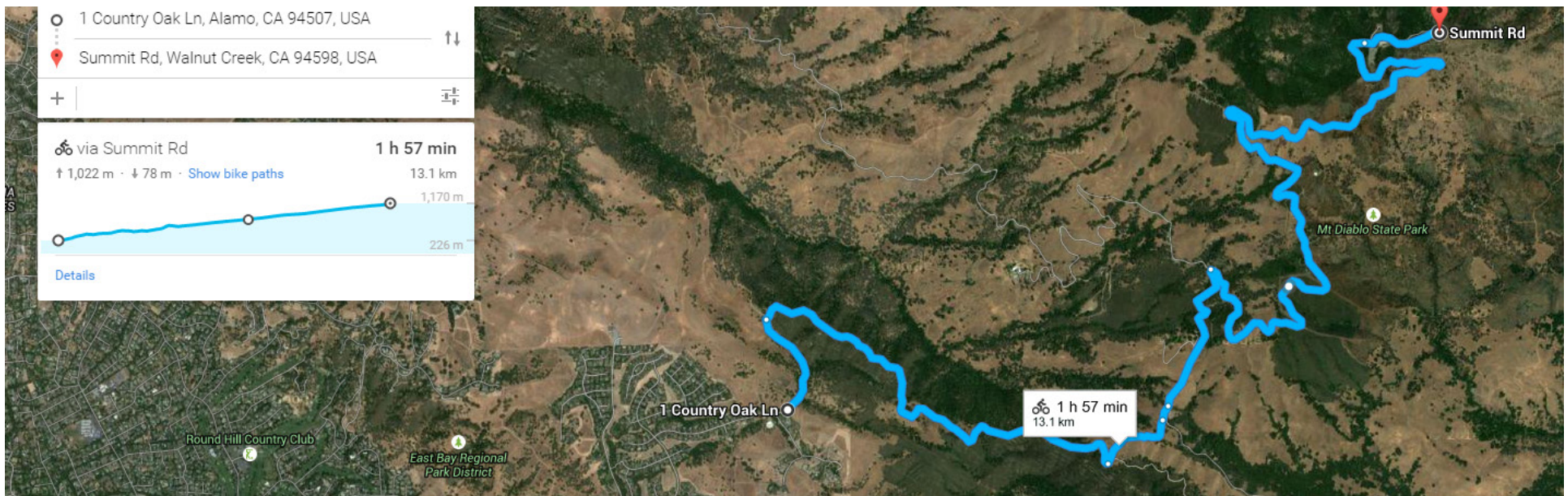
## Are elevation charts useful?

In May 2014, Google quietly launched elevation data for the desktop version of Google Maps.

Elevation charts are useful tools to help you get a sense of the topography and elevation of an area while giving an exact feet or meter you'll have to climb or descend.

It will also predict how much you have to spend during the ascent and the descent. It can even identify unknown routes that might present new challenges – and a little bit of competition – with your friends.

There are also several smart phone apps that can register your ride and then display the elevation chart.





## Trust the experts

99% of the time, a salesperson that tries to describe a ride and sell you into a tour program, has not ridden it himself.

Worse, he may not be even physically fit to ride around the block let alone complete a tour. **This is where Tourissimo stands out.**

Your expert tour managers, guides and yours truly, Beppe Salerno, will lead you on every terrain, peaks and turn. We are certified coaches who have competed in cycling events such as: Cape Epic (South Africa), Transrockies (Canada) and Iron Bike (Italy).

We will guide you to the right type of bike tour based on your fitness level and type of terrain you are used to. We even encourage participants to prepare by getting in shape months before the tour.

With local, friendly guides and expert coaches, expect your tour to be one of the most memorable holidays in your life. We have fun, surprising places for you to enjoy.

**Live Italy.**

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# Thanks!

Thank you for reading “A Quick Guide To Cycling Tour Levels.” We hope it’s been helpful as you look for a tour provider.

## About Tourissimo

Tourissimo creates soft adventure holidays that are full of intense meaningful experiences on and off the bike. Our tours are designed (or modified) to suit the ability level of the group. Sometimes we offer two partially different rides in a day (for riders of different levels), and rest days mid way through the tour.

It takes passion, drive and attention to detail to deliver a superior experience for guests. We are experts in many Italian destinations and we have several decades of combined experience in all facets of the adventure travel industry.

You can learn more at our website:

**[www.tourissimo.travel](http://www.tourissimo.travel)**