Santana Adventures Traditions

Santana Adventures began with a simple idea: create cycling vacations we would want to ride ourselves.

Since 1986, we've been designing trips for cyclists who enjoy good routes, interesting places, and the freedom to ride at their own pace. Over time, our events have evolved from hotel-based tours into cycling cruises, where the ship becomes your floating home base and each day brings a new place to explore by bike.

The traditions described here are simply the way we've learned to make these trips work well: clear daily information, flexible route choices, GPS-guided riding, thoughtful support, and a friendly group atmosphere.

Whether this is your first Santana cruise or one of many, we're glad you're here. The goal is straightforward: enjoy the ride, enjoy the places we visit, and enjoy the company of fellow cyclists.

The Daily Schedule

Each evening before dinner, we'll gather for a daily overview of the following day. You'll hear about the region ahead, the available route options, key ride details, and any timing notes that will help your day go smoothly. There is no need to take detailed notes — after dinner, the next day's schedule will be waiting for you in your room.

In the morning, you'll get dressed to ride and head to breakfast. While enjoying a generous breakfast spread, you'll learn more about the day's routes, including distances, climbs, included stops, and any special logistics. After breakfast, we'll disembark from the ship, where your bike will be waiting for you.

On some longer ride days, especially those that begin with a steep climb, we may offer a morning boost option. This standard inclusion allows participants to board a chartered coach for a short lift to a summit or higher starting point, making the ride more accessible while preserving the best parts of the route.

Santana's daily routes are GPS-guided so you can enjoy the ride at your own pace. Some participants ride as a pair, others form small groups with new friends, and many do a little of both during the week. Our participants are a friendly group, and shared miles have a way of turning strangers into riding companions quickly.

Most rides include multiple segments, often leading to one of Santana's signature ride stops: a medieval castle, a Renaissance chateau, a local vineyard, a favorite bakery, an ice cream shop, a scenic overlook, or another memorable place we've built into the day.

On river cruises, the morning routes often finish where the ship is tied up for lunch. Afternoon rides tend to be shorter and often end in a town that deserves time to explore.

On ocean cruises, where visiting three ports in a single day is not typical, lunch is handled differently. The ship will generally offer a later lunch onboard. Many participants prefer to snack throughout the day and return to the ship for a late lunch after maximizing their cycling time. Others enjoy stopping at a café or restaurant along the route for

a seated lunch and a taste of local culture. It's your vacation, and we want you to enjoy the day in the way that suits you best.

Most of our rides finish at the ship. On certain days, port logistics, road access, or local restrictions may prevent a shipside finish. When that happens, your route will end at a predetermined location where our team will shuttle you and your bicycle back to the ship.

After returning aboard, most participants are ready to clean up, refresh, and relax after a full day of cycling. Before dinner, we'll gather again in the ship's lounge to enjoy a glass of wine, review the next day's plan, and keep the adventure moving.

Choosing a Route That Matches Your Abilities

Santana's daily routes are designed by cycling enthusiasts for cycling enthusiasts. If you've been keeping up with your conditioning rides, you'll likely have a good sense of how far you can comfortably ride. We recommend riding at least twice a week before the cruise whenever possible.

Because our rides unfold over a full day, and because the scenery, camaraderie, and sense of discovery are part of the motivation, many participants find they ride 25–50% farther on a Santana cruise than they typically would at home. That said, this is still your vacation. Choosing the right route each day is one of the best ways to make the experience enjoyable.

If you have not completed a 50-mile ride within the past year, we encourage you to view that distance as an inspiring goal rather than

an obligation. Santana's events can be wonderfully motivating, but the best days come from matching ambition with good judgment. Choose routes that leave enough time to enjoy the scenery, the stops, the ship, and your fellow participants.

Did Santana discover the fountain of youth? Not quite. But many of our regular participants would happily tell you that cycling, travel, friendship, and a little adventure are a pretty good formula for living well.

SOS Vans vs. SAG Wagons

Santana events include multiple expert bicycle mechanics driving digitally directed SOS Vans. These vans are designed to respond efficiently to serious mechanical issues, breakdowns, and emergencies — often much faster than a traditional SAG wagon, even if you are off-course.

Because our pro mechanics must prioritize urgent situations and meaningful mechanical problems, participants should be prepared to handle something as common as a flat tire. Carry the basic supplies you need, know how to use them, and make sure your bike is ready before each ride.

Don't yet know how to replace a tube? You can learn the basics quickly. As with conditioning, a small investment in tools and know-how is part of cycling proficiency. Your local bike shop, a willing cycling friend, or a simple video tutorial can help you build the confidence to handle a flat without waiting for assistance.

Our SOS team is there when you truly need help. A little preparation on your part helps them take better care of everyone.

Be Adventurous, Know Your Limits, and Watch the Time

A cycling cruise offers a wonderful sense of freedom, but it also comes with one important responsibility: the ship has a schedule.

Every year, cruise passengers around the world miss their ship because they lose track of time. Santana participants should choose a ride they can comfortably finish with a generous margin before the ship's scheduled departure. A good rule is to select a route you expect to finish at least an hour before the ship is scheduled to sail.

We encourage participants to finish the rides they start, even if the day feels challenging or the weather is less than perfect. That said, judgment matters. If something goes wrong, if you are running late, or if you think you may need assistance during the final hour, call the Santana SOS team promptly. The earlier we know, the more options we have.

Adventure is part of the fun. Good timing helps keep it fun.

Changes Happen

All itineraries are provisional. We plan carefully, scout thoroughly, and work hard to create the best possible experience, but cycling cruises

operate in the real world. Weather changes. Locks close. Seas get rough. Ports adjust procedures. Roads are repaired, rerouted, or unexpectedly closed.

When challenges arise, Santana does not simply cancel the day and shrug. We adapt. Our team works to adjust plans, revise routes, solve problems, and preserve the best possible vacation experience for our participants.

Much of our scouting happens before a cruise is offered, but additional scouting often continues between the initial announcement and the cruise itself. When we find a better road, a more interesting stop, or an improvement to the day's flow, we may substitute it into the program.

Changes are not a sign that something has gone wrong. Often, they are how we make the experience better.

Assume Good Intent

On any travel adventure, especially one with cycling, ships, changing weather, local logistics, and a group of enthusiastic participants, there will be moments when something does not go exactly as expected. Someone may misunderstand a schedule, ask a question that was already answered, ride at a different pace, miss a cue, need extra help, or simply have an off day.

When those moments happen, we ask everyone to start from a place of patience and good faith. Most people are doing their best. Your fellow participants are here to enjoy the ride, the destinations, and the company. The Santana team, ship crew, guides, drivers, mechanics,

and local hosts are all working hard to create the best experience possible.

Assuming good intent does not mean ignoring problems. If something needs attention, please let us know. It simply means giving people a little grace along the way. A kind word, a patient answer, or a moment of understanding can make a big difference on a group adventure.

The best Santana trips are built not only on great routes and beautiful places, but on the generosity, flexibility, and good humor of the people sharing them.

Protect the Vacation Bubble

A Santana cycling cruise brings together a lot of moving parts: routes, bikes, ship schedules, weather, local hosts, meals, shuttles, briefings, and hundreds of small details that most participants never need to think about. Our team is here to handle those details so you can enjoy your vacation.

If something needs attention, please bring it to the Santana team. We would much rather hear about a concern early, while we still have time to help, adjust, explain, or solve the problem. A small issue mentioned promptly is usually much easier to fix than one that quietly grows into frustration.

At the same time, we ask everyone to help preserve the positive atmosphere that makes these trips special. Concerns should come to our staff, not become the main topic at dinner, in the lounge, or on the ride. Everyone aboard has invested in this vacation, and repeated

negativity can affect the experience of people who are simply trying to enjoy the day.

The same goes for politics and other divisive topics. We all come from different places and perspectives, but we're here to ride, explore, relax, and enjoy good company. This is a vacation, and the best conversations are the ones that bring people together.

Tell us when something needs attention. Tell each other when something is beautiful, funny, memorable, or worth celebrating. That balance helps protect the vacation bubble for everyone.

Thank you for joining us. We're delighted to have you aboard and look forward to sharing the miles ahead.

Top Ten for First Time Participants

Safety Brief for Cycling Cruises

eBike 101 *(if riding an eBike)*