

E-BIKE FAQs

USING AN ELECTRIC BIKE ON A DISCOVER ADVENTURE EUROCYCLE

Discover Adventure's policy

E-bikes are becoming increasingly popular; at Discover Adventure we are wholeheartedly pro e-bike. We see them as a fantastic tool for inclusivity, and a great enabler for people to get out cycling. With charity challenges being at the heart of our business we know that more beneficiaries of various charities are now using e-bikes to aid their recovery, and that they allow participation in an event raising funds for the charity that is supporting them.

The e-bike must, however, be used with caution on a multi-day, high-mileage trip and is in no way a substitute for training. If you are thinking of bringing your e-bike on a Discover Adventure Eurocycle then please read the following information to ensure that your e-bike is suitable for the challenge and you have everything you need to make the e-bike work as it should. If you are in any doubt then please contact the office in advance and speak to the team who will help give you more clarity.

What is an e-bike?

The simple answer is that an electric bike (e-bike for short) is more or less a regular bike with the addition of a motor to assist your progress.

The more complicated answer is that it is a hybrid form of transport meaning part of the power comes from the rider (exactly how much is up to you) and part of it from the motor. This applies up to around 15.5mph, which is the current legal limit for electric assistance. Once you are pedalling beyond that speed the motor will not assist you.

You might also hear e-bikes called pedelecs. This is simply another name for e-bikes where power is activated on pedalling instead of by throttle. The vast majority of today's e-bikes are pedelecs – so clearly they are not really similar to mopeds or motorbikes, as you must pedal to activate the motor (added to which, e-bike motors are much less powerful than moped motors).

Is it cheating?

At Discover Adventure we want to remove any stigma around e-bikes being seen as cheating. If you're Chris Froome and riding in the Tour and asking, then absolutely you're cheating! But we aren't here to win medals, we are here to get you on your bike and out there riding. We see e-bikes as an enabler to participation, a way of continuing riding into older age or through health problems – but not to increase your average speed or brag to your mates! In an age of environmental responsibility, the more people we can get onto bikes the better, be they electric or conventional.

Are there any drawbacks?

There are three main drawback of e-bikes; the first being the cost: it is still a relatively new technology which comes at a price. They aren't cheap, but you do get a lot for your money and if you are considering buying one it will totally transform your riding experience. The second drawback is weight; an e-bike adds approx 10kg to the equivalent standard bike. This additional weight isn't a problem when the motor is running, but when the motor stops it's not like riding a normal bike – it is really hard going. The third drawback is battery life, which is covered in more detail below.

What type of e-bike is most appropriate for this cycle?

E-bikes come in many different forms which makes it quite overwhelming when choosing the right bike. Essentially, they all boil down to one of five designs: Mountain, Town, Hybrid, Road and Cargo. Mountain and Cargo will be too heavy and slow for long-distance rides. Road is the obvious choice but won't necessarily suit everyone, and not just because they are the most expensive. The chances are if you are choosing to ride an e-bike for one of our challenges, your aim will be to make it to the finish line rather than get across it first, and riding a high performance bike will probably be less important to you than a more comfortable riding position. Of the remaining options, Hybrid is the most suitable; they tend to be lighter and give a better riding position for a long-distance multi-day ride. The benefits of weight and riding position will aid battery life – see below for more detail.



How long will my battery last?

A simple and reasonable question, but tough to answer! It depends on the power of the battery (typically 24, 36 or 48V), the power of the bike (limited in the UK to 250W), the bike's battery management system, and the way you ride. Some bikes allow you to choose different levels of assist to prioritise speed or battery life, which makes predictions of battery life even more difficult.

Typically you can expect somewhere between 25 and 70 miles of travel on a single charge of an e-bike. If you're riding hard on full power expect less; manage your battery life well and you could get more.

As most of our Eurocycles average 70-80-mile days, but can go up to 100 miles in certain circumstances, we highly recommend bringing a second battery which can be put into one of the vans to be on-hand at the lunch-stop. We can't guarantee that there will be a power supply at lunch. It is essential that you remember to charge your battery overnight.

Are there any specifications my e-bike has to meet?

Your e-bike must conform to EU law to be allowed on our ride. The UK legislation was harmonised with EU law EN15194 in April 2015, which means that it could change as Brexit takes effect. But for now it's pretty clear in defining what can – and what cannot – be called an e-bike.

Your steed is an "electrically assisted pedal cycle" (or EAPC, or e-bike, or Pedelec) if: the bike has pedals that propel it; the electric motor won't assist you when you're travelling more than 25 km/h (15.5mph); and the power doesn't exceed 250 watts.

In the UK you must be over 14 years old to ride an electric bike but you don't need a licence, nor do you need to register it or pay vehicle tax.

You may find off-road bikes that can go faster than 15.5 mph by being de-restricted, but for UK law these are not compliant with EAPC regulations for on-road use. E-bikes that have been de-restricted impact on safety, your guarantee and personal travel insurance.

What if my electric bike breaks the rules?

If your e-bike doesn't meet these regulations then it won't be allowed on our ride. We would not deem a de-restricted e-bike as safe, and if a bike needs to be registered, insured and taxed as a motor vehicle, this defeats the purpose of taking part in a cycle challenge.

Discover Adventure leaders have our full support in refusing your participation on the ride if an e-bike does not conform to standards which are there for the safety of all road users.

Can I have my e-bike couriered back to me after the ride?

Our standard courier system is for standard-weight bikes only, and e-bikes are too heavy for our normal arrangements. A courier service would have to be quoted on a case-by-case basis, so please contact us. You can also drop off and collect from the Discover Adventure office.

