



## 2010 Amber Route Bicycle Expedition In-Depth

### Overview

Amber, an enigmatic object of beauty, both a semi-precious stone and a mineral, was the main reason for the creation of the Amber Route, the most important north-south trading connection in Central Europe, running from the Baltic Coast to the Adriatic Sea. Amber was one of the first commercial products and has been traded for centuries.

The Romans used it in a number of products, including coins. Other traders brought bronze trinkets to trade for this prize. It was so highly valued that when the Teutonic Knights ruled the Baltic Coast, they prohibited the unsupervised collection of amber on beaches under penalty of hanging.

The *Amber Route Bicycle Expedition* will provide a road through European history and culture – museums, UNESCO heritage sites, monumental castles, splendid palaces and historic cities. In western Hungary we will actually be able to see remnants from the original basalt amber road construction. This great adventure will begin at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg - Russia's window onto the west and the site of one of WWII's most important battles. Six weeks later the tour will arrive at the Palace of the Doges in Venice, home of the most famous explorer of them all, Marco Polo. The Amber Route will provide a glimpse into Europe's past...and its future through over 3000 km on the best cycling roads central Europe has to offer.

The Amber Route Bicycle Expedition features 34 riding days, each ranging from 60 – 120 km, as well as 8 rest days. On the rest days, you will be free to create your own adventures – whether that means exploring landmark museums and cathedrals, experiencing gourmet dining, or just relaxing and sending e-mail home from the local internet cafe.

Spend a day wandering the streets of Europe's oldest baroque town in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. In Krakow you will have two days to explore the city, including the Rynek Glowny, one of Europe's most famous public squares. Or take a day trip 70 km west of the city and reflect on the evil that was Auschwitz-Birkenau. While in the capital of Slovenia, our final rest day, you can take time out to visit Ljubljana Castle – sitting atop a hill overlooking the centre of town. Enjoy the moment, as Venice is only just a few days away.



## **Support and Accommodations**

The Amber Route Bicycle Expedition includes a Tour Leader, Cook, and Bicycle Mechanic.

The Amber Route is not your typical European bike tour. You will be relaxing in comfortable three star hotels on most rest days and camping on the days in between.

This tour is specially designed to allow the participants to be independent and adventurous – while still having the support staff available to give aid and advice whenever needed. You get the best of both worlds! On each riding day, small but challenging situations will help you discover skills that you never knew you had: like navigating your way through towns that you and your riding partners had never heard of before. While some participants like to be the first ones to camp, others will find themselves leisurely covering the daily distance over many hours, stopping to swim in lakes or water holes, purchase souvenirs, sample local wines in Slovenia and Italy, pierogies in Poland, or sip strong fruit-flavoured palinka (brandy) in Hungary.

Built into the entry fee are hotel accommodations in St Petersburg the night before the start of the tour and in Venice on the night of the tour's arrival as well as hotels en route. For sectional riders the entry fee includes hotel accommodation the night before and the night at the end of your section.

## **What's the Next Step?**

Amber Route Bicycle Expedition was created as part of our DreamTours system. Those initially interested in the tour participated in the development of the Amber Route through their comments and tour ratings. Those serious about participating confirmed their intent to join by clicking "Count Me In!" Now that we have reached the required minimum number of people "Counted In," registration is open!

The registration process for DreamTours is slightly different than that of our Epic Tours. There is no registration fee so you can register immediately at no cost. On January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011 a 25% deposit is due. This helps us to accurately gauge how many people are committed to this tour. It also gives us the funds to start detailed planning, booking accommodations, scouting the route, and marketing the tour to encourage more riders to join.



If the required minimum number of riders make their deposits by this date, the tour will take place as scheduled. If we drop below the minimum number required, the tour will be postponed and any and all deposits will be fully refunded.

### Deposit/Entry Fee

The deposit is based on the estimated Entry Fee for the 2010 Amber Route - €800. This means the deposit is €450 and it is due January 11, 2010.

Please note the entry fee is an estimated amount that may fluctuate up or down by as much as 10%. The exact pricing will be announced before the deposit deadline of January 11, 2010. At that time, we will also send each registered rider a detailed information kit on the tour and the route, including packing tips, visa information, and much more.

[Please click here to register](#) now for the 2010 Amber Route Bicycle Expedition.

	<u>SECTION</u>	<u>DISTANCE</u>	<u>START DATE</u>	<u>END DATE</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
Full tour	St Petersburg to Venice	3,100 km	July 11	August 21	€5800
Bike the Baltic	St Petersburg to Vilnius	965 km	July 11	July 24	€2600
Solidarity & Samovars	Vilnius to Krakow	740 km	July 26	August 3	€1700
Trans-Tatra Trail	Krakow to Bratislava	530 km	August 6	August 11	€1200
Alps & Adriatic	Bratislava to Venice	810 km	August 13	August 21	€1700