

# RIDER MANUAL



## THE GREAT CROSSING EPIC 2026



**From beer steins to the fountain of wine.**



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Dear Rider,

Welcome to *The Great Crossing Epic 2026*.

Ahead of you lies not just a challenge, but a journey — one that will carry you through silence and effort, light and shadow, sunrise and sunset. You are part of a community that shares your passion for discovery, resilience, and respect for the road and nature.

This manual will guide you with the practical details you need, but the most important part is already within you: **the courage to take on this adventure**. Ride with strength, ride with wonder, and remember — every climb, every moment, every horizon is a gift.

*“Your journey starts now —  
may this adventure inspire and challenge you every step of the way.”*

[ultracyclingchallenges.com](https://ultracyclingchallenges.com)

## ABOUT THE GREAT CROSSING EPIC 2026

The Great Crossing Epic 2026 (“TGCE26”) is more than an ultracycling challenge — it is one of the cornerstones of Ultracycling Challenges, a movement that celebrates endurance, self-discovery, respect for nature, and the thrill of pushing beyond limits through landscapes few will ever touch.

In TGCE26, every climb, every silence, every sunrise is both a challenge and a gift. This is cycling at its purest: testing human strength, unveiling the beauty of the world, and connecting you with a community of riders who share the same passion for adventure.

As part of Ultracycling Challenges, TGCE26 offers:

- Scenic, safe, and carefully designed routes with complete GPX files.
- Exclusive rider package and partner benefits: fair entry fees, discounts, personalized gear and goodies.
- Warm care for the cyclist: from rider mentoring and coaching gatherings, to warm rider check-in and emotional finisher gatherings.
- Live GPS tracking to share your journey with friends and family.
- A true community: bonds forged that will last a lifetime.

You may join TGCE26 solo or as a team:

- Solo means riding the full challenge on your own.
- Team means riding together — drafting, supporting, and finishing side by side. Teams may be formed of 2, 3, or 4 riders.

## WHAT MAKES TGCE SPECIAL?

### The Concept - Diverse. Flexible. Epic.



The Great Crossing Epic is not just about distance — it is about decisions. A structure that blends **fixed sections with free routing** makes every rider the architect of their own odyssey. 4 optional Explorer Points sectors stand as invitations to test courage, add challenge, and write a bolder story. Strategy matters as much as endurance: to finish is a triumph, but to chase points is to carve your name into the higher ranks of glory.

In total, 4 Explorer Sectors offer legendary climbs or detours. Each sector adds distance, elevation, and difficulty, while earning riders Explorer Points.

The points assigned to each **Explorer Sector** are:

- EP1 Grand Colombier - 20 Explorer Points
- EP2 Mont Ventoux - 50 Explorer Points
- EP3 Col du Portet - 25 Explorer Points
- EP4 Col de la Pierre Saint-Martin - 5 Explorer Points

The goal is simple: collect as many points as you can.

To become a finisher, riders must reach the finish line before the official time limit, as no EP points are needed to qualify.

The new legends will aim for the full 100 Explorer Points, completing around 2,155 km with over 40,000 m of climbing.

The order of the finisher list is determined by:

- Total Explorer Points (higher points = higher rank)
- Elapsed time (faster riders rank higher if points are equal)

This format empowers riders to balance strength and strategy — shaping an adventure that is truly their own.

All GPX Files will be provided after registration.

## The route - Majestic. Relentless. Legendary.



Over **around 2,155 km and more than 40,000 meters of climbing**, the route unites **Europe's two greatest mountain ranges — the Alps and the Pyrenees — with the mythical Mont Ventoux standing as a sentinel in between**. From the steep ramps of Grosse Scheidegg to the endless switchbacks of Tourmalet, the riders face a procession of legendary climbs. This is a journey that strings together the roads of cycling history into one seamless, magnificent line of mountains, valleys, and glory.

The path unfolds in three great parts:

### **Part I — The Fixed Route (780 km).**

From Munich, the riders head west, riding through the calmed Bavarian Allgäu and crossing Austria and Switzerland, including iconic climbs like **Grosse Scheidegg, Gestelenpass, Col de la Croix or Col de Joux Plane**. From there, the fearsome **Grand Colombier** awaits, the gateway to adventure. This climb is the first of four optional *Explorer Points* sectors. Conquer it, and earn **20 Explorer Points**.

### **Part II — The Free Route (around 700 km).**

From here, strategy takes over. Riders must carve their own path through France, deciding whether to face the mythical **Mont Ventoux** — a climb that grants **50 Explorer Points** to those who dare. The free route ends at the top of the **Col d'Agnès**, already in the Pyrenees, where destiny awaits.



### Part III — The Final Fixed Route (631 km).

From the **Col d'Agnès**, then plunges deep into the Pyrenees. Legendary passes rise one after another: Port de Balès, Col du Tourmalet or Col d'Aubisque, among many others. Here, two more *Explorer Points* sectors await:

- **Col du Portet:** +25 points
- **Col de la Pierre Saint Martin:** +5 points

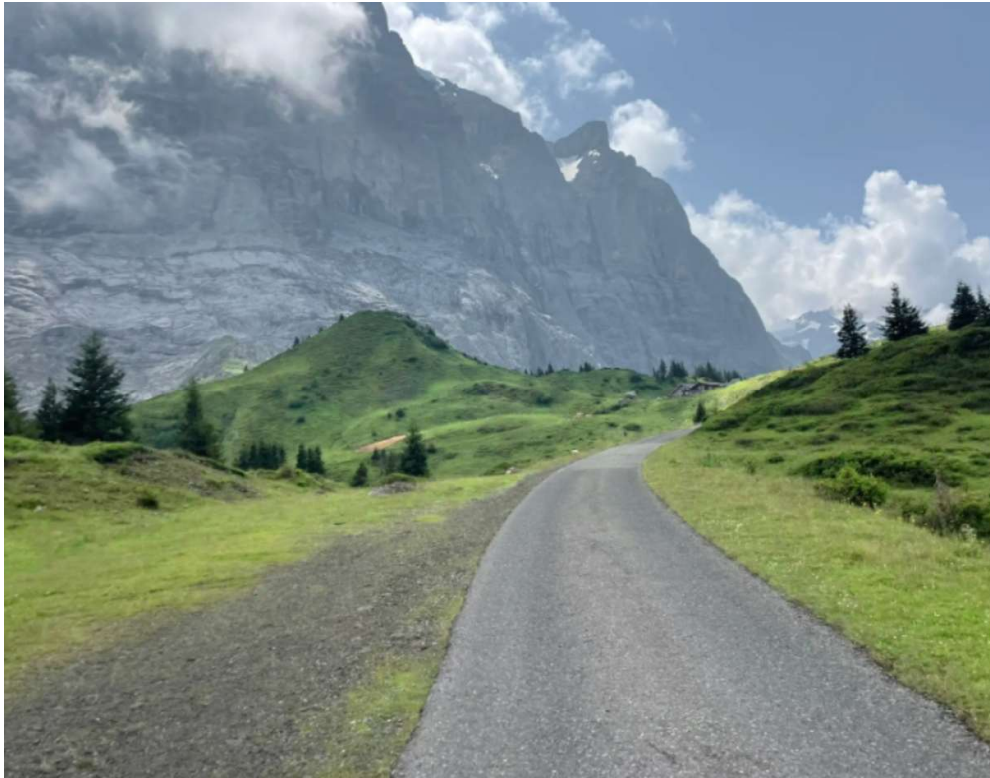
From there, riders cross into Spain via the **Col d'Orgambide**, descending to the ultimate destination: the **fountain of wine in Ayegui**. The clock does not stop until bottles run red with victory.

### The Landscapes — Where Challenge Meets Wonder



What sets TGCE apart is not only its scale, but **the sheer diversity of worlds it traverses**. From the raw majesty of the Alps like Grosse Scheidegg — where snow-capped peaks tower over silent valleys — to the lunar landscapes of Mont Ventoux, stark and windswept, every horizon tells a different story. And then the Pyrenees rise, rugged and untamed, with giants like the Tourmalet shaping the very soul of the journey. Peaks crowned with snow, valleys alive with summer bloom, horizons shifting with every climb — TGCE is a passage through Europe's natural cathedrals, an encounter with the mountains in all their forms: majestic, unforgiving, and unforgettable.

**The “when” – Long days. High summer. The peak of challenge.**



Held in the heart of July, TGCE unfolds under long days, when the mountains are fully alive and every pass stands open. The Alps still carry the freshness of lingering snow, Mont Ventoux rises under the scorching sun in its lunar solitude, and the Pyrenees blaze with summer energy. To ride from sunrise to sunset is to embrace the full spectrum of the season — cool dawns, blazing afternoons, golden evenings — a rhythm that turns every stage of the day into part of the epic.

## The rider benefits – Mindful. Caring. Personal.



As part of the Ultracycling Challenges family, riders receive extraordinary benefits which the organising team has carefully arranged for them:

- Being part of to the *Ultracycling Challenges*' community, including exclusive ultracycling coaching & mentoring online sessions
- Welcome event incl. food and drinks
- The full kit of .GPX route files
- Publishing of riders' bike features on dotwatcher.cc
- A starter-kit including, at least:
  - *Ultracycling Challenges*' drawstring bag
  - Map of the route
  - The tracking device for the duration of the challenge
  - The exclusive and individually personalized *The Great Crossing Epic* cap
  - The exclusive *Specialized Munich's* water bottle – *Ultracycling Challenges*' 2026 special version
  - *Ultracycling Challenges*' jelly beans
  - *Hoppebräu* non-alcoholic beer.
  - Other goodies like gels or energy bars
- Real-time tracking for the duration of the challenge
- Live media coverage with photo and video (drones to be confirmed)
- Coverage of the challenge on social media and dotwatcher.cc
- Publishing of individual times on website and media incl. replay functions
- Finisher goodies incl. at least:
  - the exclusive 3D biodegradable *The Great Crossing Epic's* finisher medal
- Rider finisher get-together with beer
- Album of Images of the challenge to be downloaded
- Discounts on the full range of *Ultracycling Challenges*' cycling apparel
- 50% discount for the *The Great Crossing Epic's* T-Shirt edition 2026



- 10% discount for purchasing ultracycling Cyclite equipment at Cyclite.cc
- 25% discount for renting Apidura equipment at simplybikepacking.com
- 5% discount on all *UC Challenges* at 2027
- Other goodies from our partners and sponsors
- Other discounts to be arranged

With the passion, dedication, and genuine spirit of the *Ultracycling Challenges*' team, we will bring you the experience of a lifetime!

## KEY FACTS



# THE GREAT CROSSING EPIC

From beer steins to the fountain of wine



### THE ROUTE

**66%**  
**FIXED ROUTE**  
(with 4 Explorer Points)

**2.155 km**  
**DISTANCE**

**+39.810m**  
**CLIMB**



**TARMAC**



**OTHER**



Grosse Scheidegg (1.962m)  
 Gestelenpass (1.851m)  
 Col de la Croix (1.779m)  
 Col de Joux Plane (1.700m)  
 EP1 Grand Colombier (1.501m)  
 EP2 Mont Ventoux (1.909m)  
 Col d'Agnes (1.570m)

Col de la Core (1.395m)  
 Portet d'Aspet (1.069m)  
 Col de Menté (1.349m)  
 Port de Balès (1.755m)  
 Col de Peyresourde (1.569m)  
 Col de Val Louron (1.580m)  
 EP3 Col du Portet (2.215m)

Col d'Aspin (1.489m)  
 Col du Tourmalet (2.115m)  
 Col du Soulor (1.474m)  
 Col d'Aubisque (1.709m)  
 Col de Marie-Blanque (1.035m)  
 EP4 Col de Pierre SM (1.766m)  
 Col d'Orgambide (988m)

11.07.2026  
Start (Munich, Germany)

Ride 5 countries  
(DE, AT, CH, FR, ES)

24.07.2026 sunset  
Limit to finish (Ayegui, Spain)

### WHERE & WHEN



### MAIN RULES

Unsupported. Solo or in team (2 or more)

No EPs are required to qualify as a finisher. The more EPs, the better classification

It all starts with a beer. The clock stops when your bottle is filled with wine

### REGISTRATION

03.01.2026

[ultracyclingchallenges.com](http://ultracyclingchallenges.com)



## SPIRIT AND RULES

### Overall Spirit of the Challenge

- TGCE is not defined as a race. It is a **personal endurance challenge** to test human strength, explore the world, and connect riders with a community of adventurers. The goal is to complete the course within the maximum allowed time, at each participant's own pace and responsibility. There are no prizes, podiums, or financial rewards for finishing first or achieving the fastest time.
- E-Bikes are prohibited.
- The challenge is strictly self-supported: no pre-arranged support, no outside assistance, no drafting or support from vehicles or other riders. Each participant is solely responsible for their own safety, planning, and pacing throughout the challenge. As a consequence, Ultracycling Challenges and the organizers do not provide any kind of insurance for the ride. In fact, all riders must provide a valid travel and health insurance as will be listed below.
- A systematic use of pills (e.g. painkillers or caffeine) is strictly prohibited. Entering on the Ultracycling Challenges' *Hall of Legends* is cool, but not enough to put your health at risk.
- Any published times or finish lists are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute an official competition ranking.
- Time limit: until 24 July, sunset (21:35).
- Riders are expected to report any rule violation.

### Before the challenge

- Riders must provide valid travel and health insurance covering accident, emergency extraction, repatriation and death. Liability coverage is also required.
- Riders must participate in the accreditation and present:
  - Their ID card, displaying the name provided in the registration
  - 150€ in cash as deposit for the tracker device
  - a signed hard copy of the "Rider Agreement", or sign a copy provided by us
- Failing to any of these, will result in DNS.

### During the challenge

- Riders must carry at all times the following minimum equipment: ID card, helmet, front light, red rear light, reflective vest, and emergency blanket.

- Riders must keep the tracker switched on at all times. Monitor its battery status on the tracking map, and place it only in the designated area specified by the tracking provider. In case riders have any issue with the tracker during the challenge, they must contact the organizing team via WhatsApp or [Email](#), for coordination support.
- Riders must respect local traffic laws and ride with full awareness of their safety.
- During the fixed sectors, riders must follow the designated route (including riding on the bike line if the GPX file indicates it) at all times, unless traffic signs indicate otherwise. In case of contradiction, always follow traffic signs over the provided route.
- If traffic signs indicate otherwise or if a section is unexpectedly closed (e.g. due to an accident, road works, or bike path renovation), riders must ride up to the point where they may take a detour, and from there, take the shortest possible detour to rejoin the official route.

That means, it is not necessary to ride all the way until the physical barrier, but only to the last possible detour road before the physical barrier. If an earlier or longer detour is taken that results in gaining time, a time penalty of 4 times the estimated gained time will be applied.

- Any deviation from the provided route that also results in violating traffic laws (e.g. riding on a road forbidden to bicycles) will lead to immediate disqualification.
- If a rider decides to abandon the fixed route (for example, in order to buy some food) they must go back to the point where they left the route and continue from there.
- Riders must leave no trace. Riders will not leave any litter, packaging, or equipment along the route. Respect nature by ensuring nothing is left behind.
- Upon conquering an Explorer Sector, riders must take a picture of themselves, as a proof in case of a technical failure.
- As these are virtual points, riders do not need to stop or sign anything there, the tracker device will add the achievement to the rider's tracking map.
- If a rider decides to scratch, they must inform about this without delay by sending an e-mail to [info@ultracyclingchallenges.com](mailto:info@ultracyclingchallenges.com).

## After the challenge

- Riders must give back the tracker to the organizers in person at the designated endpoint. If the rider is not able to return the tracker in person at the designated endpoint because, for example, they decide to scratch, the rider must send the tracker directly to the address that will be provided before the challenge no later than 7 days after the DNF. The tracker's deposit will be refunded in cash or via bank transfer 3 days after the receipt.

If the rider loses the tracker, the deposit will not be returned, as it is the compensation asked by the tracker-renting company.

- The order of the finisher list will be based on Explorer Points. In case of equal points, elapsed time will be used as a tiebreaker.
- In case the organization requests it, riders must provide their digital activity file(s) (.fit) within 24 hours after arrival. Failure to provide the information may result in time penalties at the discretion of the organization.

**Failure to comply with a rule will result in time penalties or disqualification as indicated or assessed by the organization.**

## PARTICIPATION AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Registration and participation

TGCE26 has limited spots (approx. 120). To ensure your participation, mark **3 January 2026 at 11:00h** in your calendar — this is when registration opens.

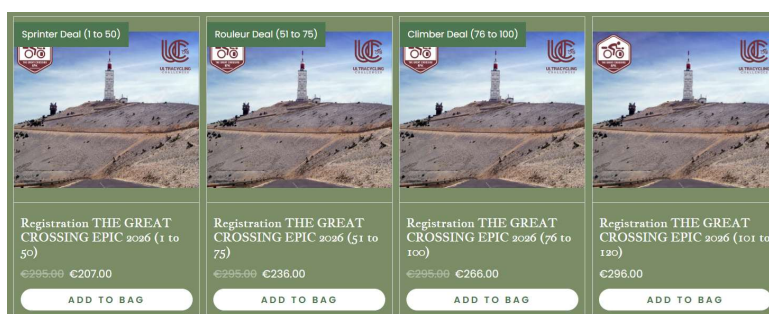
Our entry fee and price structure reward early subscribers because that helps us to organize the event more efficiently. If you want the best deal, don't wait too long! Riders joining more than one challenge receive also free of charge benefits. Full details are available [on our website](#).

If you participate as a Team (2, 3 or 4 riders), all team members need to register. As you will share one tracker for the team, the *The Great Crossing Epic's* T-Shirt is free of charge for all team members.

Now, here are the practical steps to secure your TGCE26 spot:

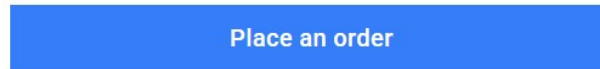
#### **Step 1: Register for the challenge:**

- **When:** Starting 03.01.2026 at 11:00h
- **How:** Via the [Ultracycling Challenges Online-Shop \(Shop\)](#)
  - Look for the product  
“*Registration The Great Crossing Epic 2026*”
  - Add to the bag the best available deal





- Enter your “Shopping bag”
- Click “Check-out”
- Enter your personal data and click “Continue”
- Click on “Place an order”



- Check your e-mail: You will receive the payment details for the bank transfer automatically via Email.
- Make the transfer within 3 working days (latest).

Note: If the payment is not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> working day, your spot will be released.

### **Step 2: Send your insurance documents**

Up to a week before the challenge, send your insurance documents to [our mailbox](#) (see “Rules” and “Safety & Legal” chapters).

### **Step 3: Accreditation - 11.07.2026**

The accreditation is the step where a rider officially becomes part of the challenge: by checking in, showing documents, signing of rules, and receiving the rider pack (including the tracker device). Accreditation is mandatory to join the challenge.

During accreditation, riders must present:

- ID card, displaying the name provided in the registration
- 150€ in cash as deposit for the tracker device
- a signed hard copy of the “Rider Agreement”, or sign a copy provided by us

**Upon performing these steps, riders will receive the starter bag.**

If you are not able to fulfil any of the above (e.g. if you forget to bring your ID card, the EUR 150 in cash), you will not be eligible to start. No refund of the registration fee will take place neither.

## Refund policy

If you need to cancel your registration, the following rules apply. Since event preparations and related expenses already start in January, full refunds are unfortunately not possible:

- January 2026 → 75% refund
- February 2026 → 50% refund
- March 2026 → 25% refund
- April 2026 → €20 refund
- From May 2026 → no refund

## Challenge Schedule

- **11.07.2026**
  - **09:30 to 12:30** Welcome event in *Specialized Munich* (Balanstraße 71A, Munich).
    - **09:30 to 11:30** Accreditation
      - **11:00 to 11:15** Briefing
    - **11:45 to 12:00** Bag dropping from riders (*only in case it is agreed\**)
    - **12:30** Toast with *Hoppebräu* non-alcoholic beer
  - **13:00** Start of the challenge
- **24.07.2026**
  - **From 17:00** Rider get-together & welcome to the last finishers
  - **21:35 (at sunset)** Time limit to complete the challenge

*\*Ultracycling Challenges will attempt to provide a service for riders to transfer bags or bike boxes to the finish line. This service is not included in the entry fee and its availability is not guaranteed, as it will depend on the number of interested participants and the overall cost.*

## Tracking during the Challenge

The tracker device enhances the experience for riders, friends, and families by enabling real-time tracking of each participant's location, speed, and rest time throughout TGCE26.

A deposit of €150 is required for the tracker. Riders must provide this in cash during accreditation. The deposit will be refunded either in cash upon returning the tracker or via bank transfer within three days.

If a rider cannot return the tracker in person at the designated endpoint (e.g., if they decide to scratch), they must send it directly to the address that will be provided before the challenge at their own expense. The deposit will be refunded once the company has received the device.

If the tracker is lost, the deposit will not be refunded, as it serves as compensation requested by the rental company.

In case of any issues with the tracker during the challenge, riders must contact the organization via WhatsApp or email so that a solution can be coordinated with our partner.

## Insurance during the Challenge

As indicated above, the subscription fee does not include any kind of insurance for the ride. Riders must contract their own travel and health insurance covering accident, emergency extraction, repatriation and death, and a liability coverage. Proof of these contracts needs to be submitted latest a week before the beginning of the challenge, that is: 03.07.2026.

## CONTACT

To solve any questions before and after the challenge, contact the team via [info@ultracyclingchallenges.com](mailto:info@ultracyclingchallenges.com). This e-mail is also available to scratch from the challenge. If this happens, riders need to inform of their decision via this e-mail as soon as possible.

## JOIN THE COMMUNITY

### Ultracycling Challenges:

Website: [ultracyclingchallenges.com](http://ultracyclingchallenges.com)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ultracyclingchallenges/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61579358160390>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@ultracyclingchallenges>

Strava: <https://www.strava.com/clubs/ultracyclingchallenges>

### The Great Crossing Epic:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/thegreatcrossingepic>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61579789344073>

*JOIN THE ADVENTURE.  
DREAM IT. DARE IT. LOVE IT.*



ULTRACYCLING  
CHALLENGES