



## Group Riding with White Rose Tours (Escorted Tours)

**Please read before departure** -If you are riding with us on the Continent, there are several differences that you should be aware of, compared to Guided Tours. Firstly, the tours are classified as “escorted”, which means that although the guide will be with you, you are responsible for doing your own navigation. With this in mind, you will find that your tour pack includes any relevant maps, route directions and information for you to find your destination. In addition you must carry conventional maps and/or have a satellite navigation covering the areas in which you will travel. If you have a Garmin navigator we can supply the proposed routes.

This system suits many people, as it allows them to ride at their own pace and style, either alone or in small groups.

If you have never toured abroad, we understand that for the first few days you may be a little apprehensive and wish to stay with the guide - this is not a problem and we will endeavour to keep a group together. In order to do this we will use the “Drop off system” as described below. However, you should be aware that this is not always possible (especially on motorways), so it is **your responsibility** to have your route notes and maps to hand and know where you are at all times. If we have extra escorts, we will sometimes split the group into two but you will be advised accordingly.

You should also be aware that travelling in a group is very slow, as everything from paying road tolls to meals take that much longer.

**Once at the location**, if you are joining any of the rides-out, then we do adopt the “Drop off System” as described below.

For anyone who has not ridden in a group before, this may well conjure-up one of two pictures

- a) pottering along at 25mph in convoy, or
- b) going like hell, desperately trying to keep-up.

In truth, there is no need for either of these situations. Here at White Rose, we are not big on rules and regulations - this is your tour and we want you to enjoy yourself, but when riding in a group, there are a few basic responsibilities that will ensure the enjoyment and safety of yourselves and your companions:

### **Drop-off**

If there are more than 6 bikes together, it may not be possible for you to stay in contact with the lead bike, so we adopt a system that allows you to ride at your own pace and yet stay within the group without getting lost. You may know this system under another name - however the principle will be the same and is one we have used successfully for many years.

### **Run Leader**

Will usually be myself. I will be wearing a Hi-Vis jacket to help identification and will lead the group. Whenever the route deviates from the “straight ahead”, I will ensure that a rider **marker** is left at the junction to indicate which direction to go.

### **Marker**

Will be the person riding directly behind the leader. When the route deviates from the “straight ahead” position, the marker will stop to indicate the direction the leader has taken. The marker should position him/herself in a safe and as **highly visible position as possible**, reinforcing the direction to be taken with indicators and hand signals if necessary.

The marker **must stay** in that position until the **back marker** arrives, (regardless of how long this is) at which point, you should then rejoin the group. Move to a position directly in front of the back marker when it is safe to do so. You should wave down and advise the back marker if you believe anyone has missed the junction.

### **Back Marker**

Will be identified before departure. The back marker will remain at the back of the group at all times and may occasionally have to “round up” someone who misses a turn, so please do not move-off and leave him high and dry.

## Group Rider

Ok that's you. The most important thing is that you **travel at your own pace**. Do not worry about losing sight of the leader or even the rider in front of you, as any deviation from "straight ahead" will be marked. However, you must be observant, and check at each junction for possible markers. If the person in front of you is travelling slower than you wish, don't pressure them, just overtake (considerately) and drop back in the group where you feel comfortable. (Some people even like to ride up to the No.2 position be dropped-off as a marker, then ride back up to No.2 again, which we don't mind, providing it is done sensibly.) You will have realised that, as we drop people off at junctions, you will slowly move forward in the group, until you may become a marker yourself.

***Under no circumstance must you ride faster than your capabilities either because you think you are going to be left behind or are holding other people up!***

## **Sat –Navs**

These are great devices, but please consider these as a navigational aid and not a substitute for map, route directions and good old plain common-sense. If riding in the group, we occasionally go off the plotted route so please follow the group not your sat nav.

## General Points

With any group of riders, you will find that the group will slowly get strung-out - this is generally because people tend to ride in single file. Although this is not a problem, riding in a tighter group is more desirable and you may have noticed that many clubs and advanced riders achieve this by riding in a staggered or chevron formation. This involves positioning yourself either close to the centre line or close to the nearside, alternate to the position of the person in front of you.

***This staggered formation should only be used on relatively straight, wide, roads and you should never maintain this position at the expense of entering a bend out of position.***

This formation has several advantages: (a) It closes the group up, which improves progress, (b) It gives better forward visibility, (c) It increases the distance between yourself and the rider in front of you in the event of having to stop quickly, (d) It prevents you "switching off" and becoming too focused on the bike in front, and (e) It discourages cars from entering the group.

One thing that you will notice on the continent is that drivers have better lane discipline than our own, so only move out to overtake when **you** are ready, and move back in as soon as possible. This is especially the case if riding in a group on motorways; where you can end up with effectively a vehicle (our group) ½ mile long in the overtaking lane. This is especially relevant in Germany where speeds can be much greater.

Another problem is in towns - at junctions, and especially at traffic lights, you should **close up as much as possible**. For some reason people are very reluctant to do this, however If you are able to form up 3 or even 4 abreast, there is a much better chance that the group will get through on the same cycle of lights.

In the country, on single-track roads, we generally find that oncoming traffic will pull-in when they see the leader's lights and Hi-vis jacket. It is therefore important to keep relatively close, otherwise the driver will assume that the entire group has passed, and will pull back out again.

Our first or last stop of the day will be for fuel; you should take this opportunity to ensure that you have a full fuel tank. Once on tour, we will plan our petrol stops to coincide with the shortest range of all of the bikes in the group. So, if we have a bike with a tank that can only do 100 miles, then we will stop every 100 miles or as close as possible to that mileage. We will then stop again at 200 miles, 300 miles etc. **It is your responsibility** to ensure that you top-up your tank as necessary to make it to the next stop i.e. if you have a range of 150 miles and don't top-up at 100 miles, you are either going to run-out, or will disrupt the tour as we have to make further stops or even go looking for a filling station. Refuelling a group can be quite time-consuming so one good idea is to partner-up with one or two other people and all refuel at the same pump, keeping the pump running and having one person pay. You can then either take it in turns to pay, or settle-up in the evening.

The other bottleneck in Europe is getting through toll booths. We always suggest you carry plenty of change with you – or a better way is to use your credit card, which is swiped and returned in seconds.

If all this sounds complicated, it's not and you will soon find yourself dropping into a routine without thinking. Riding together is a lot of fun, allows you to enjoy your riding without too much map reading and offers you the security of having other people with you in the event of a breakdown. If you want to ride-off ahead on your own that is no problem either - all we ask is that you please tell us before you leave, so the back-marker doesn't come looking for you!