

Mallorca 312 2018

The Event

The Mallorca 312 takes place at the end of April located predominantly in the Northern mountain range of beautiful Mallorca. As the name suggests the longest distance is 312 km (194 miles) with 4954 meters of climbing (16,253 ft) to be completed in a day.

There are two other distances, which you could categorise as medium and short, but even the short course is 167 km (103 miles), so as sportives go these are still longer than your average event.

The event starts early at 7am. This year there were over 8000 participants taking place on the closed road course. Starting on the main road of Playa de Muro the atmosphere at the start is excellent, with music playing and spectators waving off competitors.

There is no categorisation (unless you are an elite rider) so it is a mass start. This means that you can expect to cross the start line 20+ mins after the official start time if you are at the back of the course. In cycling terms this puts you about 7km behind the front riders. Your time however is calculated from when you cross the start. The real impact is the cut off times for feed stations and the broom wagon chasing you down!

The first 25km of the course are flat, going out through the towns and following the coast before turning inland. This section is neutralised but this makes little difference unless you are at the front. Typically the riding at this stage is as a mass peloton, which means you are averaging 30 – 35 kph with little effort.

Eventually you start to climb the Col de Femenia which rises up to 515 meters (you start at sea level), the first feed station comes at 50km and you top out on the biggest climb the Coll Puig Major (890m) at 56 km, before a long decent.

The course then follows the coast, weaving in and out towns and villages. During this part of the course, there are few flat parts and the course becomes a series of climbs and descents. As a general rule the road surface is excellent, and the gradients are between 4 – 6 %, so not too extreme.

The real highlight for this part of the course is the scenery; you have the Mediterranean on your right hand side and you look down into the bays as you pass through traditional towns and villages.

The course then splits with the 312 and 225 heading to the right and the 167 turning left. If you are doing the 167 your climbing is pretty much done for the day. If you are doing the 312 and 225 you have 5 further climbs, before looping back round inland to join the same course as the 167. This extra loop is not to be underestimated. By now the sun will be overhead and it will be the hottest point of the day.

The final two big climbs for those doing the 312 and 225 comes after the feed station at Es Capdella at around the 138 km and 146 km respectively. The first is a 5 km climb with a gradient of 6% and the second 3.5 km with a 7.1%. By this point I am happy to admit to a sense of humour failure!

After the final climb and now inland with the mountains on your left you descend along wide roads with about 75km left to ride for those on the 167 and 225. The course becomes a series of flat sections alternating from major roads to country lanes as you head East back toward the Finish.

With tired legs I had trouble picking my cadence back up to where it should be for a flat section. Luckily, a friendly Spanish rider gave me a back wheel and pulled me up to the group he was riding with. This gave me just enough recovery time to push through the feed station at 189 km. By this time the course is flat enough get the average speed back up to 30 – 35 kph on the flat and 25 kph on the short but gentle inclines (false flats!).

It was then flat all the way into the final course split, where those doing the 312 go onto back-country lanes to complete the final 87 km. I didn't complete this but apparently the road surface varies from good to gravel in places. There are no serious climbs and if you can form a grupetto you can raise the average speed back up into the 35 kph region.

The finish is back on the main road in the centre of town where you started. There is a great atmosphere as you pass under your banner and receive your medal with a fantastic sense of achievement.

A few final thoughts....

I have now ridden a few long distance and ultra events including both the Marmotte (176km) and the Tour Du Mont Blanc (330km +9000m). This ride is no doubt a serious sportive, but given that there are three distances it is accessible to a wide standard of rider with enough preparation.

I think this is a great event and really well supported and run. It has fantastic scenery and the atmosphere is good throughout. The feed stations were really well supplied, with both food and drinks. Medical support was also first class from what I could see.

My conclusion is that you should add this one to the bucket list for 2019. I will see you there!

Website – www.mallorca312.com book early as the event sells out.

Next Event – 27 April 2019

Pre-event Registration (to pick up your pack)

- Registration, Start / Finish – Location
 - Avda. Albufera, 33, 07458 Playa de Muro, Illes Balears, Spain
 - <https://goo.gl/maps/KCUV41pweXy>
 - General Advice - Do not take your bike with you to the registration area the day before the event. It is very busy and open to the public. Almost no one would notice your bike getting stolen whilst you register. This didn't look like a problem, but I wouldn't risk it!

Travel –

- Flights – We used British Airways from Heathrow Terminal 5 to Palma Mallorca.
- Taxi – We booked online with www.mallorcabuses.com to get from the Airport to accommodation. The taxis are well prepared for cyclists with either trailers or vans.

Accommodation

- The event takes place in the town of Playa de Muro. We stayed at the EIX Lagotel Apartamentos. These were set back from the sea, so less busy and a more reasonable price. It was a very short walk to the centre and registration and there is a free shuttle bus. The apartments were equipped for self-catering although we ate out. They were clean, spacious and comfortable. I would not class them as luxury, but there were on site swimming pools and restaurants. We booked via <https://www.booking.com/hotel/es/lagotel-apartamentos.en-gb.html>?

Bike Hire

We took our own bikes and transported them in bike boxes. Mallorca is well catered for bike hire. In the centre of Playa de Muro we found Huerzeler which seemed to have a good selection of carbon bikes. Further up the coast there is Pinarello Experience, you would need to get a taxi to reach them. In both cases I strongly recommend that you have either a bike fit in the UK or take your measurements from your own bike with you. 312 km is a long way to ride on a bike that doesn't fit! Book early if you are going to hire a bike.

<https://www.huerzeler.com/en/radsportstationen/alcudia-sued-muro>

<http://www.pinarelloexperience.com/> (Puerto Pollensa)

Training

Being a Spring ride you will need to train over Winter which is hard to do outside. I would recommend you invest in a turbo or preferably a Smart Trainer which can be integrated with training software.

As a coach I used Robert Atkinson who is a long standing friend and now cycling coach. He has got several people fit for long distance events, and takes part in them himself. He can give you plenty of structured training and how to use tools like Training Peaks to measure your progress.

- Coaching –
 - RAM Coaching – robert.j.atkinson@icloud.com

- Software
 - Training Peaks
 - Zwift
 - Trainer Road
 - General Advice

My Ride on the 225 (included a short detour):
<https://www.relive.cc/view/1537386830>