



ADVENTURE MANUAL

HEADING SOUTHWEST 2025

MAY 2025 . V1-ENG



- HEADING SOUTHWEST 2025 -

'Heading SouthWest' is a self-supported and adventure-cycling challenge across Portugal in one-stage. The seek for the essence of cycling.

The (set) route is 100% on-road and has approximately 1.000 kilometers and 18.000 meters of climbing. In 2025, the bikepackers will face the harshness but beautiful landscapes of North of Portugal.

HSW'25 roams through remote areas. Estrela and 'Peneda-Gerês' Mountains are the route highlights and headliners territories

The fourth edition starts on June 7th in Aveiro and finishes in the same city, also known as the 'Portuguese Venice'.

KEY DATES

ACCREDITATION & BRIEFING

June 06th Friday 19:00 - 21:00 | Aveiro

Session in English 19:00 - 20:00

Session in Portuguese 20:00 - 21:00

DEPARTURE

June 07th Saturday 06:00-07:00 | Aveiro

FINISH & TIME LIMIT

June 12th Thursday 23:59 | Aveiro

WEBSITE & EMAIL

www.headingssouthwest.cc

heading.southwest.ultracycling@gmail.com

MANIFESTO

'Heading SouthWest' is an adventure-cycling and bikepacking experience. The seek for the true essence of cycling. We believe that the self-supported approach fits perfectly with the adventure-cycling spirit. This isn't about how far you can go, but how deep is your experience. Instead of rules, we prefer to say that we have a 'Manifesto'. An agreement among all riders.

If necessary, the organization will take decisions that are not foreseen in the 'Manifesto', with the aim of ensuring the common good, as well as equality of circumstances among the participants.

Heading SouthWest is an inclusive event. We are committed with gender equality values. 'SouthWest' is for all. Doesn't matter your pace.

1 | RESPECT THE LOCAL TRAFFIC RULES, COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT:

We are a community who wants to build a positive legacy. The way you behave will shape how society and institutions will look to ultracycling and long-distance cyclists.

2 | RIDE THE ROUTE, RIDE SAFE & ENJOY:

The route was designed to tell a story across the route/landscapes and you are the main actor. Trust the script and let yourself go. You can leave the route temporarily (for water, food, WC, accommodation, tourism, etc.), but then return in the same exact point. The GPS live tracking shows your geographical position on the route and your tracker should always be on.

3 | NO THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT:

This is about your personal experience and challenging your own limits. So, make no sense to receive help from your family or friends with food, accommodation or mechanical support (riders in the duo category can help each other). Sum up, you should use the commercial services available for all riders. If you have a mechanical problem you should solve it by your own. If you can't solve it, you can use the commercial mechanical services available.

4 | NO DRAFTING:

You cannot follow other participants, cyclists or vehicles for aerodynamical advantages.

5 | USE YOUR OWN ENERGY:

Just you and your bicycle - the greatest transport invention of all time. In other words, no e-bikes and no doping.

Self-supported Ultracycling events will only work with integrity and a relationship of trust between organization and participants, as well as among all riders.

This "rules" are shared by hundreds of events and races around the world, even without the existence of an international federation. We were inspired by events such as 'The Transcontinental'. For more info, check the documentary 'Onboard the Transcontinental Race' (available on streaming platforms).

The organization and crew will be under high pressure before and during the event. We will give our best. Good vibes are very welcome.

SAFETY

PERSONAL INSURANCE

Respecting the Portuguese law for amateur events, the organization assures personal insurance for accidents (expenses for treatment, disability and death) between June 7th and June 12th. We strongly recommend to also have your own personal insurance covering civil liability and repatriation (foreign participants) in case of severe physical injuries or death. We want to make clear that - from the our and organization perspective - 'Heading SouthWest' is not a race or competition. It's simultaneously a personal challenge and a collective cycling adventure. An opportunity to face your own physical and emotional limits while other adventurers are doing the same. Individually, in community. We won't provide any kind of cash or prizes and we will collect and publish riders' results and times only for information and recreation purposes.

MANDATORY ITEMS

Helmet, front and rear lights (including backup lights), a reflective vest and an emergency insulated blanket. The vest is mandatory during the first neutral zone (from KM 0 to KM 34,3).

ACCREDITATION/BRIEFING (MANDATORY)

We will verify - during the accreditation - the mandatory items. We won't allow the participation of any rider without mandatory items (mentioned above). In the briefing session, we will check together the 'Manifesto' and share last hour information.

SCENARIOS

IF I HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

(If possible) Call always first the medical emergency: 112.

IF I HAVE A MECANICAL PROBLEM

Try to solve it by yourself. If you can't fix the problem, go to a bike shop (or similar commercial services) by your own or using public transportation (taxi, bus, train). Then return to the exactly same point where you left the route.

IF I FACE A SITUATION THAT DOESN'T ALLOW ME TO FOLLOW THE ROUTE

The route was recognized during the last months. It is impossible to control and predict what happens in hundreds of kilometers. If you face a closed road, contact the "Race" Director. If the detour means just a few hundred meters of adjustment, find - by your own - the shorter way to back to the original route.

IF I DECIDE TO ABANDON

Inform the "Race" Director and return the tracker to the organization/staff.

I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS

heading.southwest.ultracycling@gmail.com

"RACE" DIRECTOR CONTACT

+351 91 88 78 360 (David). Available during the event period and briefing day via phone call, message and WhatsApp. During the event, avoid to contact us via instagram or email.

LOGISTICS

TRAVEL TO AVEIRO

The two closest airports to Aveiro are located in Lisbon and Porto. You should travel in 'IC Service' trains (InterCity Train) which allows you the transportation of your bicycle without dismount it. The number of bicycles allowed per train/carriage is very limited, so it is advisable to buy the tickets in advance online (www.cp.pt). Do not forget to add the bicycle transportation option on the ticket purchase form. Between Porto and Aveiro you can also use the 'Urban Service' trains. It isn't necessary to book tickets in advance for the urban trains.

IN AVEIRO

The briefing session will be at 'Casa da Bicicleta - Ciclaveiro' (R. do Almte. Cândido dos Reis 12). 'Casa' is located just 500 meters away of the train station. It is not mandatory to bring your bike (there is no bike check). Anyway, feel free to arrive by bike and use your bike lock (you are totally responsible for your machine).

BAG AND BIKE BOX STORAGE

It will be possible to store your belongings: a bag or/and a cycling bag/box with unnecessary belongings for your journey. We will receive it during the accreditation in 'Casa da Bicicleta'. We will not take items of value (e.g. car/house keys, computers, cell phones, cash, etc.). We will not be responsible for the loss of valuable items. We will not accept belongings at the departure and during your participation.

RECOMMENDATION

ACCOMMODATION ALONG THE ROUTE

We don't recommend prior reservation of accommodation located along the route. Unpredictability is ultracycling middle name. There are several villages/cities with local accommodation, hostels, hotels. Route studying is very important in self-supported ultracycling and you should be aware of the accommodation options along the route.

TEMPERATURES AND WATER FOUNTAINS

The probability of high temperatures is significant, but be prepared for cold nights. Don't drink water from fountains with the info: 'Água Não Controlada' (not controlled water). There are several villages/cities with 'cafés'. Large bottles are vital in long distance rides.

TYRES AND BIKE

28 mm or above will be our recommendation, but it also depends of the preferences of each rider (32 mm is a growing option among long distance cyclists thinking about comfort). Make sure that your tires are good (punctures aren't exactly a matter of luck). You will ride in just a few days what you eventually ride in a month. The route was designed for road bikes.

DECISION TO ABANDON

During a long-distance journey you will have highs and lows. Don't take important decisions during bad moments. Wait for the morning. A beautiful sunrise in Portugal will always help.

THE ROUTE

In the mid-XX century, the geographer Orlando Ribeiro developed the first in-depth study on territorial conditions and society in mainland Portugal. He identified two opposite realities in terms of geomorphology, climate and social organization. In the North the Oceanic Climate prevails and in the South the Mediterranean/Semi-Desert Climate. These conditions and the different geological elements have shaped - over time - the diversity of cultural heritage that remains today. The Central System Mountain Range and the Tagus river divide the two realities. The name of Orlando Ribeiro's masterpiece is precisely: 'Portugal, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic'.

In 2025, 'Heading SouthWest' route will be focus on the North of Portugal, Orlando Ribeiro's 'Atlantic' side of Portugal. The North is also known by people's strong sense of identity and delicious food. Heading SouthWest 2025 route is basically 100% on tarmac (2km in sterrato). However, be prepared for several cobblestones sectors. Cobbles are typically present in the villages and central areas of the cities of North of Portugal. You will also cycle on roads with damaged asphalt. 28mm tyres are enough to face these adversities, but 32mm tyres will definitely increase your comfort and confidence.

Kilometers/Elevation Gain (Komoot) by Sectors and Check Points (CP) Cut Off.

	KILOMETERS	D+ METERS	CP CUT OFF DAY	CP CUT OFF TIME
S1 AVEIRO – LINHARES BEIRA	277	5.640	Sunday 08	23H59M
S2 LINHARES - VILA POUCA AGUIAR	203	4.110	Monday 09	23H59M
S3 VILA POUCA – SOAJO (GERÊS)	177	3.470	Wednesday 11	12H00M
S4 SOAJO (GERÊS) - AVEIRO	348	5.010	Thrusday 12	23H59M
HEADING SOUTHWEST	1.005	18.230	Thrusday 12	23H59M

According to Komoot, the route has 1.005 kilometers and more than 18.000 meters of elevation gain. The four sectors should not be seen as proposals for daily stages. We strongly recommend you to study the route and build your own plan according to your level/capacities. Concerning elevation gain, you should be aware that the measurement provided by GPS Cycling Computers usually overestimates the field terrain reality comparing with route planning apps. So, according to your perception of elevation gain, you should be aware that the route could be harder than what you could expect.

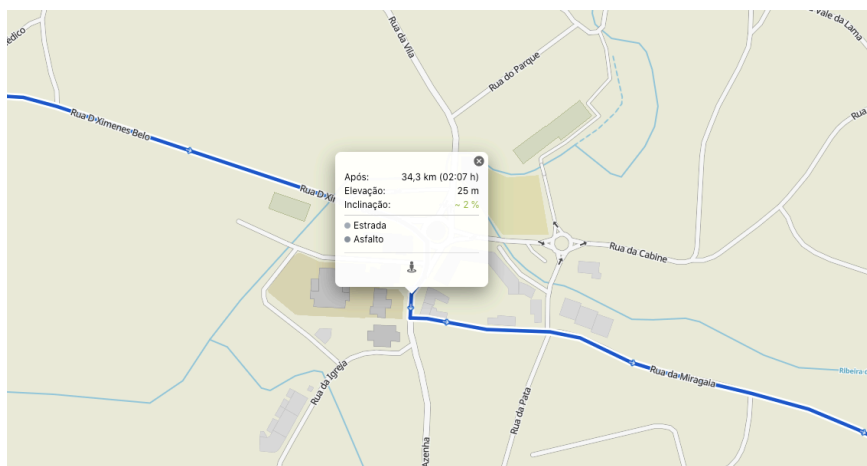
NEUTRALIZED START

AVEIRO (KM 0) – AGUADA DE CIMA (KM 34,3)

Aveiro is eventually one of the most suitable cities in Portugal for urban cycling. However, it isn't easy to leave the city and urban areas by bike on tarmac roads. A significant part of Aveiro is surrounded by water and industrial areas. There are interesting gravel paths around, but scouting the area showed us that would be a torment for road bikes at the first kilometers. We decide to use secondary tarmac roads to ride through and leave urban areas. The car traffic intensity will be low at the departure time, but there are several dangerous points (crossings, roundabouts), poor tarmac conditions and traffic lights.

Concerning these reasons, the first 34,3 kilometers of the route - from the departure point in 'Largo do Rossio' in Aveiro to 'Sucessos Doces' café in 'Aguada de Cima' village - will be neutralized. This means that is not allowed a racing pace and that **you will only be allowed to leave Aguada de cima at 08:00**. It is up to you to leave Sernada do Vouga at 08:00 or later than 08:00. The coffee shop will be open from 07:00 and the owners are informed about the event. The first 34,3 kilometers can be seen as a warm-up and the opportunity to drink quietly the morning coffee, probably the most Portuguese thing you can do. The reflective vest will be mandatory during this neutralized sector.

The neutralized sectors are part of Heading SouthWest route. It is mandatory to ride it! We won't have a group departure in Aveiro. You can depart from 06:00 to 07:00. It is up to you to decide when to start from Largo do Rossio within this one-hour window. Our staff will be there to register your start.



SECTION 3 | CP2 CAMPO DO GERÊS > FINISH AVEIRO (Ponte dos Botirões)

ESTAÇÃO FLUVIAL SÃO JACINTO (KM 0) – AVEIRO CASA DA BICICLETA (KM 993)

The ferry boat station in São Jacinto is the last official point of the route concerning time registration. The ferry service stops at night, between 22:30 and 06:50 in week days and between 22:30 and 07:30 in weekends and holydays (Tuesday June 10th is holyday in Portugal). The last kilometers of the route - between the ferry boat station and Aveiro - are part of the neutralized finish. The idea is to avoid unfair situations (image a rider arriving to São Jacinto at 22:31 and the next one at 06:49), as well as to avoid a dangerous racing pace inside Aveiro urban area. Following the same rules of the neutralized start, it is mandatory to ride the last kilometers of the route. In São Jacinto there are some accommodation options and - nor far away - a Campsite. The neutralized finish is part of the route and the official finish will be at Casa da Bicicleta in Aveiro.

NEW: RACING E TOURING CATEGORIES

In addition to the usual participation categories (solo or in pairs), this year we are launching the 'Racing' and 'Touring' categories. This innovation aims to make the event more transparent for participants and community about each participant's purpose and approach. The difference between the 'Racing' and 'Touring' categories is whether or not to fully follow the self-supported approach.

Racing: participants cannot cycle in groups (very brief interactions are tolerated along the route), and cannot receive any type of help from other participants. **Touring** (or Party Pace): participants can cycle in group(s) and receive help from other participants.

RELEVANT NOTES: (1) Riding in a group and drafting are not the same thing, and drafting is also not allowed in 'Touring' mode. Only the same members the same pair can draft. (2) The organization will ask participants in advance about the category (Race or Touring) they want to participate in. (3) During the event, participants may be moved from the 'Race' category to the 'Touring' category, at the initiative of the organization (when non-compliance with the self-supported approach is detected) and/or if participant ask to change the category. Reverse exchange is not possible.

We also inform that 'virtual basecamp' is allowed for all participants. In other words, all participants can maintain "virtual"/online/call communication with people in their close circle, with the aim of receiving assistance in booking accommodation, motivational support and information about the event/positioning of other participants. This support is only permitted in a "virtual" manner, that is, it is prohibited for this support to be provided in person. The aim is to make legal something that is usually carried out by a significant number of participants in past editions, assuming the possibility of this practice for everyone.

RIDERS' AGREEMENT

- ☐ I confirm that I have read the 'Manifesto' and I agree with the principles, namely respect the local traffic rules, ride the route, self-supported approach, no drafting and no e-bike.
- ☐ I am aware that 'HEADING SOUTHWEST' is an extreme emotional and physical challenge and I understand the risks associated with it (as well my family, relatives and friends).
- ☐ I am aware that 'HEADING SOUTHWEST' is a non-competitive event and that if I see it as a race/competition it is my own perspective/responsibility.
- ☐ I am informed that participation in the entire briefing session - which will take place on the eve of the day of departure - is mandatory and that my absence will result in disqualification.
- ☐ Concerning security, I will have/use all mandatory items: helmet, reflective vest (nights and poor visibility conditions), frontal and rear lights (including a backup kit), emergency blanket.
- ☐ I am aware that the organization will assure personal insurance for accidents (expenses for treatment, disability and death) during the event (June 7th to June 12th 2025).
- ☐ I am aware that the insurance of the event doesn't cover any damage to my bicycle/equipment, as well as damages caused - by my responsibility - on third parties.
- ☐ I will cooperate with the organization and their media team to reach maximum coverage.
- ☐ If I have a personal media team covering my progression/participation I will contact previously the organization asking for authorization and I will always mention 'HEADING SOUTHWEST' and use the logotype in the video/documentary credits.
- ☐ I am responsible for the tracker and to delivery it back to the organization (tracker loss: 150€).
- ☐ I trust the organization to be able to take decisions that are not foreseen in the 'Manifesto', with the aim of ensuring the common good, as well as equality of circumstances among the participants.

RIDER

CAP NUMBER

NAME (FULL)

SIGNATURE

EMERGENCY / NEXT OF KIN CONTACT

NAME

PHONE

EMAIL

Aveiro, June 06th 2024



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