

Race Across Europe

London to Istanbul

9 COUNTRIES | 15 DAYS | 1 FINISH LINE



BOLDER 

THIS ISN'T A NORMAL EXPEDITION

Europe is the challenge

Race Across Europe is a 15-day overland journey from London to Istanbul, travelling through nine countries as teams make their way east across the continent.

The route takes students through major cities, mountain landscapes, border crossings and unfamiliar transport networks, with the journey itself forming the heart of the adventure. Along the way, they'll navigate, manage budgets, make decisions together, cross the Alps, take on physical challenges, camp and cook for themselves, and take more and more responsibility for how their team travels.

There's a competitive edge running through the programme, with points to collect, a leaderboard that develops as the journey unfolds and a final finish line in Istanbul. But Race Across Europe is not simply about being the fastest. Teams need to decide when to push on, when to stop, where to spend their time and resources, and how to keep moving well together when plans change.

As the days progress, the challenge evolves with the route. What begins with supported navigation and team decisions in familiar European cities develops into a much bigger journey through the Alps, Italy and the Balkans, before the final crossing from Europe into Asia.

The result is an adventure built around movement, judgement and teamwork, where students experience the continent changing around them while discovering how much more capable they become when they are trusted with real responsibility.



15
DAYS

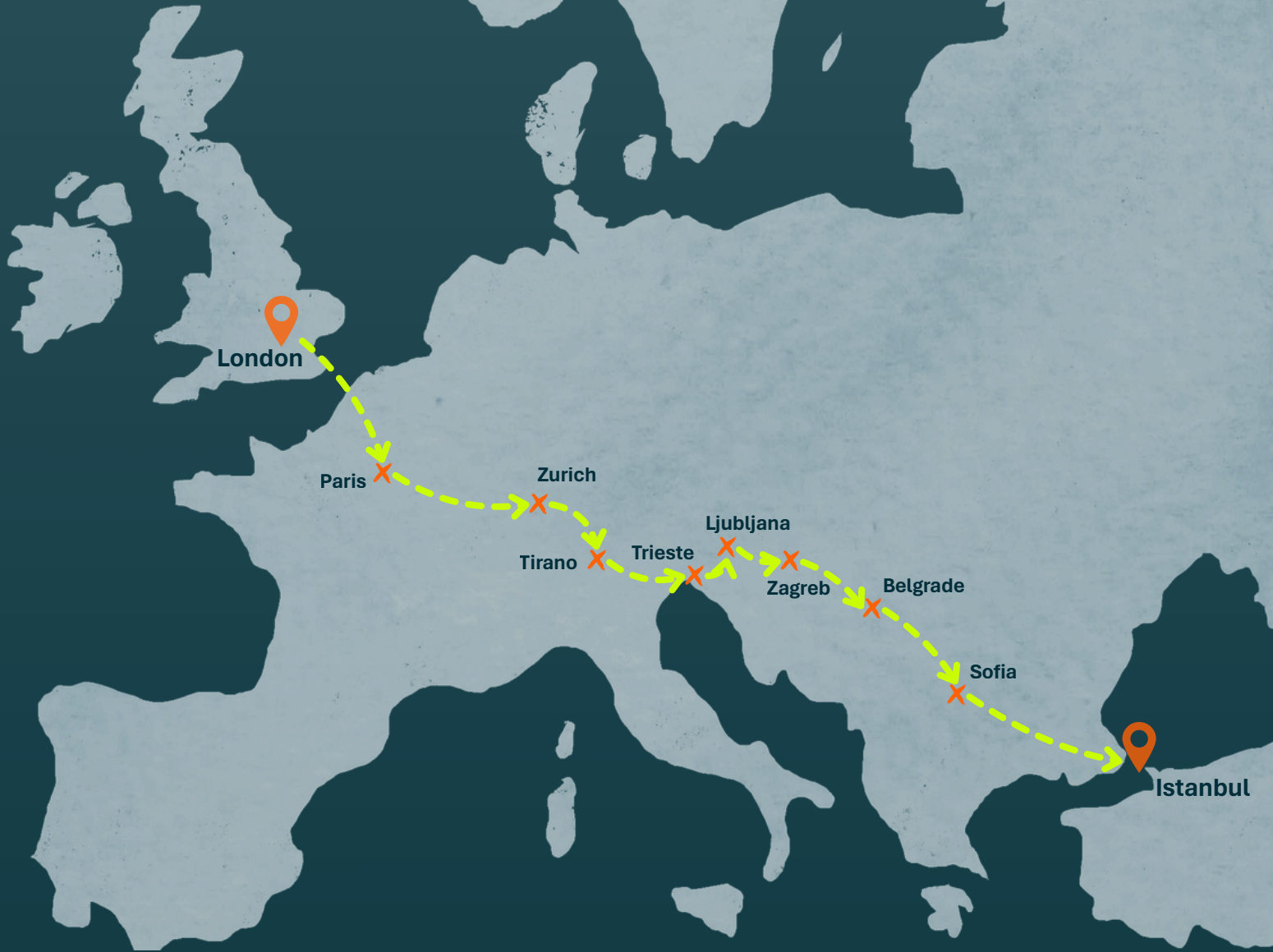


9
COUNTRIES



1
FINISH
LINE





From high-speed trains and local transport to mountain trails, white-water rafts and an overnight sleeper train, students experience Europe changing around them like never before. The journey begins in the familiar cities of Western Europe, before rising into the majestic landscapes of the Swiss Alps. Italy gives way to Slovenia and Croatia. The adventure continues east through Serbia and Bulgaria before one final overnight journey brings the teams to Istanbul.

And the finish line? On the other side of the Bosphorus.

The adventure starts in Europe.
We cross the finish line in Asia.

Adventure

HIGHLIGHTS



THE RACE

Travel in competing teams, collecting points through challenges, decisions and missions along the route. The leaderboard evolves as the journey unfolds - but speed is only one part of the game.



CROSS THE SWISS ALPS

Leave the cities behind for rafting, camping and a substantial mountain journey through spectacular Alpine country before crossing into Italy by rail.



RUN YOUR OWN JOURNEY

Navigation. Transport. Budgets. Food. Time. Team welfare. Students take increasing responsibility as they travel east, supported throughout by the Bolder team.



ISTANBUL FINISH

After an overnight train from Sofia, one final city challenge leads towards the Bosphorus - and a finish line on another continent.

Destination

SNAPSHOT



LANDSCAPE

Great European cities, Alpine valleys and passes, northern Italy, the Adriatic, the Balkans and the Bosphorus.



CULTURE

Nine countries experienced overland, with changing languages, food, architecture, histories and ways of life revealed gradually along the route.



CHALLENGE LEVEL

Moderate to challenging. A fast-moving journey with extended travel days, an Alpine trek, rafting, camping and sustained team responsibility.



ACCOMMODATION

A varied mix of group accommodation, hostels or simple hotels, supported camping during the Alpine phase and an overnight sleeper train.



CLIMATE

Highly varied. Summer conditions can range from strong heat in cities and the Balkans to considerably cooler and changeable weather in the Alps.



TRAVEL

Overland almost all the way. Rail, buses, local transport, walking and other transport become part of the challenge rather than simply a way of getting between activities.



ATMOSPHERE

Fast-moving, competitive, sociable and unpredictable - with moments of intensity balanced by recovery, culture and time to enjoy the places you're travelling through.



BEST FOR

Schools looking for something genuinely different: a team-based European adventure combining travel, physical challenge, leadership, culture and problem-solving in one evolving journey.



RACE ACROSS EUROPE

LONDON TO ISTANBUL

15 DAYS

Day 1

London to Paris

Race Across Europe begins almost as soon as the group leaves the UK. By the time students arrive in Paris they have met their teams, started thinking about how they will work together and begun to understand that this will be a very different kind of journey. Their first challenges are deliberately manageable. Paris gives everyone space to get used to navigating together, keeping track of spending, communicating clearly and making decisions without being rushed. The Bolder team remains closely involved at this stage, helping students understand the framework and giving them the confidence to take on more as the expedition develops. By the end of the day, the race has begun, but the more important development is that a collection of students is starting to think like a team.

Day 2

Paris

A second day in Paris allows the competition to develop while the teams continue to find their rhythm. They move around the city completing challenges within agreed parameters, balancing the desire to collect points with the practical realities of time, transport and budget. Different approaches soon emerge. Some teams will want to move quickly, while others may take more time to plan or decide that a particular challenge is simply not worth pursuing. There is no single correct strategy, and that is part of the point. Students begin to recognise that travelling well is as much about judgement as it is about speed. Paris provides an energetic start to the programme, but it also lays the foundations for everything that follows: teamwork, navigation, communication and the confidence to make a decision and live with it.

Day 3

Paris to Zürich and Graubünden

Leaving Paris behind, the group travels east towards Switzerland. The transition feels significant. Busy city streets gradually give way to lakes, valleys and mountains, and the scale of the journey begins to become clearer. Students continue to manage aspects of their travel within the expedition framework, keeping an eye on connections, belongings, timings and one another. By the time they reach Graubünden, the atmosphere has changed completely. The next few days will be less about moving through cities and more about travelling through the landscape itself. The evening is spent preparing for the Alpine phase, organising kit and settling into camp before the expedition takes on a more physical character.

Day 4

The Rhine Gorge

The first major adventure challenge takes the teams onto the water. After a full briefing and preparation with experienced local guides, students travel by raft through the dramatic Rhine Gorge near Ilanz. It is a very different experience from the urban challenges of Paris. The surroundings are bigger, the pace is dictated by the river and success depends on communication and working together rather than individual speed. Once off the water, the group continues deeper into the mountains. Camp routines become more familiar and students take greater responsibility for food, equipment and looking after the shared spaces around them. By now, the expedition is beginning to feel properly underway.

Day 5

The Alpine Journey

The team travels through high mountain country with everything needed for the day carried in their packs. The route introduces changing terrain, weather and a physical challenge that requires steady progress rather than racing ahead. Leadership naturally moves around the team. Someone may be strongest on the climb, another better at keeping the group organised, while somebody else notices when a teammate is struggling and needs encouragement. The mountain journey creates space for all of those qualities to emerge. After several days dominated by trains, streets and transport networks, travelling through the landscape under their own power gives the expedition a completely different character.

Day 6

Across the Alps to Tirano

The crossing continues, this time by rail. The Rhaetian Railway carries the group through the spectacular Albula and Bernina landscapes, climbing through the mountains before descending towards Italy. It is one of Europe's great railway journeys, but the students are still travelling as part of Race Across Europe rather than simply sitting back on a sightseeing excursion. Connections, timings and the wider journey still need to be managed, and teams remain responsible for keeping themselves and their equipment organised. As the train descends towards Tirano, the Alpine phase comes to an end. The scenery, language and atmosphere begin to change again, giving students a real sense of travelling across a continent rather than moving between isolated destinations.

Day 7

Tirano to Trieste

The next stage is less dramatic on paper but becomes one of the most useful tests of how far the teams have already progressed. The objective is to travel across northern Italy and reach Trieste within the agreed framework. It is a long day, with decisions to make about transport, food, timing and how best to keep the team moving. By this point, students have enough experience to understand that the quickest option is not always the best one. A cheaper route may take longer. A seemingly straightforward connection may leave very little room for error. Someone needs to think about the budget while somebody else keeps an eye on the time and another makes sure the whole group is still functioning well.

Day 8

Trieste to Ljubljana

After several intense days, the route through Trieste and into Slovenia gives the group a welcome change of pace. There is time to enjoy the surroundings, eat properly, reorganise equipment and reflect on how the journey is unfolding. Students can look back at the decisions they have made so far and begin to see how their team has changed since Paris. For some groups, this may be the point where roles become less fixed. The student who was initially reluctant to lead may begin taking more responsibility, while others discover that good teamwork sometimes means stepping back and supporting somebody else.







Day 9

Ljubljana to Zagreb

The competitive element becomes more prominent again as teams travel towards Croatia. Rather than being given a simple sequence of tasks, students are presented with more opportunities than they can realistically complete. Each requires a judgement about time, effort and potential reward. The aim is not to do everything, but to decide what is worth doing and what should be left behind. As Zagreb approaches, the teams have to balance ambition with the need to arrive together and in good shape for what comes next.

Day 10

Zagreb

The pace changes again in Zagreb as the race pauses for a locally-led community, environmental or service activity. Rather than competing for points, students spend time working alongside an appropriate local organisation and contributing to something useful. The exact activity will depend on the partner and what is genuinely valuable at the time and, after more than a week of travelling and competing, the day offers a different way of engaging with their location. It creates time to meet people, understand something of the local context and recognise that an adventure through Europe involves more than simply passing through.

Day 11

Zagreb to Belgrade

When the journey resumes, students are given even greater responsibility for making it work. By now, the routines that once felt unfamiliar have become part of everyday expedition life. Teams are more confident using transport networks, keeping track of money and organising themselves. The route heads east through Croatia and into Serbia, and the sense of travelling somewhere increasingly unfamiliar becomes stronger. Languages, architecture and landscapes continue to change around the group, and Belgrade marks another important staging point, with the final competitive phase now close.

Day 12

Belgrade to Sofia

The last major opportunity to influence the leaderboard comes in Belgrade. Teams once again need to make decisions about which challenges are worth their time before beginning the journey towards Bulgaria. By this stage, their approach is usually very different from the one they adopted in Paris. They have become better at reading situations, dividing responsibilities and recognising when a plan needs to change. Eventually, the competitive stage closes and the teams travel onwards to Sofia. For the first time, the result of everything they have done since leaving London is almost complete.

Day 13

Sofia and the Overnight Train

Sofia provides time to recover before the final journey. The teams can reorganise themselves, explore the city and prepare for the last stage, but there is also one important moment still to come: the reveal of the starting order for Istanbul, as the points earned across the expedition determine how the teams will begin the final challenge. That evening, the group boards the overnight train towards Türkiye. This is travel at its purest - leaving one European capital by rail and waking the following morning on the edge of another continent. The overnight border crossing, passports and interrupted sleep are all part of the experience. This is not simply a transfer; it's another chapter in the journey.

Day 14

Istanbul and the Finish Line

The race reaches its final stage in Istanbul, providing an extraordinary setting for the last challenge. Teams draw on everything they have learned over the previous two weeks as they navigate through a place that feels very different from where the expedition began. The exact final mission remains a surprise. Students know only that they need to work together, make good decisions and reach the final checkpoint. Eventually, the route brings them towards the Bosphorus. Crossing from the European side of Istanbul into Asia provides a fitting finish to a journey that began fifteen days earlier in London. The geography makes the moment feel significant, but so does everything that's happened along the way. The teams that cross the finish line are not quite the same, as the ones who first arrived in Paris.

Day 15

Istanbul and Home

The final morning gives everyone time to enjoy Istanbul without a leaderboard, deadline or challenge waiting around the corner. There is space to look back at the journey as a whole: nine countries, the Swiss Alps, northern Italy, the Balkans, countless transport connections and a final crossing into Asia. What students remember will vary. For some it may be the rafting or the mountains. For others it will be an unexpected conversation, a team decision that somehow worked, or the satisfaction of finding their way through an unfamiliar city together.

That variety is part of what makes Race Across Europe such a distinctive adventure. It is not built around one headline activity. The experience grows through the journey itself, with students gradually becoming more confident travellers, stronger teammates and more capable decision-makers as they move across the continent.





WHAT'S INCLUDED



Free teaching staff places
Bolder Adventure Guide 

International overland travel, and
flight back to UK from Istanbul



All planned overland travel throughout the programme
All accommodation, meals and safe drinking water

Expert local guides for specialist activities
Required permits and activity fees



Group safety, communication & sleep-out equipment
Travel Pack, inc. hoody

Comprehensive travel insurance
Safety management & planning
24/7 support during travel



Highly experienced UK account management
Pre-trip briefings & training (*as applicable*)

PLEASE NOTE: Cancellation insurance, visas, vaccinations, personal expenditure, tips for leaders, guides and drivers - and any other services not listed above are not included.

NEXT STEPS

1

Consider your preferred itinerary or direction



2

Book a 20 minute planning call. We'll confirm your aims, shape the itinerary, and prepare what you need for SLT and promotion

3

Receive your customised pack for confirmation and launch

4

Reserve your dates with a small holding deposit



BOLDER 

**SEE THE WORLD
DIFFERENTLY**



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