

Mallorca 312 2023

Having completed the Mallorca 312 in 2022, KCC club members Micheal Lambert, Eamon Kirwan and John Murray returned for another crack at the event.



Close to the start at Playa D'Muro

THE EVENT

Mallorca 312 is an annual closed-road sportive/gran fondo that takes place in and around the Serra Tramuntana mountains on the island of Mallorca, Spain.

Mallorca 312 is a 312 km (194 mile) loop of the Serra Tramuntana mountains as well as a loop out to the northeast of the island.

The route takes in some of Mallorca's finest roads, including Col de Femenia, Puig Major (descent) and the spectacular MA-10 coast road.

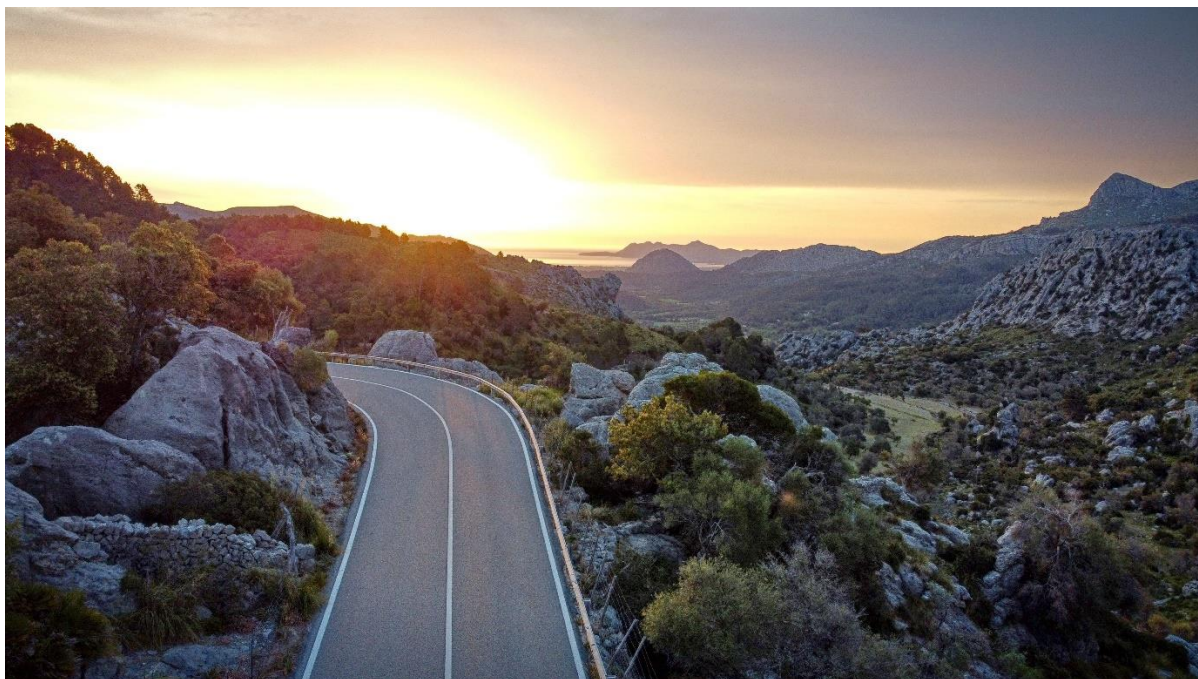
The first 150 kilometres contain nearly all the climbing; it's mentally good to know that once you're halfway through there are no major climbs left to tackle. It would be wrong to say it's downhill all the way home – but you get the idea! None of the climbs are steep (rarely above 7 / 8%) but they are long.



Just one of the climbs



The spectacular MA-10 coast road.



Scenery



Scenes at the start line



Lights on for the tunnels.

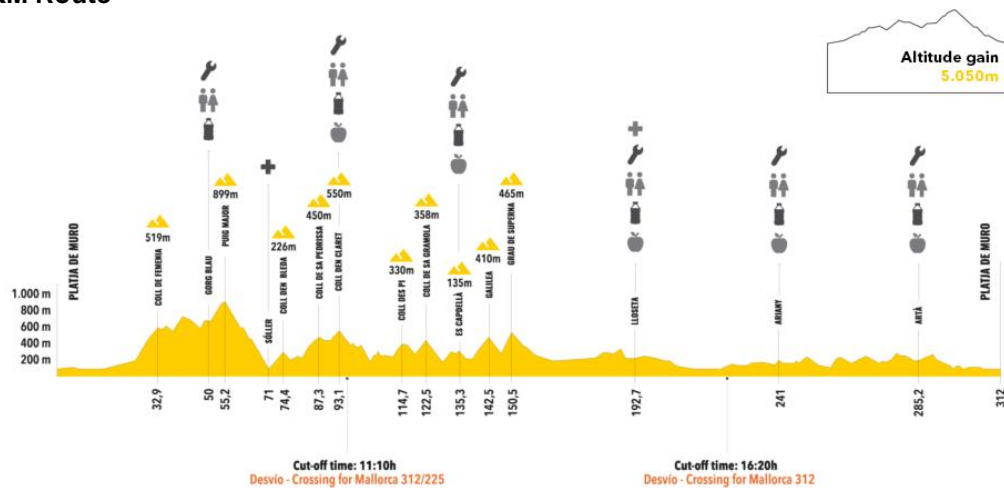


Spectacular closed roads

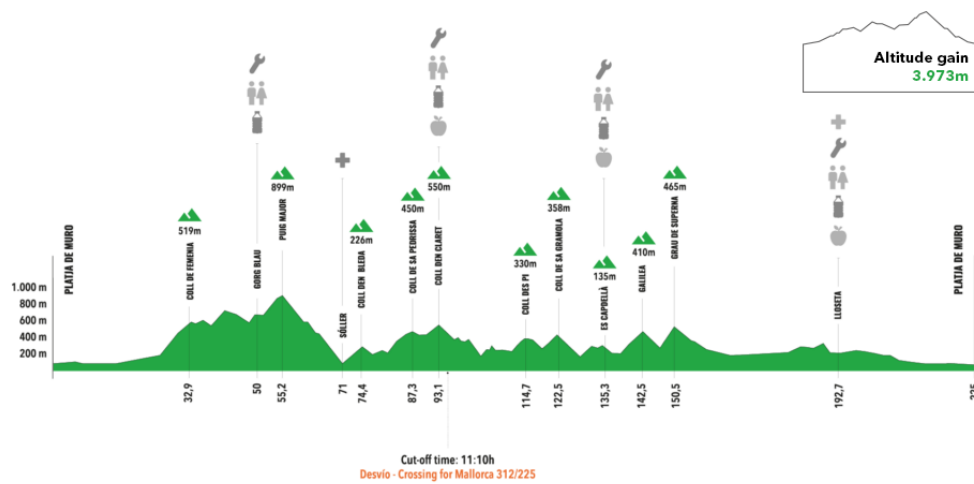
THE DIFFERENT ROUTES

Choose between 3 different routes!

312KM Route



225KM Route



167KM Route



Training

This is an event you must train for – all three distances.

The training plan we followed was a 16-week plan with an average of 10 – 12 hours of training per week. The mid-week sessions were generally completed on the indoor with the longer sessions at weekends. As there are time cut-offs for the event, we needed to cut out stops on the long training spins so coffee shops were left until the end of the spins. This prepared us mentally also to keep going on the day.

During the event, it is recommended you consume 60g of carbohydrates per hour. This means a bar or gel every 30 minutes. This was also practiced on the training runs. For the climbing element, we also included spins to Wicklow and Slieve Blooms as part of the training.

The Event 2023

We arrived a few days in advance of the event. Not much cycling was done before the event other than some easy spins to check everything was in working order with the bike.

Bed early on the Friday night.

Alarm at 4.20 Saturday morning followed by a bowl of porridge and arrived at the start line at 5.00am. There were already large numbers there. Its important to arrive early as the event is timed from the official start time of 6.30am – if you are not near the front, you could lose 30 minutes crossing the start line and be under pressure to make the demanding cut off times after that.

The race didn't start until 6.40 with the VIPs starting first. These included former pros and selected invited guests. These were followed by premium ticket holders followed by the main peloton. We got going approximately 6.45.

The first 25km is flat and you spend a lot of time passing VIPS and premium ticket holders!

Then at 25km the first climb starts – Coll de Femenia – its approximately 7.5km long with an average gradient of 6%.

The next 125km involves climbing and descending. The climbs are not overly demanding, but they are long. The descending on closed roads is great fun and you really feel like a pro on the corners.

Most skip the first water stop at 50km as two bottles and a pocket full of bars and gels is enough to carry you to the second food stop at 100km. It also saves time. The crowds at the next stop were serious and took a bit of time to get the water bottles filled and grabbed some food. No sitting around – the eating was done while on the move again.

The second food stop as Es Capdella (137km) was a bit quieter and coke was the order of the day here. It was getting very hot at this point and the next part was tough until approximately 155km when we reached the summit of the mountain section of the course. Mentally this was great as we knew the bulk of the climbing was behind us at this point.

With approximately 20k to the next stop Micheal ran dry of water and needed an unscheduled stop at a bakery for yet more coke and a full fill of the water bottles. Eamon similarly ran dry at this point and needed the assistance of a motorcycle police officer to provide water to get him to the next stop.

At 220km the 312 split from the 225 route and ran through farm roads etc. This was a really enjoyable part of the course as no need to worry about the cut offs at this point.

At the food stop in Ariany at 240km, the locals were filling your bottles and gathering food for you, a much more relaxed stop than earlier in the day. We could even afford a sit down and chat with other competitors.

The last stop at Arta 280km was amazing. The locals were thronged behind barriers entering the town and the music was loud. There was cheering, dancing and revelry on the streets. They were passing out beers to participants. It was a real high point of the event. After a sip of beer, we rolled on the finish line at 312K.

After the event

Despite the best of intentions, very little beer was consumed that night and the next day was spent off the bike.

On the Monday, we had a late flight home so took advantage and had a lovely 70km spin to Petra and Muro with not one but two coffee stops. It was nice to be able to appreciate the scenery.

Will we be back again?

Definitely! Maybe next time taking on the shorter distance of 167km allowing for a few more spins during the holiday.

On the event, we met lots of other Irish cycling clubs decked out in their club gear – Donadea Wheelers, Bohermena from Meath, Killeslin Wheelers, Orwell Wheelers etc. It would be great to see a team of Kildare CC members on the course sometime in the future. Next year's event will probably go on sale around October and will sell out very quickly.

Out of the 8000 starters:

3283 completed the 167 within the time limits.

2087 completed the 225, and

1554 completed the 312.

It was a tough but very rewarding experience on the bike.

The high points:

- Fully closed roads – It was great to be able to take on the descents with full knowledge nothing around the corner.
- The long descent off Puig Major (Highest point of the course) – The descent is approximately 15km long. It's not technical but is super-fast and very enjoyable.
- The scenery throughout is nice but the MA-10 coastal section where the road hugs the coastline is stunning.
- The weather was warm but thankfully not too hot.
- The roads were super smooth.
- The crowds in Arta were like nothing we've experienced before.



Micheal looking lonely on one of the farm roads.



Descending the Puig Major 15km overall descent



Please don't let me fall off at this point!



Eamon going through one of the many quaint villages on the route.



Eamon enjoying the descents.



Eamon still focused towards the end of the event on one of the farm roads.