

FRANCE – GUIDED SUPPORTED SMALL GROUP CYCLING TOURS

7-days / 6-nights in Loire, Provence, Dordogne, Bordeaux, Burgundy, Languedoc, Normandy or Pyrenees



Cycling in rural France has been a passion of ours for many years. We appreciate the importance of a well-chosen route – away from the maddening crowds and busy roads. We appreciate the value of knowledgeable and experienced guides, of well-maintained bikes – suitable for the terrain – and of a support vehicle or ‘sag wagon’ for the days (or hills) when you need it.

We appreciate the company of a small group of like-minded cyclist who share an interest not just in lots of fast kilometres – although the cycling is important - but in the scenery, the culture, the history and the wine and cuisine of some of the most spectacular cycling regions in Europe.

Our 7-day small group cycling program ticks all the boxes; stunning scenery, quiet roads and a French culture that embraces the bicycle as a fundamental part of its character and therefore welcomes cyclists with respect and enthusiasm. Yes, there are hills to climb but your efforts will be well rewarded by spectacular views and exhilarating downhill section.

We offer a selection of carefully planned routes through some of the most beautiful parts of France, travelling on minor roads and, where available, on designated cycle paths. A guide is with you on the road and detailed route maps are provided. All baggage is carried from hotel to hotel, leaving you free to enjoy each day. Food is important to these tours and each evening the restaurants we choose will highlight the region’s cuisine. Cycling each day, you will build-up a terrific appetite so you can indulge knowing you’ve earned every morsel.

Our tours are recommended for anyone who is reasonably fit. They are ideal for more experienced cyclists, as our guides will be happy to accompany you on additional rides for those wishing to do a few more kilometres.

For partners and those less interested in hills and major climbs we have ‘easy’ graded routes in places such as the Loire Valley. For those interested in emulating the greats in cycling we offer tours specifically to attack some of France’s classic cols. All in all if it’s cycling in France you are after we have something for everyone.

Prices: See page 10 for all dates & prices

Departs: Selected Saturdays from April - October 2012

Tours Includes: 6-nights in carefully selected 3-star hotels & typical B&B’s (all with private bathrooms), 6-breakfasts & dinners, route notes, sightseeing, luggage transfers, cycle tour guide, quality multi-gear bicycle hire, support vehicles

Distance: Moderate cycling - 40 to 60 kilometres on gently rolling to rolling terrain. Extra rides (extensions and loop rides) may be available each day.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Inexperienced or beginner cyclist and week-ender cyclist not used to multi-day rides with some hills are advised to make a specific preparation in order to enjoy these holiday on bike – talk to our staff for suggestions.

Here is a summary of some tours and suggested itineraries - these are suggested itineraries as weather conditions, group interests and the tour guide will influence the final route taken each day:

The Loire Valley

Easily accessible from Paris, the Valley of the Loire offers gentle rolling countryside, a rural landscape and of course the castles or châteaux, some of the finest in all France. Along the banks of the river, and its tributaries the Cher and the Indre, are medieval fortresses such as Amboise and Angers, renaissance masterpieces at Chenonceaux and Chambord and the *directoire* folly of Ussé. You will also find Leonardo Di Vinci's final resting place and studios at Clos Lucé near Amboise, 'troglodyte' houses carved out of the soft 'tufa' rock along the banks of the Loire and the fabulous gardens of Villandry.

The Loire region offers many fine wine *domaines*; sparkling Saumur, reds from Bourgueil and Chinon, Anjou rosés and Touraine whites. The cuisine of the region includes speciality cheeses (such as the distinctive Ste-Maure goats cheese), mushrooms (again grown in caves and wine cellars) and river fish like salmon, pike and the zander.



Our routes take in all of the major châteaux and Leonardo da Vinci's home with its codex prints and models of his inventions – such as a tank and a helicopter - in a lovely garden setting. We offer gentle cycling following riverbanks and meandering across country along quiet tree lined roads.

Day 1: Transfers are from Tours Airport and Tours TGV Station (Saint-Pierre-des-Corps). We arrive at our chateau hotel in the countryside on the outskirts of Tours, and, pausing to take a glass of the local Vouvray sparkling wine, have a look at the bikes and make sure everyone is perfectly fitted to their bicycle. There will be an optional afternoon excursion to the Château de Villandry with its spectacular gardens, or later arrivals might prefer to cycle into Tours to check out the old quarter and majestic cathedral. There should be time before dinner to relax in the gardens of the hotel before meeting our fellow riders and look forward to the pleasures of the road ahead over the first of many wonderful meals.

Day 2: Our first day in the saddle takes us along the Cher into Tours, and then out into the Touraine countryside. The route then takes us to the village of Cormery with its Abbey founded in 791, and home to a excellent restaurant for a lunch stop. Back on the road, we pass through the village of Bleré before picking up the banks of the Cher again to continue into Chenonceaux. One of the highlights of the tour, the stunning Château de Chenonceau (it loses the final 'x' of the village for some reason!) was given by Henri II of France to his mistress Diane de Poitiers. With its graceful arches spanning the river Cher, it is the most visited chateau of the Loire, and it is truly unforgettable. We stay in Chenonceaux, allowing plenty of time for exploring the chateau and maybe taking a rowing boat out onto the River Cher for a different view.

Total distance: 46 km / 29 miles

Day 3: We stay in Chenonceaux this evening, so we take a loop ride out to visit a couple of the area's lesser known jewels. Starting along the Cher, we soon come to the village of Montrichard. Medieval timbered houses huddle around the foot of the hill which is crowned by the crumbling remains of the 9th Century castle keep, built by Fulk Nerra (the Black Falcon), a local warlord who was responsible for many of the fortifications in the region. Away from the river along tiny roads through farmland and forest, we arrive at the elegant Château de Montpoupon. The castle is home to one of Frances foremost hunts and the grounds house a fascinating museum

of hunting, and the kitchens and stables give an insight into daily life of the gentry and servants in the 18th Century. Back to Chenonceaux and a chance after an early dinner to see the illuminations and spectacle of the Château's *son et lumière*. Total distance: 42 km / 26 miles

Day 4: Leaving Chenonceaux we continue northward back to the Loire. On our way into Amboise, we stop off to visit Clos-Lucé, the home of Leonardo da Vinci. As well as drawings and designs, this fascinating museum includes several life-size reconstructions of what these sketches would be like had they been made. Amboise itself clusters around a stunning medieval château overlooking the river. Leaving Clos-Lucé we head across the rich and fertile heartlands of the 'Jardin de France' and passing the ancient abbey at Pontlevoy, come to our château hotel near the village of Cours-Cheverney. The wonderful hotel has extensive grounds for a pre dinner stroll or maybe visit a local winery for a *dégustation*. Total distance: 57km / 35 miles

Day 5: We visit two châteaux today; the first, Cheverney has truly impressive interiors with period furniture, tapestries and paintings all intact. A feature of the château is the pack of hunting dogs still kept there - a highlight of the visit is watching the feeding of the hounds. For fans of the "Tintin" childrens' adventure books Cheverney was the inspiration for Captain Haddock's castle, and a museum there is dedicated to the characters. The second château is also the largest and possibly the most impressive — Chambord. Taking 15 years to build in the 16th Century, it is surrounded by a vast hunting park alive with wildlife. The interior is just as impressive, dominated by the 'double helix' staircase on which two people can ascend and descend at the same time, yet never meet. Most of the day is spent on the well maintained forest trails of the royal hunting parks. We continue through the forests to reach the Loire at Blois where we find our hotel for the evening, which is also one of the culinary highlights of the tour with its Michelin-starred restaurant. If you can manage it, there is a great *son et lumière* at the Château de Blois! Total distance: 46km / 29 miles

Day 6: The road back along the Loire takes us to the Château de Chaumont - on the death of Henri II, Diane de Poitiers was forced by his widow to take this château in exchange for her beloved Chenonceau - see who you think got the best deal! If you fancy a change from medieval brickwork, Chaumont is also host every summer to an internationally renowned Garden Festival where areas of the grounds are laid out in different themes — the inventiveness knows no bounds. After a picnic lunch (weather permitting!) on the banks of the Loire we head westwards on the north side of the river. A spot of wine tasting at a winery of the Touraine-Mesland appellation is followed by the last stretch of the tour through wheatfields and sunflowers back to Amboise and our hotel. We will have a chance to visit the majestic chateau, or maybe sit down for a coffee and pastry at one of the many cafes in the pedestrianised centre. The day ends with a fantastic celebratory meal in the medieval centre of the town. Total distance: 44km / 27miles

Day 7: After breakfast, a chance for some last minute shopping, before a transfer back to Tours.

Cycling in Provence – the South of France

One of our most popular regions of France for cycling with a mild year-round climate – situated between the Côte d'Azur and the Rhone River delta and stretching inland to the foothills of the Alps in the east and to the plateau of the Ardèche in the west - the area derives its name from the Roman *Provincia Gallia* and everywhere there is the evidence of the area's Roman past, with some of the best-preserved examples of Roman building anywhere. Renowned for its olive trees, fields of lavender and sunflowers, and of course the Mediterranean sunshine, the landscape is wonderfully varied, from the rugged hinterland with terraced vineyards, to the mini-mountain range of the Alpilles near Arles, to the flat marshes of the Camargue where the Rhone flows to the sea.

The unique quality of the light in Provence has attracted artists for the last two centuries, notably Van Gogh and Gauguin who lived in Arles and Cézanne who immortalised the area with his many studies of Mont Ste-Victoire.

The cuisine of the region is as distinctive as the light, with emphasis on fresh fruit and vegetables, olive oil, seafood and the herbs de Provence — rosemary, thyme, lavender — which grow wild on the hillsides. There are wines here too; pink rosé from Bandol and Mont Ventoux, and reds from Nimes in the west, but above all, grands crus like Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Gigondas in the Rhone Valley above Avignon.

Because of the variety available we have two exciting tours in Provence.

The **Roman Provence Heritage tour** will discover hidden treasures in Arles, Orange, Nîmes, Uzès, at the Pont du Gard and in Avignon, and taste world-renowned wines in the vineyards of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. The landscapes will shift from the green fruit-growing pastures of the Rhone valley to the dry garrigue of the inland hills to the pan-flat expanses of marshland that make up the Camargue National Park with its pink flamingos, black fighting bulls and wild grey horses.

The **Villages of the Luberon** tour takes in the Provence made famous in Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence*, with its lavender farms and olive groves, visiting charming villages with bustling markets overlooked by apricot-coloured houses with pastel blue shutters. Ménerbes, Gordes, Roussillon with its ochre cliffs, Vaison-la-Romaine dominated by the Roman bridge – will each entrance you, as will the earthly delights of the wineries of Gigondas and Beaufort-de-Venise.

The terrain here can be challenging for cyclists because of the topography, although none of the hills are too daunting, and anybody of reasonable fitness will be able to manage the routes comfortably.



Rocamadour, the Dordogne & the River Lot

A fabulous region in southwest central France with wonderful views with stunning landscapes of rivers and cliffs, hills and fields of sunflowers, with fascinating villages steeped in history and with some of the most interesting cycling in France.

Known to the French as the Périgord, the area is famous for the 'hundred year's war' between England and France resulting in the building of many castles, *bastides* or fortified villages. The village of Rocamadour was an important waypoint for pilgrims making the long journey to Santiago de Compostela and there are many fine medieval churches along the route of our tour. The caves of Lascaux are home to some of the finest examples of pre-historic art and the whole region is dotted with caves, underground rivers and ancient settlements.

The Dordogne is also blessed with a cuisine that has become synonymous with 'typical' French cooking. The famous duck and goose dishes, including the celebrated foie gras, truffles and cheeses are much sought after. The wine *appellations* include from the light and fruity Bergerac and Pecharmont in the north to the dark and powerful Cahors in the south.

The countryside on this route is fairly rugged, and there are some hills to tackle, but the route has been designed to ensure that each day's riding will be manageable for anyone with a reasonable level of fitness and the support vehicle is never far away.

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 The meeting point is Brive la Gaillard and we arrange a transfer from the railway station (regular trains run from Paris) to our hotel in Montignac, a stone's throw from the River Vézère and here we make sure everybody is fitted with their bikes; a limbering up ride will take us up above the River Vézère to the celebrated caves of Lascaux II, where cave art representing the prehistoric civilisation of 15,000–20,000 years ago is hauntingly displayed. Afterwards we head back downhill to the hotel where a quick swim in the pool before dinner might be enticing. Dinner is at the hotel where we will look forward to the week ahead.

Day 2 We follow the River Vézère as it meanders downstream towards its confluence with the Dordogne. We then visit the village of **les Eyzies** and the **Grotte de Font-de-Gaume** is set high in the cliffs overlooking the town, with both Cro-Magnon cave art and natural rock formations. We stay overnight in the market town of **St-Cyprien** with its medieval old town. *Total distance: 47km*

Day 3 Today we cross the Dordogne to **Castelnaud-la-Chapelle** with its 12th century castle, and visit the chateaux at **Beynac** high on the cliffs overlooking the town and the river. We follow the river to **La Roque Gageac** and the *bastide* town of **Domme**. Our hotel is in **Sarlat-le-Canada**, with one of the best-preserved medieval centres in France, we can wander to the *vieux ville* for an aperitif before dinner. *Total distance: 37km*

Day 4 We stay in **Sarlat** tonight; this gives us plenty of time to visit the splendid weekly market in the morning, with an astounding selection of local produce, beautifully presented, and then to head off for sightseeing. One option today is to take a Canoe trip down the Dordogne, getting a different perspective on the Chateaux we have seen. Other attractions which you might want to see are the gardens of Marqueyssac, and the **Chateau of Comarque**. On the other hand you might just want to spend the day exploring Sarlat's magical medieval lanes and alleys. Tonight we dine in the town.

Day 5 Heading back to the Dordogne, we reach it at the **Cingle de Montfort**, where a tight loop or cingle in the river creates a stunning vista. Crossing the river to pick up some un-trafficked riverside roads, we head upstream to the market town of Souillac for lunch by the Romanesque Abbey-Church. The remarkable carvings on the tympanum of the ruined church are well worth a closer look. A few kilometres after Souillac we reach **Lacave**, where an underground train takes us to a guided tour of a series of caverns resplendent with stalactites and stalagmites, reflected in still pools of water. At Lacave we leave the river and head south, climbing through dramatic countryside to our overnight stop at **Rocamadour**. This spectacular village on the River Alzou has been a place of pilgrimage since the 10th Century, and above the town in the hillside is the Cité Réligieuse, where there are seven chapels.

Total distance: 54km

Day 6 Today we rise to the uplands of the **Causse de Gramat**, a sparsely populated limestone plateau - the landscape a sharp contrast to the lush greens of the river valleys - our first stop is the **Gouffre de Padirac**, a 75m chasm leading to an subterranean river where we travel underground by boat and on foot. We cycle to Autoire, one of the most beautiful villages of France. This perfect lunch spot also benefits from a spectacular 30m waterfall.

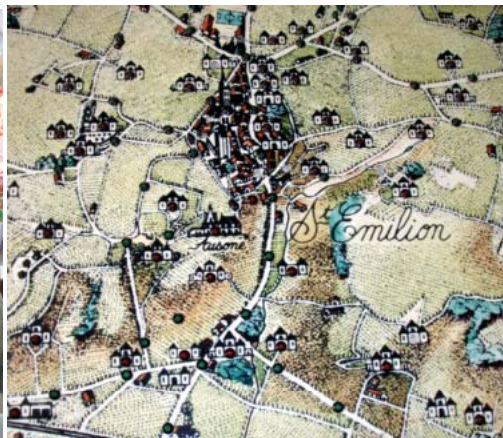
After lunch, it's a short ride to the **Chateau de Castelnau Bretenoux**, another medieval masterpiece. We then take an easy ride alongside the Dordogne to our hotel in the charming riverside town of Beaulieu-Sur-Dordogne.
Total distance: 52km

Day 7 Breakfast at the hotel is a hearty affair, and there is a chance to check out the colourful morning market in the town's central covered *halles* before we make our way home.

The Wine Regions of Bordeaux

Bordeaux and the lower reaches of the River Garonne and the lower section of the Dordogne River are world renowned as fertile areas ideal for growing wines. But there is so much more to see and enjoy in this area as the rivers are broad, meandering and majestic, there are fields of fruit, nuts and sunflowers and thick forests and pine plantations.

The region is alive with history. Prehistoric cave paintings can be seen at several grottoes along the river valley. The Romans arrived in the 3rd century BC and vestiges of that period are scattered across the region. In the 12th century the English King Henry II married Eleanor of Aquitaine and gained the Bordeaux region for the English crown. This control lasted for three hundred years, from 1154 to 1453 and the English love of red wine (or claret) helped the region gain its worldwide reputation.



Today Saint Emilion, Pomerol and Fronsac in the Libournais to the east, Graves and Sauternes in the Entre-Deux-Mers region to the southeast, and Pauillac, St-Julien and Margaux in the Medoc peninsular to the northwest are the most famous appellations in France. They include wines such as Chateaux Lafite-Rothschild, Latour, Lynch-Bages, Mouton-Rothschild, Margaux, Yquem, Cheval-Blanc and Petrus

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Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 Meet and transfers from Bergerac train station and airport to the village of St-Julien-de-Crempse. For those arriving early we offer a 9km excursion to the vineyards of Pecharmant where we can visit the Château de la Renaudie for a tasting. Those coming later can enjoy a stroll or swim before dinner.

Day 2 After breakfast we head to Chateau de Tiregand for a tour of the vineyard and tasting. We continue to Bergerac for coffee, with a chance to visit the impressive abbey-church before climbing away from the river to the hilltop village of Monbazillac for a picnic lunch. We visit the elegant 16th century Château de Monbazillac famed for its desert wine, a wonderful accompaniment to the foie gras of the region.

There is then an exhilarating downhill and a flat run through the vineyards to the market town of **Ste-Foy-La-Grande** overlooking the Dordogne. Bitterly contested between the French and the English during the 100 Years War (1337-1453), a series of medieval villages, called *Bastides* were built on a strict grid pattern around a central arcaded square, and then enclosed within defensive walls. *Total distance: 57km*

Day 3 We cross the Dordogne and continue to the village of Moncaret in the Montravel wine area. The elegant white wines are made with Semillon, Sauvignon and Muscadelle grapes. Moncaret is also home to a beautiful 11th century church and is the site of a Roman settlement.

The afternoon we follow along the Dordogne and climb to the village of St-Vincent-de-Pertignas and to our hotel at the converted *Maison Fort* or fortified manor of the Chateau de Naujan. The hotel has its own vineyard and we can visit and sample the Bordeaux appellation wines, and of course appreciate them more fully with dinner. *Total distance: 45km*

Day 4 A relaxing day cycling through the vines from the Garonne to the Dordogne, we are now entering the heart of the Bordeaux vineyards, as we arrive in the *Libournais*. A gentle climb through the Côtes-de-Castillon vineyards sees us into the ancient ramparts of St-Emilion. In addition to its fabulous wines, St-Emilion is one of the prettiest towns in Southwest France. We lunch in St-Emilion with various options of wine tasting before returning to our hotel in St-Vincent before visiting a local restaurant for dinner. *Total distance: 30km*

Day 5 Today we are in the Entre-Deux-Mers wine region - the land between the Dordogne and Garonne rivers - we take the Sauveterre to Bordeaux Rail Trail exploring towns and villages along the way.

The first of these is La-Sauve-Saint-Majeure, a village surmounted by a magnificent Benedictine Abbey. Founded in 1079 it quickly became one of the greatest abbeys in the South-West of France. Thanks to its spiritual influence, the abbey was soon regarded as a major stop for pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago (Way of St James). Next to the abbey, the Maison d'Entre-Deux-Mers is the visitor centre for all of the great white wines of the region; the different grapes are explained, and we will taste a variety of the wines to discover how *terroir* (the local soils and microclimates) can produce very different wines.

After lunch we head south to cross the river Garonne into the **Sauternes** wine area. After a tasting at a vineyard specialising in this most highly regarded of desert wines, we head for our Château hotel overlooking the village of Sauternes. *Total distance: 52km / 33 miles*

Day 6 Cycling northwards we are passing through the vineyards of the Graves region, home to the legendary Château Haut-Brion amongst the many great wines both red and white. We cycle through vines until we come to the Château de Mongenan, where we stop for a degustation and to tour the property. The furnishing and decoration of the Château have not changed since the late 18th century, when the owner died during the French Revolution.

After lunch we rejoin the La Pebie cycleway, and make our way into Bordeaux itself to complete the week's journey. Bordeaux has no shortage of attractions, from the beautifully restored 18th century Customs Houses lining the river to the sophisticated shopping along Rue Ste-Catherine. Our last dinner together will be at one of the many gourmet restaurants on which the city prides itself. *Total distance: 56km / 35 miles.*

Day 7 Tour ends after breakfast before a transfer to Bordeaux station or the airport.

The Cuisine, Wine and History of Burgundy

Burgundy (or *Bourgogne* to the French) is synonymous with the crisp whites of Chablis or the prestigious reds of the Côte D'Or, Nuits-St-George, Pommard, Aloxe-Corton and Puligny-Montrachet. Kir, the traditional aperitif of Burgundy, is made from Cassis blackcurrant liqueur from Dijon and Bourgogne Aligote white wine.

For many Burgundy is food with *Coq au Vin*, *Boeuf Bourguignon*, and snails and of course French Dijon mustard

Burgundy encompasses the rolling hills of the Maconnais and Chalonnais in the south; the wild Morvan plateau to the northwest; and of course the steep-sided côtes of the prestigious wine districts around Beaune. The scenery is a mixture of perfectly tended vineyards, fields of wheat interspaced with poppies in early summer, of maize and sunflowers. Woods and spinneys of French Oak are used for making the much-prized wine barrels used all over France and around the world. The countryside is undulating and peaceful, criss-crossed with canals, country lanes and bike trails and towpaths.

There are many rivers and streams that originate the Burgundy plateau feeding into the Seine to the north and the Saone and Rhone to the south.

From a historical perspective Burgundy has more than its fair share dating from the 8th century BC when Celts invaded, the Romans came here in the 1st century, the first Christian churches were built as early as the 4th century. Magnificent abbeys were founded at Cluny and Vézelay in the 10th century, and in the later Middle Ages cathedrals sprang up at Auxerre, Autun and Dijon. The burgeoning wine trade resulted in superb architecture for the wealthy merchants who built stunning houses and public buildings in Beaune, Auxerre, Dijon and Autun.

Our tour takes in all the varied aspects of Burgundy, both natural and man-made — and we make sure that you don't miss out on the regional gastronomic delights! The cycling ranges from easy on some days to moderate on others, but should be comfortably achievable for anyone of reasonable fitness.

Languedoc – from Avignon to the Cevennes

This region of southern France is one of startling contrasts. From the coastal plain (the largest wine producing area of France) it stretches inland to the Black Mountains (Montagne Noire), and to the west it meets the Pyrénées. In the east, spectacular canyons and cliffs stretch to the lonely plateau of the Cevennes, and from here to the River Rhône. The Mediterranean washes miles of white sandy beaches from the Rhone delta to the Spanish frontier. Between these borders sit the rugged hinterlands of the Corbières and Minervois.

In the early middle ages this was the historic home to the Cathars, a religious sect who rejected the pomp of the Catholic Church, and who was persecuted to extinction as a result. The Cathars left a legacy of fortresses in the Pyrénéen foothills and the Montagne Noire that today are some of the most romantic ruins in Europe!

A feature of the region is the Canal du Midi, built in the eighteenth century to carry goods from the Mediterranean at Sète to the river Garonne at Toulouse and from there to the Atlantic coast at Bordeaux. It is a tranquil, tree-lined treasure that meanders across the Languedoc plain and into the hills.

Seafood, shellfish and freshwater fish dominate the regional cuisine - with many Spanish influences. Further inland the food is more substantial with specialities such as cassoulet (bean and meat stew in a pot) and wild game dishes.

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The wines of the Languedoc are diverse, with reds from the Faugeres and Minervois regions, the whites of Picpoul de Pinet and others from the coastal plain - providing a perfect accompaniment to shellfish dishes - and the sparkling wines of Limoux.

The region has a climate that can vary from the icy snows of the mountains in winter to the heat of the Mediterranean summer with May/June and September the ideal time to visit. The cycling in this area is as varied as the terrain and the weather, with moderate pedalling along the valley of the River Gardon, but challenging countryside in the more mountainous terrain of the Haut-Languedoc and its Cevennes National Park, and then easy cycling as we appreciate the wineries of the coastal plain.

The tour involves a moderate amount of climbing, including a couple of cols or mountain passes, and is ideal for those with some cycling experience (although a support vehicle is available at all times).



Normandy – from the Conquest to the Bayeux Tapestry

Home of William the Conqueror, has always had strong connections with the English-speaking world; from 1066 when the Duke of Normandy laid claim to the English crown, until June 1944 and Operation Overlord when combined American, Canadian and British Commonwealth forces launched the biggest seaborne invasion ever seen to liberate France from Nazi occupation.

The land itself is rich and fertile, the valley sides containing the lush green pastures are home to the distinctive black-and-white cows which produce the milk used to produce such cheeses as Livarot, Pont l'Eveque and of course Camembert; interspersed with these are the apple orchards from whence come the famous cider and calvados apple brandy.

On the coast, fishing boats land the fish and seafood which is a big part of the local cuisine.

There is history in abundance, from the gothic cathedral of Bayeux and the renowned Bayeux tapestry to the 'merveille' or miracle which is the astonishing island monastery of le Mont St-Michel; in between are countless romanesque and gothic churches and the medieval timbered farmhouses so typical of the region. More recent history is revealed in the museums and exhibitions of the D-Day beaches, the austere world war two cemeteries, and the remains of landing stages and gun emplacements. Those to whom natural beauty is more important will not be disappointed with the many different landscapes — sweeping sea views, marshes criss-crossed with canals, and countryside patchworked with fields, woods and orchards.

The Normandy tour will show you the unmissable sites and all the magic of this very special part of France.

And for the more *sportif* cyclist – the Pyrenees Cols

Here is the chance for the more active cyclist to follow in the tracks of the world's greatest riders cycling on some of the climbs that have been made famous by the *Tour de France*. For the Pyrenees we have chosen a route that takes in the **Marie Blanque**, the **Tourmalet**, the **Aspin**, the **Peyresourde** and the **Portillon**.



On each day the cycling itinerary will cross at least one of the legendary cols of *Le Tour* but, unlike the professionals, we will be able to enjoy the breathtaking scenery as we go. Optional shorter or longer routes will be available on each day's ride, so that cyclists with a wide range of abilities will be able to take part.

The tours offer full support, guides cycling with the group and minibus near at all times. Our guides are cycling enthusiasts with a detailed knowledge of the Pyrenees and their place in cycle racing history. This holiday will present a challenge to even the most experienced cyclist but there is no reason why you shouldn't consider this a relaxing holiday too. We provide quality three-star hotels with character and ambience to ensure your time off the bike is just as enjoyable. Evening meals will not merely be a time to refuel they will offer the chance to indulge in some of fine food and a glass or two of wine with new friends!

Another offering is our tour of the mythical cols which encompasses many of the mountain passes that have passed into legend in the battlegrounds of the Tour de France. Each day includes at least one of the *géants*, yet is manageable for a wide range of sporting riders thanks to our outstanding support team.

We will take on famous climbs like the **Galibier**, **Alpe d'Huez** and of course the fabled **Mont Ventoux**, which together with the **Tourmalet** in the Pyrénées make-up the most mythical of the climbs of the *Tour de France*.



These are just a few of the many small group guided or self-guided inn-to-inn cycling tours we offer in Europe - including river rides from Passau to Vienna along the Danube or from Vienna to Budapest.

Outdoor Travel also offer cycling holiday destinations include several areas of Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, England and Scotland, Hungary, in the Czech Republic, New Zealand & Australia.

Other group guided Bike & Boat cruises are available in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Tuscany or Naples in Italy, the Dalmation Coast of Croatia, the islands of Greece, the Lycian coast of Turkey or in Vietnam.

Contact Outdoor Travel direct for more details and reservations

- Call Toll free: 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or Fax (03) 57501020
- Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au
- Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>
- Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741, Australia
- Travel Agent Licence No: 31102

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All costs are in Australian Dollars - subject to exchange rate fluctuations and booking conditions

AS AT 13/12/11

	Type of Holiday	Number of Days/Nights	Tour Cost (twin share)	Single Room Supplement	Escorted Departure Dates
Small Group Guided Cycling Holidays					
France					
Dordogne: Caves & Castles	Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,495	\$785	13 May, 27 May, 12 Aug, 9 Sep, 23 Sep
Bordeaux Vineyards	Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,575	\$835	6 May, 20 May, 3 Jun, 5 Aug, 19 Aug, 2 Sep, 16 Sep
Languedoc: Landscapes of the South	Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,625	\$835	6 May, 20 May, 23 Sep
Loire: Valley of the French Kings	Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,710	\$885	17 Jun, 24 Jun, 1 Jul, 29 Jul, 12 Aug, 26 Aug,
Alsace & The Black Forest	Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,575	\$835	22 Jul
Provence: Roman Heritage	Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,660	\$785	13 May, 27 May, 10 Jun, 9 Sep, 16 Sep, 30 Sep
Provence: Villages of the Luberon	Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,660	\$885	20 May, 3 Jun, 2 Sep, 23 Sep, 7 Oct
Burgundy Wine Explorer	Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,710	\$885	17 Jun, 1 Jul, 30 Sep
Normandy	Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,495	\$785	10 Jun, 22 Jul, 5 Aug, 19 Aug,

Small Group Guided SPORT Cycling Holidays					
France					
Classic Cols of the Pyrenees	Sport Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,245	\$680	2 Jun, 26 Aug, 9 Sep
Mythical Cols of the Alps	Sport Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,245	\$680	1 Jul, 19 Aug
Legendary Cols of the Grand Alps	Sport Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,245	\$680	17 Jul, 12 Aug
Raid Pyreneen	Sport Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$1,995	\$680	9 Jun, 2 Sep, 16 Sep
Raid des Alpes	Sport Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,325	\$730	17 Jun, 24 Jul
Randonee Pre-Alpine	Sport Guided	7 days/6 nights	\$2,575	\$940	26 Jun, 2 Aug

Please note guided tours run subject to minimum numbers. Please ask when booking.

Self-Guided Cycling Holidays					Independent Daily Departures
France					
Loire Valley	Independent	8 days/7 nights	\$1,690	\$350	Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays from mid-March to October
Dordogne	Independent	8 days/7 nights	\$1,570	\$350	Daily from mid-March to October
Northern Burgundy	Independent	8 days/7 nights	\$1,495	\$350	Daily from mid-March to October
Northern Burgundy Extended	Independent	10 days/9 nights	\$1,895	\$455	Daily from mid-March to October
Southern Burgundy	Independent	8 days/7 nights	\$1,595	\$350	Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays from mid-March to October
Burgundy Canals	Independent	7 days/6 nights	\$1,240	\$290	Daily from April to October
Provence & The Camargue	Independent	8 days/7 nights	\$1,810	\$315	Saturdays from mid-March to October
Brittany	Independent	8 days/7 nights	\$1,530	\$350	Saturdays from mid-March to October

Some of these independent tours may also be available to run as guided tours, for groups of 8 people or more. Please contact us for a group quote.

Costs are per person, based on twin share rooms.

Tours usually include half board and bike hire.

While every care is taken, amendments to the itinerary details & inclusions may occur after brochure production. Please ask our office for current details when making your booking.

PLEASE ASK FOR A DETAILED ITINERARY OF YOUR PREFERRED TOUR, AS INCLUSIONS MAY VARY BETWEEN TOURS

To make your reservations we require:

* a signed and completed booking form and

* a deposit of \$500 per person

Send these to your travel agent or to Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741

Tel: 03 5750 1441 / 03 5755 1743, Fax: 03 5750 1020
Travel Agent Licence No.: 31102

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