



BIKE & BARGE HOLIDAYS IN EUROPE

2012

FRANCE - FROM PARIS TO CHAMPAGNE OR RETURN

8-day / 7-night Moderate to challenging *Deluxe* cycling cruise

This tour in the Champagne region is one of our most challenging Bike & Barge tours in France. We cycle through hilly and undulating terrain mostly on quiet roads but sometimes in heavier traffic especially leaving Paris and approaching some towns and cities along the route.

It is a tour for the more experienced cyclist in good physical condition but daily distances are limited (maximum @ 50km per day) and there is plenty of time to visit the little villages, places of interest and other attractions we will encounter on this tour. On some days however shorter cycling distances may be possible depending on the barge's schedule.

Bike & Barge cruises combines two popular ways of exploring Europe (cycling & river cruising), it allows partners of different abilities & interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting for non-cycling partners, leisure cyclist OR enthusiasts), you unpack once & come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom.

This fully inclusive cruise offers a wonderful meals and comfortable ensuite cabin accommodation plus the opportunity to explore this beautiful countryside sampling the wines and local produce that makes this part of France internationally famous. We provide well-maintained multi-geared bikes available on board with opportunities for guided cycling along the route. The cycling is fascinating and varied with free time to explore each day's destination.

Duration: 8-days / 7-nights

Cost: AU\$1895 per person twin share (single cabin supplement AU\$895)

Departs: Paris to Epernay: 17th – 24th June, 2012
Epernay to Paris: 24th June – 1st July, 2012

Includes: Twin-berth air-conditioned cabins with private bathroom facilities, ship's crew; captain, cook and multi-lingual cycle guide, breakfast and picnic lunch each day, three-course dinner on six nights; coffee and tea every day after cycling; bed linen and (on request) clean towels every day; daily cleaning service; 24-gear hybrid bike hire with panniers and water bottle; harbour dues and tourist taxes.

Not included: Transfer to/from the boat in Paris/Cumières (near Epernay); admission fees to attractions; dinner Saturday night; drinks or personal expenses. Helmets can be hired or you may prefer to bring/buy your own



Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Suggested itinerary (subject to change – itineraries are also offered in reverse)

Sunday Paris 15km

Arrival on board the Elodie in Paris where the crew will welcome you and explain about life on the barge and provide information on the week's program. After the introduction there is the opportunity for a short cycle ride along the cycle-paths of Paris to get used to the bike and make any necessary adjustments. Paris of course is a very busy city but there are many cycle tracks and generally a respect for cyclists by the traffic.

Monday Paris - Lagny sur Marne 40km

Through lanes and parks we will make our way out of Paris heading for the river Marne and today's destination Lagny sur Marne. Along the route we pass the Nestle building – home of the world-renowned chocolate company – it is an extraordinary building well worthwhile visiting. As we reach the outskirts of Paris we see many picturesque and typical French houses and more and more green surroundings. Tonight we rejoin the barge in plenty of time for dinner at Lagny sur Marne.

Tuesday Lagny sur Marne – Meaux 42km

Today we have a challenging route ahead with several climbs rewarded by panoramic views and heady descents. There is time to visit the beautiful sculpture garden of Dhuys where monuments were made from the remains of the bridge over the Dhuys bombed during the Second World War. The city of Meaux is famous for its cheese and mustard and back onboard our chef will present some of the culinary highlights of this region. Meaux has a beautiful cathedral and we suggest an evening stroll along the riverbanks of the Marne after dinner.

Wednesday Meaux - La Ferte sur Marne 45km

Today we cycle into the great vineyards of the Champagne region, some of the finest sparkling white wines in the world. There are abbeys and chateaux along the route, one built by Catherine the Médicis. The influential Médicis family also created the abbey of Youarre with its 7th century crypt dedicated to St. Paul. We can visit the ruins of Chateau des Reines and "La Ferme de la Vallière" to taste some of the local products. Legend has it that Louis XVI on his deathbed requested one final taste of the Brie the Meaux before he closed his eyes forever.

Thursday La Ferte - Chateau Thierry 45km

A day for cycling through the vineyards of Champagne. This area was the scene of many battles during the First World War and the monument of Hill 204 commemorates the sacrifices and achievements made by the French and American soldiers. In the spring of 1918 the Americans troops took part in the second battle of the Marne to stop the German troops from reaching Paris. They succeeded and the battle is considered as one of the turning points in the Great War. We cycle to Chateau Thierry, the city of the great French Poet Jean de la Fontaine. In the evening we have time for a walk around the ruins of the chateau.

Friday Chateau Thierry (Dormans) – Cumières 50km

A highlight today is the visit to a small Champagne farmer in the village of Courselles to see how Champagne is produced. And, to fully understand the French culinary mind, we have to visit the snail museum. France is one of the very few countries in the world that discovered the taste for snails and this unique museum will explain why and we will have the opportunity to taste this delicacy.

Saturday Cumières – Epernay 10km

The barge remains in Cumières as we cycle to Epernay in the very heart of the Champagne region where the great Champagne houses are situated. One of the most famous being "Dom Pérignon" and underneath the building in the middle of the town there are over 25km of caves and cellars containing many thousands of bottles of the finest Champagne maturing and waiting to be consumed all over the world. We have plenty of time to visit one of other Champagne-houses in the town and there is usually a market on Saturday morning. There is a shopping area with plenty of souvenirs and a choice of good restaurants for dinner in the evening.

Cumières – Tour ends Sunday

Tour ends after breakfast at 9.00am.

Other Bike & Barge cruises are available in many regions of France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Germany, Croatia, Greece & Turkey - ask for details

Contact Outdoor Travel direct for more details and reservations

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