

## FRANCE – HIGHLIGHTS OF NORTHERN BURGUNDY

8-day / 7-nights **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn cycle touring from Auxerre to Chablis, Avallon & Vézelay



Discover the history, glorious countryside, sensational food and world-renowned wines of northern Burgundy on this independent cycling tour, starting and ending in the charming city of Auxerre. Ride from inn to inn visiting the many small, historic towns and villages, tasting the exquisite wines and sampling the many gourmet delights. The route is not too physically taxing – you mostly follow river valleys and canal towpaths, with a few steep but rewarding hills near Vézelay and during the last stage in the Auxerre vineyards. If the hills are a concern, consider hiring an E-bike (just like a normal bike, but with battery-assistance which reduces the resistance, so you still pedal along but the hills seem to just disappear, and the distances seem shorter).

Inn-to-inn self-guided cycling holidays are perfect for exploring France's iconic landscapes. Travelling by bike gives you the freedom and flexibility to see more of the countryside and move at your own pace. You can stop and relax or explore, secure in the knowledge that your room is waiting for you and your bags have gone ahead.

**Departs:** Daily departures on demand from mid-March to late October 2024

**Cost from:** \$1820 per person twin-share      Single room supplement from \$715

**Includes:** 7 nights' accommodation in comfortable 2- or 3-star hotels or guesthouses in rooms with ensuite; breakfast daily; multi-geared hybrid bicycle hire; luggage transfers; welcome briefing; 2 x wine tastings; detailed route notes with stage-by-stage route descriptions, maps and travel information; emergency telephone support.

**Not included:** Other meals, drinks, personal expenses, optional visits or entry fees, local city taxes (paid locally), travel to the start/end of the tour. Hire of bike helmets is not included – we recommend you take your own helmet or hire one for around \$25 when making your booking.

**Extras:** **E-bike hire and GPS hire** are available at extra cost - ask for details when you make a booking.

**Grading:** Easy to moderate, daily distances 30-50km over flat to gently rolling terrain, with a few steep climbs near Vézelay and Auxerre.



**Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details and reservations**

## Suggested itinerary:

### Day 1: Arrive in Auxerre

Auxerre, only two hours by train from Paris, is a city of art and great history and has conserved much of its exceptional architectural heritage over the centuries: the cathedral, a model of gothic elegance, and the Abbey of St Germain, a near intact monastic complex and 9<sup>th</sup> Century crypt, housing one of the oldest mural paintings discovered in France, and the clock tower. We recommend you plan to arrive after lunch, so you have time to explore the city and take a walk along the banks of the River Yonne.

### Day 2: Auxerre – Ligny-le-Châtel

**cycling @ 26km**

After breakfast meet our local representative for a briefing on the week ahead and to make any adjustment to your bikes. The Cistercian Abbey of Pontigny, the largest and one of the most beautiful Cistercian churches in France, is on your route.

### Day 3: Ligny-le-Châtel – Chablis – Noyers-sur-Serein

**cycling @ 40km**

Ligny-le-Châtel with its Renaissance church and the vineyards and cellars of **Chablis**, Burgundy's largest selling white wine, are on the program. After wine tasting in Chablis (included in tour cost), follow the beautiful Serein valley through the typical villages of the southern Chablis region to the medieval town of Noyers, an interesting town with its preserved fortifications, half-timbered houses and naïve art museum.

### Day 4: Noyers-sur-Serein – Avallon

**cycling @ 46km**

Today you cycle across the superb "terre plaine" plateau and the mystical Avallon landscapes. You pass by the medieval hamlet of Montréal before reaching the ancient town of Avallon.

### Day 5: Avallon – Vézelay

**cycling @ 22km**

Passing small villages and on quiet backroads you reach Vézelay. One of Burgundy's most famous landscapes, Vézelay offers a challenging climb up cobbled streets to the medieval town centre and its fortifications. The Basilica of Sainte-Madeleine dominates the town and surrounding farmland – a Romanesque masterpiece inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. During the Middle Ages, Vézelay was a major pilgrimage centre on the Way of Saint James – the road to Santiago de Compostela.

### Day 6: Vézelay – Escolives

**cycling @ 48km**

Your ride follows the Yonne River valley and Canal du Nivernais today. Pass Châtel-Censoir, with its Renaissance-era collegiate church, and the limestone Saussois cliffs with nesting peregrine falcons to Mailly-le-Château, which has two parts, Mailly-le-Bas by the river, and medieval hilltop village with its 14<sup>th</sup> Century fortified castle and 13<sup>th</sup> Century Gothic church. The route passes Accolay, a small village near a series of locks on the Canal de Nivernais. Continue to Escolives where you stay at a delightful winery with 18<sup>th</sup> Century wine cellar.

### Day 7: Escolives – Auxerre

**cycling @ 35km**

Water is the theme of the day, for here are some of the great rivers of France interconnected with a well-used canal system. You cycle beside the canal through the lovely Auxerre region vineyards and villages: Irancy, Saint-Bris-le-Vineux and Bailly. In Bailly stop for a tasting of Crémant de Bourgogne, the sparkling wine of the region (included in tour price), before returning to Auxerre.

### Day 8: Departure day

*Au revoir* – your biking tour in Burgundy is complete. From Auxerre there are several daily direct trains to Paris or continue on to other destinations in France.

An extended 10 day / 9 night version of this holiday is also available - please ask for details.

This is just one of the many small group guided or self-guided inn-to-inn cycling tours **Outdoor Travel** offer in Europe. We offer famous cycling trails such as the river rides from **Passau to Vienna** along the Danube or along the **Inn Bike Trail** from Switzerland to Austria. Travel too from **Vienna to Budapest** through Austria, Slovakia and Hungary, from the mountains near **Bolzano to Venice** in Italy, or across **Tuscany** or **Umbria**. Other **Outdoor Travel** cycling destinations include Spain, France, Holland, Ireland, England and Scotland, Poland, in the Czech Republic, Romania, China, Vietnam, North America, New Zealand and Australia.

We also offer group guided **Bike and Barge** cycling cruises in many destinations including along the canals & rivers of **France, Belgium, Holland and Germany**, the **Amalfi Coast** or **Venetian Lagoon** in Italy or the **Dalmatian Coast** of Croatia, the many beautiful **islands of Greece**, the **Lycian coast of Turkey**, or **Vietnam**.

### Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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