

FRANCE: RIVER SEINE VALLEY, FONTAINEBLEAU & PARIS

8-days / 7-nights **PREMIUM PLUS** GUIDED cycling cruise from Paris to Montargis or return



Departs: Paris to Montargis 27 July 2024
 Montargis to Paris 3, 17, 31 August, 14 September 2024

Cost from: \$3235 per person twin share Single cabin available with a supplement from \$1515

Highlights: Spectacular Vaux-le-Vicomte, the Chateau of Fontainebleau, medieval cities of Ferrières, the artist village at Barbizon, the gardens and forests of Ile-De-France and the rocks formations at Nemours

Includes: 7 nights' accommodation in twin-share cabin (lower beds) with a shower/toilet; 7 buffet breakfasts, packed lunch on cycling days, 6 x dinners, bike rental with pannier, water bottle and helmet, tour guide, Bourdelle garden, Apiculture Museum, Chateau Landon & Bourron-Marlotte town hall visits, ferry fares.

Not included: Transfer to/from the barge, other meals, drinks on-board, other entrance fees of museums etc; bike or travel insurance and personal expenses

Bike & Barge cruises combine two popular ways of exploring Europe (cycling and river cruising), allowing partners of different abilities and interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting for leisure cyclists or enthusiasts). Unpack once and come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom. Well-maintained multi-gear bikes are provided (you can bring your own if you prefer). The cycling is fascinating and varied with free time at each day's destination.

Enjoy the splendour of rural France within easy reach of and with a night in central Paris

This region of Ile-de-France, once famed for its royal hunting grounds, grand country homes and palaces, is an ideal location for an easy and relaxed cycling holiday. There is much to see, and the terrain is cycle friendly with around 35 – 45km of riding each day. The tour starts in Montargis and from there we follow the Seine valley downstream towards Paris. The first couple of days we follow the Canals du Centre, a section of the waterway with a rich shipping history. We cruise from Montargis, with its many charming canals, to Moret-sur-Loing, a medieval fortified town, strategically situated on the banks of the Loing. Here the Impressionist painter Sisley found inspiration for many of his works.

We continue along the Seine valley to an area rich in royal history and visit the castles of Vaux-le-Vicomte and Fontainebleau. At Vaux-le-Vicomte the impressive royal gardens are hugely popular, offering traditional French style and perfect symmetry.

We cruise the woods of Fontainebleau, heading for the artists' village of Barbizon. Our destination is central Paris where the barge will be moored overnight at Port d'Arsenal, not far from all the major attractions of the city, transport links, fine restaurants, cafes, shopping, museums and galleries.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Suggested itinerary: route may be offered in reverse, the day-to-day schedule at the discretion of the captain.

Day 1: Arrive Montargis

Plan to arrive mid-afternoon at the Rue de Port in Montargis (easily accessed by train from Paris) for a welcome drink and to meet fellow passengers and crew. Get fitted with your bicycle and relax before dinner at 6.30pm. After dinner perhaps take a walk around Montargis. The former King's royal residence here was destroyed by fire in the 16th Century, but the canals still give the town a unique charm. There is also a museum, named after the famous French painter Louis Girodet, with many of his paintings displayed – an ideal visit if you arrive early.

Day 2: Montargis

cycling @ 45km

From Montargis we ride along the l'Ouanne to Château-Renard, where we visit the ruins of the 10th Century chateau. We can also visit the Apiculture's Living Museum, where we can see beekeepers and their bees at work, learn about honey production and perhaps sample some delicious honey.

Day 3: Montargis – Néronville

cycling @ 39 or 46km

We cruise to the lock at Cepoy, then cycle through the magnificent forests of Montargis, northeast of the town. Our next stop is the medieval town of Ferrieres with its old and well-preserved town centre (down one of its narrow side streets you will find a splendid monastery). We continue on to visit the sculpture garden, Jardin Bourdelle, then meet the barge in Néronville, where we stay tonight.

Day 4: Néronville – Nemours

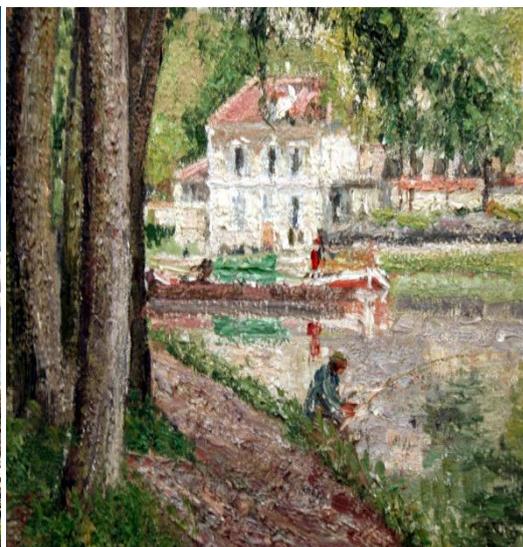
cycling @ 29 or 43km

Cycle through an area that has been cultivated since before the Romans and is still home to orchards and berry farms. Stop at the fortified town of Chateau-Landon with its 13th Century abbey, then ride on to the rocks of Nemours. Meet the barge in Nemours town, with its castle and prehistoric museum of the Ile-de-France region.

Day 5: Nemours - Moret-sur-Loing

cycling @ 32 or 43km

After breakfast we cycle through woodland with rugged rock formations often on unsealed forest tracks. We follow the picturesque valley of the Loing and visit Grez-sur-Loing, where the town hall has a selection of magnificent Impressionist paintings. We head in the direction of Moret-sur-Loing, a charming medieval fortified town, strategically situated on the banks of the Loing, where the painter Sisley found inspiration for his beautiful Impressionist paintings. If time allows, we can visit the house where he was born.



Day 6: Moret-sur-Loing – Melun

cycling @ 40km

Cycling through the manicured forests of Fontainebleau is a wonderful and inspiring journey and there is also an opportunity to visit Fontainebleau's spectacular chateau. The chateau was much favored by French kings because of the extensive hunting available in the surrounding forests. In the castle itself, among other things of interest, there is a museum dedicated to the Emperor Napoleon. The town of Fontainebleau is also a pleasant place to explore, with time for some souvenir shopping or to relax at one of the many cafes and restaurants.

We continue our ride to the artists' village of Barbizon, where, since the first half of the 19th Century, many famous painters have found inspiration and formed the landscape artist's 'school of Barbizon'. We can visit the local museum / gallery here. Our final destination before Paris is Melun, a town which is known as '*le domaine des reines blanches*' (the place of the white queens), because in former years it used to be popular as a place of residence for the widows of the French kings. Dinner is at your own arrangements this evening, so you can choose from one of the local restaurants in Melun.

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Day 7: Melun – Paris

cycling @ 35km (sailing time @ 8-hours)

Cycle to Evry along the River Seine and rejoin the barge for the cruise into Paris. The overnight mooring place is usually at the Port d’Arsenal, very central and an easy walk to the Metro. After dinner there is an opportunity for a city walk visiting Montmartre and the Sacré-Coeur.

Day 8: Paris

The tour ends after breakfast in central Paris with easy access to Metro stations and trains.



Outdoor Travel offer Bike & Barge or Bike & Boat cruises in many areas of France including the Loire Valley and Burgundy, Bordeaux, the wine region of Champagne, in Provence, on a 2-week route between Paris and Bruges through the Somme WW1 battlefields and memorial sites - significant places in Australian history. On these tours you decide each day if you want to join the bike ride. There are no activities for non-cyclists during the day, but you are free to use the bicycles before and after the cruise and to join in with evening activities.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations – early bookings essential:

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