

FRANCE – BURGUNDY CANALS WINE & HISTORY

8-days / 7-nights **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn cycling from Montbard to Auxerre & Vézelay



In Burgundy, water dominates; for here are some of the great rivers of France all interconnected by a marvellous canal system. The region has a rich history that dates back through the Middle Ages, Romans and to Neolithic times. Timber was floated through these waterways to build Paris and it is still very much a well-used boating holiday destination. There are many historical centres including the UNESCO listed village of Vézelay and Auxerre with its old centre, narrow lanes, grand cathedral and half-timbered houses. Your route is also dotted with Renaissance castles, medieval villages, and acres of manicured grapevines.

Of course Burgundy is also world renowned for its wines – especially white wines here in the north of the region – and for succulent warm stews and dishes such as coq au vin. And it is an ideal destination for spring, early summer and the autumn colours and harvest time in September. This is a perfect area to explore by bike. With easy to moderate cycling over gently rolling terrain or on flat canalside towpaths, it offers the combination of scenic waterways, classic villages and the remarkable regional cuisine of Burgundy – simply unbeatable. A highlight for many is the stop in Bailly for a tasting of the sparkling wine of the region, Crémant de Bourgogne.

Inn-to-inn self-guided cycling holidays are perfect for exploring France's iconic landscapes. Travelling by bike gives you freedom to see more of the countryside, following mostly quiet backroads and cycle paths at your own pace. Stop, relax or explore, secure in the knowledge that your room is waiting for you, your bags have gone ahead and the day is your own.

Departs: Every Thursday, Friday, Saturday or Sunday from late March to late October 2024

Cost from: **\$2015** per person twin-share Single room supplement from **\$645**

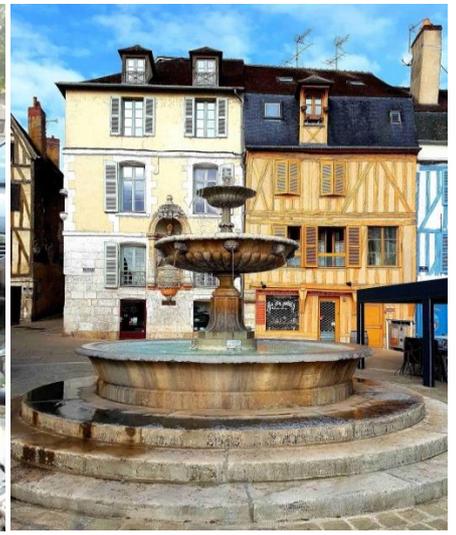
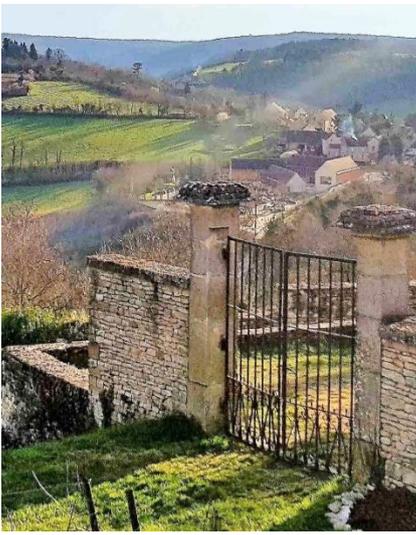
Includes: 7 nights' accommodation in comfortable 2-star and 3-star hotels or guesthouses in ensuite rooms; breakfast daily; hire of multi-gear hybrid touring bike with panniers; luggage transfers; welcome briefing; detailed route notes with stage-by-stage route descriptions, maps and travel information; emergency telephone support; Crémant de Bourgogne wine tasting; transfer from Avallon to Montbard.

Not included: Other meals, drinks, personal expenses, optional visit or entry fees, local city taxes (paid locally), travel to/ from the tour. Bike helmet not included – we recommend you bring a 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 cycling with around 25 - 65km per day on flat to gently rolling terrain.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details and reservations



Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival in Montbard in Burgundy

Arrive in Montbard mid-afternoon. Time permitting, we suggest you visit Fontenay Abbey, founded by the Cistercians in 1118. It has a great history from the Hundred Years' War, Wars of Religion and the French Revolution, has now been carefully restored and is well worth a visit.

Day 2: Montbard – Tonnerre

cycling @ 60km

After breakfast, meet our local representative at 8.45am for your bikes and to brief you on the route ahead. The ride today is beside the romantic Canal de Bourgogne, mostly on a cycle path, passing the Renaissance Chateau of Ancy-le-Franc and the village of Tanlay, which has its own 16th Century castle. Both are built largely from locally quarried limestone. Overnight in Tonnerre, a bustling town dating to Roman times.

Day 3: Tonnerre – Joigny

cycling @ 55km

After breakfast we suggest you visit the Hotel Dieu (a former 13th Century hospice) and the intriguing grotto of Fosse Dionne. Head back to the Canal de Bourgogne and cycle through a rural landscape, passing many vineyards, to Joigny, a small well-preserved ancient town with numerous half-timbered houses and churches.

Day 4: Joigny – Auxerre

cycling @ 35km

An enjoyable ride to the beautiful town of Auxerre, the historical town, stretched along the River Yonne. The old town, with its half-timbered houses and picturesque clock tower, is classified and protected.

Day 5: Auxerre – Clamecy

cycling @ 65km

Cycle first to the Caves de Bailly, where you can sample Crémant de Bourgogne before you continue along the Canal du Nivernais, following the route used to float logs from the Morvan Forest back in the Middle Ages to build Paris. The landscape is extremely beautiful here.

Day 6: Clamecy – Vézelay

cycling @ 31km

Cycling through small villages and on backroads you reach Vézelay, one of Burgundy's finest medieval towns with its impressive fortifications and the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Basilica of Sainte-Madeleine. A Romanesque masterpiece, it is a pilgrimage site for the Way of St James to Santiago de Compostela.

Day 7: Vézelay – Avallon

cycling @ 30km

Passing small villages on quiet backroads from Vézelay we cycle our way through one of Burgundy's most famous landscapes, the scenic stretch of river in the Valley of the Cousin on the way to Avallon.

Day 8: Departure day

After breakfast you will be transferred back to Montbard (transfer included), where your tour ends.

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 South Africa. 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:

- 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 3741



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