

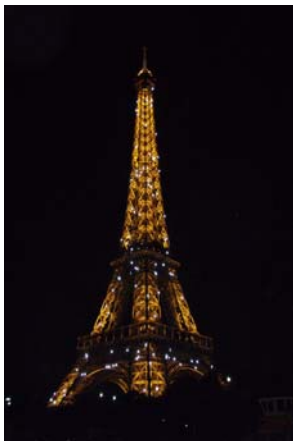


Bike & Barge in France

2010

CHAMPAGNE – FROM PARIS to REIMS or return

A Bike & Barge or Barge only cruise



- Departs:** 8-days / 7-nights – one departure only – from 26th June – 3rd July 2010
From: Paris to Reims
Cost: AU\$1895 per person twin share, (single cabin supplement on request)
Itinerary: Reims - Epernay – Château Thierry– La Ferté sous Jouarre – Meaux – Paris or return
Highlights: Reims Cathedral – champagne wine tasting in Epernay - Brie de Meaux cheeses - Paris
Included: Breakfast, packed lunch, dinner, bed linen and towels, bike rental and tour guide.
The price does not include: entrance fees of museums etc; transfer to and from the barge, drinks on board, travel insurance and personal expenses

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. Well-maintained multi-gear bikes are provided (you can bring their own if you prefer). The cycling is usually interesting and varied with free time at each day's destination.

A suggested typical day will include a buffet breakfast, briefing on the route & bike check, 2-3 hours of leisurely or moderate cycling (most rides are along sealed towpaths, backroads or trails through river valleys or beside canals), picnic lunch with some sightseeing, a further 2-3 hours (as the boat goes ahead to the next overnight stay) then afternoon tea, a shower, a 3-course dinner followed by a city walk, canal boat sightseeing or a stroll for coffee or nightlife in a historic square.

Champagne vineyards and the glorious River Marne

This Bike & barge route will follow the beautiful valley of the River Marne. Along the way we will taste the wines, the cheeses and local specialities that make this part of France so famous.

We start in Reims, with its beautiful gothic cathedral, and from there, we follow the valley downstream to the city of Epernay, capital of Champagne. Here we have the opportunity to visit the immense champagne cellars, to meet some of the smaller champagne growers and to taste their finest champagnes. From Epernay we cycle past vineyards and rolling hills to Château-Thierry scene of some of the significant battles of World War One. We visit the city of Meaux, famous for its Brie cheeses before moving on to our final destination Paris.

After an exhilarating and enlightening journey we will moor in the heart of the city of Paris near to Notre-Dame.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Suggested itinerary (the reverse itinerary from Paris to Reims is offered on this date)

Day 1 (Sat): Reims

16.00 h Arrive in Reims. This old city on the banks of the river Vesle is especially known for its wonderful cathedral, where the French kings were crowned. The Notre-Dame cathedral is one of the most famous cathedrals of the world because of its magnificent sculpture and its prominent position in more than 1000 years of French and European history. The Basilique St.-Remi is also worth a visit.

Together with Epernay, Reims is also the center of champagne production and the city has numerous cellars, which we can visit.

18.00 h Welcoming drink followed by dinner

20.00 h Guided walk of Reims.

Day 2 (Sun): Reims - Sept-Saulx

Biking: about 40 km. Sailing time: 6 hours

8.00 h Breakfast

9.00 h Today we spend some time in Reims visiting the cathedral and the Basilique St. Remi and then we cycle along the northern side of the Parc Naturel Régional des Montagnes de Reims past old wine villages to Rilly. We continue to Verzy, where we can see the 'Faux de Verzy' - odd crooked birches which owe their curious forms to a genetic disorder. Then we ride to Sept Saulx, a little village on the canal de Reims.

18.30 h Dinner

Day 3 (Mon): Sept-Saulx - Epernay

Biking: about 40 km. Sailing time: 7 hours

8.00 h Breakfast

9.00 h In the morning we follow the canal to Tours sur Marne and Mareuil-sur-Ay with its beautiful castle - the Duke of Montebello became the owner in 1830 – and he established a champagne house there. We follow the Marne river to Epernay, together with Reims, this city is the major wine centre of Champagne, where three extensive wine regions meet: the Montagne de Reims, the Côte des Blancs and the Vallée de la Marne.

Epernay has many town houses in the neo-renaissance style or classical style dating from the 19th century, especially in the avenue de la Champagne where prestigious champagne houses such as Moët et Chandon are situated. We may also have time to visit Hautvillers on the southern slopes of the Montagne de Reims. According to tradition a monk, Dom Pérignon (1638-1715), who was in charge of the wine cellars of the abbey of the Benedictine monks, was the first to succeed in blending various kinds of wine into a wine of superb quality. Dom Pérignon also introduced double-fermentation an important process in the making of champagne.

18.30 h Dinner

Day 4 (Tue): Epernay - Château-Thierry

Biking: about 40 km. Sailing time: 8 hours

8.00 h Breakfast while sailing and we start cycling at Dizy. We then come to the Château de Boursault, a large castle built in 1848 by the widow of another famous name in champagne history, Mr. Cliquot. We ride through the champagne region surrounded by extensive vineyards and will pay a visit to the champagne cellars of Sourd-et-Diot. We pass Vandières, where we can see the Roman church and we visit Dormans. In this quiet village on the Marne there are a castle and chapel in memory of the WW1 battle of the Marne.

Today's destination is Château-Thierry, which owes its name to the castle that once was situated on the slopes above the Marne. You can still see some remnants. Here we visit the centuries-old champagne cellars of Pannier. Château-Thierry is also known as the native town of the world-famous writer of fables Jean de la Fontaine. The house where he was born is now a museum

18.30 h Dinner

Day 5 (Wed): Château-Thierry - La Ferté-sous-Jouarre

Biking: about 45 km. Sailing time 5 hours

8.00 h Breakfast

9.00 h Today we cycle through the hills north of the river into the valley of the little Clignon River. Our destination of today is La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, a little village on the banks of the Marne

18.30 h Dinner

Day 6 (Thu): La Ferté-sous-Jouarre - Meaux

Biking: about 40 km. Sailing time: 6 hours

8.00 h Breakfast

9.00 h Our first goal is Jouarre, 4 km from La Ferté, where the beautiful abbey from the 12th century, with the 7th century crypt St. Paul, is definitely worth a visit. In Jouarre we can also visit a cheese dairy and taste Brie de Meaux and brie noir. Our cycling leads us through the valley of the Marne into the direction of Meaux and on the way we pass the Châteaux de Montceau, the building of which was started by Catherine de Médicis in the 16th century.

Our overnight stay is at Meaux, famous for its 'brie de Meaux'. But Meaux also has a magnificent cathedral, the Cathédrale St.-Etienne. The building of the cathedral took 400 years, from the 12th until the 16th century.

18.30 h Dinner

Day 7 (Fri): Meaux - Paris

Biking: about 55 km. Sailing time: 8,5 hours

8.00 h Breakfast

9.00 h Today we will ride into the splendid city of Paris along the canal de l'Ourcq. First we pass Trillbardou with its pumping engine dating from 1865, which once supplied the city. Later we join a bike path that leads via the basin of la Vilette all the way to the *place the la Bastille* (close to our final mooring place) in the heart of Paris not far from the Notre Dame

18.30 h Dinner

20.00 h Guided city walk including Monmartre.

Day 8 (Sat): Paris

9.00 h Tour ends after breakfast



Outdoor Travel offers Bike & Barge or Bike & Boat cruises to many areas of Europe including the Loire Valley and Burgundy in France, several routes in Holland, Germany – along the Saar, Moselle & Rhine, the Dalmatian coast of Croatia and the islands of Greece & Turkey.

Contact Outdoor Travel direct for more details, travel brochures and reservations

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