UK & FRANCE

London to Paris Cycle

Duration: 5 days

Cycling from London to Paris is one of the great cycle experiences in Europe. Passing through picturesque English countryside, we cross the Channel at Portsmouth and continue through the small villages and medieval market towns of Northern France, making time to take in some of the Normandy landing beaches. With long days in the saddle and some strenuous hill-climbs, the sight of the Eiffel Tower, our finishing point, will evoke a real sense of achievement.

Our last day in Paris allows us to explore the sights and soak up the romantic atmosphere of this majestic city, as well as enjoy the huge spectacle that is the end of the Tour de France!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: London – Portsmouth – Caen (Ouistreham)

An early start allows us to avoid the morning traffic as we pass through the outskirts of London onto quieter roads. It's not long before we're pedalling through the Surrey countryside and onto the North Downs near Guildford. Our route undulates relatively gently, though there are some steeper climbs to test our legs. Heading predominantly southwest, we enter Hampshire and pass through Alton. Look out for steam trains, as this old market town is also the terminus of the famed Watercress Line. We pass Jane Austen's house in the lovely village of Chawton soon afterwards, and continue our ride south across the sweeping South Downs, where more hills await us. Finally reaching the outskirts of Portsmouth, we make our way to the harbour for the overnight ferry to Caen. Night ferry. *(Breakfast on ferry not included)*

Cycle approx. 121km (75 miles)

Day 2: Caen (Ouistreham) – Lisieux

We ride west along the coast to the small town of Arromanches, heart of the Normandy Landings. Parts of the mulberry harbour built here can still be seen out at sea and on the beach. We ride to Juno and Gold beaches, then head back east on small roads towards Pegasus Bridge, near Caen, where the first house to be liberated from the Germans in June 1944 still stands. Now a café and museum, there is an opportunity to visit and see the original bridge, time permitting. We then continue east, on quiet rolling roads that take us through farmland and apple orchards – this area produces lots of cider and calvados! We see Lisieux's 11th-century cathedral as we approach the end of today's ride; approximately two-thirds of the town was destroyed by allied troops in the D-Day bombardment but the cathedral survived unscathed. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 121km (75 miles)

DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

Day 3: Lisieux – Évreux

Another long day ahead of us today, as we ride through lovely, typically French rural countryside. Passing through picturesque hamlets and small towns, it's hard to picture this peaceful countryside dominated by the battles of World War Two. There are some short sharp climbs, though our legs should take them in their stride by now! We ride west through rolling farmland and wooded valleys to the ancient cathedral city of Evreux. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 143km (89 miles)

Day 4: Évreux – Paris

Our last day: Paris beckons! We cycle east, crossing the River Eure and riding through small towns as we pass through the valley of the Seine. Nearing the city, we cross the River Seine and cycle through the suburb of Boulogne-Billancourt. As we head towards the centre of this iconic city, we look out for the distinctive landmarks of the Eiffel Tower and the Sacré Coeur standing out on the skyline. We pass the Arc de Triomphe and down the famed Champs-Elysées to our finish beneath the lofty arches of the Eiffel Tower – an impressive end to our challenge. After checking into our hotel we enjoy a great celebration to mark our achievements. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 121km (75 miles)

Day 5: Paris – London

After breakfast you are free to explore the famous sights of Paris. Later you can enjoy the huge spectacle that is the Tour de France! We don't have a set area to gather, but the 71m-wide Champs-Elysées is by far the best place to watch the laps before the final sprint; head over with your new cycling buddies, pick a spot and enjoy the incredible atmosphere. Spectators gather early to watch the world's most famous cycling event arrive home, and if you want a good view you are advised to get there many hours before the peloton! You are responsible for getting yourself and your bags to the Gare du Nord in time for your evening Eurostar train back to St Pancras, where you will be reunited with your bike. If you would rather see the whole Tour de France finale, we would suggest that you stay in Paris for an extra night and make your own travel arrangements back to the UK (at your own cost). If you intend on doing this, you will need to inform us prior to the confirmed deadline, so that we may cancel your return ticket and reduce your trip cost accordingly.

(Lunch & dinner not included)

Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

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CHALLENGE GRADING

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This ride lies within the **Yellow** range.

The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account.

The Challenge Factor icon shows the most challenging aspect – an extra-long day on undulating terrain.

The grade reflects the overall trip; some sections will feel more challenging than others. Unusual weather conditions also have a significant impact, and not all people are tested by the same aspects.