

FRANCE – BORDEAUX & THE WINES OF AQUITAINE

8-days / 7-nights Easy to moderate **PREMIUM PLUS GUIDED** or **SELF-GUIDED** cycling cruises



For 2019 we have secured berths on a delightful boat to cruise the spectacular Bordeaux region and its vineyards: a jigsaw of the 5 major wine regions, 120,000 hectares of vineyards and approximately 7000 châteaux or wineries. There are excellent bicycle paths, backroads to ride, charming historic villages and many prestigious châteaux to discover. Bordeaux offers a mild to warm climate ideal for cycling.

Bordeaux, near the confluence of the Gironde and Garonne rivers, is the cultural centre for the sunny south-west of France. It is a stunning UNESCO World Heritage-listed city in the heart of one of the most famous wine growing regions with grand architecture, museums, theatres and cafés. Caressed by Atlantic Ocean breezes, the vineyards of Aquitaine have for centuries produced France's most remarkable and well-known red and white wines such as *Saint-Émilion*, *Pomerol*, *Sauternes*, *Médoc* and *Margaux*.

Departs: Weekly every Saturday from 30th March to 2nd November, 2019

Cost from: (twin share, lower deck)

GUIDED:	\$2195 per person	30 th March – 27 th April, 26 th October – 2 nd November 2019
	\$2640 per person	4 th May – 24 th August, 5 th October – 19 th October 2019
	\$2810 per person	31 st August – 28 th September 2019

SELF-GUIDED:	\$1870 per person	30 th March – 27 th April, 26 th October – 2 nd November 2019
	\$2315 per person	4 th May – 24 th August, 5 th October – 19 th October 2019
	\$2490 per person	31 st August – 28 th September 2019

Supplements: Single cabin supplement from \$780
Upper deck supplement from \$310 per person, twin share
Junior Suite upgrade (lower deck) from \$520 per person, twin share

Cost includes: 7 nights' cabin accommodation with own shower/toilet, full board (breakfast, packed lunch, 3-course dinner), multi-gear hybrid bicycle hire with pannier, services of an experienced cycle tour guide (on guided tour option), maps and route information (1 set per cabin). E-bikes are available at extra cost

Not included: Personal expenses, gratuities, drinks on board, entrance fees, excursions and wine tastings, bicycle insurance, transfers to/from ship mooring point (coach transfers from/to Bordeaux at set times are available for extra cost of \$110 per person return, please ask when booking). A limited number of bicycle helmets are available onboard but we recommend you bring your own or purchase one locally.

Highlights: Bordeaux wines, historical and cultural UNESCO World Heritage sites, spectacular natural beauty, backroads through the vineyards, quaint villages and many architectural gems in the city of Bordeaux.

Difficulty: Easy to moderate with daily cycling distances from 30 to 50km. The terrain is relatively flat in parts, undulating with short climbs out of the river valleys to surrounding vineyard areas.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Bike & Barge cruises combine cycling and river cruising, allowing partners of different abilities or interests to holiday together. Unpack once and come *home* each night to a wonderful meal and comfortable cabin with your own bathroom. Each day you choose: join the cycle tour, or relax onboard the boat and enjoy the cruise. Well-maintained multi-gear bicycles with panniers are provided (comfortable, easy to ride and ideal for this route) and a fascinating and varied cycling program with free time to explore each day's destination.

Accommodation is aboard a spacious, comfortable 78-metre boat with just 47 twin and 2 single cabins all with their own shower and toilet. The twin cabins all have two lower beds (no bunks). The ship has three decks; the upper deck, main deck and sun deck. Most of the twin cabins are located on the main deck, accessible by stairs. A limited number of upper deck cabins are available at extra cost. There are also two Junior Suites on the main deck, which are a little larger and available at a supplement – please ask for details. Each cabin has air conditioning, TV, a safe and a large viewing window which can be opened. The upper deck area features a separate restaurant / dining area, a salon at the front of the ship with panoramic windows, a well-stocked bar, a small dance floor and a comfortable lounge. There is a sun deck where you can relax and enjoy the scenery.

Suggested itinerary: *

Day 1 Saturday: Castets-en-Dorthe – Canal des Deux Mers cycling @ 15km

Arrive mid-afternoon at the boat moored on the Canal des Deux Mers near Castets-en-Dorthe in the Garonne valley, or join the coach transfer from central Bordeaux at 2.00pm (recommended, at extra cost - ask when making a booking). We start with a short introductory cycle ride around Castets, a lush and fertile rural area nicknamed '*little Holland*'. We follow the cycle path along the Canal des Deux Mers from one quaint French village to another, through countryside of walnut groves, kiwifruit orchards, vegetables and wicker fields, past a medieval fortified water mill and bell tower. In the evening, enjoy a welcome cocktail and dinner onboard.

Day 2 Sunday: Castets-en-Dorthe – Entre-Deux-Mers – Cadillac cycling @ 30-50km

After breakfast we ride to the Entre-Deux-Mers region between the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers and the "*Premieres Côtes de Bordeaux*" winegrowing area; Saint-Macaire, with its medieval city gates and cobblestone streets in the old town; the residence of writer Francois Mauriac; the 16th Century Chateau Malromé, once home to painter Toulouse-Lautrec; and the village of La Réole, with its Gustave Eiffel-designed suspension bridge across the Garonne. In the afternoon we return to the ship and cruise to Cadillac, a small town with a towering castle, or nearby Loupiac. We are now in the region of Graves, known as the birthplace of Bordeaux wines.

Day 3 Monday: Cadillac – Sauternes – Bordeaux cycling @ 35-50km

We visit the Sauternais region today, where sweet dessert wines are made. We follow the banks of the Ciron River, whose cold waters flow into the warmer Garonne River and create the misty micro-climate which helps Europe's best late harvest wines. We cycle along gentle country roads, past picturesque châteaux overlooking vast expanses of vines, and near famous vineyards such as Château d'Yquem. The whole area has a fairy-tale quality. In the afternoon we sail from Cadillac on the Garonne River to the enchanting city of Bordeaux.

Day 4 Tuesday: Bordeaux cycling @ 15km

Bordeaux, there is a guided cycling tour along the promenade and a walking tour of the city's many architectural gems: from the royal entrance of the city (Cailhau door) to the Big Bell of Pey Berlan, the Golden Triangle, the Girondins column, water mirror, and more. The afternoon is free to explore the city further on your own, or shop in the city's markets, boutiques, wine shops or confectioners, or spend some time in the spectacular Cité du Vin wine museum.

Day 5 Wednesday: Bordeaux – Lamarque – Médoc – Bourg cycling @ 45km

Cruise from Bordeaux to Lamarque in the Gironde estuary to begin our cycling tour of the Médoc wine region. During the *Hundred Years War* England held the region of Aquitaine and this strategic location on the left bank of the estuary from 1154, when Eleanor of Aquitaine's husband was crowned King Henry II of England. This is the

heart of the Margaux appellation, with 21 wine châteaux which were included in the 1855 Bordeaux wine classification, including *premier cru Château Margaux*. We can stop at one of these great wine estates for an optional visit / tasting and learn more about classifications, before re-joining the barge. Afternoon cruise the estuary to Bourg, a picturesque town near the confluence of the Gironde and Dordogne Rivers.

Day 6 Thursday: Bourg – Blaye – Fronsac/Libourne

cycling @ 25-45km

From Bourg we cycle to the Côtes de Blaye area where the wine châteaux create some marvellous wines. Here the idea of *douceur de vivre* or the sweet life reigns supreme. We follow a railway-turned-bike path, and the landscape is dotted with quaint villages, elegant manor houses and story-book castles. In Blaye, the remarkable 17th Century fortress, built by Vauban, the Sun King's military engineer and architect, dominates the area. After a visit to the fortress to admire the military masterwork of Vauban, we cycle the 'Corniche', a scenic and quiet road alongside the Gironde estuary. Re-join the barge at Bourg and sail to Fronsac or nearby Libourne on the Dordogne River. Our mooring point is determined by the tides and water level of the river.

Day 7 Friday: Pomerol & St-Emilion circular tour

cycling @ 25-45km

In Libourne, where the Friday market is in full swing, we stroll through the picturesque city square, lined with buildings dating to the 16th Century, and browse the market's many stalls. Afterwards we cycle through the Saint-Émilion and Pomerol regions. Unspoiled Saint-Émilion is UNESCO World Heritage-listed for its cultural and historical value. It has been a centre of viticulture since Roman times. We ride over undulating terrain, with typical countryside views of medieval and Renaissance-era castles and stone cottages surrounded by vines.

Following back roads and lanes past famous wine estates, Saint Émilion is home to the *premier grand cru classé châteaux* of *Angélus, Ausone, Cheval Blanc* and more. In the afternoon we may explore the steep cobbled streets of the town to visit a patisseries, café or wine shops. Later we return to the barge for our farewell dinner.

Day 8 Saturday: End of tour

Tour ends after breakfast in Fronsac/Libourne (a coach transfer to central Bordeaux is available at extra cost).

*** Please Note:** *The Garonne, Gironde and Dordogne Rivers are part of a tidal river system that brings changing tides and water levels which may impact on the day to day itinerary. This cruise is offered in the opposite direction on alternate weeks. Cycling distances are approximate. Non-cycling guests are always welcome on these departures, but note that no sightseeing provisions are made for non-cyclists on cycling days.*



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