

FRANCE – HIGHLIGHTS OF PARIS, FONTAINEBLEAU & COMPIÈGNE

8-days / 7-nights **STANDARD PLUS** easy to moderate cycling - Moret-sur-Loing to Compiègne or return



See Paris from a totally different perspective, cruising and cycling through the city and surrounding villages. See the riverside landscapes that inspired artists, architects, kings and emperors. This cycling tour crosses the city of Paris from picturesque Moret-sur-Loing to Compiègne (or vice versa) with a free day mid-way to explore the city.

Cycling along the winding rivers Seine and Oise, we visit the chateau and gardens of Fontainebleau and ride through the forests of Senart and Compiègne. See landscapes that inspired Van Gogh, Sisley and other *Impressioniste* painters. Enjoy a free day to explore Paris independently – you choose which sights of Paris to concentrate on be it the Eiffel Tower, one of the many museums, Notre Dame Cathedral or Sacré Coeur, the exclusive shops of the Champs Élysées or Bohemian Left Bank. Paris by night is floodlit and spectacular and we cruise through historic locks and swing bridges along a 19th Century canal.

Our cruise through the Ile de France and the city of Paris offers easy-to-moderate guided cycling, often on cycle paths and quiet roads. Well-maintained multi-gear bicycles with panniers are provided – comfortable, easy to ride and ideal for this route. There is a fascinating, varied guided cycling program with free time to explore.

Our newly renovated barge on this route has 9 cabins (5 with twin split-level beds, 3 have a double bed and one cabin is for single use) for up to 17 guests. All cabins have en-suite shower/toilet and are simply furnished with two split level beds. No bunk beds on this barge. Bike & Barge cruises combine two popular ways of exploring Europe (cycling and river cruising), they allow partners of different abilities and interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting for leisure cyclists OR cycling enthusiasts). Unpack just once and come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal cooked and served onboard and to a comfortable cabin to relax in.

Cost – low season: \$1630 per person (twin share). Single cabin supplement from \$405 (limited availability)

Departs: 18th, 25th May; 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd June; 24th August, 2019

Cost – high season: \$1775 per person (twin share). Single cabin supplement from \$405 (limited availability)

Departs: 31st August; 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th September, 2019

Starts: Paris Gare du Nord, then transfer to Moret-sur-Loing **Ends:** Compiègne (or vice versa)

Includes: 7-nights in small, comfortable twin share cabins with split level beds and compact private shower/toilet, full board (breakfast, packed lunch each day and 3-course dinner each night), an English speaking cycling guide, hire of 24-gear bicycle, cheese tasting, guided city walks as indicated in the itinerary, entrance fee to Fontainebleau, one-way bus transfer from Paris Gare du Nord to Moret-sur-Loing or vice versa.

Not included: Airfares or transport other than that indicated, travel to/from Compiègne, excursions or entrance fees not shown in the itinerary, drinks, bike insurance (approximately €28 per person, paid locally) and personal expenses. We recommend you bring your own bike helmet or buy one locally on this trip.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Suggested itinerary: *Subject to change. The program is offered in reverse on alternate weeks – ask for details.*

Day 1 Saturday: Arrive Moret-sur-Loing

Meet at Gare du Nord in Paris for a transfer by bus to the barge moored at Moret-sur-Loing. There is time before dinner to settle into your cabin and adjust your bicycle to your needs. Moret is a beautiful medieval village, once home to the Impressionist painter Alfred Sisley. This evening we take a warm-up ride to Saint Mammés, where the Seine River meets the Loing, a village which is at the centre of a host of boating activities.

Day 2 Sunday: Moret-sur-Loing – Melun

Cycling distance @ 45km

Today we begin riding towards the impressive chateau and beautiful gardens at Fontainebleau. We follow the Seine through the picturesque villages of Héricy and Samois-sur-Seine. Our destination is Melun, a small town with several beautiful 11th Century buildings. If time permits we may have a guided city walk this evening.

Day 3 Monday: Melun – Vigneux-sur-Seine – Paris

Cycling distance @ 50km

We cycle leisurely beside the Seine and follow cycle paths through the forest of Senart, once royal hunting grounds. We re-join the barge at Vigneux-sur-Seine and sail along the Seine to Paris passing many of the famous city landmarks. Our usual mooring point is the Bassin de l’Arsenal, near the Place de la Bastille in central Paris.

Day 4 Tuesday: Free day in Paris

In the morning the barge will cruise from the Bassin de l’Arsenal along the tree-lined, tranquil Canal Saint-Martin commissioned by Napoleon to provide clean drinking water to Paris and to divert shipping traffic from the Seine. The canal is now devoted mostly to cruising and recreational boating. We travel through a tunnel and a series of historical locks and swing bridges, and under picturesque iron footbridges. Our cruise finishes in Bassin de la Villette, where we moor tonight. From mid-morning onwards you are free to explore the many delights of Paris. Perhaps visit the Louvre, Musee d’Orsay or Centre Pompidou, shop the famous boutiques and department stores, or simply sit in a cafe and soak up the atmosphere of the *City of Light*.

Day 5 Wednesday: Paris – Bougival

Cycling distance @ 40km

We ride mostly on dedicated cycle paths along the Seine through Paris, then cross part of the Bois de Boulogne towards our destination, Bougival, our peaceful mooring point for the night.

Day 6 Thursday: Bougival – Auvers s/Oise – L’Isle Adam

Cycling distance @ 40km

Our route takes us past the Château of St. Germain-en-Laye and through Conflans Ste Honorine, the French barging and boating capital, to the village of Auvers-sur-Oise, where many artists, including Cézanne, Pissarro, Daubigny, and most notably Vincent van Gogh, lived and worked. Van Gogh and his brother Theo are both buried in the cemetery here. We continue on to L’Isle Adam, a charming village known for its restaurants and outdoor cafés and its long sandy beach on the River Oise. The writer Honoré de Balzac spent time here as a young man, naming it his earthly paradise, and the town and its people appear in various guises throughout his work.

Day 7 Friday: L’Isle Adam – Creil – Compiègne

Cycling distance @ 40km

This morning we cruise on the river Oise from L’Isle Adam to Creil, where we disembark and begin a scenic bike ride alongside the river towards Compiègne, a beautiful city where many French kings had summer residences. There is free time this afternoon to explore including the palace with its garden and park or the 13th Century church of St Jacques. If time permits this evening your tour leader may organise a guided walk in the city centre.

Day 8 Saturday: Tour ends in Compiègne

The tour ends after breakfast in Compiègne. The barge is moored close to the train station at Compiègne, with frequent train services to Paris Gare du Nord (journey time approx. 45 minutes – 1 hour, cost €15-20).

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Please note that the distances shown are approximate and subject to change. The daily itinerary is determined by the barge captain and cycle guide based on river traffic and navigation matters, mooring points, weather conditions etc. This tour requires minimum numbers to run.

Outdoor Travel cycling cruises similar to this one are available on many of the canals and rivers of Europe including the **Loire Valley**, **Burgundy** or **Provence** in France, on the route between **Paris and Bruges** through the Somme WW1 battlefield and memorial sites in northern France, in Holland and Belgium, in Germany along the **Saar**, **Moselle** and **Rhine** rivers, or **Venice and the River Po** in Italy.

Bike & Boat cycling cruises available on the **Dalmatian Coast** of Croatia, islands of **Greece**, **Turkey**, or **Amalfi Coast** of Italy. Inn-to-inn cycling tours available in most areas of Europe, the US, Japan, New Zealand or Vietnam.

Contact the experienced staff at Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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