

FRANCE –PARIS TO MONTARGIS ALONG THE SEINE RIVER VALLEY

8-days / 7-nights Easy to moderate **STANDARD PLUS** GUIDED cycling cruise



The Seine Valley and Ile-de-France is an ideal location for a cycling holiday. With easy to moderate cycling of around 40-55km a day – with optional shorter or longer rides on some days – we leave the hustle and bustle of Paris to ride through an undulating landscape becoming increasingly rural as we get farther from the city. We ride on quiet country roads and bike paths alongside one of the iconic rivers of France, the majestic Seine.

This is an area rich in royal history with many grand estates, chateaux and castles, including the magnificent Château Vaux-le-Vicomte, with its extensive formal gardens, and the Palace of Fontainebleau. We cycle through forests once full of game, and visit the artists' village of Barbizon and medieval Moret-sur-Loing, an inspiration for many *Impressionist* painters. Our tour ends in charming Montargis, a town of canals and bridges, and within easy reach of the historic city of Orléans, the Loire Valley and the wine region of Sancerre.

Bike & Barge cycling cruises combine two popular ways of exploring Europe, cycling and river cruising, and allow partners of different abilities and interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting whether you are a leisure cyclist or a cycling enthusiast). You unpack once and come 'home' each night to a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom. Well-maintained multi-gear bikes are provided, or you can bring your own if you prefer. The cycling is varied and interesting, and there is free time at each day's destination. Twice during the week you have the opportunity to dine out at a local restaurant to experience the regional French cuisine.

Departs: **Paris to Montargis** 25th May – 1st June, 2019 **Montargis to Paris** 1st – 8th June, 2019

Cost from: **\$2130** per person, twin-share Single cabin – no supplement, availability strictly limited

Two Premium cabins are available in 2019 with a supplement from **\$355** per person twin share.

Two Single cabins are also available without a supplement – limited to two per departure.

Includes: 7 nights in twin-share cabin with ensuite shower/toilet, use of washer/dryer for laundry, breakfasts, packed lunches, 5 dinners, bike hire, pannier, water bottle and lock, experienced cycle tour guide.

Not included: personal expenses, transfers to/from the barge, travel insurance, entrance fees.



Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Suggested itinerary: *the route/moorings may change at the discretion of the captain or guide. Tour operates in reverse direction on alternate weeks.*

Day 1: Arrive Paris

warm up ride

Meet in central Paris by 2.00pm. We first cruise upstream on the magical River Seine, passing by many of the famous landmarks. At Évry, on the outskirts of Paris, we adjust our bikes for a warm-up ride away from city traffic. Dinner this evening onboard the barge moored in Évry.

Day 2: Évry to Melun

cycling @ 35, 50 or 60km

Our route today is mostly alongside the Seine and there are scenic spots for photos. Our destination is Melun, a small town on a bend in the river, once home to the Capetian kings of France. We can detour to the 17th Century Château Vaux-le-Vicomte, a fine example of French Baroque architecture, with its spectacular gardens or visit Blandy-les-Tours, a 13th Century fortified castle in the charming little village of Blandy.

Day 3: Melun to St-Mammés

cycling @ 45km

Following the Seine there are many historical castles and chateaux built by French royalty and aristocrats. The artists' village of Barbizon is on our route and we cycle through the forest of Fontainebleau. Once a hunting lodge it was embellished and expanded in the 16th and 17th Centuries to become the magnificent palace we see today. We visit the chateau and continue to St-Mammés, at the confluence of the Seine and Loing Rivers.

Day 4: St-Mammés to Nemours

cycling @ 40 or 55km

At St-Mammés the barge leaves the Seine and negotiates the locks of the Canal du Loing. The Loing is a narrow river paralleled by the canal and there are many fascinating rock formations. We cycle to the picturesque medieval town of Moret-sur-Loing, on the edge of the forest, a place that inspired many *Impressionist* painters including Alfred Sisley. We meet the barge in Nemours with its 12th Century castle.

Day 5: Nemours to Néronville

cycling @ 50km

We ride mostly back roads through villages and towns, including Egreville with its covered marketplace, to Néronville, near Château-Landon. There are many interesting 12th Century buildings, including the former royal Abbey of Saint-Séverin. West of Château-Landon are traces of the Gallo-Roman period – the Romans arrived in Gaul (now France) between 58 and 52 BC. There is a longer ride today for those who prefer it.

Day 6: Néronville to Montargis

cycling @ 45km

We cycle southwards, never far from the river and canal. We pass through Dordives, famous for its glassware, and Ferrières, with its ancient Benedictine abbey which housed one of the largest libraries in medieval times. We approach Montargis through a forest of oak and beech. Montargis is one of the larger towns in the region with a population of about 15,000. Known as the *Venice of the Gâtinais* it has an extensive network of canals.

Day 7: Montargis

free day, optional cycling @ 35 to 50km

A free day to explore Montargis. Sights include the museum and several interesting buildings from different eras including a wonderful 14th Century stone castle. Alternatively join your guide on an optional extra ride.

Day 8: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast. Montargis is connected by train to Paris, with several daily departures.

Contact Outdoor Travel or see our website for more details and reservations:

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