

FRANCE – PARIS, VERSAILLES, CHANTILLY & THE COMPIÈGNE FOREST

8-day / 7-night Moderate **GUIDED** cycling cruise in a traditional **STANDARD** barge



For 2027 we have a limited number of berths on a unique small barge to cruise from Paris to the historic town of Soissons, stopping along the way to take in the royal park of Versailles, Van Gogh's village of Auvers-sur-Oise, Royamont Abbey and the Chateau of Chantilly. The second half of the week explores the massive Compiègne Forest with its Pierrefonds Castle, Clairière de l'Armistice and links to Joan of Arc. Explore this varied and interesting countryside, visit historic and places of cultural interest, sampling French wine and local produce.

Departs **Paris to Soissons:** 21 June 2027

Soissons to Paris: 28 June 2027

Cost from: **\$3430** per person twin-share Single cabin supplement from **\$610** (only two per tour).
Premium twin cabin supplement from **\$325** per person twin share.

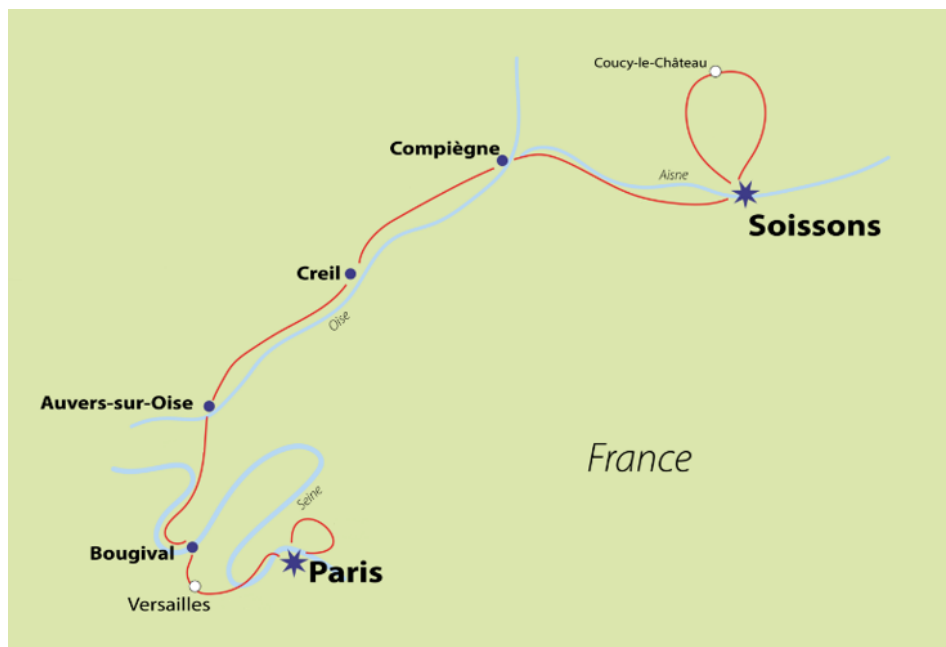
Included: 7 nights' accommodation in twin-share cabin, 7 breakfasts, 6 dinners on board, picnic lunches, cycling tour guide and bicycle hire (with pannier, lock & water bottle), ferry fees on the route.

A limited number of **E-bikes are available** at extra cost, please ask when booking.

Bike & Barge cruises combine cycling and canal or river cruising, allowing partners of different abilities and interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting for leisure cyclists OR enthusiasts). Unpack once and come back each night to a wonderful welcome from the crew, a cooked meal and a comfortable cabin. Our barge offers delicious meals and comfortable but simply furnished cabins with twin-share lower beds, small shower/toilet and a window for natural light.



Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on (03) 5750 1441 for details or reservations



Suggested itinerary – route offered in reverse on alternate weeks.

Day 1: Paris

cycling @ 18km

Arrive at the barge, moored in central Paris. Take a warm-up ride through Paris. Depending on harbour operations, the barge may cruise a canal to the River Seine and continue to a mooring point on the outer suburbs of Paris.

Day 2: Paris - Bougival

cycling @ 40km

Every morning we serve a substantial breakfast, and you choose your own picnic lunch from the buffet. After breakfast, we depart Paris by bicycle, heading over the hills towards Versailles. After a short stop at the Château de Versailles, a UNESCO World Heritage site, enjoy a coffee break in the town centre before continuing to the vast palace park for lunch. You may wish to visit the Grand Trianon or Marie Antoinette's charming Hamlet. In the afternoon, cycle through quiet suburbs towards the Seine, stopping briefly near Malmaison, the former home of Napoleon and Joséphine. Continue to our mooring point in Bougival, the birthplace of Impressionism, where Monet and Renoir painted the river's light and reflections.

Day 3: Bougival - Auvers sur l'Oise

cycling @ 35km

Leaving Bougival, we follow a bike path along the Seine to Saint-Germain-en-Laye. From the bridge, a gentle 1 km climb brings us to the château, once a luxurious residence of the French kings before the court moved to Versailles. It houses a prehistoric museum and has beautiful gardens with a terrace viewpoint across Paris. We continue along the river, stopping for coffee or lunch in Maisons-Laffitte, known for its equestrian heritage, before following forest paths to Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, a former river port at the confluence of the Seine and Oise. After a stop in Neuville, we ride through Cergy and Pontoise towards Auvers-sur-Oise. This charming village is closely linked to Vincent van Gogh, who spent his final months here and created over 70 paintings. On a guided walk, we discover the places that inspired his final masterpieces.

Day 4: Auvers sur l'Oise - Creil

cycling @ 35 or 50km

An early morning sailing carries us upstream before we begin cycling through the forests of the Oise-Pays de France nature reserve, the green "lungs" of northern Île-de-France. Our route leads to Chantilly, where we pause near its magnificent château, renowned for its art, architecture and aristocratic history. We can choose to visit the château and its world-class art collection, the peaceful gardens of Royaumont Abbey, or the historic town of Senlis, with its Roman origins, medieval streets and striking cathedral, as well as the unique graffiti museum in Verneuil-en-Halatte. After Chantilly, the longer cycling option takes us on a rewarding loop through Senlis before continuing through wooded landscapes to Creil, our final stop beside the Oise.



Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on (03) 5750 1441 for details or reservations

Day 5: Creil - Compiègne

cycling @ 40km

After a cruising breakfast on the Oise River, we ride away from the river towards the vast Compiègne Forest, passing near the impressive Gallo-Roman ruins of Champlieu, with their ancient theatre, temple and baths. After lunch, we reach the Château de Pierrefonds, a spectacular medieval-style castle and one of the day's highlights. Inside, discover historic furnishings, an ever-changing display of old bicycles, a trebuchet and a beautiful ballroom. The ride continues through woodland to Compiègne, a historic town known for its magnificent palace, once a royal and imperial residence, and the Gothic Église Saint-Antoine, with its stained-glass windows depicting Joan of Arc. There is also the option to join a guided walk through the historic centre, discovering Compiègne's links to the famous French heroine.

Day 6 Compiègne - Soissons

cycling @ 50km

Today's route is more undulating, with some hills along the way. There is a chance to visit the Palace-Museum of Compiègne before cycling through the forest of Compiègne, perhaps stopping at the Rethondes Armistice Clearing, where the World War I armistice agreement was signed by the French, German and British in a railway carriage. A replica carriage and museum are well worth visiting. We then continue riding along the Aisne River, passing through Attichy and Vailly-sur-Aisne, before reaching the ancient town of Soissons, our destination for the day.

Day 7 Soissons - Coucy-le-Chateau - Soissons

cycling @ 50km

This final day offers a roundtrip to Coucy-le-Château, with time to explore the impressive remains of one of France's strongest medieval fortresses, with its imposing walls and vast keep; famously featured in Barbara Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror*. The ride includes several hills and a mix of wooded lanes and open landscapes, with views across the surrounding countryside.

Day 8: Departure day

Tour arrangements end after breakfast. There are rail connections from Soissons to Paris and onward.

**The itinerary is indicative only and may change due to wind, weather, waterway conditions, mooring points or other circumstances at the captain's discretion. Cycling distances are approximate, and daily routes and cycling levels are determined by the guide. Please discuss options before beginning your daily cycling.*



Other **Outdoor Travel** Bike & Barge cruises are available in France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Scotland, Romania, in Austria along the River Danube, to the islands of Croatia, Greece and Turkey or in Vietnam. Inn-to-inn cycling tours or hotel barge cruises are also available in Europe, North America, New Zealand and China.

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

- Call: (03) 5750 1441
- Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au
- Web: www.outdoortravel.com.au
- Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright 3741, Australia