

London to Paris Cycle



Duration: 5 days

Cycling from London to Paris is one of the great cycle experiences in Europe. Passing through picturesque countryside of Surrey and Hampshire to Portsmouth, we cross the Channel and continue through the small villages and medieval market towns of Brittany and Northern France. 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!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: London – Portsmouth – St Malo

An early start from Chessington allows us to avoid the morning traffic, and it's not long before we're pedalling through the Surrey countryside and onto the North Downs near Guildford. Continuing through small towns and villages, our route undulates relatively steadily, 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 is also the terminus of the famed Watercress Line. We pass Jane Austen's house in the lovely village of Chawton soon afterwards, where we stop for lunch. We then 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 our overnight ferry to St Malo. *(Dinner on ferry not included)*

Cycle approx. 121km (76 miles)

Day 2: St Malo – Mayenne

After a hearty breakfast on board the ferry, we disembark and head south through the beautiful countryside of Brittany. Our route takes us through the small villages and woodland of this historic region as we head predominantly southwest along quiet roads. We pass the ancient Menhir of Champ-Dolent, an enormous megalithic granite standing-stone which reaches almost 10m high, and then continue to the medieval city of Fougères, whose fortified chateau dominates the town. Still on small roads, our afternoon's ride takes us through farmland and villages, our route getting hillier through the afternoon until we reach the riverside town of Mayenne. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 137km (86 miles)



DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

Day 3: Mayenne – Chartres

After a couple of tough days in the saddle our legs may feel a little tired, but they'll be getting used to the demands now! Today's route is long and pretty hilly – enjoy the descents, as they usually lead straight uphill again! We head east through villages and along quiet French roads to Mamers and Bellême, a hill-top town with the usual scattering of old buildings overlooking a large area of forest. This area forms a national park, with quiet roads leading over numerous hills and through areas of woodland. We pedal on, finally reaching the beautiful cathedral city of Chartres on the banks of the River Eure; we're likely to see the distinctive spires of the cathedral long before we reach our destination – a welcome sight after a very long day in the saddle and a great sense of achievement. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 186km (116 miles)

Day 4: Chartres – Paris

Our final day's cycling takes us predominantly northeast towards Paris. Initially we ride through fields and small villages, until we reach Rambouillet, site of an extensive forest; its beautiful chateau dates back to the 14th century and is a summer presidential residence. From here we ride through lovely forest and break for lunch near Versailles and its famous Palace. Entering the outskirts of Paris, we look out for the distinctive landmarks of the Eiffel Tower and the Sacré Coeur standing out on the skyline. Crossing the River Seine, we reach the suburb of Boulogne-Billancourt and continue through the Paris streets to our finish beneath the lofty arches of the Eiffel Tower. We check into our hotel and enjoy a great celebration to mark our achievements. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 88km (55 miles)

Day 5: Paris – London

After breakfast you are free to explore the city; popular attractions include the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Sacré Coeur and the Louvre, or simply wander along the river-bank and watch the world go by. Later you can enjoy the huge spectacle that is the Tour de France! The 71m-wide Champs-Elysees is by far the best place to watch laps before the final sprint. The atmosphere will be electric as spectators gather early to watch the world's most famous cycling event arrive home! You are responsible for getting yourself and your bags to the Gare du Nord in good time for our Eurostar train back to St Pancras, where we will be reunited with our bikes. *(Lunch & dinner not included)*



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.

