

Table of Rides

PARIS & THE ÎLE DE FRANCE	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
PARIS ORIENTATION	1½–3 HOURS	11.4KM	EASY
FABULOUS FONTAINEBLEAU	2¼–4¼ HOURS	42.5KM	EASY
MONET’S PASSIONS	3¼–5¾ HOURS	57.2KM	EASY
NORMANDY & BRITTANY	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
D-DAY BEACHES	3–5½ HOURS	55.5KM	EASY
CALVADOS CLASSIQUE	3 DAYS	132.8KM	EASY–MODERATE
KING ARTHUR’S FOREST	4¾–8½ HOURS	85KM	EASY–MODERATE
NORTHERN BRITTANY MAJESTY	4 DAYS	185.3KM	EASY–MODERATE
THE LOIRE VALLEY	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
CHÂTEAU EXPLORER	5 DAYS	232.7KM	EASY–MODERATE
CHAMPAGNE	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
VALLÉE DE LA MARNE	2½–4½ HOURS	46.3KM	EASY–MODERATE
MONTAGNE DE REIMS	3–5¼ HOURS	52.8KM	EASY–MODERATE
CÔTE DES BLANCS	3¼–5¾ HOURS	57.5	EASY–MODERATE
TASTE OF SOUTHERN CHAMPAGNE	3 DAYS	173.8KM	MODERATE
ALSACE & LORRAINE	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
ALSATIAN WINE ROUTE	4 DAYS	235.2KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING
VERDUN BATTLEFIELDS	1½–2½ HOURS	25KM	EASY
BURGUNDY	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
CLASSIC BURGUNDY	7 DAYS	365.4KM	MODERATE
CÔTE D’OR WINE LOVER’S CIRCUIT	3 DAYS	126.4KM	EASY
SOUTHWEST FRANCE	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
BORDEAUX WINE EXPLORER	7 DAYS	284.7KM	EASY–MODERATE
CAVES, CUISINE & CHÂTEAUX	9 DAYS	426.2KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING
THE MASSIF CENTRAL	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
VOLCANS D’AUVERGNE	3 DAYS	171KM	DEMANDING

SUMMARY	PAGE
Paris on two wheels: the best of central Paris on bikepaths along the Seine	49
The château of Fontainebleau, its gorgeous forest and a stop in Barbizon	54
Meander by the Seine; visit Monet's gardens in Giverny; storm a Norman castle	56
SUMMARY	PAGE
Peaceful Normandy coast of cemeteries, memorials and museums remembering a time of war	67
Picturesque Honfleur, villages of half-timbered houses along the Route du Cidre, superb Norman cuisine	71
The natural, historical and sometimes mystical attractions of the legendary forests of chivalrous knights	79
St-Malo, medieval Dinan, the château of Combourg, and magnificent Mont St-Michel	82
SUMMARY	PAGE
The aristocratic pomp and architectural splendour of famous royal châteaux on a wild scenic waterway	101
SUMMARY	PAGE
Wide panoramas over vineyard-blanketed lands; a visit to the home of Dom Pérignon himself	121
Forests and vineyards of the Parc Naturel Régional de la Montagne de Reims	123
Pretty wine villages along the Côte des Blancs, forests and the Château of Montmort	125
Forests and vineyard-laden hills of the Aube region and its impressive city of Troyes	128
SUMMARY	PAGE
The heart of the Alsatian wine region and magnificent Ballons des Vosges mountains	138
A sobering day ride of major World War I battle sites	148
SUMMARY	PAGE
Vineyard-covered limestone slopes, serene Morvan valleys, picturesque medieval villages and Roman ruins	159
The beautiful Route des Grands Crus through the villages of the Côte d'Or	168
SUMMARY	PAGE
Float on vineyard waves through the world's largest fine-wine producing region	184
Marvellous food, ancient cave art, grand châteaux and fabulous cycle touring	195
SUMMARY	PAGE
Dramatic volcanic landscape, snowy uplands, jade-green valleys and the rough-edged people who live there	227

FRENCH ALPS & THE JURA

	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
VERCORS CONTRASTS	3 DAYS	202KM	DEMANDING
HIGH COLS OF THE TOUR DE FRANCE	4 DAYS	256.1KM	DEMANDING–VERY DEMANDING
THE JURA	6 DAYS	330.5KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
REMOTE CÉVENNES	5 DAYS	412.7KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING
UPPER LANGUEDOC	7 DAYS	443.2KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING

THE PYRENEES

	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
PYRENEAN FOOTHILLS	3 DAYS	167.5KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING
RAID PYRÉNÉEN	10 DAYS	810.4KM	VERY DEMANDING

PROVENCE & THE CÔTE D'AZUR

	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
ALPES MARITIMES	2 DAYS	65.8KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING
PLATEAU DE CAUSSOLS	5¼–10¼ HOURS	103KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING
CÔTES D'AZUR HINTERLAND	4–7¼ HOURS	73.8KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING
MEDITERRANEAN PROMENADE	2¾–3¼ HOURS	32.1KM	EASY
GRAND CANYON DU VERDON	3 DAYS	155.6KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING
THE LUBERON & MONT VENTOUX	6 DAYS	335.4KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING

CORSICA

	DURATION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
THE SCENTED ISLE	5 DAYS	212KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING
THE SOUTH	5 DAYS	217.1KM	MODERATE–DEMANDING

SUMMARY	PAGE
Craggy cliffs, desolate vistas, gruelling climbs, plunging gorges and long, flat stretches of meadowland	242
The five major alpine cols of the Tour de France, totalling 14,000m of climbing	246
Vineyards, deep dark forests, coarse gorges, lakes and rugged mountain terrain	252
SUMMARY	PAGE
Scenic gorges, remote mountains, fine wine country and a 50km (mostly) downhill	272
Little-frequented lands of jagged limestone outcrops, pretty lakes and narrow defiles	279
SUMMARY	PAGE
After an easy start, magnificent mountain scenery and terrain to challenge <i>grimpeurs</i> (climbers)	304
Classic climbs, isolated villages, Tour de France romance and stupendous scenery	309
SUMMARY	PAGE
Tiny roads in the Nice hinterland, perched villages, gaspingly spectacular panoramas of the Côte d'Azur	337
Ravishing gorges, upland plateaus, high cols with long views and ancient perched villages	339
Picturesque perched villages, little-known cols and castle ruins	341
The famous Corniche d'Or passes through idyllic Mediterranean summer villages and inlets	342
Gorgeous scenery and challenging terrain on northern Provence limestone plateaux	344
Visit pretty perched villages, remote gorges and challenging Mont Ventoux	349
SUMMARY	PAGE
Corsica's best: breathtakingly rugged coastal scenery, the Calanche and alpine vistas	381
Prehistoric sites, captivating coasts, high passes and Bonifacio, the jewel of Corsican cities	388

The Author



ETHAN GELBER

An unabashedly native New Yorker, Ethan first landed in Paris in 1987 for a college semester of overseas study. He hit the ground, wheels already spinning, with all the grace of a deflated soufflé. Twenty years later, after a long stint organising and guiding trips for a France-based bike tour operator, a down-and-out-worthy series of odd jobs and friends in Paris, untold thousands of kilometres in the saddle in over 40 countries and hundreds of thousands of words written about it all, he's amused to think that it's all come down to this book.

Ethan now resides in Australia with Jane and Rohan, happy with the knowledge he can begin a new chapter in life.

MY FAVOURITE RIDE

After a decade of leading bike tours in Europe, often in France, I got a little jaded. The same roads, the same sights, the same hotels. Impossibly, I even got blasé about the food and wine. Been there, done that. Again and again. And again. Then, as part of the research for this book, I found myself in places I hadn't yet been – Corsica, the gorges of the Cévennes, the autumn-tinted rolling hills of Quercy, the soaring peaks of the Pyrenees. It was revelatory. All the sensuous thrill of discovery in France came back. The fascinating flavours and fragrances, the regional changes in *patois* and *terroir* and the incomparable experience of it all by bike. There really is nothing like cycling in France.

LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

Why is our travel information the best in the world? It's simple: our authors are passionate, dedicated travellers. They don't take freebies in exchange for positive coverage so you can be sure the advice you're given is impartial. They travel widely to all the popular spots, and off the beaten track. They don't research using just the internet or phone. They discover new places not included in any other guidebook. They personally visit thousands of hotels, restaurants, palaces, trails, galleries, temples and more. They speak with dozens of locals every day to make sure you get the kind of insider knowledge only a local could tell you. They take pride in getting all the details right, and in telling it how it is. Think you can do it? Find out how at lonelyplanet.com.

