

Calais to Nice...



... discover some of France's most beautiful regions

This ride will show you the great diversity of France as you start out in the flat Pas de Calais and Nord regions, then pass through Champagne, Burgundy and Provence before arriving in Nice 16 Days later! With gentler terrain and a rest day half way through in Dijon, this ride is more relaxed than our other end to end rides, but nevertheless is a challenge as riding for two weeks is not something you can readily simulate at home.

Along the way you will have our customary high level of support to help you along, and you will stay in historic and interesting places each night. The variety of landscape is amazing and just keeps getting better and better the further south we go!

You can elect to climb Mont Ventoux if you fancy it, and if you cannot spare two weeks for the whole ride, you can join us for either half.

Showing you places many people do not know exist, you will remember this ride fondly!

At a glance:

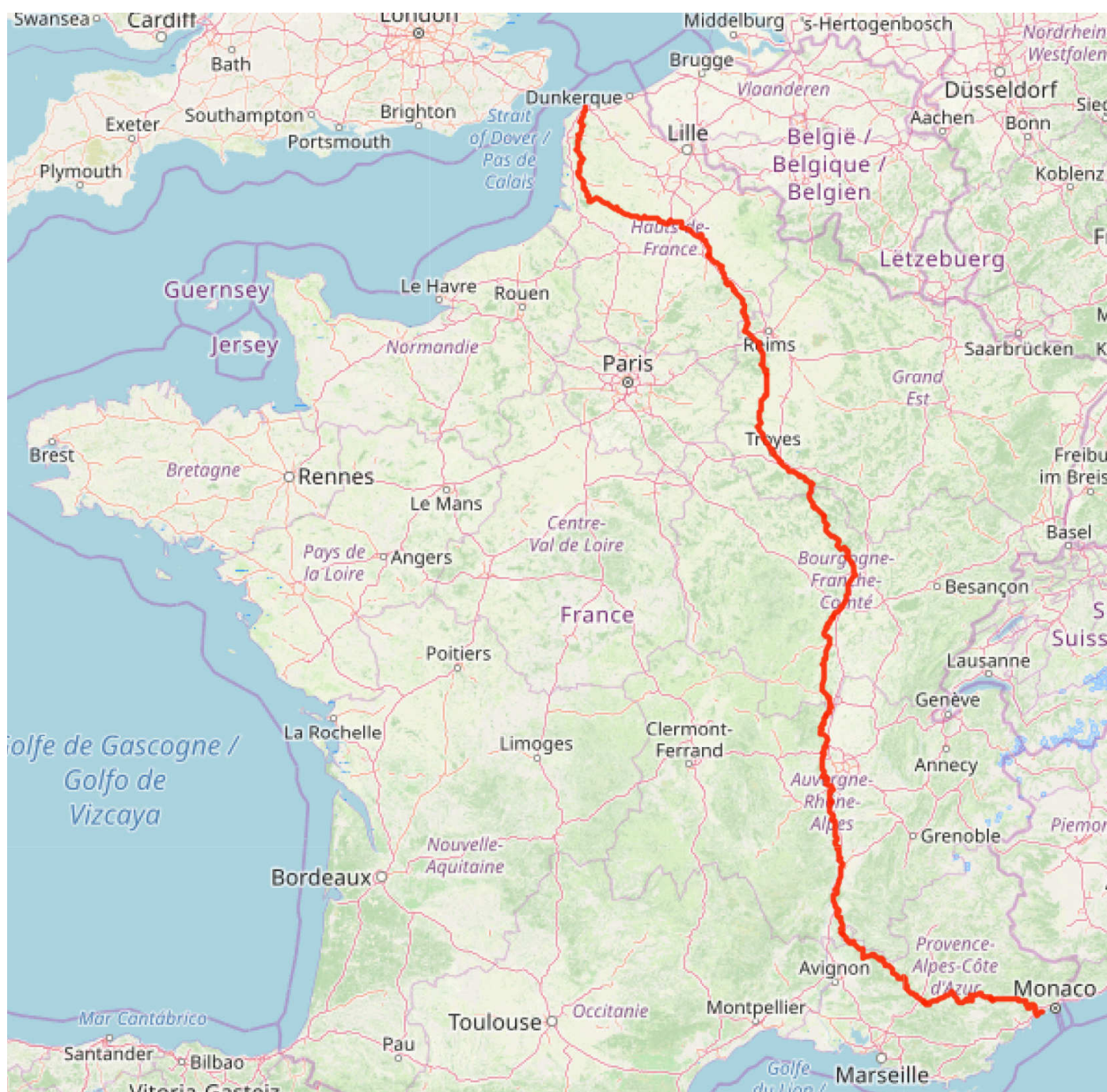
- 15 days' riding, with a rest day in Dijon
- 893 miles (1,429km)
- 16,011m ascent
- Daily distances from 49 to 75 miles (78 to 120 km)
- 15 nights in comfortable 3*** family run hotels
 - 12 dinners
- 3 nights dinner not included
 - 8 picnic lunches included
- Snacks, drinks and cakes along the way
 - UK bike return option
 - Fully supported

Highlights include:

- Vimy Ridge
- Historic Laon
- Champagne vineyards
- The mediaeval half-timbered city of Troyes
- Dijon, capital of Burgundy—enjoy a rest day here
- Historic and beautiful Beaune
- The Rhone valley
- Mont Ventoux (from afar, or option to climb!)
- Gorges de Verdon
- Promenade des Anglais in Nice
- Optional bike return to St Pancras (£50 per bike), allowing you to relax on the train home.
- Quiet traffic free roads with good surfaces
- Cake & Coffee stops



The Route:



The map will not show all of the towns and places we go through but is intended to give an overview only. Daily distances can be found under the daily itinerary pages and elevations charts are towards the end of this guide.



Day 1: We meet in the morning in Calais, give you a pre ride briefing and after leaving Calais head into the benign countryside of the Pas de Calais. This is a gentle day with little in the way of hills as we follow canals and quiet lanes to our hotel near Bethune, where your fine evening meal will include produce from the beautiful kitchen gardens. (66 miles / 106 km / 526m ascent).

Day 2: From our hotel the first major landmark is the Vimy Memorial which sits on a ridge with commanding views. The climb up to here is not particularly hard or long, and on a clear day the views are incredible. The monument itself remembers the Canadians who fell in the First World War and is a breathtaking piece of design and architecture. Several of our itineraries pass here and it is always quoted by clients as a highlight. Passing Arras, similar in style to Bethune and with two majestic squares, we pedal to Cambrai for the night. (53 miles / 84 km / 558 ascent).

Day 3: South from Cambrai the landscape immediately becomes more rural and you sense a change in the rhythm as the bustle of the north is left behind. We pass a very lovely Abbey set in a quiet river valley. It's worthy



of a visit. The obvious lunchtime stop is in St Quintin, a town which was flattened in World War One but which is now in the heart of the Artois region. It's then an easy run to Laon for the night. This well preserved mediæval town is off the beaten track and one of the highlights of the journey you are undertaking, with its intact walls and ancient gateways, spectacular cathedral and many old buildings and passageways making it a delight to explore. (60 miles / 95 km / 856m ascent).

Day 4: Laon to Epernay is a more undulating day but employs quiet lanes all the way. With a shorter distance there is plenty of time to enjoy the abbey ruins, underground caves and vineyards before arriving in the heart of the champagne producing region and the chance to visit a 'cave' and sample a glass of the bubbly stuff! (53 miles / 84 km / 1,050m ascent).

Day 5: Leaving Epernay our first stop is in the quaint town of Vertus, in the midst of the vines, where a coffee in the square is highly recommended. We then continue through more vineyards along a straightforward and very gentle route, eventually joining the Seine, to Troyes, one of the finest towns



in France. You will have plenty of time to explore this mediaeval town. (64 miles / 102 km / 484m ascent).

Day 6: The exit from Troyes tracks the River Seine, and we follow the river valley for a good few miles, before leaving it where the road gets busier and following another smaller tributary. We then pass through the vineyards with a couple of longer but gentle climbs. This is a day where the pleasure of riding your bike through small villages and unspoilt landscapes reminds you that you are now in the heart of France far away from everyday hustle and bustle! (53 miles / 85 km / 642m ascent).

Day 7: From Chatillon sur Seine there is a gentle climb for the first half of the day – but do not worry, it averages 5.1m per kilometre! Once again, quiet villages and roads are the order of the day as we make our way to Dijon, another of France's finest cities, where the centre is historic and beautiful with multi-coloured roof tiles and cobbled streets and squares. The capital of the ancient Dukedom of Burgundy, this is a fine place to savour. (57 miles / 91 km / 590m ascent).

Day 8: Rest day in Dijon. Enjoy the pavement cafes in the main square,

visit the Maille mustard shop or explore the magnificent public buildings in this elegant city.

Day 9: The Burgundy vineyards are renowned the world over and for good reason. Having sampled some of the local wines last night we will pass through vineyards that have been in the same families for generations, via illustrious names such as Clos Vougeot, which was such a favourite of Napoleon that he ordered his soldiers to salute the vines when they passed. The highlight of the day is Beaune, where a visit to the Hotel Dieu is a must. This ancient hospital is still run as a charitable foundation and survives through auctioning off the grapes from the many vineyards that it has received in donations throughout the centuries. The town is worthy of a lengthy stop and stroll around its ancient streets. Continuing from here we pass many more famous names before arriving in our small village for the evening. In contrast to last night's city stopover, this is France in her rural splendour. (62 miles / 98 km / 737m ascent).



Day 10: We proceed into the 'Maconnais' area today, but first pass the famous Cluny abbey, one of the most influential of all monastic establishments in the middle ages and beyond. The buildings are impressive and it is possible to visit this 'National Monument'. From Cluny we follow the Saone river valley leaving the hills on our right (a continuation of the Cote d'Or seen on the stretch from Dijon the Beaune) to our stopover in Villefranche sur Saone. A gentle first half to the day with more ups and downs in the afternoon as we ride through the Beaujolais vineyards. (63 miles / 100 km / 1,103m ascent).

Day 11: From the Soane valley this morning, to the Rhone valley in the afternoon. Skirting Lyon, you will see the Alps in the far distance to your left on a clear day. There's a stiff but quite short climb first thing then undulations for the rest of the day before one last long climb and accompanying long descent down to the Rhone. It is amazing how wide the river is here and how blue it is too. (57 miles / 96 km / 1,448m ascent).



Day 12: A very straightforward day following the Rhone valley again, with the steep hills on the right showing off their terraced vineyards. There are lots of pretty villages again, and if you hadn't noticed it already, you will really feel you are in the south now. We follow the Rhone cycleway through Crozes Hermitage and Valence to our overnight stop in a beautiful hilltop village - one of the 'Plus Beau Villages', the most beautiful villages of France, where our hotelier hosts are simply charming and provide an excellent meal on their terrace. (71 miles / 114 km / 649m ascent).

Day 13: The first half of the day is undulating and there is a good climb before lunch - and an equally good descent - with views of Mont Ventoux in the distance. Lunch in an historic town is followed by an easy run-in to the wonderful Vaison la Romaine for the night. We are very much in Provence, an historic region with Roman remains and as well as the vines, you will pass many fruit orchards and olive groves, lending a distinctly Mediterranean feel. (51 miles / 82 km / 923m ascent).

Day 14: Today has an option to climb Mont Ventoux for the athletic (weather dependent). This is the longest day of the ride, but a very pretty



ride around the side of the mountain. Although there's more ascent than before, with sensible pacing and frequent breaks to indulge in the goodies from the van, there is no reason why you should not get to our overnight stop in time for a swim before dinner. (75 miles / 120 km / 2,228m ascent).

Day 15: One of the real highlights of the ride, we head for the Gorges de Verdon, France's answer to the Grand Canyon. After very gradually gaining height you pass into the gorge with amazing views of the river and an ice-blue lake far far below. It is a wonderful ride along a road that clings to the hillside and offers endless photo opportunities. There is a lot of vertical ascent today but much of it is gained gradually over a long period and thus will not be noticed. The big hill comes at about half way after which it is flat or downhill most of the way to our evening stop. (49 miles / 78 km / 1,917 ascent).

Day 16: Yesterday we reached an altitude of approximately 750m above sea level and the good news is that today we have to descent to 0. There



are several climbs to do first, but after the first one we are on a plateau of about 1,000m above sea level and continue along that for some time. There's a descent off the plateau followed by another sharp hill – perhaps the hardest of the whole ride – but after that it is virtually all downhill for the last 15 miles as we start to pass nice villas on the run-in to Nice and our arrival point on the famous Promenade des Anglais. A celebratory dinner awaits and you can relax in the knowledge that there is no riding required tomorrow. 62 miles / 98 km / 1,723m ascent).

‘The most enjoyable cycling holiday I’ve been on in 15 years - quiet but well-maintained roads, beautiful and occasionally stunning scenery, overnight stops in hotels and towns with character, and even bags carried up to rooms.’



BIKES, NAVIGATION & EQUIPMENT

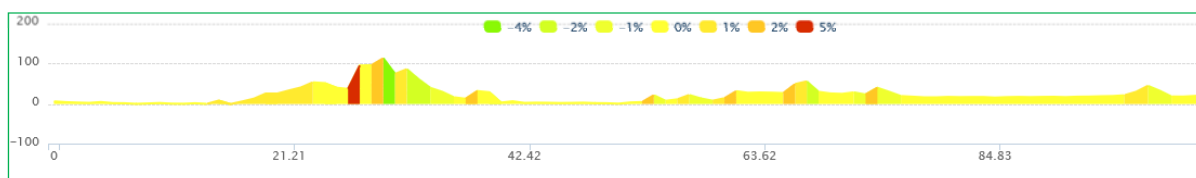
This tour is one on which to bring your best bike. We recommend road or touring bicycles, although we have had people complete the ride very happily on mountain bikes with road tyres (‘slicks’). All bikes are secure at night. You won’t need panniers or bar bags as you will frequently see the vans.

We provide a printed route card with turn by turn instructions, and we will also tell you which maps cover the areas we pass through. However, by far the best way to find your way is with a GPS and we provide tracks; you will save so much time and with a GPS the ability to find yourself geographically uncertain is reduced by a huge amount.

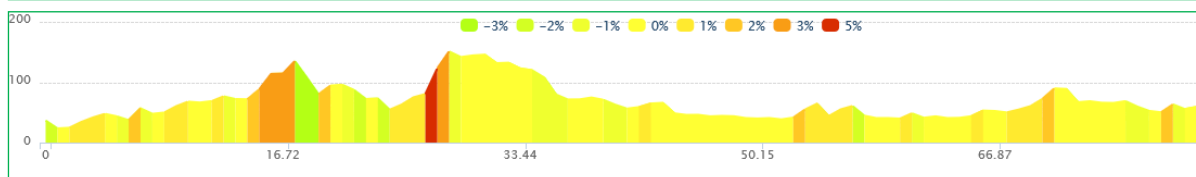
We send you out a kit list in advance of your holiday so you know what to pack. It’s easy to take too much but we will give a list of what you should need on your holiday.

Elevation Charts

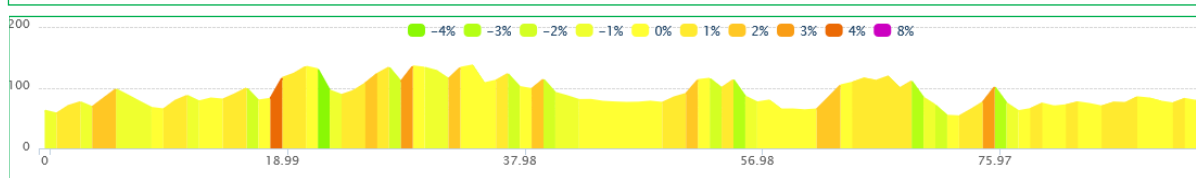
1
66 miles
526m



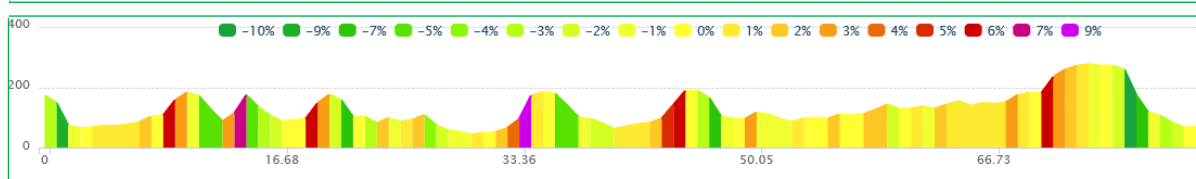
2
53 miles
558m



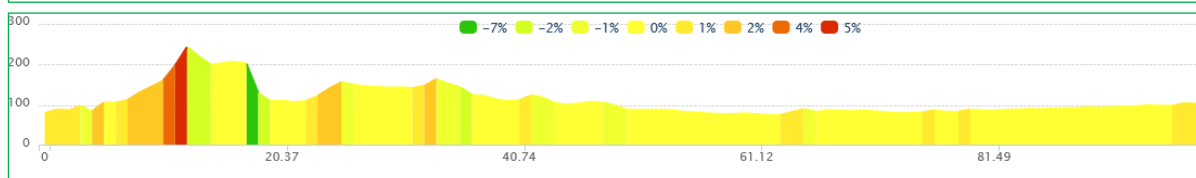
3
60 miles
856m



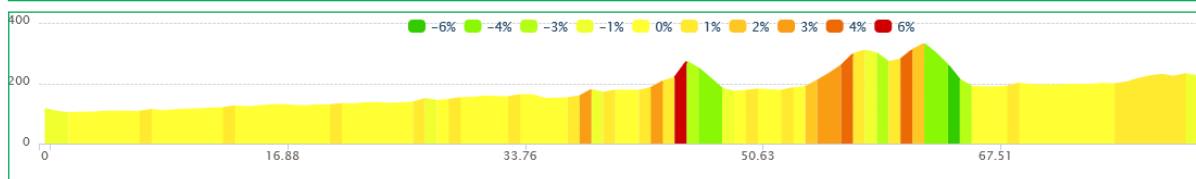
4
53 miles
1,050m



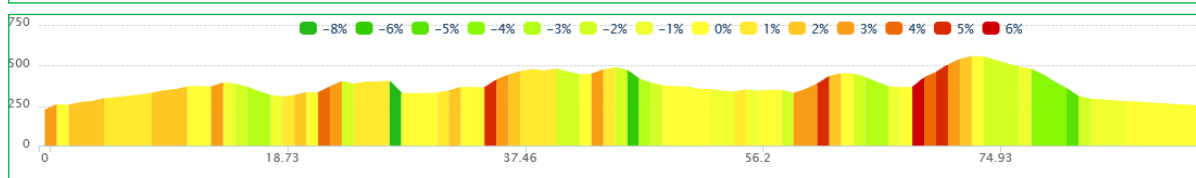
5
64 miles
484m



6
53 miles
642m



7
59 miles
1,167m



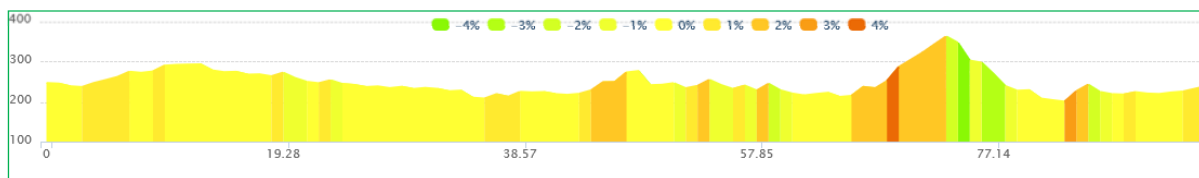
After day 7 there is a rest day in Dijon. There is therefore an opportunity to join or leave the tour here if you wish to do one half only.

For general identification only. Actual route may vary. Note different scales for each day—e.g. days 5 and 6 are not as flat as they look! Distances on graphs are km. Elevation is calculated by MapMyRide which produces significantly higher figures than Garmin.

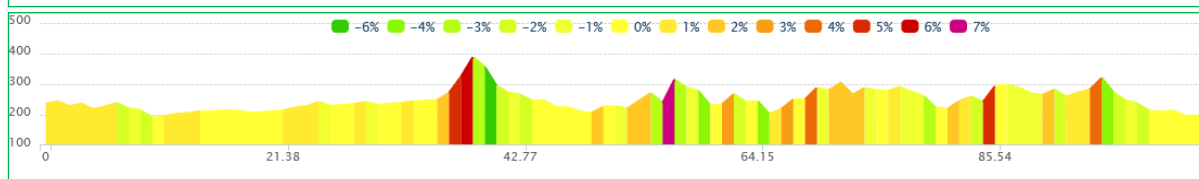
Starting elevation 0m. Finishing elevation 0m. Average overall gradient therefore 0% !

Elevation Charts

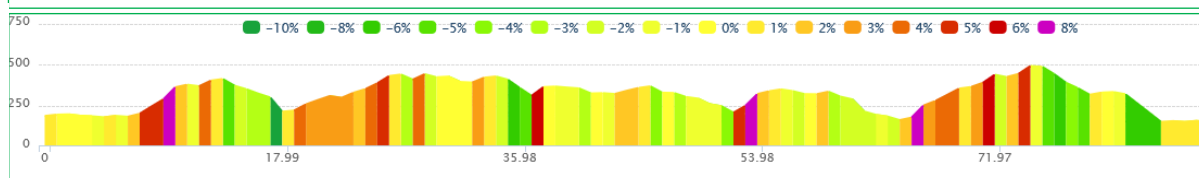
8
62 miles
737m



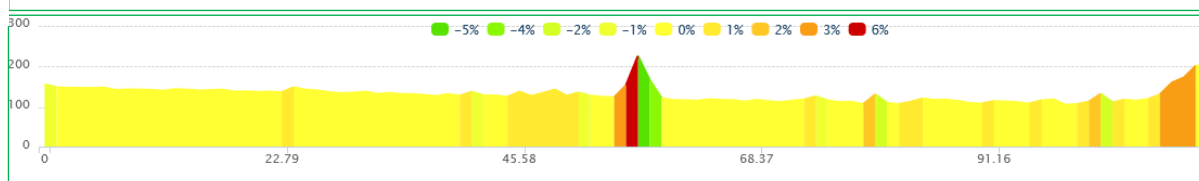
9
63 miles
1,103m



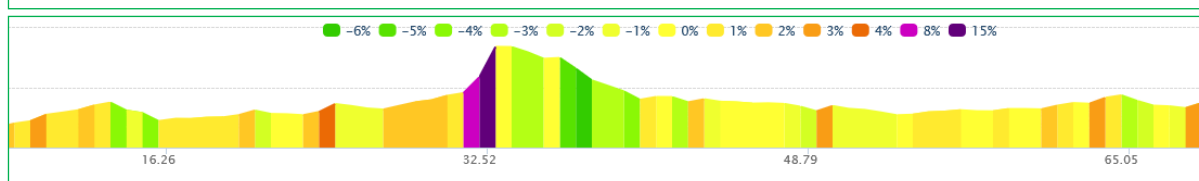
10
57 miles
1,448m



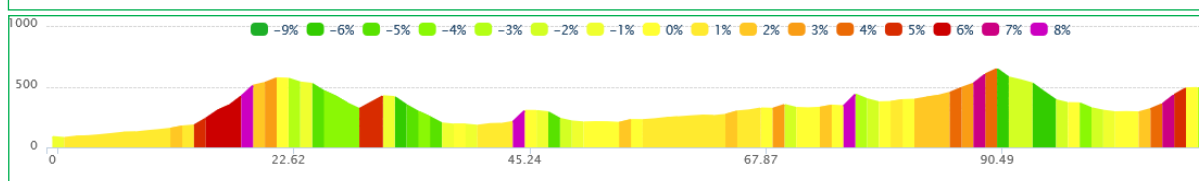
11
71 miles
649m



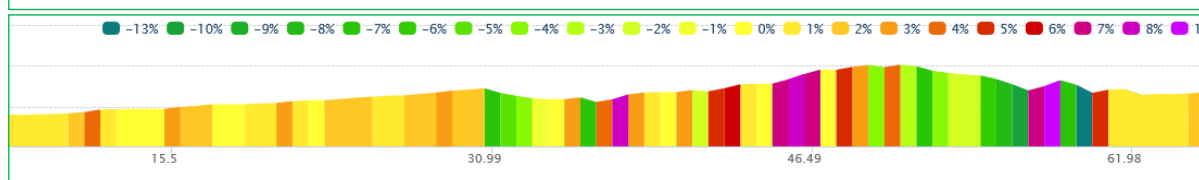
12
51 miles
923m



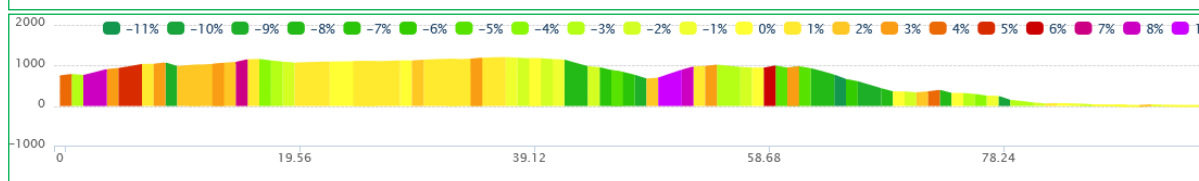
13
75 miles
2,228m



14
49 miles
1,917m



15
62 miles
1,723m



For general identification only. Actual route may vary. Note different scales for each day—e.g. days 5 and 6 are not as flat as they look! Distances on graphs are km. Elevation is calculated by MapMyRide which produces significantly higher figures than Garmin.

Starting elevation 0m. Finishing elevation 0m. Average overall gradient therefore 0% !



TRAVEL TO THE TOUR

Travel to and from the start and end of the tour is not included in our prices due to the vast range of places our riders come from. For many of our riders it's perfectly possible to do this trip without flying.

Ferry: The ferry from Dover to Calais docks about a mile from the town centre. There are trains from Waterloo East to Dover.

Train: Some Eurostar services stop at Calais Frethun.

Many people travel over the night before and we can recommend hotels should you wish to do the same.

TRAVEL HOME

Air: Nice airport is on the edge of the city and has frequent and low cost flights to many airports in the UK and other international destinations. We can transport your bike box south but we do need AT LEAST 4 WEEKS notice.

Train: From Nice there are frequent trains back to London via either Paris or Lille. If you can change at Lille that will make life easier as you will not then need to cross Paris. Sometimes, to get to Lille, you may need to change at Lyon Part Dieu as well. Fares and timetables are released 3 months before travel and if you then, the fare from Nice to London starts at about £80 (less for over 60s). You will need a bike bag to travel on this train as they do not take assembled bikes and you should carefully check the size of any bike box you will be using to verify it complies. Alternatively use our bike return service and finish your holiday in a relaxed state!

Transfers to the airport and railway station are not included as both are within very easy reach, and well-connected to, our final hotel, either by bus (15 mins to airport, 150m from hotel) or foot (10 mins to station).

BIKE RETURN SERVICE: We offer our popular bike return service to St Pancras for £50 per bike / £20 per item of luggage. Your bike will be ready and waiting for the arrival of the 8am departure from Nice, which gets to London at about 4pm (exact time subject to timetables but it won't vary much). This will allow you to enjoy a stress free return to the UK on the train. You do not need a bike box or to dismantle your bike for this service.



TERRAIN: The route crosses a variety of terrain from the flatter landscapes of the north to the Gorges of the south. It does not go out of its way to climb big hills but nevertheless you should prepare for the ride by riding on all sorts of terrain. You will get a real feel for France and the geography of the country and we pass through some simply stunning countryside with plenty of old villages, castles, lakes and mountains.

Thanks for taking us on a fantastic trip from St Malo to Sete. It was a real cycling challenge, right up there with LEJOG. We passed through places I never dreamt of visiting on quiet roads, saw some amazing scenery and made new friends. All in all, it was an excellent 10 days cycling!

The key to success on this ride is patience, and riding at your own pace. To get the most out of this ride you will enjoy the variety of terrain on offer. If you have never done a trip like this you will find some days harder than others – and not always the ones you expect to! On other days you will find your legs and enjoy blissful riding along some of the quietest and most beautiful roads you are ever likely to ride along.



Two vans operate on this trip to cater for all speeds of rider and are there to provide everything you need to make your trip easier, so that all you have to do is pedal. We provide a coffee stop in the morning and snacks throughout the day but you will see us far more frequently than that as we sit by the side of the road to see you all through a tricky junction or to dispense suntan lotion. Everyone loves our homemade cake (you have to eat it all, because we get in trouble if we take any back at the end of the trip) and we also have a range of spares on board. You can leave a daybag in the van with waterproofs, gels, your iPad or whatever you may need to get at throughout the day—you will see us every hour on average and we are always only a phone call away. Various referred to by riders as ‘the mothership’, the ‘tuck shop van’ and ‘ride HQ’, our vans are all this and more (OK, no tuck shop, but the Fortnum & Mason hamper does contain a lot of other goodies!).

GROUP RIDING

You do not need to ride as a group as our support vehicles will cater for everyone's speed. You will usually find someone else who rides at a pace that you are comfortable with, even if you did not know them before the holiday began. If you find yourself riding in a large group and are not familiar with group riding, ask us, or other riders, to explain about warning signals and how to pass information about hazards on the road between yourselves.

If you are a slower rider you can still complete the route at your own pace, although on longer days you may want to set off a little earlier – we always advise completing 60% of the daily distance by lunch time. It is important to ride at your pace, not someone else's.

Our group sizes vary from 4 up to 12. Sometimes we go to 14, but we are keen to keep the personal service that our returning customers love. On our feedback form a lot of people have told us that we should stress the benefits of small groups—so we have!

'Of 6 companies that we have used for this format of holiday you are far and away the best.'



We are a specialist family run company and we care deeply that you have a good time. It's more than likely that one of the business owners will be leading your trip. This isn't just a livelihood for us, it's a vocation, so we'll do whatever we can to look after you and make sure you have fun! We're mad keen cyclists and want to pass on the joys of riding in France. This means is that if you want to ring us at 9pm on a Sunday with some questions, please do. If we can't come to the phone we will get back to you surprisingly quickly. You'll probably be speaking to the person who planned the route and has actually ridden it, or chose the hotels. If you have any questions at all, please call us on +44 (0)1300 350555 or email info@greenjerseycycling.co.uk.

HOTELS

We use small family-run hotels wherever possible where a generous breakfast is offered. All have en suite facilities. The average rating is 3-star. Final confirmation of actual hotels is decided in January / February each year. Accommodation is on a half board basis on the majority of nights—see the ‘At a glance’ section on page 1 for precise details. If a hotel does not have a restaurant for dinner then we eat out (cost included in tour). We arrange tables together for the evening meals although you are of course free to come and go as you please. If you have any dietary requirements please let us know in advance. On nights when dinner is not included you are free to make your own choice but we will of give you pointers.

MEALS & DRINKS

Breakfast and dinner is included in the cost of your holiday and we also include your first drink (beer, soft drink or glass of wine) for your evening meal. Pre-dinner drinks, extra wine and coffee afterwards are not included and you should pay for these yourself at the time.

For lunch, we will tell you where you will find places to eat / buy food. On several days on this tour we provide a picnic lunch (included in the cost of the holiday) where facilities are scarce due to the rural nature of our route.

DATES AND PRICES

Please see our website.

BESPOKE DATES

If you can rustle up a group of 8 or more we can put on a bespoke date just for your group.

TO BOOK: [Our booking pages can be found at http://greenjerseycycling.co.uk/contact](http://greenjerseycycling.co.uk/contact)