

# LONDON TO PARIS CYCLING CHALLENGE

## Route 1

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5 days / 4 nights

Depart Blackheath

Return Paris - London

Distance approx 291 miles

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### INTRODUCTION

Cycling from London to Paris is one of the great European cycle experiences. Passing through picturesque countryside, we cross the Channel and continue through the small villages and medieval market towns of 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 also sees the close of the final stage of the Tour de France, the most prestigious of all the cycling races in the world, which traditionally finishes on the Champs-Élysées. What better way to celebrate your own achievement than by watching the giants of the cycling world lap the streets of central Paris?

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### ITINERARY

#### Day 1: London – Dover

We start in Blackheath, south-east London, one of the capital's most attractive suburbs. It's an early start but means we miss the morning traffic as we cycle through the outskirts of London. After 22 miles (35kms) we reach the city of Rochester, which boasts a 1000-year-old Norman castle and ancient cathedral.

From here, our surroundings become less built up. We cycle on narrow, winding roads, through small towns and villages in the Kentish countryside. Much of the route from Rochester onwards runs

along the edge of the North Downs, a designated Area of Outstanding Beauty, and takes in parts of the Pilgrims Way. By late afternoon the Kent coastline will be a welcome sight as we near Dover to board the ferry for the two-hour crossing. On arrival in Calais it's just a short cycle (5miles/8km) from the port to our hotels.

**Stay overnight in Calais.  
(Lunch included, riders buy their own dinner on the ferry).  
Cycle approx: 89 miles**

#### Day 2: Calais – Abbeville

We start the second day with a hearty French breakfast to prepare for a challenging ride. Within the first few miles we cycle into the pretty Nord Pas de Calais countryside, a picturesque area of green meadows, rolling hills and dense forests. We pass through the fortified town of Montreuil, once one of the wealthiest ports in northern Europe.

Our cycling day is interspersed with scheduled water and snack stops every 25 miles - and numerous "unscheduled" stops in French Cafés. And you can savour the local *joie de vivre* with a generous lunch at the half-way point.

By late afternoon we approach Abbeville, on the banks of the River Somme. Our hotels will be a welcome sight after a long day of cycling.

**Stay overnight in Abbeville.  
(Breakfast, lunch & dinner included).  
Cycle approx: 70 miles**

#### Day 3: Abbeville – Beauvais

Soon after leaving Abbeville we cross the River Somme and head into the Picardie countryside. The area is famous for its First World War battlefields and is scattered with cemeteries. Cycling through the Somme is an experience not to be missed.

Today's scenery is the most rural of the whole ride. We encounter long, sweeping hills and green pastures, and pass through a succession of villages, all with at least one boulangerie and

bar/tabac! The roads are generally quiet and away from large towns. Our destination is Beauvais, known for its enormous Cathédrale Saint Pierre. We stay overnight in hotels on the outskirts of town.

**Stay overnight in Beauvais.  
(Breakfast, lunch & dinner included).  
Cycle approx: 71 miles**

#### Day 4: Beauvais – Paris

Cycling is the French national sport and on the eve of its biggest race we set off for our finish. Heading south out of Beauvais along quiet country roads, we enter a forested area known as Le Parc aux Etoiles. From here it's a strong descent towards the River Seine. Once we hit the outskirts of Paris we swap quaint country roads for roundabouts and traffic lights. It is not uncommon for the local Parisians to stop and cheer us on as we cycle past!

We re-group a few miles from the finish and the excitement starts to build as we cycle along wide boulevards, up to and around the Arc de Triomphe. The adrenaline will be pumping as we cycle as fast as we can down the Champs-Élysées. To mark our incredible achievement we will be greeted in style at the Eiffel Tower. In the evening we enjoy a celebratory meal at the hotel.

**Stay overnight in Paris.  
(Celebration meal, breakfast, lunch & dinner included).  
Cycle approx: 61 miles**

#### Day 5: Paris – London

After breakfast you are free for the rest of the day to explore the city. The Tour de France finishes on the 71m-wide Champs-Élysées. This is by far the best place to watch the sprinters in action as they circuit inner Paris for about an hour before the final lap. The atmosphere will be electric as spectators gather to watch the world's most famous cycling event come home. If you want a good view you are advised to get there hours before the peloton! You are then responsible for getting to the Gare du Nord on time for our evening Eurostar train back to St Pancras, from where those who

prefer will be transferred back to our start point.

**(Breakfast included, riders buy their own lunch & dinner).**

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Tour cost

The tour cost includes all meals (other than dinner on the ferry and lunch and dinner on Day 5), accommodation, support vehicle and Discover Adventure leaders and medical staff, drivers & cooks. It also includes return transportation to London by Eurostar.

The tour cost does not include insurance and meals as specified. Approx. £70 - £100 is recommended for personal expenses.

### Food and Accommodation

4 nights in \*\*/\*\*\*\* hotels. The hotels are comfortable and well situated but not luxurious. All rooms have en suite facilities. All food is included except dinner on the ferry and lunch and dinner on Day 5.

### Passport, Visa and Vaccinations

A valid ten-year passport is required. Visas are not required. No specific vaccinations are recommended for France but we insist your tetanus injections are up-to-date.

### Climate

July 16 - 28°C

The climate of northern France is very similar to that of southern England. Rain is a possibility in July and it may be windy in flatter areas.

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## CYCLING INFORMATION

Support vehicles are with the group all of the time. All luggage and spares will be carried in them.

The cycling is mainly undulating. Distances are fairly long, varying from 95 - 125km per day, and participants should make sure they are fit enough to manage these distances. We ride mainly on small country roads. Traffic is light on most of the roads but when we pass through large towns we go through as a group.

### Bike Repairs

There will be a range of spares in the vehicle along with a full tool kit. However, it is impossible for us to carry spares for every eventuality so it is vital that if you bring your own bike it is in good order before departure.

Further information, kit list etc will be sent on receiving your booking

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### ATOL 5636

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**Please phone Action Medical Research on 01403 210 406 with any questions.**

