

OVERVIEW

This week-long bike and barge cruise takes you along the Seine River Valley, passing by splendid estates including the castle and grounds at Fontainebleau, and through small medieval towns on the way to Montargis. Enjoy this scenic ride on easy canal paths, with frequent stops to sip café au lait in quaint French villages. Our boat for the week floats quietly along the Seine River, slipping through locks and under bridges while sumptuous meals are prepared onboard. This tour is ideal for anyone who loves the French joie de vivre, and those who are new to cycling and want to try bicycle traveling without having to pack and unpack their bags. Our Plus! tour is land based and gives those who want to keep exploring the chance to spend another few days pedaling between important chateaux including Blois, Chambord, Amboise and Chenonceau.

If this sounds great but you are looking for a shorter trip check out our Bike and Barge: the Seine which features the first 8 days of this itinerary.

HIGHLIGHTS

Paris; Castle of Fontainebleau; "artists' villages" - towns that inspired 19th and 20th century Impressionist painters; medieval fortified towns and castles; private castle visit.

TOUR FACTS

Tour Style	Bike and Boat: Learn more about our Bike and Boat tours at https://www.experienceplus.com/tours/bike-tour-styles/bike-and-boat-tours
Includes	10 nights lodging, meals as noted in itinerary, Vaux-le-Vicomte guided visit, Chambord guided castle visit, canoe trip along the Cher river, guided visit to Clos Lucé, entry ticket to visit Chenonceau castle, brie cheese tasting, wine tasting; and the usual (see below)
Countries	France
Begin/End	Paris/Amboise
Arrive/Depart	Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG)
Total Distance	380 km (236 miles)
Avg. Daily Distance	42 km (26 miles) per riding day
Tour Level	
Keep in Mind	We work hard to maintain consistency across all of our tours, but some trips have unique differences. Here are some things to keep in mind about this tour. For more questions about the Barge check out our Bike & Boat FAQ

Please Note: We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes, including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the 🗗 online itinerary for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:

https://www.experienceplus.com/guided-bike-tours/france/barge-seine-plus



DATES & PRICES

Dates	Price	Single Supplement*
🗗 Aug 26-Sep 5, 2023	🗗 USD\$6295	🗗 USD\$1450

*We are happy to match solo travelers who would like to share a room with someone of the same gender. If no match exists, due to hotel pricing, we will charge 50% of the single supplement rate. This fee will be collected at the time of the final payment. If a roommate assignment is available this fee will be refunded at the conclusion of the tour.

DAILY RIDE SUMMARY

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level Notes
1	Test ride		
2	44km / 216m (28mi / 708ft)	Gentle	
3	44km / 283m (28mi / 928ft)	Gentle	
4	48km / 369m (30mi / 1210ft)	Gentle	
5	36km / 273m (23mi / 895ft)	Gentle	
6	57km / 400m (36mi / 1312ft)	Gentle	
7	48km / 302m (30mi / 991ft)	Gentle	
8	48km / 108m (30mi / 354ft)	Gentle	
9	43km / 280m (27mi / 918ft)	Gentle	
10	43km / 347m (27mi / 1138ft)	Gentle	
11	Last day		



ARRIVAL INFO

Meeting time 2 p.m. - on Day 1, meet your fellow cyclists and Tour Leaders at the boat dock Port d'Arsenal, close to the Place de la Bastille (click for location).

Note:

Before you make arrangements, check with us if your tour departure is guaranteed. If your tour departure is out further than 6 months, please also check with us as there might be slight changes to the itinerary.

From Gare du Nord to the Docking Place:

- 1. Metro Line 5 (direction Place d'Italie), exit at Quai de la Rapée
- 2. Walk 5-min to the docking place.

Your boat's name is "Fleur". If you are arriving by taxi, your taxi can take you to the "Capitanerie de Port" (Port Authority), which is where the boat usually docks. Your driver can ask the Port Authority where your boat is and take you there.

If you haven't been to Paris yet, we recommend you spend some time in this amazing city. You can find hotel recommendations in Paris and throughout France here.

Depending on where you choose to stay in Paris prior to your trip, your hotel's website will usually provide arrival information. You might also like Rome2Rio for more route-planning.

We recommend flying into the Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG).



Your trip ends on the final day at around 11:30 a.m. after the guided tour of Clos Lucé.

If you didn't get a chance to spend time in Paris before the trip, you might choose to do so now. Find the link to hotel recommendations in the arrival instructions.

The below information will help you plan your departure. For more tips or other routes, you might like Rome2Rio. The fare and timing information listed below is approximate.

We recommend flying out of Paris Charles de Gaulle (CDG).

From Amboise to Paris or CDG Airport:

- 1. Taxi from the ending point of the tour to the Tours St-Pierre-des-Corps TGV train station (30 min/EUR 45)
- 2. Train from Tours St-Pierre-des_Corps TGV to "Paris Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport" (2 hours/fares vary) or Paris (direct, 1 hour/fares vary)



Look up French train schedules and book tickets, if necessary, SNCF.com or Trainline.eu. Questions? See our information on taking trains in Europe here or ask us.



Welcome to Paris, the city of lights

Highlights Paris

Meet early afternoon at our docking point in central Paris. We'll take a test ride with the bikes this afternoon and you'll have time to explore the surroundings before we gather to meet everybody including the barge crew. We'll enjoy a welcome drink and dinner on board tonight. And how about a post-dinner stroll in central Paris?

DAY 1

Meals Dinner Lodging & Fleur Barge

Exiting Paris by boat and bike

Highlights Cruise the Seine during breakfast, audio guide visit Chateau Vaux-le-Vicomte, bicycle along river paths and forest lanes, Melun town

Avoid the city traffic by cruising through Paris on our private barge, enjoying views from the river and relaxing on board. Breakfast and a leisurely morning onboard prepare us for late-morning departure along the Seine River and through the Sénart Forest. Deboard and it's a pleasant ride to Chateau Vaux-le-Vicomte, where you'll enjoy an audio guide visit. Afterwards you'll reach the small town of Melun where our boat will dock for the night on the ancient village island. Melun, born as a Gallic town was then a Roman mutatio. We'll taste another specialty of town, the Brie de Melun.

DAY 2

Distance	44 km (28 mi)
Gain	216 m (708 ft)
Terrain	Gentle
Level	
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging	🗗 Fleur Barge

Pedaling through Barbizon and Fontainebleau

Highlights Artists' village of Barbizon, Fontainebleau castle (UNESCO site), fortified medieval town.

Start your delightful ride along the river lined by sumptuous villas. Enjoy the quiet bike path before we leave the river to dive into the expansive Fontainebleau forest, centered around the famous Fontainebleau castle which was home to French monarchs for about eight centuries. Our first stop is the small village of Barbizon, formerly home to mid-19th century painters including Théodore Rousseau and Jean-François Millet. Continue through the forest to reach the magnificent Fontainebleau castle, one of France's most spectacular royal palaces. Continue pedaling to return to our boat, moored tonight in a medieval fortified town along a small tributary of the Seine River.

Distance	44 km (28 mi)
Gain	283 m (928 ft)
Terrain	Gentle
Level	
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging	🗗 Fleur Barge



From Moret-sur-Loing to Nemours

Highlights Medieval town of Moret-sur-Loing, Loing River biking, Nemours.

Spend some time this morning wandering the streets of quaint Moret-Sur-Loing, the fortified medieval town that inspired Impressionist painters including Monet and British artist Alfred Sisley. Our ride today takes us along the Loing River to another artist village. From here, you can choose to take a longer ride or continue along the river to reach our boat, docked in tiny medieval Nemours. Visit town and its medieval castle or, for a different take on the region's (pre)history, enjoy a visit to the interesting prehistorical museum, which houses rich archaeological collections from the Paleolithic period through the end of the Iron Age, excavated in the Île-de-France region.

Medieval Castles and Towns

Highlights Medieval castles and towns

The Loing River was "improved" in the early 18th Century in an effort to increase visits from merchants. We'll leapfrog the canal today as we pedal through forested areas and rural countryside to reach a private castle open to us for a visit and lunch. After lunch, we'll keep pedaling to the impressive fortified medieval town of Chateau Landon. A quick downhill brings us to our boat, docked on the Loing Canal in a tranquil spot for the night. After dinner, we'll head back to Chateau-Landon for an engaging guided walk to learn more about the historical importance of this town.

DAY 4

Distance	48 km (30 mi)
Gain	369 m (1210 ft)
Terrain	Gentle
Level	
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging	🗗 Fleur Barge

DAY 5

Distance	36 km (23 mi)
Gain	273 m (895 ft)
Terrain	Gentle
Level	
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging	🗗 Fleur Barge

Montargis

Highlights Bourdelle Sculpture Garden, Ferrières Abbey, Montargis

An optional 13 km ride this morning takes you to a unique art spot in a nearby town. This garden museum honors influential and prolific 19th Century sculptor Antoine Bourdelle by hosting 58 of his bronze statues in a lovely garden. Keep pedaling to the small medieval town of Ferrières with its impressive Benedictine Abbey, tiny alleyways and historic wash houses. Take a break and wander through town before continuing south to arrive in Montargis, the second largest town of the region and a fitting ending destination to our barge trip as its medieval center is crisscrossed with canals and rivers. Our home for the next two nights! Enjoy dinner in town tonight.

Distance	57 km (36 mi)
Gain	400 m (1312 ft)
Terrain	Gentle
Level	
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch
	🗗 Fleur Barge



Loop ride in Montargis

Highlights Ouanne River ride; 10th Century Castle Ruins, Bee-Keeping Museum

A loop ride today takes us to another small town in the countryside to visit a unique, thriving honey making farm and "living museum" where a short visit highlights the peculiar place of bees in the world. Return to Montargis and make sure to visit some of the sights like the gardens and ruins of the central Chateau, the cathedral and several Renaissance palaces and gardens.

DAY 7

Distance	48 km (30 mi)
Gain	302 m (991 ft)
Terrain	Gentle
Level	
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner & Fleur Barge

Chambord and Blois

Highlights Guided visit of Chambord Castle, city of Blois

We'll say farewell to our boat today and shuttle to the Castle of Chambord, one of the most famous chateaux of the Loire Valley. Some say Leonardo da Vinci designed the opulent 400-room Château de Chambord when he lived at the royal court. Opulence is key here: The Château nearly bankrupted the French treasury before its completion in 1685. Enjoy a unique behind-the-scenes tour of the castle late morning and enjoy lunch on your own before heading to Blois, a different and lively feel compared to the tranquil villages we've visited on our boat tour. Stroll through town to see its castle, the cathedral and gardens that dot the city.

Cycle to Amboise

Highlights Cycling along the Loire River, Chaumont Castle, Amboise

Leave Blois along the Loire River today, cycling on one of Europe's most popular bike routes. First stop is at the Chaumont Castle, with its spectacular gardens, park, and castle perched over the Loire river valley. Continue pedaling to reach the vibrant town of Amboise which boasts the manor house of Le Clos Lucé, where Leonardo da Vinci came to spend the last three years of his life upon invitation from the French King Francis I. Leonardo is buried in the castle's chapel.

DAY 8

Distance	48 km (30 mi)
Gain	108 m (354 ft)
Terrain	Gentle
Level	
Meals	Breakfast
Lodging	 In Best Western Hotel Blois Chateau In Mercure Blois Centre Hotel

Distance	43 km (27 mi)
Gain	280 m (918 ft)
Terrain	Gentle
Level	
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner
Lodging	Photel le Clos d'Amboise



Amboise

Highlights Château de Chenonceau; canoe trip down the Cher River

Head off toward the Cher River this morning where we'll regroup to canoe to the famous castle of Chenonceau. The castle forms a bridge across the river, one of the tributaries to the Loire. After dropping your canoe and a lunch together, we head off by bike to explore the castle, once occupied by Diane de Poitiers, mistress to Henri II. After the king's death in 1599, Queen Catherine de Medici reclaimed the castle and evicted de Poitiers. You can still explore the two separate gardens created for these two women. We'll enjoy a wine tasting at hotel before dinner together.

DAY 10

Guided tour of Clos Lucé, tour end

Highlights Da Vinci Museum, Clos Lucé

Before you head off on your own travels join us this morning for a fascinating guided tour of the Clos Lucé, where Leonardo da Vinci spent the final years of his life. Walk through his bedroom, discover where he worked, and stroll through the vast gardens where many of his inventions were constructed for the first time. Our visit of Clos Lucé will end at 11:30 so please plan your travels accordingly if you'd like to participate. We hope you've enjoyed this relaxing cultural and historic exploration of the Loire!

Meals Breakfast



INCLUDED

WHAT'S INCLUDED

When you book a tour with ExperiencePlus! our goal is to ensure your only focus each day is to hop on your bike and explore scenic cycling routes in new destinations. Inclusions may differ depending on which tour style you pick but all ExperiencePlus! tours include the three most important aspects of a guided bike tour.

- Superb tour leaders who are fun and multilingual, bicultural experts, and cycling enthusiasts. They will support you and help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- High quality bikes selected for the terrain you are cycling on and correct bike fitting to ensure comfortable cycling.
- Thoughtfully designed itineraries and routes that take advantage of stunning cycling destinations and the freedom of bicycle travel.

PRE-TRIP SUPPORT

- Bicycle training programs designed specifically for your tour and fitness level.
- Planning tips on what to pack, hotel recommendations and other helpful details from our Travel Planning Pages: https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-plann ing/
- A gift of your choice (cycling jerseys, socks, or a t-shirt) as our way of saying thanks for choosing ExperiencePlus!
- *Traveler services including assistance booking extra nights at the tour starting and ending hotels. (*Explorer Tours excluded)
- See "What's Included" for tour-specific inclusions and be sure to check the "Keep in mind" section under "Tour Summary" online.

BICYCLES

For a full list of what's included with your bike see: https://www.experienceplus.com/what-to-expect/our-bikes/. If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so. On Explorer tours we include a GPS device on all bikes. We ask that you bring your own helmet to ensure the best fit. If you would like us to provide you with a gently used helmet, please contact us.

NAVIGATING, DAYSHEETS AND VAN SUPPORT:

Each day you'll receive a daily briefing with a highlighted route map. About 14 days prior to your tour, we will provide you with access to RideWithGPS Experiences, our platform to distribute information on each tour day's activities, meals and ride, as well as GPS-routes. Daily information also includes Tour Leader phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information. On Classic, Bike and Boat and Expedition tours we also navigate using our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map. On Explorer tours the terrain and destinations are not always conducive to using chalk arrows so we'll ride as a group or you can navigate on your own with the GPS tracks. On tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths.

On tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths.

Need More Miles? On many days it is possible to add miles to the day, just talk to your tour leader about your options.

Need Fewer Miles? If you aren't sure about your abilities or how much you want to ride remember the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. You are on vacation and we're here to help make it perfect for you.

TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADER TEAM:

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5% of the tour cost per traveler – this is for the entire tour leader team, not each tour leader. You can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your tour leaders did not quite meet your expectations, please let us know. *Tips are included in Expedition pricing.

PHOTOS:

By reserving space on tour, you agree that ExperiencePlus! Bicycle Tours may use, re-use and reproduce any images, photos or videos that you send to us, or that are taken by our guides and/or other travelers of you individually or in a group, in any medium, including but not limited to print, electronic media, or Internet, free of charge and without your right to inspection, for promoting and publicizing our travel products and services worldwide. If you do not want us to use any images of you that are taken by us or other participants during the tour, you must inform us or your tour leader in writing at the start of the tour.



STYLES

OUR TOUR STYLES

We realize that one size does not fit all and there are as many ways to travel by bike as there are different types of cyclists and travelers. No matter what you are looking for in a cycling vacation, we have a tour with just the right pace for you.

Classic Tours: Dream of traveling through a region by bike? then our Classic style bike tours are for you! Our unique chalk arrows lead the way as you explore small villages and world-class cities while traveling at your own pace.

- Tour Length: 7-15 days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars, most itineraries include at least one two-night stay at the same hotel.
- Road Type: Pavement, bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4.5

Explorer Tours: Travel further off the beaten path - we let the destination dictate where we ride, not the road surface.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days
- Hotels: 2-3 stars, occasional multi-night stays at the same hotel.
- Road Type: 30-50% gravel or hard-packed dirt, the rest pavement.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation: Group riding and GPS
- Price: \$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Bike and Boat Tours: Spend days cycling and your evenings relaxing on a private boat as you cruise to your next port.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days, some itineraries have land-based extensions available.
- Barge/Boat: 3-4 star, same cabin for the entire boat trip.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Expedition Tours: Multi-week tours where you spend long days on the bike with the added satisfaction of pedaling across multiple countries.

- Tour Length: 15-40 days
- Hotels: 2-4 stars, typically there is a 2-night hotel stay every 5-7 days.
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel.
- Multi-night Stays: On rest days
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 4-5



LEVELS

We know that travelers have different cycling abilities and preferences for the number of miles, elevation gain, and type of terrain they want on a bicycle tour. We have rated each day of our tours on a scale of 1-5. Our Tour Level's are an average of the day rating on tour. We recommend looking at the daily summary on the PDF and Website Itinerary to see details about each day's ride.

LEVEL 1 - 1.5

Level 1 - 1.5 days will be mostly flat and the distance will rarely exceed 50 km. Level 1 - 1.5 tours are suitable for beginner cyclists, those traveling by bicycle for the first time, or multi-generational groups with a desire for a nice and easy bike tour with plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the scenery.

- Average daily mileage: 20 50 km. (12-30 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- Gain: 0-400 M (0-1200 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat with occasional gentle climbs at a grade of less than 3%, that are sustained for a maximum of 3km. There might be a steeper but short climb.

LEVEL 2 - 2.5

Level 2 - 2.5 days are ideal for riders newer to bicycle touring looking for a bit of a challenge.

- Average daily mileage: 30-60 km (18 38 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- Gain: 400 600 m (1200 2000 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly rolling terrain around 3%. Presents multiple 3% to 4% climbs. May present an occasional steeper climb.

LEVEL 3 - 3.5

Level 3 - 3.5 days are great for active individuals (who run, bike, swim etc. on a regular basis).

- Average daily mileage: 50-70km (30-45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- Gain: 600 900m (2000 2800 ft)
- Terrain: Multiple Climbs with grades of 4 6%.

LEVEL 4 - 4.5

Level 4 - 4.5 days are the best riding days for avid cyclists or very active individuals who are excited to challenge themselves on a bike.

- Average daily mileage: 70-90km (45-55 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- Gain: 900-1000m (2800-3600 ft)
- **Terrain:** Presents multiple steep climbs (6% to 8% grades), 1 to 3km long. Alternatively, 4 6% grades for 6 kilometers or more.

LEVEL 5 (EXPEDITION)

Our Expedition tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages mean limited van support so we recommend these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- Average daily mileage: 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- Gain: 500-2000 m (1600- 6500 ft)
- Terrain: Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

REMEMBER

A tour level is the average of the days so we recommend you look at the day level on each day of the itinerary to help you better understand what to expect from your tour.



CHECKLIST

TO DO ONCE YOU'VE BOOKED!

- □ Read through your Reservation Confirmation and After you Book Information (link sent to you by e-mail), it has important information to help you plan your trip!
- □ Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country.
- Complete the Customer Information Form: https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/customer-information-form/
- □ We recommend you take out travel insurance. Find details at https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/travel-insurance/
- Choose a bicycle training program: https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/bicycle-tour-training/
- □ Peruse our country-specific Travel Planning Pages: https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/

6 TO 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- □ Refer to your Tour Packet/Itinerary to see step-by-step arrival and departure information for your tour, meeting place and time, if a reservation on a complimentary ExperiencePlus! Shuttle (if applicable) is required, along with other important information to help you plan your arrival and departure.
- Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed.
- □ Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights.
- □ Begin your chosen training program
- □ Final payment is due 90 days (120 days for Bike & Barge/Boat tours) prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail which we send 10 days prior to the due date for detailed instructions.

6 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- □ Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Reading and Movie Lists: https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/.
- □ Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing Lists for suggestions, and see luggage limits at https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/packing/
- We'll email you your access code to Digital Daysheets, Hotel Itinerary, Participant Roster, names and contact information of your Tour Leaders, emergency phone numbers, and other important departure information about 2 weeks prior to your tour start date. All this will be provided to you via a feature called Experiences via the RideWithGPS App (tracks available but not necessary for navigation on Classic, Expedition and Bike & Boat tours).

DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack one day of cycling gear in your carry-on just in case. See you soon!