

Barge Meanderer

Biking in France – Upscale Guided Cycling Adventures

Canal de Briare - 2017 Biking Program

Deluxe guided biking tours for all skill levels,
from recreational to expert riders, along French canals

Our biking program is designed to allow as much flexibility as possible. The following is an example of the biking tour itinerary and various options. We shall always try to accommodate and specific group or individual preferences. However, there is only one guide available and therefore the majority rules (GPS are available).

NOTE: The area between Briare and Sancerre is a true bikers' paradise. It is a part of the fabulous network of biking paths and trails known as Loire à Vélo - www.loireavelo.fr

A typical itinerary includes:

Sunday – Paris to Montbouy

We collect you from your Paris hotel after lunch for transfer by private mini-coach to Meanderer moored in the quiet and picturesque village of Montbouy (just a few miles from the regional capital of Montargis). After a champagne reception we take an early evening cruise to the village of Montcresson and back. Relax on deck and watch the town and people pass by. Your first dinner on board.

Biking:

Introduction

Bike allocation and fitting



Monday – Montbouy to Rogny-Les-Sept-Écluses

During the morning we cruise to Rogny-Les-Sept-Écluses, a historical home of an ancient seven-stage staircase lock, considered to this day a marvel of engineering. After lunch, the excursion program begins with a visit to the magnificent Château de Sully-sur-Loire or to the busy town and spectacular palace of Fontainebleau, home to generations of French royalty or to the Château Vaux le Vicomte with its extensive and pristinely preserved formal gardens.

Biking:

Beginners/Leisure Bikers – Bike on your own along the canal and rejoin the barge anytime at one of subsequent locks. Stop in Chatillon Coligny and have a cool drink at the café in the square. Map and instructions. Flat or mild elevation – 2 to 10 miles.

Intermediate Enthusiasts – Guided afternoon ride of 25-45 miles (2 – 3.5 hrs). Rejoin the barge upstream. Pass through villages of Chatillon Coligny and Aillant sur Milleron. Light elevation.

High Experience/Conditioned – Guided ride 55-85 plus miles (3-5 hrs). Skip cruising or visit.

Route will include historic villages of Saint Maurice sur Aveyron, Saint Martin sur Ouanne, Champignelles and Le Charme. Medium elevation.

Tuesday – Rogny-Les-Sept-Écluses to La Gazonne

This morning we visit the regional capital town of Montargis, the week's best opportunity to explore a busy market town. People-watch or shop for souvenirs and exquisitely packaged confectionary from the famous Mazet Praline shop. On return to the barge, our afternoon cruise through six locks, which replaced the historical seven staircase lock of Rogny, brings us to the overnight remote mooring at La Gazonne, in the middle of a magnificent nature preserve.

Biking:

Beginners/Leisure Bikers – Bike on your own along the canal and rejoin the barge anytime at one of subsequent locks. Ride through Rogny-les-Sept-Ecluses, up to the 7 locks and the historical church (Medium grade). Map and instructions. Flat or mild elevation – 2 to 10 miles.

Intermediate Enthusiasts – Guided morning ride of 25-45 miles (2 – 3.5 hrs). Start and end in Rogny Les Sept Ecluses.

Pass through villages of Adon, La Bussiere, Les Marches and Boismorand. Light elevation.

High Experience/Conditioned – Guided ride 55-85 plus miles (3-5 hrs). Skip cruising or visit. Route will include historic villages of La Bussiere, Gien, Dampierre en Burlu, Ouzouer sur Loire, Sully sur Loire, Saint Martin sur Ocre and return via Briare. Medium elevation.



Wednesday – La Gazonne to Briare

We start with a morning visit to the splendid 16th century Château of St. Fargeau, offering a surprising and unique discovery of the rich history of this castle. An alternative excursion is available to the Medieval Village of Guedelon, an extraordinary and unique experience to observe this 25 year project recreating a defensive medieval castle, which is being built with materials, tools and techniques of this ancient period. Our afternoon cruise takes us through some of the most beautiful and rural parts of the canal to the spectacular town of Briare on the bank of the Loire River and the entrance to the extraordinary Briare Aqueduct (Pont Canal).



Biking:

Beginners/Leisure Bikers – Bike on your own along canal and rejoin the barge anytime at one of subsequent locks. Ride through Ouzouer sur Trezee. Map and instructions. Flat or mild elevation. – 2 to 10 miles.

Intermediate Enthusiasts – Guided afternoon ride of 25-45 miles (2 – 3.5 hrs). Rejoin the barge upstream. Pass through villages of Ouzouer sur Trezee, Bleneau, Dammarié en Puissay. Light elevation.

High Experience/Conditioned – Guided ride 55-85 plus miles (3-5 hrs). Skip cruising or visit. Route will include historic villages of Ouzouer sur Trezee, Dammarié en Puissay, Bleneau, Les Mezilles and Toucy. Medium elevation.

Thursday – Briare to Beaulieu-sur-Loire

We cruise in the morning over the Pont Canal. The daily excursion program continues with a visit the town of Gien. Set on the banks of the River Loire, the pretty town holds many attractions including the famous Faïence Boutique, the Hunting Museum and the Château de Gien. We then take a short drive

to the beautiful private Château de La Bussière, with its incredible 18th Century gardens. An optional visit to the UNESCO World Heritage site Village of Vézelay is highly recommended as is a private visit (by appointment) to Château de Buranlure.

Biking:

Beginners/Leisure Bikers – After the crossing of Pont Canal, bike all the way to the mooring at Beaulieu sur Loire. Map and instructions. Flat or mild elevation. – 2 to 10 miles.

Intermediate Enthusiasts – Guided morning ride of 25-45 miles (2 – 3.5 hrs). Rejoin the barge at Beaulieu sur Loire. Pass through villages of Briare, Saint Firmin sur Loire, Ousson and Chatillon sur Loire. Light elevation.

High Experience/Conditioned – Guided ride 55-85 plus miles (3-5 hrs). Skip cruising or visit. Briare to Sancerre, depending on distance. Medium elevation.



Friday – Beaulieu-sur-Loire to Léré

This morning we continue along the Canal Lateral de la Loire on the way to the charming town of Léré, our final mooring port. The scenery of flat fields and pastures slowly changes to the hills of the vineyards. Afternoon excursion takes us to the world famous wine region of Sancerre with the opportunity to sample the local wines and explore the charming hill-top village. A visit to the extraordinary town of La Charité sur Loire, surrounded on all sides by the Loire River is a special treat. For early risers the best market visit of the region at Cosne-sur-Loire with our chef is an option. The real wine aficionados have the option to visit 2 wineries that afternoon; Sancerre as well as Pouilly Fume.

Biking:

Beginners/Leisure Bikers – We shall further explore the biking path of Loire à Vélo. Multiple trails available at mild elevation or flat ranging from 2-10 miles

Intermediate Enthusiasts – Guided morning ride of 25-45 miles (2 – 3.5 hrs). Rejoin the barge at Lere Bike through the villages of Belleville, Sury pre Lere, Sancerre (at the foot of the Sancerre Hill) and Menetreol. Light elevation.

High Experience/Conditioned – Guided ride 55-85 plus miles (3-5 hrs). Skip cruising or visit. Bike to Nevers (Plagny), climb to top of the Sancerre hilltop village, ride through La Charite and Appremont and incredible double locks of le Guetin.

Saturday – Léré to Paris

This morning after breakfast we depart for the return transfer to Paris.

NOTE: Cruises run in reverse direction alternate weeks. It may be necessary to vary the itinerary from day to day according to local conditions.

To book a cruise or for more detailed information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Susan and George Kovalick

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