

Normandy – Independent Paris by Pedal Power

- 'Back on a bike after many years away - your encouragement and simple cycling tips really boosted my confidence. Thank you so much. '
Moriah, Steyning,
 - 'We just loved Le Lavandou and the easy cycling along the coast towards St Tropez was such a surprise.'
Janet and Ron, Cheshire,
 - 'What a fantastic ride to Paris. It's hard to put into words the euphoria I felt when we were cycling down the Champs-Élysées.'
Ian, West Sussex,
 - 'You were just wonderful guides on our first ever trip to Provence . . . we will definitely be back - in fact we've just booked!'
The Crane Family, Warwickshire,
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Highlights:

Honfleur Harbour

Voie Verte Miles
Dramatic River Crossing
Pastoral Landscape
Sneaking into Paris
Paris the City of Light

Summary

You may never win the Tour de France but, how would you feel cycling down the Champs-Élysées having ridden under your own steam all the way from the sea. Just an overnight sail away, Normandy has the weather to match and even better the best of an English summer, and of course, manages to deliver that with very French aplomb. From the beautiful harbour of Honfleur and heading inland, Haute Normandie is one of France's great dairy 'baskets' and famous for its butter and cheeses, not to mention its fine and more earthy ciders.

Pedal Power to Paris picks its way down quiet lanes of Normandy, gently crossing tributaries of the River Seine, passing through timber-framed villages and, winding through a patchwork of plentiful fields. The tour brings you up to the edge of the Ile de France where you cycle through Louis VI's 13th Century arch of La Porte de Bretagne before discovering a remarkably rural route right to the heart of capital city. Surprise yourself as you sneak up on Paris.

Tour in Brief:

- Fellow Velo Tour Pack
- 6 Nights Accommodation
- 6 Continental Breakfasts
- Carefully Selected Routes
- Telephone Support

Tour Map

Introduction

Easy cycling on days of short and medium distances will transport you from the bustle of a coastal port to the heart of the French Capital; for virtually the whole journey you will be gliding through a peaceful and pastoral landscape, along quiet country lanes and dedicated cycle routes.

You will be surprised how easy it can be, riding in the heart of Paris with its great landmarks as your guide.

Day 1 Le Havre to Honfleur – 23 km

Starting from the Port of Le Havre, just a quick check of your Fellow Velo Travel Pack and you can be on your way. The first ride is the shortest of the tour and, if you are just off the ferry, it will ease you into the riding to come. Cycleways and the back roads will help you escape the bustle of the Port and, carry you out into the flood-plain of the River Seine. You cross the river in safety, over the architectural masterpiece that is the Pont du Normandie – it makes for a really dramatic start to your tour. Now you roll into Honfleur, with plenty of time to explore this jewel of the Normandy Coast.



Day 2 Honfleur to Le Bec-Hellouin – 50 km

Your ride now heads inland as we chart a course for Paris. Quiet country lanes skirt the gentle slopes close to the mouth

of the Seine and take you through some sleepy villages and hamlets with beautiful timber-framed houses. You join the valley of the River Risle and pass through a peaceful pastoral landscape which may ultimately surprise you with its reach to the very edge of Paris. This first longer day ends in the Commune of Le Bec- Hellouin, voted as one of the most beautiful villages in France (Les Plus Beaux Villages de France) and renowned for its Benedictine Abbey.



Day 3 Le Bec-Hellouin to Pacy-sur-Eure – 60 km

On the edge of Le Bec-Hellouin, the Voie Verte that brought you to the end of your ride yesterday now stretches out through the Haute Normandie landscape, giving you miles and miles of quiet and safe cycling. It follows a former railway line and provides a great way of crossing the main watershed between the Risle and the River Eure on the very gentlest of gradients. A freewheeling descent into the tributary valley of the Iton is followed by a moderate rise over to the main Eure valley, with its archetypal stone and timber-framed villages. The Eure is a really beautiful tributary of the Seine and something of a hidden treasure of Haute Normandie.



Day 4 Pacy-sur-Eure to Thoiry – 55 km

The day begins with your ride still following the course of the Eure and, though a little before lunchtime, you could soon be sampling the produce of Le Goubelin, a micro-brewery and brasserie. Today has a few more hills than on other days but none are very demanding; the ride comes out of the Eure Valley and takes an undulating route through yet more sleepy villages and hamlets. Cycle through the Gate of a King as you come across the remains of the fortress built by Louis VI – Louis le Gros ('Fat Louis' but probably only to his very closest friends).



Day 5 Thoiry to Paris – 50 km

Your triumphant ride to Paris. A morning of gently undulating landscape brings you to the Forest of Marly le Roi and, easy rolling miles run through to the once home of the Sun King, Louis XIV. His palace of Château de Marly was destroyed after the French Revolution but the park that it sat in has been beautifully restored. Through what feel like village streets and grand residential avenues, you'll surprised just how quickly you find yourself on the banks of the River Seine. Now just cross into the Bois de Boulogne, round L'Arc de Triomphe, roll down the Champs-Élysées and finally, stare up at the Cathédrale Notre Dame de Paris.



Day 6 Paris

Wake in Paris with a whole day and second evening to explore the City of Lights. After a leisurely breakfast, you can join our short guided cycle ride through some of the heart of the city, before we leave you to make your own choices from all the exceptional attractions that you will find surrounding you; the museums of Le Louvre and Musée d'Orsay, the cathedrals of Notre-Dame and Sacré-Coeur, the Eiffel Tower and Arc de Triomphe, the parks and gardens of the Tuileries and the Place des Vosges or, the cafés and restaurants of Montmartre or any other number of Parisien districts.



Day 7 Paris to Le Havre

On the last day of the tour, for most riders, it will be a train journey back to the coast at Le Havre and a ferry home across the Channel. However, with all the wonders of Paris to hand you could always extend your holiday here or make it a point from which to explore further into France – see our More Information page for Paris by Pedal Power.

Eat Sleep Drink

Eat

From your arrival before the cycling starts, to the day of your departure, breakfast is included at each of your accommodation venues on the tour. That means that even if you take it in a leisurely fashion, you will have enough fuel onboard to start each ride or, head out on one of the optional exploring days of the tour. Your Travel Pack will include information on convenient locations for gathering picnic supplies for lunch and, hostelrys where you can have it all provided on a plate. On this tour, we leave the evening meal venues with you; on nearly every evening there is plenty of restaurant choice in the small towns where you will be staying and, at least one recommendation for each evening.



Sleep

Most of your accommodation will be in small and specially selected hotels; welcoming staff, lovely comfortable rooms and the promise of a great night's sleep. Chambres d'hôtes are often included in the mix on this tour, particularly for couples and smaller groups. Ending this cycle tour in Paris means two nights in the glorious City of Lights; we will book you into a quintessentially French hotel in the heart of the city, with a warm and welcoming atmosphere so that this becomes a very special part of your holiday.



Drink

Maintaining both your energy and hydration levels while cycling is very important. On each day of this tour, it is easy to keep yourself supplied with water and soft drinks. We will provide all the information you need to track down supplies and, will make sure that on the one ride where they are a little more sparse, that we prepare you to stock up with plenty of water. As you are in Normandy, you will no doubt come across ciders of the region but we can also steer you towards lesser known tipples such as can be found at a micro-brewery on the River Eure.



Paris by Pedal Power (Independent) Recommended Tour Dates

We normally recommend that customers undertake this tour at Easter or in June, July, August or September but you could choose almost any time during our cycling season – just contact us to check on availability.

Paris by Pedal Power Independent Tour from £695.00/person

Fellow Velo Independent Tour recommended dates have been chosen on the basis of factors such as;

- Climate and Weather Norms
- Convenient Holiday Dates
- Maximising Landscape Beauty
- Local Facility Holiday Seasons
- Local Traffic Patterns

We can offer our Fellow Velo Independent Tours between Easter and October, with the flexibility to meet your needs. Just let us know which date you would like to start your tour on and, we will do all that we can to deliver the holiday package you are looking for.

Our standard prices for this tour are best achieved when we have as much advance booking time as possible (we would still try to match the price even on last minute bookings but, accommodation is normally the largest component in a tour price and, the one which can vary the most).

The tour price is based on 2 people sharing rooms but, we can also quote for single room occupancy if that is what a customer wants (there is nearly always a supplement to be paid with such a booking but we would advise on the details before you committed to your holiday).

Most holiday accommodation in France is charged on a room basis rather than a per person price and, there is often very limited or no discount on the price for children. However, for any booking where a group is happy to share family or multi-bed rooms, we may even be able to quote a lower price per person for the tour (if you advise us that you would be happy with such an accommodation arrangement).

We do not add margins to the accommodation we book for our tours so, if we can book accommodation at a lower price, we will pass these savings on to our customers.

More Information

Travel to and from your Tour

- A tour starting just over the Channel means that, if you are planning to join the tour by car, there are ferry crossings between Portsmouth and Le Havre – this tour starts in Le Havre. There is currently one provider of these ferries, with an outward overnight ferry and a late afternoon return ferry, please check the options via www.brittany-ferries.co.uk
- Or, add to the excitement and leave the car in Portsmouth and be a bike passenger on the ferry, it's a lot of fun and cheaper too! (We can advise on a location to leave your vehicle for the duration either in Portsmouth or Le Havre.)
- This tour ends in Paris – we can advise you on the best train options to return to Le Havre for your ferry connection.

Fancy a longer holiday

- For anyone who wants to extend their holiday with us, we can book additional hotels for you at the start or end of your Tour, just call us on 07811 285021.

Families, and/or non cycling companions

- We think Paris by Pedal Power is ideal for families with older children, even though there are no rest days until you reach Paris (we have completed this tour with young teenagers so don't let the prospect of city riding put you off). Most of the cycling is flat and a significant proportion of this tour is made up of dedicated cycle routes and quiet country lanes.

Travel Pack

- Your personally tailored travel pack will be with you approx 3 weeks prior to your Tour start date. There will be oodles of information for you in this pack.

Any queries at all before you book

- We don't want to bombard you with masses of text to read, so anything at all that needs clarification please call us on 07811 285021, 01788 568371 or email us at jane@fellowvelo.com