

Length & Breadth – Entre Deux Mers

- ‘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:

Famous Vineyards
Great River Crossings
Bountiful Bordeaux
Architectural Wonders
Triumphant Toulouse
Camino de Santiago

Summary

Our Entre Deux Mers Tour makes for a great ride from the centre of France's Atlantic coastline at La Rochelle, and through Historic Aquitaine. It is also the second leg of a potential three leg cycle tour which guides you down the length and breadth of France.

When this area was governed by the Angevin Empire through much of the Middle Ages, the vast production of wine it controlled accounted for a significant proportion of the Crown's national income. Crossing this part of France can easily be mapped by names which resonate with the fruit of its earth; Médoc, Entre Deux Mers, Graves and Armagnac. Fabulous coastal stretches give way to green slopes falling into rivers, great and small. And, when it comes to the built environment, there is Bordeaux 'The Pearl of Aquitaine' a wine capital for the world and, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in recognition of its historic architecture and, Toulouse 'The Pink City', named after its terracotta bricks and, also proud possessor of two World Heritage Sites.

As one of our 'Length and Breadth' Fully Guided Tours, this offers the option of a closer to nature experience as nearly all of the nights can be spent on campsites, with campsite meals provided on three of the evenings (but of course, you can still choose a fully hotel based tour if that level of comfort is desired). We provide the tents and, will pitch them for you; your own sleeping bag and camping mat are the

only real extras you will need to bring in comparison to our other tours. Your luggage will be transferred for you between campsites so, the cycling remains a relaxing pleasure but the feeling of a greater escape is real and the rewards are plentiful.

Tour in Brief:

- Fellow Velo Welcome Briefing
- 8 Nights Camping
- 2 Hotel Nights
- or 10 Hotel Nights
- 10 Continental Breakfasts
- 9 Lunches
- 3 Campfire Meals
- Luggage Transfers
- Cycling Guide
- Carefully Selected Routes
- High Quality Bikes
- Support Vehicle

Tour Map

Introduction

The terrain on each of our Length and Breadth legs through France provides for really entertaining as easy cycling days, only the slightly longer distances and occasional crossings of larger rivers raise them from our lowest cycling grade. So, the remarkable feeling of adventure that comes with bigger cycling tours really is there to be grasped by anyone with the spirit to match the experience.

Day 1 Arrive La Rochelle

Arrive in La Rochelle and transfer to a charming hotel for a

relaxing evening before the start of your cycling tour. La Rochelle is wonderfully preserved city and, its walls make for an excellent evening promenade to relax before the cycling that lies ahead.

Day 2 La Rochelle to Marennes – 70 km

We meet for your Fellow Velo Welcome and head to the Vieux Port of La Rochelle, for the start of the tour ride south out of the city. We leave the city clinging to the coastline as we round the bay between the Île de Ré and the Île d'Oléron. After a memorable crossing of the Charente at Rochefort, we cycle just a short distance behind the coast along narrow twisting lanes for an afternoon break in the wonderful setting of Brouage before reaching our first campsite of the tour.



Day 3 Marennes to Royan – 55 km

As with so much of the French mid Atlantic coastline, the salt marshes and reclaimed land provides both visual character and supplies the store of local produce; for Marennes it has historically been oysters and now, it is also something of a Tomato Capital for France. Fantastic sandy forest riding now skirts the coastline around to Royan, through the Coubre Tremblade Forest and passed the dominant Coubre Lighthouse.



Day 4 Royan to Blaye – 70 km

Royan is a bustling seaside resort and important as the crossing point at the mouth of the Gironde Estuary, from here we turn inland following the river, deep into the landscape which bears the fruit of the World's Wine Capital, Bordeaux. The south- west facing slopes help you soak up the sun just as the grapes do the same and, offer great views of the Gironde.



Day 5 Blaye to Bordeaux – 65 km

At Blaye, we cross the Gironde by ferry to start our ride into Bordeaux. The famous names of appellations, vineyards and chateaux are all around you, the choice and potential expense is almost overwhelming. Gentle riding through the verdant countryside brings us to an early afternoon arrival in Bordeaux, with plenty of time to freshen up on the campsite before a leisurely evening's exploration of this truly beautiful city.



Day 6 Bordeaux to Langon – 55 km

Today we leave the city with its architectural World Heritage Quarter as we gently rise with the valley of the Garonne. Head out of Bordeaux on the banks of the river and ride through a rural landscape with a network of lanes connecting small villages and hamlets. The river is still quite broad in this section and flows at a gentle pace so riding 'against the current' feels pretty easy.



Day 7 Langon to Meilhan-sur-Garonne – 30 km

We continue for a short while along the natural valley slopes of the river before reaching the head of the Canal de Garonne. Relaxed rural riding makes for easy miles as you roll through the countryside to a quiet campsite, just below the banks of the canal, with Meilhan-sur-Garonne perched above on the valley side. The Base Nautique means a friendly bar on your doorstep despite the remote tranquillity.



Day 8 Meilhan-sur-Garonne to Boé – 77 km

Built in the middle of the 19th Century and significantly restored in the 1970s, the canal's towpath provides a great 120 mile cycling corridor through the heart of Aquitaine to the Rose City of Toulouse. Very easy riding along the course of the canal carries us along to another Base Nautique for our overnight stop, now roughly half distance between Bordeaux and Toulouse.



Day 9 Boé to Moissac – 45 km

Some of the most scenic cycling along the Garonne today, with the ride sharing one of the French arterial routes of the Camino de Santiago (The Way of St James). A shorter riding day means that we can arrive at Moissac with plenty of time to get freshened up at the final campsite of the tour and, have time to explore Moissac including the beautiful Cloisters of the Saint Pierre Abbey.



Day 10 Moissac to Toulouse – 63 km

The last riding day of the tour follows the Canal de Garonne to its end in Toulouse. With barely an incline in sight, save for the crossing of roads which traverse the canal, another easy cycling day will carry you to the comfort of a real bed for your final night's rest. The splendour of the Rose City awaits your evening stroll; in and around its treasured landmarks, you can reflect in comfort on a great cycling adventure.



Day 11 Depart Toulouse

Leave Toulouse on your onward journey or homeward return; we will help you with a shuttle link to your next travel terminus (or you could stay on the trail and join us on the Canal du Midi Tour that follows immediately on).

Eat Sleep Drink

Eat

From when the cycling starts, to the day of your departure, breakfast is included every day on the tour. Typically that

means pastries on the campsite or maybe an early stop at a tastebud tingling boulangerie. Lunches are included on each of the cycling days, either gathered up near the beginning of the ride or planned at a local hostelry (and, there may be a day when you will just come upon a picnic laid out for you around a corner on the journey). On this tour, three 'campfire meals' are included; and on the other evenings there is plenty of restaurant choice in the small towns or at the campsites where you will be staying, with at least on recommendation for each evening.



Sleep

This special Fully Guided Tour is one of our camping trips; all the campsites have been carefully selected by us and as we all know, France is one of the best places in the world to camp. Sites will vary from small family run ones to larger, beautifully equipped parks. We will provide the tents, and you'll probably arrive on site to find them put up for you. All you need to bring is whatever it takes for you to have a good night's sleep. All our Length and Breadth trips have at least hotel stop where you can luxuriate splendour, on this tour these come at the beginning and end in La Rochelle and Toulouse. You can of course opt for hotel accommodation for the whole tour if you wish.



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 ensure you have plenty of access to places to buy drinks or obtain water. As you are in some of the most historic wine regions in the world for parts of this trip, you will no doubt have plenty of tasting opportunities.



France – Length & Breadth Recommended Tour Months

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

Our Entre Deux Mers Tour is great as an individual ride but, is also one of three tours which can be combined to complete a cycle ride the Length and Breadth of France. It is the second natural leg of that potential combination with Atlantic Coast and Canal du Midi being the other legs.

Entre Deux Mers Camping Version – Tours from £1035.00/person

Entre Deux Mers Hotel Version – Tours from £1415.00/person (Deposit of £450.00/person)

Booking from this Tour Page is for the Entre Deux Mers Tour only – if you want to combine two or three of the tour legs into a longer holiday then, just start the booking process from the first in your chosen sequence and send us an email from Contact Us to confirm the additional elements.

Combined Leg Prices:

Two Legs Camping Version – From £1765.00/person

Two Legs Hotel Version – From £2625.00/person

Three Legs Camping Version – From £2365.00/person

Three Legs Hotel Version – From £4075.00/person

More Information

Travel to and from your Tour

- This tour starts in La Rochelle, there are many ways to get there and this depends on whether you are travelling by car or as a foot/bike passenger. If you are planning to join the tour by car, there are ferry crossings between Portsmouth and St Malo. 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 (if bringing your own) or foot 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 St Malo. For those living near Poole or in the Channel Islands take a look at Condor Ferries, www.condorferries.co.uk Then you can travel onward by train – check the latest information via www.voyages-sncf.com and www.raileurope.com

- The tour finishes in Toulouse, return travel to the UK can be via budget airline www.easyjet.com www.flybe.com www.ryanair.com or by rail back to the ferry port.

If you are bringing your own bike

- For anyone seeking the comfort and convenience of using their own bicycle, this is a great tour for you. Not only that but, you can even leave the car behind as well; book yourself onto the ferry as a cyclist and travel onwards to La Rochelle by train.

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 Entre Deux Mers is ideal for families with older children, how about bonding trips with Dads and Lads and not to forget Mums and Daughters, think of the fun of cycling together and then the campsite camaraderie. A significant proportion of this tour is made up of dedicated cycle routes and quiet country lanes. Call us to discuss the different cycle options available to children (tag along, child bike etc).
- A partner, spouse or friend who doesn't share your love of cycling. On any of our Fully Guided Tours, a non-cycling person can get a lift with the support vehicle from location to location. Anyone needing a little help can also get a "lift" in the support vehicle.

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 or 01788 568371 or, email us at jane@fellowvelo.com