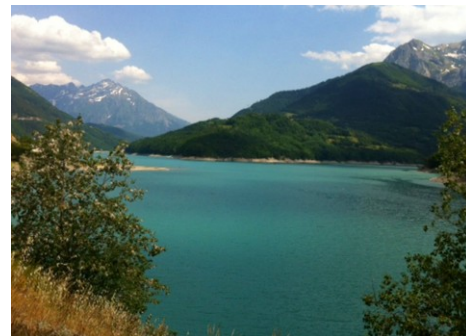


London To Geneva Cycle



Duration: 10 days

Setting off from London, we pass through picturesque Kent countryside, cross the Channel and continue through the small villages and medieval market towns of Northern France to Paris and the evocative landmark of the Eiffel Tower. After a day to rest, we head off again, cycling through sunflower fields, quiet woodland and rolling chalk hills dotted with small medieval towns and sleepy villages. The landscape varies from farmland to forests and the famous vineyards around Chablis as we pass through Burgundy en-route to the beautiful Jura Mountains. Our ride culminates in crossing the mountains, our biggest challenge. The gentle rolling hills that form much of our landscape en-route provide us with the perfect preparation for the hair-pin bends of the Col de la Faucille (1323m), a climb that has featured many times in the Tour de France. Crossing into Switzerland, we finish with a wonderful descent; after long days in the saddle and a challenging day in the Jura, we will be very happy to see Geneva and its beautiful lake!

Don't miss the huge spectacle that is the Tour de France on the July 2019 departure!

DETAILED ITINERARY

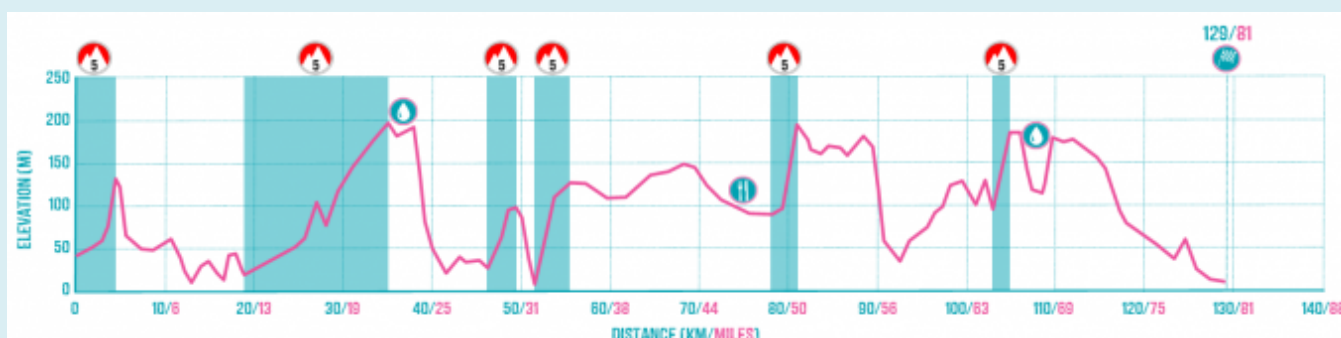
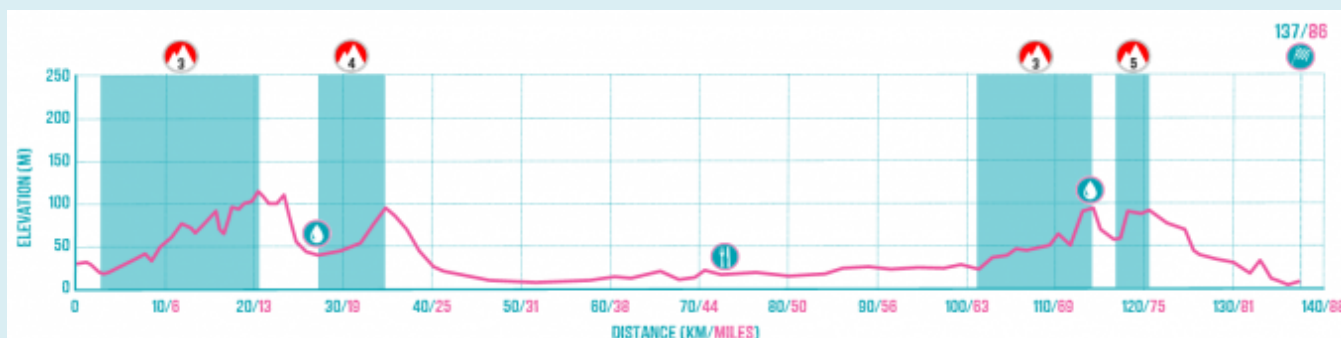
Day 1: London – Dover – Dunkirk

An early start allows us to avoid the morning traffic as we pass through the outskirts of London onto quieter roads. It is not long before we are among the rolling fields and villages of rural Kent, passing orchards and traditional oast houses where hops are stored. We follow country roads across the hills of the North Downs to Dover and the coast. Taking the ferry to Calais, we have dinner on board and cycle the short distance to our hotel. Night hotel.

(Dinner on ferry not included)

Cycle approx. 136km (85 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE

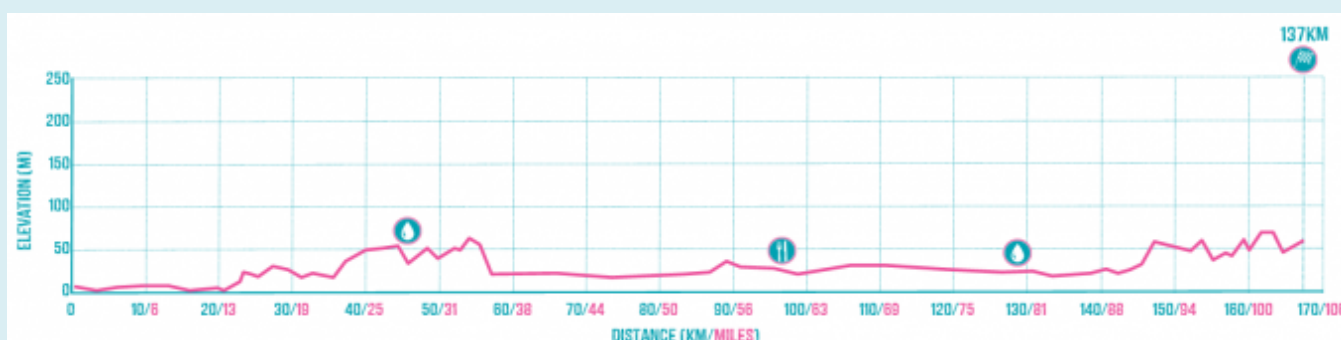


Day 2: Dunkirk – Cambrai

We head south from Dunkirk, riding roughly parallel to the Belgian border. A long day in the saddle lies ahead, but the terrain is fairly flat as we pass through small villages and farmland, with some areas of shady woodland. A few hills mid-way through our morning stretch the legs a little! The area we pass through saw a great deal of action in WW1 and many road-names in towns and villages testify to the history. Our afternoon is predominantly flat as we ride southeast, though a few hills await us before Cambrai, a town which dates back to Roman times. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 161km (100 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE

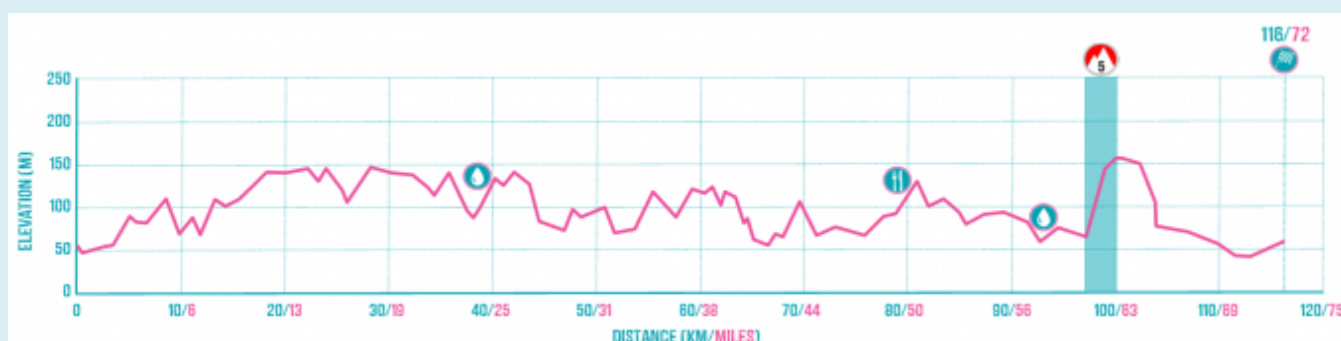


Day 3: Cambrai – Soissons

Today is shorter, but almost continually hilly, as we cross beautiful rolling landscapes, where fields of crops stretch for miles. For the first part of the day we pass small war cemeteries, reminding us of events a century ago. We have a great view of the River Somme, which we cross before our first water-stop. Narrow lanes lined with hedgerows take us through small villages with ancient crumbling buildings, and we follow wider boulevards through historic towns with striking churches and town halls. The last section of our route runs through an area involved in the WW1 Battles of the Aisne, with more cemeteries and memorials to the fallen. With roughly ten miles to go, the road climbs steeply out of the pretty village of Vauxaillon, winding through woodland and into open fields with wonderful views. A rewarding descent brings us to Soissons, an ancient town which lies on the River Aisne. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 114km (70 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE

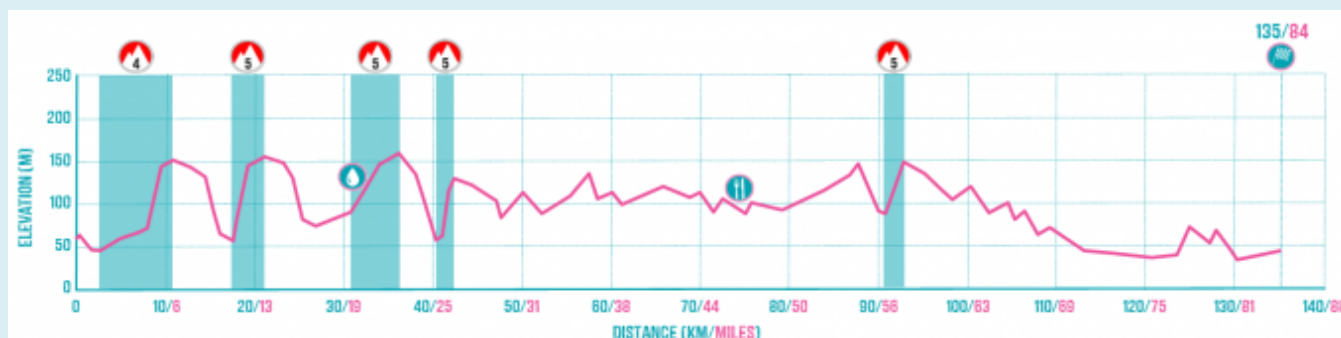


Day 4: Soissons – Paris

Our final day's cycling takes us southwest, on yet more undulating roads through small villages and farmland. There are some short sharp climbs in the morning, before we reach busier roads. As we cycle through the Parisian streets we look out for distinctive landmarks, feeling excited at being this close to our goal! Then we sweep around the Arc de Triomphe and down the famed Champs-Élysées to our finish beneath the lofty arches of the Eiffel Tower. We head to our hotel and get ready for a final meal together as a group to mark our achievement. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 121km (75 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 5: Rest Day Paris

After breakfast you are free to explore the city; why not go up the Eiffel Tower or visit renowned attractions such as the Arc de Triomphe, the Louvre and Notre-Dame Cathedral.

For the July departure date, you can enjoy the huge spectacle that is the Tour de France! We don't have a set area to gather, but the 71m-wide Champs-Élysées is by far the best place to watch the laps before the final sprint; head over with your new cycling buddies, pick a spot and enjoy the incredible atmosphere. Spectators gather early to watch the world's most famous cycling event arrive home, and if you want a good view you are advised to get there many hours before the peloton!

Those ending their cycle ride in Paris will leave by train later in the day, while we meet again for dinner and a briefing, and meet our new group members who have arrived today. Night hotel.

(Lunch not included)

Day 6: Paris – Sens

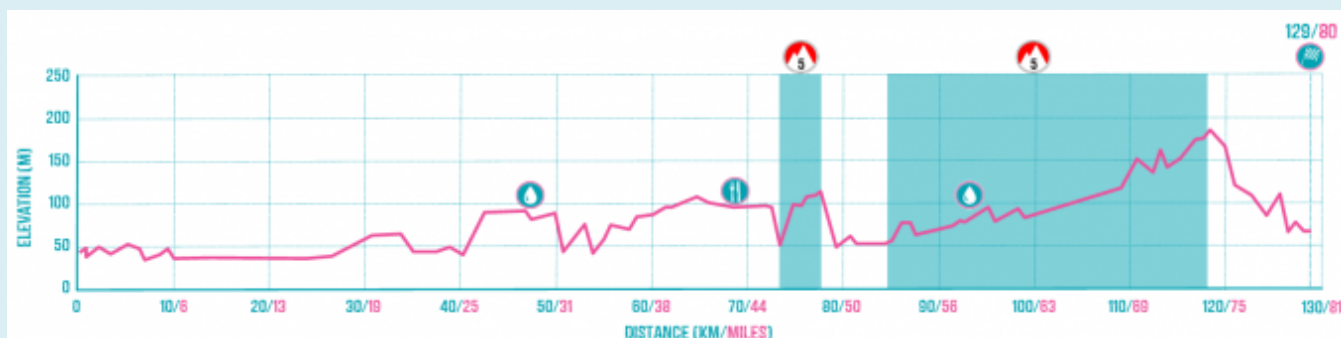
We start early so we can negotiate Paris's busy streets before rush-hour, and head from our hotel towards the Eiffel Tower, where we have the obligatory group photo. Our route takes us along the boulevards of the capital's Left Bank; we see many recognisable landmarks such as Les Invalides and the Grand Palais as we ride south-east out of Paris, roughly following the course of the River Seine. Many of the streets we take have cycle paths, and it doesn't seem long before we have left the suburbs behind us.

We now ride through open, agricultural landscapes, passing villages with squat Norman churches, colourful shuttered houses and tree-lined market squares – peaceful rural scenes which are as quintessentially French as the grandeur of Paris behind us. This region is very historic, with many towns and villages dating back to medieval or Roman times.

After passing on wide shaded roads through the extensive green forests of Fontainebleau, formerly a royal hunting park, our route becomes a little hillier as we ride over the gently rolling chalk hills that make this region so good for wine-growing. There are no tough climbs on this first day, but we'll no doubt be pleased to cross the River Yonne into the lovely medieval Burgundy town of Sens, complete with its beautiful town hall and gothic cathedral. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 125km (80 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE



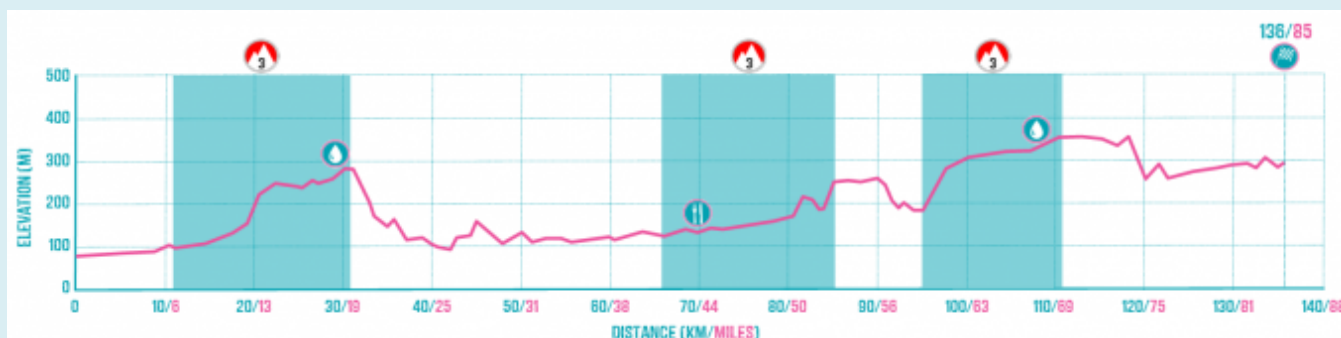
Day 7: Sens – Semur-en-Auxois

Today takes us further into rural Burgundy, over rolling hills with gentle inclines that open up to wonderful views over this typically French countryside. We leave our hotel on quiet, flat roads, passing small villages and open fields of barley and wheat. After about 15km we have a long, winding climb which flattens out to a striking tree-lined avenue through the fields. We start to pass fields of sunflowers and sections of woodland, and ride through some very picturesque villages with old churches and striking town halls. Some miles before our lunch-stop at Chablis – which gives its name to one of France’s most famous white wines – we come to the vineyards: rows upon rows of vines, mainly pinot noir and chardonnay, on the south-facing slopes.

We pass several old wineries before riding right through the pretty old town of Chablis itself, then cycle on small, quiet country lanes connecting the abundant farms and villages that dot the landscape. There are some wonderful views as we crest the rolling hills, and every rise is followed by a lovely descent. As we approach the end of the day’s ride, our road brings us out at a wonderful viewpoint over the picturesque medieval hill-top town of Semur-en-Auxois; our hotel is only a short distance away. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 125 km (80 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 8: Semur-en-Auxois – Lons-le-Saunier

Our longest day is a day of two halves, separated by our most significant climb so far! The morning continues predominantly south-east on quiet rolling roads, riding through yet more picturesque towns and villages; some of

the churches have the distinctive coloured roof-tiles typical of Burgundy. We pass fields of sunflowers, corn and small pockets of woodland and ride for a short stretch alongside the Canal de Bourgogne. A 250km-long feat of engineering, the canal connected Burgundy to both northern Europe and the Mediterranean, allowing it to prosper. We come to the picturesque town of Bligny-sur-Ouche, which lies at the foot of our most challenging climb so far – a 6km ascent which twists up through woodland before the road straightens out and an easier gradient takes us through pastures at the top. Our treat for conquering the climb is the wonderful descent that follows – at twice the length of the climb, we definitely tackle this hill from the best direction!

Wide sweeping bends takes us through fields and woodland, passing small villages, right down into the town of Beaune below us. It's an exhilarating descent with wonderful views of the countryside around us, and we'll be buzzing when we reach lunch shortly afterwards. We cross the River Saône, heading towards Verdun, and the rest of our day is fairly flat. There are numerous reservoirs in this region which break up the browns and greens of the fields that we cycle through for most of the way. As we enter the Jura region we can see the ridge of mountains looming on the horizon, though they still look quite distant. Our last few miles see a few gentle uphill sections through lovely quiet woodland and we finally reach the Roman spa town of Lons-le-Saunier, pleased to be saving the real climbs for tomorrow! Night hotel.

Cycle approx 158km (98 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 9: Lons-le-Saunier – Geneva

A shorter day today, but our big challenge looms as we cross the Jura Mountains into Switzerland! We set off from Lons-le-Saunier and start climbing almost straightaway. This is the steepest hill we've experienced so far, so it's important to pace yourself and not over-do it. The climb levels out after roughly 3km and we are suddenly in more mountainous scenery, with cow-bells clanging from the pastures around us. Following a flattish road – one of very few flat sections today! – through a beautiful valley surrounded by verdant wooded slopes, we reach the village of Orgelet with its pretty church, and then start to climb again gradually. Our road takes us through a scenic gorge and we cross the beautiful aquamarine Lac de Vouglans, a narrow sinuous reservoir hemmed in by the rocky cliffs around it. We climb for roughly 20km through lovely scenery; the gradient is not steep and there are some flatter sections. We then have a wonderful descent into the picturesque town of Saint-Claude; with its colourful buildings and its wonderful location tucked in between the mountains, this is worth a café-stop just to admire the views!

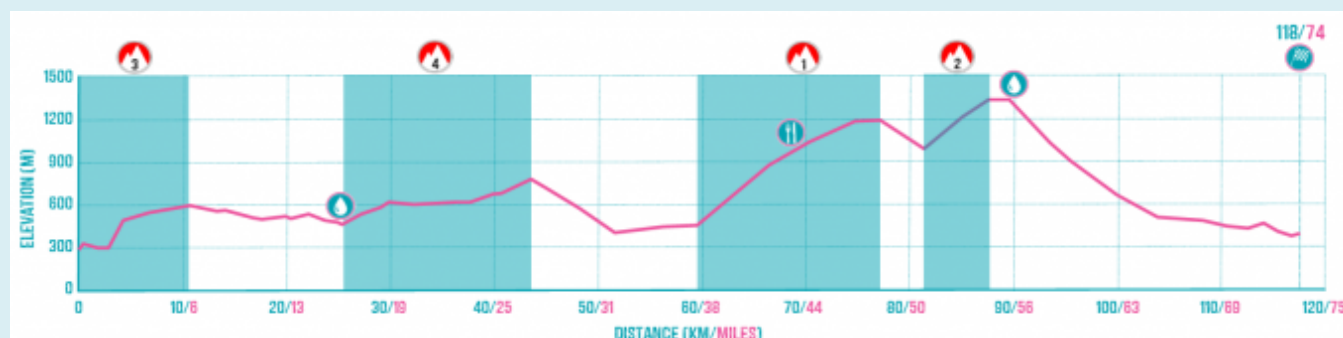
After Saint-Claude our climbing starts in earnest – we ascend gradually on hair-pin bends through trees, passing waterfalls and gushing streams. At some points the views open out so we can fully appreciate the mountain scenery we are climbing through. As we get higher up we reach pastures and the terrain levels out more; we pass

a giant model of a bike which pays homage to the popularity of cycling in this region: this climb has featured in the Tour de France on many occasions, as well as other professional races. Shortly after this, the road plunges downhill into a secluded valley. It's frustrating to lose even a fraction of our well-earned elevation knowing we have to re-gain it, but it's a wonderful descent and very beautiful!

From the valley we start to climb again, on hair-pin bends that take us once more through forest. These are our last miles uphill, and although it is steep in places we know the end is in sight! We finally reach the Col de la Faucille (1323m), and gather for a group photo before our big descent. We have time to savour this – we should be feeling justly proud of ourselves for reaching the summit. In clear weather we should get great views of the Mont Blanc massif, and there are wonderful views over Lake Geneva as we descend the 12km to Gex, the small Swiss village at the foot of the mountain. We pass through the international border with Switzerland, and cruise on flat roads with cycle lanes to our lakeside finish point in Geneva. This evening we enjoy a great celebration! Night hotel.

Cycle approx 110km (70 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 10: Geneva – London

Free time to explore Geneva before flying back to the UK. *(Lunch & Dinner not included)*

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transport by ferry to France
- All meals except where specified, and hotel accommodation on a twin-share basis
- Discover Adventure leaders, mechanics and drivers
- Full vehicle support throughout the trip
- Maps and route information
- Celebration meals in Paris and Geneva

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Four meals as specified in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Homebound flight from Geneva

- Transfer to Geneva airport
- Bicycle
- Cycle helmet (compulsory) and water bottles
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | TOUGH (3)



Trip grades range from Challenging (1) to Extreme (5).

TOUGH trips can involve tough terrain, with some very rigorous days; weather, altitude and/or basic living conditions will add to the challenge. They demand good stamina, fitness and a determined attitude.

See [Trip Grading Explained](#).



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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 19 Aug 2022, and the challenge is subject to change.