

Paris To Geneva Cycle



Duration: 6 days

We cycle from the Eiffel Tower through Paris into the fields of wheat and sunflowers of rural France. Our ride culminates in the crossing of the beautiful Jura Mountains, our biggest challenge. The gentle rolling hills that form much of our landscape en-route provide us with the perfect preparation for the Col de la Faucille (1323m), a climb that has featured many times in the Tour de France. We then have a wonderful descent to Geneva and its beautiful lake!

Our July departure allows you to see the Tour de France finish in Paris – an exciting way to start your ride! **Not applicable to 2024!**

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: London – Paris by Eurostar

We depart for Paris on a morning Eurostar from London St Pancras, after loading our bikes onto the support vehicles. On arrival, we transfer to our hotel and are free to enjoy the sights of Paris before meeting again for dinner and a detailed trip briefing. Night hotel. *(Lunch not included)*

Day 2: Paris – Sens

Our first day in the saddle! 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 3: 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



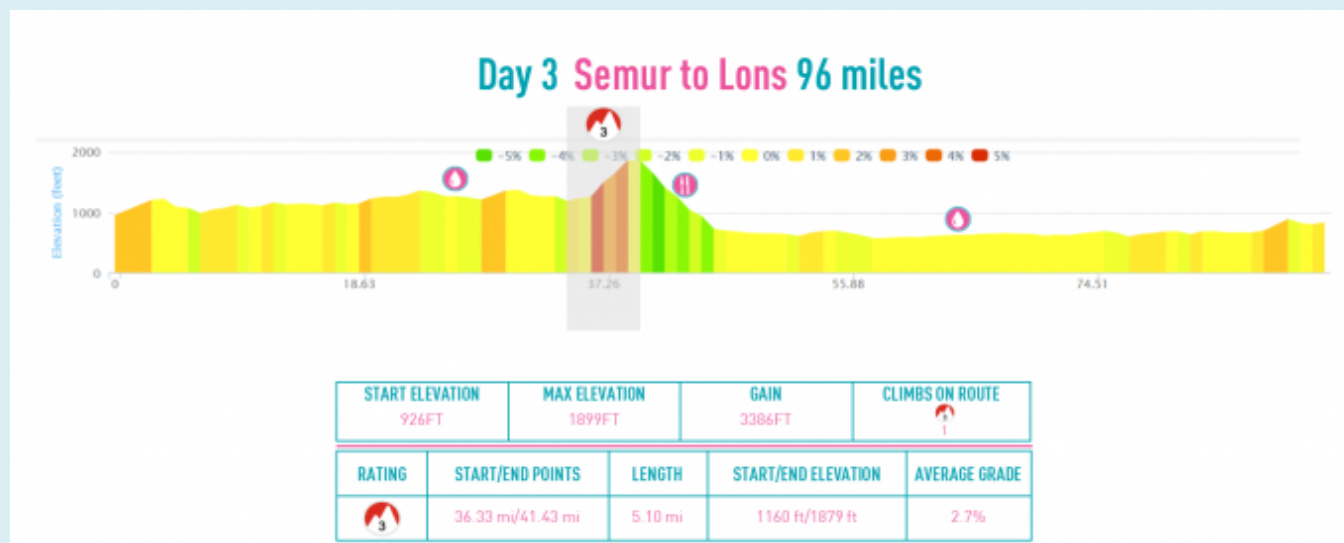
Day 4: Semur-en-Auxois – Lons-le-Saunier

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 5: 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!

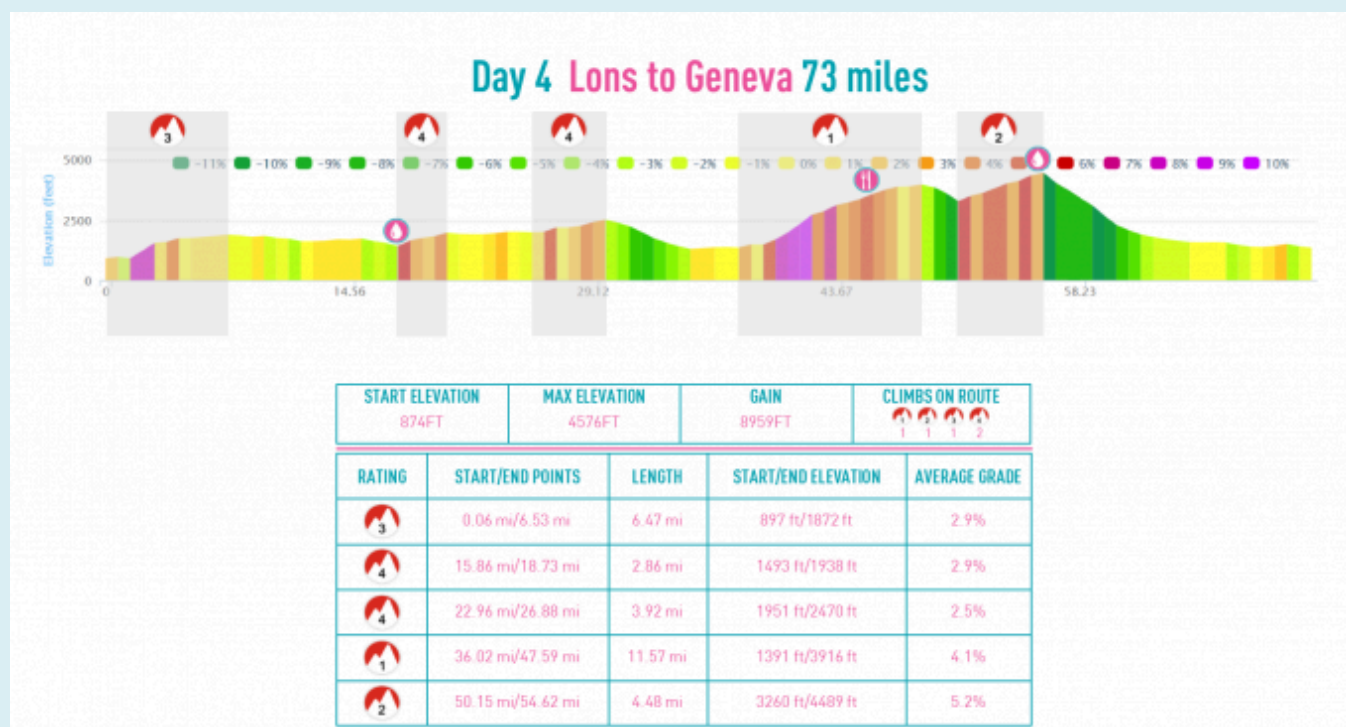
After Saint-Claude our climbing starts in earnest – we ascend gradually on hair-pin bends through trees, passing waterfalls and gushing streams. At some points the views open out so we can fully appreciate the mountain scenery we are climbing through. As we get higher up we reach pastures and the terrain 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 6: Geneva – London

Free time to explore Geneva before your own travel arrangements back to the UK. *(Lunch & Dinner not included)*

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transport by Eurostar to Paris
- All meals except where specified
- 5 nights hotel accommodation on a twin-share basis
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependant on group size)
- Vehicle support throughout the trip
- Maps and route information

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Homebound flight from Geneva
- 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 | ORANGE

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions (see icon) are also taken into account.

[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 26 Apr 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.