

# Cycling Europe

## FRANCE: PARIS & CHAMPAGNE BY BIKE & BARGE 2019

8 Days/7 nights GUIDED CYCLING

*"I drink it when I'm happy and when I'm sad  
Sometimes I drink it when I'm alone  
When I have company I consider it obligatory  
I trifle with it if I'm not hungry and drink  
it when I am  
Otherwise I never touch it - unless I'm  
thirsty"*

Madame Lily Bollinger (1899 - 1977)



Your tour starts in Paris, one of Europe's most beautiful and beloved cities, then winds its way through the valley of the river Marne. Stylish cities, delightful villages and family-run vineyards- a feast for the eyes, the nose and the palate.

Begin your adventure with a full day's guided discovery of Paris "City of Light". The following day leave Paris and follow the beautiful valley of the River Marne to the city of Meaux, famous for its Brie cheeses. In 2015, UNESCO granted the Champagne area the status of World Heritage; the vineyards, wine cellars and sales houses where champagne is produced and sold are considered culturally significant. Along the way you will visit some small champagne producers who will be proud to let you taste their best Champagne wines. The barge will also spend a night in Château-Thierry, scene of major battles in World War I. Cycle through the vineyards on the rolling banks of the Marne River to finally reach the true capital of the Champagne region, the city of Epernay. Here you will visit one of the magnificent champagne cellars.

The tour operates in reverse depending on your date of departure.



## ITINERARY: PARIS TO EPERNAY



### Day 1 (Sat): Paris: embarkation

Boarding and check-in at 2pm at the Quai de Bercy on the Seine in Paris. After a welcome by the captain there is time for a walking tour through Paris. Dinner on board followed by a briefing about the barge, bicycles and tour programme.

**Overnight in Paris.**

### Day 2 (Sun): Paris – Lagny-sur-Marne (ca. 35km)

You leave Paris by bike via the canal de l'Ourcq. A bike path leads from the place de la Bastille (close to the mooring place

of the Zwaantje), via the basin of la Vilette to the banks of the l'Ourcq. This canal was built by order of Napoleon Bonaparte. The canal provided the city with water and played an important role in the transportation of goods to and from the city. Destination of today is Lagny a nice little town along the Marne.

**Overnight in Marne.**

### Day 3 (Mon): Lagny-sur-Marne - Meaux (ca. 20 km or 37 km)

From Lagny-sur-Marne cycle mainly along the Marne River and its parallel canal. In case you opt for the short ride, the first challenge is the hill near Chalifert. While the barge takes the tunnel through the hill, cyclists can climb and cross the hill by bicycle. On the longer cycle option the first part is also quite hilly. Later you will follow the small Canal de l'Ourcq that was built by Napoleon to transport wood grain and free water to Paris. Today's destination is the city of Meaux, famous for its "Brie de Meaux" cheeses and the magnificent Cathedral St.-Etienne. **Overnight in Meaux.**



### Day 4 (Tue): Meaux – La Ferté-sous-Jouarre (Cycling: ca. 30 km or 52 km)

There are a few cycling options today. The shorter option will lead you over the hills and slopes of the Marne valley on the south bank of the river through forests and small villages. The longer option stays in the valley of the river in the morning with a ride through Trilport and Lizy-sur-Ourcq while later you climb a few challenging hills, leaving the valley in the direction of Jouarre. In Jouarre, all cyclists meet to enjoy an excellent presentation and tasting of the famous Brie de Meaux and Brie noir cheeses at the family-run Fromagerie Ganot. Dinner on board and night in La-Ferté-sous-Jouarre or a village nearby

**Overnight in La-Ferté-sous-Jouarre or a nearby village.**



### Day 5 (Wed): La-Ferté-sous-Jouarre – Château-Thierry (Cycling: 42 km)

Enjoy a somewhat challenging cycle tour from La-Ferté-sous-Jouarre to Château-Thierry. The first part of the cycling track leads you along the Marne River. After a few miles you will take a side valley and follow country roads along the small river Ru de Bouillons then through various small villages and hamlets. Continue riding uphill until you finally reach the plateau above the northern

part of the Marne valley. The side valleys are mainly covered with forest while the plateau is predominantly agricultural. Follow the valley of the small river Clignon. En route you can visit the large WW1 American War Cemetery and Monument near Belleau on the D82. Start your descent to reach Château-Thierry.

### **Overnight in Château-Thierry.**

### **Day 6 (Thu): Château-Thierry – Dormans – Epernay (Cycling: 35 or 50 km)**

Château-Thierry owes its name to the castle that once was situated on the slopes above the Marne. You can still see some remnants. The town was the site of two important battles: the Battle of 1814 in the Napoleonic Wars between France and Prussia, and the Battle of 1918 at the end of World War I. Château-Thierry is also known as the native town of the world-famous writer of fables Jean de la Fontaine. Today we will enter the official Champagne region and you choose between a long and a short bike ride.



During breakfast the boat will cruise to the lock of Mont St Pierre then either cycle or cruise along the Marne River to Dormans - a

quiet village on the Marne with a castle and chapel in memory of the battle of the Marne. During World War I this area was the scene of many close battles. We will see the Château de Boursault, a large castle built in 1848 by the widow of Mr. Cliquot, who gave her name (Veuve Cliquot) to a famous Champagne wine. A ride up the northern valley slope to the village of Châtillon-sur-Marne rewards the cyclist with a stunning panoramic view over the Marne valley and the Champagne vineyards.

### **Overnight in Epernay.**

### **Day 7 (Fri): Epernay Cycling: 17km or 25 km) + visit to Epernay centre & Champagne houses**

The last half day's cycle tour takes you along the quiet canal parallel to the Marne River to Ay and Mareuil-sur-Ay. Return via Dizy to visit



Hautvillers. After a somewhat challenging ascent you will reach the picturesque village of Champagne wine growers on the southern slopes of the Montagne de Reims. Highlight is a visit to the chapel with the tomb of the monk Dom Pérignon. According to tradition, Dom Pérignon (1638-1715), who was in charge of the wine cellars of the abbey of Benedictine monks, was the first to succeed in blending various kinds of wine into a wine of superb quality. Double fermentation, characteristic for the making

of champagne, was also introduced also by Dom Pérignon. Return to Epernay by bike. After lunch, visit the centre of Epernay. Together with Reims, Epernay is the major wine centre of the Champagne region. It is where three extensive wine regions meet: the Montagne de Reims, the Côte des Blancs and the Vallée de la Marne. Epernay has many houses in neo-renaissance style or classical style from the 19th century, especially around the beautiful Avenue de Champagne where prestigious champagne houses such as Moët & Chandon are situated. Champagne tasting and tour in one of the major Champagne houses.

### **Overnight in Epernay.**

### **Day 8 (Sat): Tour ends in Epernay or Reims:**

Disembark after breakfast around 9:30.am

## ITINERARY: EPERNAY TO PARIS

The tour operates in reverse every other week as follows:

**Day 1 (Sat)** Epernay embarkation and check-in at 2pm. Welcome by the captain, crew and tour leader. Dinner on board followed by a guided walk through Epernay.

**Day 2 (Sun)** Epernay round tour (17 km or 25 km) Afternoon: visit Epernay centre and Champagne houses

**Day 3 (Mon)** Epernay – Dormans - Château-Thierry (35 km or 50 km)

**Day 4 (Tue)** Château-Thierry - La-Ferté-sous-Jouarre (approx. 42 km)

**Day 5 (Wed)** La-Ferté-sous-Jouarre - Meaux incl. Brie cheese tasting (30 km or 52 km)

**Day 6 (Thu)** Meaux to Lagny-sur-Marne (20 km or 37 km))

**Day 7 (Fri)** Lagny-sur-Marne to Paris (approx. 35 km)

**Day 8 (Sat)** Disembarkation in Paris after breakfast (Quai de Bercy, Paris).

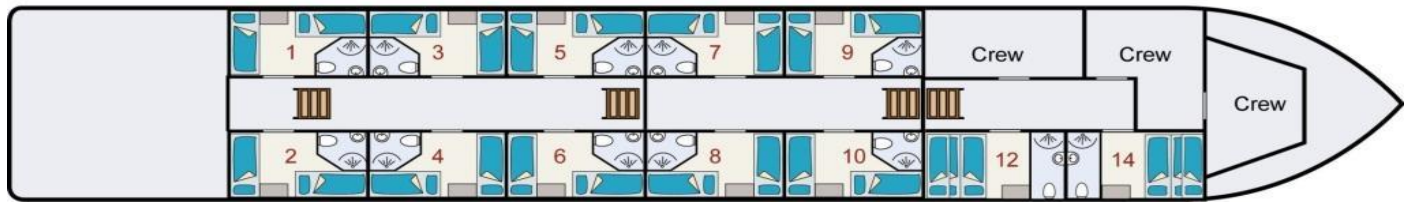
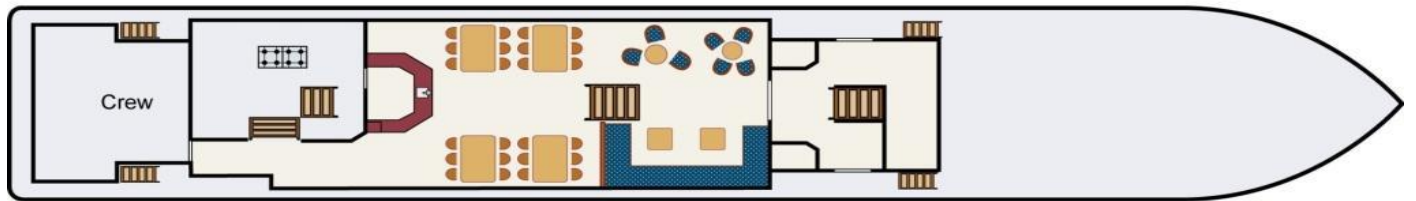
## GRADE & TERRAIN

**MODERATE TO DEMANDING:** The cycling tours are fully guided, but cannot be rated as easy. You need to be cycle-fit. You cycle small country roads as well as unpaved and/or semi-paved roads and tracks on the undulating slopes of the wide river valley, through the hills and the Champagne vineyards. Cycling distances vary from 30 – 50 km per day - tours are much more challenging than tours in Holland / Belgium!

## YOUR BARGE ZWAANTJE

The “Zwaantje” (little Swan) is a fully converted passenger barge under Dutch flag and management. 40 meters (131 ft.) in length it can accommodate 24 passengers. Cabins 7 sq m. On lower deck the barge has 12 cabins: 10 twin cabins with two single beds each and two cabins with a double (French) bed. All cabins have a small en-suite bathroom with toilet, shower and wash basin.





## GETTING TO THE BARGE

In Paris the docking place is close to Gare de Lyon.

In Epernay the SNCF train station is approx. 1 km from the docking place. From the train station in Epernay you can travel with only one change in approx. 1 hour & 20 minutes with SNCF to TGV Station Champagne-Ardenne, just a little south of Reims. There is also a good, direct (SNCF) connection to both Reims Centre (23 – 39 minutes) and Paris Gare de l'Est (1 hour & 16 min – 1 hour & 42 min).

## 2019 SCHEDULE PARIS TO EPERNAY

15 June & 10 August

## EPERNAY TO PARIS

08 June, 22 June & 17 August

## 2019 COST IN EUROS PER PERSON:

Twin cabin	€1,189
Single cabin	€1,529 Limited number of single cabins available (twin cabin for single use)

**Rental bicycle 21-speed:** With pannier bag, water bottle: € 80 per week (optional)

**Rental E-Bike:** With pannier bag, water bottle: € 175 per week (limited number available, early bookings strongly recommended)

**Helmet:** It is mandatory to wear a cycle helmet on this tour - there are a limited number of **helmets available on board at no charge, these must be requested at time of booking.** Otherwise you will need to bring your own helmet.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN TOUR COST

- Tour and accommodation on board
- 7 x breakfasts, 6 x picnic lunches during bike tours, 7 x three course dinners
- Coffee and tea
- Welcome drink and tour briefing on the first evening
- Use of bed linen and towels
- Daily cleaning of the climate-controlled cabin
- Tour leader (multilingual) for fully guided cycling tours, daily briefings of the bike tours, some short walking tours, Brie cheese tasting, half day guided tour of Epernay including Champagne tasting;
- Maps for daily bike tours, 1 set per cabin
- GPS Tracks
- Wi Fi

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED IN TOUR COST

- Transfers to/from the docking place
- Drinks
- Rental bicycle
- Entrance fees & excursions,
- Drinks on board
- Personal insurance
- Gratuities (at your discretion).
- Special diets on request / surcharges may apply.



*Book through:*

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