



The Tour de France with Viva Travels *The Pyrénées to Bordeaux*

6 nights/7 days

Arrival day: July 19

Arrival city: Pau

Departure day: July 25

Departure city: Bordeaux

Price for 7-day tour: \$3,795



Tour Highlights:

- Ride/view stages 16, 17, 18 and 19, four very exciting stages of this Tour, including 2 high mountains, one flat ride into the finish, and the individual time trial!
- Climb the Col de Tourmalet, Col d'Aubisque, Col de Soulor on race day.
- On the rest day, you have a plethora of choices for your rides, including two legendary Pyrénées climbs, the Hautacam and Luz Ardiden, and the spectacular Cirque du Gavarnie, Europe's most magnificent natural spectacle with a 400m waterfall.
- This is the 100th anniversary of the Pyrénées mountains being used in the Tour de France, time to come celebrate by climbing a few of these peaks on your bike!
- You can ride as much of stage 18 as you like – 30, 50, 75, 100 miles or more! Riding into the finish line is one of the more thrilling experiences of going to the Tour de France.
- Experience the time trial course as it meanders through the most expensive vineyards in the world. We will surely do some wine tasting on this tour!
- Minimal shuttling on this tour means more riding for you.
- We have a very special dining event planned for our final night in the vineyards of the Médoc.

Accommodations

Our inns are pleasant and convenient. Lourdes is a fabulous place from which to access the great cols of the Pyrénées, right out our doorstep. Our 3-star hotel for the first 4 nights is right in town, close to the many activities of this active small city. Our second hotel for two nights is only 15 minutes outside of Bordeaux, bordering the vineyards and forests and only 3 kilometers from the Time Trial route of stage 19! It's hard to beat the convenience of our accommodations!

Cycling routes and ability level

Riders should be of intermediate level or above, although with properly focused and consistent training, we believe a rider of any level can tackle most of these routes/climbs. All guests will be sent a cycling training plan to help prepare for this magnificent week of riding. Daily mileage will be 40 – 120 km (25 – 80 miles) with elevation gains of 3,000 – 6,500 feet on the climbing days. Most days have options to shorten or lengthen the ride, with van support available on most routes. Van access will be limited on the Tour routes due to road closures.



Non-cycling partners

This tour is open to non-cycling partners who want to experience alternative activities such as hiking, shopping, relaxing poolside, or who might want to view the Tour but not from the seat of a bicycle. We will make every effort to include non-cycling partners on race days, although we cannot guarantee access on the climbs due to limited access for vehicles (viewing options are available from the bottom, or as far up as one can hike). Non-cycling partners may consider renting a vehicle for full flexibility, although we cannot offer any discounts for non-cycling guests as we must limit our total number of guests to twenty.

What makes this tour so special?

Experience *does matter!* Jennifer Sage, proprietor of Viva Travels, has been leading and organizing bicycle tours in France since 1989, working for several high-end bicycle tour companies before starting her own specialized Tour Company in 2003. Her familiarity with France, French culture, history, language and joie de vivre makes for a very special experience. Her knowledge of and passion for the Tour de France and with cycling in general allows her to select an itinerary and routes to maximize your experience. For her tours, she selects guides with a special flair for human interaction and service as well as experience.



With Viva Travels, there is no need to change hotels often. We make every attempt to minimize shuttling, although with some stages it cannot be avoided. Our goal is that you'll spend more quality time riding and less time shuttling.

Options available to you on Sunday the 25th

Similar to the 2009 Tour, the organizers have scheduled a very important stage (the individual time trial) on the penultimate day. It's exciting, but it is a very long distance from Paris, making it difficult to both see this important stage (where the GC can change very easily) and to get to Paris in time to get a place on the Champs Elysée (or arrive around midnight on the 24th). We have elected to end the tour on Sunday morning to give you the option of either catching a train to Paris or to stay an extra day and ride in the vineyards with us, and then watch the finish on television. Of course, you can also elect to depart for home or for extended travel plans elsewhere. Not everyone wants to experience the massive crowds of the finale in Paris so we thought giving you this option actually allows you to customize this Tour any way in which you prefer to finish it! Here are your options:

Watch the Paris finale: We will take you to the train station in Bordeaux early on Sunday (train tickets not included), where you'll arrive in Paris between 10:30 and noon. We will make your train and hotel reservations and give you all the insider tips to watching the Tour in the City of Lights. Depending on your hotel choice (3 or 4-star, overlooking the Champs Elysée or a few blocks away), the price is \$175 - \$300/pp, double occupancy. Contact us for details.

Stay in the region one more night: we will drive to St. Emillion to ride in even more famous vineyards, through rolling hills from one medieval village to another. The Tour standings won't change, but we'll gather at our hotel terrace to watch the ceremonial laps on the Champs Elysée, a glass of the local nectar in hand. We'll be able to see much more via the television, including the requisite sprint finish, and then celebrate with yet another amazing meal. We drop you off at the Bordeaux train station on Monday 26th for departure to your final destination. Price \$350/pp.

Viva Travels Pyrénées to Bordeaux Tour Itinerary

July 19-25, 2010

Day 1 - July 19th

Meet your guides at the Pau train station/airport in the morning for a transfer to Lourdes. Your guides will help assemble your bikes followed by a moderate warm-up ride to familiarize you with riding in Europe. Tonight, we'll have a very special welcome cocktail reception and banquet at our hotel where your guides will give you the exciting details of the week to follow.

Day 2 - July 20th, Stage 16

TdF Route: Bagnères de Luchon to Pau

Your Totals: 60-100 km/37-62 miles.

Everything is right out our hotel door! A nice long warmup will bring us to the base of many of the big climbs in the region. The peloton will be ascending the Tourmalet on two stages, today and the 22nd. We'll consider our options while there but we may want to reserve the Tourmalet for the mountaintop arrival. In that case, today we'll climb the Col de Soulor and the Col d'Aubisque, arguably the two prettiest climbs in the Pyrénées. After the stage, it's a nice roll home to our hotel. Tonight dinner on your own in Lourdes.

Day 3 - July 21st Rest Day for the Tour

Your totals: 50-130 km/31-81 mi.

Today you have numerous options, but the one we recommend is climbing to the ski stations of Hautacam and/or Luz Ardiden. Both these mountaintops figure into the lore of Lance Armstrong's history in the Pyrénées. Luz Ardiden was where he was taken down by a bystander's *musette* (bag) in 2003; and it was on the climb to the Hautacam that he set up his victory in 2000. Another option is the incredibly beautiful Cirque de Gavarnie, one of the most striking views in Europe, with its 400m waterfall and massive rock walls. It's possible to do all or part of these options.

Non-cyclists can enjoy the town of Lourdes or elect to join in the van and meet the group for a picnic.

Tonight, a special dinner together of local specialties.

Day 4 - July 22nd Stage 17

TdF Route: Pau to the Col du Tourmalet

Your totals: 70 - 123 km/43-76 mi.

This will be one of the most exciting stages in the entire 2010 Tour. Our goal is to reach the Tourmalet summit, to watch the riders battle it out to the top. This is likely to be a turning point in the race if the top 5 of the GC are close.



Non-riders can watch from the bottom (or hike partway up) or explore Lourdes or nearby Tarbes. Tonight dinner on your own in Lourdes.

Day 5 - July 23rd Stage 18

TdF Route: Salies to Bordeaux

Your totals: to 40 – 140km/25- 100 mi.

We will drop you off right on the route so you can challenge yourself along this fairly flat course at whatever distance you choose. The scenery will gradually transition to endless vineyards as you approach the boundaries of Bordeaux. Riding into the *arrivée* town is a very thrilling experience! After you've arrived, find a spot along the final kilometer to glimpse the expected sprint finish. After the race is over, we have a short shuttle to our hotel just outside on Bordeaux.

Diner together at our hotel.

Day 6 - July 24th Stage 19

Bordeaux to Pauillac – Individual Time Trial

Your totals: 42-130 km/25 – 81 mi.

Our inn is only a few short kilometers away from the Time Trial course. Ride directly to the course and cruise all the way to Pauillac (about 40km), or take some detours into some of these amazing chateaux along the route.

Tonight, we have an exciting farewell dinner planned at a special restaurant owned by a renowned chef in the village of St. Julien.

Day 7 – July 25th

As explained above, you have several options. Our “standard” tour is completed and after breakfast, we will escort you to the train station in Bordeaux to catch a train to Paris if desired. Let us provide you with a hotel and TdF self-guided tips. Or stay an extra day with us and ride in the rolling vineyards of St. Emillion. We'll celebrate the Tour finale together at our hotel and take you to the train station the following morning on the 26th.



Pyrénées to Bordeaux Tour de France Tour Details 7-day Tour: \$3,795*/pp

For convenience, stage viewing opportunities and maximum riding time, this tour is an exceptional value! Maximum 22 guests (*fewer than 13 guests requires a slightly higher fee of \$3,895). Ride/view 4 stages, 6 days of riding. Change hotels only once. Single supplement \$500. A deposit of \$1,000 is required at registration.

PAY YOUR DEPOSIT BY DECEMBER 5TH AND RECEIVE A \$200 DISCOUNT.

The balance is due on April 15th.

Price includes transportation from the airport/train station in Pau to the start of the tour and to the train station in Bordeaux at the end of the tour; 6 nights accommodation in 3-star hotels; hotel tips and taxes; all breakfasts, four dinners including a gastronomic farewell banquet on the final night; one gourmet picnic lunch you will never forget; a welcome cocktail on our first evening; van support en route providing encouragement, refreshments and a lift if needed; bilingual guides to assist you along the way who take care of every detail (an additional guide added for groups over 16); detailed route notes and highlighted maps; Tour de France viewing tips and stage information; historical and cultural information; packing tips; water bottle and a phone card. In the months prior to departure, receive via email Tour de France updates and anecdotes, and training tips** to help you prepare for your trip.

We will do everything possible to accommodate non-cyclists and make sure your plate is full of activities. However, the vans must be made available for the cyclists when they are en route, so if you go with the vans, we cannot leave the tour route. We will assist in activity planning prior to the tour.

Not included: airfare, transportation to pick up point or from departure point, five lunches, two dinners, alcohol/beverages at meals, incidentals, or bicycles (bring your own bicycle. Limited rentals available – please contact us soon to reserve a bicycle if available). For non-cyclists, additional activities might incur some fees (chair lifts for hiking access, bus or ferry, etc).

The pick-up and drop-off point are the airport in Pau, and the train station in Bordeaux. We recommend you arrive/depart by plane in Paris with a local flight to Pau. It is possible to fly out of Bordeaux, or take the train to Paris. Viva Travels can help arrange travel plans prior to or after our tour, including airfare, train tickets, accommodations and automobile rentals for extended stays. Please contact us for more information.



** Jennifer Sage, owner of Viva Travels, is a Certified Personal Trainer, Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist and a 12-year Master Instructor for Team Spinning USA, now founder and Master Instructor for ICI/PRO (Indoor Cycle Instructor PRO). Your training program will be geared specifically with climbing in mind, and will include both indoor and outdoor training suggestions.

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