

French Alps Road Cycling – 8 Days

‘Les Route Des Grandes Alpes’: From Geneva to Nice



Our week long French Alps road cycling tour offers pure cycling adventure and a challenge for any cyclist wishing to ride above 2000m in altitude while trans versing the French Alps. Join us and experience the local culture, taste the remarkable cuisine and ride through one of the most scenic regions in Europe. This trip is ideal for both serious and recreational cyclists and is fully supported.

Surround yourself in beautiful scenery - We'll be riding in the Swiss - French Alps to the Mediterranean Sea, surrounded by the most impressive natural scenery this region has to offer.

Ride famous Tour de France passes - Discover the most famous and mythic mighty passes of the French Alps. We'll ride many of the passes made famous by the Tour de France such as Galibier, Alpe D'Huez and Col de Bonnette. Each day ride 50km or more up and down.

Beautiful accommodation - We've selected small hotels and lodges with 2-4 star ambiance, and include 3 gourmet meals each day during the 8 day road cycling tour of the French Alps.

Tour Itinerary

Day 1. Geneva to Valloire

Following individual arrival we transfer by train from Geneva, Switzerland to St-Jean-de Maurienne in France (leave Geneva approx. 10 am, arrive approx 1 pm). This is a three hour train ride. After a welcome lunch we assemble our bikes and ride along the valley to Saint-Michele-de Maurienne and up the Col du Telegraph (12.1km / 860m climb) to Valloire.

Accommodation: Hotel Meals: Dinner Elevation/Cycling: 860m up, 32km / 20mi, 3hrs riding

Day 2. Valloire to Serre Chevallier - La SAlle-les-Alpes

Our tour continues today with the first highlight, the Col de Galibier. The first two-thirds of the long ascent is through a forest before the valley opens and we ride steep switchbacks to the pass at 2647m. At the top we are rewarded by the panorama and a long 1600m descent via the Col du Lautaret (2058m) and then further down the valley to Briançon. From here it is only 15 km to the end of the day in Serre Chevallier.

Accommodation: Hotel Meals: B,L,D Elevation/Cycling: 1300m up, 66km / 41 mi, 4hrs riding

Day 3. Climb to Alpe d'Huez from Serre Chevallier - La SAlle-les-Alpes

This morning from Serre Chevallier we cycle the Col de Lautaret, followed by a long descent through a valley and along Lac du Chambon (Lake Chambon). After 67km / 41mi we reach Le Bourg d'Osians before stopping for lunch. After lunch we ride the legendary road to Alpe d'Huez, a 13km long climb with and

altitude gain of 780m! We continue on to the Col de Sarenne at 2004m where another amazing downhill on a quite side road is waiting for us. We finish in Mizoën back at the shores of Lac du Chambon and take a bus transfer back to Serre Chevallier.

Accommodation: Hotel Meals: B,L,D Elevation/Cycling: 2027m up, 102km / 63mi, 6-7hrs riding

Day 4. Serre Chevallier via the Co d'Izoard to Barcelonette

Today we cycle through the National Park at Col d'Izoard (2360m). On our right side we see the great mountain panorama of the Meije. The climb starts again gently with an approach along the valley floor. Once we have left the cooling shadows of the valley forest behind we zig-zag our way up slopes that become more and more barren. The southern ascent of the Col d'Izoard is one of the most unforgettable roads in the Alps with the famous rock formations of the Casse Desert towering above the road. A small cycling museum of the Tour de France is at the summit, along with a memorial to Coppi and Bobet. After the long descent to Guillette we tackle the second pass for today. We will climb up the Col de Vars to 2111m. The following decent leads us to the small town of Barcelonette, where we stay for the next two nights.

Accommodation: Hotel Meals: B,L,D Elevation/Cycling: 2151m up, 95km / 41mi, 6hrs riding

Day 5. Rest Day in Barcelonette

Situated at over 1100 metres in altitude, Barcelonette is a pretty market town nestled in the Ubaye valley in the southern French Alps. The climbs around the town are among the highest and most well known in all of the Alps. Barcelonette is also famous for the textile links that it has with Mexico. Many of the residents of the town emigrated to Mexico from early in the 19th century until as recently as the 1950's. Some of the residents returned with their fortunes, and built around 50 luxurious villas in Barcelonette, Jausiers and the surrounding area. These so called 'Maisons Mexicaines' are worth seeing and are a unique feature of the valley's architecture.

For the keen riders we offer an excursion up the stunningly beautiful Col del la Cayolle (29km / 1200m climb). The road winds its way up a narrow road over many old stone bridges to the Col at 2326m. We return the same way to Barcelonette.

Accommodation: Hotel Meals: Breakfast No Cycling or Excursion

Day 6. Barcelonette to Lantosque

Today's stage starts with a 32km climb to the Col de la Bonette – Restefond (2715m), followed by another 287 climbing meters to the highest point on the scenic ring road around the Cime de la Bonette (a barren mountain top). The pass is the highest sealed road in France and lies right on the edge of the huge National Park Mercantour. From the cold mountain top, we descend into the warmth of the Côte d'Azur. Finally we roll into Lantosque in the foothills of the Alps.

Accommodation: Hotel Meals: B,L,D Elevation/Cycling: 1600m up, 128km / 79mi, 6-7hrs riding

Day 7. Lantosque to Nice

The last day on our bikes leads us on 'hidden trails' into Nice, with the Col de Turini as a true highlight. We do the climb up the Turini first thing in the morning before we continue towards Monaco. Just before the reaching the Mediterranean Sea and the traffic of the famous resort town we 'hang a right' to stay on the hilltops above Monaco. We follow a very scenic road overlooking 'la mer' all the way to Nizza. We climb up the 'Route de la Grand Corniche' a fabulous panoramic road high above Monte Carlo (Monaco) and the last pass of our trip to La Turbie. Finally, we drop down into the busy city of Nice with minimal exposure to the traffic. We finish at the doorstep of our hotel.

Accommodation: Hotel Meals: B,L,D Elevation/Cycling: 2000m up, 92km / 58mi, 7-8hrs riding

Day 8. Departure

After breakfast, you have time to pack your bike for the transfer to the airport.

Accommodation: None Meals: Breakfast No cycling:

Tour Information

Included in 8 day tour:

- 7 nights in 2-4 star hotels (based on twin share)
- All meals as indicated in itinerary (except lunch and dinner on rest day)
- Arrival train transfer from Geneva to St-Jean-de Maurienne on Day 1
- Airport transfer in Nice
- Support vehicle and luggage transport
- 1 experienced drive guide

Not Included:

- Bike Rental not available for this trip
- Drinks & Favourite snack bars
- Travel Insurance
- Personal Expenses
- Passport or Travel Visa Requirements

Tour Grade

This tour is graded 7/8 challenging to hard (on a scale of 1-10 with 9/10 being extreme).

Recreational Riders & Sightseeing Passengers

Whilst this tour is graded hard to challenging, we are happy to cater to a small number of recreational riders who may wish to take part with shorter daily rides. We also welcome limited numbers of non-riders on our tours. If you are keen to experience the French Alps, but prefer to do this on four wheels rather than two, please do not hesitate to check our availability on your departure of choice.

2011 Departure Dates

JUN 18

JUL 05

2012 Departure Dates

JUN 22,29