

# ITINERARY

This long-weekend challenge links two great European cities, London and Paris, covering around 300km in just three days. We set off through the streets of south London and cycle through undulating countryside towards the south coast, before crossing into France by ferry. Once in France we enjoy sleepy Normandy villages with some challenging hills to conquer along the way, until we reach the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Free time to explore the sights of Paris, before boarding the Eurostar back to London.

## Day 1 - London - Dover

Ferry crossing Dover - Calais  
Transfer Calais - Dieppe

Our starting point is the London Borough of Bexley in south-east London. It's an early start through the built up streets of south-east London and north Kent. There is likely to be a lot of traffic around so we'll cycle slowly, single file and keep close together. We will regroup following this first section out of London.

After 16 miles / 26km we reach the city of Rochester with its 1000 year old Norman Castle, historic cathedral (the second oldest in Britain) and strong links to local resident Charles Dickens. From this stage of the day our surroundings start to become less built up and congested. We cycle on narrow, winding roads with high hedgerows either side. Much of the route from Rochester onwards is through small towns and villages along the edge of the North Downs, a designated "Area of Outstanding Beauty" and over the Pilgrims Way, a route used by pilgrims on their way from Winchester to Canterbury. Having cycled a large chunk of today's distance, it's a final push up a long hill to the lunch stop.



After lunch we cycle along a ridge, following the Pilgrim's Way to Burham and on to Lydden. Traffic starts to build up again as we approach the end of the day's ride.



Late afternoon the Kent coastline comes into view as we near Dover. Catch the 19.00 ferry (bikes will be loaded on to the vans) to Calais with dinner onboard. Once we reach French soil we meet our coach to take us to the hotel in Dieppe.

116km approx.

## Day 2 - Dieppe - Gournay en Bray

After a hearty breakfast, we are reunited with our bikes and set off through Dieppe, an old fashioned port town nestled between two limestone cliffs. The streets are likely to be crowded due to the traditional Saturday street market. Within 2½km we are into the pretty Normandy countryside. We pass through typically French villages, all of which seem to have at least one boulangerie and bar/tabac no matter how small.

The route to our first stop in the village of Torcy le Grand is gently undulating. The terrain is similar for the next stretch to the centre of Saint Saens, with its pretty central square and church, where we'll stop for lunch. From there we encounter a few uphill sections - some longer and more challenging than others. From Bosque Eveline (51km into the day) the route

becomes undulating once more.

The last stretch of cycling is another succession of sleepy villages along quiet roads. The terrain continues to be undulating with an uphill stretch that affords beautiful views of Saint Aubert-en-Bray and Onse-en-Bray. We will spend the night in Gournay en Bray. This evening we are bound to celebrate today's achievement over a glass or two of French wine or beer in these picturesque surroundings.

**80km approx.**

### **Day 3 - Gournay en Bray - Eiffel Tower, Paris**

We leave Gournay en Bray in a south-easterly direction bound for Paris and a beautiful days' cycling. Normandy is known for its bocage, farmland criss-crossed with hedges and trees and we are soon cycling amongst this type of rural landscape. We pass through numerous villages this morning and see the locals heading to and from church. The terrain is mainly undulating but there are some short climbs.

As we progress through the day, our surroundings start to change and we enter the suburbs of Paris. We stop for lunch after having cycled around 40km. Straight after lunch we enter a forested area known as Le Parc aux Etoiles for about 3km. From there it's a strong descent towards the River Seine. We cross the river over a bridge close to Poissy. This is a main road and there is likely to be lots of traffic. Once through Poissy we head uphill through more forest on a dedicated bike lane. The next main place we reach is St Germain-en-Laye. It is here that we cross the Seine once more, the river having swept round from where we crossed it before. We encounter a succession of traffic lights and roundabouts before crossing the river once again. The route is mainly uphill with one very steep climb followed by a long downhill.

The next bridge we cross takes us into the Bois de Boulogne on the western edge of the city. The designer of these woods took his inspiration from London's Hyde Park. Today it is home to the French Open tennis tournament

and two horse racing tracks – we pass both of these venues on our route through the park. We re-group inside the park for the final stretch of cycling. We exit this pretty expanse of green together at Place de la Porte de Passy. From there the excitement starts to mount as we cycle along the wide Parisian boulevards towards our final destination.

We cross the Pont d'Iena and straight ahead of us is the Eiffel Tower, Paris' most impressive and recognisable landmark. It is here that we celebrate the end of this memorable ride.

A short ride (approx. 5 minutes) to our hotel, situated close to the Eiffel Tower. Tonight we enjoy a celebratory meal and raise a glass of vin to the achievement of our group.



**114km approx.**

### **Day 4 - Paris - London**

This morning is free for you to explore Paris independently. It is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities in the world - Notre Dame, the Champs Elyées, Arc de Triomphe, Montmartre, Sacré Coeur, Musée d'Orsay ...there is so much to see and do.

In the afternoon we catch the Eurostar back to London from the centrally located Gare du Nord. On arrival at London we can collect our bikes and make our way home with memories of a great challenge.

This is a complex itinerary and is subject to change  
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