

# 2010 Alpes, Pyrenees, Bordeaux and Paris Trip

---

## TRIP DETAILS:

**Duration:** 15 days (14 nights)

**Dates:** Monday, 12 July to Monday, 26 July 2010

**Start:** Grenoble **Finish:** Paris

**Accommodation:** Selected quality hotels

**Group Size:** Maximum 35 people (4 Staff)

**Cost:** AUD\$6,950.00 – Single Supplement AUD\$1630.00

[Reserve your place now](#)

## [Inclusions](#)

## Optional Extras:

[Bike Rental](#) \$840 ([Cannondale Synapse carbon fibre](#))

[Paris Triomphe Package](#) (Final day)

[Grand Palais Seating](#) (Final day)

Pre or post tour accommodation to extend your stay

[Travel Insurance](#) and Car Rental.

[Email us for details](#)

## Highlights:

- See 8 stages
- Conquer Alpe d'Huez
- Do Mont Ventoux
- Take the Tourmalet
- See and ride the Alpes and the Pyrenees
- See the TT in Bordeaux
- Travel by TGV (fast train) to Paris
- and many more...

## Who is this trip for?

Come and see the mountain stages of the Tour de France 2010. We will start in the heart of the Alps, Grenoble and follow the Tour into the Pyrenees where we will celebrate the 100th year of these famous mountains in Tour de France history before making our way by TGV to the finale on the Champs Elysees in Paris.



The trip is geared to suit anyone with an interest in Cycling who wants to see the biggest of the Grand Tours, the Tour de France. This (and riding our bikes) is our main focus for the trip. We cater for cyclists of all abilities by providing riding options each day. To enjoy our trips you don't need to be an athlete, but do need to be someone who cycles regularly and in good health. Each day we'll have options for rides to suit people of who feel like a challenge, or an easy day enjoying the scenery. We ride on quiet scenic roads and where possible we ride on the race course ahead of the race. As with all of our tours you'll be guided by our expert team of ride leaders,

drivers and guides.

This trip will also cater for people who do not ride bikes with visits to the race and other attractions but an interest in seeing the Tour de France is important as it is the main focus of the trip.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

---

### Day 1, Monday, 12 July: Collection from Grenoble Train Station or Lyon Airport

---



There will be someone to meet you at the Grenoble Train Station or Lyon Exupery Airport and transfer you to our 3 star hotel in Grenoble. We have found from experience that the first thing most cyclists want to do is to have a short ride to shake out the cobwebs after the plane trip. The area around Grenoble provides an ideal base with a flat bike path for our ride this afternoon and many famous mountains nearby.

The first job will be to assemble your bike and Bikestyle Tours staff will be available to assist if you have any problems. We will organise a ride after lunch and there should be time to rest up before the welcome dinner in the evening.

Overnight: Grenoble

Meals: Dinner

## Day 2, Tuesday, 13 July: Alpe d'Huez

---



Welcome to the Alpes! Today is the stage finish in St Jean de Maurienne but we will skip the race in order to ride Alpe d'Huez. I'm sure you will all agree that climbing the famous Alpe d'Huez takes priority today! However we will be back in time this afternoon to see the race on TV.

Today is your chance to experience one of the most famous climbs in France, Alpe d'Huez. Alpe d'Huez was first climbed by the Tour de France in 1952 when Fausto

Coppi won the stage and since that day has become etched in Tour history.

This morning we will leave Grenoble by bus and travel along the Isere valley until we are 10 kms from the base of Alpe d'Huez. This will allow us time to warm up before we get to Bourg d'Oisans where the climb will start. The route up to the 1850 meter Alpe d'Huez via the 21 switchbacks is only 13.5 km, with the first few kms the toughest, but it's an achievable ride for most people.

We should all be finished our climb and back in the pretty village of Le Bourg d'Oisans by early afternoon. We will have time to purchase the compulsory souvenir cycling jersey before we head off for our next destination, Provence!

Overnight: Grenoble

Meals: Breakfast

## Day 3, Wednesday, 14 July:

Today is the “fete nationale”, or to us non French people Bastille Day. It’s not only a public holiday but also the day when traditionally a Frenchman will try to win the stage of the Tour de France. The stage today from Chambéry to Gap on the edge of Provence and is probably well suited to the current crop of French riders as it’s got some challenging climbs but it isn’t in the high mountains so not a target for the pure climbers.



It was on a hot undulating stage from Chambéry to Gap in the [2003 Tour de France](#) where Lance Armstrong made his now famous dash across a field after narrowly missing the badly injured Joseba Beloki.

We will head out this morning for an extended ride and stop to see the race pass near Grenoble. As we tackle Mont Ventoux tomorrow we’ll take it easy today. The fans will be out in droves today so the atmosphere will be quite special. After seeing the race we’ll head for our next stop in Provence in a small traditional hotel in the centre of the town of Nyons. Tonight we’ll have dinner in the hotels restaurant, which is well regarded locally and specialises in Provencale dishes. As today is Bastille Day, there will be festivities in the town centre with dancing, food and wine. A great chance to see the locals celebrate the “fete nationale” in true French style.

Nyons is a small town in the Drome Provencale, an area known for its olives and lavender and dry Mediterranean climate. The town has a long history dating back to Roman times and just down the road from our hotel is a 2000 year old Roman bridge. The upper town is worth a visit to explore the tiny streets and quaint old houses. A true village of Provence without the usual hordes of tourists.

Overnight: Nyons

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 4, Thursday, 15 July:



We’ll get away in the cool of the morning and travel to the village of Bedoin where we will begin our ascent of the Giant of Provence. This is the traditional route of the Tour de France that winds its way up through the forest to Chalet Reynard where the well known “moonscape” of Mont Ventoux comes into view. Over the last 6kms the bare landscape allows you magnificent views over the plains of the Luberon as you pass by the monument to Tom Simpson, who died tragically on the slopes of the mountain in the 1967

Tour de France. After the compulsory photographs at the summit we’ll head back down via the thrilling descent to Malaucene where our coach will be waiting to take us to our next stop in the coastal resort of Port Camargue. For those not wanting to tackle the difficult climb that is Mont Ventoux we’ll offer an alternative easy ride visiting some of the local villages of the Luberon.

We will have some lunch, freshen up and leave Malaucene for our journey to Toulouse where we will arrive in time for a relaxing drink and dinner. Tomorrow we will meet the rest of our group who will be starting in Toulouse and travelling with us to Paris.

As the old capital of Languedoc and France's fourth-largest city, Toulouse (known as la ville en rose, or the city in pink) is the major city of the southwest, and the gateway to the Pyrenees mountain range. It is an ancient city with a stormy history. Complimenting this distinguished history, Toulouse is also a city of the future and the high-tech centre of the aerospace industry in France. It is home to Airbus and Aérospatiale — and the National Center for Space Research has been headquartered here for more than 3 decades. The extraordinarily high population of students, some 110,000 out of a population of more than 800,000, also contributes to the pulse of the city.

Overnight: Toulouse

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 5: Friday, 16 July:



There will be a ride this morning out into the countryside around Toulouse, particularly the area to the north west around the Forêt de Bouconne and l'Isle Jourdain. The town of l'Isle-Jourdain is in the Gers department and situated

in beautiful countryside. Your journey to the town takes you through a timeless landscape of fields of giant golden sunflowers, soft green pastures and traditional half-timbered farmsteads. The town is typical of many in the region. Fiercely protective of its Gascon heritage, l'Isle-Jourdain celebrates its history and this is evident in the buildings themselves. We will stop here for a bite to eat before returning to the hotel to see the finish of today's uphill stage finish in Mende which is usually a thriller.

We would also recommend a trip into Toulouse to have a look around the lovely cobbled streets and historic buildings. Another possibility is a visit to the Airbus factory where the A380 is assembled. It's not far from our hotel.

Tonight we will have a dinner where you will meet your new travelling partners and where our staff will answer all your questions on your upcoming adventure.

Overnight: Toulouse

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 6: Saturday, 17 July:



Today's stage finish is in Revel and we will be heading across there today to see the race finish. It is about 65km and we will head out of Toulouse to Revel by bus.

When we arrive in Revel we may be just in time to see the end of the market. Every Saturday morning one of the most beautiful markets in France is held under the massive central roof and all around the square.

This is a relatively unknown but beautiful part of France to ride as it sits just on the edge of the Montagne Noir which is a part of the Parc naturel régional du Haut-Languedoc. Bikestyle Tours knows this area well as our French base is just 40kms from here.

The race will pass through town (or the edge of it) and head up the final climb to the Lake at Saint-Ferréol. This should help to split the group as it has in the past. It's well worth a ride as it's very scenic and festive with lots of people having BBQ's and generally having a good time!

So first of all we will ride this little loop and then head out for our ride along some of the quieter roads returning to Revel along the course. As with nearly all days on our trips there will be two or possibly three different rides offered ranging from a shorter ride for a recreational cyclist to something that should satisfy a more serious cyclist.

After we have seen the race finish and jersey presentations we will leave for the short drive to our pleasant and traditional French hotel in Castelnaudary, nicely situated on the bank of the Canal du Midi in an urban setting and just a few minutes walk from the main town centre and the canal basin. Castelnaudary is a market town, and the capital of the Lauragais. It is the main port of the Canal du Midi and is the birthplace of the rich bean and meat stew called "Cassoulet" that you must try before you leave!

The Canal du Midi is a 240 km (150 mi) long canal that connects the Garonne River to the Étang de Thau on the Mediterranean and along with the Canal de Garonne forms the Canal des Deux Mers joining the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. The canal runs from the city of Toulouse down to the Mediterranean port of Sète.

Overnight: Castelnaudary

Meals: Breakfast

## Day 7: Sunday, 18 July



The race leaves Revel this morning, passing near our hotel in Castelnaudary before heading for the mountains with a finish at the summit of Plateau de Bonascre. We could stay in town to see the race pass however from experience we know there are two things you are sure to want to see, a finish and a start.

Today we will ride across to the start in Revel to see the riders leave for their first Pyrenees stage. We will offer two routes to the start, one direct ride of around 20km and another longer and more difficult ride of around 45km. Once we've seen the race leave we will gather again to continue our day. We will return to the hotel either directly (about 20kms) or take a ride up into the Montagne Noir to tackle a climb or two before returning to the hotel to see the finish on TV. The climbs in this area are usually between 500 and 700 metres so it will be a nice intro for you.

Race starts are great to see. First of all, the huge publicity caravan leaves town handing out their freebies with everyone from children to grandmothers scrambling to get something! Experience tells us don't get between a French grandmother and her Tour freebie!

Next the teams arrive with their team vehicles with their roofs full of bikes and team buses with the riders safely tucked inside being given last minute instructions from their directors. After instructions they must do what is called "sign on" where they sign a start sheet. The rule is no signature, no start. The riders will ride their bikes to a big yellow podium where the crowds gather to see their heroes. So some good places to gather are near the team buses or somewhere between the bus and sign on. Normally the stars and the yellow jersey signs on towards the end so be patient.

Then after all the ritual it's time to go. The riders go to the start to begin their long day in the saddle. The race always leaves on time with the first part of the race being a neutral period to get them safely out of town.

Overnight: Castelnaudary

Meals: Breakfast

## Day 8: Monday, 19 July



This morning we leave Castelnaudary with our final destination being Lourdes. On our way we will stop to see the race deep in the Pyrenees mountains.

This morning we will drive to Aspet which is perfectly positioned for us to see the race today. Aspet is positioned between the Col des Ares and the Portet d'Aspet. These climbs will come towards the end of the race to Luchon so you will get to see what a peloton looks

at the end of a hard day. The gaps between groups and riders will be minutes, not seconds with the final group often known as the autobus or the gruppetto. This is the name given to the group of cyclists who form a large group behind the main peloton.

Our rides from here will focus on these climbs so we will leave the bus and head across to the course and climb up to find a position on the Col des Ares where we can see the riders pass. It's about 25 kms to the top and it is up to you how far you wish to climb however don't go over the top as it could take a long while to get back!



The other point of interest (and worth a visit) in this area is the Memorial Fabio Casartelli, less than 15kms away from Aspet. Fabio Casartelli was an Italian cyclist and an Olympic gold medallist, who died in a crash on the descent of the Col de Portet d'Aspet, France, during the 15th stage of the 1995 Tour de France. Lance Armstrong, Fabio Casartelli's teammate, went on to win Stage 18.

If you wish it should be possible to first ride to the Memorial Fabio Casartelli and then ride onto the climb of the Col des Ares.

After the race we will continue our drive to Lourdes where we will spend the next 4 nights.

In the heart of the Pyrenees, Lourdes is a religious centre and receives more than 5 million pilgrims from all over the world every year most of whom come to take the healing waters. Lourdes was just a small market town on the 11 February, 1858 when Bernadette Soubirous saw the Virgin Mary along the Gave. Today Lourdes has the second greatest number of hotels in France (outside Paris) with 230 establishments. For us though it is the geographical position, at the foot of the mountains making it an ideal starting-point for our cycling trips into the Pyrenees with all of the major climbs not far from us.

Overnight: Lourdes

Meals: Breakfast

## Day 9: Tuesday, 20 July 2010



Today stage is from Luchon to Pau and we will see the race about 20 kms from Lourdes on the slopes of the Col du Soulor, which is really the last big climb of the day.

Those wanting to tackle a big mountain will leave the hotel early this morning and take the very handy bike path that leaves Lourdes and takes you down to Argeles Gazost where we will leave the path and begin our ascent of the Col du Soulor and Col d'Aubisque. The Col du Soulor is an undulating climb with some quite steep

sections. Depending on time, once we get to the top of this climb we will continue onto the Aubisque along the Corniche du Cirque de Litor which is a highlight with stunning scenery and the odd cow standing on the road with his bell ringing to warn you if there happens to be some mist. We say "depending on time" as the roads will be closed quite early today and although you may get across to the Col d'Aubisque, you may not get back before the race comes through. In which case you will be able to see the race on the Col d'Aubisque.

For those wanting a less strenuous ride we will leave a little later and again follow bike path to Argeles Gazost where we can see the race pass or continue on to see the race just out of town on the lower slopes of the Col du Soulor to see it there.

After seeing the race pass we all head back to Lourdes by bike.

Overnight: Lourdes

Meals: Breakfast

## Day 10: Wednesday, 21 July



It's a rest day today, for the race that is! Not for us though...

We are going to ride the Tourmalet today!

We chose this ride today as it allows you time to do it at your leisure and after all it is celebrating 100 years and is the most famous of all Pyrenees climbs.

Today we will ride from the hotel on a hilly 35km to St Marie de Campan where we begin climbing the 17 hard kilometres to the summit of the Tourmalet before going down the other side descending into the Luz Valley. From

the top of the Tourmalet it is 50km back to the hotel in Lourdes making a ride of 100 kms. Whilst this is mostly downhill on the way home there is often a headwind up the Luz valley.

If anyone wants an easier ride we will be offering a 40km ride to Bagneres de Bigorre and back or possibly a visit to Pau to have a look at a team hotel followed by a ride back to Lourdes.

Overnight: Lourdes

Meals: Breakfast

## Day 11: Thursday, 22 July



Today the race resumes and there is no easing the riders back into it with the start in Pau and a finish atop the mighty Tourmalet. The final mountain stage of the Tour de France today from Pau to Tourmalet will be an exciting one, and possibly decisive in the race. The Col du Tourmalet is one of the most famous of climbs on the Tour de France. It has been included more than any other pass and this year celebrates 100 years since the Tour de

France first passed over it and is ranked hors catégorie, or exceptional.

If the top places in GC are close then the only chances to gain time are this difficult mountain stage, or the time trial in Bordeaux in two days time. With no team time trial, new teams and the world's best riders this could be one of the most hotly contested tours of recent years.

Over the last week we've done a lot of riding, but we won't have to venture too far today if we don't want to. We'll leave Lourdes and head down the valley bike path that follows the old railway line to Pierrefitte, before continuing to Luz St Saveur via the scenic Gorge de Luz. From here you begin the climb of the Tourmalet. You may wish to go to the top or just outside the town where there are some good viewing points on some steep sections of the initial climb to see the race pass by, returning to the village to see the final moments of the race on TV at a local bar.

Our other option, which some may prefer, is to take a ride this morning up the nearby Hautacam, a climb that has featured many times in the Tour de France. With this option we can return to the comfort of our hotel in Lourdes and watch the race on TV.

After the finish we will return to Lourdes.

Overnight: Lourdes

Meals: Breakfast

## Day 12: Friday, 23 July



Today's stage is a transition day before the final Time trial tomorrow in Bordeaux.

Expect a breakaway today as the leading teams let those who are not high on GC to go away thus allowing the peloton to settle down and cruise along until the sprinters teams take over towards the end to bring them back together for a sprint finish.

Our day won't involve the race today as too much awaits us in the Bordeaux area. We will travel by bus to Libourne

where we will stop for the next two nights. It is the wine-making capital of northern Gironde and lies near Saint Emilion and Pomerol. When we arrive in Libourne we will check in and get ready to head off for a ride through the vineyards of Bordeaux.

We will head across to Saint Emilion on minor roads through beautiful villages and some of the oldest vineyards in existence. Wine was introduced to this region by the Romans. We will stop in St Emilion with its cobbled streets, wine shops and cafes before returning to Libourne. Saint-Emilion is an outstanding example of an historic vineyard landscape that has survived intact and in activity to the present day and is thus a World Heritage site.

Overnight: Libourne

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 13: Saturday, 24 July

Maybe it will all come down to today, the final Time Trial. However after all the mountains of the previous weeks the race may have well been decided.



This morning we will go for one last ride through the vineyards of Bordeaux before we head across to the city centre of Bordeaux to see the Time Trial start. The starts are great as we can see the riders warming up and preparing for their race. When the last rider has left we will go to a local cafe and watch the finish on TV before returning to Libourne for our final dinner of the trip. We like to do our farewell dinner on Saturday night as then

you're free to stay on the Champs Elysees and not rush back to the hotel after the race on Sunday.

Overnight: Libourne

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 14: Sunday, 25 July



We will have an early start today and head off to the nearby train station and catch the TGV directly to Paris while your luggage and bikes will be transported separately to save you lugging them about. Once in Paris we will transfer you to the Champs Elysees for the afternoon. You will have a few free hours to explore this most famous of all streets before it's time to see the race. If you have reserved seating please refer to the maps we

have provided you.

The last stage is traditionally a procession until the entrance onto the Champs-Elysees where the racing really starts. Riders traditionally chat, celebrate the final stage, pose for photographs, drink Champagne... sometimes they even dress-up, swap bikes and generally horse around. Traditionally, once the race gets into Paris, the Yellow jersey and his team lead the peloton onto the Champs-Elysees for what is a basically a big criterium in the centre of the French Capital.



Overnight: Paris

Meals: Breakfast

## Day 15: Monday, 26 July

Its farewell to your new friends as our tour comes to an end this morning. For those flying out today from Paris CDG airport our staff and coaches will be available to help you on your way.

For others why not stay on in Paris for a day or two more and enjoy everything this wonderful city has to offer.

### Inclusions

**Tour cost is per person twin share and includes:**

- Transport throughout by private luxury coach with custom bike trailer.
- Services of 4 experienced tour guides, including a former Pro cyclist, plus our coach driver.
- Transfers on Monday, 12 July from Lyon Airport or Grenoble Rail Station to hotel
- Transfer on Monday, 26 July to Paris CDG airport
- TGV train from Libourne to Paris
- 14 night's accommodation, in selected quality hotels (with private facilities).
- Buffet breakfast daily
- 3 course evening meals on 5 nights
- Mechanical assistance with your bike
- Sightseeing as listed
- Maps and Bikestyle guide to the Tour de France
- Bikestyle Tours cycling jersey, cap and musette bag
- A 20% discount card off Official Merchandise at the TDF store