

FRANCE

CYCLING & CULTURAL TOUR



9 Days/8 Nights

31 May - 8 Jun 2027

Tour Highlights...

Annecy • Rhône Valley • Lakes & Vineyards • Charming Villages • Waterfalls • Medieval Towns
• Riverside Cycling • French Gastronomy • Lyon



Summary

France is best enjoyed slowly, preferably on two wheels, with beautiful scenery ahead and the promise of good food waiting at the next stop.

Our nine-day adventure begins in Annecy, where flower-filled canals, cobbled lanes and the sparkling waters of Lake Annecy create a lovely introduction to the region. We'll explore the Old Town with a local guide and discover the flavours of Savoy during a delicious food tour featuring regional cheeses, truffle specialities, pastries and traditional mountain dishes.

From Annecy, we transfer to Seyssel, where our cycling adventure along the ViaRhôna begins. Over four riding days, we'll follow the curves of the Rhône through vineyards, wetlands, forests, orchards and peaceful rural villages. Daily distances range from 40 to 60 kilometres, with relatively gentle climbing and a shorter option available on the longest day.

Along the way, we'll pause in the canalside village of Chanaz, see the Pierre-Châtel Charterhouse perched high above the river and visit the impressive Glandieu Waterfall. There may also be time for a pink-praline brioche in Saint-Genix-sur-Guiers. Naturally, this is important cycling fuel.

Our overnight stops reveal another side of France, from Belley's hidden courtyards to Morestel's flower-filled streets and artists' galleries. In beautifully preserved Crémieu, we'll enjoy a well-earned rest day, with time to explore its medieval gateways, ancient ramparts, market hall and hilltop ruins.

The final ride takes us through open countryside and along the Rhône into Lyon, France's celebrated culinary capital. It is a fitting finale to a journey filled with riverside riding, medieval towns, Alpine flavours and the easy companionship that comes from travelling together.

This is France at handlebar height: relaxed, delicious and wonderfully memorable.

ICON Adventures, PO Box 11406, Toowoomba QLD 4350

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Day 1 Bienvenue à Annecy! (D)

Welcome to Annecy, where our French cycling adventure begins amid cobbled lanes, flower-lined canals and the sparkling blue waters of Lake Annecy.

Make your way to our centrally located hotel and settle in at your own pace. Depending on your arrival time, you may like to stretch your legs with a wander through the colourful Old Town, enjoy a drink beside the canal or simply relax after your travels.

This evening, we'll gather to meet our fellow travellers and raise a glass to the adventure ahead. Over a relaxed welcome dinner, chat through the days to come and begin sampling the excellent French food we'll undoubtedly be cycling to justify. No cycling today. Just good company, a beautiful setting and the exciting feeling that the journey has officially begun.

O/N (2 nts) Hôtel du Palais de l'Isle (or similar)

Day 2 Annecy (B)

After breakfast, we'll meet our local guide for a story-filled walk through Annecy's historic centre. As we weave our way along laneways and canals, we'll uncover the people, events and intriguing little details that have shaped this lovely corner of France. Along the way, we'll see landmarks such as the distinctive Palais de l'Île, once used as a prison and courthouse, and discover why Annecy has earned its nickname, the 'Venice of the Alps'.

The afternoon is yours to enjoy. Browse the boutiques, visit the château, take a cruise on the lake or find a waterside café and watch the world wander past. You might even like to sample a little local cheese, purely in the interests of cultural research, of course. There's also hot air ballooning or tandem paragliding if you are looking for a little high adventure. This evening is free to choose your own restaurant and enjoy another taste of Savoyard life.

Day 3 Annecy to Seyssel (B,L)

After breakfast, we'll join our local guide for a delicious three-hour journey through Annecy's culinary traditions. Across several carefully chosen stops, we'll sample truffle specialities, regional cheeses and a hearty Savoyard dish such as tartiflette or diots au crozet. We'll finish with a freshly made pastry and a tasting of jams and spreads infused with Alpine flavours. Drinks are included and, rest assured, nobody will be leaving hungry.

This afternoon, we'll transfer to the riverside town of Seyssel, where our cycling journey begins. After checking into our accommodation, we'll be fitted for our bikes and make any necessary adjustments. The evening is free to rest, settle in and prepare for tomorrow's first ride.

O/N (1 nt) Seyssel B&B



Day 4 Seyssel to Belley 40km, 280m ascent (B,D)

Today, we climb into the saddle and begin our journey along the ViaRhôna. Following the curves of the Rhône, we'll cycle along quiet country roads through vineyards, forests and small rural hamlets.

We'll pause in Chanaz, a picturesque village beside the Savière Canal, where traditional artisans continue to produce local wares. There will be time to explore, find a café and enjoy the peaceful waterside setting before continuing our ride.

Our route then follows the Rhône towards Belley, the historic capital of the Bugey region. Its compact old centre is filled with quiet lanes, hidden Renaissance courtyards and handsome buildings shaped by centuries of religious and commercial life. The town's striking Saint-Jean-Baptiste Cathedral and former Bishop's Palace offer an impressive finish to our first day on two wheels.

O/N (1 nt) Belley

Day 5 Belley to Morestel 48km, 200m ascent (B,D)

Leaving Belley, we'll follow the Rhône through a changing landscape of wetlands, farmland and peaceful riverside countryside. High above the river stands the imposing Pierre-Châtel Charterhouse, a former 14th-century monastery and fortress perched dramatically on its rocky promontory.

Our ride continues through the orchards and villages of the Pays du Guiers. Those with a sweet tooth may like to detour to Saint-Genix-sur-Guiers, birthplace of the region's famous brioche filled with crunchy pink pralines.

Further along, Glandieu Waterfall provides a wonderfully refreshing pause before we complete the final kilometres to Morestel. Known as the City of Painters, Morestel welcomes us with flower-filled lanes, galleries and traditional stone houses topped with rounded tiled roofs.

O/N (1 nt) La Garenne de Morestel (or similar)

Day 6 Morestel to Crémieu 60km 300m ascent (30km option) (B,D)

Today's ride leads us across open plains and gently rolling countryside. We'll pass through the Vallée Bleue, a large riverside recreation area where we can pause beside the Rhône and perhaps enjoy a cooling swim.

Continuing towards La Balme-les-Grottes, we'll have the opportunity to visit its remarkable caves, carved deep into the limestone cliffs and surrounded by centuries of legends. The caves are also home to protected colonies of bats, although they may be less delighted to see us than we are to see them. Quiet country roads then guide us towards Crémieu, a beautifully preserved medieval town of stone gateways, ancient ramparts, cobbled lanes and a magnificent covered market hall.

A shorter 30-kilometre option follows an almost continuous cycle path directly from Morestel to Crémieu.

O/N (2 nts) Le Clos Sayanna Guesthouse (or similar)

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Day 7 Crémieu rest day (B)

After three days in the saddle, today is ours to enjoy at a gentler pace.

Crémieu's compact medieval centre is ideal for exploring on foot. Follow the lanes beneath ancient gateways, wander around the impressive 15th-century market hall and discover the town's ramparts and former Augustinian convent. Those with energy still in reserve can climb Saint-Hippolyte Hill, where the ruins of a 12th-century priory are accompanied by wonderful views across the tiled rooftops below.

Alternatively, browse the local shops, settle into a café or find a sunny terrace for a long lunch. It is a rest day, after all, so doing very little is also a perfectly respectable cultural activity.

Day 8 Crémieu to Lyon 52km, 220m ascent (B&D)

After breakfast we'll return to our bikes for the last stage of our ride.

The route begins among fields, farmland and small villages before gradually joining the dedicated cycle paths of Greater Lyon. We'll stop at Miribel-Jonage Park, an enormous natural playground of woodland, lakes and riverside trails, with time to relax or take a swim if the weather is being cooperative.

As we approach Lyon, the scenery slowly shifts from rural countryside to lively neighbourhoods and broad riverbanks. Our final kilometres follow the Rhône into the centre of the city, bringing our ViaRhôna adventure to a wonderfully fitting conclusion in France's celebrated capital of food.

O/N (1 nt) Lyon

Day 9 Au revoir, Lyon! (B)

Our cycling journey comes to an end after breakfast this morning. Depart any time.

You may choose to spend a little longer discovering Lyon's historic neighbourhoods, colourful food markets and famous restaurants, or continue with your onward travel arrangements - ask us if you would like assistance.

It's time to say au revoir to our fellow travellers, although perhaps not goodbye. After sharing this many kilometres in the saddle, we suspect there will already be talk of where we might cycle next.

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The Details

PRICE INCLUDES

- Small-Group - Min 6 - Max 12
- Australian Host - Suzanne Holden
- Classic hybrid bike & helmet hire (e-bike extra)
- Group transfer from Annecy to Seyssel
- 24/7 telephone support from local office
- GPX tracks, and daily route information
- 8 Nights in boutique accommodation
- Meals as per itinerary 8B, 1L, 5D
- Airport transfer from Geneva airport on arrival if combining with Sicily tour
- Luggage transfer whilst cycling

LET US HELP YOU WITH:

- Flight bookings
- Travel insurance
- Pre or post tour travel
- Airport transfers

PRICE EXCLUDES:

- Flights to France
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Meals not mentioned
- Tipping - please allow approx. €30pp
- e-bike upgrade A\$150/bike
- Airport transfers (unless joining from ICON Sicily tour)
- All expenses of a personal nature

COST PER PERSON

- Twin or double share: A\$4,795/person
- Single supp: A\$980/person (3 available)
- Solo Twin share: availability subject to roommate match

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