

Bicycle Tours in France: Cycling Corsica

OVERVIEW

From the sea, Corsica appears as a large piece of Alpine Europe floating on a bed of cobalt blue. In fact, Corsica is geologically more closely related to the Alps than it is to its larger neighbor to the south, the Italian island of Sardinia. But culturally and linguistically this birthplace of Napoleon is all Mediterranean. Palm-lined streets bustle with colorful marketplaces and French, the island's official language since 1768, mingles with a variety of exotic dialects brought here from northern Africa, Italy, and the rest of the Mediterranean basin. An island of beauty, Corsica is also an island of delightful surprises for the touring cyclist.

Extend this tour 3 more days join us on our Cycling Corsica Plus! Beaches and Bonifacio



HIGHLIGHTS

Mountain scenery, Extraordinary coastal scenery, French and Mediterranean food, Picturesque villages, Beautiful Pisan and Genoese churches, Fabulous beaches, Impressive watchtowers along the coast

TOUR FACTS

Includes	The usual plus... Use of a quality 27-30 speed bicycle; 8 days, 7 nights' accommodation; 7 breakfasts, 5 dinners with wine; shuttle back to Bastia on Day 8; 2 or 3 bilingual tour leaders; van support
Countries	France
Begin/End	Bastia / Shuttle back to Bastia
Arrive/Depart	Bastia
Total Distance	297-355 km (183 - 219 miles)
Daily Distance	Average if you ride every mile every day 59 km (36 miles)
Rating	301 Moderate coastal rides and one day of optional mountainous terrain.

DATES & PRICES

Dates	Price	Single Supplement*
Sep 13 - 20, 2017	USD\$4295	USD\$550
May 10 - 17, 2018	USD\$4295	USD\$550
Sep 17 - 24, 2018	USD\$4295	USD\$550

*We are happy to match solo travelers who would like to share a room with someone of the same gender. If no match exists, due to hotel pricing, we will charge 50% of the single supplement rate. This fee will be collected at the time of the final payment. If a roommate assignment is available this fee will be refunded at the conclusion of the tour.

Bicycle Tours in France: **Cycling Corsica**

DAY 1

Arrive Bastia, Corsica



Highlights Historic capital of Corsica, sidewalk café, gourmet introductory dinner

Bright blue and white fishing boats and sidewalk café await you today as our tour begins near Bastia, Corsica's historic capital and its most picturesque city. We recommend arriving a day early to soak in the charms of this centuries-old Mediterranean seaport. We'll fit you with a bicycle this afternoon so you can explore town, and then reconvene this evening for a traditional French gourmet dinner together.

Distance: Test Ride. Meals: D

Lodging L'Alivi

DAY 2

Bicycle to Rogliano



Highlights Scenic cycling in Corsica's panhandle, Genoese history and settlements

After breakfast you'll head north on an easy ride along the east side of Cap Corse, Corsica's panhandle. You'll want to stop for a snack or coffee in Erbalunga to see its Genoese coastal tower before a lunch stop in the tiny port of Santa Severa. Stop for ice cream or a swim in Macinaggio before heading inland to our hotel.

Distance: 38 km (24 miles). Meals: B, D

Lodging U Sant'Agnellu

DAY 3

Bicycle to St. Florent



Highlights Scenic cycling on Cap Corse, Mediterranean beaches

Today's ride is one of the most spectacular bicycle rides in the Mediterranean basin. We suggest an early start as you'll want to stop often for photographs. You can even take a swim during your lunch stop. Our route follows a chain of Genoese watchtowers, built along the coast in the late Medieval period to provide the local villagers early warning of impending attack by pirates. We'll continue south along the west side of the Cap Corse to our hotel right on the water, located in the ancient Roman town of St. Florent.

Distance: 74 km (46 miles). Meals: B

Lodging Hotel Dolce Notte

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DAY 4

Rest day in St. Florent



Highlights 11th-century Pisan cathedrals, enchanting bay of St. Florent with nearby beaches and aquatic activities

A visit to our first 11th-century Pisan cathedral begins our day. Pisa ruled Corsica unchallenged until 1133 A.D. when the pope divided the island between Pisa and rival Genoa. Our optional ride continues on to the most famous Pisan cathedral in Corsica as we wind our way through hilltop villages and river gorges.

Distance: 0 - 54 km (0 - 33 miles). Meals: B, D

Lodging Hotel Dolce Notte

DAY 5

Bicycle to L'Ile Rousse



Highlights Beautiful coastal landscape with breathtaking vistas and Mediterranean beaches

You'll head across the unique Désert des Agriate today. This stony landscape that was once rich with wheat fields is unlike any area on the island and offers some beautiful panoramas. After soaking up the views you'll coast down to the beach for a refreshing swim if you wish. Our efforts today will be rewarded as we explore the coastal town of L'Ile Rousse with its charming center and beach. And if that's not enough, we'll watch the sun drop into the sea.

Distance: 46 km (28 miles). Meals: B

Lodging Hotel L'Escale Côté Sud

DAY 6

Mountain Day



Highlights Coastal to mountain scenery, spectacular wildflowers in season, Genoese history

You'll head into Corsica's interior today. This is the main "mountain day" on the tour, so take your time and enjoy the extraordinary wildflowers. Climbing over the pass of Saint Colombano you'll enjoy a wonderful glide down the Navaccia River to Ponte Leccia, named for the 17th-century Genoese bridge still in use. You'll then have a steady long climb to be rewarded with a beautiful descent through chestnut forests as we head into one of Corsica's most interesting regions, the Castagniccia.

Distance: 79km (49 miles). Meals: B, D

Lodging La Refuge

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DAY 7

Bicycle to Aléria, shuttle to Pinarello



Highlights Ancient capital of Roman Corsica, luxurious beachfront hotel

The trend today is down though there are a few hills that will certainly get your attention before you reach the coast. Our destination, Aléria, was one of the principal Roman trading towns and capital of Roman Corsica by 170 B.C. From Aléria we'll shuttle just under an hour to our luxurious beachfront hotel.

Distance: 70 km (43 miles). Meals: B, D

Lodging La Pinarello Hotel

DAY 8

ExperiencePlus! Shuttle to Bastia



Highlights Tour ends in Pinarello shuttle to Bastia

Enjoy breakfast together before you head back to Bastia for flights home.

Meals: B

INCLUDED**BEFORE YOU LEAVE**

- Tour planning tips on what to bring, what to leave home, and what you might like to read before your trip.
- Bicycle Tour Training program designed specifically for your tour rating by renowned cycling coach, Joe Friel.
- Assistance with flights, trains and booking extra nights at your starting and ending tour hotels.
- A complimentary gift of your choice

ON YOUR BICYCLE TOUR

- Superb tour leaders who are great fun and also bilingual, bicultural experts, and avid cyclists. They're experienced to help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- Comfortable lodging in 3-4 star hotels located in or near the town square with easy access to your favorite café (bar, gelato, espresso) of the day, always with a private bath.
- All breakfasts & at least half of your dinners each featuring multi-courses, fresh, seasonal specialties and wine or beer. See specific tour information for details.
- On many tours we also have 1 or 2 lunches—see specific tour itineraries for details.
- Use of a high quality bike—a Titanium road bike, hybrid, or an aluminum tandem in Continental Europe. For tours in South America, Scotland and Ireland we have aluminum frames. All of our bikes are geared specifically to cruise the flats and help ease you over the mountain.
- Our bikes come with a computer so you can track your miles. They also have an expandable rear rack pack to carry your stuff, and a water bottle that's yours to keep.
- Full van support to carry luggage - and tired cyclists, too!

- Special events like wine tastings and cultural visits as described in the trip itinerary.
- All tips and gratuities at tour hotels and group meals.
- Unique routes, marked with our signature chalk dust arrows that ensure you won't get lost. They also give you the freedom to travel at your own pace.
- Daily mileage options—for those folks who just can't get enough cycling, we'll suggest optional routes off our marked course.
- Detailed route map, and arrows that will lead you to hidden wonders on your bicycle ride.
- All the fun (and more) that you expect from your vacation.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Transportation to and from the bicycling tour including airfare, or train travel
- Helmets - we ask that you bring your own to ensure the best fit
- Meals not listed in the itinerary
- Tour Leader gratuity

AFTER YOUR BICYCLE TOUR

- Deeply discounted tours with our "Re-Cycle Program." Your fifth tour with us will be discounted by 50% of the average price of your previous four tours; your tenth tour will be discounted by 100% of the average price of your previous nine tours!

 **LEVEL RATINGS**

Our itinerary descriptions provide daily mileage to help you determine if a bicycle tour is suited to your physical capabilities and interest. You'll also find a note about the trip's terrain on the "Tour Facts" page of each tour. The purpose of this page is to offer a general explanation of our rating categories.

BIKE TOURS 101

Perfect for people looking for mostly flat terrain, or those newer to cycling. Also great for families traveling with younger children (8—14).

- **Average daily mileage:** 50—57km (30 to 35 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Terrain:** 101 tours offer flat to gently rolling terrain. You'll find specific information on the "Tour Facts" page of each itinerary where you see the tour rating.

BIKE TOURS 201

For riders who prefer a combination of flat and rolling terrain with moderate climbs on one or two days. An excellent compromise for friends who have diverse riding abilities.

- **Average daily mileage:** 50—57km (30 to 35 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Terrain:** 201 tours feature mostly flat and rolling terrain with moderate climbs on one or two days where you might gain up to 2,000 feet. Some 201 tours may have some longer mileage days of up to 85 kms (50 miles) over fairly flat terrain. While others may have days of 30 - 45 kms (18—25 miles) with steeper climbs. You'll find specific information on the "Tour Facts" page of each itinerary where you see the tour rating.

BIKE TOURS 301

For riders who enjoy some climbing every day. These tours are best suited to intermediate level recreational riders. Fit beginners will likely do well but may want to shuttle on days with steeper climbs.

- **Average daily mileage:** 50 to 75 km (35—45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Terrain:** For 301 tours expect cumulative daily climbs of 1,500—2,000 feet and several days of climbing in excess of 3,000 feet. You might encounter some longer mileage 80—90 km (50-60 miles) days with rolling terrain. You'll find specific information on the "Tour Facts" page of each itinerary where you see the tour rating.

BIKE TOURS 401

For cyclists who love to climb (and descend)! If you haven't trained or are an inexperienced rider you will find these trips very challenging and will very likely need to shuttle regularly.

- **Average daily mileage:** 50 to 75 km (35—45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Terrain:** 401 tours are challenging. Expect the possibility of longer mileage days of 80 - 120 kms (50 to 70 miles) with rolling terrain, or some sustained hills for considerable distances - think mountain passes, or steeper (+5%) climbs that come with regularity and could be as long as 10 km (6+ miles). You will have gains of 1000 meters (3000 feet) on a third of the days. You'll find specific information on the "Tour Facts" page of each itinerary where you see the tour rating.

BIKE TOURS 501

Our ExpeditionPlus! tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages means limited van support so we recommended these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- **Average daily mileage:** 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Terrain:** Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

REMEMBER

It is almost always possible to adapt the day's ride to how you are feeling either by taking advantage of the support van, or asking tour leaders for additional mileage.

Need More Miles? On just about every day of every tour it is possible to add miles to the day. Just talk to your tour leader about the options.

Need Fewer Miles? If you aren't sure about your abilities or how much you want to ride remember the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. You are on vacation and we're here to help make it perfect for you.

Chalk Dust Arrows. Remember, no matter what level of tour you choose ExperiencePlus! uses chalk dust arrows to mark our routes so riders can take the day at their own pace! Whether you prefer to stop at every gelateria, take a hundred photos a day, or push to achieve a new personal best you'll be happy on our tours.

WHAT TO EXPECT**BICYCLES**

Your bike comes with a pack for the rear rack, lock, cyclometer (bicycle computer), a spare tube and patch kit and pump. If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so—your tour leaders will install them during the bike fitting. We have flat pedals with or without cages and straps available. For safety and hygiene reasons you are responsible for bringing a helmet.

Daily Routine (Procedures and Logistics)**DAYSHEETS**

Each day you'll receive a daysheet with information on the day's activities, meals and ride. These also include Tour Leader phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information about sites that you may want to stop and see along the route. Your Tour Leaders will also post daily announcements in the hotel lobby with information about sightseeing in town or restaurant recommendations for dinners on your own as well as important information about breakfast, luggage down and "arrows down" time.

NAVIGATING ON TOUR

At breakfast each day we will make the "Master Route Map" available so you can highlight your map for the day's ride. Of course, we also mark the route every day with our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map! The arrows also allow you to ride at your own pace. There is no need to "keep up" with the group—this is your ride!

But what if it rains? What happens to the arrows? In a light rain, the arrows actually "set up" and become more permanent. In a heavy rain, they do wash away. If that happens, we'll re-group to cycle together for those who want to continue cycling while those who prefer to stay dry can shuttle.

VAN SUPPORT

The van carries luggage and supports cyclists. It also has water, fruit and snacks. Though the van has snacks, we encourage you to stop and enjoy markets and find your own favorite local specialty.

HOTELS

We have carefully chosen all of our accommodations for their charm and location. They are typically small, family run hotels that offer you a glimpse into the local culture.

We prefer hotels near interesting sites in the center of town located along the best cycling route in the area. Because many of the hotels are small not all of the rooms will be

exactly the same. We keep this in mind and do our best to distribute rooms fairly by the end of the tour. Our itinerary lists our primary hotels. On rare occasions, listed hotels are subject to change.

MEALS AND RESTAURANTS

Breakfasts: we work hard to arrange complete breakfasts but some hotels still serve continental style breakfasts; cycling is energy intensive so we do recommend you plan for a morning or mid-morning snack on the road at a local café or market.

Water is OK in almost all hotels and in country fountains; if there is a problem, we will advise you.

We'll recommend lunch locations en route and most itineraries include a few group picnics. We limit the number of picnics so you don't feel pressured to be at a certain place in the middle of your ride.

Dinners together are often pre-planned and pre-ordered. We'll ask you if you have special dietary requirements. Pre-planned meals allow us to provide a variety of regional specialties and facilitate efficient service. Water, wine and beer are included.

TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADER TEAM

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5% of the tour cost per traveler – this for the entire tour leader team, not each Tour Leader. If you'd like to show your gratitude for your Tour Leaders' excellent service you can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your Tour Leaders did not quite meet your expectations, then we would like to know about it. You will also have the opportunity to leave your comments in our evaluation survey which we email to you after your trip.

PHOTOS

We'll be taking photos throughout the tour and we encourage you to do the same. Please note that we may use these for promotional purposes. Please inform us if you prefer images of you not be used. We realize that many of our travelers are great photographers and often people want to share photos after the trip. We'd love to see and share your photos from the tour with the world so if you don't mind the possibility of being famous (at least in the ExperiencePlus! world) send us a link to your tour photo gallery, or upload your favorite 20 - 30 pictures to your tour departure gallery - we'll send you the link to that online photo gallery in your final email!

CHECKLIST

TO DO TODAY!

Read through your Reservation Confirmation Email, it has important information to help you plan your trip!

- Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country
- Complete the Customer Information Form online at www.experienceplus.com/travelinfo/tourcif
- Apply for trip cancellation/interruption insurance within 21 days of booking your tour. Find details at <http://www.experienceplus.com/assets/files/packingbicycle.pdf>
- Download the bicycle training program found on the Training Program Blog Page at www.experienceplus.com/training

3—6 MONTHS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

- Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed. As you make your plans refer to the Getting To and Away sent to you in your booking confirmation email it provides meeting times and the starting and ending hotels and shuttle information when applicable.
- Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights. Please refer to the Getting To and Away sheet you received in your Reservation Confirmation Email.
- 12 weeks before your tour begin your training program www.experienceplus.com/training.
- Final payment is due 90 days prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Deposit Payment Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail you have received for detailed instructions.

6 WEEKS—2 WEEKS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

- Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Suggested Reading and Movie List which you'll find on the country page linked from the www.experienceplus.com/travelinfo page.
- Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing List on our website at www.experienceplus.com/assets/files/packingbicycle.pdf.
- We'll email your Hotel Itinerary information 30 days prior to departure.

DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack your Getting To and Away information and one day of cycling gear in your carry-on. See you soon!