

FAQ

DETOURS IN FRANCE – *Self Guided and Customized Tours*

Questions ?

What exactly is a self-guided tour?

We provide all the structure for a great trip: the right places to stay, wonderful routes to follow, with detailed, step-by-step route notes and highlighted maps, and a few, well-chosen meals. And we transfer your luggage while you enjoy the sites and scenery along the way. If you need any help, we are always an easy phone call away, and have a Trip Manager on hand in each region.

The joy is you do it at your own pace, with no schedule, and no waiting around for other people in a group of strangers. Stop when you want, however often you want, wherever you want.

Will we be with other people doing your tours? NO. We do not group people up together on the tours – it will be your own, private – tour, to do at the pace you like.

Are there fixed departure Dates?

NO. Just tell us your preferred arrival date, and we will confirm availability back to you. If for some reason that specific date doesn't work (which is rare), we will propose an alternative, either in dates or different hotel accommodation.

Do you offer group tours?

If *YOU* are a group of friends or family looking to travel together, we will be more than happy to help you organize your holiday. We can recommend and include special activities, guided visits and tastings, and as many of the meals as you like (so you are not stranded as a group looking for dinner).

We do NOT offer open dates for people to sign up on, to join another group of people, except on some of our Guided Wine Tours, where you will join a small group (generally up to 8 participants max) on the same tour.

I am a single; can I do your tour on my own?

YES. We have many travelers who are keen on exploring France, but are travelling on their own. The places we have you explore are friendly and safe, and you will find your hosts at the hotels and restaurants warm and accommodating. Our published prices are based on double occupancy, so contact us and we can give you a quote with the single supplement included.

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Why don't you publish single supplements?

The single supplement varies a lot depending if someone is joining friends, but in a single room (in which case overhead costs on the trip such as the bag transfers and bike delivery are divided between several people) or when someone is travelling on their own, and those costs are factored into their individual trip price. To avoid confusion, and to be sure we are quoting the best possible price for your specific scenario, we prefer to give a specific price for each request.

Questions ?

How would you describe your accommodation levels?

All of the hotels we use have been chosen with great service and excellent locations in mind. We offer 3 different levels of accommodation on our tours:

CLASSIC Comfortable 2 and 3 star hotels, all of course with private, en-suite bath. Many of our CLASSIC hotels are family-run.

CLASSIC + A selection of charming 3 and 4 star hotels – we try to find places with great personality that reflect the region, and are not too large.

DELUXE The best hotels the itinerary can offer; luxury accommodation: 4 and 5 star hotels

To help you choose, we list on our website exactly which hotels we use in each category on each itinerary; if because of availability, we cannot offer the hotel listed, you will know this and be given other options to choose from before booking.

You can also mix and match levels – perhaps you feel like spoiling yourselves for the final evenings, or perhaps there are specific hotels that appeal that you would like to include – just let us know.

What type of restaurants do you include?

The French are passionate eaters, and we believe that meals are a big part of your travelling experience. The dinners we include, either at your hotel's restaurant, or in great, local spots, make delicious, high quality meals, with fresh ingredients, and that reflect the region's culinary culture. This doesn't mean you'll be eating at Michelin-starred restaurants every night; it means you'll be eating at places with great ambiance, loved by locals as well, sometimes relaxed, sometimes more gourmet, but always with fabulous, fresh food.

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Can you accommodate my dietary restrictions?

Absolutely. Once you have booked, we will check with you to see if you have any dietary restrictions we should know about, and we communicate them to the restaurants we work with for your tour. Restaurants in France are much better now than they were in the past about accommodating these in a satisfactory and delicious manner.

How does the Custom Tour service work?

The tours we show on our website are all wonderful, but you can treat them as a simple starting point. We pride ourselves on our ability to do customize your trip, and to offer great advice for doing so. If you have something specific you would like to do, don't be shy – let us know. Either we will help your dream become a reality, or if there is a good reason to not do it, we'll give you our expert advice and try to come up with a fantastic alternate solution.

TELL US *YOUR* DREAM TRIP!

Where are you based?

Our office is located in Beaune, France, in the heart of Burgundy. Being based in France means we have the local expertise and easy access to all our trip regions. We travel to them OFTEN (we do route work and research every year), to check out hotels and restaurants, go over routes and itineraries, and meet with our contacts, and we update our tours so that you are always getting the best trip possible.

We have Trip Managers who help us in our work in each region as well, meaning there is someone in the region when you are on trip, whether it be in Alsace, Brittany, Bordeaux, Dordogne, the Loire, Normandy, Provence...

Questions ?

What type of bikes/equipment are included?

Except for our Regular Bike itineraries, each of our tours includes the use of a high quality Hybrid bike. They come equipped with everything you will need: lock, water bottle, front removable handlebar bag, and a set of back panniers. We have slightly different bikes in each region; you can upload the Bike Details pdf for your specific trip from that trip's webpage for the exact brand and specs.

On our Challenge Bike Trips, the included bikes are high quality, very lightweight, carbon road bikes. Again, the specific details for each trip can be seen on the Bike Details pdf that you can upload from the trip page on our website.

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We have the whole range of sizes available for all our bikes, and will ask your size details after you have booked in order to ensure the best possible fit while you are on trip. We will also find out if you would like our helmets and toe cages on the pedals, both complimentary during the trip.

Many of our trips offer the possibility of other bike options; ask us for details on supplements where available for e-bikes, road bikes, and children's equipment.

I am not a great biker; will I be able to do your trip?

Other than our Challenge Bike Trips, our bike holidays are meant for people who enjoy being active, but not for athletes. We offer several different levels of trips to suit your riding ability, including several in the "easy" category. Our routes are designed to allow you to explore at a relaxed pace, with lots of time for stopping and site-seeing along the way, rather than to be pedaling against the clock to get in to your destination before sunset!

Having said that, you will be biking every day, and for a few hours, on your holiday. You will not be physically at ease if you are not already comfortable on a bike, and already bike a little in your regular lifestyle. Your behind will be happier once you get on trip if you get out and practice, with a few outings at least, before you arrive for your trip in France.

Questions ?

What happens if there is a problem with the bike?

We expect you to be able to manage a basic flat tire, which very occasionally happens while on trip. We provide you of course, with the new inner tube and tools needed for this, and if it has been several years (decades??) since you have changed a bike tire, you'll find the French quite bike savvy and happy to help! However, if something trickier comes up with the bike, you can contact us at any time, and our Trip Manager will do what is necessary to help you out quickly, in order for you to continue enjoying your holiday.

What happens if it rains on your biking or walking tours?

The weather, sadly, is one thing we cannot control, and it could rain while you are on your trip. Generally if it does rain, it won't rain all day, nor so hard that you can't ride or walk anyway, perhaps getting a little wet. We always recommend you bring rain gear of course, just in case.

If the weather is really unpleasant, or you simply don't feel like riding or walking, we are happy to help organize a transfer for you (and your bikes on the bike trips) to the next hotel. There may be a supplement charge for this that you can pay directly to the driver, and we will communicate it to you when we set it up so you know how much to expect when making your final decision.

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I'm ready to book, how does this work? What kind of deposit do you require? What if I need to cancel my trip?

We will send you a booking contract to fill out and to scan and e-mail back to us. We require a 30% deposit to confirm your tour, by VISA or MASTERCARD. This deposit is fully refundable up to 2 months before your tour. We will charge final payment 1 month before your trip dates, which is then non-refundable. All our (very straightforward) booking details are outlined on the booking contract.

We do not sell Travel or Cancellation insurance; there are many companies specialized in this service that we recommend you look into, for your country of origin. Also, it is a good idea to check with your credit card company to see if there is travel insurance included when you pay for your holiday with their card.

Questions ?

I'm booked. What is the best way for me to get to the start of the trip? Can you help me book my flight / train tickets?

We are not a ticketing Travel Agent, so we cannot purchase flight or rail tickets for your travel. However, we are more than happy to help out with advice regarding the best itineraries and timing to get to and leave from your trip.

For rail travel, it is best to wait until less than three months before your trip, as that is when the French Rail Company (SNCF) finalizes their schedules. They have their own website www.voyages-sncf.com, but it can be difficult to use for purchasing tickets with non-European credit cards. We have found another company, www.capitainetrain.com which is very easy to use to check schedules and to purchase tickets, and which in our experience is priced much better than the international Eurail company. You have to sign up for it, but it is free, and they do not hassle you with spam afterwards.