

Great Explorations

CERTIFIED OFFICIAL OPERATOR of TOUR de FRANCE



Particulars

Trip Dates:

[Alps to Paris: July 2011](#)

Pyrenees: July 12-18, 2011

Custom trips also available. Call or email for details.

Total Days:

7 days/ 6nights

Arrive/Depart:

Bagnères de Bigorre/
Carcassonne

Activity Level:

Daily Options:

Moderate: 40-60 km
Intermediate: 60-80 km
Advanced: 80-100+ km

Tour de France, Pyrenees: Bagnères de Bigorre to Carcassonne Tour with the Pros

We will be back in the Pyrenees in 2011 and will be starting from Bagnères de Bigorre; you can reach Bagnères by train via Tarbes from Paris, or by flying from CDG into Tarbes/Lourdes airport, just 18 km away. Flights through Air France are approximately 50 euros.

Bagnères is ideally situated with superb riding in every direction and just 30 km from Col Tourmalet for those that wish to challenge one of the highest cols in the Pyrenees. Bagnères is a charming village with thermal baths and spa, great restaurants and a cycling mecca. From here we will follow the peloton east, overnights in St. Girons and then finishing in the medieval city of Carcassonne.

Great Explorations is recognized as one of two *certified official operators of the Tour de France* and our partnership level included access at the departure and technical zone visit (with media, broadcasters etc.) at a stage start and finish; these credentials provided unparalleled access to see teams up close and have the chance to meet your favorite riders.

Only Great Explorations:

- Small groups, extraordinary guides, and authentic experiences.
- A ride you will never forget: Col de Tourmalet, ahead of the pros
- In Paris, watching the finale and then a surprise you won't ever forget
- Order off the menu at restaurants you won't find in guidebooks.
- We design and operate our own trips so there are only good surprises.

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Cost:

**Land Cost per person
(current year):**

Yellow Jersey*:
US\$3250
*includes private access

Classic:
US\$2850

6B/ 1L/ 5D

Single Supplement:
US\$600

Bike Rental Options:
Racing:
Van Nicholas Mistral with
shimano 105- \$390
Cannondale CAAD 5-
US\$290
Hybrid:
Cannondale

US\$210

Itinerary

July 12: Bagneres de Bigorre

Our Pyrenees trip starts in Bagneres de Bigorre, which is a cyclists' dream village surrounded by lush rolling farmland, forests and just south, the dramatic peaks of the Pyrenees (col Tourmalet is less than 30 km away); pro teams often base here to train and Tour de France legend Laurent Fignon (yellow in '83 & '84), operated a cycling center here (we met him with Miguel Indurain and Bernard Hinault on Day 2 of the trip in 2010). There are over 20 cycling routes to choose between ranging from moderate routes of 30 km/ grades of 2.5% to 100+ km with challenging grades including those the pros will ride on this year's Tour. There are also thermal baths here and a swank spa. If you arrive on the train from Paris, we'll meet you on arrival (train arrives at 1:53) with bike fit between 2-6. There will be time for a warm-up ride (27.5 km/easy grades; 53 km/moderate grades) or you can explore the town center and relax. We meet for a welcome reception at 7:00 and then enjoy dinner at a local bistrot.

July 13: Bagneres de Bigorre

Stage 11: Blaye-les-Mines to Lavaur

As the peleton approaches the Pyrenees from the north, we will have an opportunity to cycle without the crowds today. Choose from a 45 km loop with 733 m of climbing or an 83 km loop over Col Aspin with 1355 m of climbing. Both rides visit the ancient cistercian Abbey at Escaladieu and the 14th century castle at Mauvezin. We will have dinner at a country auberge that will be memorable.

July 14: Bagneres de Bigorre

Stage 12: Cugnaux to Luz-Ardiden (209 km)

The pros will be climbing one of the most exciting cols of the Pyrenees today, Col Tourmalet and this will be the ideal place to watch. For those that wish to cycle a metric century, this would be the ideal day, riding via Luz-Saint-Sauveur (the climb is 19 km and average grade 7.4% with a maximum of 10.2%). For those that prefer to ride directly up from the east the distance is 24 km, and you can watch anywhere along this route.

July 15: Bagneres de Bigorre

Stage 13: Pau to Lourdes (156 km)

It's just 22 km from Bagneres to Lourdes and if you prefer to ride directly there to watch the finish this is an option. Our long route will be a spectacular route we have ridden many times that is just over 100 km with 1600 m of climbing.

July 16: St. Girons

Stage 14: St. Gaudens to Plateau de Beille 189 km

The peleton will leave the Pyrenees today and race east from St. Gaudens. We will get an early start and ride part of the course over Col de Portet (1069 m) and Col de la Core (1395m) as far as St. Girons where we are staying at the charming Hotel Eychenne.

July 17: Carcassonne

Stage 15: Limoux to Montpellier 187 km

We'll ride between St. Girons and Limoux with plans to watch the start and then cycle the 25 km to Carcassonne, the medieval city that is one of the most well preserved and historic in France. We will finish with a festive dinner in the historical center and toast our week together..

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Note: Once our access is confirmed, you will have the option of opting 'in' for this

On our Tour de France trips, we generally try to provide options to cycle 60 km, 80 km or 100 km on each cycling day. Although anyone of moderate cycling level may enjoy this tour, it is ideally suited to those with intermediate to advanced fitness levels. By this we mean you should be able to cycle 60 km at a minimum with some hills. If you have any questions about this trip, please consult our Travel Advisors

Accommodations



Residence Des Thermes, Bagnères de Bigorre

This 3-star hotel directly faces the Grand Thermes in the historical center of Bagnères. There is a charming café on the main floor and everything in Bagnères is a short stroll away. We stay in Bagnères because it is a cyclist's mecca and is one of the most beautiful villages in the Pyrenees.



Hotel Eychenne, St. Girons

Formerly a stage coach inn, this 3-star hotel has been in the same family for 7 generations. There is a swimming pool and gardens to enjoy and each of the rooms is distinctive. This hotel is a member of both Guide de Charm and Chateau & Hotels Collection.



Hotel Campanile Est La Cité, Carcassonne

Rated by Trip Advisor as the #1 hotel in Carcassonne, this hotel is close to the center and has a swimming pool and amenities to ensure comfortable stay.

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What's Included in the Cost of Your Trip?

- Services of one or more experienced Great Explorations guides and support vehicle
- Lodging as per final itinerary
- All breakfasts, 1 lunch, 5 dinners
- Entrance fees for selected historical sites and museums
- Detailed map and cue sheets
- All baggage transportation during the tour
- Travelogue
- Pre-departure Trip Planner with tips on what to bring and general information about traveling in France
- All tips in hotels, restaurants etc. (excludes discretionary tips for guides)

Please note: Final itinerary is subject to revision; any changes made are done so in an attempt to provide the best possible trip given route conditions and available services. Due to the nature of our business and exchange rates, prices are subject to change. All prices quoted are U.S. dollars but we gladly accept payment in Canadian dollars also. Due to cancellations and waiting lists, trip availability fluctuates daily. If you have any questions or would like to confirm space on this trip before making your reservation, please contact us at info@great-explorations.com or by telephone at 604.730.1247

Map of the Area

