

## TOUR DE FRANCE CYCLING HOLIDAY

TOUR PYRENEES July 8<sup>th</sup> to July 19th 2017



*Pics from previous Croydon Cycleworks tours*

Cyclists around the world agree, France is truly the Mecca for road riding. Magnificent scenery, excellent roads, friendly motorists, great food and wine and a rich cycling culture are elements that make cycling in France a lifetime goal for many bike enthusiasts. The 104th edition of the Tour de France promises some terrific action and close racing. Will Froome be back for more time in Yellow, and will Richie Porte be the Aussie challenger we have been hoping for (don't forget Rohan Dennis). The French will be hoping for a local to show form, with some saying the race route has been tailored to suit Romain Bardet, who now is a real contender for the yellow jersey. Whatever the result, we will be in a perfect position to experience the colour and spectacle of the world's greatest bike race, while riding the roads and mountains that are part of tour folklore. Viva le tour!

Here are some key features of our 2017 tour.

- We aim to see 2 race stages up close, one mountain stage and a stage start.
- Our 11 day tour will have its home base in the spa town of Bagnères de Luchon, in the heart of the serenely beautiful Pyrenees, famous for its steep mountain passes.
- Group size is limited for a more intimate, flexible tour. A French speaking guide and mechanic will be riding with you or driving you at all times
- We will ride the toughest mountain passes famous in tour history, such as the Port de Bales, Col de Peyresourde, and the breathtaking Col du Tourmalet.
- Our schedule is designed to minimize transfers and driving, most days you will ride from the front door, making for more time to ride and also more time to relax and enjoy the other aspects of holidaying in the French countryside. We are also more flexible with our schedule than other tours; you are always free to do your own thing if you wish, including doing extra riding!

## Proposed tour itinerary (subject to change)

**Sat 8<sup>th</sup> July** We pick you up from Toulouse and drive south to Luchon, deep in the heart of the Pyrenees. Our accommodation is a lovely converted 18th century Inn and our host Elodie is a wonderful cook. Unpack the bikes, and maybe go for a quick ride around town. Rest up and eat well tonight for we have some fantastic cycling ahead.

**Sun 9<sup>th</sup> July** Superbagnères is just out of Luchon and is a well known ski resort and stage finish. It's a long HC category climb with some very steep sections with a great view over Luchon and the valley below. Our 50km ride concludes with a leisurely lunch in town.

**Mon 10<sup>th</sup> July** The beauty of the Pyrenees will be apparent on our ride over the Col de Mente and Porte D'aspè (where we visit the Casartelli monument) and return via St Beat. A charming 110km route with some tough climbing. Cool down after ride by having a dip under the crystal clear waterfall located just nearby our accommodation (watch out for bears).

**Tues 11<sup>th</sup> July** Today we head off early to climb the slopes of the difficult Port de Bales, which the TDF visits frequently. I rate this climb as very hard, with its constant changes in grade. A 70km round trip.

**Wed 12<sup>th</sup> July** We will head to Bossost in Spain over the Col du Portillon, stopping for a tapas style brunch and return via St Beat and Marignac. An easier ride today of 65km.

**Thurs 13<sup>th</sup> July** Tour day today! We will ride part of the TDF race route, heading over the Col de Peyresourde to get a good vantage point on race route on the climb to Peyragude. This will be a key stage for the GC contenders so expect to see all the big names riding at their max.

**Fri 14<sup>th</sup> July** An early start for a pleasant and largely flat ride this morning takes us to St Girons to watch today's stage start. These are a lot of fun with opportunities to see riders and pick up tour memorabilia. 90km round trip. Celebrate Bastille day with the locals tonight in town.

**Sat 15<sup>th</sup> July** In towns all around France, it is market day. Take the morning off and have a walk around Luchon, try some local produce, maybe book in to the famous "Vaporium" in town for spa, hot spring sauna or massage, you've earned it!

**Sun 16<sup>th</sup> July** We ride one of the most epic and famous climbs in the world today, the mighty Col du Tourmalet. It is an unrelenting climb topping out at 2115 metres with a gradient up to 10.5 percent. There is a monument to the tour and a café at the top (with some fantastic old bikes and photos on display), well worth stopping at to reflect on the effort it takes to ride here, and also the history the mountain represents for the Tour de France. A special dinner tonight at a rustic hilltop restaurant, famous for its fresh homegrown produce.

**Mon 17<sup>th</sup> July** Today we take you on our secret 100km loop, a spectacular ride on some lesser known roads that are truly memorable. Don't forget to try the locally grown peaches and nectarines, the taste is amazing.

**Tues 18<sup>th</sup> July** Last ride today! A delightful ride down the valley to St Beat then over the Col de Ares. Not too difficult and a great way to finish our tour. Farewell dinner tonight at accommodation.

**Wed 19<sup>th</sup> July** We drive back to Toulouse to drop you off at the station by midday

**Cost of this tour is \$4450 including GST. This represents fantastic value as similar commercial tours can cost twice this much.**

- Airfares are not included. You will need to organize your own transport to Toulouse (easy access from Paris via the very fast TGV train or by air). We will drop you back at Toulouse station by midday on the final day.
- Includes comfortable accommodation in a quiet scenic location a short ride from town centre (rooms are shared)
- All breakfasts and some snack food are included. Dinners at accommodation (five evenings) are also included. Dinners eaten out and café stops are at your expense.
- Participants will be asked to contribute and assist at times with food preparation, packing and cleaning up. We don't make the beds or clean up after you but we will be there to guide, assist, and drive and ensure a hassle free holiday for you.
- Places are limited, so reserve yours early to avoid disappointment. A 50% deposit is required to secure your place with the final payment due April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017. Some conditions apply regarding cancellation. Participants are required to take out their own travel insurance. No insurance = no ride.
- Special tour jersey is provided to participants
- We recommend bringing your own bike, however we can arrange bike hire if you wish. A good quality road bike will cost you around 50 Euros per day. You must book early.
- To book or for more info email Mick [sales@croydoncycleworks.com.au](mailto:sales@croydoncycleworks.com.au) or call 03-97235164
- Places are very limited. Don't delay or you will miss out!



The Croydon Cycleworks tour is now in its tenth year and is a proven success, taking a carefully selected group of likeminded enthusiasts on what for many will be a trip of a lifetime. Here's what some past participants had to say about our tour.

***"What a fantastic tour! Superb riding, terrific food, and really well organized. The guys did a wonderful job. I would love to go again!"***

***"I'd been wanting to see the Tour de France for years, and this was a great way to do it. The trip was better than I'd ever imagined. Lovely accommodation and area, very relaxing. Spectacular riding. Loved it".***

***"Mick and Adrian did a great job organizing, they were there to help if needed and made my time so enjoyable, wish I could go again"***