FRANCE & SWITZERLAND
Paris to Geneva Cycle

Duration: **6 days / 5 nights**
Trip Grade: **Tough**
Dates:

9 – 14 May 2010	**8 – 13 May 2011**
20 – 25 Jun 2010	**19 – 24 Jun 2011**
5 – 10 Sep 2010	**11 – 16 Sep 2011**

Payment Options:	**2010**	**2011**
Self Payment Registration Fee	£199	£199
Trip Cost	£700	£750
Fundraising Registration Fee	£199	£199
Min. Fundraising Target	£1750	£1875

This exciting, short cycling challenge links the two classic cities of Paris and Geneva, crossing the Swiss border with a fabulous *Tour de France* climb in the beautiful Jura Mountains.

Our route takes us south-east from Paris, crossing rolling chalk hills, quiet woodland and rural plateaux. The landscape is dotted with small medieval towns and Romanesque churches as we cycle through the famous vineyard regions of Champagne and Burgundy. Skirting Dijon, we head to the Roman spa town of Lons-le-Saunier, at the foot of the Jura.

Our legs feel well-prepared as we tackle the hair-pin bends of the *Col de la Faucille* (1232m), a 4th category climb frequently used in the *Tour de France* and the toughest part of our challenge. Crossing into Switzerland, we finish beside the lake in beautiful Geneva.

ITINERARY

Day 1: London – Paris by Eurostar

We depart for Paris on a morning Eurostar from London St Pancras, after loading our bikes onto the support vehicles. On arrival, we transfer to our hotel and are free to enjoy the sights of Paris before meeting again for dinner and a detailed trip briefing. Overnight in hotel. *(Lunch not included)*

Day 2: Paris – Sens

Up early for our first day in the saddle! We head south-east out of Paris, roughly following the course of the River Seine. Before long we have left the suburbs behind us, and enjoy cycling through open, agricultural landscapes. Our route takes us over the rolling chalk hills that make this region so good for wine-growing. We pass through areas of green woodland and many small, traditional villages. This region is very historic, with many towns and villages dating back to medieval or Roman times. There are no tough climbs on this first day, but we'll no doubt be pleased to see the medieval Burgundy town of Sens, complete with its beautiful town hall and gothic cathedral. Overnight in hotel. **Cycle approx 125km (80 miles)**

Day 3: Sens – Semur-en-Auxois

Today sees another long day's ride, but we will share a huge feeling of satisfaction as we count off the miles! Our route undulates as we head through open fields of barley and wheat, and wilder forested areas. Pinot noir is the main grape of the vineyards we see on south-facing slopes. There are no large towns on our route, and we cycle on small, quiet country lanes connecting the abundant farms and villages that dot the landscape. We drop downhill as we approach the picturesque medieval hill-top town of Semur-en-Auxois, cross its beautiful stone bridge and have a short climb to our nearby hotel. Overnight in hotel. **Cycle approx 125km (80 miles)**

Day 4: Semur-en-Auxois – Lons-le-Saunier

Another early start! We cycle south-east, skirting the busy city of Dijon. We pass through the quiet town of Beaune, situated on the Burgundy wine-trail, and cross the River Saône; there are numerous reservoirs in this region which break up the browns and greens of the fields that we cycle through for most of the day. Our day's cycle is mainly flat, though there are a few short, sharp inclines to test our leg muscles! The landscape changes towards the end of the day as we enter the Jura region, but we reach the lovely Roman spa town of Lons-le-Saunier and save the real hills for tomorrow! Overnight in hotel. **Cycle approx 150km (95 miles)**

Day 5: Lons-le-Saunier – Geneva

A shorter day today, but our big challenge is to cross the Jura Mountains into Switzerland! We set off from Lons-le-Saunier and start climbing steadily almost straightaway. It's important to pace yourself and not over-do it, as although the first part is strenuous, the real climb has not yet begun. The scenery quickly becomes wilder, uncultivated Jura country, and it's not long before our efforts are rewarded with wonderful views across the valley. We take our time, enjoying the fabulous landscapes and resting our legs on the downhill stretches as we wind our way further into the mountains and gradually up to our highest point, the Col de la Faucille (1232m) – our biggest challenge yet! Hairpin bends take us almost 12km uphill before we reach the top; this climb has featured in the *Tour de France* on many occasions, and we should feel justly proud of ourselves for reaching the summit. In clear weather we should get great views of the Mont Blanc massif. From here, we enjoy a fantastic, well-earned descent down to the international border with Switzerland, and we cruise to our lakeside finish point in Geneva. Overnight in hotel. Celebration meal. *(Dinner not included).* **Cycle approx 110km (70 miles)**

Day 6: Geneva – London

Free time to explore Geneva before flying back to the UK. (*Lunch & dinner not included)*

WHAT'S INCLUDED

The tour cost includes all accommodation, transport (by Eurostar and return flight), and food other than 4 meals as detailed in the itinerary. It also includes full trip support of experienced Discover Adventure leaders, drivers and mechanics (see Trip Support below).

As a general guide, items not included in the tour cost are your personal travel insurance, airport departure tax where applicable, any extra meals, drinks, personal items and entry to any optional tourist sites you may wish to visit.

Approx. £100 - £150 is recommended for personal expenses. We strongly recommend you carry a credit card in case of personal emergency.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

The group flight returns into London Heathrow or Gatwick and is booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline.

Connecting Flights

If you book onward flights from Heathrow or Gatwick, it is your responsibility to allow plenty of time for connections with the group flight and to cope with any flight schedule changes. Please be aware that the best deals allow little flexibility if you need to change them. We regret that we are unable to book connecting flights for you.

Flying Separately

If you prefer to book your own flight please ask us for a land-only cost. You will be responsible for making your own arrangements for getting to the airport. We need to know if you do not require our group flight as early as possible; please complete the form in the information pack you'll be sent with your booking confirmation.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is in 2-3* hotels, picked for their proximity to our route. The hotels are comfortable with en suite facilities; standards may vary between the hotels.

FOOD

All food is included except 4 meals where specified. Lunches are generous buffet-style with plenty of energy food to keep you going! Dinners are generally eaten in the hotel.

Dietary Requirements

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Bear in mind that being vegetarian is not generally well-understood in France, so meals may not be as varied as you are used to. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Other Meals

Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally when we are in towns, where you are free to explore and find something to suit every budget.

ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE!

Travelling, whether in the UK or abroad, is always unpredictable. Whether it's the wide-ranging state of public toilets the length of Britain, puncturing in the rain, quirky accommodation staff … it's all part of the challenge you are signing up for!

We can guarantee that coming face-to-face with experiences outside your normal 'comfort zone' will help you bond with your fellow cyclists and provide you with plenty of things to laugh about! A sense of humour and sense of adventure are two of the most important things to bring with you!

PASSPORT & VISA

A valid ten-year passport is essential for travel in France & Switzerland and must be valid for at least 6 months after entry. There is no visa requirement for UK citizens. Other nationalities should check entry requirements for both countries.

VACCINATIONS

We recommend the following vaccinations:

- Tetanus (essential)

You should <u>always</u> check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

CYCLING INFORMATION

FITNESS WARNING: DESIGNED TO BE CHALLENGING!

This ride is designed to be challenging for those of good health and fitness, and is achievable for most people provided they train well in advance. We will supply you with a thorough training guide when you have registered. Training for the challenge is all part of the preparation and requires commitment! Without it, you will find the ride less enjoyable – and we want you to have the time of your life!

We are always happy to talk through the trip in more detail with you if you are worried about your fitness at any stage.

Terrain

The cycling is mainly undulating. Distances are fairly long, averaging 120km per day; you should make sure you are fit enough to manage these distances confidently.

We ride mainly on small country roads. Traffic is light on most of the roads but when we pass through large towns we go through as a group. French drivers are generally far more considerate to cyclists than here in the UK.

The final climb is long and tough. Using *Tour de France* terminology, it's 4th Category, which designates it as an official mountain climb. It will give you an unbeatable sense of achievement on your final day: you must have trained for this, be used to cycling and very familiar with the range of your gears. You cycle approximately 510km on this trip overall.

Bikes

We strongly recommend that you ride a road/racing bike (rather than a mountain bike) for this trip due to the long distances involved on well-surfaced roads. However Discover Adventure can provide hybrid or mountain bikes at an extra cost of £10 per day if you wish (£60 total).

Bike Repairs

There will be a range of spares in the vehicle along with a full tool kit. However it is impossible for us to carry spares for every eventuality so it is vital that when bringing your own bike it is in good order before departure.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU SUPPLY YOUR OWN HELMET AND WEAR IT AT ALL TIMES WHILE CYCLING.

Clothing & Equipment

We could be exposed to bad weather at any time. The table below gives you an idea of the climate, but be prepared for all weathers and temperatures and remember that weather conditions can change quickly. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, as well as details on useful discounts you are entitled to as a Discover Adventure customer. We are always available if you need advice.

Weather

The climate is very similar to that of southern England. Temperatures can vary widely; rain is always a possibility and it may be windy in flatter areas. In the mountains the weather can change rapidly.

June / July	14 - 28°C
Aug / Sept	16 - 32°C

TRIP SUPPORT

Discover Adventure Crew

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first-aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

All our leaders are from the UK or other English-speaking countries. Most work for us on an ad-hoc basis and have

'real' jobs in-between trips! We never send our leaders to the same destination for months on end – we want them to be as enthusiastic about your trip as you are.

The number of crew and support vehicles looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but the team will be looking after every aspect of your trip whether that's transporting your luggage, ensuring your route is well-marked, making you lunch and sorting out any mechanical problems. At Discover Adventure we pride ourselves on our high leader: cyclist ratio and believe it leads to greater trip enjoyment as well as excellent trip safety.

Luggage

Support vehicles are with the group all of the time. All luggage and spares will be carried in them.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft sailing bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already.

Your bikes will be well-packed and protected during transit in our vehicles, but if you prefer to store your bike in a bike bag or cardboard bike box just bring it to London ready packed.

You should also bring a small daypack or large bumbag to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

TRIP SAFETY

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will always have access to our 24-hour emergency back-up in the UK. Our leaders are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary should local conditions dictate.

Pre-trip administration – such as compulsory medical questionnaires and travel insurance – is all done with your safety in mind.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Long before 'Responsible Tourism' became a recognised phrase, we designed and ran our trips to ensure they made minimum impact on the environment and a positive impact on the local communities we pass through. AITO, our Trade Association has recognised the work we do in this area and has awarded us 4 stars as a Responsible Tour Operator.

CARBON OFFSETTING

We actively encourage all our customers to offset any emissions connected with their trip. You can offset at any time in the lead-up to departure by visiting Climate Care via our website and making a donation to a worthwhile project supported by them. Alternatively, if you wish to take more practical action you can volunteer for a day with BTCV and work on an environmental project near to where you live. Work may include construction footpaths, dry stone walling, creating wildlife habitats or planting trees in your community. Make your volunteer pledge by going to www.btcv.org/dapledge

Please contact the Discover Adventure office with any queries using the contact details below.

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