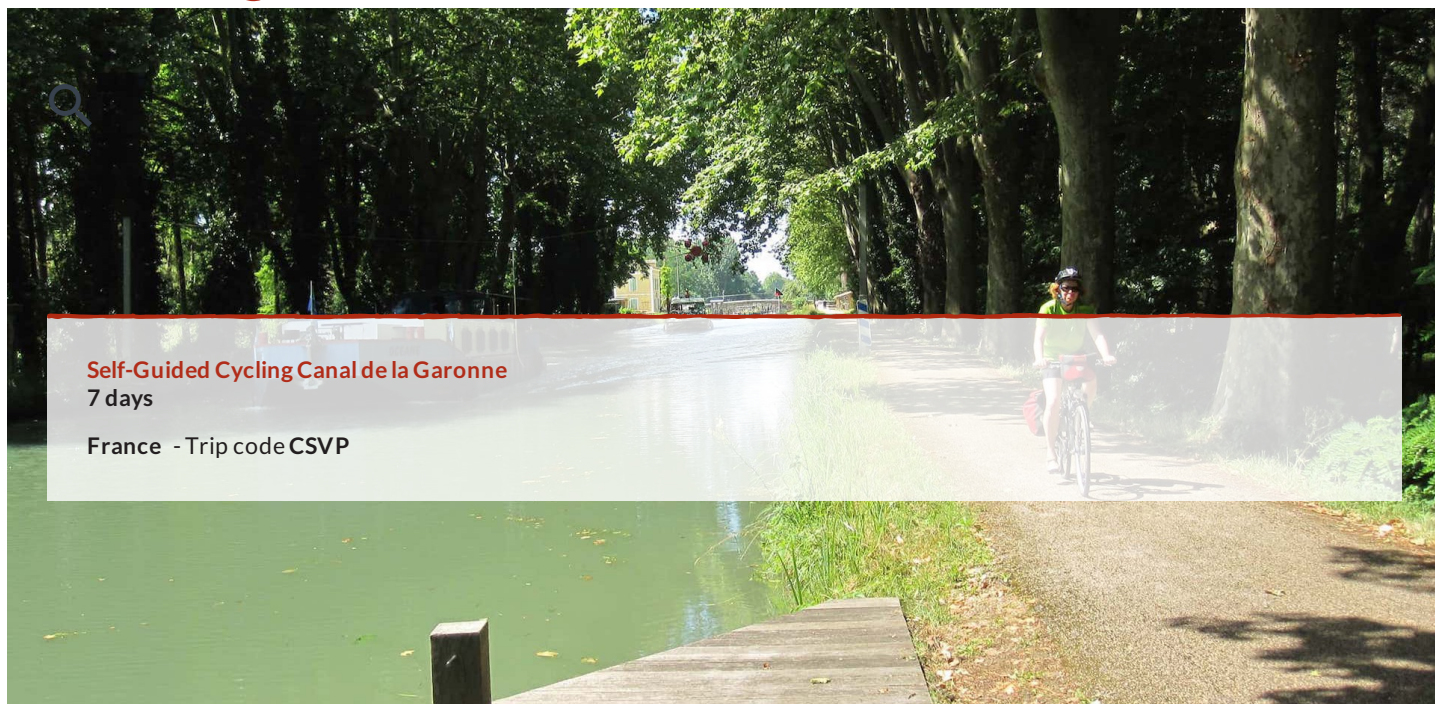


EXPLORE!



Self-Guided Cycling Canal de la Garonne

7 days

France - Trip code CSVP

Self-Guided Cycling Canal de la Garonne

The Canal de la Garonne in the southwest of France makes the perfect setting for an easy self-guided cycling holiday.

From the city of Bordeaux start cycling through winelands over gently rolling hills before connecting with the Garonne canal, which leads you all the way to elegant Toulouse. Along the way you pass châteaux, historic towns and villages and countless age-old plane trees that line the tow path. Tarn-et-Garonne is known locally as the 'land of a thousand and one flavours' and you can accompany regional delicacies with fine local wines.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Canal de la Garonne** - Easy cycling following the historic canal from Bordeaux to Toulouse
- ★ **Picturesque landscapes** - Rewarding views of southwest France from the saddle
- ★ **Delicious local gastronomy** - Accompany regional delicacies with a glass of Bordeaux
- ★ **Traditional architecture** - Petit and grand châteaux, old farms with elegant pigeon towers and wooden barns for drying prunes
- ★ **Midi - Pyrenees** - Cycle through the beautiful landscape and charming villages of the Tarn-et-Garonne region, known locally as 'the land of a thousand and one flavours'

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

CYCLING GRADE:

Easy To Moderate

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate rides on the same tour. You'll be cycling through flat or gently undulating terrain, with the occasional more energetic ascent.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Arrive in Bordeaux

The first night of your holiday is spent in a charming 18th century hotel, complete with grand original features. From its city centre location, you are well-placed to explore Bordeaux, with its wealth of beautiful neoclassical architecture.



Accommodation: Hotel Majestic (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Cycle to Cadillac through villages and vineyards

After breakfast you head to the bike supplier on foot or you can choose to take a tram. You will be supplied with your bike and be able to make the necessary adjustments with the help of the friendly bike shop owner and after signing the agreement of care for the bike, you will set off to Latresne on a cycle path along the Garonne River. From here, your route turns north, winding through the hills and between impressive wine estates and typically-French villages. In La Sauve, you turn south again, following quiet tarmac lanes for the last leg of your ride to Cadillac. Here, you can look forward to a refreshing dip at your hotel swimming pool (in summer months), as well as views of the impressive 18th-century 'Chateau de Cadillac'.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 47 kilometres (150 metres total ascent).



Accommodation: Chateau de la Tour (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Start your journey along the Garonne Canal to Meilhan-sur-Garonne

Today's route starts off on winding inland lanes, avoiding the busy road between Cadillac and Saint Macair. Although you face some ascents, a rewarding landscape awaits of impressive estates, vineyards and picturesque villages. After passing through Bastide de Saint Macair, you cross the Garonne to commence your route along 'La Véloroute des Deux Mers' - your cycling path along the Garonne Canal 'between two seas'. Tonight's accommodation will be in one of two charming chambre d'hôtes (B&Bs), situated in either Meilahn-sur-Garonne, or a bit further inland in Marcellus.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 51 kilometres (Total 200 metres ascent and 140 meters descent)



Accommodation: Le Font d'Uzas (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 4 - Pedal to Sèrignac; Enjoy plenty of stops en route

Today you continue along the Canal de la Garonne, cycling on flat terrain all the way to Sèrignac. Enjoy the shade of ancient plane trees along your route, and take time to make small detours. The church in Mas d'Agenais is worth stopping off at, with its authentic Rembrandt painting. You may also choose to enjoy a cup of coffee on the beautiful village square in Damazan, with its fortress and historic arcades. Another option is a visit to the town of Tonneins, worth the 10 kilometre detour for its wide choice of restaurants, cafés and shops. Tonight's accommodation in Sèrignac is in a converted 17th century convent, boasting exceptional hospitality.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 66 kilometres (Total 30 metres ascent and 60 meters descent)



Accommodation: Hotel Le Prince Noir (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 5 - Continue along the canal to UNESCO-listed Mosaic

Today commences with a gentle ride between the plane trees and orchards along the canal. After 10 kilometres, the channel protrudes through an aqueduct over the river, providing a unique entrance to the city of Agen. We recommend spending some time here to explore its pleasant city centre and renowned Museum of Arts. Continuing along the canal to Valence d'Agen, this is another beautiful town, with curious round washhouses. The last section of today's route is particularly scenic as you pedal into the historic town of Mosaic. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is a particularly important stop on the Chemin de Saint Jacques (Way of St James) coming in from Geneva. We recommend spending time exploring its 11th century Abbey of St Pierre, with its stunning cloister, before retiring to your comfortable and well-positioned hotel.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 58 kilometres (Total 60 metres ascent and 30 meters descent)



Accommodation: Hotel Le Pont Napoleon (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Arrive in Toulouse; explore 'La Ville Rose'

Today's ride takes you over an aqueduct and through pretty agricultural scenery. Passing from village to village, you will see elegant dovecots protruding above old farms. From Montech, you may choose to jump on the train with your bike to avoid the busy roads in the outskirts of Toulouse. The last 10 kilometres of the route into Toulouse is especially busy. Once you have checked in to your conveniently-located hotel in Toulouse, the rest of your time is free to explore France's fourth-largest city. Knicknamed 'La Ville Rose' because of its pink stone buildings, the city is renowned for its thriving café and cultural scene, as well as its atmospheric old quarter.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 67 kilometres (Total 75 metres ascent and 50 meters descent)



Accommodation: Hotel Royal Wilson (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Trip ends in Toulouse

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

DAILY DISTANCE



General cycling information

On this tour you cycle 289 km over five days (an average of 58 km per day) with further optional rides available. The terrain for the first two days is over gentle hills on secondary roads. Once you join the Canal de la Garonne (around 70% of the total route) you ride mainly on flat cycle paths. We have graded the route as easy to moderate

Bike included

21 or 24 gear hybrid bike.

Bike information

Your included bike is a 21 or 24 gear hybrid bike and will be the correct frame size for your height. Various models are possible, each of a similar standard, eg Gazelle, Koga. Each bike is fitted with a map holder, small handlebar bag, water bottle holder and a rear pannier bag. A lock, pump, spare inner tube and puncture repair kit with tyre levers is included. All you need to bring is your own helmet. You will be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike.

Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday. You will be required to pay a refundable deposit upon collection of the e-bike in country. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

Cycling grade

EasyToModerate

Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a pump, lock, spare inner tube and tyre levers. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 6
Dinner: 2



Transport

Bicycle



Accommodation

2 nights premium hotel
4 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

France

Climate

Across France, from April - August, weather conditions are generally warm and pleasant with moderate rainfall; Autumn temperatures are a bit lower and the winter months (though colder) remain mild. The summer months on the Mediterranean Coast in the south tend to be warmer than the rest of France and have less rainfall, and also more mild winters; freezing conditions are nearly unheard of. The mountainous areas of the Alps, Juros and Pyrenees can be quite different. During summer the morning and evening temperatures are considerably cooler and it becomes much colder in winter with heavy snowfall. Western France, along the English Channel, there can be very strong winds and frequent rain during the winter months Nov - Apr. Wine harvesting takes place in late August/early September.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Catholic

Language

French

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Day 1 - Depending on your arrival time into Bordeaux spend time this afternoon walking over the Pont de Pierre or try a city or wine tour (book in advance locally).

Day 5 - Spend time in Agen visiting the Museum of Arts, the Notre Dame church or the cathedral of Saint-Caprais.

Day 7 - Depending on your onward travel plans spend time to explore Toulouse. The Carmelites chapel is a good spot for art lovers or the Augustins museum for its architecture and historical artifacts.

Clothing

Bring cycling gear such as quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts and cycle gloves. Remember that the weather is changeable in France and it can be cool, especially at night and at the start and end of the season, so bring a warmer jacket/fleece. A raincoat is essential at all times in case of rain. A light windproof jacket is always useful. Some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of baggage as per your airline luggage allowance, maximum 20 kg per person. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage if using public transport so don't overload yourself. Luggage transfers between hotels are normally arranged by the hoteliers. Mark your bags clearly and leave them at the place and time arranged with them. When travelling on public transport you should always take your luggage with you.

Luggage transfer

Included between each hotel.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced map we recommend the following:-

General map

Overview of the 'Véloroute Deux Mers', with logistical information on the accommodations and businesses that sponsor the guide, available via the website: www.canal-et-voie-verte.com

Topographic maps

By the French 'Institut Géographique National' (www.ign.fr). Scale 1: 100,000

145 - Bordeaux

160 - Agen-Marmande

168 - Toulouse

Country Information

France

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£11

Dinner price

£16.00 - 18.00

Beer price

£4

Water price

£1.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Pounds Sterling and US Dollars can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change. Please change currency into Euros prior to arriving in France.

Where To Exchange

Bureau de Change can only be found in major cities and large airports. Many French banks no longer exchange Foreign currency.

ATM Availability

In cities and most major towns

Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants (make sure you have informed your credit card company that you are travelling abroad as some companies will reject payments)

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are no longer commonly accepted and can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bicycle

Recommended airport

Arrival - Bordeaux. Departure - Toulouse.

Flying to your destination

We'd recommend outbound flights into Bordeaux Airport which is served by both budget (including Easyjet, Ryanair and flybe) and non-budget airlines (including British Airways) from multiple airports in the UK. We'd recommend return flights from Toulouse Airport which is served by budget (including flybe) and non-budget airlines (British Airways).

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Premium - Hand-picked and chosen for their character, location or local importance, these properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool (pool may have seasonal opening). Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Arrival and departure information

By public transport from Bordeaux airport

Take bus Lianes 1 to Place Quinconces where the hotel is located (departs every 10 minutes approx. from 5am to midnight, duration 30 mins, cost 1.50 Euros).

By public transport from St. Jean train station

Take Tram line C to Place Quinconces where the hotel is located (departs every 10 minutes approx. from 5am to midnight, duration 10 mins, cost 1.50 Euros).

A private taxi organised directly from the airport would cost approx. 20 to 25 Euros.

If you plan to travel with your own car to the Garonne we recommend driving first to Toulouse to park your car at the final hotel which has good value private parking. Trains from Toulouse to Bordeaux depart every hour from 6am to 9pm, taking from 2 (direct intercity) to 3 hours (indirect regional TER) (15 to 35 Euros). We recommend you make a reservation for yourself and the bikes if you are bringing your own. Bikes do not need a reservation on the regional TER service but there can be limited space. www.sncf.com

At the end of your trip you can fly back or take a train from Toulouse.

By public transport to Toulouse Blagnac Airport

Take shuttle bus (Navette) from Gare Matabiau train station to the airport (departs daily (except st May) every 20 minutes approx. from 5am to 9pm, duration 20-40 mins, cost 5.50 Euros).

<http://www.toulouse.aeroport.fr/en/passengers/go/access-airport/airport-shuttle>

A private taxi organised directly from town would cost approx. 20 to 25 Euros.

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click here.

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click here

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

France: Visas are not required by UK, EU, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click here

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom. [Read more information about what travel insurance is required.](#)

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

France

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
