

# Self-Guided Velodyssee Cycling: Arcachon to Biarritz

Trip Code: SGAB

Version: SGAB Self-Guided Cycling the Velodyssee



CYCLE



SELF-GUIDED



LEISURELY



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Cycle along peaceful woodland paths, through open farmlands and to welcoming seaside towns
- Soak up the atmosphere of vibrant Hossegor, a mecca for surfers around the world
- Discover Biscarrosse and Chateau de Montbron, once home to English Royalty

- Finish your daily rides with a relaxing swim from the sandy beaches of the Atlantic Coast

#### AT A GLANCE

- Self-Guided
- 4 days cycling & sightseeing
- Bike hire included
- Daily departures available
- GPS Travel App
- Join at Arcachon / End in Biarritz

#### ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 5 Breakfasts
- 5 nights Hotel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

## Introduction

World class wines, inviting beaches, endless sunshine and smooth cycle paths. What more could you want from a self-guided cycling holiday in southwest France? This fantastic 5 night cycling adventure follows the EuroVelo 1 long distance cycle route, the Velodysee, along the Cote d'Atlantique from Arcachon (just south of France's wine capital Bordeaux) into Basque country to the seaside town of Biarritz. Cycling an average of 50km per day you can look forward to well-marked cycle routes taking you through open farmlands and vineyards; to beautiful lakes and to the historic coastal towns. Along the way you will discover the largest sand dune in Europe, France's surfing hotspots, photogenic lighthouses, and of course chateaux. Each evening you will stay in welcoming 2\* or 3\* hotels close to the inviting beaches where you can enjoy a relaxing swim after a day on your bike and dine on the fantastic cuisine this region is known for. If you love good food, great wines and exploring on two wheels, you will love the Velodysee.

### Is this holiday for you?

If you love exploring on two wheels, cycling to the sound of crashing waves and having plenty of time to discover new cultures and cuisine then you will love the Velodysee. Cycling an average of 50 km a day on well-marked cycle paths and quiet lanes you will have plenty of time to soak up the atmosphere of life in southwest France and enjoy the many sights along the route. Plus you will have time to enjoy a boat trip from Arcachon, join a surf lesson on the famous Hossegor beach and climb Europe's highest sand dune, Pilat. At the end of each day you can look forward to warm hospitality in hotels close to the beach and feast on delicious French cuisine.

# Itinerary

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## DAY 1

### Arrive in Arcachon, explore the town, relax on the beach or take a boat ride.

Arrive in the popular seaside town of Arcachon, famed for its oysters and 'Arcachonaises' (marvellous villas). Depending on the time of your arrival you can delight in exploring this pretty town and its four quarters, each romantically named after a season. Alternatively, you may wish to relax on the beach and watch the world pass by or join one of the boat trips around the Ile aux Oiseaux to Cap Farret, or on the Bassin to discover the oyster beds and famous stilted wooden buildings known as cabanes tchanquees. In the evening you will be spoilt for choice of seafront restaurants to sample the local fayre.



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

## DAY 2

### Climb Dune du Pilat and cycle through tranquil forest trails to Biscarrosse Plage.

Equipped with your bike and fuelled by breakfast you will begin your journey south along the Velodysee cycle route. It is not long before you will reach Dune du Pilat, the highest sand dune in Europe. We recommend taking the time to hop off your bike and ascend the dune for fantastic panoramic views across the Bay of Arcachon and its neighbouring islands. When you have finished taking in the views, your ride continues through the Landes forest. Cycling through the welcomed shade of the soaring maritime pines, it is hard to believe that the forest is in fact a manmade feature. The forest was part of a reforestation project in the mid 1800's and replaced the swamplands that once occupied the area. Today the forests provide a great recreational area and an important windbreaker for the Medoc wine region. Your final goal of the day is Biscarrosse Plage, often referred to as Bisca by the locals, where you will have time to end your day with a visit to the beach before dinner in one of the nearby restaurants.

Meals: **B**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Ascent**  
575M



**Distance**  
49KM

## DAY 3

## Discover Biscarrosse and its surrounding lakes as you cycle to Mimizan Plage.

Today's ride is perhaps the most challenging of the week as your route takes you away from the coast to explore the beautiful interior of the region and its several inviting lakes. You begin meandering through the shade of the woodlands towards the first of today's lakes and a popular spot for those seeking the thrill of water sports activities. Pedalling on you will soon reach the main town of Biscarrosse nestled between the two lakes of Etang de Cazaux et de Sanguinet to the north and Etang de Biscarrosse et de Parentis to the south. This lovely town makes for the perfect coffee stop with its fortified church of Saint Martin and 14th century Chateau de Montbron; home to English Royalty during the English occupation of Aquitaine.

When you have finished exploring your route continues around the second of the lakes, passing through the small town of Parentis-en-Born before heading south through farmlands and vineyards to reach your home for the night in Mimizan Plage. A firm favourite with surfers thanks to its combination of 10km long sandy beach and Atlantic winds.

Meals: **B**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Ascent**  
495M



**Distance**  
55KM

### DAY 4

## Cycle through farmlands to discover the Contis les Bains lighthouse and end your day in charming Vieux Boucau les Bains.

Today you can look forward to one of the most beautiful and peaceful sections of the week as you cycle along the Cote d'Argent, weaving through fragrant pine forest and open farmlands. As you approach the small town of Contis les Bains we recommend taking a slight detour to visit the town's lighthouse. You will need a little energy to tackle the 183 steps up the lighthouse but you will be rewarded with a superb view along the coastline. Hopping back on your bike your route continues following the shoreline through more rural landscapes towards Leon. Just before reaching the town, you will discover Leon Lake, a lovely place to cool off with a swim or relax and watch the world pass by before pedalling on to Vieux Boucau. Originally known as Port d'Albret, this charming seaside village was formally a busy port until 1578 when the river was diverted and the port moved to Bayonne. Today it is a welcoming sleepy tourist spot nestled between the glistening ocean and the deep green forest. Checking into your home for the evening you can enjoy dinner with a glass of Bordeaux as the sun sets.

Meals: **B**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Ascent**  
640M



**Distance**  
60KM

### DAY 5

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## Soak up the atmosphere of surf mecca Hossegor and end your cycling adventure exploring Biarritz.

The final stage of your cycling adventure takes you alongside the longest sandy beach in Europe. Here surf is king and you will spot locals and holidaymakers alike enjoying the fantastic surf conditions as you cycle along. Leaving Vieux Boucau you will first head inland through the final woodlands and farmland of the Landes region, before arriving back on the coast at the surfing mecca of Hossegor. This active town has a real buzz about it with the ocean at the heart of everything including a plethora of events and festivals the town hosts. The biggest event in the calendar is the Quiksilver and Roxy Pro, when professional surfers from around the world hit the surf. Beyond the beach, you will find lovely cobbled streets and the delicious scent of freshly baked goods from the towns inviting 'boulangeries'.

When you have finished soaking up the atmosphere and watching the surfers enjoy the waves you continue on your way to your final goal of the week, Biarritz. This marks your arrival in Basque country, where Spanish and French cultures collide. This elegant seaside town was a firm favourite with Napoleon III and his Spanish-born wife Eugenie in the mid-19th century. As you would expect the royal links have left their mark on the town with grand villas and heritage listed residences. We recommend taking a stroll along the Estacade pier to the Rocher de la Vierge and visiting the Miremont Patisserie, where the 'La Beret Basque' cake was invented to soothe the wives of soldiers heading off to battle during WWI.

Meals: **B**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Ascent**  
220M



**Distance**  
60KM

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### DAY 6

## Enjoy a relaxed breakfast before making your onward journey.

Enjoy a relaxing breakfast in your hotel and perhaps take a final stroll along the coast before making your onward journey.

Meals: **B**

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## Holiday Information

## What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Bike hire
- City taxes
- Self-Guided Travel App
- Self-guided information pack containing your tour booklet and travel documents
- Luggage transfers

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to Arcachon
- Travel from Biarritz
- Visas (if applicable)
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Personal equipment
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

## GPS Travel App

This holiday is led by a self-guided app, which contains the personalised details of your complete holiday itinerary. This includes the GPS-led routes for you to follow on your self-guided cycling and walking tours, as well as attractions, coffee stops and points of interest in the towns and cities along the way. The app does not need to have Wi-Fi connection to work, you simply follow the instructions we provide you to download the app to your phone before you leave home and you are ready to go.

Each mobile comes with a different expected battery life so we suggest you pack a spare battery pack with you just in case you require it.

You can expect to receive your Self-Guided Pack containing your tour booklet and all your relevant holiday documents no later than 3 weeks before your holiday start date. We will send your documents using signed for courier so that you can track your package and know that they are safely on their way to you. Should your self-guided trip be part of a longer adventure requiring you to leave home more than three weeks before your holiday start date, please do inform our sales team so that we can make alternative delivery arrangements.



## Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking holiday for your family, a centre based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a days walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool or visiting museums is calling.

Please discuss this further with our sales team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

This trip starts at your accommodation in Arcachon. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a land only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The nearest airport for this trip is Bordeaux Airport with options from regional UK airports.

If you are flying into Bordeaux Airport you can travel via train to Arcachon. You must take the airport shuttle to Bordeaux from where you can take the train direct to Arcachon. The journey takes less than 1 hour in total with both shuttles and trains running hourly. For more information please visit [www.rome2rio.com](http://www.rome2rio.com)

Your trip ends in Biarritz from where you can take the bus direct to Bordeaux Airport.

## Meal Plan

This trip is on a bed and breakfast basis to allow you the most flexibility during your holiday.

## Food & Water

Water is drinkable from the taps on this holiday. Please fill your personal bottles for your day in the morning. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

French cuisine is ingrained in French culture and is one of the country's greatest contributions to the world. It is filled with passion; a celebration of the rich natural flavours of basic ingredients, to be enjoyed with one of the country's fine wines. Meal times are leisurely, a time to be enjoyed with good company and are an experience to be savoured.

This region of France is known for its rich foods made with local ingredients such as duck, prunes, and truffles. Here you can feast on dishes such as la saute d'oie (sautéed goose), coq au vin, and confit duck. And of course all these rich foods require a good wine to wash them down such as the Bordeaux which is produced in this region of France.

Given that your route follows the coastline, it is no surprise that fish and seafood also feature heavily on menus with popular dishes including fresh Marennes- Oleron oysters.

You will find many appealing cafes along your route for lunch or you may be swayed by the delicious scents of the local 'boulangerie' to enjoy a picnic of fresh bread and delicious local cheeses- yummy. Cycling in the France is not just a journey but a treat for your taste buds!

## Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

## Accommodation

This trip has been designed with the coastal towns in mind. You will stay in a selection of small 2 and 3 star hotels each chosen for their warm hospitality and fantastic locations along your route. All of the hotels offer something different such as lovely beachfront locations, or cosy communal areas, ideal for relaxing after a day on your bike.

All of the hotels offer a typically French continental breakfast of delicious fresh breads and pastries served with your morning coffee. Some hotels also offer additional hot items.

It is possible to arrange additional nights accommodation if you would like to extend your time in Arcachon or Biarritz. Please speak to one of our sales team for further information.



## **Bike Hire**

Bikes come with 21 gears and come equipped with 2 panniers for your daily essentials plus a milometer, a bike lock, pump and repair kit. We strongly recommend you bring your own helmet with you.

We also recommend packing a gel seat for extra comfort or a pair of padded cycling shorts, whilst the cycling is leisurely and there are plenty of opportunities to stop and explore it is always nice to have some padding for a comfortable ride.

E-bikes are also available at an additional supplement of £ 175. We are also able to arrange children's bikes, children's follow-me tandems, trailers and child seats. Please ask our sales team for details.

## **Baggage Allowance**

Your main luggage will be transferred between each of your hotels while you are out on your bike. We ask that you please ensure your luggage is limited to one piece under 20KG and that your luggage is ready for collection each morning.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

### Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## Health & Vaccinations

### Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

### GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

### Severe Allergies

Please inform our KE Sales and support team of any severe allergies you may have before travel. We will always do our best to help but we are unable to guarantee an allergy free environment on our KE trips. We advise that you always carry your own treatment for the allergy with you such as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' if required. We also recommend that you discuss this with your accommodation on arrival so that they can better assist you.

## Currency

The currency for part or all of this holiday is the Euro.

## Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided cycling holiday is that you decide the pace. This trip is designed for leisure cyclists and does not require you to be in peak fitness. Having said this it is always sensible to get some additional exercise before going on an active holiday. After all, the fitter you are the more enjoyable your cycling will be. You should be comfortable with cycling an average of 50 km a day on easy cycle paths or quiet roads and we advise you to dust off your bike and head out on a few rides before your holiday.

## Climate

The climate in south west France is favourable most of the year round with the breeze from the Atlantic helping to keep the summers cool and the winters mild, ideal for cycling.

Summer temperatures reach highs of around 23 degrees with July being the hottest month. Summers can be hot although winds coming over from the Atlantic Ocean help keep hot temperatures tempered by moderate, cool breezes. This temperate summer climate provides a fantastic week of cycling in the sun. Spring and autumn offer cooler temperatures of 10-19 degrees with some rainfall, ideal for those to cycle in slightly cooler conditions.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

Lonely Planet – South West France  
DK Eyewitness Guide – Dordogne, Bordeaux and the Southwest Coast

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

## SelfGuided Cycling Equipment List

- Cycling shorts
- Cycle helmet
- Functional base layer
- T-shirts
- Scarf
- Hat
- Windproof jacket
- Fleece / extra layer
- Rain protection
- Rucksack (approx. 20 l)

- Small first aid kit for your rucksack
- Sunscreen
- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Camera (batteries/memory card)
- Mobile Phone (ensure your data package covers your destination)
- Handlebar mount that is compatible with your smartphone
- Power bank
- Waterproof phone cover
- Sun glasses
- Personal wash kit
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Tupperware for picnics

## Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.  
[-> Find out more](#)

## Land Only Information

Please note our 'from price' listed is based on 4 persons on twin or double occupancy, however we can quote for any number of travellers, including solo travellers, contact our sales team for a quote.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights accommodation before or after your self-guided trip, ask our sales team to find out more about this.

Our sales team will be happy to provide you a quote for scheduled flights or alternatively you may wish to book your own flights with a low cost carrier from your nearest regional airport.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

We offer some transfers to your hotel from the nearest airports, please refer to the 'joining arrangements and transfers' for further details for this trip.

# Why Choose KE

## why KE?

We have created this fantastic cycling trip to showcase the traditions of the Cote d'Atlantique, fantastic French cuisine and the historic character of Arcachon and Biarritz. Plus we have included your hire bike in the cost of this trip and e-bikes are available too.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 16/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change