



## **France Boat & E-Bike Paris to Epernay River Cruise**

**Private Charter Champagne Tour by E-Bike! Marne River**

### **Day to day program: Paris, Lagny-sur-Marne to Epernay**

#### **Day 1: Paris, Lagny-sur-Marne, roundtour (22 km/14 mi.)**

Embarkation and check-in at 11 a.m. on the Marne in Paris, Lagny-sur-Marne. After a welcome by the captain, crew and tour leader you leave ship by bike for your first cycle tour via the river Marne (lunch package incl.). A bike path leads all along the river. You pass the chateaux of Champs-sur-Marne and bike through the surrounding gardens. The Château de Champs-sur-Marne is characteristic of the residences of leisure built in the countryside in the 18th century, giving rise to a new style of living. It is one of the most magnificently furnished châteaux in the Ile-de-France.

#### **Day 2: Lagny-sur-Marne – Meaux (22 km/13 mi. or 42 km/26 mi.)**

From Paris, Lagny-sur-Marne there are 2 bike options. The first kilometers of both options are uphill. In case you opt for the short ride, the first challenge is the hill near Chalifert. The barge will take the tunnel through the hill, but cyclists can test their fitness and muscles for the first time by climbing and crossing the hill by bicycle. Also on the longer option the first part is quite hilly, because you have to leave the valley of the Marne. Later you will follow the small Canal de l'Ourcq that was built by Napoleon to transport wood, grain and fresh water to Paris. Today's destination is the city of Meaux, famous for its "Brie de Meaux" cheeses and the magnificent Cathedral St.-Etienne. Night in Meaux.



#### **Day 3: Meaux – La Fert -sous-Jouarre (30 km/18 mi or 66 km/41 mi.)**

There are a few cycling options today. The shorter option will lead you over the hills and slopes of the Marne valley on the south bank of the river through forests and small villages. The longer option stays in the valley of the river in the morning with a ride through Trilport and Lizy-sur-Ourcq. Later you will have to climb a few challenging

hills, leaving the valley in the direction of Jouarre. In Jouarre, all cyclists can enjoy a very nice presentation and tasting of the famous Brie de Meaux and Brie noir cheeses at the family-run Fromagerie Ganot. Dinner on board and night in La-Ferté-sous-Jouarre or a village nearby.

**Day 4: La-Ferté-sous-Jouarre – Château-Thierry (40 km/24 mi. or 57 km/35.5 mi.)**

Enjoy a somewhat challenging cycling tour from La-Ferté-sous-Jouarre to Château-Thierry. The first part of the cycling track leads you along the Marne river. After a few miles you will take a side valley and follow country roads through various small villages and hamlets. Continue riding uphill until you finally reach the plateau above the northern part of the Marne valley. The side valleys are mainly covered with forest, on the plateau agriculture is predominant. Follow the valley of the small river Clignon. En route you can visit the large WW1 American War Cemetery and Monument near Belleau on the D82. Start your descent to reach Château-Thierry. Dinner on board and night in Château-Thierry. Château-Thierry owes its name to the castle that once was situated on the slopes above the Marne. You can still see some remnants. The town was the site of two important battles: the Battle of 1814 in the Napoleonic Wars between France and Prussia and the Battle of 1918 at the end of World War I. Château-Thierry is also known as the native town of the world-famous writer of fables Jean de la Fontaine.

**Day 5: Château-Thierry – Dormans – Epernay (35 km/19 mi. or 55 km/35 mi.)**

During breakfast the ship will take us to the lock of Mont St. Pierre or even a bit further upstream to Dormans. Today we will enter the official Champagne area. Dormans is a quiet village on the Marne with a castle and chapel in memory of the battle of the Marne. During World War I this area was the scene of intense battles. A ride up the northern valley slope to the village of Châtillon-sur-Marne rewards the cyclist with a stunning panoramic view over the Marne valley and the Champagne vineyards. Today there is no dinner on board. You can select one of the local restaurants in town.

**Day 6: Epernay round tour (17 km/10 mi. or 26 km/16 mi.)**

The last half day's cycling tour takes you along the quiet canal parallel to the Marne river to Ay and Mareuil-sur-Ay. Return via Dizy to visit Hautvillers. After a somewhat challenging ascent you will reach this picturesque village of Champagne wine growers on the southern slopes of the Montagne de Reims. Highlight is a visit of the chapel with the tomb of the monk Dom Pérignon (1638-1715). In charge of the wine cellars of a Benedictine abbey, Dom Pérignon pioneered a number of winemaking techniques, being the first to blend grapes in such a way as to improve regional wines into a wine of superb quality. Double fermentation, characteristic for the making of champagne, was introduced also by him. Return cycling to Epernay. After lunch, visit the center of Epernay. Together with Reims, Epernay is the major wine center of the Champagne region, where three extensive wine regions meet: the Montagne de Reims, the Côte des Blancs and the Vallée de la Marne. Epernay has many town houses dating in neo-renaissance style or classical style dating from the 19th century, especially around the beautiful Avenue de la Champagne where prestigious champagne houses, such as Moët & Chandon and Mercier, are situated. Enjoy a Champagne tasting and take a tour in one of the major Champagne houses.

**Day 7: Epernay**

End of your tour: Disembarkation after breakfast until 9.00 a.m.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

- **Important remark:** The cycling tours are fully guided, but **cannot be rated as easy**: you need to be a fit and well-practiced cyclist. Every day you will cycle small country roads (short distances: un- or semi-paved roads and tracks) that – almost all day – go up and down the beautiful slopes of the wide river valley, through the hills and the Champagne vineyards. Cycling distances vary from 30 – 50 km (19 – 31 miles) per day. **Biking in the hills will not take too much effort, as a comfortable E-bike is reserved for all guests.**

- Accompanied by a competent, professional and multilingual tour leader, you and the group will visit interesting sights and places on the daily cycling tours. During the bike tour, they will explain the local history and culture behind the things you encounter along the way.
- With 18 guests or more, the daily cycling tours will be accompanied by two knowledgeable and multi-lingual tour leaders. On most days, the tour leaders will offer a long and a short (or a quicker and a more relaxed) cycling option. The option for a long tour is also depending on weather conditions and wishes of the group.
- When there are less than 18 guests aboard, the tours will be accompanied by one knowledgeable and multi-lingual tour leader. During days when two bicycle options are possible, the tour leader will make a choice to guide the longer or the shorter option after consultation of the group. Not all mentioned highlights can be visited during the short cycling option.
- Cycling route distances in the travel program are approximate.
- On some days you can choose between a longer and a shorter cycling route. Please note that on the shorter routes you may not be able to visit all the highlights mentioned.
- If you prefer not to cycle on a particular day, you're welcome to stay on board and relax while the ship cruises to the next landing place.
- The tour itinerary and route are subject to possible changes due to nautical, technical or meteorological reasons, or other unforeseen events.
- A detailed cycling map and a GPS app are available for guests who wish to cycle individually and at their own pace. The tour guide is always available via cell phone in case of questions, breakdowns or emergencies.





## ABOUT THIS TOUR

### E-Bike special, tour 7 days/6 nights

The Champagne tour is a bike and barge touring classic that not only allows guests to explore the world famous city of Paris, but also the Champagne region, famous of course, for producing Champagne wines. From the time the Benedictine monk Dom Pierre Pérignon invented the bubbly drink in 1670 at the Abbey of Hautvillers, the Champagne name has been synonymous worldwide with the very best of sparkling wines.

Every day you will cycle small country roads (including a few un- or semi-paved roads and tracks) that go slightly up and down the beautiful slopes of the wide river valley, through the hills and the Champagne vineyards.

Biking in the hills will not take too much effort, as a comfortable E-bike is reserved for all guests.

On a daily basis you will have the opportunity to cycle to boutique wineries, sample a variety of champagnes, taste delicious cheeses of the Brie region and generally discover all gems that the Champagne region, UNESCO world heritage, has to offer. But more than just visiting the Champagne region, you will also have the opportunity to explore Paris, one of Europe's most beautiful and beloved cities. Other highlights of the tour include a visit to the city of Meaux, well known for its Brie cheeses and a stopover in Château-Thierry, scene of major battles in World War I. Along the way you will cycle through almost endless vineyards on the rolling banks of the Marne river and visit a local wine farmer. The tour ends in the city of Epernay, the real capital of the Champagne region, where you will have the opportunity to visit one of the town's imposing champagne cellars.

### The ship – Your sailing hotel

In between cycling excursions, you cruise along with the ship, which travels to a new destination every day. You dine, sleep and eat breakfast on board. You'll receive a packed lunch every day, and you can usually choose between a longer or shorter bike ride. It's also possible to spend a day on board if you like. There are rental E-bikes included in the price.

### Fully Guided

Accompanied by a competent, professional and multilingual tour leader, you and the group will visit interesting sights and places on the daily cycling tours. During the bike tour, they will explain the local history and culture behind the things you encounter along the way.

### E-bikes

Our e-bikes also have highly-responsive handbrakes and a minimum of eleven speeds. The motor runs on a 400Wh battery and offers three levels of power-assistance. The e-bikes include comfortable gel seats that can be adjusted for height, have a lock attached to the frame and special anti-puncture tires.

#### INCLUDED:

- Group Transfer from Paris hotel to Pier
- 2-night hotel stay in the heart of Paris (optional: additional nights available)
- Walking tour of Paris
- Sunset Dinner Cruise on the Seine
- Optional: Versailles by Bike (tour)
- Boat Accommodation for 6 nights in an air-conditioned cabin with a private deluxe bathroom
- Welcome evening with crew including a complimentary drink
- Daily breakfast buffet
- Daily packed lunch for cyclists
- Biodegradable water bottle
- Daily afternoon cake & coffee/tea
- 5 Daily 3-course dinners
- E- bike with pannier bag
- Short Walking Tours
- Brie Tasting in Jouarre
- Champagne tasting at local vineyard
- Champagne Celler visit in Epernay
- Fees for ferries
- Option to stay aboard and not bike
- Biking Guide & Comprehensive route description & cycling maps for each day
- Helmet
- Wi-Fi
- End of Cruise Private Mini-Van transfer from Epernay, with sightseeing stop\*, to airport or Paris city center.

. \* dependent on flight times

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Adult Beverages; soda
- 1 dinner (Day 5)
- Gratuities (at your discretion)
- Entrance fees and excursions (not mentioned under included)
- Travel Insurance

## REVIEWS

### One of the best trips ever

Juanita Keel-Ryan

One of the best trips ever! Great organization from start to finish. I booked directly with Boat bike tours online. No issues. The boat was wonderful, the guides superior, the chef exceptional and the captain/boat owner was a great navigator of the boat in all respects.

### The zwanje was a wonderful boat very...

Kathleen

The Zwanje was a wonderful boat very clean with adequate space for all of our belongings. The crew were fabulous as were the guides. The bikes are heavy with good tires so they provide stability with good gearing for climbs. Champagne tasting gorgeous countryside charming towns WWI memorials made the rides interesting and fun. Our guides were knowledgeable about the history and sites that we visited. They also placed a priority on our safety. Did I mention how fabulous the food was? Beautiful presentation as well. Great trip.

### A belated review & now a distant of a...

Gillian Press

A belated review & now a distant of a fabulous Boat? Bike on the Zwaantje, From Paris (Lagny ) to Epernay. Attention to detail by the staff was fabulous & a great group of people. Loved every minute of it. Looking forward to another trip

### Most memorable...

Mary Ann D.

For me the most memorable part of the trip was meeting all the passengers and crew and enjoying their company for a week. The rides each day that were planned were great and I can't say enough about the food we had on the boat. I would do another boat/bike trip again!

### Champagne area was the best...

Susan C.

This was my first experience riding an electric bike and I was skeptical at first, but now I'm sold! The e-bike allowed me to greatly enjoy the tour AND have energy left over for enjoying evening activities! My favorite part of the tour was riding through the champagne area. The vistas were breathtaking and visits to the vineyards for wine tasting were such fun. I loved riding off the usual tourist paths through quaint villages filled with cottages that looked like they were from fairy tales, complete with beautiful gardens and clay tiled roofs. Stops along our daily rides to enjoy coffee in a cafe or maybe a beer or glass of wine in the late afternoons was an added treat. We often squeezed in a little shopping during these stops. The crew of the Zwaantje couldn't have been more pleasant. The meals prepared by Chef Frank were a delight each evening!

### Can I take Chef Frank home please...

Geogia P.

We have been on 9 tours now - and this is definitely one of the good trips - why? the CREW!!!! Cpt Willie runs a great boat - that crew from the chef to the guides to the deck hand - all were involved in making our trip a success - and they were so much fun ..... Chef Frank definitely a big winner as well.