

France: The Burgundy Wine Region & Dijon

Bike Vacation + Air Package

Burgundy's historic, bucolic and culinary treasures are uncorked on this delightful journey. Spinning from Lyon to Dijon—two UNESCO-designated marvels—you'll cycle a countryside bursting with grapes for the region's celebrated wines, explore masterpieces of medieval urban planning, roll past charming stone villages and along riverbanks, and more. Of course, no visit to Burgundy is complete without its legendary food and wine, and our generous included features offer just that—from Michelin-approved dining to a picnic at a local home. Join us in this charming corner of France on a tour that's vintage VBT!

Cultural Highlights

Cycle through the peaceful countryside that produces delicious Chardonnay wines.

Visit a local market in Cluny, home to a 10th-century abbey.

Pass renowned wine villages on a roll through the world-famous vineyards of the Côte de Beaune.

Savor classic French cuisine at a Michelin-approved restaurant.

Visit the 15th-century Hospices de Beaune, a masterpiece of flamboyant Gothic art and architecture.

Engage with a local family during a game of pétanque and a picnic lunch at their charming summer home.

Discover a protected city center that has inspired musicians, artists and writers for centuries in Dijon.

Surround yourself with pastoral splendor on a roll along Burgundy's beautiful Garden Route.

Browse Dijon's wealth of fascinating—and free—museums.

What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of easy terrain mixed with moderate hills. Our VBT van support shuttle is always available for those who need assistance. Ideal for beginning and experienced cyclists alike.

Tour Duration: 10 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 16 - 35

Average Cycling Time: 01:00 - 03:00

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

May 67°/50°, Jun 73°/57°, Aug 79°/60°, Sep 72°/54°, Oct 61°/47°

Average Rainfall (in.)

May 3, Jun 3.1, Aug 3.1, Sep 3, Oct 3.4

DAY 1: Depart from home / Fly overnight to Lyon

Depart from home for France. The particulars of your overseas arrival are detailed with your flight itinerary.

DAY 2: Arrive in Lyon

Upon arrival at Lyon Airport, claim your luggage and clear customs. If your luggage is lost, fill out a PIR form before leaving the customs area; VBT representatives are not allowed into the customs area. Please note: Make sure that your VBT luggage tags are attached to your bags. This helps the representative identify you.

After exiting customs, enter the arrival hall and look for your VBT representative or driver, who will be holding a VBT sign. Your representative will welcome you to France and arrange for your transfer via taxi or van (approximately 40 minutes, depending on traffic) to your Lyon hotel. Important: If you are delayed in meeting your VBT representative at the Lyon Airport, please call 06 68 32 22 05 from within France. Outside of France, call +33 6 68 32 22 05.

VBT provides City Information that includes information and recommendations for what to see and do in Lyon. Use the rest of the day to relax. Or begin exploring Lyon, following your whims and desires on foot or using the city's network of buses and trams and the subway. Please note that hotel check-in is 2:00 p.m., but the hotel will try to have rooms available earlier if possible and will store your luggage if needed.

Hotel: Hotel Carlton Lyon MGallery by Sofitel

DAY 3: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Transfer to hotel via Cluny / Warm-up ride

VBT Air Package and Pre-Trip Extension guests: Meet one of your VBT Trip Leaders in the hotel lobby at 9:00 a.m. You will transfer by bus via Cluny to the hotel in Tournus.

Cluny, the former abbey and home of the Pope around AD 910, was larger than St. Peter's Basilica in Rome in its heyday. It was later dynamited, and its richly carved stones were sold by an unscrupulous group that included a local priest. You'll stroll along the ancient stone streets of Cluny with a local guide.

VBT has timed your visit to fall on a market day, so you'll have the opportunity to buy some local specialties for lunch on your own.

Arrive at your Tournus hotel, meet your second Trip Leader, and have free time to settle in before a safety and bike-fitting session and brief warm-up ride through the countryside and on a bike path along the River Saône.

After some time to freshen up, meet for a welcome cocktail reception and dinner in your hotel. Dine in its restaurant that is highly rated by the Michelin guide as a "très bonne table" (very good table).

Hotel: Hotel Le Rempart

Meals: Breakfast (included for Air Package guests only), Dinner

Daily Options: 4.2 miles (6/8 km)

DAY 4: Chardonnay loop

This morning's ride takes you on the flat Voie Bleue bike path along the tranquil banks of the Saône. Keep your eyes open for the varied birdlife along your route.

Leaving the river, you'll enter rolling wine country, where the dry white wine of the Chardonnay grape is produced. Roll into the wine village of Viré, home to a recent success story in France's wine world. In the latter part of the 20th century, the villages of Viré and Clessé realized that they had a high-quality wine that could rival the older appellation of Pouilly-Fuissé, so they applied for a separate status. This was finally granted in 1999, and the Viré-Clessé appellation emerged.

Continue cycling to a small village with a name that is linked worldwide to dry white wine: Chardonnay. The village recently celebrated its thousandth anniversary. Its name comes from *cardonnacum* or the "place full of thistles." Chardonnay grapes most likely originated here and were then shared and distributed throughout France by monks. The earliest recorded reference to Chardonnay occurred in 1330. It was around this time that Cistercian monks built stone walls around their *Clos de Vougeot* vineyard exclusively planted to Chardonnay grapes. The village of stone houses grew up around the *lavoir*, a stream-fed wash-house, and several *domaines* (wine producers). You'll stop in this charming spot for lunch at a local restaurant.

After lunch, continue through the peaceful rural countryside before rejoining the Voie Bleue bike path along the river and following it back into Tournus.

Tonight, take a short walk to a nearby wine purveyor for an introduction and tasting of the incredible depth of Burgundy's wines. Afterward, you are free to enjoy dinner on your own in one of the local restaurants, or you may choose to eat in the hotel's renowned bistro.

Hotel: Hotel Le Rempart

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Daily Options: 12.1, 18.1 or 25 miles (19.7, 29.1, or 41.3 km)

DAY 5: Cycle through the Côte de Beaune

This morning, hop a shuttle to your starting point. Get underway with a brief reel through the vineyards of the Côte Chalonnaise. At Chalon sur Saône, pedal along the Voie Verte bike path, following the Canal du Centre to Santenay. Afterward, continue on small roads through the world-famous vineyards of the Côte de Beaune, passing renowned villages such as Puligny Montrachet, Meursault and Pommard—considered the mecca of Chardonnay production by many oenophiles.

This afternoon, there'll be time for lunch on your own before you continue your ride into Beaune, the elegant town that is imbued with wine traditions—and your next accommodation. After time to relax, walk through its charming pedestrian center for dinner in another Michelin “très bonne table” restaurant—not as high as a “star” but indicating a rigorous approval!

Hotel: Hotel Le Cep

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Daily Options: 15.2 or 29.1 miles (24.5 or 46.9 km)

DAY 6: Hospices de Beaune / Home-hosted lunch

After an elaborate breakfast (including wine and cheese, of course, for those who are so inclined), a five-minute walk takes you to the 15th-century Hospices de Beaune (also known as the Hotel Dieu), the epicenter of Beaune. This perfectly preserved historic treasure was the recipient of Europe's earliest philanthropic endeavors and today is still entirely financed by private donations. It has never been closed a single day in more than 500 years! This authentic masterpiece of flamboyant Gothic art and architecture is Burgundy's single most-visited site; you will understand why after setting foot inside the stunning courtyard. Visit the Hospice, then cycle out of wine country and head into the countryside on narrow, quiet roads to the small hamlet of Cussigny. As lunch nears, your small group is invited into an

old mill that serves as the summer home of the Lefils family. Here, enjoy a game of *pétanque* before a picnic prepared by your Trip Leaders. Conclude this pleasant visit with homemade dessert and coffee or tea with your generous hosts.

Afterward, ride back to Beaune through forests, villages and—depending on the time of year—sunflower or canola fields. On return to your hotel, perhaps relax in the spa, then stroll through the town's narrow medieval center to enjoy dinner on your own in one of the fine restaurants.

Hotel: Hotel Le Cep

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Daily Options: 12.3, 21.9 or 30.5 miles (19.8, 35.3 or 49.1 km)

DAY 7: Routes des Grands Crus / Dijon

Your cycle route today takes you through some of the most famous vineyards in the world, en route to Dijon, the beautiful capital of the Burgundy region. You'll wind your way to Nuits St George, the region where famed Côte de Nuits red wines are produced. Here, stop to choose from different lunch options on your own before cycling along the narrow lanes used as access routes by local vineyard workers. In this area, monks toiled for centuries making wine for religious services. Historians now point out they likely kept the very best wine for themselves. It is thought that the very first red wines in the world were made here—and that monks macerated the grape skins so the typical rosé wine would more closely resemble the blood of Christ.

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee added the entire stretch of vineyards from Beaune to Dijon to its World Heritage List in July 2015. Along the Route des Grands Crus, you may wish to stop and explore old and charming villages such as Vosne-Romanée and Gevrey-Chambertin before continuing all the way to the outskirts of Dijon. As you enter the capital of Burgundy, marvel at the astonishingly well-preserved city center. Dijon, often called “Sleeping Beauty,” is third in France for its number of protected historic buildings, with more than 100 acres of the city center protected. This capital of the former ducal kingdom has attracted musicians, artists and writers for centuries.

After checking into your hotel, set out on a walking tour with your Trip Leaders. This evening, venture out on your own to wander the medieval cobbled streets and find just the right place to enjoy an apero (aperitif) and dinner on your own.

Hotel: Grand Hotel La Cloche

Meals: Breakfast

Daily Options: 12.1, 25.9 or 29.3 miles (19.6, 41.8 or 47.3 km)

DAY 8: Dijon / Burgundian canal / Valley de L'Ouche

After breakfast, cycle directly from the hotel to the Route des Jardins, Burgundy's beautiful Garden Route, and the pleasant byway along the Canal de Bourgogne to Pont de Pany.

A short option loops back to Dijon; longer options head into the Valley de L'Ouche along the winding River L'Ouche and the canal. The bucolic scenery here has made this route a favorite of every traveler in France for its lush, peaceful and unspoiled countryside—it's the pastoral side of France at its most authentic.

Back in Dijon, you might browse the many fine museums specializing in everything from fine arts and sacred art to natural history and daily Burgundian life. Each is free and housed in a historic building.

Tonight, finish your week of cycling with a stroll through Dijon's pedestrian streets to a farewell dinner in a fine gourmet restaurant housed in a 15th-century building.

Hotel: Grand Hotel La Cloche

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Daily Options: 13.4, 26.2 or 38.8 miles (22.3, 43.7 or 64.7 km)

DAY 9: Transfer to Dijon railway station / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

VBT Air Package guests: After breakfast, walk to the Dijon train station (your luggage will be taken in the van) and continue by high-speed train to Paris. Upon arrival, you will be met by a VBT representative and transferred to your centrally located hotel.

VBT provides you with City Information and recommendations for what to see and do in Paris. Use the rest of the day to relax or to begin exploring Paris.

Hotel: Hotel Rochester

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10: Depart for home

After breakfast*, transfer to the Paris Charles de Gaulle airport for your return flight**. Please ensure you are ready in the hotel reception area at the designated time.

*Please note: For guests with early-morning departures, breakfast at the hotel may not be available. Please check with the front desk to verify the times that breakfast is served.

**VBT recommends that you check your transfer time in your "Transfer Reminder." The transfer is prearranged by VBT and is prepaid. VBT transfer times and departure points are finalized in advance and cannot be modified for individual guests. If you extend your stay beyond the scheduled program dates, return transportation to the airport will be at your own expense.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Hotel Carlton Lyon MGallery by Sofitel (Day: 2)

The Hotel Carlton Lyon MGallery by Sofitel is a fully renovated, stylish, 4-star boutique hotel in the heart of Lyon's pedestrian historic center. It has retained its authenticity and personality by combining contemporary comfort with sophistication and refinement. A five-minute walk from the Metro Bellecour, the hotel is the ideal base from which to discover Lyon: the Opera, museums, Cathedral St Jean, shopping streets, and the Rhône River are all nearby. Each of the air-conditioned rooms offers lush décor and all the amenities you need for a comfortable stay. Onsite, you may relax in the plush lobby bar under the soft light of pearl chandeliers.

Grand Hotel La Cloche Dijon - MGallery (Days: 7,8)

For nearly 600 years, the Grand Hotel La Cloche Dijon – MGallery has been welcoming visitors to the heart of Burgundy. Today, the hotel is set in a centrally located, 19th-century heritage building near the Old Town and a number of attractions, including museums and the Ducal Palace. Savor delicious gourmet French and international cuisine at the hotel's two restaurants, and take advantage of the fitness center.

Hotel le Rempart (Days: 3,4)

Past and present converge at the Hotel le Rempart, a 4-star, family-run establishment built on medieval

ramparts and set on the site of a 15th-century guardhouse. Inside, find an elegant, modern ambiance and a focus on the cuisine for which Burgundy is famous. In the restaurant, enjoy a creative menu based on fresh local produce, or dine in the bistro, whose menu is also served on the delightful Romanesque patio in warm weather.

Hotel Le Cep (Days: 5,6)

Hotel Le Cep, tucked into the heart of medieval Beaune, was made for royalty. This was Louis XIV's favorite accommodation when he visited Burgundy. Constructed as a private home in the 16th century, its grounds include buildings dating from the 14th century, with its "newest" structures from the 18th century. The 1547 courtyard is overlooked by Italianate galleries and two lovely towers. With a renowned restaurant, whose wine list boasts 50 regional wines, the Hotel Le Cep is one of the "Small Luxury Hotels of the World" and was included in the 500 best hotels list from *Travel + Leisure* for 2013, demonstrating its excellence in quality.

Hotel Rochester (Day: 9)

This 4-star hotel is located a few steps from the Champs-Élysées and the Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré, in one of Paris' most elegant and well-known quarters. It is a very easy and safe base for exploring, shopping, and taking evening strolls. Small and family-run, it exudes an ambiance of elegance, charm, and Old World traditions. Relax in the hotel spa and in your room, which is decorated in a Louis XV style. Enjoy its modern amenities, including air conditioning (April to October), cable satellite TV, free wireless Internet service, in-room safe, and minibar.