

## France: The Burgundy Wine Region & Dijon

### Bike Vacation Only

Reel along France bike routes and discover the world's most famous vineyards. Spinning from Lyon to Dijon—two UNESCO-designated marvels—you'll cycle a countryside bursting with grapes for the region's celebrated wines. Stop at charming stone towns imbued with wine tradition. Explore the 15th-century Hospices de Beaune, an authentic masterpiece of flamboyant Gothic art and architecture and Burgundy's most visited site. In Dijon museums, browse fine arts and sacred artifacts. Follow narrow roads into tiny hamlets and wine villages with thriving local market scenes. The bucolic scenery here has made this route a favorite among French travelers for its lush, peaceful, and unspoiled scenery.

### 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.

Enjoy a guided tour and tasting at Domaine Debray wine cellars in Beaune.

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:** 7 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: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Transfer to hotel via Cluny / Warm-up ride**

Meet one of your Trip Leaders in the lobby of the Hotel Carlton Lyon MGallery by Sofitel at 9:00 a.m. (4 rue Jussieu, Lyon 69002, telephone +33 478425651). He or she will be wearing VBT staff garments. If your arrival in Lyon is scheduled later than 9:00 a.m. or if you are delayed, you must take a taxi or train to the hotel in Tournus at your own expense (Hotel Le Rempart, 2 Avenue Gambetta, Tournus 71700, telephone +33 3 85511056). Taxi cost is approximately €200 (travel time is approximately 1 hour to the first hotel); train cost is approximately €30 (travel time is approximately 1 hour, 10 minutes). If you have taken the train, depart the train station and take a right; you will see the hotel on the opposite side of the road about 300 yards away. If you experience any travel delays or changes to your schedule, please contact the first hotel to advise the staff, and they will inform your VBT trip leaders.

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 your bike tour begins, partake in a safety and bike-fitting session. A brief warm-up ride leads you through the countryside and on a bike path along the 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: Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Warm-up Loop: 7 km (4 miles)

What to Expect: An easy loop from your hotel takes you past the Abbey and through the town of Tournus,

then along a bike route on the Saône River back to the hotel.

## DAY 2: Chardonnay loop

This morning's spin 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

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 – 61 km (12 – 37 miles)

Morning

Tournus to Chardonnay with Shuttle: 20 km (12 miles)

or

Tournus to Chardonnay: 29 km (17 miles)

Afternoon

Chardonnay to Tournus Loop: 41 km (25 miles)

What to Expect: Depart the hotel in the morning and roll through Tournus, then follow La Voie Bleue bike path along the Saone River to the wine-making town of Viré. You will then board the van shuttle or continue cycling through rolling vineyards into the town of Chardonnay. The afternoon ride returns to Tournus along a northerly route.

## DAY 3: 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

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 22 – 47 km (14 – 29 miles)

Morning

Chalon to Santenay: 25 km (15 miles)

Afternoon

Santenay to Beaune: 22 km (14 miles)

What to Expect: Cycle on beautiful paved path along the Canal du Centre to Santenay. Then, continue on

a bike route through the vineyards of the Côtes de Beaune, passing world-famous villages such as Puligny-Montrachet, Meursault and Pommard. Board the van shuttle to Beaune, or embark on the longer option, riding through vineyards on the prestigious Route des Grand Crus, with wine-tasting opportunities all the way to your hotel in Beaune.

## DAY 4: Chardonnay loop

This morning's spin 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.

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Hotel: Hotel Le Rempart

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 – 61 km (12 – 37 miles)

Morning

Tournus to Chardonnay with Shuttle: 20 km (12 miles)

OR

Tournus to Chardonnay: 29 km (17 miles)

Afternoon

Chardonnay to Tournus Loop: 41 km (25 miles)

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Hotel: Hotel Le Cep

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 22 – 47 km (14 – 29 miles)

Morning

Chalon to Santenay: 25 km (15 miles)

Afternoon

Santenay to Beaune: 22 km (14 miles)

What to Expect: Cycle on beautiful paved path along the Canal du Centre to Santenay. Then, continue on a bike route through the vineyards of the Côtes de Beaune, passing world-famous villages such as Puligny-Montrachet, Meursault and Pommard. Board the van shuttle to Beaune, or embark on the longer option, riding through vineyards on the prestigious Route des Grand Crus, with wine-tasting opportunities all the way to your hotel in Beaune.

## 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 join your group for a visit of Domaine Debray wine cellars followed by a tasting. 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

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 15 – 49 km (10 – 30 miles)

Morning

Beaune to Cussigny: 20 km (12 miles)

Afternoon

Cussigny to Beaune: 15 km (10 miles)

Cussigny to Beaune Plus: 29 km (18 miles)

What to Expect: Cycle on country roads to Cussigny for a memorable home-hosted lunch. From here, you may hop the support vehicle or pedal back to Beaune. Another option is to cycle an extra loop through the Hautes Côtes de Beaune vineyards before heading back to the hotel.

## 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 Dijon - MGallery

Meals: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 – 47 km (12 – 29 miles)

Morning

Beaune to Nuits St. George: 20 km (12 miles)

Afternoon

Nuits St. George to Chenove: 22 km (14 miles)

Nuits St. George to Dijon: 27 km (17 miles)

What to Expect: Follow the Route des Grands Crus through prestigious villages such as Aloxe-Corton, Nuits St-Georges, Vosne-Romanée and Gevrey-Chambertin, all renowned for their wines. Those who desire a longer option can continue on to Chenove or all the way to Dijon.

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

After breakfast, your bike tour concludes with a 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 Dijon - MGallery

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 21 – 55 km (13 – 34 miles)

Morning

Dijon to Pont de Pany: 22 km (14 miles)

Dijon to Pont de Pany Loop: 21 km (13 miles)

Afternoon

Pont Pany to Dijon: 34 km (21 miles)

What to Expect: Enjoy easy and pleasant cycling along the Canal de Bourgogne from Dijon to Pont de Pany on our shortest option. Those who wish to cycle back to Dijon can ride along the canal or choose the longer option, featuring more mileage and some rolling hills.

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

Your tour ends after breakfast. It is an easy five-minute walk to the Dijon train station if you wish to take a train to the airport or your next destination.

Meals: Breakfast

## **Accommodations**

May vary depending on departure date.

### **Grand Hotel La Cloche Dijon - MGallery (Days: 5,6)**

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: 1,2)**

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: 3,4)**

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.