Geneva to Nice Road Cycle

Trip Code: GNMB

Version:

CYCLE	GUIDED GROUP	10 TOUGH



HIGHLIGHTS

- Ride the famous cols of Iseran, Galibier and Izoard
- Experience several classic Tour de France mountain stages
- Superb 2-day finale through the Alpes Maritimes from Le Sauze to Nice
- We make this classic Alpine challenge achievable - 7 cycling days
- Vehicle support, cosy hotels and all meals included

AT A GLANCE

- 7 days biking
- 670 kilometres
- 100% road
- 100% vehicle support
- Max altitude 2762 metres
- Join at Thonon-les-Bains (Geneva) / ends Menton (Nice)

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

The Route des Grandes Alpes is a 700 kilometre long Alpine road from Thonon-les-Bains on the shores of Lake Geneva to Nice on the Mediterranean. This spectacular strip of tarmac provides one of the world's classic road cycling challenges, whilst cutting through the heart of the French Alps by way of many of the most famous Tour de France climbs, such as the Cormet de Roselend, the Col de l'Iseran, the Col du Galibier and the Col de l'Izoard. This is undoubtedly a contender for the best road cycling holiday in Europe!

Refined and improved for 2024, our version of the ride follows the original Route des Grandes Alpes pretty faithfully, with just a couple of minor deviations to avoid potentially busy stretches of road. Crossing more than 20 significant cols in 7 days of cycling, this is an iconic route that all experienced and enthusiastic road cyclists should ride at least once. On most days you have the choice of riding an easier (Level 2) route or a more challenging (Level 3) route with additional distance and height gain. With partial vehicle support, all meals included and a good standard of hotel accommodation throughout, this is one of the most cost-effective ways to ride this route. Low cost flights operating into Geneva and out of Nice work well with this holiday.

Is this holiday for you?

ROAD CYCLING. This cycling journey from Lake Geneva, through the Alps to the Mediterranean ranks amongst the world's great rides. With more than 16,000 metres of ascent over 670 kilometres distance cycled (with the option to extend each day) it is a real challenge.

Our itinerary provides a very consistent first 6 days of cycling with 90 to 95 kilometres on each of those days and generally between 2200 and 2600 metres of ascent. This is followed by a longer final stage from Beuil to the sea, covering 130 kilometres with 2700 metres of ascent. These stats are challenging and you can expect long days and some long, long climbs (usually averaging out at between 6 and 8 percent gradient) where you need to take your time and spin. There are long descents, too; often sinuous and always fast. This is not a holiday for inexperienced cyclists - a good level of physical fitness and stamina will be required. Regular club, sportive and randonnee riders will find it within their capabilities. This is a partially supported ride with the tour guide driving the support vehicle. BIKE HIRE AVAILABLE LOCALLY.

Itinerary

Version:

Holiday Information

What's Included

- Support vehicle and driver/guide
- Baggage transfer between overnight stops
- All accommodation as detailed in the trip dossier
- Detailed 'Road Book' and GPS tracks and smartphone navigation app
- All meals except dinner on day of arrival at Thonon

What's not Included

- Travel Insurance
- Visas (if required)
- Tips for the guide and miscellaneous tips
- Miscellaneous personal expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc
- Geneva and Nice airport transfers
- Bike hire
- Bike Carriage on the flights - please contact your carrier for charges

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

TRAVEL TO YOUR DESTINATION

In some cases you may choose to take a ferry and/or train to your holiday start and end destination. Please see further information on Travelling by Train.

If flying from the UK there are low cost airlines available to the start and from the end of your holiday.

To benefit from full financial protection, ease your holiday planning, and avoid dealing with airlines, we can book scheduled flights from the UK as part of a flight inclusive package. Scheduled flights are usually more expensive than low cost alternatives, however potentially less stressful if your flight is cancelled or delayed. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will offset the carbon of your flight.

Your holiday begins at the hotel in Thonon-les-Bains on the evening of Day 1 of the itinerary.

The initial rendezvous with the group and guide will be at 9 am on Day 2 outside the Thonon-les-Bains railway station (SNCF) just adjacent to the hotel.

Airport transfers from Geneva Airport on Day 1 and to Nice Airport on the final day of the itinerary are not included.

Transfers from Geneva Airport to Thonon can be booked at www.thetrainline.com. Enter Geneve Aeroport as your starting point and Thonon-les-Bains as the destination. The journey may involve both bus and train, costs as little as €10 and bikes are carried free.

Alternatively, private transfers from Geneva Airport to Thonon can be arranged through ABD Services 74. Email. abdservices74@gmail.com Tel. +33 6 24 80 01 55

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the trip price with the exception of dinner on Day 1, the day of arrival at the hotel in Thonon-les-Bains.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for 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 meals 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.

Food & Water

Water from the taps is perfectly drinkable on this holiday - please use this to fill your personal bottles for your daily activities. We do not encourage the purchase of single-use plastic bottles.

In France hotel breakfasts are usually continental buffet style. Lunches will be fresh and tasty picnics provided by the guide, either at the support vehicle at a designated location and time each day, or provided as a packed lunch (individual salad - carbohydrate and vegetable based, cold meats, cheese and fruit) carried in a small backpack or handlebar bag. A third option for those allergic to even a small backpack is to cycle with 'racing food' only (gels and energy bars) leaving you free to stop and eat when and where you choose (restaurant, bakery, grocery store...). Dinner will be taken at our accommodation. The hotels we frequent are used to feeding hungry cyclists and generally provide a 3 to 4-course evening meal with tasty and large portions of quality local cuisine. We pay very careful attention to the quality and the variety of your meals. Fresh and local products will be served wherever possible.

Accommodation

Throughout the tour, the accommodation is in comfortable and welcoming 2-star (and one 3-star) hotels and guesthouses. All accommodation is twin-share and with en-suite facilities. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up another single traveller of the same sex. Single room occupancy can be pre-booked at supplementary cost. If you propose to arrive early, additional nights can be booked at the group hotel in Thonon-les-Bains and, similarly, we can book extra hotel nights in Nice at the end of the tour.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The holiday will be led by an experienced English speaking guide who will drive the support vehicle.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to moderately high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 2500 metres. Most people will have no difficulty with this level of altitude but before coming on the holiday, we recommend you read the advice on trekking at high altitude. You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude.

Spending Money

We recommend that £150 (or equivalent in US dollars, Euros etc.) will be sufficient for miscellaneous expenses and should also cover your bar bills - beer, wine and soft drinks are available every night. By far the easiest way to obtain your travel cash is from ATM's using a credit card or a debit card - there are ATM facilities at Geneva Airport as well as in the majority of the larger towns on our route.

Your Bike

We recommend that your bike is fitted with suitably low gearing and suggest that you fit reasonably high volume tyres (28mm for instance) which will provide a bit more comfort on the variable road surfaces typically found on our **Road Cycling** holidays.

Since you are depending on your bike to transport you throughout your holiday, it's important to ensure it is in good working order. If you are not mechanically minded, get your local bicycle dealer to service it for you.

Please contact us if you are unsure about the suitability of your bike.

Bike Hire

Bike hire can be arranged through our local agent. Your choice of bike will be brought to the group's first meeting outside the railway station in Thonon-les-Bains at 9 am on Day 2 of the holiday. The options are:

Standard: carbon frame and fork, disc brakes, Shimano Tiagra groupset, 50/34 chainset and 10-speed 11/32 cassette, aluminium wheelset, model Scott Addict 50 or equivalent, roughly 9 kg: Hire cost - £310 / 370 euros / $425 for the week.

Premium: carbon frame and fork, disc brakes, Shimano 105 Di2 groupset, 50/34 chainset and 12-speed 11/32 cassette, aluminium wheelset, model Scott Addict 40 or equivalent, roughly 8.9 kg: Hire cost - £375 / 440 euros / $510 for the week.

Ultimate: carbon frame and fork, disc brakes, Shimano 105 Di2 groupset, 50/34 chainset and 12-speed 11/34 cassette, Syncros or Mavic carbon wheelset, model Scott Addict 30 or equivalent, roughly 8.4 kg: Hire Cost - £495 / 575 euros / $675 for the week.

Electric: carbon frame and fork, model Orbea Gain M30 or equivalent, supplied with 1 x 248Wh battery (plus additional battery 210Wh): Hire Cost - £700 / 810 euros / $950 for the week.

The bikes come with a repair kit (2 CO2 cartridges, patches, multi-tool, 1 inner tube, tyre levers) and 'consumables' (tyres, tubes, brake pads, cables) are included in the rental price. However, you will be liable for the cost of replacing your hire bike if it is stolen or lost, or if you damage it in a crash. If you tell us which bike you wish to hire and the size of bike you need we will reserve one for you and add the cost of bike hire to your final invoice. We must stress that your hire contract will be with the local hire company and that KE cannot be held responsible for any issues arising from bike hire. If you do hire a bike, we recommend that you take your own shoes and pedals (pedals can be provided without charge on request at least 2 weeks before departure - Look KEO easy, Shimano SPD SL or Shimano SPD) and possibly even your own saddle, which will go a long way towards making it feel like your own bike. You must also take your helmet, which will be worn at all times when on the bike.

Travelling With Your Bike

Airlines require that you pack your bike properly for travel and for this holiday we recommend that you use a purpose-made soft and foldable bike bag. These can be relatively inexpensive. They are also light in weight, easy to handle and, most importantly, can be packed into a small space to allow easy transportation in the support vehicle. You will need to partially dismantle your bike to pack it in your bag.

If you propose to travel with your bike in a more rigid bag or box (which cannot be folded down to the size of typical hand-luggage - 56x45x25 cms) you will be charged £40 (or €45 or $50) for the transport of this bag/box during the trip. This cost will be added to your final invoice.

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding travelling with your bike.

Vehicle Support

Throughout the trip the group will have the back up of a support vehicle which will be driven by the tour guide. After breakfast, the guide will pack your luggage in the van, distribute cereal/energy bars, and announce the time slot for lunch. The driver can also hand out picnics to any of the group who do not wish to stop at the designated picnic lunch stop.

Once all the cyclists have passed the picnic stop, the driver will transport your luggage directly to the following night's accommodation, before returning to wait at the foot of the last climb of the day. He is then available to help any members of the group in difficulty or who encounter a mechanical problem. You'll usually meet the van driver several times during the day, offering the opportunity to fill up with water, change clothing, etc.

Each group member is free to ride at his or her own pace, using the road book, smartphone navigation app and GPS tracks to navigate during the day. However, the driver is equipped with a mobile phone, and can be reached at any time during the day if a particpant encounters a problem. The driver is also available throughout the trip to provide information and advice.

As well as carrying the group's baggage, the support vehicle can also carry a limited number of cyclists and their bikes. So if you want to opt out of a morning, afternoon or even a full day of cycling, it may be possible to travel in the vehicle.

Route Navigation

You will receive an email 7-10 days before departure with the following navigation tools:

Phone App. Download the trip itinerary to your smartphone, view route maps and profiles, accommodation details, services and useful contacts, and use the integrated route guidance (visual and vocal) for navigation.

Detailed Road Book. Includes maps with highlighted routes, step-by-step route description and route profiles.

GPS Tracks. The tracks are in gpx format, compatible with all GPS devices/apps.

Baggage Allowance

Apart from your bike in its bag (if you are taking your own bike), you should travel with one main item of luggage, such as a sturdy holdall or piece of wheeled luggage, and a small cycle-specific day pack. The day pack can be used to carry valuable items such as cameras and GPS devices whilst travelling and can also carry items on the rides if that's what you choose to do.

Your baggage allowance on the flights will depend on your airline. When choosing your flights, whether booking them directly or through KE, you will need to consider the cost of carrying your bike. These costs are your responsibility.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the ‘Dates and Prices’ table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

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.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates *(see Health & Vaccinations below),* **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the FCDO for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Currency

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

Preparing for your Holiday

The better conditioned you are the more you will enjoy your cycling holiday. We suggest that you adopt a sensible weekly exercise regime and fit in a number of long cycle rides in hilly country to ensure you are physically capable of taking part in this trip - this will also provide you with an opportunity to make sure all your riding kit is tried and tested before you travel. Cycling is obviously the best activity to prepare for this trip, however, running and swimming are also good for developing aerobic fitness and stamina.

Climate

The temperatures that we can expect to encounter during the day will be reasonably warm, at around 20 to 25 degrees centigrade. However, at higher altitudes on the tops of passes it will be considerably cooler. During the first departure of the year, there is often snow on the roadsides at the Col de l'Iseran and the temperature might be as low as 5 degrees centigrade. The weather is usually pretty good from late June to late September in the Alps, but mountainous areas do generate their own weather systems and occasional rain and thunderstorms cannot be ruled out. You should be prepared for all eventualities. Visit the World Meteorological Organization's website at worldweather.org for climate statistics for Geneva or use this link for the weather in Nice.

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 before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

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 directly 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

- Cycling in the French Alps - Paul Henderson (Cicerone Press)
- Rough Guide to France. Lonely Planet
- Downhill All the Way: Cycling Through France from La Manche to the Mediterranean (Paperback) by Edward Enfield
- In Pursuit of the Yellow Jersey: Bicycle Racing in the Year of the Tortured Tour (Cycling Resources). by Samuel Abt & James Startt

Maps

Route Des Grandes Alpes.

IGN Regional Discovery Maps. 1:250,000 scale. Excellent folded map with the entire route.

Private Groups Information

Make this KE cycling holiday your own!

- Do our normal group departure dates not fit?
- Are you wanting to travel with just your friends or family?
- Are you looking to organise a trip for your local cycling club?

We are experts in creating holidays for groups of friends, families, charities, and cycling clubs. Our personal service means you'll be fully involved as we make the arrangements for your perfect adventure holiday.

Independence with Security

Travelling as a KE Private Group allows you more flexibility and choice, but still with the peace of mind that everything is pre-planned and arranged for your group by a reputable adventure travel company.

To take your first step to an amazing adventure with your friends and family complete the private group enquiry form, or call our **Sales Experts on: 017687 73966**

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.

Explore International

This holiday is part of our Explore International range. Participants on these trips can book through KE or through our international partner. This helps us to gather together sufficient numbers of like-minded adventurers to get your holiday up and running quickly. Led by an English-speaking guide, the cosmopolitan nature of these groups can be an important part of the experience!

Equipment Information

Equipment List

For this holiday you will need your usual cycling clothing, including shoes, cycling gloves and helmet (which must be worn at all times when cycling). Even though we run this holiday during the summer months, you must be prepared for the possibility of cold conditions on the high passes. As well as your summer riding gear, take clothing that will keep you warm in these conditions, especially on the descents.

Whether you are hiring a bike or taking your own, we recommend that you take the usual day-ride essentials of: mobile phone, multi-tool, mini-pump, tyre levers, spare tubes and puncture repair kit.

Bike Wear

- Cycling helmet
- Cycling shoes
- Waterproof overshoes
- Padded cycling shorts
- Long leg cycling trousers or leg warmers
- Lycra arm warmers
- Short sleeve cycling tops
- Long sleeved cycling top
- Lightweight windproof gilet
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Regular biking gloves
- Long fingered biking gloves
- Warm hat that fits under your helmet
- Buff
- Sunglasses
- Sun cream (inc. total bloc for lips/nose)
- Camera

Other Stuff

- Travel and off-the-bike clothing and footwear
- Wash bag, towel, toiletries
- Swimwear
- Basic First Aid kit and personal medication
- Chamois Cream (e.g. Assos or Ozone)
- Rear light for tunnels
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Spares

If you are hiring a bike you do not need to bring any spares. The hire bikes are provided in good condition and a supply of consumable spares (tubes, tyres, brake pads/blocks, cables) is carried. Only parts and components that are broken due to a crash and/or misuse will be charged. In the event of bike loss or theft, a fixed fee will be charged equivalent to the value of the bike. If you are taking your own bike, you should consider taking a minimum of spares, including a couple of spare spokes (for each wheel if they are different), spare brake blocks (or brake disc pads), chain links/chain connector, rear derailleur hanger and any non-standard parts specific to your bike.

Repairs

It is a good idea that you familiarise yourself with how to carry out at least some basic repairs to your bike e.g. changing an inner tube and fixing a puncture. This will save the inconvenience of having to wait for assistance from the guide.

Hydration and Energy Snacks

You should take 2 standard water bottles (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic) and also consider taking a small supply of the gels, power bars or sports drink mix that you would normally use on a ride at home.

Please contact us if you have any questions about your equipment.

Land Only Information

Please refer to the 'Joining Arrangements & Transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Flights and other transport to your destination should not be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

Land Only Information

We sell this holiday on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The holiday starts at the hotel in Thonon les Bains. Transfers from Geneva Airport on Day 1 and to Nice Airport on the final day of the itinerary are not included.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Great Value With partial vehicle support, driven by the tour guide, we cycle from Thonon-les-Bains beside Lake Geneva to Nice on the Mediterranean. En route, we climb some of the most historic road biking cols in Europe. Fully inclusive, this holiday also offers fantastic value for money!

Please Note This document was downloaded on 12/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change