FRANCE - COGNAC FOR FAMILIES - **£420**

25th July 2020 - 1st August 2020 (8 days)

Based at a château in the Charente Maritime department of France, this holiday provides an opportunity to tour abroad in comfort in the company of other families. The château complex is set in eight acres of private grounds with three accommodation buildings, swimming pools, a snooker table, a patio and a BBQ area. Using a tried and tested format, families set off together at about 9:30am, visit a cafe, then a place of interest with another stop in the afternoon, and return about 5:30pm. After this, the children get together and play (possibly in 1 of the 3 swimming pools) whilst the adults drink a bottle of wine and generally relax, knowing the children are having fun. Ages have ranged from 5 to 18 years with the commonest age being between 10 and 13, including the Tour Manager's 13-year old son. The pace is relaxed, and everyone stays broadly together. Route sheets and gpx files are provided so if you wish to stay awhile at a location, you are most welcome to do so. A lovely environment for an enjoyable holiday.

**Holiday Itinerary**

**Saturday 25th July**
Arrive any time after 5pm, but in time for an introductions meeting at 8pm. Bikes can be left on cars as tomorrow's ride will be car assisted. Stay 7 nights. Meals: None

**Sunday 26th July**
Route 1. A circular car assisted ride from Jarnac (50km away) along the Charente valley. The town of Jarnac is on the banks of the Charente River, east of Cognac and west of Angouleme, in the eastern Charente department (Poitou-Charentes region) of France. The surrounding area is a gently rolling landscape of vineyards and other farming activities. 53km. Meals: D

**Monday 27th July**
Route 2. A circular ride via Givrezac and Mortagne-sur-Gironde. We head for the coast via Givrezac, a small market town and today is market day, so a good place to pick up lunch. Mortagne-sur-Gironde is an inland harbour which is lined by restaurants. 54km. Meals: None

**Tuesday 28th July**
Route 3. A circular ride to Cognac, the main town in the region and famous for its Cognac distilleries, notably Hennessy. There isn’t much to see on the way out and back except for the Roman Church at Ars. Today’s ride is a little longer than usual but it uses the most direct route without retracing. 68km.
Meals: None

Wednesday 29th July
Rest day, for sightseeing or relaxing. Meals: None

Thursday 30th July
Route 4. A circular ride to Pons, which was a staging post on the road to Santiago de Compostela in the Middle Ages. It’s castle and donjon (tower) is in a square with public gardens, and it’s possible to climb the tower. The ramparts below offer good views along the river Seugne. We don’t visit the Château de Enigmes at Pons today, which has a treasure trail designed for children based around the Templars, but you may do so if you prefer rather than spending time in Pons itself, or you could visit the château the previous day. Built by the Rabaine family and, when threatened by destruction, it was moved stone by stone to its present site. 48km. Meals: None

Friday 31st July
Route 5. A circular car assisted ride from Espargnes (25km away) to Royan. For most visitors the big attraction of Royan is its proximity to very pleasant beaches which are sandy and gently sloping, so perfect for children. The ride will also visit Talmont, Royan, La Grand Conche and Ars. This second car assisted ride is suggested for today so that bikes can be left on cars ready for the journey home. 54km. Meals: D

Saturday 1st August
End of holiday. Château to be vacated by 10am. Meals: None

Meals: D = Dinner

Please note that the day on which each ride will take place is subject to change.

Holiday Summary

Accommodation & Meals
The three buildings, the ‘château’, ‘stables’ and ‘domaine’ could be let in their own right but we have sole use of these. They are all well furnished and have well-equipped kitchens. The ‘château’ is the larger of the three and with its swimming pool will be used as the main communal area for relaxing in the evening, sitting on the patio, playing snooker or having a dip in the pool! Most rooms are two-bedded, though some can take an extra bed or two, and some but not all are en-suite. Some families might wish to have the parents sharing a room with their own children, while others might need or prefer two rooms. No breakfasts are included but there will be an opportunity to order a breakfast to be delivered by the local boulangerie (except for Sunday morning). The dinners included on the Sunday and Friday evenings will be buffet style (main course only).

Passports, Visa & Health
EU citizens must hold a passport that is still valid on the date of their return to their home country. Holders of non-EU passports are advised to check whether they require a visa. There are no compulsory health-related requirements for UK residents, but you are strongly advised to check that your tetanus protection has not expired. You must also carry your European Health Insurance Card.

Travel Insurance
Our Booking Conditions stipulate that, for holidays outside the UK, travel Insurance is mandatory. Details of the level of cover needed and other conditions you should check are stated in the Booking Conditions. CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours Ltd cannot accept responsibility for any costs that may be incurred due to insufficient insurance cover.

Price
The price of £420 is based on a minimum number of 32 people taking part in the holiday; please note Booking Conditions, clause 3. If there are insufficient bookings by 16th May 2020, we will contact you and return all monies paid, although in certain circumstances the holiday may still run at below minimum numbers but at the same price.

Price Includes
- 7 nights château, sharing room
- 2 dinners
- Cleaning charges and heating/electricity costs
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price Does Not Include
- Travel to and from France and to the château
- Breakfast
- Lunches or refreshments during the day
- Entry fees at any attractions visited
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance

Payment Schedule
A deposit of £200 per person is payable upon booking, with the final balance of £220 per person to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 16th May 2020.

Cancellations
Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:
Written notice received:  
Before 16th May 2020  
From 16th May 2020 through to departure  
Cancellation charge:  
Deposit (£200)  
100% (£420)

### Additional Information

#### Area Covered By The Holiday
Based in the Charente Maritime department of France, within 30km of Cognac.

#### Rides & Rest Days
Five circular routes are available from which a route will be chosen that is appropriate for a given day. Each route has been selected to lead to a point of interest that would appeal to both children and adults alike. Rides will leave the château at roughly 9:30am. A morning and afternoon stop will be incorporated, varying from a café in a village/town or another point of interest such as a church or château. Lunchtime will usually be in a town that offers a choice of places to eat. It is intended to return to the château by about 5:30pm. 

All rides are led and it is anticipated that the group will cycle together. This is nice for the children, especially those on solo bikes, as they feel they are cycling with friends whilst still under the watchful eye of their parents. The average speed is leisurely at about 6kmph (10mph), waiting at difficult junctions for anyone behind to catch up if need be. The roads are mostly tarmac, though on occasions paths may be used that will be suitable for most types of bike.

This holiday is not designed for the absolute beginner. Your family should have been cycling before and all should be capable of covering 68km (42 miles) in a day. Children can often cycle further than parents expect when they are with a group. However, shortcuts can be suggested if you feel any given route is too long. If children cycle on their own bike it is important that parents keep an eye on them.

Ideal destinations for the rest day and within cycling distance is the town of Saintes with its Roman amphitheatre, the Château des Enigmes at Pons and a large waterpark at Jonzac, along with cafes and boulangeries.

#### Accommodation & Meals
Rooms will be allocated as near to your request as possible but, obviously, there will be less choice as the holiday gets booked up. Please make your preferences clear on the Booking Form.

#### Travel
The château is located at 17800 Pons, Charente-Maritime, France. Approximate distances from the nearest ferry ports are:
- Calais (777km)
- Dieppe (610km)
- Le Havre (584km)
- Caen (506km)
- Cherbourg (591km)
- Saint-Malo (430km)
- Roscoff (565km)

#### Group Information
The maximum number of participants will be 40 excluding the Tour Managers. This will mean there will be approximately 12 families in total, though this will depend on the number of people in each family.

#### Weather & Clothing
At this time of year it should be warm and dry but rain is always a possibility, so you should carry clothing to ensure that you and your children can remain warm and (reasonably) dry. Sun cream is strongly recommended.

#### Cycles & Equipment
Any combination of tandem, cycle, hybrid or lightweight MTB is suitable, but this must be in good working order, especially the brakes. Everyone in your family should have ridden their cycle before the tour to ensure they are happy with its handling. Lights will not be necessary. Please ensure that you have suitable panniers for carrying rainwear, spare clothing, picnic food, sun cream, etc. Each family will also be expected to bring/carry sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs.

#### Maps & Guides
Although the rides will be led, daily route sheets and gpx files containing enough information to navigate during the holiday will be provided. If you prefer to carry more detailed maps, several maps of the area are available through the internet, but a map showing the whole area covered won't have enough detail. The following maps cover the area:
- IGN Top 100 - 1:100,000 IGN 138 - La Rochelle, Saintes, Ile de Re et Ile d'Oleron £8.99
- IGN Top 100 - 1:100,000 IGN 145 - Bordeaux, Arcachon, Gironde, Medoc £8.99
- The Rough Guide series of guidebooks for France can also be recommended.

You should carry a map in case you become separated from the group or wish to spend some time cycling away from the group. The routes have been planned using IGN maps 138 and 145 but please check with the Tour Manager just before the holiday if purchasing new maps. Michelin Local map 324 could be equally useful.

#### Travel Insurance & Advice
In addition to travel insurance, EU nationals should carry a European Health Insurance Card, obtainable from www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/. This enables you to take advantage of emergency medical services free or at a discount under a reciprocal provision that exists between EU member states. Your travel insurer may refuse to meet the extra costs of medical treatment if you do not carry
Before booking you should check the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, at www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice or on 0845 850 2829.

Other Information
A €100 cash returnable damages deposit per family is to be paid to the Tour Manager on arrival. This is held to cover any breakage or damage that may occur. This deposit, less the cost of any breakages etc, will be refunded at the end of the stay.

Tour Manager's Contact Details
If you require any assistance, or have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the Tour Manager using the information provided below.

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