



## PREMIUM SPORT TOURS

# The Alps & Pyrenees Stages

**With or Without Bikes**

**Thursday 12th to Friday 27th July 2007**

On this tour you will see all the crucial Alpine & Pyrenean stages as well as the all important Albi Time Trial, and for those bringing bikes you will be able to ride the famous climbs such as the Col de Colombiere, Cormet du Roseland, Alpe d'Huez (not on 2007 TDF route), Galibier, Mont Ventoux (not on 2007 TDF route), Plateau Bielle, Port de Bales, Tourmalet (not on 2007 route), Aubisque.

Following the Tour de France for 15 days can be tiring, therefore this tour has been designed with the minimum amount of hotel changes. Apart from the first & last nights in Paris at the 3\* Hotel Mercure Porte de Versailles EXPO we shall spend 3 nights at Aix les Bains, 2 nights on Alpe d'Huez, 2 nights in Orange, 3 nights in Toulouse and 3 nights in Argeles Gazost.

### Inclusions

#### Includes:

- 15 Nights Bed & Buffet Breakfast accommodation in 2\* & 3\* Hotels
- 10 Evening meals
- Air conditioned coach transportation throughout
- Coach transfers to and from Paris hotel and Paris Charles de Gaulle airport at specific times
- Special bike trailer for the safe keeping & transport of your bike
- Coloured maps with Tour de France route marked
- Detailed itinerary
- Services of our guide

#### Does Not Include:

- Guided bike rides
- Drinks with meals
- Hotel extras (telephone, drinks, laundry)

## Standard Tour Itinerary

<b>Thu 12th July</b>	<p>We shall collect clients from Paris Charles de Gaulle airport at 10.00hrs, 12.00hrs, 15.00hrs &amp; 17.00hrs for transport to our Paris hotel, Hotel Mercure Porte de Versailles EXPO. This airport transfer is included in the tour price.</p> <p>We shall spend 1 night in Paris on Bed &amp; Buffet Breakfast basis at the 3* Hotel Mercure Paris Porte de Versailles EXPO. We have arranged for you to keep your bike box / bag at the hotel for the duration of the tour as the bikes will travel built up in a special bike trailer.</p>
<b>Fri 13th July</b>	<p>After breakfast you will be able to load your bike onto the special bike trailer. We shall leave Paris and travel to the French Alps and the spa town of Aix les Bains where we shall spend the next 3 nights on Dinner, Bed &amp; Breakfast basis at the 2* Hotel Campanile. Not only is Aix les Bains a beautiful town to stay in, next to Lac Bouget but it offers excellent access to the first 2 Alpine stages of the Tour de France.</p>
<b>Sat 14th July</b>	<p>The riders of the Tour de France enter the Alps with a 197km stage from Bourg en Bresse to the Savoie village of Le Grand Bornand. En route they face a number of small climbs as they head into the Alps, but it is the final climb of the day, the 16km Col de la Colombiere where all the action will take place. It is on the Col de la Colombiere where we shall come into contact with the Tour de France for the first time, and our location in Aix les Bains offers good access to the stage. Those with bikes will be able to ride to the Col de la Colombiere from the hotel in Aix les Bains or travel part way on the bus and ride the rest. Those without bikes will be taken to the town of Cluses from where they will be able to walk onto the lower slopes of the Col de la Colombiere. After seeing the stage we shall return to our hotel in Aix les Bains.</p>
<b>Sun 15th July</b>	<p>The 2nd Alpine stage is fairly short by Tour de France standards, only 165km, but will be very tense from the outset. Cramped into the 165km stage are 6 climbs, and the last 3 are very tough (Cormet du Roseland 1,967mt, Hautville 1639mt &amp; the final climb to the ski station of Tignes at over 2,000mt high).</p> <p>Once again our location in Aix les Bains is excellent for accessing today's stage, and offers those with bikes numerous possibilities of seeing the stage. Yesterday we saw the final climb of the stage, today we'll see the stage mid point (Cormet de Roseland) and see the final of the stage on TV. Those with bikes will be able to ride from our base in Aix les Bains to either the climbs of the Col de Tamie or Cormet de Roseland, or alternatively travel part way on the bus and ride the rest. Those without bikes will be taken to either the town of Albertville or the beautiful Savoie village of Beaufort which lies at the foot of the Cormet de Roseland climb. After seeing the stage in our chosen location we shall return to Aix les Bains.</p>
<b>Mon 16th July</b>	<p>After a week of racing the Tour de France spends its first rest day in the ski station of Val d'Isere. We however shall leave Aix les Bains and those with bikes will have the opportunity to climb the infamous 21 hairpined climb to the ski station of Alpe d'Huez. You will be able to ride from Grenoble (50km) or from the Bourg d'Oisans valley floor, but don't forget to call in at the tourist office in Bourg d'Oisans and time yourself up this mythical climb.</p> <p>Not only do you get the opportunity to ride Alpe d'Huez we have also secured accommodation here for the next 2 nights at an excellent 3* Hotel.</p> <p>Those without bikes will have some free time to spend at the ski station of L'Alpe d'Huez and may want to take the cable car up to Pic Blanc at a staggering 3,600mt!!</p>
<b>Tue 17th July</b>	<p>After a rest day in Val d'Isere the 2007 Tour de France concludes its visit to the Alps with an absolute classic stage, from Val d'Isere to Briancon passing over 2 of the highest roads in the Alps, first is the Col d'Iseran at a staggering 2,770mt followed by the 34km climb of the Telegraph &amp; Galibier to 2,645mt. It is on the Col du Galibier that the stage will be decided, as from here it is a 40km descent to the finish in Briancon.</p> <p>Our location at L'Alpe d'Huez offers excellent access to seeing the stage on the Col du Galibier. Those with bikes will have the opportunity of riding from L'Alpe d'Huez to the Col du Galibier whilst those without bikes will be taken to the Col du Lauteret from where they will have the choice of seeing the riders on the descent of the Galibier or walking 8km to the summit.</p> <p>After seeing the stage those with bikes can ride back to L'Alpe d'Huez whilst those without bikes will return on the coach.</p>
<b>Wed 18th July</b>	<p>The Tour de France leaves the Alps and heads for the Mediterranean with a 170km stage from Tallard to Marseille. After the three Alpine stages that have been, today will be a relatively quiet stage in the Tour de France with a gradual descent out of the Alps and down to the Med.</p> <p>As today's stage is not particularly interesting and is quite away from our hotel in L'Alpe d'Huez we have decided to have a day off from Le Tour, and travel to Provence and the town of Cavillon where we shall spend the next two nights at the 2* Hotel du Parc.</p> <p>After checking in, those with bikes will be able to have an easy afternoon ride through the beautiful Provence countryside around Cavillon, whilst those without bikes will be able to relax and visit the town. In essence a day off to relax and chill.....</p>
<b>Thu 19th July</b>	<p>Today the Tour de France hugs the Mediterranean coast with a 180km flat stage between Marseille and Montpellier. Once again, another day for the sprinters or breakaway as the GC contenders will be saving themselves for the forthcoming Albi Time Trial and Pyrenees.</p> <p>Our location in Cavillon is excellent for seeing the stage and those with bikes will be able to have an easy ride from the hotel to the feed station and back. However.....you may want to miss seeing Le Tour and use the opportunity of being in Cavillon to climb the mythical mountain of Mont Ventoux and pay your respects to Tom Simpson who died on the mountain taking part in the 1967 Tour de France, 40 years ago.</p> <p>Those without bikes will have the choice of seeing the Le Tour pass through the feed station, visit the typical Provence town of Cavillon.</p>

<p><b>Fri 20th July</b></p>	<p>The Tour de France leaves behind the flatlands of the Mediterranean as it heads inland across the Haute Languedoc national park and the Espinouse mountains with a 180km stage to the town of Castres. With all the small climbs on today's stage it is ideal for a breakaway as the stage is too difficult for the pure sprinters and the GC riders will be saving themselves for tomorrow's all important time trial at Albi.</p> <p>After an early breakfast we shall leave Cavillon and travel to a mid point of the stage, possibly the town of St Pons de Thomieres where we shall see the riders tackle a small climb leaving the town. Those with bikes will be able to ride to St Pons Thomieres from Beziers, whilst those without bikes will be taken there by the bus.</p> <p>After seeing the stage we shall travel to the Pink City of Toulouse, where we shall spend the next 3 nights on B&amp;B basis at a 3* Hotel in the city centre. Not only is Toulouse a beautiful city, it offers excellent access to the forthcoming stages.</p>
<p><b>Sat 21st July</b></p>	<p>The first "Race of Truth" comes late in the 2007 Tour de France, and today's 56km Individual Time Trial based around the city of Albi is sure to sort out those riders with aspirations of a good GC finish in Paris.</p> <p>Our location in Toulouse is excellent for accessing the stage. Those with bikes will be taken out of the city to a point where they can ride to Albi to see the time trial, whilst those without bikes will be taken by the bus to the city of Albi where they will be able to see the start and finish of this all important "Race of Truth". Apart from seeing the Tour de France, Albi is a beautiful city to visit and boasts a very impressive cathedral.</p> <p>After seeing the stage we shall return to Toulouse.</p>
<p><b>Sun 22nd July</b></p>	<p>After two weeks of racing the 2007 Tour de France enters the Pyrenees for its final phase, and what a showdown the Pyrenees are to offer, with 3 incredibly hard stages in 4 days. Today is the first stage of the Pyrenees, and after leaving Mazamet the hometown of Laurent Jalabert it uses two climbs that are becoming a regular feature in the Tour de France route, the 2000mt Port de Pailheres and the climb to Plateau de Bielle 1780mt.</p> <p>Once again our location in Toulouse offers good access to this first Pyrenean stage. We shall travel out of the city, and those with bikes will be able to ride to the final climb of the stage, Plateau de Bielle, whilst those without bikes will be taken by the bus to the village of Les Cabannes (foot of the climb to Plateau de Bielle) from where they will be able to walk on to the lower slopes of the climb.</p> <p>After seeing the stage we shall rejoin the bus in Les Cabannes and return to Toulouse.</p>
<p><b>Mon 23rd July</b></p>	<p>The second Pyrenean stage is a classic 5 mountain traverse of the Pyrenees from Foix to Loudenvielle over 197km and featuring the Col du Port, Portet d'Aspet and the Casartelli memorial, Col de Mente, Port de Bales and the classic Col du Peyresourde before a hair raising descent to the finish in Loudenvielle. The Port de Bales has never been used by the Tour de France, and is an extremely difficult climb (20km @ 6.2 average) on a small road with parts of the climb at 14%!!</p> <p>We have decided to see the stage on the unknown Port de Bales as we can access it easily from Toulouse and exit quickly after the stage, as we are moving on to Argeles Gazost today.</p> <p>Those with bikes will be dropped off south of Toulouse and will be able to ride to the Port de Bales, whilst those without bikes will be taken to the foot of the climb by the bus.</p> <p>After seeing the stage on the Port de Bales we shall see the stage finish on TV. before traveling to Argeles Gazost where we shall spend the next 3 nights on Dinner B&amp;B basis.</p>
<p><b>Tue 24th July</b></p>	<p>After two vicious stages in the Pyrenees the riders of the Tour de France spend their 2nd rest day in the town of Pau. This gives those with bikes the opportunity to ride the famous Col du Tourmalet, whilst those without bikes will be able to spend the day at leisure in Argeles Gazost .</p>
<p><b>Wed 25th July</b></p>	<p>The final Pyrenean stage is brutal 218km and 4 mountains en-route between Orthez and the ski village of Gourette (Col d'Aubisque). The Port de Larrau is the first mountain and takes the riders over the border into Spain, whilst the second mountain the Col de la Pierre St Martin brings the riders back into France. But it is the final two climbs where the showdown will take place, and the super steep Col du Marie Blanque is next before the final climb to the ski village of Gourette, near the summit of the Col d'Aubisque.</p> <p>Our location in Argeles Gazost is excellent for accessing the stage and those with bikes will be able to ride to the final climb to Gourette (Col d'Aubisque), whilst those without bikes will be taken to the foot of the climb from where they will be able to walk on to the lower slopes.</p> <p>After seeing the stage we shall return to Argeles Gazost.</p>
<p><b>Thu 26th July</b></p>	<p>After following the Tour de France for 2 weeks and seeing all the important stages of the Alps and Pyrenees it is time to say "Au revoir" to Le Tour and commence the journey back to Paris.</p> <p>We shall leave Argeles Gazost and return to Paris and the 3* Hotel Mercure Porte de Versailles EXPO where we shall spend 1 night on Bed &amp; Buffet Breakfast.</p> <p>If you want to continue following Le Tour you could join our Final TT &amp; Paris Finale tour that arrives at the Hotel Mercure tonight. You would depart with that tour tomorrow morning for the stage finish in Angouleme. If you simply want to extend your stay in Paris then we can book extra nights for you at the Hotel Mercure. Please see supplements below.</p>
<p><b>Fri 27th July</b></p>	<p>After breakfast we shall leave Paris. We shall offer transfers from the hotel to Paris Charles de Gaulle airport at the following times 07.30hrs, 11.00hrs &amp; 14.00hrs. For those people returning to the UK, a UK coach will depart from the Hotel Mercure Porte de Versailles EXPO at 08.30hrs, taking a 13.30hrs sailing from Calais to Dover and making drop offs throughout the UK</p>

**Please call us for full details**

**1800 335 971**