



THE 2012 BIG BATTLEFIELD BIKE RIDE

DURATION: 7 days / 6 nights

DEPART: 20th May 2012 (Portsmouth – Le Havre)

RETURN: 26th May 2012 (Dunkirk – Dover)

The 2012 Big Battlefield Bike Ride takes us from HMS Victory in Portsmouth, a hugely important part of naval history – across the channel to Le Havre and Northern France.

This challenging route traces some of the region's most significant WW1 & WW2 battle sites, including Thiepval on the Somme

This will be a great physical challenge, but also an amazing emotional journey as we visit some of the memorial sites in the Somme. We finish our challenge in Dunkirk where we will learn of the incredible rescue efforts from the Little Ships enabling 330,000 allied troops to be rescued from Northern France in 1940.



ITINERARY

DAY 1: Portsmouth – Le Havre

We will have a great send-off from HMS Victory in Portsmouth's Naval Dockyard. After a spectacular parade we will cycle to the ferry terminal and catch the evening overnight ferry to Le Havre. We are allocated our cabins and have a good night's sleep – ready for an early start and a challenging day tomorrow! Dinner included. **Cycle 2 miles**



DAY 2: Le Havre - Dieppe

We arrive in France at around 7am local time. We shall transfer directly onto buses and make the short journey by coach to our starting point in Fecamp, a coastal fishing town outside of Le Havre. Here we will mount our bikes and begin cycling eastwards to Dieppe. We make our way to St Valery-en-Caux where the 51st Highland Division, part of the British Expeditionary Force, attempted to evacuate Northern France in June 1940. The attempt failed due to fog. We will walk to the cliff-top memorial to the soldiers that died, which overlooks the small coastal town and beach. Our cycle continues along the beautiful, but hilly coastal road to Dieppe with stops at several other points along the route where there are memorials to the events of both the D-Day landings and the earlier BEF evacuations. Overnight in hotel (breakfast, lunch & dinner included). **Cycle approx 50 miles**

DAY 3: Dieppe – Amiens

From Dieppe we cycle inland, gradually climbing away from the coast along country roads, passing through hamlets and small towns, stopping maybe for a cool drink in a typical village café. The terrain becomes testing and undulating as we head into the French countryside where the aftermath of the First World War remains apparent by the small military cemeteries dotted around the landscape. We will stop at two of these en route, the first at Grandcourt, where 29 British and Commonwealth soldiers are buried. In addition we visit the Cauillon

and Crouy British Cemetery. The route we take is beautiful; through rolling farmland and woodland. We spend the night in Amiens, relaxing after a long day in the saddle. Overnight in hotel (breakfast, lunch & dinner included). **Cycle approx 75 miles**

DAY 4: Amiens – Arras

Today is our most thought provoking ride as we explore the tragic battle sites of the First World War. We leave Amiens following the River Somme heading north east through small villages towards Albert. As we progress, the cemeteries and memorials become ever more frequent as we ride on into the heart of the Somme. We cycle on to Thiepval, which is the main memorial to the lost French and British soldiers who gave their lives during that terrible time. After exploring the area, including the Beaumont Hamel trenches, we carry on cycling north-east, finally finishing in the town of Arras with a visit to the underground tunnels that housed the Allied Troops. Overnight in hotel (breakfast, lunch & dinner included). **Cycle approx 70 miles**

DAY 5: Arras – Ypres

Leaving Arras behind us we head directly North on a tough cycle via the Canadian memorial at Vimy Ridge and on to the smaller cemeteries such as those at Vermelles and Festubert. Fromelles is where the most recent WW1 burial ground was found, so we shall remember those who fell here at the brand new memorial built in 2009. Heading north of Armentieres there is the opportunity to hear our Battlefield Guides talk at Ploegsteert and to visit the memorial which commemorates nearly 11,000 servicemen who died in WWI mostly during day-to-day trench warfare. From here we complete the final stretch into Ypres, an immensely historic town where we shall join the evening ceremony held daily at the Menin gate. Overnight in hotel (breakfast, lunch and dinner included) **Cycle approx 70 miles**



DAY 6: Ypres – Dunkirk

Our penultimate day sees us traversing the flatter lands of the Belgian/French border to Dunkirk. We will start early and head up towards the port town, following the route taken by many soldiers on foot. Cycling along the coast towards Dunkirk we will arrive at the beach memorial to those soldiers who lost their lives so close to being free, and witness a special ceremony to remember those who fought for us here. After our grand finale we transfer to the hotel and prepare for a well-deserved celebration meal.

Cycle approx.: 70 miles

DAY 7: Dunkirk - Dover

After breakfast we will take our bikes to the port and take the ferry back to Dover from where you will make your own way home.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Tour cost

The tour cost includes all meals (other than breakfast on Day 2, lunch and dinner on Day 7); accommodation; support vehicles and Discover Adventure leaders, drivers and cooks. The tour cost does not include travel insurance, meals as specified, tips or personal expenditure. Approx. £100 - £150 is recommended for personal expenses.

FOOD AND ACCOMMODATION

5 nights in **/** hotels. The hotels are comfortable and well-situated for our ride, but not luxurious. All rooms have en suite facilities. All food is included with the exceptions detailed. Night one is in a 4 berth ferry cabin.

PASSPORT, VISA AND VACCINATIONS

A valid ten-year passport is required. Visas are not required for British passport-holders. No specific vaccinations are recommended for France but a tetanus injection is essential.

CLIMATE

May: 16 - 25°C

The climate of northern France is very similar to that of southern England, rain is a possibility in May and it may be windy.



FITNESS WARNING: DESIGNED TO BE CHALLENGING!

This ride is designed to be challenging for those of good health and fitness, and is achievable for most people provided they train well in advance. We will supply you with a thorough training guide when you have registered. Training for the challenge is all part of the preparation and requires commitment! Without it, you will find the ride less enjoyable – and we want you to have the time of your life!

CYCLING INFORMATION

Support vehicles are with the group all of the time and all luggage and spares will be carried in them. The cycling is mainly undulating and distances fairly long, varying from 25 – 80 miles per day. Therefore, participants should make sure they are fit enough to manage these distances. We ride mainly on small country roads. Traffic is light on most of the roads but when we pass through large towns we take extra care. It should be noted that even on the quiet roads you should keep in to the side!

BIKE REPAIRS

There will be a range of spares (for sale if required) in the vehicle along with a full tool kit. However, it is impossible for Discover Adventure to carry spares for every eventuality so it is **vital** that your bike is in good order before departure.

It is imperative that you supply your own helmet and wear it at all times while cycling.

Further information and a kit list will be sent once you have registered for the challenge.



For information about The Big Battlefield Bike Ride Logistics, please contact Discover Adventure using:

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