

# Pre-arrival information for your self-guided holiday in France

**Self-guided cycling and walking** requires individuals to use problem-solving skills, be adaptable and have a keen eye. You should be comfortable with map-reading and the use of a travel app and/or referring to route notes and have a good sense of direction (or be willing to work on improving this!). At times route finding, losing your way and finding it again, or asking locals for help is all part of the adventure. If this is your first time on a self-guided trip, you will certainly get the hang of it after the first couple of days, as do the vast majority of our first-time travellers.

In this document we will provide you as much useful information as possible.

This is essentially an independent holiday, and part of the pleasure is experiencing local life, with its day-to-day challenges. Your trip was designed and is organised entirely by S-Cape. All our staff members speak fluent English and we are always on hand to help out in case of need or difficulty. If you have any questions or problems while travelling, you can contact the office during office hours or the emergency phone that is on 24 hours a day.

**Have a great holiday!**

**Team S-Cape Partners France**

## Contact and emergency numbers

**Ambulance / medical assistance / police:** [112](#)

**Local Assistance:**

• **S-Cape Partners France** +33553730861  
Monday-Friday 09.00-18.00 hrs.

• **Emergency mobile** (outside office hours) +33631064272

## Important information

Please be assured that all material provided for route finding is updated regularly, and we provide a 24/7 Bilingual Emergency hotline in the event of any problems. There is a certain level of the unknown that comes with self-guided trips. However, with a methodical approach, potential problems will be avoided. The freedom of a self-guided trip is something that, once experienced, is sought time and time again.

## Address and contact details

**S-Cape Partners France**  
55 rue Saint Jacques

**Office Tel.:** +33 5 53 73 08 61  
**Emergency Mobile :** +33 6 31 06 42 72

**Office hours:**  
**Monday-Friday:** 09.00-18.00 hrs.

### **Problems/complaints during the trip**

At S-Cape, we take customer satisfaction very seriously. Complaints about accommodation or any other service booked should be dealt with on the spot, immediately and WHILE you are travelling. We cannot solve such problems once your trip is over, so complaints submitted after the fact will be of little help to you.

Please discuss the problem directly with the service supplier first, in order to give them a chance to solve the problem. If this does not produce the desired result and you feel you have a legitimate complaint which is not being dealt with in the proper manner, kindly contact our office so that we can assist you in the matter. Though we can usually only mediate by phone, we will be happy to help sort out any difficulties to ensure that your stay is a pleasant one.

### **If you cannot continue your trip**

In the unfortunate event you cannot continue the programme due to illness, injury or extreme weather conditions, you should always inform the (next) accommodation as well as your local agent. They will assist you in changing the accommodation scheme if necessary, discussing first the possible extra costs of this change. You will always have to pay for extra costs on the spot and then claim compensation from your travel insurance if possible.

### **Loss of personal Items**

If you lose something or have it stolen and wish to make a claim to your insurance company when you return home, you must report it to the police (Gendarmerie or Police Nationale) when it occurs. The Police will ask you to fill out a form and give you a copy. The vast majority of insurance companies will request a copy of this form when processing your claim. If you lose your passport, this document may be valid for international travel, but you should contact your embassy / consulat

## **Practical information**

### **Accommodation & Meals**

Please check your travel documents for a list of the hotels which have been booked for your holiday and the meals included in your programme.

### **Alternative accommodation**

During high season you might be booked into an alternative accommodation, which may not be listed in your route notes. The start or end of the routes may then be slightly altered, so pay close attention at the start and end of the routes. In some cases, we provide extra descriptions to be used when starting from / returning to an alternative accommodation.

In choosing alternative accommodation we have tried to maintain the same standards and quality and, whenever possible, location (in the same town or village), in order to modify the routes as little as possible.

### **Accommodation list & Check-in**

You have been provided with an accommodation list confirming all the services booked for you with the name and addresses of your hotels and other service suppliers.

The official check-in time is typically from 3:00 pm, and sometimes as late as 5:00 pm. Smaller accommodations, like B&Bs, may open later in the afternoon. It is advisable to call a day in advance to inform them of your estimated arrival time. If you plan to arrive before the check-in time, notify the hotel in advance so they can try to prepare your room early. If early check-in is not possible, inquire about leaving your luggage at the hotel. This way, you can take a stroll around the area or relax at a coffee shop, making for a pleasant start to your trip. By the time you return, your room should be ready.

When you check in at an accommodation, you may be asked to show this as proof of confirmation. You will also have to present some form of ID.

**REMEMBER to collect your ID before you leave.**

### **Luggage transfer**

If you have booked luggage transfer, this service is provided by the accommodation itself or a local taxi driver.

Please clearly label ALL your belongings with **the name of the main booker** on a luggage tag. Without a tag the luggage will not be transported to the next hotel. Labelling your belongings prevents mix ups, delays and loss. **If you have not received luggage tags from your agency, you must bring their own.** Ask hotel staff where the bags should be left in the morning, it must be ready by 9:00 am. In the afternoon, your luggage will be in your accommodation before 5:00 pm.

**Your luggage – one suitcase per person must not exceed 20 kilos, due to labour laws. If heavier, you will be charged an important surcharge.**

If heavier, you will be charged an important surcharge.

For all Camino trips 1 suitcase or travel bag (13 kg maximum) is allowed.

For all Tour Mont Blanc trips 1 suitcase or travel bag (15 kg maximum) is allowed.

If you are unable to do the cycle ride on a given day, you can ask the person in charge of luggage transport if you can ride with the luggage. However, this is not always possible and sometimes you will have to pay a small fee locally. Sometimes the vehicle is not suitable for passengers, or the transporter does not have the proper insurance / permit to carry passengers. Don't forget to ask about the transfer of your bike too.

When you travel by public transport you always take your luggage with you.

### **Transport**

We have done our best to give you the most recent information, but do remember that timetables are subject to change, sometimes without notice. Please check the local timetables before departure, then double-check on arrival. You can also ask the accommodation owners for assistance.

Do not forget to stamp or validate your ticket. Before your departure, your ticket must be stamped / downloaded on your phone. If you haven't had time to stamp or validate, report it quickly to the train controller. If you have chosen the e-ticket service, there is no need to stamp your travel confirmation.

**If you are travelling on a Sunday or a national holiday, remember to double-check timetables as fewer services may be available.**

### **Included transfers**

S-Cape Travel is concerned about client safety. If your programme includes transfers, please remember to use your safety belt at all times. Most of our local suppliers and taxi drivers collaborate with S-Cape Travel on an on-going basis. They are familiar with our programmes and the safety standards sought by S-Cape Travel. Should you feel at any time that proper safety practices are not being observed, please contact S-Cape Travel and / or your agency.

### **Late arrivals / delays on Arrival Day**

If you have booked a transfer from the airport or train station to your first accommodation and experience considerable delay, please call as soon as possible to warn the transport company or local agent. You'll find the phone number on your Trip Voucher and/or under the "Organisation" section in your Route Notes or in the travel app.

If you are travelling by car, make sure you have the address or coordinates of your first accommodation, to enter into the travel app (such as Google Maps, Ways) you use for driving.

If you plan to arrive after 18.00 hrs, please inform the accommodation of your estimated arrival time. Smaller accommodations like B&B's might open later in the afternoon. You might want to call them a day in advance to inform them on your estimated time of arrival.

### **Weather forecast**

Check the weather forecast before you set out for the day. You should always carry a fleece/warm clothing in addition to a wind breaker, rain jacket, gloves and a warm cap.

### **Hot weather**

It can get warm in summer. To avoid the danger of heat stroke, you are advised not to do any cycling or walking if temperatures rise above 35° C. Remember that springs may dry up, so remember to carry plenty of drinking water (at least 2 litres per person). Good sun protection is essential (sunscreen, sunglasses, hat).

### **Caution at the beach**

If you are visiting a coastal area, please take care when swimming in the sea. Rogue waves and swift currents may be present any time. Pay close attention to any warning signs along the coast, follow recommendations from local residents and ask hotel staff for more information when necessary.

### **Dogs**

In rural areas you might encounter dogs. Do not panic and continue cycling or walking past the dog, waving your trekking pole if necessary. If the dog persists in bothering you, a more aggressive approach could be required, such as pretending to throw or (only in extreme cases) actually throwing stones.

### **Hunting**

Hunting is quite common in rural areas all over France. Most hunting seasons start in September and continue to April, but the exact dates change every year. If you hear shooting near you, make your presence known to the hunters.

### **Safety & Arrival time at the end of your day**

It is good practice to take a fully charged mobile phone with you every day. You should have the phone switched on, even if you prefer to keep the ringer off.

### **We recommend saving emergency phone numbers in your mobile phone.**

Make sure to check the duration of your route and the local sunset time. If you think you may arrive after 18.00 hrs (or less than 1hr before dark), **please inform your accommodation for that evening**. The accommodations we work with are familiar with our self-guided programs and, if you do not arrive before sunset, they may start to worry and decide to call for a rescue.

If you are travelling alone in remote areas, please inform the accommodation owner of the route you will be taking and your approximate arrival time.

For your safety, before departure it is **ESSENTIAL** to:

Know how to send your current location via SMS text message or other messaging system, such as WhatsApp. (To do so, open a new message, select the "Attachment" function and choose "Share my location" - then click on "Accept" to allow your device to access your location.)

### **National holidays**

France has a number of national and local holidays. Banks, shops and government institutions will be closed AND bus/train services may be reduced.

Bank holidays in France:

- 01 January (New Year's Day)
- Friday before Easter Sunday (Good Friday)
- Easter Sunday and Monday
- 01 May (Labour Day)
- 08 May (Victory in Europe Day)

- Thursday, 39 days after Easter Sunday (Ascension Day)
- Monday after Pentecost (50 days after Easter), observed only in some businesses (Whit Monday)
- 14 July (Bastille Day)
- 15 August (Assumption)
- 1 November (All Saints' Day)
- 11 November (Armistice Day)
- 25 December (Christmas day)
- 26 December (Boxing day only in Alsace-Lorraine)

### **Fitness: preparing for your trip**

Make certain you are in good health and in sufficiently good physical condition to handle the exertion required by the trip.

The concept behind our trips is the enjoyment of an active holiday, and the fitter you are the more you will enjoy yourself. So we recommend preparing for this holiday. The best training is to practice what you are going to be doing: walking or cycling uphill, downhill and cross-country (on uneven terrain). Train and build up gradually to avoid causing yourself an injury! Using your gear before departure (boots, day-pack, clothing, etc.) gives familiarity and comfort while on your trip, and helps identify any potential problems.

### **Nutrition**

Your body needs fluids, vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates to work. While walking or cycling, your body needs more of these than it can store. Have a low-fat, regular portion breakfast (such as cereal) every morning and drink plenty of water and fruit juice.

During your walking or cycling route, maintain your body's water level by drinking often; drink before you are thirsty and eat before you are hungry; consume low-fat snacks such as fruit or energy bars; good foods include bananas, oranges, apples, raisins and other dried fruits. It is recommended to carry at least 1.5 / 2 litres per person, and more if it is particularly hot or windy. Avoid eating a big meal during the route.

After the walking or cycling route, continue to hydrate and replace lost energy stores by eating proteins, carbohydrates and sugars.

## Useful information

### **Travel documents**

Personal Identification. You will need a valid passport to travel to France. If you are an EU citizen, you can travel with your national identity card BUT be advised that some international airlines require you to present a passport for international travel.

Non-EU residents should check with the embassy or consulate in their country regarding visa requirements.

### **Health care & insurance**

Travel insurance is recommended for our holidays. If you do not already have insurance, you can purchase it online. There are many options with varying prices and coverage.

Residents in the EEA (European Economic Area) should apply for a European Health Card before travelling abroad. This includes the European Union, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

Further information is available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=509&langId=en>

Travellers from other countries should check with their insurance company regarding cover for the holiday before departure. Guidelines for countries mentioned below, are available online (just click on the country):

[Australia](#)  
[Canada](#)

### **Prescribed medicines**

If you are taking prescription medication you may find it useful to ask your doctor for a letter detailing your condition and prescribed drugs. This prevents possible trouble at customs and helps the local doctor if you need to buy medication while travelling. A special license is required to bring in medication which is considered a 'controlled substance'.

### **Driving license & registration**

European driving licenses are valid throughout the EU. Non-EU members need an international driving license together with their national driving license.

If you're driving in the EU, remember that vehicle liability insurance is mandatory. Be sure to carry proof of insurance, which you will need if you are involved in an accident. The financial risk taken by uninsured drivers is immense.

### **Money matters**

#### **Currency**

France is a member of the European community and uses the Euro.

The symbol is €.

Coin denominations are 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 cents, 1 & 2 Euro.

Bills are 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and (rare) 200 & 500 Euro.

#### **Cheques & credit cards**

You should contact your bank before departure, if planning to use your debit or credit card overseas.

Cash points / ATM machines ("distributeur de billets") can be found at airports and in larger towns and villages.

There are different networks, and using a cash point from your own network (e.g. Cirrus) will help avoid extra charges for withdrawals. The most common credit cards are: Visa and MasterCard. American Express and Diners Club cards are sometimes accepted.

**IMPORTANT:** Credit cards are not always accepted in small shops and restaurants so always ask in advance if you can pay by credit card. Travellers' cheques are generally accepted at banks, but the charge for changing them can be quite high. Personal cheques are not accepted.

#### **Telephone & time zone**

To call France from abroad, dial 0033 (+33). If you are using your own cell phone to call within France, you have to dial 0033 before the area code and phone number. France is in the Central European time zone (GMT +1).

#### **Electricity**

European plugs – Two round pins.

Electrical current – 220 volts, 50 Hz.

#### **Opening hours**

##### **Shops**

Shops in villages are usually open from Tuesday to Saturday, 09:00 to 12:00 hrs and 14:00 to 18:00/19:00 hrs. Many shops close at lunchtime.

**BE AWARE: Many shops and restaurants are closed on Sunday & Monday .**

Opening hours will be longer in cities and towns. Larger supermarkets will stay open from 08:30 to 20:00 hrs. Bakeries will usually be open Sunday mornings until 12:00 hrs.

##### **Pharmacies**

There is always at least 1 pharmacy on call 24 hrs in larger villages or towns (see sign on pharmacy door for emergency number). They tend to be closed on Sundays; especially in rural areas.

## Post offices

In cities and larger towns, post offices will be open:

Monday to Friday: 09:00 to 19:00 hrs

Saturday: 09:00 to 12:00 hrs

Sunday: closed

In some villages they may only be open on weekdays for one or two hours in the morning.

Stamps can be bought at post office (La Poste) as well as tobacconists (Tabac – kiosks or bars with a red and white sign with a 'T – Tabac'). These shops have longer opening hours.

## Banks

Most banks are open from Tuesday to Friday from 09:00 to 16:30 hrs (open on Saturday morning). Many will close from 12:00 to 14:00 hrs. It is always better to go to a bank before noon. It is generally easiest to get your money at cash points ("distributeur de billets").

## Museums & monuments

Smaller museums and monuments have more or less the same timetable as shops, whereas major monuments will be open all day from 10:00 to 17:00 hrs, although some may close at lunchtime from 12:00 to 14:00 hrs. Please check on the museum's website or ask at tourist information on arrival.

## Restaurants

The kitchen of most restaurants is open from 12:00 to 14:00 hrs for lunch and from 19:00 to 21:00 hrs for dinner. In larger towns they could be open longer. **BE AWARE:**

**Many bars, bakeries and restaurants are closed on Sunday & Monday . We advise you to check this in advance .** One of the solutions is to ask for a lunch pack at your accommodation, to be paid on the spot.

## Drinking water

Tap water is always checked by the authorities but may not have the best taste due to high chlorine content. You can buy mineral water everywhere. Ask for "eau en bouteille" to get a plastic bottle.

[Gourdefriendly.green](#) might be a handy website. It shows different options where to find water (public fountains, or for example shops which are "gourde friendly". Gourde is the French word for a flask.

## Spring water

In the mountains there are many natural springs, where villagers prefer to get their drinking water even though it is not checked by the health authorities. In general, you can rely on springs where water runs freely and abundantly from a pipe, but your body may not be used to the high concentration of some minerals.

Our route descriptions may indicate the location of springs used by locals, where water is untreated.

Pay attention to local signs: "Non potable" = Do not drink.

Please BE ADVISED that drinking spring water is entirely at your own risk.

## Sustainability

S-Cape Travel considers it of utmost importance to select environmentally friendly hotels, excursions and means of transport. You can join the effort and we ask you to please consider the following:

- Take short showers instead of baths.
- Limit your use of air-conditioning as much as possible. If in use, please choose a temperature within 5°C of the outside temperature. Apply this practise in your car as well.
- Let hotel staff know if you wish to use your towel for another day.
- Tip: choose not to pick up new plastic bags when you shop, put items directly in your day pack.
- At bars/restaurants, prefer dishes made with local ingredients: better for the environment AND the local community.
- Do not litter. Should you encounter rubbish bins that are full, take your rubbish with you.
- If you visit a protected area, you may consider making a donation or buying a book in the park shop.
- Keep the following sequence in mind: 1. Reduce, 2. Re-use, 3. Recycle.



## Food & wine in France

One of the pleasures of travelling in France is its wonderful and varied cuisine and wines.

### Breakfast

Breakfast is included in your arrangement. Most accommodations generally serve breakfast from 08.00 or 08.30 hrs onward, but check with each accommodation for exact times. Breakfast can vary a great deal from one place to the next. The accommodations we work with usually serve a Continental breakfast which includes bread, butter, preserves, pastries, tea and coffee. Many places serve additional breakfast items, such as cereal, yogurt, cheese, ham and fruit. Breakfast is not always buffet-style; you may be served at your table. In this case, ask your host what is included and whether there are extras that you have to pay for on the spot.

### Picnic or Lunch

Lunch provisions can be bought in village shops along the route or you can order a lunch pack at the accommodation (remember to do this the evening before). Most shops normally close from 12:00 to 14:00/15:00 hrs. You will find bars/restaurants along some routes and these are usually open for lunch from 12:00 to 14:00 hrs.

**BE AWARE: Many bars, bakeries and restaurants are closed on Sunday & Monday .**

### Evening meal

See the "Included" section for a list of meals included in your package. The accommodations we've selected either have a restaurant of their own or one available nearby. Some nights you'll have the opportunity to venture into town and choose from a selection of restaurants of different styles and standards. Restaurants are generally open for dinner from 19:00 until 21:00 hrs.

**Note: You may be staying in a small village with not many options/restaurants for your dinner (especially on Mondays and Sundays as many restaurants are closed).**

**This is also why in some cases we include dinners in your package.**

As everyone has a different taste and budget, we are hesitant to provide you with restaurant suggestions, and if we do, the information can be quickly outdated as opening days and hours and even proprietors change regularly. When looking for a restaurant in France we advise you to use the app of [TripAdvisor](#) and / or [Michelin](#). They both give a good overview and you can use different selection criteria. Always a good source of information is your local inn-keeper. They tend to know the hot-spots around them.

### Vegetarians & other dietary needs

If you are a vegetarian or have special dietary needs, please inform the restaurant of this fact, "Je suis végétarien(ne)" so they can suggest and prepare something appropriate.

Vegetarians will not find many main courses "plat principal" available, as these are mostly meat or fish, but you will nearly always find a vegetarian starter "hors d'oeuvres" and first courses "entrées", which may include substantial salads, vegetables, cheese and egg dishes. Be advised that some vegetable dishes may not be "vegetarian" as they're often prepared with meat or fish, e.g. mixed salad with tuna, chick peas with sausage or omelette with ham. If you need to specify, you can request "s'il vous plaît: pas de poisson, pas de viande (no fish, no meat).

### Bars

Bars are the social gathering place in any French village or town. They usually open from breakfast time to late at night. You may have the option of being served at the counter (coffee, sandwich, pastry or snack/tapas) at the counter or being waited on at a table (see lunch and dinner times above).

Bars in smaller villages may not open until later in the morning. If you are getting an early start, take something with you to eat and drink.

BE AWARE:

Many bars, bakeries and restaurants are closed on Sunday & Monday .

### Coffee

Coffee is served in several different ways: "expresso" (usually strong black coffee), "café allongé" (black coffee with more water), "café noisette" (espresso with a little milk), and "café au lait" (espresso with lots of milk).

### Tipping

In general tipping is not included in your check. For good service up to 5% would be appreciated or a bit more for excellent service.



## Travelling by train with your bike

On a cycling holiday in France, you may have to travel by train with your own bike. In particular, when you travel directly by bike to the starting point of the cycle route - or when you return from your destination.

Below you can find out what you need to know about travelling with your bike on a train in France, as well as our tips and useful links.

### 1. Bicycle boarding conditions

In France, the conditions for boarding bicycles vary according to the type of train (regional - high-speed trains (TGV), intercity, OUIGO, etc.), the region and the season.

In some cases, you can take your undismantled bike on board free of charge (generally on regional trains). On the other hand, sometimes you will have to reserve a paid space for your non-dismantled bike (generally on TGV, intercity and OUIGO trains).

**Please note: not all bicycles are accepted on SNCF trains. Recumbent bicycles, tricycles, tandems and all types of trailers are not allowed.**

You can find the details and boarding procedures for each type of train below.

### 2. Travelling by bike on a TER (regional trains)

*Generally, the conditions for travelling with your bicycle on a **TER** are:*

- Free service.
- Possibility to travel with a non-disassembled bike.
- No seat reservations are required.
- TER ticket: when you are looking for a train ticket, you must not choose the option "reserve a non-disassembled bike space" otherwise TERs will not be displayed.

*Beware of:*

- The possibility of taking your bike with you is subject to the availability of places on the train. We recommend you avoid peak times.
- Depending on the season and the region, this service is not always available free of charge. We invite you to visit the [snCF website](#).

### 3. Travelling by bike on an INOUI TGV and on an intercity train

*Generally, when you travel on **TGV INOUI or intercity train**, you have 2 options:*

- Bicycle not dismantled: service subject to a charge (€10) - accessible only by reservation - bike needs to be put in a specific place.
- Bicycle dismantled in a bag (maximum size 130 x 190 cm): free service - without reservation.

*Beware of:*

- For night-time Intercity lines, it is mandatory to reserve a space dedicated - service subject to a charge (€10).

#### 4. Travelling by bike on an OUIGO train

*Generally, when you travel on an **OUIGO train** (OUIGO Train Classique and OUIGO Grande Vitesse):*

- Bicycles must be dismantled and stored in a bag (maximum size 90 cm x 130 cm).
- Service subject to a charge: you must subscribe to the "additional luggage" option when you buy your ticket.
- Bike needs to be put in a specific place.

#### 5. How do I reserve a bike seat on a train?

- Go to the [SNCF Connect website](https://www.sncf-connect.com/en-en/), the mobile application or directly in a train station.
- On the website, enter your <https://www.sncf-connect.com/en-en/> destination. Click on "add" and "bicycles".

The screenshot shows the SNCF Connect booking interface. At the top, there are input fields for 'Departure: Marseille' and 'Arrival: Paris'. Below these, there's a section for 'Outbound: Today, 8h' and a button '+ Add a return trip'. A 'Filter by:' section shows 'Direct travel' selected. Below that, a 'Traveller' section shows '1' traveller. To the right of this, it says 'maximum 9 passengers. [Find out more](#)'. Below the traveller section, there's a box for 'Traveller 1 : 30 - 59 years old' with sub-points 'Without a discount card' and 'Without a loyalty card'. At the bottom, there's a red oval highlighting an 'Add' button with a plus sign and the text 'Travellers, animals, bicycles'.

The screenshot shows a list of options to add to a booking. The options are: 'Add another traveller', 'Add a pet', and 'Add a bicycle'. Each option has a corresponding icon (person, paw print, and bicycle respectively) and a right-pointing arrow. A red oval highlights the 'Add a bicycle' option.

- Then choose your "bike offer" (non-dismantled bicycle – bicycle in a cover, free service...).



## 6. Our tips

- We strongly advise you to download the [snCF mobile app](#) prior to departure.
- Arrive 30 minutes early at the train station.
- Ask people – ticket inspectors if they can tell you if there is a lift or easier access to the platforms (sometimes lifts are hidden).
- Avoid peak times (especially for TER trains with free service).
- Never take the last TER (because if it is full, you may be refused access for the bike).
- Locate the train's bike car.

### Gearlist

If you have booked luggage transport, your main luggage will be transferred by vehicle, so you will only need to carry daily provisions with you in a day pack. Take plenty of water (at least 1.5-2 litres per person) as well as a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, rain jacket or windbreaker, warm jacket/fleece, camera, small first aid kit, lunch & snacks.

Take extra water if the weather is particularly windy or hot.

The following is a guide to recommended clothing and equipment for this particular trip, without reference to other activities or travel arrangements you may have planned in Europe.

### Maps

You will receive a set of maps that have been created especially for this trip. There is only 1 route marked on each map. The routes have been drawn on the maps as accurately as possible, using GPS tracks obtained while creating the route. However, the maps provided with these route descriptions are intended to be a GENERAL GUIDELINE as they are not of topographic quality. For detailed maps of the area, you may wish to purchase your own maps online (see, for example [www.mapsworldwide.com](http://www.mapsworldwide.com) or [Cartes IGN - Fédération Française de la Randonnée Pédestre \(ffrandonnee.fr\)](http://Cartes IGN - Fédération Française de la Randonnée Pédestre (ffrandonnee.fr))). We recommend IGN maps.

### Medications

It is your responsibility to bring sufficient quantities of any specific medications you require and carry them in your hand luggage when flying.

### Basic First Aid kit

We suggest that you bring:

- Sun cream and lip balm and after –sun cream such as aloe vera.
- Throat lozenges or sweets – a small supply, always welcome when cycling, especially hard caramels, mints or fruit sweets
- Energy: Consider bringing energy drink powder in sachets
- Allergy: Antihistamine medication where necessary
- Antiseptic solution: dettol, betadine in swabs or solution with cotton wool
- Small pack of wet wipes or antibacterial hand gel: very useful for cleaning hands when limited or no water is available
- Treatment for headaches and/or pain relief
- Anti-inflammatory tabs such as Nurofen or Ibuprofen. Arnica for bruising or sprains
- Insect repellent and bite relief
- Nail scissors, needle and thread
- 4" crepe bandage, plus an elastic bandage or ankle/knee support
- Vaseline

**IMPORTANT:** Airlines do not allow you to take liquids on board in bottles greater than 100ml (some exceptions apply – refer to your airline for details).

All liquids you take on board should be placed in a plastic zip lock bag and offered for inspection by customs.

**Pen knives, scissors, nail files and containers larger than 100ml cannot be carried in your hand luggage when flying.**

## **Clothing and other items**

You will need your regular walking/cycling gear, including some sort of reflective garment. For the evenings, smart outdoor style trousers (or shorts) are invaluable, as are quick-dry t-shirts. These can be washed easily and will dry overnight and still look good for sightseeing or having a drink in town.

Take as little as possible to avoid potentially lugging a heavy suitcase up three flights of stairs at the end of the day. Please be aware that laundromats ("Laverie") are not common in rural areas, so plan to do handwashing of small items.

## **Lightweight walking shoes/ trainers**

For wearing around towns & villages. They can also be a back-up pair.

## **Socks & underwear**

Take only good quality socks with quick-dry and insulating qualities. Road test them before you go on the trip. Take a suitable quantity of underwear as washing facilities are limited.

## **Warm jacket, hat, gloves**

Bring a fleece, Polartec or warm layers for the evenings especially in spring or autumn; be sure it is totally suitable for your needs.

A fleece jacket which blocks the wind (Wind-stopper) is the most preferable. In the summer months a lightweight jacket is suitable for evenings.

If you are cycling/walking in mountainous or coastal areas, even in the height of summer, the weather can change very quickly and unexpectedly and you should be prepared for fog, mist, rain, snow or hail at any time. Always take an extra layer with you, as well as a warm hat and gloves.

## **Waterproof jacket & trousers**

If you are caught in heavy rain, with good waterproof clothing you should remain dry. Remember that most garments will lose their properties over time. Few will remain waterproof for more than five years and many deteriorate in three years or less. We recommend a rain jacket with a good hood and collar and waterproof or thermal walking/cycling trousers or tights.

## **Dress code**

In general, you should wear suitable clothing when entering a church (in many places, it is considered unacceptable to go inside wearing shorts or a tank-top). We suggest that women carry a shawl to cover up bare shoulders or low-cut tops. It also comes in handy when your shoulders get sunburned!

It is considered inappropriate for men to go without a shirt / T-shirt (other than at the beach).

## **Toiletries**

Bring your own toiletries including soap, comb, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc.

## **Sewing kit**

A sewing kit may be useful.

## **Snacks**

Light, high-energy foods like nuts, dried fruit and chocolate make good energy supplies. If you have specific dietary requirements, you may want to bring along your own supplements. Some specific dietary requirements may not be catered for at your destination.

## **Reading material, journal, cards**

A small paperback or journal may be good for free time in the evening.

## **Day pack**

### ***When walking***

It is essential to carry your gear needed each day. A minimum capacity of 25 L is preferable, with a good hip harness.

### ***When cycling***

Your hire bike will have a front cycle bag and/or back panniers, to carry the gear you'll need each day. Please be

aware that rental bike suppliers do not supply bicycle mirrors and seat gels. If you usually cycle with these, we recommend you bring them with you.

### **Day pack for walking and cycling:**

- Your accommodation list
- Your maps and route notes
- Fully charged and working phone
- Powerbank and its charging cable
- First aid kit
- Water bottle
- Lunch box (Tupperware container), knife, spoon and cup (or something to drink from)
- Waterproofs
- Warm layers
- Warm Hat and Sun Hat
- Lightweight Gloves (for Spring or Autumn)
- Small Towel
- Sun cream
- Sunglasses
- Camera, batteries for camera and a spare memory stick

### **Clothing & other items for walking**

#### **Trekking poles (adjustable)**

Highly recommended. A pair works best, depending on what you are comfortable with. If you suffer from back or knee pain this should be considered essential. Remember to practise walking with your pole(s) on different types of terrain in the months preceding your trip.

#### **Walking boots**

The importance of good footwear cannot be stressed enough. Your boots should be sturdy and of good enough quality to handle all types of terrain. Lightweight boots, (cordura/leather boots) which have Gore-Tex or sympatex water-proofing are most suitable for this trip. They should provide good ankle protection and be well broken in. Waxing leather boots regularly prolongs their life.

#### **Walking tops & trousers**

We recommend walking trousers and shorts and quick-dry wicking t-shirts. These can be washed easily and will dry overnight and still look good for sightseeing or having a drink in town. Wicking T-shirts are fast drying, keep moisture away from your skin and are available at outdoor stores. You should also bring one pair of loose-fitting trousers to wear in cities and for evenings out, etc. Shorts or zip-off trousers are useful in warmer weather.

#### **Compass**

You will probably also have this option on your phone. A compass shows you the cardinal directions used for navigation and geographic orientation. If you are lost, this will help you navigate in the right direction.

## Luggage

If you have booked luggage transfer, this service is provided by the accommodation itself or a local taxi driver.

Please clearly label ALL your belongings with the **name of the main booker** on a luggage tag. Without a tag the luggage will not be transported to the next hotel. Labelling your belongings prevents mix ups, delays and loss. **If you have not received luggage tags from your agency, you must bring their own.** Ask hotel staff where the bags should be left in the morning, **it must be ready by 9:00 am.** In the afternoon, your luggage will be in your accommodation **before 5:00 pm.**



**Your luggage – one suitcase per person must not exceed 20 kilos**, due to labour laws.

If heavier, you will be charged an important surcharge.

For all **Camino** trips 1 suitcase or travel bag (**13 kg** maximum) is allowed.

Additional bags and overweight bags weighing more than 13kgs may not be moved. Please do not attach items to your main bag to be transferred as such items may be lost or damaged. If the driver finds you have excess luggage locally, and there is space in the van, they may choose to transfer your excess luggage in which case a link will be emailed to you to pay this by credit card. If not paid immediately your **luggage will not be transferred**.

For all **Tour Mont Blanc** trips 1 suitcase or travel bag (**15 kg** maximum) is allowed.

If you are unable to do the cycle ride on a given day, you can ask the person in charge of luggage transport if you can ride with the luggage. However, this is not always possible and sometimes you will have to pay a small fee locally. Sometimes the vehicle is not suitable for passengers, or the transporter does not have the proper insurance / permit to carry passengers. Don't forget to ask about the transfer of your bike too.

When you travel by public transport you always take your luggage with you.

## Cycling responsibly

Bicycle touring implies certain inherent risks. It is a sport in which safety depends on your own judgment and alertness as a cyclist.

Neither we, nor the local agent, can be held responsible for possible damage (physical or otherwise) to participants due to: physical activity during the tour, failure to follow road regulations, alcohol consumption, breaking of means or materials, lack of medical assistance in remote areas or other unforeseen circumstances.

As a cyclist you are responsible for the way you ride and the condition of your bicycle. At times this may involve riding on varied terrain (uneven surfaces, wet/ muddy/ slippery sections, loose rock, poor visibility, etc.) with certain difficulties and challenges that should not be underestimated. In these situations, the cyclist must use a great deal of caution and common sense, as some routes can become dangerous and unsafe if the cyclist does not take sufficient care or have the proper gear or adequate physical/technical ability.

You should always consider which side of the road you should be using, especially after taking a break when your mind may switch off.

When travelling on quiet country roads you should always be mindful of the possibility of traffic at any time and always cycle in a safe position on the road.

If you are using your own bike on this trip, we recommend a general service before you start the trip, as well as equipping your bike with "anti-puncture" tyres with a reflector strip in order to be visible from the sides.

## Equipment

If you have any questions about the equipment required for this trip, please give us a call. We recommend buying your equipment at a reputable bike or outdoor sports shop, where you can also get professional advice.

On all S-Cape Travel cycling holidays we recommend that you bring:

- cycling glasses (to protect against dust, insects, pollen, sun, etc.)
- cycling gloves (padded for extra comfort)
- water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus).

**You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort.**

If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided at your destination (check bike details) then you may like to bring a

small rucksack to wear while cycling.

A cycling helmet, lock, pump, spare inner tube and puncture repair kit with tyre levers is provided with your rental bike.

**REMEMBER:** When visiting important churches you should be dressed appropriately. This means covering your shoulders and wearing at least knee length shorts or skirts.

Each of the routes is designed to take in points of interest, views and, as far as possible, quiet roads, paying special attention to the altimetry. There may be some ascents involved.

### **Before starting out**

#### **Bike check**

Conduct a quick check before every ride:

- Inflate tires, if necessary, and insure proper pressure
- Take a quick ride to check if derailleur and brakes are working properly
- Inspect the bike for loose or broken parts
- Pay extra attention to the bike during the first few kilometres of the ride

#### **Safety**

Use common sense and caution at all times. Always keep an eye open for potentially dangerous situations (difficult terrain, sheer drops, changing weather conditions, etc.).

Always keep an eye open for pedestrians and beware of car doors, as sometimes people open them without looking out for cyclists. At crossroads, look at drivers and attempt to establish eye contact.

Avoid cycling at night or use lights.

**Remember to always ride on the right-hand side of the road.**

#### **Sharing the road**

Obey traffic regulations: laws that apply to motorists apply to cyclists as well.

Ride in the right-most lane that goes in the direction you are travelling.

#### **Signs and signals**

Obey all stop signs, traffic lights and lane markings. Use hand signals to indicate your intention to stop, turn or change lanes.

#### **Intersections**

Slow down before intersections and check for oncoming traffic.

Although this trip follows quiet country roads you will inevitably have to cross some major roads with traffic. If possible, dismount and find the nearest pedestrian crossing.

If you are used to driving on the left-hand side of the road, please remember that in France traffic will be approaching **on the RIGHT -HAND** side of the road, so be extra careful when crossing roads and at junctions. This may be easy to forget after a long section on your own in the countryside.

#### **Braking technique**

Apply both brakes at the same time gently, never stab at them. On downhill sections, use both brakes to slow down before entering a curve.

Do not apply brakes continuously, as they could overheat and stop working. Beware of rain and wet roads: water on the rims could affect your brake system, making it harder to stop. Apply the brakes lightly to clean off and dry the rims BEFORE you need to stop and allow a greater distance when stopping in wet conditions.

#### **Clothing**

We recommend brightly coloured cycling gear such as quick drying tops, padded shorts and cycling gloves. A waterproof cycling jacket is also recommended and a light windproof jacket is always useful.

Shoestrings must not be too long. You can tuck the ends of the laces into your shoes or socks to prevent them from getting caught in the chain or spokes.

## Several shirts & cycling trousers

While riding you'll want cycling tights, shorts and T-shirts in a wicking or quick-dry material. Also, T-shirts with collar and at least one long-sleeved shirt for sun protection. Quick-dry loose-fitting trousers are popular and practical for sight-seeing, and shorts or zip-off trousers will be handy in warmer weather.

## Footwear

If you are not bringing cycling shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes, as these are better for cycling. This becomes more relevant the more demanding the trip grade and distance to cover. SPD cycling shoes with protruding cleats are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

## Rental (e)bikes & instructions

### Rental Bikes

Your hire bike rental begins on the morning of Day 2, and the bikes will usually be delivered to your accommodation on the evening of your arrival (day 1) or the next morning before 09.30 hrs. Suppliers will leave the keys at the reception of your accommodation. You do not have to be present. Just feel free to ask the reception to check if the bikes have been delivered. Any change to this is listed in your day-by-day programme. At the end of your trip, please leave the bike at the last accommodation and hand the key in at the reception. Your bike will have been serviced, cleaned and fitted to your requirements. A cycling helmet, lock, pump, spare inner tube and puncture repair kit with tyre levers is provided with your rental bike. The frame and saddle height are set to your height, although you might want to adjust your saddle to be in the most comfortable position. We also recommend doing a first small test drive of couple of hundred meters to be comfortable with gears, breaks etc. If you have an issue with your bike, you can contact the service provider (name of bike rental in your reservation) directly. And you can always call us on our emergency phone number.

In France you are not required by law to wear a helmet while cycling (if the cyclist is over 12 years old) but strongly recommended.

### **The helmet is mandatory for children under 12 years.**

In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies will not be valid in cases where the cycling was not wearing a helmet.

### General Rental Conditions

Depending on the bike supplier you might be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike that contains the following conditions.

The bike, including all accessories supplied, is let out on hire. The equipment remains the property of the supplier and the renter will not sell, hire out or otherwise part with possession thereof.

### **We ask that you always ensure that the equipment is adequately secured with the padlock when not in use, even when stored in storage area within the accommodation.**

We also require that you use the bike in accordance with the law, will not use the bike whilst under the influence of drink or drugs and will immediately notify the supplier in the event of breakdown or loss of the equipment.

The equipment must be used with caution and attention to the safety of both the rider and others and, by undersigning the present form, declare to free the supplier from any responsibility whatsoever for damages and/or harm caused to him/herself, items or third parties due to the improper use of the equipment and accessories.

Before taking possession of the rented equipment and signing the present agreement, the renter must check that all the equipment is in proper working order and condition; reporting any problems to the supplier.

The renter agrees not to misuse the equipment and to return it with all accessories in the same condition as when received (ordinary wear and tear excepted). The supplier will be entitled to charge the renter for any damage caused to the equipment during the rental period. In the event of mechanical failure not resulting from misuse, the supplier will provide support and assistance to repair the bike in a timely fashion.

The renter will be held responsible for any damage found to the bike or accessories when returned, even if said damage is caused involuntarily or the renter is not legally responsible for said damage. The renter must reimburse the supplier for all expenses needed to repair the equipment.

At the end of the rental period, following verification of the condition of the equipment and depending on the nature and extent of the damage, the supplier reserves the right to charge the renter (or not) for small damages. Should the equipment be stolen, lost or seriously damaged, the supplier reserves the right to hold the renter liable for the replacement value of the equipment, which may vary between 650.00 and 3500.00 Euros, depending on type, model and condition of the equipment at the time of rental.

The bike can only be rented by persons aged 18 or older, on presentation of some form of legal identification. Bikes can be rented to minors only on presentation of a written declaration by a parent or legal guardian authorising the use of the equipment by the said minor. Said declaration must be presented before the equipment is rented. The supplier accepts no responsibility whatsoever.

**IMPORTANT: You are expected to know the very basics of bike mechanics and how to mend a puncture or change a tyre. In the event of more serious damage which you cannot repair on the spot, please call the bike supplier who will help you fix the bike or suggest the best and fastest solution.**

## E-bike instructions



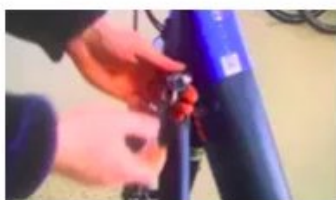
The night before starting your bike tour, we strongly suggest performing a brief bike and battery check:

### Charging the battery






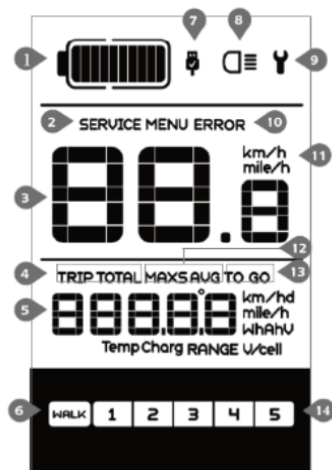
You will find your E- bike in the garage. The battery should be connected to a power plug. When charging, the LED on the adapter will turn red; when fully charged it turns green. If necessary, the battery can be taken off the bike by releasing it from the downtube using the extra (smaller) key on the keychain. After 3 days of inactivity, the battery switches to sleep mode. To activate, remove the battery from the bike and push the button until the indicator LEDs illuminate.

**Please charge the battery every night!** The bike will then have a 'range' of 100-140 kms, depending on the power assistance level(1-5). **We advise to take the adapter in your bicycle bag** in case the battery needs charging during the day trip.



### Operating the INFO screen on the handlebar


The e-bike can be activated by pressing the  **button** for 2-3 seconds. The screen turns on and provides the rider with information such as **battery range (km's), assistance level (1-5), trip distance** etc.. You can scroll through the menu by pressing the  **button**. The motor-assistance level can be adjusted using the **+ / -** buttons. The light can be activated by pressing the  **button**.



### Resetting odometer:

If you prefer to reset the trip-distance/odometer to zero please walk through these steps:



1 - activate the info screen by pushing the  button for 2-3 seconds

2 - quickly click the  button two times

3 - click the + button

4 - quickly click the  button again two times

For an instruction video on our E-bikes, please visit: [www.dutch-biketours.com/bicycle-rental](http://www.dutch-biketours.com/bicycle-rental)

## Walking responsibly

Self-guided walking has its inherent risks. It is a sport where safety depends upon the judgement and alertness of each participant.

S-Cape is concerned about client safety and we go to great lengths to provide correct, detailed and up-to-date information in our route descriptions.

It is very important for each participant to be conscious of his/her responsibility to heed the information given in our route descriptions and apply these, USING COMMON SENSE.

When out walking, you are responsible for the way you act and the decisions you make. At times this may involve walking on a varied terrain (uneven surfaces, wet/muddy/slippery sections, loose rock, poor visibility, etc.) that can present difficulties and challenges that should not be underestimated. In these situations, it is of utmost importance that the participant uses a great deal of caution and common sense as some routes can become dangerous and unsafe if the person has not taken sufficient care, is not dressed appropriately and does not have adequate physical and/or technical ability.

The walking routes on this programme follow official paths. On these routes there are places where the path crosses a stream (or dry streambed). You will often NOT find bridges, since these are streams which you can walk across with your boots on or by using stepping stones. In spring and autumn, the depth of some streams may increase and you may have to take your boots off and wade across (through ankle-deep or slightly higher water). We would NOT recommend wading across when water levels are above the knee!

Stepping stones can be slippery so pay special attention when crossing and use your trekking poles for balance. It is best to walk on the stream bed rather than on top of the stones especially if they are wet, mossy or muddy.

### Safety

Use common sense and caution at all times.

Always keep an eye open for potentially dangerous situations (difficult terrain, wet surfaces, sheer drops, changing weather conditions, etc.).

## Signs & signals

Obey all signs and recommendations along the walking routes.

## Intersections

Although this trip mainly follows walking paths, with occasional sections on rural tracks or quiet country roads, you will inevitably have to cross some major roads with traffic.

If you are used to walking on the left-hand side of the road, please remember please remember that in France traffic will be approaching on the RIGHT-HAND side of the road, so be extra careful when crossing roads and at junctions. This may be easy to forget after a long section on your own in the countryside.

## Crossing streams

Usually you should be able to walk across easily. However in spring and autumn, the depth of some streams may increase and you may have to take your boots off to wade across (through ankle-deep or slightly higher water). Never attempt to cross a stream where the water comes above your knees.

## How to use the Travel App - GUIBO

For all our cycling & walking trips use the **GUIBO APP** for iOS and Android smart phones. This App has the detailed tracks and maps that you can use offline and without roaming. Thanks to the phone's internal GPS, you can check your exact position on the map, so you always know exactly where you are.

More information on how to use the App in the manual:



## Feedback & sharing

This travel programme has been compiled with great care and precision. However, it is possible that you may experience small changes during your holiday, or notice errors unforeseen at the time of writing. The information is provided "as is" and we accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience experienced as a result of this information.

If you notice any errors, please let us know. We greatly appreciate any suggestions, observations or comments you might have, and you may be certain that they will be used for the benefit of future travellers.

Also, do not hesitate to share your experience with your family & friends!

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

**Team S-Cape Partners France**