

# Battlefield Cycle - France

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## Cycle Challenge



Duration: 6 days

Our exciting cycle challenge takes us through northern France to Cherbourg, visiting some of the region's most significant World War 2 battle sites, including Pegasus Bridge and the Normandy Landing Beaches.

We have some long days in the saddle as we pedal through this historic region, but we stop to pay our respects at many sites, and our tired bodies seem a small price to pay for the sacrifices made by the armed forces in WW2 and more recent years.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1: Portsmouth departure

We meet in the evening on Whale Island, Portsmouth, home to HMS Excellent, the oldest shore training establishment of the Royal Navy. Here we will enjoy a welcome meal and briefing and have the chance to meet fellow riders and our support crew. We'll then cycle down to the port for our night ferry crossing to Le Havre.

Night ferry cabins. (Meals not included)

### Day 2: Le Havre to Lisieux

After disembarking from the ferry we cycle to central Le Havre for our official start. Le Havre was a destination of strategic importance during both WW1 and WW2. We gather at St Marie cemetery for an official start to our ride and play tribute to the fallen soldiers. From here we set off for what will be a gentle introductory day, riding north of the Seine towards Rouen. We'll enjoy cycling alongside the scenic chalk banks of the river before heading south towards Lisieux, our overnight stop.

**Cycle approx. 60 miles.** (Breakfast on ferry not included)

### Day 3: Lisieux to Caen

Our legs should be feeling used to the miles now as we head west towards Caen. There are a few more significant hills today, though they aren't long and our legs should be feeling used to the effort by now! Stops today include German and Allied cemeteries and Merville Battery, which saw an epic airborne assault. We finally come to Pegasus Bridge, where the first house to be liberated from the Germans in June 1944 still stands. We then continue the flat run-in along the river to Caen. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx 45 miles**

### Day 4: Caen to Bayeux



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## DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

A fantastic though poignant day today, as we ride between some of the D-Day Landing Beaches and stop to pay our respects at their memorials. Notable stops include Juno and Gold beaches, as well as Arromanches, where the views out to sea are spectacular and evoke the terrible history only too easily. From Bayeux War Cemetery we ride on to our hotels. It will be a long day because there are many places to visit, but this breaks up the cycling into smaller chunks and should make for a less demanding day ahead of tomorrow's more challenging distance. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx 50 miles**

### Day 5: Bayeux to Cherbourg

Today centres on the role of the Americans, with our first stop Omaha Beach, made more notorious from the opening scenes of *Saving Private Ryan*. We pay our respects at the cemetery here before continuing on along the coast towards Cherbourg. We stop at other battle sites and memorials including the village of Ste Mère Église, which played a large part in the D-Day landings and was liberated by the Americans. The last section of our ride takes us northwest, over some short sharp hills to Cherbourg and the end of our challenge! We mark our achievements with a celebration meal. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx 78 miles**

### Day 6: Cherbourg to Portsmouth

Transfer from the hotel to the ferry for our journey back to Portsmouth.

(Meals on ferry not included).



## CHALLENGE GRADING

Our trips are graded yellow, orange or red, in increasing level of challenge. This ride lies within the yellow range.

The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude etc. Each colour grade has a spectrum which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account.

The grade reflects the overall trip; some sections will feel more challenging than others. Unusual weather conditions also have a significant impact, and not all people are tested by the same aspects.

