



NEWS RELEASE

Issued on behalf of Veloscenic

GET AHEAD OF 'LE TOUR' – CYCLE FROM PARIS TO MONT ST-MICHEL VIA VELOSCENIC



The Tour de France will start from Mont Saint-Michel in 2016, but cyclists can get there ahead of the pack this summer along the Veloscenic – www.veloscenic.com – a 270 mile cycleway linking Paris and Mont Saint-Michel, easily accessible from the UK and readily broken down into bite-sized chunks. Around a third of all foreign cyclists

sampling Veloscenic last year were Brits, who appreciate a long-distance route that is easy to navigate and offers something for all abilities. Its 80 miles of traffic-free greenways and 125 miles of shared paths (with very little traffic) suit families and amateur cyclists, while there are two advanced sections that challenge even the hard core.

Veloscenic opened in 2012 and follows the traces of the original pilgrimage route, encompassing four regions (Ile-de-France, Centre-Val de Loire, Pays de la Loire, Basse-Normandie) and eight departments, with a staggering five UNESCO World Heritage Sites en route. It offers a rare opportunity to cycle through spectacular scenery and sample the essence of traditional French life, history and culture. The adventurous will be suitably challenged by tackling the entire route which takes around a week; while others can limit themselves to shorter stretches, with plenty of interesting detours (for example, to Versailles). Those finishing in the west will see the fruit of ten years of development work at [Mont Saint-Michel](#) which will be completed this summer, restoring the tidal flow which cuts-off the iconic island from the mainland at high tide.



The comprehensive English website offers an easy-to-use trip planner with an interactive search. Find a section to match cycling ability (there are seven family-friendly and two challenging stretches) with recommendations for bike-friendly accommodation en route. There is advice on where to rent a bike, where to eat, places to visit (including local markets) and connecting train stations, plus technical information on each stage with a difficulty rating, elevation and GPS tracks to navigate. There are also a comprehensive [map-guide](#) which can be purchased and downloaded (price £14).



It is perfectly possible to travel out and back from the UK by train, with or without a bicycle, connecting with reliable local rail services at towns along the route. For those who want someone else to do the leg-work, there are several cycling packages from 4-10 days. The seven main sections (each of which can be sub-divided further) include:

Paris to Epernon: Architecture and nature – 50 miles

Starting from the iconic Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, cyclists quickly reach large open spaces of the natural regional park of the Upper Chevreuse Valley, with a potential detour to Versailles, then on smaller roads to reach Epernon. As some of this section remains unsigned, it is more suitable for seasoned cyclists (families can take the train between Paris (Montparnasse) and Epernon station which takes around 45 minutes).

Head towards the light at Chartres – 22 miles

This short stretch leads to Chartres along the royal valley of Eure along tiny roads, stop-off at delightful gardens, passing Maintenon Castle and its impressive aqueduct. Arrive in Chartres by dusk and watch the city bathed in thousands of lights, with creative illuminations that run from 11 April until 10 September 2015.



Seek out times past between Eure and Loir – 46 miles

Follow more green lanes along the Eure and into the Loir Valley, where the charming town of Illiers-Combray seems to come straight from the pages of a Marcel Proust novel. There is a gradual transition between countryside, open plains and agricultural land, leading into Thiron-Gardais and the grounds of its splendid abbey.



Amble along in Percheron country – 47 miles

A family-friendly section following a network of green lanes virtually the entire way, through the Perche Regional Park with lush green countryside dotted with villages, mills and mansions. Swap two wheels for four on a carriage tour with Celine Maudet, or walk part of the way with a donkey!

Return to the source at Alençon – 45 miles

Follow little roads through the Normandy-Maine Regional Park, pass through meadows and apple orchards, taste the delicious local calvados and Perry. Visit undiscovered Normand gems such as Carrouges Castle, the thermal spa resort of Bagnoles-de-l'Orne and the mediaeval city of Domfront.

Awaken your senses – 41 miles

Follow a delightful greenway, formerly a railway track, and be seduced by charming villages such as Mortain and Ducey. Stop-off the sample delicious local delicacies direct from the farm.

Cruise to Mont Saint-Michel – 19 miles

Keep the famous silhouette of Mont Saint-Michel in vision, pedalling through the surrounding grasslands with superb sea vistas before reaching the newly-restored, iconic landmark. At the journey's end, rest a while at a new B&B - www.locationpierretnature.fr - with a Jacuzzi Bath overlooking the Bay.

Sample Package: Biking France (www.biking-france.com, + 33 (0)2 54 78 62 52) offers a five day cycle route from Alençon to Mont Saint-Michel from £515pp (based on 2 sharing), including 4 nights' B&B accommodation, 2 dinners (drinks not included), route maps and notes, luggage transfers and bike and helmet rental.

Getting here: Trains booked through Voyages SNCF (www.voyages-sncf.com; 0844 848 5 848) from London-Paris and back from Pontorson (the nearest station to Mont Saint-Michel) to London (via Paris) start at £89.50 per person. Alternatively, Brittany Ferries (www.brittanyferries.com; 0871 244 1400) offers return channel crossings to Caen, Cherbourg and Saint Malo from £110pp for a car and two passengers.

For more information visit www.veloscenic.com

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