

Holiday: Emerald Coast Cycling

Rating:  level Holiday type: Independent Cycling

- Marvellously varied cycling; interest-packed route, spectacular views
- Sensational coastal scenery: white sand beaches, hidden coves, emerald seas
- Colourful fishing villages unchanged over the centuries
- Friendly hotels, great cuisine, swimming most days
- An eclectic architectural mix: classic Roman, elaborate Romanesque and flamboyant Gothic



It's almost impossible to resist the appeal of the spectacular Emerald Coast, with its pink granite cliffs and turquoise seas, wonderful white beaches and deserted little coves. Writers and artists, attracted by the stunning landscapes, dramatic views and vibrant Mediterranean-style colours, have been coming here for centuries, yet the region remains largely unspoilt with much of its original charm still intact. So you'll see locals with shrimping buckets wading the beaches, and fishermen cleaning out shells by hand.

The cycling routes we've chosen are mostly along uncrowded coastal paths and quiet country lanes. And, best of all, you get the most wonderful panoramic views without having to climb many hills! For most of the time, you're by the sea, with plenty of opportunities to swim from some of the most beautiful beaches in France. Other highlights include riverside cycling to the gorgeously preserved walled town of Dinan that feels barely changed since the Middle Ages. It's well worth time exploring the cobbled streets, imposing castle (with dungeon!) and beautifully restored half-timbered houses which can be found in the historic centre.



World Pictures

“Be sure to sample the region’s signature dish: the seafood platter, piled high with shiny pink lobster, king prawn, silver oysters, scallops and clams.”

On your last day you'll pedal through the ancient Forest of Hunaudaye and have time to visit its imposing C13 château.

Throughout your trip, you'll be staying in friendly, family-run hotels ranging from a lovely C16 manor house to a modern *** riverside hotel, with pool, on the banks of the Rance.



Emerald Coast Cycling: Day by day



Day 1 Arrive at Lamballe

Your holiday starts at M. Jamin's C16 manor house in the countryside just 3kms outside the market town of Lamballe. With only 15 rooms, it's a lovely intimate place to stay. The food here is excellent and the inner courtyard opens up as a beautiful terrace for *al fresco* dining on fine summer evenings.

Day 2 Lamballe to Sables d'Or-Les-Pins 37km/21mi

Gentle cycling first along quiet country lanes then out along the coast to the lively sailing resort of Pléneuf-Val-André. The white sandy beaches here are simply gorgeous so make sure that you take your swimming things with you today! There are also some excellent ocean-facing restaurants for a long seafood lunch. You continue along the coast to St Pabu where you turn inland, crossing Cap d'Erquy, and back to the coast at Sables d'Or-Les-Pins.

Day 3 At Sables d'Or-Les-Pins

Relax on the beach or follow our circular cycling route taking in the Cap Fréhel lighthouse and the famous C14 feudal stronghold of Fort de la Latte. Perched on a rocky promontory above the sea, it occupies one of the finest settings in northern France, and it's easy to see why it's been used on numerous film sets. A climb up to the gallery at the top of the tower will reward you with magnificent views – out right across the ocean to Jersey on a clear day.

Day 4 Sables d'Or-Les-Pins to Dinard 47km/29mi

Today's route starts by gentle peddaling through pretty farming hamlets - wonderful views across the Baie de la Fresnaye. Stop for a coffee perhaps in the bustling market town of Matignon then on via the popular yachting village of Lancieux – impressive square bell tower capped by a dome and lantern turret – and on to St Briac where Debussy composed his major work “The Sea”. The final stretch takes you to our hotel in St Enogat, just 10 minutes walk from the centre of Dinard.

Day 5 At Dinard

Once a sleepy fishing village on the estuary of the Rance, the English transformed the town into one of the most famous and upmarket resorts in Europe. Although a little quieter now, it has not lost any of its charm and many of the “Belle Époque” villas, overlooking the fabulous white sandy beaches, have become historic monuments. Walk out to the Pointe des Étrêtes for views of the off-shore islands, or take a 10-minute ferry across the bay to St Malo and loose yourself in the narrow cobbled streets within the *Intra Muros* (fortified walls) of the ancient city.

Day 6 Dinard to Dinan 39km/22mi

A complete change of scene today as you cycle inland – usually flat! – and follow the banks of the river Rance. You'll feel like you're taking a trip back in time as you pass sleepy hamlets and forgotten fishing ports – look out for the stilted fishing huts at Les Hisses. Our hotel in Dinan overlooks the river and has a lovely outdoor swimming pool if you fancy a dip. There's also a lovely patio for pre-dinner apéritifs overlooking the picturesque port.

Day 7 At Dinan

This beautifully preserved ancient walled town, with riverfront port and picturesque half-timbered buildings, is an absolute gem. Wander round the marvellously restored ancient squares, visit the imposing C13 castle, admire the flamboyant Gothic basilica and stroll the lovely cobbled streets packed with authentic artisan workshops. Lunch perhaps in the bustling Place des Merciers where pretty triangular-gabled houses are further examples of Dinan's exceptional architectural heritage.

Day 8 Dinan to Lamballe 45km/26mi

First stop today is the picturesque little village of Léhon – C9 abbey - then on through quiet farming villages to the impressive 13C Château de la Hunaudaye. The ruins of this huge château date back over 800 years, yet the 5 majestic towers are still in good condition and are surrounded by water-filled moat. It's gentle, flat cycling through the forest back to Lamballe where you can relax in the gardens and enjoy a celebratory drink before dinner – a *Kir Breton* (cassis and cider) maybe?

Day 9 Leave Lamballe



For departure dates,
prices and travel
options, please visit
our website at:
www.headwater.com