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Bike ride along the Seine

The *bouquiniste* level (sidewalk where the booksellers are) is usually as close to the Seine as Paris visitors get. Small portions of the Seine are accessible down the occasional stairs.

However, the length of the Paris waterfront is open for viewing and enjoying on Sundays and holidays year round (including during the July/August Paris Plage). The traffic is non-existent between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. along the riverfront. Instead children are learning how to either bike or roller blade, families plan their outings, and joggers have space. Everyone has the "sea" air to breathe as the barges and tourist boats pass by.

It was on one of these sunny Sunday mornings that we rented bikes.

We set out to ride our bikes, walk them when necessary, snack at the Eiffel Tower with our vehicles next to us, park just about anywhere we wanted, with the freedom to have a ball.

With our picnic items spread among the four of us and placed in the bicycle baskets, we headed out on our first biking adventure in the city.

The route

Taking a tour if you are already familiar with Paris might seem basic, a reader once told me. So I recommend renting a bike and using a map for more excitement. You choose where to go and when to stop. With the biking/bus lanes now in place and more on the way, it's a great way to see Paris.

We picked up our bikes, familiarized ourselves with them, and took the closest route to the Seine. Our goal was to cycle along the prescribed route.

The route leaves the Seine at certain points and you are up on the street level and sometimes walking your bikes across the Seine in order to reach the other side.

Our tour started at the Bastille.

We traveled boulevard Bourdon down to the Seine. Descending the ramp at the Quai de la Rapée and continued through the tunnels. We headed in the direction of Jardin des Tuileries.

Back up at street level, we crossed Pont Royal to the left bank. Riding toward the Eiffel Tower (our first snack and beverage break with a view) was a combination of quay/embankment and street travel.

Returning from the Eiffel Tower, we once again crossed Pont Royal (walking our bikes across the bridge) and descended to the quay once again through the Tuileries tunnel.

Our trip took us along the embankment toward Quai de la Rapée once again and up the ramp heading for the Pont d'Austerlitz (passing the metro station).

Once across the Seine, we descended the ramp to the right, and went in search of a picnic spot. At this point, looking at a map, we are parallel with the Jardins des Plantes.

We preferred our second attempt at a picnic spot, a view of Notre Dame. Our first choice was on too much of a slope, although it was shady.

This made it easier to nap and plan our dessert -- what else? Berthillon sorbet!

Our path went past Notre Dame and over to l'île Saint Louis for the first Berthillon shop -- you can find it at about five or more locations on the island.

From here you can either go straight to Bastille and the rental shop or divert through the Marais.

The trip is an all-day affair.

Your lunch

We took our lunch items in back packs that fit nicely into our baskets. We took along food that could be easily eaten with your fingers:

Salad (fresh or packaged), bread, hard boiled eggs, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, La Vache qui Rit (The cow who laughs) Apericubes (flavored cheese chunks), hard cheese cut into cubes, can of rillettes de canard** (available at any grocery store or open-air market), pocket size can opener, sharp knife, plastic cutlery, cups and plates; napkins, tablecloth, wet wipes, wine and corkscrew and water.

One way paths

Bike traffic has directions. To ride toward the Eiffel Tower you ride along the left bank. Along the dotted lines of

the "Paris Respire"* route you can ride in either direction.

To cross over to the right bank and the Louvre, we chose to walk our bikes over the bridge.

The map is easy to read. The day is really laid back. The wine at lunch may be incentive for a nap, just lock your bikes in case you fall into a deep, relaxing sleep.

Visit the Paris city hall link for a [Paris respire information](#). "Paris respire" is a 365-day a year event. This "Paris respire" page gives you maps to download and hours when walkers, cyclists and rollers can take advantage of the streets that are closed to car and truck traffic on Sundays and holidays. Enjoy Paris in different way!

Definitions

*"Paris Respire" This project was conceived to improve the quality of life in certain areas. New areas were added again in July. These are areas closed to traffic every Sunday and holiday in Paris.

These areas include:

Berges de la Seine, Bois de Boulogne, Bois de Vincennes, Quartier Sentier, Quartier Mouffetard, Quartier du Luxembourg, rue des Martyrs, Extension of Canal Saint-Martin, Canal Saint-Martin, Quartier Roquette-Bastille, Quartier Daguerre, Quartier Montmartre and rue du Poteau.

**rillettes de canard is a wonderful way to eat strands of duck, or goose (oie) pieces on the run. A basic pronunciation is "rijet".



Legal squatters along the Seine

