

Unforgettable Cycling Holidays in the French Ardennes

For cyclists of all levels of expertise, there is no better getaway than the beautiful green environment of the French Ardennes. Acres of forests and undulating hills spread along the majestic River Meuse in one of the most unspoilt and natural landscapes of Europe. There are clearly marked cycle paths that follow the winding river, the raging torrents or peaceful canals, as well as those penetrating the depths of the mysterious and vast forests.

THE GREENWAYS

The South Ardennes Greenway was inaugurated in 2023, an opportunity to ride along the Ardennes Canal, just one of the many unique opportunities to discover the charm of nature in the Ardennes by bicycle. There are cycling itineraries for both families and serious cyclists, exploring the wonders of this oft forgotten region of France.

Following one of the oldest rivers in Europe, the Meuse Cycle Route runs from its source in the Haute Marne region, to its estuary in the Netherlands near Rotterdam, a journey of some 1150 km. Cyclists are guided by dedicated signing throughout their trek, which follows a secure greenway (for cyclists and non-motorised modes of transport) and little-used secondary roads. It is possible to take TER trains to complete parts of the route, when bikes can accompany their riders on the train.



Sudard Greenway – Voie Verte – Montgon Crédit D Truillard

The South Ardenne Greenway follows the canal , whilst the Trans Ardenne Greenway follows part of the towpath along the Meuse river. A secure 130 km cycle path, it is accessible to all-comers, with a number of gourmet stopovers along the route. Starting the itinerary in the north at Givet, a Belgian border town, touring cyclists enter the Ardenne massif and the Meuse valley in the very heart of the Ardenne Regional Nature Park. Following the meanders of the Meuse through exquisitely beautiful countryside interspersed with villages with local slate or blue-stone roofs, it is an introduction to the heritage of the Ardenne, its legends and glorious industrial past.



Ennemanne Greenway, Credit D.Truillard

The Ennemanne is another, much shorter, Greenway following a small river through a narrow valley full of elements of the industrial past, following the route of the old railway which supplied metal processing plants.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Away from the marked paths, there are many cyclist routes along the country roads through the Ardennes countryside to explore the tiny villages, fortified churches, forests and lakes.

The Ardennes Thierarche region was the theatre for incessant wars, obliging the residents to fortify their homes, farms and churches. An unmarked 150 km trail is designed to discover these fortified churches and farms, together with an appreciation of the glorious natural beauty of the lakes and rivers with its abundant wildlife, including storks, salamanders and kingfishers. Tour: www.ardennes.com/la-destination/les-incontournables-culture-patrimoine/les-eglises-fortifiees-de-thierache/

The Préardennaises Ridges is an area linking the Champagne and Ardennes regions, criss-crossed with paths for walkers and cyclists. Villages steeped in history, Romanesque churches, rivers, lakes and orchards abound. The cycle tracks are detailed on www.rando-cretes.fr

MOUNTAIN-BIKE (MTB) TRAILS

The Ardennes Regional Nature Park is the ideal area for Mountain-bike enthusiasts, offering 22 different trails, ranging from very easy to very difficult. With its wooded, undulating landscape (altitude variation of 380 m), the Ardennes Regional Nature Park has everything MTB enthusiasts require. With 4 degrees of difficulty, the trails can be very gentle or very technical and demanding. Taking cyclists through valleys, villages and woodlands, they will please beginners, experts and families alike.

Five MTB hostels along the routes provide a welcome stopover for cyclists, with cycle rental, repairs, restrooms, etc.



Roc La Tour. Credit Vincent Frasiak

Givonne is one of the last French villages before the Forest of Bouillon in Belgium. The Bannet Leisure Centre offers trails with four levels of difficulty and is open all year round. The leisure centre is easy to find: cyclists only need to follow the stream and enter a vast area of oak and beech woodland crossed by streams and torrents. The leisure centre, crossed by the GR® 14 Ardennes, long distance footpath, offers some excellent MTB excursions, with some 16 circuits totalling 116 km, together with the discovery of unusual sites such as the former border post at Olly. [Touring map: www.givonne.fr/images/bannet/Carte_VTT_Bannet_Givonne.pdf](http://www.givonne.fr/images/bannet/Carte_VTT_Bannet_Givonne.pdf)

Many other mapped routes are also available, including a cross-border route with Belgium, and The Voie Vive, a 74 km route from Rocroi to Monthermé. [Detailed map: https://espacestrail.run/fr/ardenne/parcours/110755](https://espacestrail.run/fr/ardenne/parcours/110755)



Rempart de Rocroi Crédit Vincent Frasiak