

Home Travel Lists

## How to channel your inner Geraint Thomas: The best cycle-themed tours in the French mountains



France doesn't really need advertising as a great destination for cyclists. CREDIT: GETTY

**A**s the Tour de France kicks off, we select the best cycle-themed tours in the Alps and Pyrenees.

### G-force

You know it's July when images of men in unflinchingly tight sportswear pop up in newspapers, and random phrases such as "yellow jersey", "team time-trial" and "irregularities with the second urine sample" hover on the periphery of the conversation. Ah yes, the 2019 edition of the Tour de France ([letour.fr](http://letour.fr)) begins today, in admittedly not-very-French Brussels – with Geraint "G" Thomas hoping to become the first British rider to retain the title since, ooh, Chris Froome did it way back in 2017. But as well as being the world's greatest bike race, Le Tour is also a three-week slow-motion advert for [France](http://France) as a glorious destination. Not that this requires much advertising. More at [uk.france.fr/en](http://uk.france.fr/en).

### Elysian wheels

The best way to watch the Tour is to be in [Paris](http://Paris) for the final stage (Sunday July 28). Not only do the riders perform a dozen or so laps from the Louvre to the Champs-Élysées, meaning you see them dash by more than once, but if you get bored of sweaty Lycra, you can nip to a bar in the Marais or a restaurant in Saint-Germain-des-Pres. A three-night stay at the five-star [Hotel du Collectionneur Arc de Triomphe](http://Hotel du Collectionneur Arc de Triomphe) (almost on the race route) with return trains (out on July 26) costs from £931pp, via [eurostar.com](http://eurostar.com).

### You can call me Alps

If you can watch the pros lumbering up the hellish gradients of the Alps and not think "that looks awful", you can follow in their tyre tracks. [Marmot-tours.co.uk](http://Marmot-tours.co.uk) has a week-long "Alpine Classic Cols" tour, tackling beasts like Alpe D'Huez, from Aug 24-31. From £1,440pp including bike. Flights (to Geneva) are extra.