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Route 6: Towards Rambouillet, Dreux, Evreux or Rouens

Bicycle from Paris to Versailles and beyond

Cycle the Bois de Boulogne bike path, the Parc of Saint-Cloud, and the Forest of Fausses-Reposes.



Rue de Rivoli bike lane,
early Sunday morning.

Clicking on any picture
enlarges it



On route to the Bois de
Boulogne — Grand Palais
and Petit Palais.



Grille for Bagatelle Garden,

**Maps: Paris map, Michelin suburban map #21,
IGN regional map #8 if continuing Northwest from Versailles, or #20 if
continuing Southwest.**

Nature of the Ride:

This shady route takes you from Paris's western edge, at the Bois de Boulogne, to Versailles in about 16 kilometers. Most of the ride is in parks and woods, using park roads with little traffic; but it also passes through towns on quiet streets. There is one short, steep hill (where you can walk your bike if desired) and one other, more moderate, climb.

In Versailles, you can ride in the park, but not in the Palace gardens. If you wish to tour the château or the Gardens, bring a sturdy bike lock.

The return to Paris is by retracing the route, or by train: (1) From station Versailles Rive Gauche to RER C stations, or (2) with a change at Viroflay, to the Monparnasse RR station; or (3) from station Versailles Rive Droite to the Saint-Lazare RR station.

Destinations:

Continuations without much traffic are possible northwest towards the Seine Valley and Normandy; and with moderate traffic, west and southwest to the Chevreuse Valley, Rambouillet, and beyond.

from Bois de Boulogne bike path.



Bike path in the Bois de Boulogne.



The high speed bike lane by the Hippodrome (horse racing track) of Longchamp.



A pack of riders on the Hippodrome de Longchamps corse.



Entrance to the pedestrian bridge over the Seine.



The pedestrian bridge.

Directions:

To print itinerary, select the text below, and choose print selection.

Please follow [this link](#) for an explanation of the author's traffic ratings.

Follow bike lanes westward from central Paris to the Bois de Boulogne. Then follow one of the smaller roads or bike paths to the **southwest** corner of the park:

Specifically, if you enter the Bois from Avenue Foch (a) follow the Route de Seresnes southwest; cycle clockwise around the (lake) Lac Inférieur, and then take the cycle lane of the Route of l'Hippodrome. Or, (b) for a longer, looping ride, cross north to the Port des Sablons, and follow the **bike path** west, then south. When this temporarily ends, turn right and walk your bike two blocks past the traffic circle, then take the continuation bicycle path leaving to the left.

If you enter the Bois from the bike lanes of Avenue George Mandel - Avenue Henri Martin and the Porte de la Muette, you must angle to the northwest because of the one way road. After 100 meters, either at the bike path or at the route just afterwards, turn left and at the next road turn right and continue by the lake. Then continue westward in the cycle lane of the Route de l'Hippodrome.

In either case, at the Hippodrome de Longchamps (horse racing track) in the **southwest** corner of the Bois — attention, there are **two racetracks** in the Bois — **do not take or continue south on the shaded bike path**, but rather, ride south **on the main road**, on the ride side of the right lane: – This lane, closed to motor traffic, is a one way, **clockwise**, circular bike route around the Hippodrome de Longchamp. **Stay right** to protect yourself: On weekends packs of high speed cyclists come whizzing by.

Follow the bike lane as it curves west; exit left at the Y when it begins to turn north. Exit the Bois, keeping left.

At the road along the Seine River, dismount, and at the light cross, and walk your bike up the ramp onto the footbridge. (The sign indicates that bicycles are only permitted if they are walked; but many French ride on the footbridge anyway.) Stay on the bridge as it climbs to its end, crossing over railroad tracks. Turn left (heading due south), and after one block bear right. At the next intersection, walk or ride your bike up a very steep block-long hill. The street turns left at the top (route Calvaire) – do not turn to cross the rail line – and follow this minor road essentially straight south as it changes names (Latouche, Sully, Ecolles, Lilas, 1.2 km (0.7 mi). When the road splits, keep right. The road becomes one-way with you, and finally a foot path that leads into the Park of Saint-Cloud.

In the Park, immediately branch to the right, climbing, and then immediately branch left on a flat dirt way that joins a gravelled path between flower beds. The path becomes a dirt trail which turns right. Push or ride your bike on the path, climbing an occasional few steps and crossing through a gate. Continue to the paved road, then turn left for 50 meters. At the traffic circle, exit to the right, westward on the paved road. Cross straight through the next traffic circle and continue west, then southwest.



View of the Sein from the pedestrian bridge.



The northwest route: The circle with the war monument. Exit right here.



Porte Saint-Antoine. One route enters the gate, the other turns right.



Young children ride ponies into the Park of Versailles.



From Porte Saint-Antoine, looking into the Versailles park. Going straight leads eventually to the Grand Canal. To continue NW with the first choice, turn right.

After 2.2 kilometers you cross through a massive gate, into the quaint village of Marne-la-Coquette. At the stop sign, near the city hall (*Mairie*), bear right merging on a street. In one block, this turns south (left). Its name changes to the Avenue de Versailles, and then the Route de l'Impératrice. The Route enters the Forêt (forest) de Fausses-Reposes, turning west then southwest (light traffic). While in the forest, stay on the road; the rough bike path is considerably slower and suitable only for mountain bikes.

At the end of the forest of Fausses-Reposes, you reach the town of Versailles. Cross the main avenue (which runs north-south — the Boulevard de Jardy, D182) at the light by the traffic circle. You now have three choices: (1) [Visit the Château de Versailles](#); (2) [continue towards the Versailles Hamlet \(of Marie-Antoinette\) and northwest towards the Seine valley](#); or (3) [continue west or southwest towards the Chevreuse Valley, Rambouillet and Chartres](#).

To the Château de Versailles:

To reach the Château de Versailles, from the traffic circle after the forest, take the street ahead on the left, which goes west, curving to the left sharply downhill (Avenue de Villeneuve-l'Étang). One block after this road straightens out, about 1.5 km (0.9 mi) from the forest at a little triangle, turn left on Rue Maréchal Foch. *One route (that has impressive buildings but heavy traffic) is to go south about six blocks (just past the Rive Droite train station) to the Boulevard de la Reine, turn right, and continue west for eight blocks, before turning left to enter the Versailles Park.* To avoid the traffic, I recommend rather, that you weave through less busy streets by turning right after two blocks off of the Rue du Maréchal Foch onto Rue Des Missionnaires, left after 4 blocks (onto Rue Mademoiselle), and then at the T, right onto Boulevard de la Reine. In four blocks you come to the Versailles park entrance.

You enter the park of the Château of Versailles, near the Grand Trianon (open 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM from May through September and from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM from October through March). There are restaurants and food stands at the Grand Canal below the Palace. To visit the Trianons, the Hamlet, the gardens, or the Château, lock you bike in the park, perhaps in front of the Grand Trianon, and proceed on foot. The opening hours of the various attractions vary considerably, so consider informing yourself before you leave Paris. Bikes are not permitted into the gardens near the Palace (but are permitted in the park).

You can also enter the Versailles Park from the North entrance, near Marie Antoinette's Hamlet, by following the directions in the third paragraph below.

Return from Versailles to Paris:

You can return to Paris by retracing your steps. In this case, after having exited the park of Saint-Cloud, in order to avoid the one way streets against you, when necessary descend to the right, then continue northward, until reaching the foot bridge.

Or, of course, take the train from the Versailles Rive Droite railway station off Rue Maréchal Foch (to the Saint-Lazare station), or a C line RER train from Versailles Rive Gauche station, which is 8 blocks further south to any of



Part of Marie Antoinette's hamlet, in the Versailles park.



Way to the Bailly porte; walk your bike!



Farmland after the Bailly porte.



Northwest: The second choice to ride to Bailly and Noisy-le-Roi is fast and smooth.



Noisy-le-Roi — the Mairie (town hall), a short detour from the route.



several Paris stations – but not during [evening rush hour](#). At the Viroflay RER stop, you can transfer to trains for the Monparnasse RR station.

To the Versailles Hamlet and Northwest from Versailles to Normandy.

From the traffic circle at the boulevard at the end of the forest (Forêt de Fausses Reposes), take the street on the left, which goes straight, very steeply, down the hill (Boulevard de la Porte Verte – one block north of the street mentioned under the Versailles option). Continue straight through two traffic circles (cycle lane) on the Avenue du Maréchal Franchet d'Esperey, which curves to the left, and arrives at another, large traffic circle with many streets leading off. Continue straight (slightly left) through this into Rue du Marechal de Lattre de Tassigny (bike lane), which then curves left (south). In four blocks, at the light (sign "Le Chesnay, Église St-Antoine"), turn right on Avenue Debasseux (into the town of Le Chesnay), and in four blocks at the light turn left onto Avenue de General Leclerc. At the circle with the war monument you are going to exit to the right 90 degrees, but only after you have walked your bicycle across the main part of the street, into the “counter-allée” of the Boulevard Saint Antoine. **This is the parking alley that runs along the south (your left as you ride west) side of the main road; the traffic on this alley goes in the direction opposite to that of the main road lane adjacent, unlike almost all other alleys.** Always continue straight ahead until you reach the parking area for the Porte (gate) Saint-Antoine.

You can enter on the left the Versailles Château compound at the port Saint Antoine, near Marie Antoinette's hamlet. For a visit to the hamlet, lock your bike near the gate. The park is open 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM from May through September and from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM from October through March.

Beyond Versailles to the Northwest:

You have a choice of two routes: **Choice 1:** For a scenic and adventurous walk (ride with a mountain bike) on very rough rocky roads among tall trees and fields, enter the Château park compound at the port Saint Antoine. Turn right immediately, west, and pass along the moat which surrounds the “hamlet” of Marie Antoinette on a dirt road. When the hamlet ends, the road becomes **extremely rough**. Unless you have a good mountain bike, **walk your bike** for approximately 3 kilometers (1.8 mi) (the author sometimes rode, and had a flat). The road runs straight for 1 km, then turns left for 700 m; at the next intersection turn right on a lane which in 1.7 km leads to the “Porte de Bailly”, an ancient gate. The motor traffic barrier poles here are spaced so closely that, in order to pass, if you are carrying saddle bags you may need to remove one of them.

Continue past a parking lot to the main road. Take the lane straight across this, ignoring signs for autos, and pass through the tunnel under the elevated highway. At the T, turn right, cross under another highway, and at the traffic circle continue 600 m in the same direction up the hill to the T at the main road of Bailly (with light to moderate traffic). Turn left. Follow the continuation directions given in the second paragraph below.

Choix 2: The other choice from Port Saint Antoine is a smooth, rapid ride nearby traffic and of no great beauty. Follow the bike path (sign for bicycles:

Flowers in Noisy-le-Roi,
approaching the forest of
Marly.



Forest road (route
forestière) in the Marly
Forest.



The road to Alluets-le-Roi.



View, Alluets-le-Roi.



The hills after Maule.



The village of Goussonville,
after Maule.



Crossing through Haute-Ile,
on the north bank of the
Seine.

"Boucle de Versailles, Bailly") which leaves the parking area of the Saint Antoine gate, along the left of the highway (Route de Saint-Germain, N186). After 1.1 kilometers, the bike path crosses a street at a light, goes under the highway by a tunnel, the runs beside the highway on the other side. You have to walk your bike several times to go through some other tunnels, then you return to the other side of the highway (always following the signs for "Bailly"). You descend a ramp to the left and join the bike path to the west along the side of highway D307. In about 2 kilometers, exit for Bailly and Noisy-le-Roi. When the bike path ends continue straight ahead on the road (light – moderate traffic).

After either choice, continue west on the road into Noisy-le-Roi. After coming up a hill, turn right onto the rue Henri Regnault (sign: Porte Des Gondi). *A short detour straight ahead at this turn would lead into the center of town with a butcher shop, a bakery, and a deli (traiteur)*. If you visit the shops, ride back and turn left toward the Porte Des Gondi.

Ride up the hill to the T, turn left, and after two blocks bear right into the Rue de la Forêt, which you follow west to the traffic circle "Rond-Point Des Chênes". Turn right, and enter the forest of Marly.

After passing under the super highway, turn left at the first paved road which shortly joins into the Route Forestière Royale, which you follow through the forest to the intersection with Highway D98 (2.5 km - 1.5 mi). Turn left on D98, cross the Autoroute, then turn right on the next paved road, the Route des Joncs. After 1.9 km (1.2 mi), you merge with a (dirt?) road, the Route Neuve du Roi, and continue west for another 2.1 km (1.3 mi) where you bear left. At the next intersection, in 400 meters, turn right, now out of the forest and in the commune of Sainte Gemme, and turn right again at the next street (heading north). Cross D30 at the traffic circle, exiting in the same direction onto the Route Royale (an ancient military road). Follow this for 5.6 km (3.4 mi) among fields to the village of Alluets-les-Roi.

Turn left here onto highway D45 (towards Maule), and follow it through the village. Note that the countryside before you becomes hilly, with plateaus cut by river valleys! Soon the highway turns gently right and enters a woods while descending. When the highway arrives at a complex intersection (where D45 turns sharply left near Beule), you have to decide whether to stay on the south bank of the Seine, towards Mantes or Evreux, or rather to cross the seine to its north bank.

South Bank (Rive Gauche) of the Seine:

Follow D45 downhill to Maule. Continue in any of several directions, for example to Jumeauville, Goussonville, Arnouville, puis soit Mante-Ville (gare) ou Septeuil, etc.; or to Thoiry, Garancières, etc.

North Bank (Rive Droite) of the Seine:

(The author followed this route from Paris one Saturday in June, 2007, as far as Giverny and Vernon without experiencing much traffic.) From D45 in Beule, from the complex intersection, turn slightly right and cross through Bazemont, then take D191 in descent to highway D113 in Aubergenville near the Seine. Turn left, and ride in the breakdown lane as far as Épône. Turn



North side of the Seine:
Cyclists around a monument
in la Roche-Guyon.



The Chateau of la Roche-
Guyon.

Clicking on any
picture enlarges it.

Clicking on a red
rectangle, if it exists,
brings up a very
large photo.



The garden and the house of
Monet at Giverny.

right and cross the Seine. Immediately turn left on D146, and follow this until within Limay. Pick up D147 towards Vetheuil (passing through Dennemont to avoid one steep hill).

Then pass through the very interesting towns of Vetheuil, Haute-Ile, and la Roche-Guyon, continuing to Gasny. From here, either go via the Andelys, a very interesting town, and continue from there until Rouen; or visit the Garden of the painter Monet at Giverny and then the Andelys and Rouen, or rather cross the Seine to Vernon (railway station, 92 km - 55 mi from Paris) and return to Paris by train or continue on.

Continuation Southwest from Versailles

From the traffic circle end of the Fôret Des Fausses Repose, continue at first following the directions above for the Versailles Château: that is, take the street to the left before you, the Avenue of Villeneuve-l'Étang which goes west, curving to the left, and then right, sharply downhill, and when this road ends after 1.5 km (0.9 mi) at a little triangle turn left on Rue Maréchal Foch.

Stay on Rue du Marechal Foch (substantial traffic), and continue south (eventually in a bike lane) past both Versailles railway stations. **One block before the end of the road**, turn right onto Rue Henri de Régnier; at the T turn left onto highway D91 (hilly, and moderate traffic). This climbs, then crosses over a rail line, under an autoroute, past a military camp and then descends to the Bièvre valley (cycle path). **It is worth it, in the Bievre valley, just when the road become flat, to turn right off the road, and to take a break by walking your bike around the lakes, which are full of water fowl and quite pretty.** Continue on hilly, busy D91 (cycle path in the beginning) as far as la Brosse or Dampierre en Yveline. From these towns you can turn West on country roads towards the forest of Rambouillet, and eventually Dreux or Chartre.

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