

# The Tour de France

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## HISTORY, OPERATIONS and Territories

Presented by the France-Lithuania Chamber of Commerce

## THE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE TOUR DE FRANCE

Created in 1903 by the newspaper *L'Auto*, the Tour de France is far more than just a cycling race: it is a national event that gathers millions of spectators along the roads of France every year and tens of millions of television viewers worldwide. Much like *pétanque* in southern villages, the Tour embodies a true folk festival. The French set up along the roadsides, enjoy family picnics, and wave flags it is an essential summer tradition, deeply rooted in the country's cultural identity.

- **1903** : First edition — 6 stages, 2,428 km
- **Today**: 21 stages, ~3,400 km, broadcast in over 190 countries
- **Record**: Lance Armstrong (stripped), followed by Eddy Merckx & Bernard Hinault — 5 victories each

### ■ Yellow Jersey

Worn by the leader of the general classification. Created in 1919, it is the ultimate emblem of the Tour. Every second gained or lost can change its wearer.

### ■ Green Jersey

Awarded to the best sprinter—the one who accumulates the most points during intermediate sprints and at stage finishes. It is the reward for pure speed.

### ■ Polka dot Jersey

Awarded to the best climber, the "King of the Mountains." Points are accumulated at the summits of categorized climbs. A symbol of bravery in the Alps and the Pyrenees.

### ■ White Jersey

Awarded to the best climber, the "King of the Mountains." Points are accumulated at the summits of categorized climbs. A symbol of bravery in the Alps and the Pyrenees.



## THE STAGE CONCEPT

The Tour takes place over 21 consecutive days (with 2 rest days). Each day is a "stage" with its own start and finish. There are 3 main types of stages :

### 1/ Flat stages

Flat terrain favoring the sprinters. The pelotons ride at high speeds and often finish in a mass sprint. Typical distances: 150 to 230 km.

### 2/ Mountain stages

The most spectacular! The Alps, Pyrenees, Massif Central... Legendary Mountain passes like Alpe d'Huez or the Tourmalet are the theaters of myth where victories for the general classification are forged.

### 3/ Time Trial (TT)

Each rider sets off alone against the clock. No team tactics: it is pure effort. The final time trial on the Champs-Élysées is often the decider for the yellow jersey.

## The Link with French Territories

The Tour de France is a magnificent showcase for tourism and heritage. Each year, it traverses castles, vineyards, seaside resorts, and picture-postcard villages. Local authorities actively bid to host a stage start or finish, as the media impact is global. The landscapes themselves become characters: the lavender fields of Provence, the snow-capped peaks of the Alps, the Norman cliffs, and the Atlantic beaches give the Tour a unique geographical and cultural dimension.

#### A little travel tip:

Plan your summer by following the Tour route — it is the best travel guide to France !

### A Lithuanian Wink

A link between France and Lithuania on the roads of the Tour.

#### Ramūnas navardauskas

Winner of a stage in the 2013 Tour de France in Chartres—the first and only Lithuanian to win on the Tour! A rider for the Garmin-Sharp team, he delivered a historic moment for Lithuanian cycling.

#### Ignatas Konovalovas

A Lithuanian sprinter who participated in several Tours, he proudly represented the colors of Lithuania on the French roads under the colors of the FDJ team.



Ramūnas Navardauskas



Ignatas Konovalovas