

Cycling Tourism and Leisure Cycling

Active Lifestyles and Economic Impact in Europe



Cycling tourism, as a sustainable form of tourism, is gaining interest and attention from users, and attracting more investments from public bodies and professionals. However, the impact of cycling tourism in economic and other terms – both current values and evolution over time – is difficult to estimate in Europe. Beyond tourism, cycling for leisure, also referred to as recreational cycling, is not widely monitored, even though its contribution to the economy, as well as to health and well-being, is well known.

The latest official data on cycling tourism in Europe estimated **2.3 billion cycle tourism trips a year in the EU** and a total economic value of **€44 billion**. The source study was published in 2012 by the European Parliament and needs updating. **This report aims to highlight more recent facts from four European countries, to reflect national dynamics, and to promote the need for consolidated and up-to-date European data and definitions on cycling tourism and leisure cycling.**



CYCLING FOR LEISURE AND ON HOLIDAYS

Cycling is quite common in Europe, but with important differences between countries and regions. As stated by the 'Cycling Counts' report in June 2026, **24% of EU residents cycle at least once per week** – 61% in the Netherlands and less than 1% in Cyprus. When focusing on leisure cycling, cycling for fun is widely spread in Europe.

50–70%

share of the population **cycling for leisure** in  Germany and  the Netherlands

18–40%

share of the population **cycling during holidays** in  Italy and  France

A standardised way of monitoring leisure cycling and cycling during holidays in Europe would enable more comparison and a better understanding of national trends.



CYCLING TOURISM'S ECONOMIC IMPACT

The overall economic impact of cycling tourism in Europe in 2026 is unknown. **Total estimates by country vary widely** depending on the definitions and methodologies, which may also change overtime. Yet, the economic impact of cycling tourism is significant in the four countries included in this publication:

€18B

gross revenue from cycling tourists and day excursions **in Germany** (2024)

€6.4B

+39%
since 2019

economic impact of cycling tourism **in Italy** (2025)

€4.2B

+121%
since 2009

economic value of cycling tourism **in France** (2019)

€1.3B

€2.1B from
cycling day trips

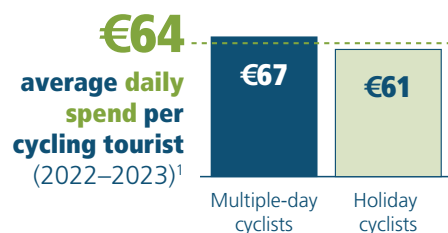
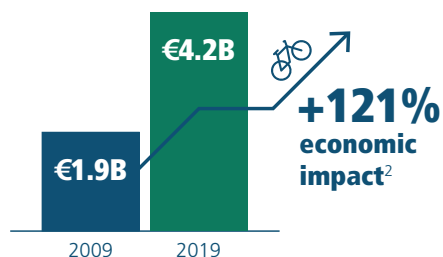
total expenditure of Dutch cycling tourists **in the Netherlands** (2025)

FRANCE

22M

French people usually cycle during their holidays (2018)¹

40% of the population¹



10M
cycling vacations by French people, 2017-2018¹



90M
overnight stays¹



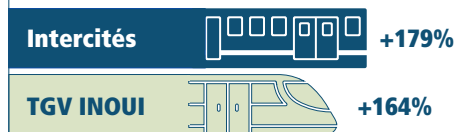
93% of these vacations were spent in France¹

41% of cycling tourists are women¹



14% of cycling tourists are foreign visitors along seven touristic cycle routes in France (2021-2023)¹

Growth in bicycle train ticket sales (2020-2025)²



La Loire à Vélo, part of EuroVelo 6

€54.5M/y

3x economic impact 2010-2022²

economic impact 2010-2022²

(1) 'Impact économique et potentiel de développement des usages du vélo en France', ADEME, April 2020 ; and its update 'Impact socioéconomique des usages du vélo en France', ADEME, February 2026;

(2) 'Stratégie nationale du tourisme à vélo', Réseau vélo et marche, June 2024 ; and 'Chiffres clés du tourisme à vélo 2025', Réseau vélo et marche, May 2026

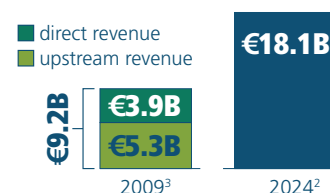
(3) 'Spécial économie du vélo – étude complète', Atout France, October 2009

GERMANY

39.3M

Germans cycle during their holidays or in their free time¹

50% of the population¹



annual gross revenue from overnight and day cycling visitors

Note: the 2009 and 2024 figures use different methodologies and are not directly comparable.

€1.7B

from sales and income tax generated by cycling tourism in 2024¹

12.2M

cycling trips (short and long) by Germans in 2025, where cycling is a main part of the trip¹



>€105

average daily spending per person for cycling tourists²



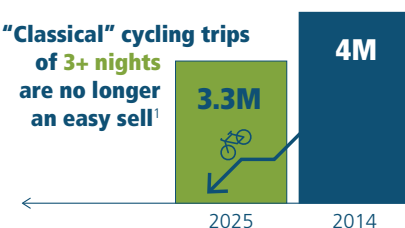
Average distance ridden per day (2025)¹

E-bike users **60.3 km/day**

Standard cyclists **66.9 km/day**

1/2 non-cycling tourists from Germany could imagine going on a cycling holiday in the future¹

"Classical" cycling trips of 3+ nights are no longer an easy sell¹



(1) ADFC Bicycle Travel Analysis 2025 and 2023

(2) 'Basic study cycling tourism in Germany (2026)', German Tourism Association (DTV) not published yet in August 2026 (quoted in 'Ein Gewinn auf vielen Wegen – Wirkungsbericht der Radverkehrsförderung des BMV', Bundesministerium für Verkehr, June 2026)

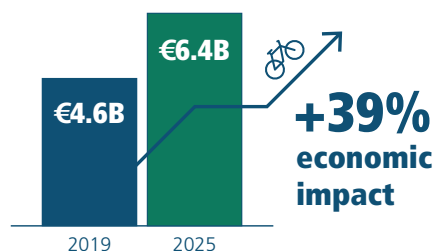
(3) 'Basic study cycling tourism in Germany (2009)', German Tourism Association (DTV), in German



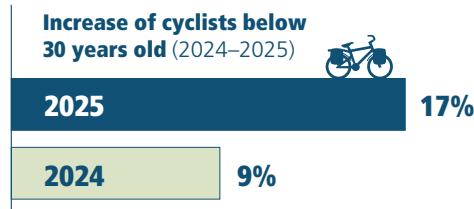
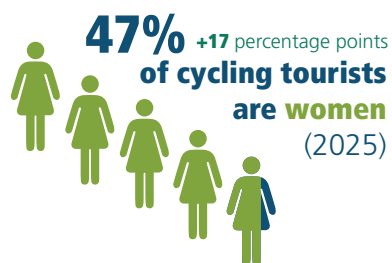
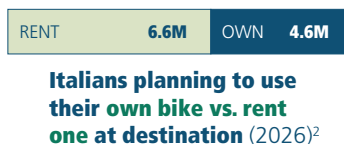
11M

Italians will cycle during their holidays in 2026²

18.6% of the population¹



49M
cycling tourism presences in 2025
55 million in 2019



(1) '6° Rapporto Sul Cicloturismo', Isnart – Legambiente, April 2026 (subtitle: 'Viaggiare con la bici, La via italiana al cicloturismo 2026')

(2) Confturismo-Confcommercio Observatory, in collaboration with SWG, 2026

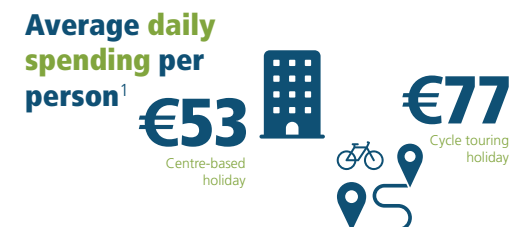


THE NETHERLANDS

10.6M

Dutch people take recreational cycling trips in 2026¹

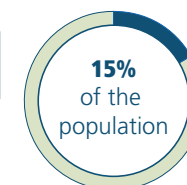
70% of the population¹



2.1B total annual expenditure on cycling day trips of one hour or longer by Dutch recreational cyclists in 2025²

4.8M
cycling holidays in the Netherlands taken by Dutch residents (2024/2025)¹

2.4M
Dutch residents took a cycling holiday in 2024/2025¹



(1) 'Recreational cycling The Netherlands | 2026', Fietsplatform (Dutch cycling platform), June 2026

(2) 'The economic impact of bike tourism in The Netherlands', Decisio, June 2026

CONCLUSION

Cycling tourism has a **significant economic impact** in France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. Evidence suggests volumes have increased significantly in recent years. A general trend is a **broader understanding of cycling tourism's** different segments and an evolution in how it is experienced: multiple-day cycling trips, short cycling trips, cycling while on holidays, and cycling day trips. Growth in **e-bike use**, as well as a mix of more leisure and more sports cycling, is also observed in multiple countries.

However, the different definitions and methodologies used in the four countries analysed in this report confirm that a **standardised monitoring exercise** is needed to obtain consolidated and up-to-date data on the volume and impact of cycling tourism and leisure cycling in Europe.

PUBLISHING CREDITS

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CYCLITE is a brand dedicated to developing lightweight, high-quality equipment for carrying gear on the bike, including bikepacking bags and transport solutions for long-distance cycling and everyday use. Driven by a deep passion for cycling, our mission is to enable more people to explore the world by bike. As supporters of this report, we strongly believe that expanding and improving cycling infrastructure across Europe is essential. Well-connected and safe routes will encourage more people to experience the unique freedom of bikepacking and bicycle travel – one of the most rewarding and sustainable forms of mobility and outdoor activity.

Main questions for future harmonisation efforts arising from the differences in methodologies and definitions between the four countries analysed:

- **How to define cycling tourism?** Definition of cycling as the main purpose, or cycling as part of the holidays, and inclusion or not of day trips by bicycle. A solution could be to calculate the impact for each segment individually before summarising them for a global impact figure.
- **How to measure cycling tourism in a country?** Focus only on domestic usage or also include international visitors. Clearly distinguish domestic and international visitors to avoid double-counting users when aggregating European data.
- **How to estimate the economic impact?** Figures on the cycling tourism economy, the total economic impact, the added value, the revenue from sales and income tax or the total expenditure from cycling tourists do not represent the same realities.
- **How often is cycling tourism monitored?** Annually, every five years, or more than ten years apart.
- **What methodology is used to enable comparison, through time and space?**

EUROVELO DATA HUB

The EuroVelo Data Hub contains updated key figures and useful resources to monitor the growth of the European cycle route network and cycling tourism in general. It gathers data on EuroVelo network usage, route development, digital statistics and cycling tour operators' industry. Guidance on how to start monitoring cycle routes, cycling tourism and evaluating its economic impacts can also be found on [Pro.EuroVelo.com](https://www.eurovelo.com/pro).

