

Touring the Grande Terre of New Caledonia (343 miles/549 km)

The Tour

This self-supporting tour will take you on 11 days of riding and sightseeing through the Grande Terre of New Caledonia. It will take you north through the farmlands and prairie-like countryside of the west coast over the central mountain range to the lush and green east coast. Along the east coast, the route will turn south and you will cruise along beautiful coastline peppered with scenic sandy beaches and several river crossings before turning inland and crossing the mountain range again to return to the west coast where the tour concludes.

Duration: 14 Days
Riding: 11 Days
Difficulty:  Moderate
Depart: Tontouta
Arrive: Tontouta
Total Distance: 343 miles/549 km
Total Ascent: 14,913 ft/4,545 m
Total Descent: 14,913 ft/4,545 m



When to Ride It

Cycling in New Caledonia is best enjoyed any time between May and September, when the temperatures are milder and there is much less rain and humidity.

How to Get There

Several airlines serve New Caledonia. From Australia and New Zealand there are several direct flights per week on Qantas Air, Air New Zealand, and AirCalin.

For North American cyclists Air New Zealand has direct/non-stop flights that operate several times a week from Los Angeles and San Francisco to Auckland. From Auckland there is a direct flight on Air New Zealand to New Caledonia.

From Europe and from Asia, Air France and AirCalin fly several flights per week to New Caledonia.

The starting location of this tour is from the Tontouta International Airport in Tontouta. If you do not feel like riding the very first day after your arrival in New Caledonia, you can make reservations ahead of time at the motel Les Paillottes de la Ouenghi near Boulouparis and they will arrange for shuttle pick up at the airport. This will eliminate the first day of the tour's ride from Tontouta to Boulouparis. Check their web site for contact information.

Alternatively, you can make reservation at the Ecoltel – Tontoutel in Tontouta near the airport and set out on the ride the following day.

Accommodations

Accommodations in New Caledonia are quite expensive and once you get outside of Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia, hotels, motels and gites (New Caledonia's Bed&Breakfast) are not frequent. It is therefore recommended that you bring light camping gear as a backup even if you are not planning to camp on this tour.

Camping is permitted in camp grounds; but even if you can not find one, it is ok to break camp on the beach or at a resting area. Do not camp on tribal lands unless you ask for permission first.

Because of the scarcity of accommodations along this tour, it is recommended that you arrange for reservations ahead of time. There is no accommodation on day seven from Poindimie to Houailou and your only option is to camp in Houailou at Camping de Kaora camp grounds.

You can pick up a free accommodation guide book available at the airport and also in the tourist information center in La Foa. This Address Book offers an extensive list of lodging from campgrounds to hotels.

The Roads

The quality of roads on this tour is good. All roads on this tour are paved and well maintained.

Recommended Maps

Supermarkets throughout New Caledonia have a good selection of regional and national maps that you may not be able to find or purchase outside of New Caledonia.

Recommended Gear

Besides the [standard touring gear & spare parts](#), it is recommended that you bring at least two extra foldable tires with strong Kevlar casing.

If you plan to tour New Caledonia during December to April (the wet season) bring good cycling rain gear. Additionally, if you like to use rearview mirrors, whether they are helmet mounted or bicycle mounted, make sure you bring one for riding on the right hand side of the road.

List of Daily Rides

The Daily Rides

Day 1 of 11: Ride from Tontouta to Boulouparis (18 miles/28.8 km)



Day 2 of 11: Ride from Boulouparis to La Foa (21.5 miles/34.4 km)



Day 3 of 11: Ride from La Foa to Bourail (33.1 miles/53 km)



Day 4 of 11: Ride from Bourail to Poya (29.2 miles/46.7 km)



Day 5 of 11: Ride from Poya to Pouembout (31.6 miles/50.6 km)



Rest day in Pouembout



Day 6 of 11: Ride from Pouembout to Poindimie (48.5 miles/77.6 km)



Rest day in Poindimie



Day 7 of 11: Ride from Poindimie to Houailou (45.4 miles/72.6 km)



Day 8 of 11: Ride from Houailou to Bourail (43 miles/68.8 km)



Rest day in Bourail



Day 9 of 11: Ride from Bourail to La Foa (33.2 miles/53.1 km)



Day 10 of 11: Ride from La Foa to Boulouparis (21.5 miles/34.4 km)



Day 11 of 11: Ride from Boulouparis to Tontouta (18 miles/28.8 km)

