

# Tour De France Encyclopedia Article

## Tour De France

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# Tour De France

The Tour de France bicycle race is the world's largest annual sporting event, having been run every year since 1903 except for periods during the two World Wars. With a live television audience of 900 million viewers in 163 countries in 1998, its popularity is surpassed only by the World Cup and the Olympics. Unfolding during a three-week period every July, it covers approximately 2,500 miles and is divided into daily segments that traverse France by various routes. The race pits some 21 teams of riders against mountainous segments in the Alps and Pyrenees and flat segments in Brittany and Normandy, culminating with a spectacular symbolic finish on the Champs-Élysées in Paris. Individual riders also compete against each other in time trials. The overall leader earns the right to wear an illustrious yellow jersey. Victories by American Greg Lemond in 1986, 1989, and 1990 enhanced the event's popularity profile in the United States.

## Further Reading:

Abt, Samuel. *Tour de France: Three Weeks to Glory*. San Francisco, Bicycle Books, 1991.

Brunel, Philippe. *An Intimate Portrait of the Tour De France: Masters and Slaves of the Road*, second edition. Denver, Bounpane Publications, 1996.