European road trip itinerary

This is the plan we created from our European road trip. The idea was to make it an activity based holiday, on a budget and the most challenging part of all…it had to be dog friendly. Not that, that wasn’t challenging enough, we decided to sleep in the back of a Land Rover Discovery (we’re a bit mad). We worked on building a raised, flat pack bed for the back with a foam top and plenty of storage space underneath for our gear. I know, it’s exciting!

We had scoured the internet for information and found it really challenging to get a good idea of how doable this was so we decided to find out for ourselves.

If camper vanning your journey, Google free motorhome sites as there are lots dotted all over France. These usually are near public toilets and running water and we only realised this at the end of our trip…rookie error.

**Top Tips** – due to short time constraints we paid for some of the toll roads. When we calculated the time taken without them it added hours on to our trip so just be aware of the added cost as they can incur as some can be pricey!

Trip Plan

**Trip duration** : 10 days (lots of opportunities to reduce or extend)

**Sleeping:** Back of our converted Land Rover and a couple of nights in a hotel as a treat.

**Transport**: Ferry and car

**Countries**: visit 3, drive through 5

**Lakes**: 6

**Dover** – **Calais** – by boat

**Calais** – **The Black Forest (Freiburg)** – this was a long drive and if we had longer we would definitely have broken up the journey. (7h15) 1 night

This is a recommended campsite. We would advise using ‘Euro Campings’ wesbite to give you good guide prices and ratings before you turn up to the campsite so you know how deep into your wallet you need to dig.

<https://www.eurocampings.co.uk/germany/baden-wurttemberg/freiburg/freiburg-camping-hirzberg-108809/>

**Freiburg** – **Lake Constance** (1h50) 1 night

This campsite is near the water so pretty handy! It is also one of the cheapest we could find coming in at €27 a night (not cheap in our eyes but for the area it’s what you’d expect).

<https://www.eurocampings.co.uk/germany/baden-wurttemberg/gaienhofen/campingplatz-horn-bodensee-102238/>

When approaching the lake we saw more signs saying ‘no dogs’. The best option is to walk around the shore until you find a secluded spot where there isn’t ‘beach’ signs as this is a free for all area.

**Lake Constance** – **Lake Neuchatel** (3h18) 1 night

We noticed there were many signs saying ‘no dogs’ around the shore so we found this brilliant dog friendly campsite that is shore side making it a perfect place to relax and swim. The facilities here were fantastic and they were very dog friendly (thank goodness).

https://alanrogers.com/campsite/camping-paradis-plage-ch9030

**Neuchatel** – **Lake Annecy** (2h05) 2 nights – we treated ourselves to a hotel for this stay as it was our holiday after all! We felt we needed to use some WiFi and do more research on dog friendly locations. We used booking.com to compare cheap deals and stayed at <https://www.montblanc-hotel.fr> – 45 minutes drive to Annecy (the town is beautiful).

We also realised that there is a filter on Booking.com to allow dogs. As we scrolled through we noticed so many hotels were pet friendly making this quite easy to find a suitable stay.

To find a dog friendly shore side spot at Annecy look on Google Maps of the lake, then in the bottom right-hand corner, south of [Talloires](https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Tourism-g187270-Talloires_Haute_Savoie_Auvergne_Rhone_Alpes-Vacations.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), there is a restaurant called La Cuillere a Omble. About 50m north of this there is a parking area where you can access the lake and you (and your dog) can swim. If you also drive to this side of the lake you will see many opportunities to stop and swim with your pooch.

**Lake Annecy** – **Lake du Verdon and Verdon Gorge** (4h42) 2 nights

We recommend this campsite as it is well spaced, shady spots, by a stream and on a budget at €25 a night.

<https://www.campinglabeaume-verdon.com/en/>

When you are here we would highly recommend hiring a motor boat for at least 4 hours. It’s around €110 but so worth it. This was our only activity spend on the holiday as we packed our own inflatable kayak and SUP saving us lots in the long run. From the trip we easily covered the cost of both of these items based on how much they cost to hire per hour at different locations.

Day trip to Lake Sainte Croix (1 hour drive from Lake du Verdon) – we just went for a swim and to dine out that evening.

Once again…there are lots of signs saying no dogs on the beach at Sainte Croix. If you drive slightly out of town you will come across lots of cars parked by a woodland (a big clue is when you see lots of cars parked at many of these spots it’s usually a sign you can swim nearby). As you head into the woodland you see many trails going in different directions. Always choose the lesser used trail as the main ones are usually where dogs can’t go as they are the big beaches. We walked further from the crowds along the shoreline where there are some quieter spots and people had their dogs running off leash and swimming in the lake. So don’t be too discouraged when you see signs saying ‘no dogs’ – have a ramble first.

**Lake du Verdon** - **Lake Leman** (5h43) 2 nights. You can wild camp or you can go for campsites it’s entirely up to you. There are a range of campsites to choose from but we would recommend this one as it is more convenient for your route as you don’t want to be going to far inland. <https://www.eurocampings.co.uk/germany/baden-wurttemberg/gaienhofen/campingplatz-horn-bodensee-102238/>

Day trip from Lake Leman to Cascades du Herisson (2h05) – a great waterfall hike and lots of wild swimming opportunities (just a bit crowded). <https://www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com/daniel-starts-ten-favourite-french-swims/>

**Cascades du Herisson** – **Mesnil St Pere** (3h00) 1 night. There is a free campsite for motorhomes here (Rue du Lac, 10140 Mesnil St. Pere, Champagne Ardenne [08-10-51-52] / France) We would recommend using this website to find others in France. [www.campercontact.com](http://www.campercontact.com)

We didn’t overly like Mesnil St Pere’s lake as it felt too man made and built to be beachy and attract crowds. The reason we picked it was because there are less lakes as you move up north through France and we wanted a last lake stop before heading to Calais.

**Mesnil St Pere** – **Calais** (4h09) Home

Don’t forget to get your dogs worming tablet before heading home! Your dog could be put in quarantine if this is not done properly. Look for guidelines on travelling with your pet here <https://www.gov.uk/take-pet-abroad>

If you are doing this trip in the car like we did we would recommend getting a roof box as it clears up so much space for under the bed. We kept our SUP and kayak in there leaving us heaps of space in the car. Also if they are still a bit damp (from constant use!) then having them in the outside of the car makes a big difference to your living environment.