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1 Cycle routes

Whether it's tropical trails in Malaysia or an epic trans-European journey, there are plenty of options for an exciting break by bike, says **Akeela Bhattay**

1 Loire Valley FRANCE

One of the most accessible cycle routes in France, the 500-mile Loire a Velo path is ridden by more than 700,000 cyclists a year. Flat and well-signposted, it's a great route for beginners and families, and there's plenty of wildlife to admire, including osprey and eagles. Feast your eyes on the pageant of fairytale chateaux and ever-changing landscapes as you cycle downstream, and be sure to stop in the foodie haven of Tour for a tippie and a taste of the local cuisine.

2 Big Sur USA

Known as the 'greatest meeting of land and sea on earth', the stretch of coastline at Big Sur is one of California's most beautiful, and experienced cyclists can make the most of it by biking Highway 1. It's one of the most challenging routes in the US and not one for the faint-hearted. Those up to the task will enjoy riding past soaring mountains lined with Monterey pines and cypress trees, dizzying cliffs plunging into the Pacific Ocean, and seemingly infinite white sand.

3 Danube EUROPE

Running alongside the River Danube, this cycle route is undoubtedly one of Europe's most beautiful. The stretch running through Austria, Germany, Slovakia and Hungary is mostly flat, with perfectly paved and well-signposted paths, making it easy on the nerves as well as the eyes. Weave through Austria's UNESCO World Heritage-listed Wachau Valley, with its castles and vineyards, and marvel at the striking valleys, lakes and architecture of Bavaria.

4 Pulau Langkawi MALAYSIA

Touted as Malaysia's best-kept secret, the paradise island of Pulau Langkawi is synonymous with activities such as golf, diving and sunbathing, but it's also perfect for cycling. The flat roads make the trail accessible to cyclists of varying abilities, though the tropical heat may prove a merciless companion. Explore lively fishing villages and picturesque paddy fields, discover rustic houses and ride through lush rainforests, breaking to observe the island's many bird species.