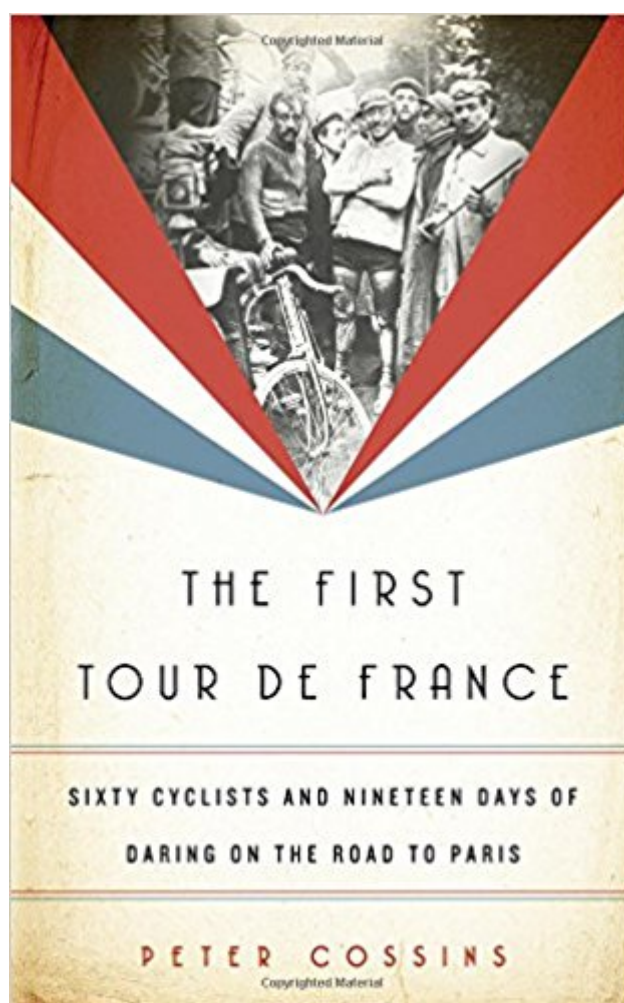


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The First Tour De France: Sixty Cyclists And Nineteen Days Of Daring On The Road To Paris



Synopsis

From its inception, the 1903 Tour de France was a colorful affair. Full of adventure, mishaps and audacious attempts at cheating, it was a race to be remembered. Cyclists of the time weren't enthusiastic about participating in this "heroic" race on roads more suited to hooves than wheels, with bikes weighing up to thirty-five pounds, on a single fixed gear, for three full weeks. Assembling enough riders for the race meant paying unemployed amateurs from the suburbs of Paris, including a butcher, a chimney sweep and a circus acrobat. From Maurice "The White Bulldog" Garin, an Italian-born Frenchman whose parents were said to have swapped him for a round of cheese in order to smuggle him into France as a fourteen-year-old, to Hippolyte Aucouturier, who looked like a villain from a Buster Keaton movie with his jersey of horizontal stripes and handlebar moustache, the cyclists were a remarkable bunch. Starting in the Parisian suburb of Montgeron, the route took the intrepid cyclists through Lyon, over the hills to Marseille, then on to Toulouse, Bordeaux, and Nantes, ending with great fanfare at the Parc des Princes in Paris. There was no indication that this ramshackle cycling pack would draw crowds to throng France's rutted roads and cheer the first Tour heroes. But they did; and all thanks to a marketing ruse, cycling would never be the same again.

Book Information

Hardcover: 384 pages

Publisher: Nation Books; 1 edition (June 6, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1568589840

ISBN-13: 978-1568589848

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 1.2 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: Be the first to review this item

Best Sellers Rank: #220,696 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #163 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Individual Sports > Cycling #328 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Miscellaneous > History of Sports #404 in Books > History > Europe > France

Customer Reviews

"A book that will entertain everyone - from those casually interested in an adventure tale to avid sports enthusiasts." •Galveston County Daily News"Essential...The First Tour de France takes you back to the race itself. Cossins produces a deeply researched and detailed description of the race that toggles between background information on the race's organization and the individual stages,

with long stretches of real-time-style stage reporting one chapter at a time. The effect of this, especially the latter, is soaring." •Chris Fontecchio, Podium Café

Peter Cossins has written about professional cycling since 1993 and is a contributing editor to Proccycling magazine. He has covered sixteen Tours de France, writing for the Guardian, Times, and Telegraph, and is the author of several previous books on cycling related subjects.

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