

Provence : Cycling the Luberon

7 days, 6 nights

5 days cycling

Protected by the mountains and blessed with an exceptional quality of light, the Lubéron radiates with a palette of different colours. It is a terrain of sensations. The colours, fragrances and tastes of Provence will attack your senses, you can be sure to see some of nature's wonders and sample some exceptionally good food and wine.

The villages and the region's history are a real joy to discover, there is no better way than by cycling to really penetrate into the intimacy of the region. This itinerary will lead you through Roussillon and Rustrel where you will find the stunning bright ochre quarries. Perched villages, such as Bonnieux, Lacoste and Ménerbes, some of the most beautiful villages of France.

There is a unique savoir vivre in Provence, a relaxing rhythm where people take the time to enjoy the simple pleasures in life. Go with the flow, make the odd detour along the way to really seep up the history and savour all the pleasures of Provence.

Tour Aventure Trekking

Agence de voyages LI 02A.06 0002 - Garantie Financière de 137204€ : APS - Contrat RC : n°86 410 716 Gan Eurocourtage IARD

RCS AJACCIO 489 755 470 - Membres du SNAV - E-mail : info@tour-aventure.com - Web site : www.tour-aventure.com

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Autres destinations : 1 Avenue François Laguerre - 09400 TARASCON SUR ARIEGE Siret : 489 755 470 00023 - Tél : +33 (0)5 61 05 16 31 - Fax : +33 (0)5 61 05 16 80

Program

Day 1 : Arrival in Cavaillon

Installation in your hotel in Cavaillon. You may choose to visit the town or discover the nearby villages.

Loop from Cavaillon to the Fontaine-de-Vaucluse

A cycle ride from Cavaillon to Fontaine-de-Vaucluse passing by the prestigious L'Isle sur la Sorgue known as the 'Venice of the Comtat' with its shady squares and old water wheels. The river Sorgue divides into five streams as it runs through the town that is reputed for its many pretty canals and wealth of antique shops. The calm streets are bordered with plane trees, it's a great place to just stroll around and enjoy. Then, you will arrive at Fontaine-de-Vaucluse, a small haven that has a capricious spring, before riding back to Cavaillon.

Distance : 30km, duration : 3h00, altitude gain : +150m, descent : -150m.

Day 2 : Cavaillon to Apt

From Cavaillon you cycle to Gordes, classed as one of the most beautiful villages in France. Gordes is well known for its historic site known as the village of Borries, a small cluster of strange dry-stone dwellings inhabited from the Middle Ages right up to the nineteenth century and the twelfth century Cistercian Abbaye de Sénanque, open to the public and host to various religious exhibitions. Continuing on you will discover the hilltop village of Roussillon and Gargas, so named because of the warm russet, violet, and yellow ochre hues of its buildings. Finally you arrive at your destination for the day, the village of Apt, situated in the very heart of the Luberon.

Distance : 48km, duration : 5h00, altitude gain : +620m, descent : -435m.

Day 3 : From Apt to Viens

From Apt your itinerary heads to the village of Rustrel, there is an hour long circuit that lets you discover the 'Colorado Provençal' again these where once ochre quarries but the landscape of vivid colours are in contrast to those visited yesterday. Small roads and lanes lead you through some classic Provençal countryside where you will see vineyards, fields of scented lavender, cherry orchards, fig trees and olive groves. There is plenty of time for exploring the host of unusual villages, natural wonders and historic sights, before arriving in the lovely village of Viens.

Distance : 27km, duration : 3h15, altitude gain : +612m, descent : -100m.

Day 4 : Viens to Buoux

From Viens, superb picturesque village where traces of the past are still present thanks to the superb historic monuments, shady roads lead to Saigon a village which is emblematic of the Luberon, the itinerary continues to Buoux. Buoux is known for its impressive fort and cliffs that attracts climbers from all over the world.

Distance : 39km, duration : 4h00, altitude gain : +180m, descent : -150m.

Day 5 : Bonnieux, Lacoste and the North side of the Petit Lubéron

Buoux has an important strategic position between the Grand and the small Luberon. You will traverse a host of enticing small villages before arriving at Bonnieux village. Bonnieux is perched on the northern slopes of the Luberon, it boasts two ancient churches, vestige ramparts dating from the 13th century and a marvellous orientation point from where you can take in the surrounding landscape. The next stop is a village that is dominated by the ruins of the mysterious château de Sade. From here, a small road leads to the village of Ménerbes that clings to a rocky spur, the spot is of exceptional beauty and offers views across the Lubéron and the Monts du Vaucluse. A final enjoyable loop will lead you through part of the valley of Aiguebrun and back to Buoux.

Distance : 42km, duration : 4h15, altitude gain : +460m, descent : -460m.

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Day 6 : From Buoux to Cavaillon, by the villages of Lourmarin and Merindol

Today's route takes you through a natural defile created by the River Aigue Brun. This ancient trail, known as the 'Combe du Lourmarin', enables one to traverse the Luberon range from north to south. The route winds past rocky outcrops and brings you out near the lovely village of Lourmarin, classified as 'one of the most beautiful villages in France'. You can admire the 15th/16th century Château, the Romanesque church, a lovely campanile and old fountains. Your final stage takes you along the southern flank of the Luberon range, through the lush farmlands that line the banks of the Durance River. You ride through the village of Lauris, and at Merindol you can explore the old town centre with its picturesque 17th and 18th century buildings. Merindol is also known for its fruits and melons, which can frequently be purchased in the markets of Cavaillon, which you should reach in the mid-afternoon.

Distance : 42km, duration : 4h15, altitude gain : +220m, descent : -565m.

Day 7 : Cavaillon, end of holiday.

Your trip comes to an end after breakfast in Cavaillon.

This programme is an example of the itinerary we aim to adhere to. It may be possible, if situations arise that are beyond our control, for the itinerary to be modified.

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Details

Level of difficulty

Moderate. No particular technical difficulty.

Price

- From 01/04/2010 to 31/10/2010 : Price per person in Double room 655 €, Price per person in Single room 775 €

Supplements/reductions :

- Bike hire : 105 €/pers

Price includes :

Half board accommodation (except day 1 and 6), internal transfers, baggage transfers between hotels, the dossier containing your maps, route notes and all necessary details needed for your holiday.

Price does not include :

Entrance fees, additional transfers, evening meals day 1 and 6, drinks, picnics, additional activities, holiday insurance and travel.

Encadrement

Self-guided cycling.

Carrying

During your cycling holiday you will only need to carry a few personal belongings for the day (pic-nic, water ..). Bring a suitcase that's easy to carry (see our equipment advice).

Accommodation/food

Accommodation

Double room, depending on hotel availability or chambre d'hôtes, with ensuite bathroom, in halfboard except D1 and D6.

Food

- Continental breakfast (tea, coffee, milk, bread, butter, jam)
- Evening meal often based on local specialities, includes starter, main course and desert.
- Pic-nics and drinks not included.

Starting point/end

Starting point : At your hotel in Cavaillon, day 1, according to your time of arrival.

End : At your hotel in Cavaillon, after breakfast.

Organisation

We propose a self guided, independent formula. You choose your departure date and we will take care of all the rest between the initial rendez-vous time through to the dispersion point. We transport your bags between the hotels, provide the maps and good walking route notes. This is a way of enjoying complete flexibility, you dictate the pace and rhythm of your holiday.

Dates

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Every day from the start of April to mid-November, according to availability. Bookings from two people or more.

Number of participants

From 2 people

Access

Marseille-Provence airport, Avignon airport.

Trains and TGV to Avignon station then SNCF bus to Cavaillon.

Autoroute Lyon Marseille to Cavaillon.

Bibliography

Provence

- Steffen Lipp 2004

France

- Lonely Planet Publications 2005

Practical info

- Vaucluse tourism committee - tel : 0033 4.90.80.47.00 - fax : 0033 4.90.86.86.08

- Cavaillon tourist office - tel : 0033 4.90.71.32.01

- Weather: Alpes de Haute Provence : 08.36.68.02.04, Vaucluse : 08.36.68.02.84.

- SNCF : Direct line 08.36.353.535.

- Cavaillon bus station : 0033 4.90.783.239

ACCESS :

- By air :

- Marseille-Provence airport - tel : 0033 4.42.141.414

- Avignon airport - tel : 0033 4.90.815.151

- By train :

TGV trains from Paris, Toulouse, Lyon, Marseille to Avignon station, then TER train to Cavaillon , Avignon-Marseille line. From Avignon station, you rejoin the bus terminal (near the SNCF station in the town centre), around 20mn by navette.

- By car :

- Autoroute Lyon Marseille to Cavaillon.

- From Avignon bus terminal (time table information tel 0033 490820735) : many buses on Sundays to Cavaillon, journey 30mn. From Avignon train station, you rejoin the bus terminal (near to the SNCF station in the town centre), by navette in around 20mn.

PARKING:

Free parking in Cavaillon:

- in front of the hôtel du Parc (near Place François Tourel)

- public garden (near the tourist office).

Secure parking, at your accommodation :

Depending on your accommodation in Cavaillon (according to availability) :

- Hôtel Toppin:

Possible to leave your car in the hotel garage, secure parking : the first and last nights are free, if not the cost is 3,5€ per night. Please inform us when making your reservation so that we can book it for you. (26places/individual box).

- Hôtel du Parc :

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Secure garage: 6€ per night- Please inform us when making your reservation so that we can book it for you.

Supplementary night in Avignon :

Hôtel Angleterre, Bd Raspail, tel 0033 490863431

Hôtel Blauvac, rue Bancasse, tel 0033 490863411

Hôtel Ibis, Pont de l'Europe, Bd Dominique, tel 0033 490820000

Hôtel Kyriad centre, Place de l'Horloge, tel 0033 490822145

Hôtel Magnan, rue Portail Magnanen, tel 0033 490863651 , near the town centre station.

To carry in your luggage

- A small day pack for your water bottle, camera, picnic and waterproof
- A bag, rucksack or suitcase for your main luggage 10 kg maximum per person.

For the day time

- Comfortable shoes/trainers
- Walking socks.
- Warm fleece
- Shorts and T shirts.
- Swimming costume or trunks
- Towel
- Water bottle (one litre minimum)
- Personal first aid kit

For your picnics

- A good cutting knife and some plastic bags

Sun and rain protection

- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Sun hat
- Wind and waterproof jacket (Gore-Tex style).

Relaxing time

- Trainers or open sandals
- Warm Fleece and casual wear

With your service

The Tour Aventure team is present and always at hand to ensure the smooth running of your holiday. We are on the ground and ready to assist in any eventuality.

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