

EXPLORE!

Bordeaux to the Mediterranean - Walks and Wine

9 days

France - Trip code BWW



Bordeaux to the Mediterranean - Walks and Wine

Enjoy easy walks, great wine and fabulous food on a journey from the shores of the Atlantic to the Mediterranean Sea. Starting out in Bordeaux, we indulge in the first of five included wine tastings and explore the city and nearby coastal dunes on foot. Heading inland, we ramble through beautiful countryside with time to wander in medieval villages. We discover the fabulous fortified citadel of Carcassonne and stroll alongside the Canal du Midi. Reaching the Mediterranean at charming Collioure, we end as we began, with a glass of wine in hand to toast our journey's end.

Trip highlights

- ★ Scenic walks - Easy walking amidst beautiful countryside and coast
- ★ Wine tasting - Sample some of France's finest wines
- ★ Historic cities - Discover the delights of Bordeaux and Carcassonne
- ★ Ancient villages - Explore the medieval gems of Saint Emilion and Cahors
- ★ Vermilion Coast - Stay in charming Collioure

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Easy

Suitable for most people in good health, these easy walks are predominantly on good paths, at low altitude and on undemanding terrain. Previous walking or trekking experience is not necessary.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Bordeaux, port city on the Garonne River

The trip starts today in Bordeaux. A port city, sited on the Garonne River, Bordeaux is the hub of the famed wine-growing region which takes its name.



Accommodation: Hotel Le Chantry (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Walking tour of Bordeaux; wine museum and wine tasting

This morning we go on a walking tour of the city centre, visiting its most important sights including the Monuments aux Girondins, Cathedrale St André, Place de la Bourse and neighbourhood of Chartons. To get fully prepared and informed about the wine journey we are about to experience, we visit the city's Wine and Trade Museum, an introduction to the wine story of Bordeaux and the first of five included wine tastings. Later we plan to stop at the famous Bar a Vin for lunch and the chance to try more wines! The afternoon is left free to explore Bordeaux further. You can either wander on foot or you may wish to take an optional bike tour around the city. In the evening, an aperitif in one of the hip wine bars of the Chartrons quarter is recommended.



Accommodation: Hotel Le Chantry (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

DAY 3 - Chateau Carbonnieux wine tasting; vineyards and dune walks

This morning we take a public bus to Villenave d'Ornon station on the edge of the city from where we ramble through vineyards to the famous Chateau Carbonnieux. We will visit the chateau and enjoy a tasting of superb Bordeaux wines. We then drive to the Atlantic coast and the spectacular sand dunes at Pilat, the highest in Europe reaching 117m. Starting in a pine tree forest we walk through this unique landscape and climb the dunes. Walking along the top of the dunes, we enjoy superb views across to the Atlantic. Next we explore the nearby small coastal town of Arcachon, famous for its seafood and where we can watch the locals harvesting oysters. We can try some of these delicacies with a nice white wine before travelling back to Bordeaux.

Today's four kilometre walk is pretty much flat and is expected to take around an hour. If the tide is out it's possible to walk all the way to Arachon, an 18 kilometre walk that would take around four-and-a-half hours.



Accommodation: Hotel Le Chantry (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Saint Emilion visit and wine tasting; walk near medieval Rocamadour

Today we leave Bordeaux and drive to the Entre-deux-Mers region to the east of Bordeaux and famous for its excellent white wines. The name, meaning 'between two seas', refers to its location between the Garonne and Dordogne rivers. We visit the small town of Saint Emilion - a medieval gem where there's time to explore and take in the atmosphere of the narrow streets. There are many wine shops here. We then drive to a nearby winery for a tasting of some excellent wines. After lunch we continue to Rocamadour, a famous medieval village spectacularly located on a steep rock bluff and which is one of the most important pilgrimage sites in France. In the afternoon we take a circular walk from Rocamadour into the surrounding countryside of the Parc Naturel Regional des Causses du Quercy. We hike amidst forests of oak and pine before returning to the historic centre of Rocamadour with time to enjoy the late afternoon and evening in the village.

Today's four kilometre walk ascends and descends around 200m and is expected to take about an hour.



Accommodation: Hotel Relais Amadourien (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Peche Merle cave visit and Cele Valley walk; wine tasting

Today we drive to visit the cave of Peche Merle, famous for its prehistoric cave paintings and one of only a few such sites open to visitors. Extending for more than a kilometre from the entrance are caverns whose walls are painted with murals dating back to 25000 B.C. We then walk from Peche Merle in the beautiful Cele Valley and through the rolling, green hills along the river Lot to Saint-Cirq-Lapopie where our bus is waiting for us. We drive on to our next destination, the fabulous medieval town of Cahors. In the afternoon there's time to explore the town. Today's wine tasting will be in either Saint-Cirq-Lapopie or one of Cahor's lovely wine boutiques.

Today's nine kilometre walk ascends and descends around 200m and is expected to take approximately three hours.



Accommodation: Hotel Le Valentre (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Drive to Carcassonne; walk in citadel and along Canal du Midi

After breakfast this morning we drive to Carcassonne, stopping en route at the lovely medieval village of Cordes-sur-Ciel. In the afternoon we walk along a section of the Canal du Midi under the shade of plane trees and pass a number of ancient locks. One of the greatest French construction works of the 17th century, the 241 km canal connects the Garonne River with the Mediterranean Sea. Later we enjoy a walking tour of the UNESCO-listed medieval fortified city with our trip Leader. With its extensive ramparts and myriad turrets, the medieval citadel of Carcassonne dominates the surrounding countryside. It's a UNESCO-listed World Heritage Site and embodiment of a fairy-tale castle.

Today's seven kilometre walk is pretty much flat and is expected to take approximately two-and-a-half hours.



Accommodation: Hotel Espace Cite (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Walk near Narbonne; drive to Collioure on Mediterranean coast

This morning we drive to the hilly region southwest of Narbonne for a walk in the area near to the magnificent Cistercian Abbey de Frontfroide which there is also the option to visit. We then continue after lunch to our journey's end, the historic village and old fishing port of Collioure on a stretch of the Mediterranean Sea known as the Vermilion Coast. The town has a strong Catalan culture and is famous for its anchovies and history as an artists colony - Derain, Picasso and Matisse all painted here.

Today's three kilometre walk ascends and descends 100m and is expected to take approximately one hour.



Accommodation: Hotel Princes de Catalogne (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Coastal walk and wine tasting

For our final walk of the holiday we take a local bus to Port Vendres from where we walk along Vermilion Coast on the Sentier Littoral and through the rolling hills of surrounding vineyards to Banyuls-sur-Mer. There are some great views of the nearby Sierra Albera Mountains - foothills of the Pyrenees. Anyone not wishing to do join this walk, the longest and most challenging of the trip, can take the train direct to Banyuls-sur-Mer. On arrival we visit a local wine producer for our final wine tasting - no doubt raising glasses in a toast to our fantastic holiday! We return to Collioure later by public bus or train.

Today's 18 kilometre walk ascends and descends around 250m and is expected to take approximately five hours.



Accommodation: Hotel Princes de Catalogne (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Trip ends in Collioure

The trip ends this morning in Collioure.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCE

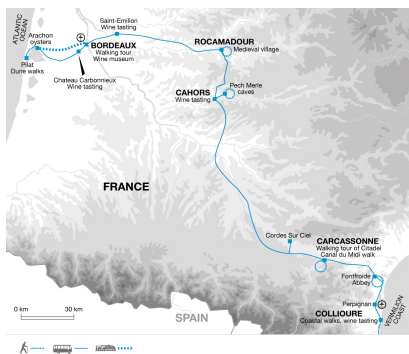
Day 3	18km
Day 4	4km
Day 5	9km
Day 6	
Day 7	3km
Day 8	18km

Walking grade

Easy

Trek details

We walk on 6 days with walks of between 1 and 5 hours. There are no demanding ascents or descents. Terrain may be uneven and rocky underfoot in places. We have graded the walking on this tour as Easy.



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 8



Transport

Bus
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

8 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

France

Climate

Across France, from April - August, weather conditions are generally warm and pleasant with moderate rainfall; Autumn temperatures are a bit lower and the winter months (though colder) remain mild. The summer months on the Mediterranean Coast in the south tend to be warmer than the rest of France and have less rainfall, and also more mild winters; freezing conditions are

nearly unheard of. The mountainous areas of the Alps, Juros and Pyrenees can be quite different. During summer the morning and evening temperatures are considerably cooler and it becomes much colder in winter with heavy snowfall. Western France, along the English Channel, there can be very strong winds and frequent rain during the winter months Nov - Apr. Wine harvesting takes place in late August/early September.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Catholic

Language

French

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Bordeaux - Bicycle rental €12 per day

Near Narbonne - Visit Frontfroide Abbey €11

Clothing

Take light and comfortable clothing that can be layered according to the temperature. Light rainwear may be needed at any time of year, and a warm fleece/jacket is recommended for cooler days and evenings.

Footwear

We recommend you bring lightweight walking boots with ankle support, make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

15Kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece and a daypack.

Equipment

A water bottle, sunhat and high factor sunscreen are all essential. A torch is useful in case of power cuts or emergencies. Walking poles are very handy over rocky uneven terrain.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might like to consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the Explore.

France

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£11

Dinner price

£16.00 - 18.00

Beer price

£4

Water price

£1.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Pounds Sterling and US Dollars can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change. Please change currency into Euros prior to arriving in France.

Where To Exchange

Bureau de Change can only be found in major cities and large airports. Many French banks no longer exchange Foreign currency.

ATM Availability

In cities and most major towns

Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants (make sure you have informed your credit card company that you are travelling abroad as some companies will reject payments)

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are no longer commonly accepted and can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Train

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

France: Visas are not required by UK, EU, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

France

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
