

EXPLORE!



Velo en Provence

8 days

France - Trip code CVP

Velo en Provence

Riding our bikes through the heart of Provence, we visit ancient vineyards, hilltop villages and discover the landscapes that inspired Vincent Van Gogh to paint here. We cycle past the ancient 'bories' (stone houses) in the Luberon and the Roman remains in Orange and St-Rémy-de-Provence, perhaps stopping to visit the region's elegant Romanesque abbeys or to enjoy mouth-watering Provençal cuisine and local wines.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Orange** - Discover the 1st century AD Roman treasures, from the Arc de Triomphe to the superb Roman theatre
- ★ **Dentelles de Montmirail** - Cycle beneath the towering rock formations; Alpine foothills rising up from the edge of the Rhône valley
- ★ **Food and wine** - Visit Châteauneuf du Pape, sample the wines and some of the region's gastronomic highlights along the way
- ★ **St - Rémy-de-Provence** - Wander the streets of this delightful market town at the foot of the Alpilles mountain range and one time home to Vincent Van Gogh
- ★ **Cycle the Luberon** - Visit the beautiful 8th century village of Gordes

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.

CYCLING GRADE:**Moderate**

Medium length rides suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. Mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

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 Avignon train station

We join our trip at Avignon TGV train station and then take a short drive to the pleasant Provençal town of Orange. Steeped in history dating from the early 1st century AD, there are many treasures to see, including the recently restored Arc de Triomphe to the still used Roman theatre.

No cycling today.

If you have booked an optional e-bike, you will be required to pay the €250 cash deposit and sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike.

If you wish to drive to the start of the trip please ask us for parking details.



Accommodation: Hotel Saint Jean (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Optional Ride to Châteauneuf du Pape, circular route back to Orange

Having had a chance to familiarise ourselves with our bikes, we start by exploring the area around Orange. There is the opportunity to cycle south of the town through world famous vineyards to the small village of Chateuneuf du Pape. There will be ample time to sample some of the regions' famous wines and explore the ruins of the chateau which was built as a summer residence for the Popes of Avignon. After lunch we can return to Orange following the course of the mighty Rhone taking a break in the village of Caderouse, where ramparts encircle the village. Today provides for a gentle introductory ride, but alternatively you can just follow the local back roads through small, quiet villages to give a longer optional cycle route. Later this afternoon you may like to visit the

large and well preserved Roman theatre and triumphal arch.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (Total 112 metres ascent and 113 meters descent), plus optional extra 31 kilometres.



Accommodation: Hotel Saint Jean (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Cycle through stunning countryside and vineyards; ride to Carpentras

We leave Orange, cycling east through the interesting village of Cameret-sur-Aigues and vineyards to Séguret at the foot of the Dentelles de Montmirail. Séguret is an open balcony on the Rhône Valley, sat beneath the medieval castle remains surrounded by vineyards which produce a very respectable Côte du Rhône. Inhabited since prehistoric times and enriched in Gallo-Romano times, today's village was built in the 10th century and belonged to the Papacy before becoming part of France revolution in 1793. Continuing on our way towards Carpentras we pass through the villages of Gigondas and then Vacqueras, birthplace of the troubadour poet Raimbaud. Along this section of the ride there are some excellent views of the limestone pinnacles and the opportunity to try some of the best Grenache wines produced in the foothills of the Dentelles.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 47 kilometres (Total 269 metres ascent and 215 meters descent), plus optional extra 23 kilometres.



Accommodation: Hotel de l'Univers (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Free day or optional circular cycle route via Gordes back to Carpentras

With three nights in Carpentras you may wish to take the opportunity to take a day off from cycling in which case, there are plenty of things to do and see in this historic and attractive town. The town is situated in an area where, in the 14th and 15th centuries, Jewish communities were protected, benefitting from the presence of the Popes in Avignon who granted them the freedom to worship and live peacefully, having been banished from the Kingdom of France. The Synagogue was built in 1367 and is one of the oldest in France. The Hotel Dieu in the town is an 18th century hospital with a well-preserved collection of apothecary jars, decorated walls and ceilings. Antique lovers will enjoy the Rue de Porte Mazan and the town's glass-covered shopping street. A short train ride away is the city of Avignon and the amazing Palace of the Popes. For those that would prefer to ride, options include the strenuous climb up Mont Ventoux, or riding east of Carpentras to find some of the Luberon's prettiest villages. Three of them have made it into the list of the 'Les plus beaux villages' (most beautiful villages) of France, an association of 144 villages selected on the quality of their architecture, environment and patrimony. This is one place where you can view lavender fields if travelling in July as we continue south-east to arrive at Gordes where there may be time to experience the local street market. On the flanks of

the Vaucluse plateau, just across the Luberon barrier, Gordes is a typical Provençal village. A maze of intricate lanes leads up to St Firmin's church and to the massive hulk of a Renaissance château perched on the top of the village (Optional longer rides available).

Our total cycling distance today is from 20 kilometres, up to 80 kilometres (Total 934 metres ascent and 934 meters descent)



Accommodation: Hotel de l'Univers (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Cycle under southern slopes of Mount Ventoux to vineyard for wine tasting and lunch

The cycling route today gives us a taste of Provençal life, taking us through the lovely villages at the southern foot of Mont Ventoux, with a stop on the way for morning coffee, before reaching a local farm. Here we have a guided walk around the vineyards and olive groves with optional wine tasting and lunch (€25). Having eaten at the farm, there is time to relax and enjoy a dip in their swimming pool. In the late afternoon we cycle back through sleepy villages to our accommodation in Carpentras.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 42 kilometres (total 330 metres ascent and 330 metres descent)



Accommodation: Hotel de l'Univers (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 6 - Crossing the river into the Bouche du Rhône; ride to St Rémy-de-Provence


If you prefer not to cycle today it is possible to leave your luggage with the support vehicle as usual and use train to visit Avignon, travelling onto St Rémy-de-Provence by bus after the visit. The cycling route takes us southeast through the market gardens of the Vaucluse and Bouche du Rhône regions following lanes across flat farmland and through delightful old villages. It is possible to make a short detour to the Grottes de Thouzou en route. These caves offer an easy walk along a horizontal gallery via the fossil bed of an underground river where you can discover the delicate beauty of the only natural cave developed for tourism in Provence. Our route crosses the Durance River to Noves, a typical village with two 14th century gateways and a 12th century church. Our destination for today is St Rémy-de-Provence the birthplace of Nostradamus and one time home to Vincent Van Gogh. (Optional 66 kilometre longer ride is available).


Our total cycling distance today is approximately 52 kilometres (total 84 metres ascent and 119 meters descent).



Accommodation: Hotel du Parc (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Free day or optional circular cycle route via Les Baux back to St Rémy-de-Provence


Riding west we cycle around the base of the Alpilles, passing Mas-Blanc-des-Alpilles, the smallest village in the department and surrounded by former agricultural land now used for market gardening and fruit trees. Close by we can visit the Barbegal Mill, a sixteen wheel water powered device constructed in the 3rd or 4th century. We continue cycling through olive groves, to visit Les Baux-de-Provence, another of France's most beautiful. Perched on a rocky spur, the village overlooks some staggeringly beautiful countryside. We finish with a delightful descent back into St Rémy-de-Provence. The afternoon is left free to visit St Paul de Mousole (Van Gogh) and the archeological site of Glanum.


Our total cycling distance today is approximately 41 kilometres (Total 286 metres ascent and 285 meters descent)



Accommodation: Hotel du Parc (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

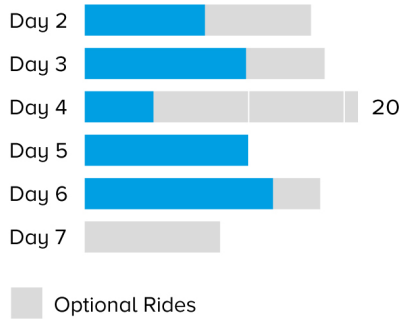
DAY 8 - Trip ends Avignon train station

After breakfast we drive from St-Rémy-de-Provence to the TGV train station in Avignon where the trip ends.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

DAILY DISTANCES



General cycling information

On this trip we cycle 237 km over six days (an average of 40 km per day) with further more challenging optional rides available. One of the more challenging options is the classic Tour de France climb of Mont Ventoux, for which you can hire road bikes locally. We use quiet, undulating roads although there will be several steeper sections. Maps are provided to cycle individually or in groups while the Explore Leader drives the support vehicle, except on circular routes when the Explore Leader will cycle with the group. We have graded the route as moderate. GPX files are available for this holiday.

Bike included

21 gear RTE 520 hybrid bikes with front suspension. Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

Bike information

Your included bike is a 21 gear RTE 520 hybrid and will be the correct frame size for your height. These are unisex step-through frames, but women's step through frames are available, but are limited in number and size and may vary in bike type - please request at time of booking. A 15-litre pannier and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle carries the luggage from point to point and is driven by the Explore Leader. Maps are provided to cycle individually or as a group. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet and water bottle. Electric bikes (available for an additional cost) will be the similar RTE 700 unisex step-through frame bikes with front and rear suspension fitted with a 250watt Geonaute 8FUN motor. You will be required to pay a refundable cash 250 Euro deposit upon collection of the e-bike in country. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

Cycling grade

Moderate



Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bicycle
Taxi



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Driver



Accommodation

7 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.

Orange - Roman Theatre - and other similar sites around Euros 7 each.

Avignon from Carpentras or St Arles from St Remy De Provence - around Euros 15 per person return (depending on train type).

Day 5 Optional lunch, wine tasting after guided tour of the vineyard €25

Clothing

Pack essentially for hot weather. However, you must bring a warm sweater or jacket for cycling on cool days and for wearing during the evenings. In case of rain, waterproofs are essential. Also, a pair of long trousers or tracksuit bottoms are useful for cycling along hedgerow-lined footpaths.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to trips that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike.

It does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage. A swim towel would also be useful for day 5.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore 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 Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Country Information

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

Bicycle, Taxi

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - Our 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.

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. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

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.
