



## The Best of Provence Getaway

### Tour Overview

**Tour Dates:** You may begin this tour on any day, but please note that bike pick-up and return cannot occur on a Sunday. See [Schedule](#) for blackout dates and additional tour scheduling considerations.

**Location:** Located in the far southeast of France, Provence is known for its lovely Mediterranean climate, fields of sunflowers, vineyards, the Impressionists, its Papal palace and Roman ruins. Though most people are somewhat familiar with this region of France, few realize just how diverse are the many areas that comprise Provence, or how deeply rooted the region's history is in that of ancient Rome.

The tour begins in Avignon and ends in Arles, 3 - 4 hours from Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport by express train. Overnight destinations include 2 nights in Avignon and 2 nights in Arles.

**Tour Type:** Hub & Spoke Tour

**Terrain:** The terrain, like everything about this region, is diverse. While there are lots of ups and downs on this tour (some challenging), you will also enjoy long, relatively flat stretches of effortless cycling.

**Length:** 4 days / 4 nights.

**Distance:** 105 miles / 170 km. Optional cycling routes bring the total to 154 miles / 249 km.

### Highlights:

**Roman ruins** as impressive as those of Italy; particularly the grand aqueduct of the region, the Pont du Gard and the magnificently preserved theater at Arles.

**The dramatic rise of the Alpilles Mountains** and the perched village of Baux-de-Provence.

**The sheer beauty** of the Mediterranean landscapes and the play of light that so captivated Impressionists like Van Gogh.

**An incredibly varied geography** including mountain ranges, semi-arid *garrigue*, rolling vineyards, and cliff-studded river valleys.

**Enjoy free wine tasting** opportunities nearly everywhere along your route.

**Perched medieval villages** bathed in the warm Provencal sun.

**The colorful city of Avignon** with its medieval wall surrounding the city and its former Papal palace.

## Daily Itinerary

### **Day 1: Arrival in Avignon. Spend 2 nights.**

Arrive in Avignon at the time of your choosing. No activities are scheduled for this day.

Avignon is a vibrant southern city, full of historical sights. Must-sees include the city's many museums, churches and the Palais des Papes, the residence of the Popes who moved here from Rome in the 14th century when Rome was politically unstable. Avignon's medieval center is completely surrounded by ramparts, giving the city a most unusual look.

### **Day 2: Cycle to the Pont du Gard**

Today you will pick up your rental bikes in the morning and begin your adventure to the Pont du Gard.

**Route:** Begins and ends in Avignon. Lots of ups and downs and some long climbs. Optional side trip provides additional mileage and challenge.

**Distance:** 66 km / 41 miles

**Description:** This day trip's primary destination is the Roman aqueduct called the Pont du Gard. Constructed by the Romans in the 1st century to transport clean drinking water to the Roman city of Nîmes, this remarkable aqueduct bridges the Gard today as it has for 2000 years. You'll also cycle through a number of charming medieval villages like 16<sup>th</sup> century Aramon, which feels forgotten by time. If you're visiting in September, you may even experience a running of the bulls! The area surrounding the Pont du Gard is a park, complete with riverside beaches and a lovely picnic area.

**Option:** Optional side trip to the magnificently perched village of Castillon-du-Gard adds 11 km / 7 miles and a very long climb. Your efforts are rewarded by one of France's most beautiful villages and extraordinary views.

### **Day 3: Cycle to Arles. Spend 2 nights.**

**Route:** Begins in Avignon and ends in Arles. The route is mostly flat along very quiet roads with some rolling stretches on route to Tarascon.

**Distance:** 47 km / 29 miles

**Description:** This day trip takes you to your second base location, Arles, by way of Tarascon and Beaucaire, two towns that have been around since Roman times. Tarascon boasts a fairytale 15th century chateau, considered to be one of the finest fortified medieval castles in the whole of France. The route takes you first down the wooded shores of the Rhone and then along the tops of the hills that border the Rhone to Tarascon. Following Tarascon you cycle through quiet farmland that ends just before Arles.

## Arles

Once the Roman capital of Provence, then a major religious center during the Middle Ages, Arles offers a number of monuments from its glorious past including a magnificent Roman amphitheatre. Today, Arles is the unofficial capital of the Camargue. Van Gogh moved to Arles in 1888, captivated by the vivid colors of the surrounding countryside. Following the loss of his ear, Van Gogh moved to St. Remy, where he prolifically produced over 100 drawings and 150 canvases.

#### **Day 4: Cycle to Les Baux-de-Provence**

**Route:** Begins and ends in Arles. The route is flat or gently rolling until you reach the Alpilles, after which you have a 3.5 km or 2 mile climb to Baux.

**Distance:** 56 km / 35 miles

**Description:** This day trip's primary destination is the perched medieval village of Baux-de-Provence. Sitting atop les Alpilles, a jagged range of mountains that pops up out of nowhere, the scenery and views here are a must. As you leave Arles you pass the remnants of an ancient Roman aqueduct and enter the gorgeous countryside made famous by Van Gogh and other Impressionists. In addition, you will have the opportunity to explore the medieval villages of Paradou, Maussane, St. Etienne-du-Grès, and the town of Fontvielle.

**Option:** Optional side trip to Van Gogh's town of St. Remy and the Roman ruins at Glanum adds 11 km / 7 miles.

#### **Day 4: Optional Ride in the Camargue, Provence's Wetlands**

**Route:** Begins and ends in Arles. The terrain is completely flat.

**Distance:** 56 km / 35 miles

**Description:** This day trip takes you into the Camargue, the vast wetland of the Rhone delta, where rice is the principle crop. The Camargue is a rich tapestry of many different ecosystems, a haven for wildlife, and a joy for anyone seeking tranquility or long, wild communion with a watery landscape. Much of this region is a nature conservation area, and you may see all manner of wildlife including flamingos, white horses, and bulls. You will likely see as much wildlife as people.

**Option:** You have the option of shortening this ride to 26 km / 16 miles in the event that the heat or sun are just too much for you.

## **Tour Price: US \$475.00 per person**

**Children's Price - Children 16 years or younger traveling with 2 adults: \$250.00 per child.**

**Discounts are available for parties of 5 or more adults.**

### **The tour price includes:**

- Tour Documentation: Route instructions, map, Pre-trip Preparation Guide, On-Road Quick Reference Guide, and Sights Guide.
- Bike Rental for 3 Days: Excellent quality hybrid or mountain bike with handlebar bag, map carrier, cyclometer, water bottle cage, rear rack, lock, repair kit, and helmet. Optional pedal cages. Road / racing bikes are available for a supplemental charge.
- Pick-up of your Rental Bike in Arles
- Baggage Transfer
- English-Speaking Support Staff
- Reservation of your Accommodations
- Shipping and Handling Charges for US customers
- Basic SAG Support: If you choose not to cycle on one or more days due to weather, illness, etc., AND you notify your Diverse Directions support representative in advance so that you and your bikes can be transported along with your luggage, no additional charges will apply.

### **The tour price does NOT include:**

- Hotels: Because you are free to select from a wide range of hotels -- from charming and basic 2-star to 4-star luxury (where available) -- the cost of your hotel accommodations is not bundled into the tour package price. See our Accommodations Options page for the price ranges of each category of hotel. A list of accommodations options for this tour, with website links, is available upon request.
- Meals: You are free to determine your own budget for meals. A wide variety of options are available -- from creating a picnic from provisions obtained at a boulangerie / patisserie, to dining at bistros and restaurants, or taking meals at your hotel (where available.) Please note that breakfasts are NOT included in France hotel rates. However, hotels with restaurants often offer a demi-pension option, which includes the cost of your room, breakfast, and dinner at a reasonable price.
- Transportation from your home to Avignon and from Arles to your home.
- Personal expenses
- Insurance
- Shipping and Handling Charges for non-US customers. A shipping & handling charge of US \$15.00 will be added to tour package orders outside the US.

For Diverse Directions' payment terms, cancellation policy, and all terms & conditions, please see [Terms & Conditions](#).