

Touring holidays of France

Expressions



Provence fly-drive touring holiday



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01392 441250

Provence fly-drive touring holiday

8 NIGHTS / 9 DAYS

Crillon-le-Brave

Joucas

Luberon

Aix-en-Provence

Arles



This 8-night fly-drive touring holiday of Provence begins in Marseille. Collect your hire-car and drive north, viewing the impressions Montagne Sainte-Victoire in the distance. You pass Avignon and reach your first stop in the pretty village of Crillon-le-Brave, in the foothills of Mont Ventoux and just a short distance from the renowned wine villages of Gigondas, Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Beaumes-de-Venise and Vacqueyras. In the three nights you spend here there is time to explore the wine country nearby or to drive into the papal city of Avignon, or the towns of Orange or Nimes, both rich in Roman history. As you leave Crillon-le-Brave heading for Joucas in the Luberon, you pass through the beautiful landscape of olive groves, orchards, lavender bed and sunflower fields, so often associated with Provence. Joucas is a charming hill-village, not far from its more famous neighbour, Gordes, enjoying a reputation as one of the most beautiful villages in Provence. There are local markets to visit in the villages of the Luberon most days of the week. The journey from Joucas to Aix-en-Provence crosses through the heart of the Luberon. Aix-en-Provence has amazing character and verve; it is truly Provençal in its architecture and vegetation, yet it is renowned for its cultural sophistication with excellent restaurants, shops and music and art. Cezanne's atelier is here in Aix. After your night in Aix, we recommend a slight detour on the way to Arles, and a visit to the Alpilles region south of Avignon. This is a region where local traditions have been well-preserved and there is the charming Roman town of St Remy de Provence and a mediaeval, pedestrianised hill village of Les Baux de Provence. It is an area rich in literary and artistic associations, made famous by Van Gogh and the writer Alphonse Daudet. Your final two nights are spent in Arles, famous for its well-preserved Roman architecture, as gateway to the marshlands of the Camargue and home to Van Gogh during a very productive period in Provence.

PRICES

From £2,160 per person

Based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

DATES

This rail holiday can be arranged throughout the year. Timings can vary depending on the month and day of the week. For more information regarding rail services to and within France, view our train guide.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Scheduled British Airways flights London to Marseille return
- Hire of a Group B car for the duration of the holiday
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in a Standard room at Hostellerie de Crillon le Brave in Crillon-le-Brave
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Standard room at Hotel le Phebus in Joucas
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Classic room at Villa Gallici in Aix-en-Provence
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Classic room at Hotel Jules Cesar in Arles
- Concierge service and Expressions Holidays regional helpful hints

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Early check-in or late check-out at any hotels (although we can arrange this on request at additional cost)
- Any other services not mentioned above, such as transfers and meals except breakfast at hotels
- Personal holiday insurance. This is essential and cover should be in place from when you book the holiday.
- Local tourist tax, usually between Euros 1 and 3 per person per night, and payable locally to the hotel

Day one Marseille to Crillon-le-Brave

Your fly-drive touring holiday of Provence starts when you arrive in Marseille, collect your hire-car and drive for about an hour and a half to the pretty village of Crillon-le-Brave, situated in gently undulating countryside of fields and orchards, with magnificent views of Mont Ventoux in the near distance. The village is very attractive with houses of golden stone, small squares and narrow streets. It is in the Cotes du Ventoux wine region. You stay here for three nights at the Hotel de Crillon-le-Brave, perched at the very top of this traditional French village, it is a charming, luxury hotel, composed of converted stables, a school, a presbytery, and houses, and sitting on multiple levels, affording fantastic views of the Provence landscape all around.

Days two and three at Crillon-le-Brave

You have two full days to explore this part of the Vaucluse. If wine-tasting appeals then venture out to Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Gigondas, Beaufort-de-Venise or Vacqueyras, to taste the best wines of the region. The base of Mont Ventoux is clustered with small market towns such as Caromb or Carpentras. Drive the short distance to Avignon to witness its wealth of impressive ancient and mediaeval architecture. From the Palais des Papes, the largest gothic palace in the world, to the multiple hidden gardens that are scattered along the old city streets, Avignon is a place of veritable beauty. In the summer months your visit may coincide with the Avignon Theatre Festival, founded in 1947 by Jean Vilar and recognised to be one of the greatest in the world. Watch performances of theatre and dance; listen to readings; and indulge in the vibrancy and colour of the event. Less than 45 minutes away lie the tranquil turquoise waters of beautiful Fontaine-de-Vaucluse. Follow the trail of water exquisite in its clarity and colour through the pools and channels created by this subterranean spring, and water that has inspired poets for hundreds of years. Petrarch lived here in the 14th century and his now is now a museum. There is also a museum of the Resistance, a museum of Provençal 'santons', workshops of hand-blown crystal and a mill making paper by hand using 15th century techniques.



Provence scenery

Day four Crillon-le-Brave to Joucas

Today is a glorious, gentle drive into some of the most beautiful countryside of Provence as you enter the Luberon, a gentle landscape of vineyards, orchards, rolling hills and home to the famous lavender and sunflowers, associated greatly with Provence. Your destination in this region is the village of Joucas where you spend two nights.

Day five in Joucas

Today should be spend exploring the landscape and the neighbouring villages of the Luberon. Just 20 minutes from Joucas is one of the finest examples of the famous Provençal lavender fields at the Abbaye de Sénanque, just outside the village of Gordes. The former Cistercian monastery dates from 1148 and now guests can take tours of the church and

cloisters and feast their eyes on beautiful fields of lavender beyond (the lavender is usually harvested by the beginning of August and is in bloom from the end of June). For a more in- depth view of the history of lavender in Provence why not visit the Musée de la Lavande in Coustellet. Gordes itself is one of the most beautiful villages in Provence and nearby is the curious Village des Bories, an open-air museum of stone dwellings possibly dating as far back as the Bronze Age. Explore along the Sorgue River and the surrounding countryside by bike or on foot. Local markets take place in the villages every day: Lourmarin and Bonnieux on a Friday, Gordes on a Tuesday and Menerbes on a Thursday, for example.



Day six Joucas to Aix-en-Provence

Continue your tour through the villages of the Luberon before you reach the delightful city of Aix-en-Provence, overlooked by the Montagne Saint-Victoire, recognisable from the works of Cezanne. Recognised as a cosmopolitan hub of the south of France, the streets of Aix-en-Provence are lined with boutique shops specialising in art, jewellery, and fashion. Fine dining is also an attractive in Aix with exclusive cafés and Michelin-starred restaurants, many on the Cours Mirabeau. Yet, it is the historical heritage of the town that really makes its chic cosmopolitan side come to life. A haven for Paul Cézanne, his 'atelier' is available for viewing, recreating the artistic and productive space in which he used to work. A short walk from the 'atelier' is Les Lauves, the spot from which Cézanne developed his love affair with Montagne Sainte-Victoire. On Saturday mornings there are busy farmers' markets and the Musée du Calisson, where you can learn about the famous sweets. The main art gallery is the Musée Granet in the Mazarin district, full of elegant 17th and 18th century townhouses. You spend one night in Aix-en-Provence.

Day seven Aix-en-Provence to Arles

Today you travel from Aix-en-Provence to Arles but we suggest you take a slight detour north of the obvious route, to head into the Parc Regional des Alpilles and witness yet another landscape of Provence. Les Alpilles are a chain of limestone mountains, full of lots of natural scenery and displaying an authentic Provence. This is the land of the authors Alphonse Daudet (you can see his mill at Fontvieille) and Frederic Mistral and of Van Gogh who lived in St Remy de Provence. The landscape has the limestone peaks, but pine and oak forests, fields of olive trees and avenues of cypress. Dotted around are farmhouses of ancient drystone. St Remy de Provence is the place to head for first, where three civilisations are represented in a single site at Glanum, then to Les Baux de Provence, a mountain-top village with 22 historic monuments and with outstanding views over the countryside below. From Les Baux you are just 8 km from Fontvieille, a pretty village with ancient houses and where Alphonse Daudet wrote his famous 'Lettres de Mon Moulin'. Arles, your destination for today, is just 7km from here. You stay at Arles for two nights.

Day eight in Arles

Arles is an ancient city on the river Rhone and gateway to the Camargue. Important in Roman times, the amphitheatre is a major landmark of the city today, where plays,



Arles

concerts and bull flights are held. There is also a Gallo-Roman theatre, an aqueduct and Roman baths. The city and its surrounds inspired Van Gogh when he lived here for 18 months in 1888-1889. From Arles explore the nearby marshlands of the Camargue, at the delta of the river Rhone. The Camargue is approximately a third lakes or marshland and home to more than 400 species of birds. Horses and cattle roam the area. It is worth heading for the fortified, walled town of Aigues-Mortes which seemingly rises from the marshes and salt pans of the Camargue, although not officially in Provence as it is in the department of the Gard in Languedoc.

Day nine Arles to Marseille for the return flight to London

Today, continue to explore the town of Arles, depending on the time of your return flight from Marseille to London.



GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR TOURS

Our tailor-made touring holidays are suggested itineraries which can be adapted in numerous ways. They can be fly-drive (with flight and hire-car included), self-drive (with ferry or Eurotunnel included with your own car) or rail and hire-car.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of your chosen transport and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

TOUR CODE

FRFD01

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BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators).

Expressions Holidays

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HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441250

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process.