



## Wonders of Provence Tour: Art, Food & Charm 8 Nights

01 April 2017 – 31 October 2017



### Summary

Food and art are forms of expression in Southern France, inspired by the remarkable landscape and history spanning thousands of years. Your custom tailored Provence tour follows in the footsteps of Cezanne and van Gogh, exploring charming tree-lined streets and indulging in savory culinary creations. Lavender fills the air with herbaceous aromas. The Rhine River shines alongside the former Papal Palace. Roman ruins decorate the hillsides. Idyllic lanes wind through gardens while medieval cobbled alleys meander through storybook villages. Immerse yourself in the splendors of Provence, from castles to marinas, vineyards to forests.

### Wild Discovery Advantages

- A proven expertise in organizing successful holidays
- Experienced and knowledgeable staff
- High quality service & strong commitment to customer satisfaction
- Permanent assistance from Wild Discovery Head

Office at any moment

### Overview

**Dates:** 01 April 2017 – 31 October 2017

**Interest:** couples – family – seniors – group

**Level of Comfort:** 5/5

**Minimum # of passengers:** 2

**Maximum # of passengers:** none

### Information about the destination

- **Currency:** Euro
- **Language:** French - English
- **Transportation:** private car or bus
- **Dialing Code:** 33
- **Recommended vaccines:** none
- **Banks & currency exchange:** It is better to exchange

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- Attention to details that make the difference currencies before you go

#### **Day 1: Marseilles**

Upon arrival at Marseille's international airport, meet greet and transfer to hotel  
Rest of the day at leisure

#### **Day 2: Aix-en-Provence**

Today, your private transfer leads you out of Marseille and into the relaxed pace of Aix-en-Provence. Lush leafy trees shade wide boulevards. 17th and 18th-century mansions border open plazas. Moss covered fountains highlight the delicate and decorative atmosphere of the city. The streets of the Old Town have an undeniable charisma. The ornate Italian-style façade of the 17th-century town hall building sets the scene. The Quartier Mazarin, a 17th-century quarter, follows the historical line of the old town walls. The Fountain des Quatre-Dauphins has four dolphins supported by an obelisk adorned with a baroque motif to display the Italian influence on the design of the city.

#### **Day 3: Aix-en-Provence**

In the morning, your guide meets you at the hotel and leads you on a fabulous tour of what the locals call "Aix," before continuing to the 17th-century estate of Chateau La Coste. The classic Provencal palace was erected in the style of a Venetian villa. The aroma of olive trees catches in the soft breeze. Oak and almond trees blanket the hilltops, offering restful shade. Grapevines stretch across the landscape overlooking the rolling mountains on the horizon.

The bright green leaves connote the fertile quality of the soil. The architecture blends into the lavish landscape, uniting the natural beauty with an architectural aesthetic. You can stroll through the woodlands and valleys at your leisure, where you can enjoy the contemporary artwork on display along the paths. You come across the Origami Benches created by French artist Tadao Ando. The shape of the bench and its cover look as though the structure was folded out of paper. The artistic paths of the villa present a chance to discover the tremendous works of French artists across various disciplines. Embrace the feeling of being surrounded by the natural splendor of the countryside.

#### **Day 4: Gordes**

Today, you say goodbye to Aix-en-Provence and make your way to the perched village of Gordes in the Luberon Natural Regional Park.

Marc Chagall found inspiration along the town's medieval streets. Imposing towers rise out of the 16th-century fortified castle of Chateau de Gordes. Narrow lanes wind up and down the hillside. Red ochre cliffs extend from the cedar forests. The city was settled in the Gallo-Roman times, and the castle's foundation dates back to the 11th century. From the exterior, the castle looks impenetrable due to the impressive preservation of the towers and battlements. The interior now holds the town hall and a museum showcasing the artwork of Belgian painter Pol Mara. The river winds along the gorge floor below. The water has helped shape the village's surrounding landscape for thousands of years.

#### **Day 5: Menerbes**

Today, continue to the village of Menerbes, located on a rocky outcropping overlooking Luberon. Forests open up to a view of vineyards.

Narrow streets wind along antique houses and a 17th-century bell tower. Pablo Picasso once owned a home in the village and retreated to the streets when in search of quiet and inspiration. Excavations have shown uncovered artifacts proving that the area has been inhabited since prehistoric times, containing the remains of villas and ancient cemetery remnants attributed to the Romans. The Corkscrew Museum is a delightful rural exhibition displaying more than 1,000 different varieties of corkscrew. The tool was

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invented by a Frenchman in the 12th century and has since become invaluable to wine lovers across the world.

#### **Day 6: Abbaye de Senanque**

Today, your guide leads you to the commune of Fontaine-de-Vaucluse at the foothills of the mountains bordering the Cote d'Azur. A cliff borders the town, rising to a height of 754 feet. The largest spring in France surges into the Sorgue River in March. The translucent turquoise water wraps around the base of the cliff and splashes cold water against its banks.

The Italian Poet Petrarch once called the village home in the 14th century. You continue to Saint-Paul-de-Mausole, the asylum where Vincent van Gogh resided. The gardens have been maintained with manicured hedges bordering blossoming flowerbeds. The pyramidal roof of the structure provides volume to the two-story square steeple. A Romanesque stairwell guides you through an exhibition of artwork painted by local artists. At the top of the stairs, a window opens to the wheat field that inspired van Gogh during his stay, along with the famous painter's chambers. This was also the location that inspired the artist to paint the deep swirling colors of *The Starry Night*.

#### **Day 7: Avignon**

In the morning, your guide meets you at the hotel and leads you through the celebrated marketplace of the city. Over 40 stalls fill the covered central market of Les Halles. Creamy olive oils and vibrant spices are on display. The zesty aroma of fresh raspberries drifts through the air. Eggplant glistens in the soft light. Freshly baked baguettes rise out of breadbaskets like sabers.

The nearby flower market fills with the blossoming petals of vibrant sunflowers and tulips. Your guide leads you through the lanes of the marketplace and to the private kitchen to learn the secrets of French cooking first hand. Asparagus season is celebrated in and around Avignon, and your instructor lets you know it. He teaches you various ways to prepare the simple vegetable, from grilling the spears to creating a decadent soup, producing a lavish lunch. Before you dine, a local sommelier teaches you about the flavor profile of Rhone wines, to better accompany the characteristics of the meal you have made.

#### **Day 8: Châteauneuf-du-Pape**

The morning light washes over the Rhone River and highlights the edges of the historic Saint Benezet Bridge. The 12th-century edifice reaches a length of 2,952 feet and contains 22 arches. It was once an important crossing point of the river until the 17th century. After breakfast, your guide takes you to the exciting Roman aqueduct of Pont du Gard, a 31-mile system erected in the 1st century AD. The aqueduct carried water from a spring in Uzes to the Roman colony now known as Nimes. The three-tiered archways cross the Gardon River at a height of 160 feet, with a descending gradient of nearly one inch.

The structure provides insight into the precision and skill of Roman engineering. At Châteauneuf-du-Pape, you have a chance to explore the rich history and magnificent wines of the town. Vineyards unfurl like draping prairies around the Rhone Valley. Trees sprout from between homes beneath the crowning 14th-century structure of Pope John XXII's Castle. Vineyards in the area encompass more than 7,900 acres. Explore the vineyard of Domaine Juliette Avril, a family-run estate started in the late 1980s. The 94 acres of land contain fertile plateaus, rich calcareous soil, and cobblestone. The Juliette Avril Rouge is a red blend with notes of raspberry. The mild fruity palate has a polished finish, readying you for another sip of wine.

#### **Day 9: Marseille**

Transfer to the airport for your departure flight

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#### Prices Include

Round trip ticket to Marseille (economy class)  
Round trip transfer: airport – hotel – airport  
8-night accommodation at hotels  
Meals: daily breakfast  
Tours and excursions as per the program  
Assistance of our representative in France

#### Prices Exclude

Airport taxes  
Fuel surcharge  
DIP surcharge \$5/ticket  
Optional Tours  
Visa fees  
Travel insurance  
All other expenses

#### Starting Price Per Person in US\$

Hotel	Double
3* Hotel	5920
4* Hotel	7455
5* Hotel	11750

- *Prices may change without prior notice and subject to availability at time of booking*

#### Flight Schedule

From	To	Flight No	Departure	Arrival
Beirut	Paris	AF 5107	07:55	11:35
Paris	Marseille	AF 7664	13:00	14:20
Marseille	Paris	AF 7663	10:35	12:05
Paris	Beirut	AF 5106	13:40	18:55

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