

From Cathar castles to the Mediterranean sea

9 days / 8 nights

A superb route from the medieval city of Carcassonne, passing vineyards and Cathar castles to the shores of the Mediterranean sea. The castles of Queribus, Peyrepertuse and Aguilar, the gorges of Galamus, the majestic vultures, the Fitou vineyards, the Côtes du Roussillon, the Muscat from Rivesaltes... And that's just a glimpse of what lies ahead this fantastic cycle route! This is a truly exceptional tour.

YOUR PROGRAM

Day 1 - Carcassonne

Carcassonne, a hilltop town in the Languedoc area of southern France, is a wonderful place to start your holiday. Famous for its medieval citadel, explore the lanes, bars and restaurants that nestle inside the fortress. Dinner in one of the hidden gardens is a must.

Night in a three star hotel or chambre d'hôtes with swimming pool.

Day 2 - From Carcassonne to Rennes les Bains.

After breakfast, your cycle ride will take you north. Very quickly you will leave the bustling Carcassonne to cycle in a peaceful surrounding. The hills begin as you enter the Cathar country and a visit to the Abbaye de Saint-Hilaire. From there, your ride takes you through genuine charm vineyards where you may be tempted to taste their wines. Cross Limoux before heading towards Rennes-Le-Chateau. Continue up to Rennes les Bains, a small village known for its thermal baths, where you will spend the night.

Approximately 60km, +1000m, -900m

Night in a three star hotel at the heart of the village.

Day 3 - From Rennes les Bains to Rivesaltes

A wonderful day's ride where nature is really in the spotlight. Superb landscapes follow one after another such as the Gorges de Galamus, where vultures fly majestically above you. It's possible to stop in one of the vineyards or take a short stroll to the Galamus hermitage, perched on a cliff and overlooking the gorge. The itinerary continues through the Côtes du Roussillon via little-known roads which are a dream for cyclists. Your day ends in Rivesaltes, the capital of the Muscat wine, where we suggest that you taste the "muscat ambré".

Approximately 75km, +800m, -1100m

Night in a three star hotel in the heart of Rivesaltes.

Day 4 - From Rivesaltes to Port-la-Nouvelle

For this stage you'll take the cycle path that runs along the river all the way to the coast. Now is your opportunity for a refreshing swim in the Mediterranean sea! The route crosses some small towns on the coast, giving you many opportunities to stop before reaching Port-la-Nouvelle where you will stay for the night.

Approximately 50km. Mostly flat with some sections on busy roads.

Night in a three star hotel next to the sea.

Day 5 - From Port-la-Nouvelle to Tuchan

From Port-la-Nouvelle, you will turn your back to the sea to enjoy the tranquillity of the nearby hills, where the cicadas will remind you of their presence. The views down to the coast are wonderful and the climb through the maquis is nothing else than beautiful. The route winds upwards to reach the pretty village of Tuchan.

Approximately 52km, +700m, -550m.

Night in a chambre d'hôtes.

Day 6 - A loop of the Cathar castles

Today, you'll start your cycle ride heading south through the vineyards. Work out those calf muscles on the hills to reach the château de Quéribus and a bit further, the château de Peyrepertuse. Cycle past some stunning gorges to reach Tuchan once more.

Approximately 65 km, +1200 m, -1200m. The distance and altitude climbed can be easily reduced by not visiting the two castles.

Night in a chambre d'hôtes.

Day 7 - From Tuchan to Lagrasse

Today's ride takes you through more vineyards before entering an area of hills, forests and rivers (sometimes dry in summer). Visit some of the Cathar monuments, including Villerouge Termenès. Finish today's wonderful cycle ride in Lagrasse, classified as one of the most beautiful villages in France.

Approximately 55km, +730m, -760m.

Approximately 49km, +635m, -755m - Option without château de Villerouge Termenès.

Night in a chambres d'hôtes.

Day 8 - From Lagrasse to Carcassonne

A shorter ride today means you can either enjoy Lagrasse in the morning or Carcassonne upon arrival. Your ride will take you through rural countryside and little villages until you reach the much celebrated medieval town of Carcassonne.

Approximately 36km, +368m, -389m.

Night in a three star hotel or chambre d'hôtes with swimming pool.

Day 9 - Carcassonne.

End of your holiday after breakfast.

Additional information

TARIFFS

Price from 1099 euros per person.

OPTIONS

"Giant" (brand) electric bike with panniers. Distances possible depending upon battery use.

: 231 euros per person.

Road bike rental (aluminium frame) : 175 euros per person.

Mountain bike rental with panniers and handlebar bag.

: 133 euros per person.

Road bike rental (carbon frame) : 210 euros per person.

GPS tracking on USB key. : 25 euros per person.

INCLUDED

8 nights in double/twin rooms, breakfasts, luggage transfers, the detailed route notes with maps and contactable assistance throughout.

NOT INCLUDED

Travel to the meeting point, bike hire, lunch and dinner, entry to tourist sites, optional activities, insurance, personal spending.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Between 36 and 76 km per day, occasionally with steep climbs.

Some shorter or longer options possible. A good level of fitness is required, although electric bikes can also be hired.

CARRYING

Your bags will be transported each day.

ACCOMMODATION

Three star hotels and chambres d'hôtes.

SIZE OF GROUP

From two people.

DEPARTURES

Any day from the beginning of April to the end of October.

DEPARTURE

Carcassonne.

DISPERSION

Carcassonne.

HOW TO GET THERE

Carcassonne Airport is 3km from the centre of Carcassonne. Carcassonne serves some European cities such as Dublin, London, Bournemouth, Eindhoven...