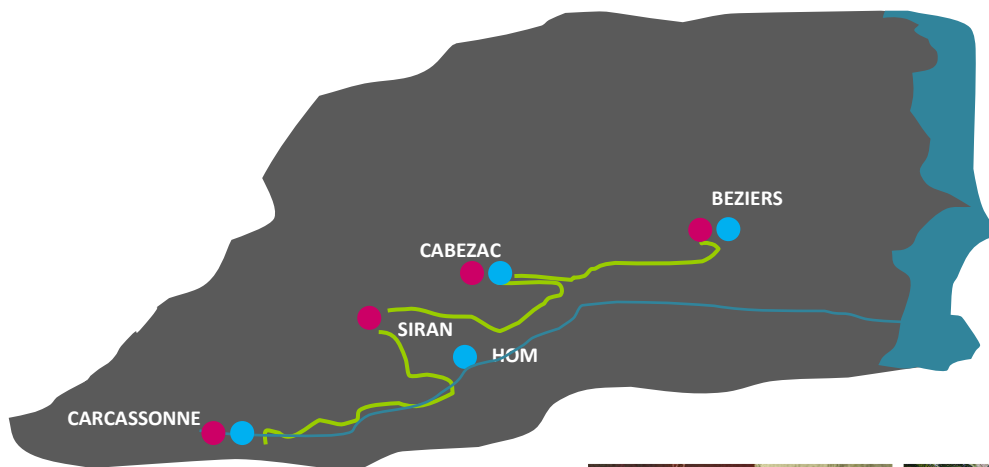




## COLOURS OF FRANCE THE CANAL DU MIDI

4 NIGHTS / 5 DAYS  
CARCASSONNE - BEZIERS



# EXPLORE

THE CANAL DU MIDI AT YOUR OWN PACE



### Day 1 : Arrival in Carcassonne

It is hard to believe that Carcassonne is real, when you first approach it from afar. The ancient city, (a settlement here from as far back as 3500 BC), sits majestically high, is ringed completely by its castle-like ramparts. The city and its fortifications was rated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1997. You'll soak up the view from your hotel, located by the medieval walls. You will have time to relax and read your package of trip information by the swimming pool, before wandering in to explore the cobblestoned streets.

### Day 2 : Carcassonne to Siran 45 km

You have a relaxing, easy ride today, as it leaves Carcassonne and follows the roads and bike paths along the Canal (flat!). Your route takes you through a mix of villages with odd names, stemming from the regional language, which for centuries was not French, but the local "Occitan": Marseillette, Puichéric (with its 13th century church and annual pig festival!) and La Redorte. You pass a first feat of canal engineering as well, the bridge of Orbiel, taking the canal over the Orbiel River! At the end of the day leave the canal bike path to ride through the tiny roads and villages of the picturesque Minervois vineyards – perhaps stop for a wine tasting, as your ride is almost finished! Your goal is the beautiful Chateau de Siran, in the heart of the village of the same name. Dinner at you hotel. (please note, the CLASSIC itinerary stay in Homps, along the canal.)



## COLOURS OF FRANCE THE CANAL DU MIDI

4 NIGHTS / 5 DAYS  
CARCASSONNE - BEZIERS



### Day 3 : Siran to Cabezac 40 km

Your ride today starts in the middle of a beautiful terrain of vineyards and small villages, before returning to the Canal bike path in Homps, an ancient commercial port, where the regional barrels of wine were loaded into boats for the journey to Bordeaux. The small village today is charming and quite tranquil, making it hard to imagine its busy past. You'll continue along the Canal bike path all the way to Le Somail, with its pretty bridges, at which point you leave the canal again to pedal through the olive groves, vineyards, and flowered fields of the scenic surrounding countryside. You are headed for the hamlet of Cabezac, sitting on the Cesse River, with its natural still pools. By the hotel, using the river for power, is a working olive mill, where you can stop for a taste of the production of the "eternal trees". Night in Cabezac itself, with dinner at the hotel's excellent restaurant. Dinner included tonight

### Day 4 : Cabezac to Beziers 42 km

Today's ride is easygoing cycling all the way, along the Canal du Midi to the villages of Colombiers, and Capestang before continuing to your final stop in Beziers. Be sure to stop and see the "Tunnel de Malpas" which allowed barges to continue their route passing along its 165 metres of tunneled underground vaulting. No one believed that the canal's engineer, Pierre-Paul Riquet, could complete this feat, and in fact the King even ordered that he stop, and deviate the canal's route. He feigned obedience, but completed the tunnel in secrecy, unveiling it only after his project was done. Enjoy two other feats of canal engineering: the Fonserannes locks, and the Orb Aqueduct (in effect a bridge, carrying the waters - and traffic - of the Canal du Midi over the Orb River!). Near the end of the day, you approach Beziers, perched above the canal, and home to Paul Riquet. Enjoy the lovely view of the arched Romanesque bridge over the Orb River, and the 12<sup>th</sup> century St Nazaire Cathedral. We provide a small walking tour of the historic centre to help in your explorations.

### Day 5 : Departure from Beziers

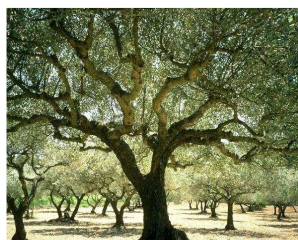
After a final breakfast, the trip is over. You can catch the train from the Beziers for easy connections for your further travels. Bon Voyage!





## COLOURS OF FRANCE THE CANAL DU MIDI

4 NIGHTS / 5 DAYS  
CARCASSONNE - BEZIERS



### What's included in your package

- 4 nights' accommodation in the comfort level of your choice CLASSIC or CLASSIC+
- All breakfasts, 2 dinners (drinks not included with dinners)
- Bike Fitting and Orientation with our Trip Manager at the start of the trip
- Fully equipped quality hybrid bike
- Detailed maps and step-by-step route notes
- Regional information and advice
- Luggage transfers from hotel to hotel
- Emergency phone call support 7 days a week

