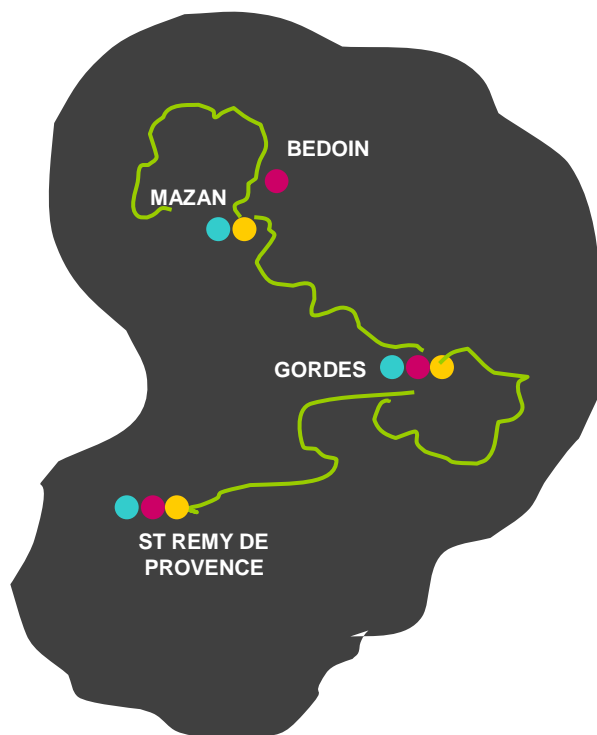




COLOURS OF FRANCE PROVENCE BIKING

6 NIGHTS / 7 DAYS
RHONE, LUBERON & ALPILLES



EXPLORE

PROVENCE AT YOUR OWN PACE

Day 1 : Arrival in Mazan

On your arrival in Avignon, we will transfer you to your first hotel, in Mazan, in the heart of the Vaucluse region of Provence (please note, the CLASSIC+ itinerary is based in nearby Bedoin). The countryside is spectacular, with the impressive Mont Ventoux as a backdrop, and small Provencal villages dotting the plains and vineyards that spread out around you. This typical small Provencal town will enchant you, with its rich 2000 year old history. Before dinner, our Trip Manager will meet up with you to go over your trip package and make sure your bikes are fitted properly. A delicious first dinner is included tonight.

Day 2 : Loop into the Vaucluse 38 or 50 km

Your ride today is beautiful, taking you through several picturesque villages, such as Flassan, Ville sur Auzon, and Baluvac; each worth some meandering, and always with the impressive Mont Ventoux as your imposing backdrop. You will pedal along lovely quiet roads, and through some of the oldest vineyards in all of France. We recommend the detour into the town of Beaumes de Venise; not only is the town quite charming, but if you feel like it, after finding some lunch, you can stop for a tasting of their wonderful sweet white wines, or some of the Cotes de Rhone reds. If you prefer, take some time to explore at the shop of the local olive mill to taste the fruity artisanal olive oils. The ride finishes back on the flats to return you to Mazan for a second evening.



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Day 3 : Mazan to Gordes via Isle sur la Sorgue 42 or 50 km

After a leisurely breakfast, you ride southwards towards the Rhone plains. You'll ride through the small village of Venasque (considered by many as the most authentic village of the Venaissain region, and on towards Isle Sur la Sorgue. This compact town, built on the islands of five branches of the Sorgue River, is most well-known today for its huge weekend antique markets. During the week as well, it is worth taking the time to visit the many antique shops and boutiques, and to find lunch or at least a cool refreshment in one of the many cafés. From there it is not far to your destination, you may decide to add on a few kilometres to visit the village of Fontaine de Vaucluse, with its beautiful spring; save a little energy for the very end, as Gordes is perched, spectacularly, on the top of a hill

Day 4 : Luberon loop ride 42 Km

Your final ride is a great one: a loop ride including many of the classic Luberon villages (originally made famous in Peter Mayle's book, *A Year in Provence*), allowing lots of exploration. You'll ride through Roussillon, with its ochre cliffs, mined for the rich pigments, Menerbes, with its shady main square and odd corkscrew Museum, and Lacoste, with the ruins of the castle of the Marquis de Sade. At the end of your ride, you can decide to pedal down (but don't forget you have to come back up!) into the valley to visit the Cistercian Abbey of Senanque, perhaps in time to see the monks during vespers, and to admire the lavender fields. You'll also want to take a little time explore the unique *borie* village (traditional stone huts), on the outskirts of Gordes. Dinner tonight is included in one of our favourite restaurants.

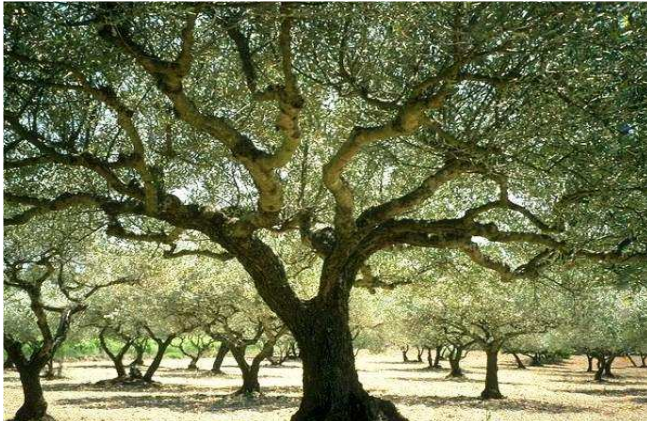
Day 5 : Gordes to St Remy de Provence 55 km

You leave Gordes after your breakfast this morning, heading westwards. After pedaling along the plains through the base of the Luberon hills, you arrive in the lively town of Cavaillon, famous for the Cavaillon melons, smaller and juicier than cantaloupe, and coveted by the locals. You can detour into the centre of town to find some lunch here if you like. Cavaillon is also where you cross over the Durance River, and then continue along small roads through vineyards, olive groves and orchards, on to your final destination, the Provencal town of St Remy, with its shady squares, and lovely little streets and boutiques. St Remy is tucked into the foot of the Alpilles hills, with their



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beautiful white stone, often set against an intense blue sky, where writers such as Daudet and Frederic Mistral settled. Enjoy a pastis at one of the local cafes before your delicious dinner, included this evening.

Day 6 : Loop to Les Baux de Provence 50 km

Your ride today is spectacular, bringing you through olive groves and vineyards to the fortified village of Les Baux de Provence. There is a big climb in the morning, but it will be worth it! And of course you get the glorious downhill back into St. Remy at the end. Take your time to visit the chateau of Les Baux, looking down on the gorgeous Alpilles mountain range as a backdrop, and also the sound and light show in one of the old bauxite mines, with a different artist as its theme each year. You may also wish to stop for an olive oil or wine tasting along the route... Decide if you want the long or short option, to leave more or less time to relax in St Remy in the afternoon. St Remy is where Van Gogh was incarcerated in the Saint Paul de Mausole hospital for a year (and where he completed an astonishing 150 paintings!), but it is also worthwhile visiting the archeological site of Glanum.

Day 7 : Departure - Bon Voyage!

After a final breakfast, we transfer from your hotel back to Avignon for your further travels.

What's included

- 6 nights in charming hotels of the comfort level of your choice CLASSIC, CLASSIC + or DELUXE
- All breakfasts, 3 dinners (drinks not included with dinners)
- Fully equipped quality hybrid bike
- Orientation with our Trip Manager
- Detailed maps and step-by-step route notes
- Regional information and advice
- Luggage transfers
- Transfer from Avignon centre or train station to the first hotel
- Transfer back to Avignon on departure day morning
- Emergency phone call support 7 days a week