



EXPLORE PROVENCE AT YOUR OWN PACE

Day 1: Arrival in the Luberon

Upon your arrival in Avignon, we will transfer you to your first hotel, in the picturesque village of Joucas. After you have settled in, our Trip Manager will meet you for your Trip Orientation and bike fitting. Dinner is included this evening

Day 2: Luberon Villages 68 km / 42 Miles

Your ride today is a great one: a little rolling, but quite beautiful, and taking in the classic sights of the Luberon. The loop route includes a fantastic line-up of many of the Luberon villages originally made famous in Peter Mayle's book, *A Year in Provence*, allowing lots of exploration. You'll pedal through Roussillon, with its ochre cliffs, mined for the rich pigments, Bonnieux, with its shady squares, twisting streets and panoramic view, and also Lacoste, where you can explore the ruins of the castle of the Marquis de Sade. Near the base of Menerbes, stop for a winetasting and to visit the odd corkscrew museum if you like. A final climb up into Gordes (one of France's "Prettiest" Villages) seemingly gravity-defying as it sticks to the side of a vertiginous cliff. Each village has its own personality and charm. There is an option to detour in to the lively town of Apt, accorded a special label for gourmets.

Day 3: The Gorges de la Nesque 69 km / 43 Miles

You leave Joucas to ride northwards over the Vaucluse Plateau. The ride has some challenging climbs, but it is breathtakingly beautiful. After riding through the dense forest, with occasional vistas of the plateau, descend into the lovely town of Sault, famous for its lavender fields. Stop in the historic centre for lunch if you like (a good part of the climbing is done for the day), or at least to visit the artisanal Boyer nougat factory in the centre of town, before continuing on, through the village of Monieux, and following the narrow ridge and rolls of the fabulous Gorges de la Nesque. This protected natural site is home to a variety of flora, as well as the rare Peregrine Falcon and the Royal Eagle, and the scenery is breathtaking, with occasional views down the up to 400 m drop into the canyon of the Gorges. It is a favourite for cyclists from all over. Your ride brings you to the small village of Villes-sur-Auzon, with its ochre-coloured houses, and small village fountains, and where you can stop for a refreshment before continuing along the last stretch of riding – more forgiving terrain now – through Mormoiron and into Bedoin. (the DELUXE itinerary stays in neighbouring Crillon-le-Brave).



**Day 4: The Rhone Wine Route** 73 km / 47 Miles

Today's ride is gorgeous, taking you up to start into the "Dentelles de Montmirail", a small chain of hills with a stunning lace-like crest, before descending to the town of Malaucene. Continue northwards to the Roman town of Vaison la Romaine. This small Provençal town, cut in two by the Ouvèze River, will enchant you with its rich 2000 year old history. Take the time to explore the Roman vestiges in the centre of town, including the beautiful Roman bridge, that survived the incredible floods of 1992, and hike up to the ruins of the upper village for a beautiful panorama. Turn southwards from Vaison through Seguret (another of France's "Prettiest Villages"), before approaching two of the renowned "Cru" villages of the Southern Cotes de Rhone: Gigondas and Vaqueyras, with their wonderful rich red wines and then the small town of Beaumes-de-Venise. Not only is the town quite charming, but if you feel like it you can stop for a tasting of their deliciously addictive 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, before returning to your hotel

**Day 5: The Mont Ventoux**, 48 km / 30 Miles

Your final ride most certainly falls into one of the top 20 climbs in all of France – and one of the most popular climbs of the Tour de France: The Mont Ventoux! Our ride takes you up the shorter of the two possible routes (starting the 22 km climb in Bedoin), and therefore the more challenging, but traditionally, this is the version against which all passionate cyclists need to measure themselves. The Mont Ventoux - or Sentinel Mountain - at a height of 1912 metres, and with its striking white limestone cap - stands out for miles around. Often hit by strong winds, and extreme differences of temperatures between the base and the summit, the mountain is also one of only 368 UNESCO rated Biosphere Reserves in the world, due to its rare and unique flora and fauna and huge variety of microclimates. Once you reach the top, take a moment to share the thrill and give homage to the many other great riders who have come here, before turning around to descend back to your hotel

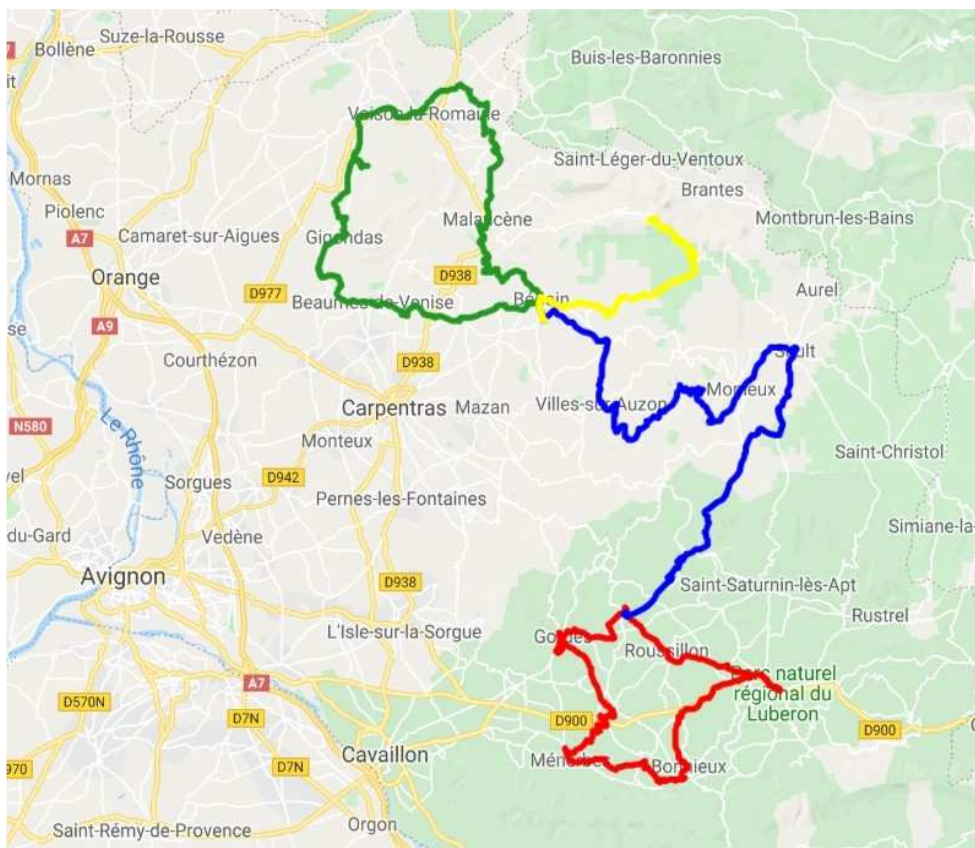
Day 6:**Departure – Bon Voyage!**

After a final breakfast, we will transfer you back to the train station in Avignon in time for your further travels.





BIKING IN PROVENCE – 5 Night CHALLENGE TOUR



What's included in your Provence package:

- 5 nights' accommodation of the comfort level of your choice: CLASSIC, CLASSIC + or DELUXE
- All breakfasts, 2 dinners (drinks not included with dinners)
- Fully equipped high quality Carbon road bike
- Orientation and bike fitting with our Trip Manager
- Detailed maps and step-by-step route instructions
- Regional information and advice
- Uploadable GPS file of the route to use on a free APP in your smartphone or a Garmin (device not provided) - Can be used without international internet plan (offline)
- Luggage transfers from hotel to hotel
- Transfer from Avignon to the first hotel
- Transfer to Avignon train or centre on departure day morning
- Phone call support 7 days a week

