

Great Explorations



Trip Dates:

2011

May 9-15

Jul 3-9*

Sep 5-11

2012

May 7-13

Jul 1-7*

Sep 3-9

Self-guided and custom trips also available and can start any day. Call or email for details.

Trip Size:

8-16 participants

Total Days:

7 days/ 6 nights
with 5 days cycling
(arrival night hotel is included)

Arrive/Depart:

Vaison/Avignon

Activity Level:

Moderate
30-55 km daily
(20-40 miles)
van supported

Terrain:

2 days gently rolling, 3 days are moderately rolling

Provence, Biking

Vaison-La- Romaine, Pernes-les-Fontaines and Gordes

With its quiet roads amidst fields of lavender, fine wines to taste, and wonderful food to eat, the Provence region of France is heaven on earth for the itinerant cyclist. Beginning in the village of Vaison le Romaine, we will cycle routes that will include the region's market towns, wine-making villages and medieval cities. We'll taste wine in centuries old caves, see Roman antiquities, visit hill-top castles steeped in history and stroll markets at L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue and others. We've been coming here for 20 years and can say there are few places as welcoming to those on a bicycle as this enchanting area of France.

Only Great Explorations:

- Small groups, extraordinary guides, and authentic experiences.
- A ride you will never forget: cycling the wine route through Seguret, Gigondas and Vacqueras
- Order off the menu at restaurants you won't find in guidebooks.
- Distinctive, charming hotels too small for larger groups.
- We design and operate our own trips so there are only good surprises.

Itinerary



Getting there :

Our trip starts in Vaison which can be reached through Avignon, by coach from the TGV station (3€) or by taxi.

DAYS 1+2:

Vaison le Romaine - Our meeting time is at 4 pm. We will visit the Roman ruins and then enjoy a welcome wine reception at the hotel before dinner at a favorite

restaurant. Next day, we will set off on bikes on a delightful ride to the east, under the flank of Mont Ventoux. Surrounded by almond trees, Entrechaux nestles around a hilltop castle in ruins. Mollans-sur-Ouvèze clusters around a high-arched bridge marked on each side by a tower and a tiny chapel. Back in Vaison, we will dine at Brin D'Olive, where the chef has won many awards for his imaginative cooking.

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Cost

Land Cost (current year):

US \$2250

Includes 6B/2L/5D

Single Supplement:

US \$400

Bike Rental:

US \$140

DAY 3+4:

Pernes les Fontaines - After a morning visit to the market in Vaison (one of the largest and oldest in France) wind your way among the wine villages of the Dentelles de Montmirail, stopping to explore Sablet, Gigondas, and Vacqueyras. Séguret is an artists' colony, including makers of santons, delicate and detailed figurines in regional costumes. Spend the night outside Pernes-les-Fontaines at a charming chateau with extensive grounds and large pool. Dinner will be at Chez Serge, in Carpentras. Next day, there are options to reach Chateau-neuf-de-Pape where a wine museum and endless tasting opportunities await, or alternatively, a loop to Bedoin up Mt. Ventoux (shuttle option) and back via an extraordinary descent of the Gorge du Nesque. Explore Pernes-les-Fontaines, with its twisting streets, houses painted in a rainbow of blues, pinks, and greens, and fountains gently splashing in squares lined by plane trees.



DAY 5+6:

Gordes - On to the beautiful Luberon Valley. Pedal past Petrarch's Fontaine de Vaucluse, then through Ménerbes, the village of Peter Mayle. Your destination is Gordes, a stunning perched town with artists' studios, cozy cafés and arcaded medieval lanes. Enjoy a day ride from Gordes, discover the red shades of Roussillon and find the ruins of the castle of the Marquis de Sade at Lacoste. Pedal to the nearby Bories Village and Sénanque Abbey, set in a beautiful secluded valley.

DAY 7:

Transfer to Avignon for trains onward. Arrival time at Avignon TGV will be 10:00 am



What's Included in the Cost of Your Trip?

- services of one or more experienced Great Explorations guides and support vehicle
- 6 nights lodging
- all breakfasts, 2 lunches, and all dinners but 1
- entrance fees for selected historical sites and museums
- detailed map and route instructions
- all baggage transportation
- all transportation from initial meeting point to final drop-off (see arrive/depart cities)

Please note: Final itinerary is subject to revision; any changes made are done so in an attempt to provide the best possible trip given route conditions and available services. Due to the nature of our business and exchange rates, prices are subject to change. All prices quoted are U.S. dollars but we gladly accept payment in Canadian dollars also. Due to cancellations and waiting lists, trip availability fluctuates daily. If you have any questions or would like to confirm space on this trip before making your reservation, please contact us at info@great-explorations.com or by telephone at 604.730.1247

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Accommodations- Casual/Classic



Hôtel Le Burrhus (Casual)
Vaison-La-Romaine

This hotel overlooks a pretty square right in the heart of Vaison. The hotel has been recently renovated, and often hosts art exhibits in the hotel's lounges. Jean-Baptiste and his wife Laurence are gracious hoteliers who welcome us as friends.



L'Hermitage (Classic)
Pernes-les-Fontaines

A charming 3-star hotel in a former family mansion, set in grounds with 100-year old plane trees. There are lovely gardens and a large swimming pool. Françoise and her daughter Caroline are charming hosts.



Hôtel Les Romarins (Classic)
Gordes

A charming boutique 3-star hotel with views over Gordes, and an inviting pool and gardens. The town is only a five minute walk away. Gordes was immortalized in the book, 'A Year in Provence' by Peter Mayle.