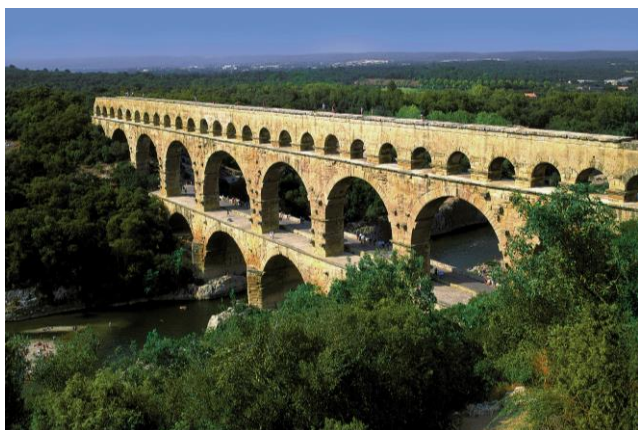


Tour
Information



Provence by Rail





Travel

Passports

Please ensure your 10 year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to France.

Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

French consulate: PO Box 57, 6A Cromwell Place, London SW7 2EW; Tel (020) 7838 2000/1. Information Service: Tel (0891) 887 733, Fax: (020) 7838 2046. Opening hours: 0900-1130 (and 1600-1630 for visa collection only) Mon-Fri (except British and French national holidays).



Tickets

You will be issued with return train tickets. Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate. Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Standard Premier on Eurostar tickets is indicated by two asterisks in the class type section in the top right hand corner. A light meal will be served to passengers travelling Standard Premier on Eurostar. Standard class Eurostar tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although there is a buffet car serving drinks and snacks.

TGV tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although a buffet car is available.

Train Seats

On all legs of the journey you have reserved seat and carriage numbers which are shown clearly on your ticket.



Baggage

As with most trains, passengers are responsible for carrying baggage onto and off the train. Baggage can be stored on overhead shelves or at the entrance to the carriages. Trolleys are available at St Pancras and Lille, but bags do need to be carried on to the platform. Porters are sometimes but not always available at St Pancras.

Travel Editions recommends a luggage delivery service called **thebaggageman**, where your suitcase can be picked up from your home before departure and delivered straight to your hotel; therefore removing the worry about carrying your cases onto and off the trains.

For further information: www.thebaggageman.com

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Transfers

On arrival, transfer by coach to your hotel - the Bristol or the Avignon Grand.

Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.



Accommodation

Bristol Hotel

Located on the main thoroughfare in central Avignon, the Bristol Hotel enjoys a superb location in the heart of the city. Facilities at this traditional family-owned three-star hotel include bar and comfortable bedrooms with private bath/shower, hairdryer, TV, telephone, safe and wifi. Rooms at the Bristol Hotel do not include tea/coffee making facilities, so we suggest you bring a travel kettle if required. There is also a ground floor brasserie serving inexpensive meals throughout the day under separate management.

For more information visit their website
<http://www.bristol-avignon.com/uk/>

Avignon Grand

The superior four-star Avignon Grand Hotel is located directly opposite the old city walls and a 10 minute walk to the main square. All rooms are spacious and equipped with modern facilities, including private bath/shower, hairdryer, TV, telephone, safe, coffee/tea making facilities and wifi. You are also welcome to use the outdoor swimming pool.

The Avignon Grand does not offer a restaurant for individual guests but a room service menu is available as well as many excellent restaurants nearby.

For more information visit their website
<http://www.avignon-grand-hotel.com/en/>



Food

Colourful red and yellow peppers, glorious tomatoes, aubergines, fresh fish, Provençal herbs (basil, thyme, rosemary, sage, marjoram...), olives and olive oil, citrus fruits ripened in the Mediterranean sunshine form the basis of the Provençal *cuisine*. Traditional dishes of the region include *Ratatouille* (stew of courgettes, tomatoes, red and green peppers and aubergines braised with garlic, olive oil and *Herbes de Provence*), *Bouillabaisse* (fish soup), *Soupe au Pistou* (vegetable and bean soup with fresh basil), *Pissaladière* (golden onion, anchovy and olive pizza), *Daube Provençale* (classic French beef stew), *Aïoli* (garlic

mayonnaise generally accompanies fish, vegetables or crusty bread) and *tapenade* (luscious Provençal paste made with olives, olive oil, anchovies, capers and garlic).

Enjoy the traditional Provençal sweets, such as *Tarte aux fruits*, *Calisson* (made from a paste of ground almonds, candied melon and orange peel, covered with bright royal icing) and *Nougat*. Coffee is served after the meal and will be black, in small cups, unless a *café au lait* (or *crème*) is requested. A typically Provençal apéritif drink is *Pastis* (such as Ricard), an aniseed liqueur.

Almost all restaurants offer two types of meals: *a la carte* (extensive choice for each course, generally more expensive) and *le menu* (a set meal at a fixed price).

The bill (*l'addition*) will not be presented until it is asked for, even if clients sit and talk for half an hour after finishing their meal. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required.

Generally speaking, mealtimes in France are strictly observed. Lunch is as a rule served from noon to 1330, dinner usually from 2000-2130, but the larger the city, the later the dining hour.



Drink

Wine is by far the most popular alcoholic beverage in France, and the choice will vary according to region. Provence is best known for its rosé wine; the pink wines of Massalia (today's Marseille) were already famous in Roman times. Côtes de Provence AOC is the main wine region, producing about 75% of all wine in Provence, of which 80% is rosé.

In elegant restaurants the wine list will be separate from the main menu, but in less opulent establishments will be printed on the back or along the side of the *carte*. The waiter will usually be glad to advise an appropriate choice. If in doubt, try the house wine; this will usually be less expensive and will always be the owner's pride.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily



Destination

"I am now in the land of corn, wine, oil, and sunshine. What more can man ask of heaven?" Like many others, Thomas Jefferson was seduced by the stunning landscapes of Provence. One of the most alluring regions of France, Provence conjures up images, immortalised in countless films and books, of sleepy villages, stunning scenery, rich vineyards, fragrant olive and peach groves, boules, rustic cuisine and robust wines. It is also a region that boasts some of the best preserved Roman sights in the world and beautiful cities with world class museums, galleries and restaurants.

During your trip you will visit:

Avignon

Our base is the cultural heart of the Provence region, Avignon; a beautiful and fascinating city. Surrounded by massive ramparts the old town is dominated by the immense (48,000 square feet) and imposing *Palais des Papes*, headquarters of the Catholic Church from 1309 to 1377. The building's heavy fortification reflects the violent nature of 14th Century religious life, whilst its luxurious trappings were either looted or destroyed during the Revolution of 1789. Nonetheless there is a lot to see here including the *Grand Tinel tapestries*, the *Stag Room*, the *Consistory Hall*, *Benedict XI's Cloister and Grand Chapel*. Other major sights of the city include the famous incomplete *Pont St Bénézet*, partially destroyed by floods in 1668, that lends its name to the famous song "Sur le Pont d'Avignon", *Petit Palais*, built for Cardinal Béranger Frédol between 1318 and 1320, the *Rocher des Dom*, site of Avignon's earliest settlement, several churches including the *Notre-Dame Cathedral*, the *musée Calvet* (15th-20th century art and archaeology), the *musée Angladon* (18th-20th century art) and the lively heart of the city, *Place D'Horloge*.

Heading away from the touristy Place d'Horloge, you will find delightful small side streets filled with excellent restaurants and cafés.

For more information about Avignon please visit:
<http://www.avignon-tourisme.com/home-1-2.html>

Aix-en-Provence

Known as the city of a thousand fountains, the former capital of Provence, Aix, is a lovely spa town with a host of classical mansions, elegant boulevards and beautiful paved squares. The city's most famous son is Paul Cézanne, whose studio is preserved exactly as he left it when he died in 1906. Other sights include the *Cathedral of St Sauveur*, noted for Froment's "Triptych of the Burning Bush" and several museums, including the *Musée Granet* of fine art and archaeology and the *Tapestry Museum*. It is a wonderful place to linger, too, at an outdoor café, particularly one of many along the elegant tree-lined *Cours Mirabeau*.

For more information about Aix-en-Provence please visit:
<http://www.aixenprovencetourism.com/en/>

Uzès

A charming medieval hilltop town, Uzès' narrow cobbled streets are wonderfully atmospheric and perfect for strolling, browsing or stopping at a leisurely café. We will see Uzès on market day - with over 200 stalls selling pottery, flowers, linens, jewellery and *produits du terroir*, the bustling traditional market is well worth a visit. One of the many shaded squares, the *Place aux Herbes*, hosts this lively and popular market. Other sights include the *ducal palace*, residence of the ducal Crussol family, and the 12th century *Fenestrelle Tower*, whose cylindrical steeple is the only remnant of the former Romanesque cathedral *Saint-Théodorit*, destroyed in 1563 by the Protestants.

For more information about Uzès please visit:
<http://uk.uzes-tourisme.com/>

Pont du Gard

The three tiered Roman *Pont du Gard* aqueduct dates from around 19 BC and spans the Gardon Valley. Amazingly-preserved, this hugely impressive 158-foot high structure served as aqueduct and general crossing, and is a remarkable symbol of the Romans' engineering capabilities. Indeed, the highest bridge they ever built, it was considered by the Romans as the best testimony to the greatness of their Empire.

For more information about Pont du Gard please visit:
<http://www.pontdugard.fr/en>

Orange

Orange contains two of the finest Roman monuments in Europe; the *Theatre Antique d'Orange* and the *Arc de Triomphe*, which was built to celebrate Caesar's victory over the Gauls. The old town is also worth exploring with its 17th Century *Hotel de Ville*, *Notre Dame Cathedral*, and peaceful, shady squares overlooked by terrace cafes.

For more information about Orange:

<http://uk.otorange.fr/>

Châteauneuf-du-Pape

In the 14th century, the Popes of Avignon decided to build a new castle (*Château neuf*) and plant the vineyards that have since produced one of the finest Côtes-du-Rhône red wines, famous throughout the world. This attractive village is full of wine merchants offering tastings and sales.

The Luberon National Park

This regional nature park is one of the most appealing areas of Provence with limestone cliffs, river-hewn gorges, rugged peaks and rustic villages, such as the perched village of *Gordes* with its 16th Century Castle. This is the area that inspired Peter Mayle's 'A Year in Provence'.

For more information about the Luberon:

<http://www.theluberon.com/>

Arles

Another town with a strong Roman history, with a well preserved *Arena* offering lovely views of the town from its top tier, *Constantine Baths* and a *Roman Theatre*. This beautiful Provencal town also hosts the lovely 12th Century *Church of Saint-Trophime* with its peaceful cloisters. Artists such as Van Gogh and Gauguin drew their inspiration from the stunning views of the surrounding countryside.

For more information about Arles:

<http://www.arlestourisme.com/home.html>

Camargue

A protected area of outstanding natural beauty; the marshy 75,000 hectare expanse of the Camargue is a wilderness of enormous interest. It is a nature lover's paradise with wild horses, migrant flamingos and a host of other birds often visible.

For more information about the Camargue:

<http://www.visitprovence.com/en/territory/camargue>

Les Baux-de-Provence & Les Alpilles

The ancient ruined citadel of Les Baux-de-Provence clings to one of the highest ridges of the spectacular Alpilles, an area of limestone crags south of the pretty village of St Remy. The village is divided into two: the bustling inhabited lower village of elegant Renaissance houses and cobbled streets and the deserted "Ville Morte" above, its ruined buildings hardly distinguishable from the limestone crags.

For more information about Les Baux-de-Provence & Les Alpilles:

<http://www.lesbauxdeprovence.com/en>

Reading Suggestions

Graham Robb, *The Discovery of France*.

A general introduction to French culture, landscape and history, it also features an excellent insight into the distinctive character of France's regions.

Bernard Levin, *From the Camargue to the Alps: A Walk Across France in Hannibal's footsteps*.

As the title suggests, English journalist Bernard Levin follows the Carthaginian military commander's path across France to Italy, describing history, landscape and culture on his way.

James Pope-Hennessy, *Aspects of Provence*.

A concise and vivid survey of Provence.

Peter Mayle, *A year in Provence*.

An entertaining account of the author's life as an expatriate in Provence and his take on the locals and their customs.

Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy, 1766*.

Laurance Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy, 1768*.

Both 18th century authors travelled through France, to Nice, continuing along to Italy. Sterne's personal and sentimental account can be seen as a response to quarrelsome and deriding Smollett's.

Lady Winifred Fortescue, *Perfume from Provence, 1935*.

This bestseller related the everyday life in a village in Provence during the inter-war period.

F Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night*.

Fitzgerald's famous novel is set in the glamour and extravagance of the 1920s French Riviera.



The Basics

Climate – The weather in Provence at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.



Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – French.

Religion – Roman Catholic.

National holidays – New Year's day (01 Jan); Easter Monday; Labour day (01 May); Victory in Europe day (08 May); Ascension day; Whit Sunday; Whit Monday; National day (14 Jul); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' day (01 Nov); Armistice day (11 Nov); Christmas day (25 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

Shops and museums – Avignon and Aix-en-Provence have a wide variety of shops. Villages have small boutiques and beautiful markets.

Department stores are open 0900-1830 Monday to Saturday. Most shops are closed between 1200-1430. Some food shops (particularly bakers) are open Sunday mornings, in which case they will probably close Monday. Many shops close all day or half-day Monday.

Please note that most museums are closed on Mondays.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in France, depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know

your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 20 7431 8201 or

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Consulate Marseille

24 avenue du Prado

13006 Marseille

France

+33 (0)4 91 15 72 10

Marseilleconsular.marseille@fco.gov.uk

Mon, Wed and Fri: 0900 to 1230. Outside these hours a consular Emergency Service is in operation and can be contacted on +33 (0)4 91 15 72 10

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