



# Provence Itinerary 2012

April 29-May 11

- Comfortable hotels and charming inns – all with private bath
- Transportation in nine-passenger van • Outstanding cuisine
- Château visits • Farm-fresh products of Provence
- The Abbey at Sénanque • Numerous shopping opportunities
- Mediterranean boat ride and old fishing port at Cassis
- The wines of southern France, including Châteauneuf-du-Pape
- A picnic featuring local produce • Fabulous outdoor markets
- The stunning perched villages of Provence (Gordes, Roussillon)
- Aix-en-Provence, considered Southern France's prettiest town

Tour cost – \$3,895 per person • For a single room, add \$550 • To book, call (800) 676-1247

TOUR SUMMARY	FLY FROM U.S. – Leave April 27, arrive April 28 (overnight, <b>Best Western Marseille Airport</b> )
Tour begins & ends at Marseille Airport	TOUR BEGINS – At 9:30 a.m. Sunday, April 29, lobby, <b>Best Western Marseille Airport</b>
	TOUR ENDS – May 11, in the morning, at Marseille Airport (you will fly home today)
	TOUR DIRECTOR • <b>Connie Barney</b> , an experienced travel guide & culinary professional

## ■ Day 1 (Sunday, April 29)

We meet in the lobby of the **Best Western Marseille Airport** and plunge right into our Provence adventure. Just one hour up the road is our first destination, the fabled food and flea market at **l'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue**, known throughout France. Here, we'll shop for a picnic lunch, which we'll enjoy near town. Then it's on to the riverside village of **Fontaine-de-Vaucluse**. In springtime the springs that form the source of the **Sorgue River** are at their peak – a thundering waterfall leaping from the base of a mighty cliff. Late in the day, as we make our way north, we come to our hotel, the **Bellerive**, surrounded by vines near **Rasteau**. **DINNER** is in our hotel's restaurant, considered one of the finest tables in the area. **OVERNIGHT – RASTEAU**

## ■ Day 2 (Monday, April 30)

France is chock-full of lovely stone villages, and we visit two of the prettiest today: the perched village of **Séguret**, and lovely **Gigondas** (a fine red wine is made here). Also on our agenda is fascinating **Vaison-la-Romaine**, three towns in one – Roman, medieval and modern. We explore the old streets of the *ville haute* and admire the Roman-era excavations before having lunch. Later, we return to the beautiful **Bellerive**. **OVERNIGHT – RASTEAU**

## ■ Day 3 (Tuesday, May 1)

Very close to **Rasteau**, across a plain covered to the horizon in grape vines, lies Roman **Orange**. Here

we visit two treasures: a triumphal arch, built by the Romans in 20 BC, and the town's magnificent **Roman theater**, dating from the reign of **Caesar Augustus**. It is one of the best-preserved in the world. After lunch we go north, arriving in the small town of **Grignan** in time to visit its renaissance château. Returning to the Bellerive, we have **DINNER. OVERNIGHT – RASTEAU**

## ■ Day 4 (Wednesday, May 2)

From **Rasteau** this morning, we go south. Around 10 a.m. we arrive in old **Châteauneuf-du-Pape**, Southern France's most renowned wine village. After free time, we come to old **Avignon**, still protected by its proud city walls and recalling the days in the 14th century when it was the seat of the **Roman Catholic** church. We'll see as many of its attractions as time allows: the **Palace of the Popes**; the famed **Pont d'Avignon**, celebrated in a French children's song; and the **Musée Angladon**, with 19th century art and furnishings. You'll also enjoy wandering the animated streets and exploring the upscale shops. Late in the afternoon, we come to the charming village of **Saïgnon** and check into our old stone hotel, facing the fountain in the main square. This peaceful village, high on a hill, is dominated by a brace of rocks whose level tops afford a magnificent view of the surrounding hills, culminating in 6,273-foot **Mont Ventoux**. Tonight we have **DINNER** in our hotel's cheerful dining room. **OVERNIGHT – SAIGNON**

### ■ Day 5 (Thursday, May 3)

Our first stop is the delightful perched village of **Roussillon**, an ochre-colored marvel high on a cliff, where we go for a walk and have **LUNCH**. Later, we visit pretty **Gordes**, perched high above the **Lubéron** valley. Then it's on to the ancient **Abbey of Sénanque**, founded by Cistercian monks in the 12th century in a wild and romantic valley.

**OVERNIGHT – SAIGNON**

### ■ Day 6 (Friday, May 4)

From **Saignon** today we visit the market town of **Apt**, then explore the hill villages of **Bonnieux** and **Lacoste**. This is Provence at its best – medieval villages of stone houses with red-tile roofs, hidden in a tangle of winding streets. Later we visit the charming village of **Ménerbes**, made famous by **Peter Mayle**, whose stone farmhouse here was celebrated in the book “*A Year in Provence*.” **OVERNIGHT – SAIGNON**

### ■ Day 7 (Saturday, May 5)

Just 90 minutes from **Saignon** is Roman **Arles**. We arrive in late morning, in time to visit the legendary Arles market, one of southern France's best. After **LUNCH**, we get to know Arles better, with a get-acquainted walking tour and a stop at one or more of the many sights the city has to offer. Perhaps you'd like to explore the **Roman amphitheater**, the **cathedral and cloisters**, or the **Museum of Old Arles**. **OVERNIGHT – ARLES**

### ■ Day 8 (Sunday, May 6)

From **Arles** this morning we head north to the village of **Barbentane** to visit its Italianate château. You'll enjoy the beautiful castle with its fine old furnishings and quiet grounds. Near noon we arrive at the magnificent Roman aqueduct called the **Pont du Gard**, dating from the 1st century AD. It's incredibly well-preserved, with an informative museum to explain its significance and construction. We return to **Arles** in the late afternoon for free time, followed by **DINNER**. **OVERNIGHT – ARLES**

### ■ Day 9 (Monday, May 7)

We start a bit early today in order to get to the popular, and spectacular, village of **les Baux-de-Provence** before the big tour buses arrive. You'll love the rustic cobbled streets and windswept castle ruins commanding a view of the valley. Late in the morning, we head to the pretty town of **St. Rémy**, which we explore. In the afternoon, join us in visiting the asylum where **Van Gogh** lived in 1888-89, and to see the nearby ruined Roman town of **Glanum**. **OVERNIGHT – ARLES**

### ■ Day 10 (Tuesday, May 8)

Out of the country and into the city today, we leave **Arles** and proceed south, all the way to the

**Mediterranean at Cassis**. Here, stroll the lively waterfront and enjoy a boat ride to visit three *calanques* – dramatic, cliff-lined inlets of the **Mediterranean**. Later we arrive in beautiful **Aix-en-Provence**, our home for the next three nights. We stroll the **Cours Mirabeau**, one of France's most beautiful main streets, for a drink. Later, enjoy free time in what may be southern France's most beautiful town, followed by **DINNER**. **OVERNIGHT – AIX-EN-PROVENCE**

### ■ Day 11 (Wednesday, May 9)

A walking tour of **Aix** begins our day. See the old **Cathedral of St. Sauveur** and some of Aix's many fountains, as well as the pedestrian-only shopping district, a medieval marvel. After a lunch break, we visit the city's fine-arts museum, the **Granet**, featuring paintings by **Cézanne** and other artists; and **Cézanne's studio** on a quiet, tree-lined street. **OVERNIGHT – AIX-EN-PROVENCE**

### ■ Day 12 (Thursday, May 10)

Late in the morning, after free time in **Aix**, we leave the city for the nearby perched village of **Ventabren**. Here, we enjoy a festive **FAREWELL LUNCH**. Later, back in **Aix**, do some last-minute shopping or sightseeing, or take time to prepare for tomorrow's departure. **OVERNIGHT – AIX-EN-PROVENCE**

### ■ Getaway Day (Friday, May 11)

It's time to say *au revoir* to Provence. **Aix-en-Provence** is only 30 minutes from the **Marseille-Provence Airport**, providing easy access for morning flights.

## Notes

**MEALS** – Tour includes breakfast every day, as well as eight other meals (lunches and dinners), as indicated in **BOLD CAPS** on the itinerary.

## OUR HOTELS

**Hôtel Bellerive**, Rasteau (Vaison-la-Romaine)  
**Hôtel du Presbytère**, Saignon  
**Hôtel Calendal**, Arles  
**Hôtel Mozart**, Aix-en-Provence

**HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS** – Subject to availability.

**ITINERARY** – Details of this preliminary itinerary could change. A final itinerary will be issued closer to trip departure.

**SIGHTSEEING** – All sightseeing listed in the itinerary is included as part of the tour.