



# Provence Itinerary 2018

■ May 13-25 ■ Group limited to 16

- Comfortable hotels and charming inns – all with private bath
- Transportation in nine-passenger van • Outstanding cuisine
- Newly opened replica of the **Chauvet Cave**, with reproductions of cave art dating back an estimated 32,000 years.
- Roman-era **Pont du Gard** • 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
- Stunning perched villages of Provence – **Gordes, Roussillon**
- Gracious **Aix-en-Provence**, southern France's most elegant town

Tour cost – \$3,995 per person • For a single room, add \$550 • To book, call (800) 676-1247

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>TOUR SUMMARY</b></p> <p>Tour begins, ends at Marseille airport</p> | <p><b>FLY FROM U.S.</b> – Leave May 11, arrive May 12 (overnight, Best Western Marseille Airport)</p> <p><b>TOUR BEGINS</b> – At 9 a.m. Sunday, May 13, Best Western Marseille Airport</p> <p><b>TOUR ENDS</b> – May 25, in the morning, at Marseille airport (you will fly home today)</p> <p><b>12 TOUR NIGHTS • TOUR MEALS</b> – Breakfast daily, plus eight lunches and dinners</p> |
|--|---|

## ■ Day 1 (Sunday, May 13)

We meet in the lobby of the **Best Western Marseille Airport** and plunge right into our Provence adventure. Just 90 minutes up the road is our first destination, Roman **Arles**. Arriving before noon, we stow our bags at our charming, quiet hotel, then walk through the old town before stopping for **LUNCH**. In the afternoon, 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 2 (Monday, May 14)

From **Arles** this morning we head north to the village of **Uzès**, as typical southern French town with an arcaded central square. Near noon we arrive at the soaring 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** in town. **OVERNIGHT – ARLES**

## ■ Day 3 (Tuesday, May 15)

We start a bit earlier 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 and where we have lunch. 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 4 (Wednesday, May 16)

From **Arles** this morning, we go north. Around 10:30 a.m. we arrive in old **Avignon**, still protected by its proud city walls and recalling the days in the 14th century when it was the seat of the Catholic church. We'll see as many of its attractions as time allows: the **Palace of the Popes**; the bridge called the **Pont d'Avignon**, celebrated in a French children's song; the **Musée Angladon**, with 19th century art and furnishings. You'll also enjoy wandering the animated streets and exploring the upscale shops. In the afternoon, we pass through **Châteauneuf-du-Pape**, Southern France's most renowned wine region. Later, we come to our hotel, the **Bellerive**, surrounded by vines near **Rasteau**. **DINNER** is at our hotel. **OVERNIGHT – RASTEAU**

## ■ Day 5 (Thursday, May 17)

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. Later, we relax at the beautiful **Bellerive**

before **DINNER** at the hotel. **OVERNIGHT – RASTEAU**

### ■ Day 6 (Friday, May 18)

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 visit the newly opened replica of the **Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc Cave**, displaying exact copies of images painted an estimated 32,000 years ago. **DINNER** at the hotel. **OVERNIGHT – RASTEAU**

### ■ Day 7 (Saturday, May 19)

From **Rasteau** today we push south to the fabled **Lubéron** region of Provence. Our first stop is the market town of **Apt**, to take in its well-regarded Saturday market. Then it's on to two spectacular hill villages – **Bonnieux** and **Lacoste**. Our final stop is in the village of **Ménerbes**, made famous by Peter Mayle in *A Year in Provence*. At day's end we return to **Apt** and check into our *centre ville* hotel. **OVERNIGHT – APT**

### ■ Day 8 (Sunday, May 20)

The fabled food and flea market at **l'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue** is first on today's agenda. Here, we'll shop for a picnic lunch, which we'll enjoy near town. Then it's on to the beautiful riverside village of **Fontaine-de-Vaucluse**. In springtime the source of the **Sorgue River** is at its peak – a thundering waterfall leaping from the base of a mighty cliff. Late in the day, as we make our way back to **Apt**, we may want to pause in rustic **Oppède-le-Vieux**, unlike any other village in this region. **DINNER** in town. **OVERNIGHT – APT**

### ■ Day 9 (Monday, May 21)

Our first stop is the delightful perched village of **Roussillon**, an ochre marvel high on a cliff, where we go for a walk among the hills, pines and colorfully eroded cliffs. After a lunch break, we visit pretty **Gordes**, perched high above the **Lubéron** valley. Then it's on to the ancient Cistercian **Abbey of Sénanque**. On our way back to **Apt** we may want to pause in rustic **Oppède-le-Vieux**, unlike any other village in this region. In the late 20th century it was largely abandoned, creating an atmospheric collection of romantically crumbling structures. **OVERNIGHT – APT**

### ■ Day 10 (Tuesday, May 22)

Out of the country and into the city today, we leave **Apt** 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**. Late in the day we arrive in beautiful **Aix-en-Provence**, our home for the next three nights. We check into our hotel, then stroll to the **Cours Mirabeau**, one of France's most stately main streets, for a drink. Later, enjoy free time in what may be southern France's most beautiful town, followed by **DINNER** in the art deco splendor of our hotel's restaurant. **OVERNIGHT – AIX-EN-PROVENCE**

### ■ Day 11 (Wednesday, May 23)

A walking tour of **Aix** begins the day. See the old **Cathedral of St. Sauveur** and several 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 24)

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 25)

It's time to say *au revoir* to Provence. **Aix-en-Provence** is only 30 minutes from the Marseille-Provence Airport, convient 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 Calendal**, Arles

**Hôtel Bellerive**, Rasteau (Vaison-la-Romaine)

**Hôtel Ste. Anne**, Apt

**Hôtel St. Christophe**, 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 itinerary is included as part of the tour.

**TOUR PRICE** of \$3,995 per person is an estimate as any significant decline in the value of the U.S. dollar vs. the euro may result in imposition of a currency surcharge. Ask us for details.