

Touring holidays of France

Expressions



Provence by car self-drive holiday



Provence by car self-drive holiday

12 NIGHTS / 13 DAYS

Burgundy

Vienne

Bonnieux

Crillon-le-Brave

Arles

Champagne



This 12-night self-drive touring holiday to Provence allows you to tour from Calais to Provence and back, enjoying various stops in Provence itself and also on the way there and back, in the comfort of your own car. Your touring holiday to Provence starts with a Eurotunnel crossing from Folkestone to Calais and then a drive to a wine village in Burgundy, south of Dijon, where you spend the first night of the tour. From the patchwork of Burgundy vineyards you travel south, along the valleys of the Saone and the Rhone, through Beaujolais to the town of Vienne, with plenty of time for detours along the way, perhaps to Cluny or Tournus. Your first stop in Provence is for three nights in the pretty village of Bonnieux in the Luberon, renowned for its olive groves, vineyards, lavender beds and sunflower fields. There are plenty of places of interest to visit nearby. Then you travel across to the region of the Alpilles, south of Avignon, renowned for its traditions and local culture, to reach the historic city of Arles, gateway to the Camargue and famous for its amphitheatre and associations with Van Gogh who lived and worked here. In the two nights you spend here there is time to explore the wetlands of the Camargue and perhaps venture to the fortified town of Aigues-Mortes. The papal city of Avignon can be visited en-route before your final overnight stay in Provence, in the village of Crillon-le-Brave, nestling in the foothills of Mont Ventoux, not far from the wine villages of Chateauneuf-du-Pape and Gigondas. Your route back to Calais affords you two stops: one in southern Burgundy, south of Beaune, and the other in Epernay, in the Champagne region. You return on a Eurotunnel crossing from Calais to Folkestone.

PRICES

From £2,470 per person

Based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

DATES

This self-drive holiday can be arranged for any departure date subject to availability.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Eurotunnel from Folkestone to Calais return for car and passengers
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Tradition room at the Chateau de Gilly in Burgundy
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Deluxe room at the Hotel la Pyramide in Vienne

- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in a Charme room at the Domaine de Capelongue in Bonnieux
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Classic room at the Grand Hôtel Nord-Pinus in Arles
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in a Classic room Hotel de Crillon-le-Brave, in Crillon-le-Brave
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Standard room at Le Montrachet in Puligny-Montrachet
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Classic room at Hostellerie La Briqueterie in Epernay, Champagne
- Concierge service and Expressions Holidays regional helpful hints

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Early check-in or late check-out at any hotels (although we can arrange this on request at additional cost)
- Any other services not mentioned above, such as transfers and meals except breakfast at hotels
- Personal holiday insurance. This is essential and cover should be in place from when you book the holiday.
- Local tourist tax, usually between Euros 1 and 3 per person per night, and payable locally to the hotel

Day one Calais to Burgundy

You start this self-drive touring holiday of France with the crossing on Eurotunnel for your car and passengers. From Calais to your first night's stop in Burgundy, north of Beaune, it's a drive of about 6 hours with the most direct route taking you past Reims and the Champagne region, the mediaeval town of Troyes and the cathedral city of Dijon. You stop in the village of Gilly-les-Citeaux, surrounded by the vineyards of Burgundy and near the famous villages of Vosne-Romanee and Nuits-St-Georges. You spend one night here.

Days two Burgundy to Vienne

Today's drive is just 2 and a half hours following the course of the Saone and the Rhone to Vienne, south of Lyon. However, it is going to take you much longer than this to complete the journey today as there is so much to see and do along the way. You can choose to dally a while in Burgundy itself, perhaps visiting Beaune or any of the wine villages nearby, or veer off the main route to visit the Benedictine abbey of Cluny, founded in the 10th century, or take a detour into Beaujolais, with its steep vineyards and villages of golden-brown stone. Enjoy the scenery and continue onwards to Vienne where spend the night. Vienne, in the Rhone valley south of Lyon, was once an important centre of the Roman Empire, and boasts a rich archaeological history. Take time to see the Temple d'Auguste et de Livie and the amphitheatre, still used as a venue today. The gothic cathedral in Vienne, a striking building dating back many centuries, is also not to be missed. You spend one night here.

Day three Vienne to Bonnieux in the Luberon

Today's journey south still follows the course of the Rhone for much of the way, but again with only 2 and a half hours' driving time, all sorts of sightseeing diversions beckon along the way. In addition to the nougat-town of Montelimar, you could take a longer detour to visit the Gorges des Ardeches or the Roman town of Orange before striking out into the countryside of the Luberon to reach one of its prettiest and best-known villages, Bonnieux. You spend three nights here.

Days four and five In the Luberon

With two days in the Luberon you have plenty of chance to explore the region as well as to relax in the village of Bonnieux. From the hill-top village of Bonnieux enjoy the views of the Luberon, wander its pretty streets, taste regional specialities in its cafes and restaurants, and visit its baker museum and the famous Roman bridge in the valley below.



Beaune

Just 25 minutes from Bonnieux is one of the finest examples of the famous Provencal lavender fields at the Abbaye de Sénanque, just outside the village of Gordes. The former Cistercian monastery dates from 1148 and now guests can take tours of the church and cloisters and feast their eyes on beautiful fields of lavender beyond (the lavender is usually harvested by the beginning of August and is in bloom from the end of June). For a more in-depth view of the history of lavender in Provence why not visit the Musée de la Lavande in Coustellet. Gordes itself is one of the most beautiful villages in Provence and nearby is the curious Village des Bories, an open-air museum of stone dwellings possibly dating as far back as the Bronze Age. About 30 minutes away lie the tranquil turquoise waters of beautiful Fontaine-de-Vaucluse. Follow the trail of water exquisite in its clarity and colour through the pools and channels created by this subterranean spring, and water that has inspired poets for hundreds of years. Petrarch lived here in the 14th century and his now is now a museum. There is also a museum of the Resistance, a museum of Provencal 'santons', workshops of hand-blown crystal and a mill making paper by hand using 15th century techniques.

Day six Bonnieux to Arles

Today you should not take the most direct route between the two places but enjoy a detour through the Alpilles, a chain on limestone mountains, full of lots of natural scenery and displaying an authentic Provence. This is the land of the authors Alphonse

Daudet (you can see his mill at Fontvieille) and Frederic Mistral and of Van Gogh who lived in St Remy de Provence. The landscape has the limestone peaks, but pine and oak forests, fields of olive trees and avenues of cypress. Dotted around are farmhouse of ancient drystone. St Remy de Provence is the place to head for first, where three civilisations are represented in a single site at Glanum, then to Les Baux de Provence, a mountain-top village with 22 historic monuments and with outstanding views over the countryside below. From Les Baux you are just 8 km from Fontvieille, a pretty village with ancient houses and where Alphonse Daudet wrote his famous 'Lettres de Mon Moulin'. Arles, your destination for today, is just 7km from here. You stay at Arles for two nights.

Day seven In Arles

Arles is an ancient city on the river Rhone and gateway to the Camargue. Important in Roman times, the amphitheatre is a major landmark of the city today, where plays, concerts and bull flights are held. There is also a Gallo-Roman theatre, an aqueduct and Roman baths. The city and its surrounds inspired Van Gogh when he lived here for 18 months in 1888-1889 and it was here that he developed his swirling style and colour scheme that we now recognise as being quintessentially Van Gogh and painted 'Bedroom at Arles' and 'Starry Night' amongst others. Arles was also the setting for his

collaboration and subsequent disagreements with Gauguin, as well as the famous act of cutting off his own ear. Visit the Foundation Vincent Van Gogh Arles and view Van Gogh's work in dialogue with more contemporary pieces. As an International Art capital, Arles is the home of a series of exciting and colourful festivals throughout the year. For example, from July to September, the Roman Theatre houses the Festival of Photography, in which live music accompanies open air night projections of the work of local and famous photographers.

From Arles explore the nearby marshlands of the Camargue, at the delta of the river Rhone. The Camargue is approximately a third lakes or marshland and home to more than 400 species of birds. Horses and cattle roam the area. It is worth heading for the fortified, walled town of Aigues-Mortes which seemingly rises from the marshes and salt pans of the Camargue, although not officially in Provence as it is in the department of the Gard in Languedoc.

Day eight Arles to Crillon-le-Brave

Today follow the course of the River Rhone northwards to the papal city of Avignon, which you could visit before continuing on your way to Mont Ventoux and the village of Crillon-le-Brave. Avignon, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is set on the banks of the majestic Rhone river and was the seat of the Catholic popes for most of the 14th century, only coming under French rule in 1791. Its centre, which is surrounded by high mediaeval ramparts, houses the imposing Palais des Papes, the largest gothic palace in the world. The old town of Avignon is home to numerous other architectural gems including the 12th century cathedral, the ramparts, and the famous Pont d'Avignon. You have three nights in the pretty, hill village of Crillon-le-Brave.

Days nine and ten In Crillon-le-Brave

The base of Mont Ventoux is clustered with small market towns such as Caromb or Carpentras. Nearby are the wine villages of Gigondas, Vacqueyras, Beaumes-de-Venise and Chateauneuf-du-Pape. The region also boasts spectacular scenery that can be explored on foot or by bike. For the more adventurous visitor, cycle up the winding path to the summit of Mont Ventoux and look down from the rocky, chalky mountain top over the lush green fields below. Crillon-le-Brave is less than an hour's drive from Sault and also from Valréas, both sites of more famous lavender festivals, with an opportunity for a tour around some botanical gardens in Sault.



Provence scenery

Day eleven Crillon-le-Brave to Puligny-Montrachet in Burgundy

After enjoying breakfast at the hotel travel northwards again, along the valley of the Rhone, towards Burgundy and the small village of Puligny-Montrachet, famed for its white wines, and to the south of Beaune, situated at the heart of the Cote de Beaune.

Day twelve Burgundy to Epernay in Champagne

Drive northwards and arrive in the Champagne region for your final night of this self-drive touring holiday in Epernay. Nestling between the Aisne and Marne valleys, Epernay and its nearby rival, Reims, are well situated to see the champagne vineyards thrive.

Day thirteen Epernay to Calais

Depending on the time of your Eurotunnel crossing from Calais to Folkestone, you may want to linger amid the Champagne houses of Epernay and Reims. We can give you suggestions of Champagne houses to visit. Laon and Arras are two historic towns that you also might want to call in at on the way back to Calais.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR TOURS

Our tailor-made touring holidays are suggested itineraries which can be adapted in numerous ways. They can be fly-drive (with flight and hire-car included), self-drive (with ferry or Eurotunnel included with your own car) or rail and hire-car.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of your chosen transport and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

TOUR CODE

FRSD02

The logo for Expressions Holidays, featuring the word "Expressions" in a white, elegant script font on a dark blue rectangular background.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators).

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HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441250

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process.