

Bike and Barge in the Provence
In the footsteps of Van Gogh
An 8-day cycling tour

Tour Code: FR01C



The Provence is one of the most fascinating regions of Europe, a land of incredible natural diversity and home to pink flamingos, herons, cormorants and more than 400 species of other birds. The vast wetland plains, ponds and rice paddies are protected against the modern world. You will bike and boat through a land of salt marshes, rich in flora, fauna and wildlife, a country in itself with its long horned black bulls, white horses, gypsies, and Camargue cowboys.

Highlights of this unique bike and boat tour in France include the medieval fortress town of Aigues-Mortes and the Gallo-Roman city of Arles, which dates back to the 7th Century with its major Roman sites. This was home to Van Gogh between February 1888 and May 1889. During this period he produced about 300 drawings and paintings, among them "Bedroom in Arles." Inspired by the vibrant light of the region, he also created "Starry Night" which he painted on the plains at the northern edge of the Alpilles Mountains. Avignon, the heart of Provence, also known as The "Windy City" stretches in all its beauty on the left bank of the Rhône river. Avignon is one of the few French cities to have preserved its ramparts; its historic centre, with the amazing Palace of the Popes and the 12 C cathedral Notre-Dame-des-Doms, is an ideal place to wander about in search of beautiful surprises. Please read the daily itinerary below to learn more about what you will see and experience as you motor through Provence waterways.

We hope you enjoy this wonderful and diverse Provence bike tour full of colour, texture, history and contrast!

"It is not the language of painters but the language of nature which one should listen to. . . The feeling for the things themselves, for reality, is more important than the feeling for pictures." Vincent Van Gogh



Programme in Short:

Avignon - Aigues Mortes

1. Arrival in Avignon
2. Avignon: circular route 18,6 miles (30 km)
3. Avignon - Aramon; 25 miles (40 km)
4. Aramon - Vallabrègues: 22 miles (35 km)
5. Vallabrègues - Arles: 34 miles (55 km)
6. Arles - Aigues - Mortes: 16 miles (25 km)
7. Aigues - Mortes: circular route 34 miles (55 km)
8. Departure

Reverse Itinerary:

Aigues Mortes to Avignon

1. Arrival in Aigues - Mortes
2. Aigues - Mortes, round tour: 34 miles (55 km)
3. Aigues - Mortes - Arles: 16 miles (25 km)
4. Arles - Vallabrègues: 34 miles (55 km)
5. Vallabrègues - Aramon: 22 miles (35 km)
6. Aramon - Avignon: 25 miles (40 km)
7. Avignon round tour: 18,6 miles (30 km)
8. Departure

Tour Dates:

FROM AVIGNON: Saturday 26.03, 9.04, 23.04, 7.05, 21.05, 4.06, 18.06, 2.07, 16.07, 30.07, 13.08, 27.08, 10.09, 24.09, 8.10, 22.10.2022

FROM AIGUES-MORTES: Saturday 2.04, 16.04, 30.04, 14.05, 28.05, 11.06, 25.06, 9.07, 23.07, 6.08, 20.08, 3.09, 17.09, 1.10, 15.10.2022

Participants: minimum 1.

Level: 1-2

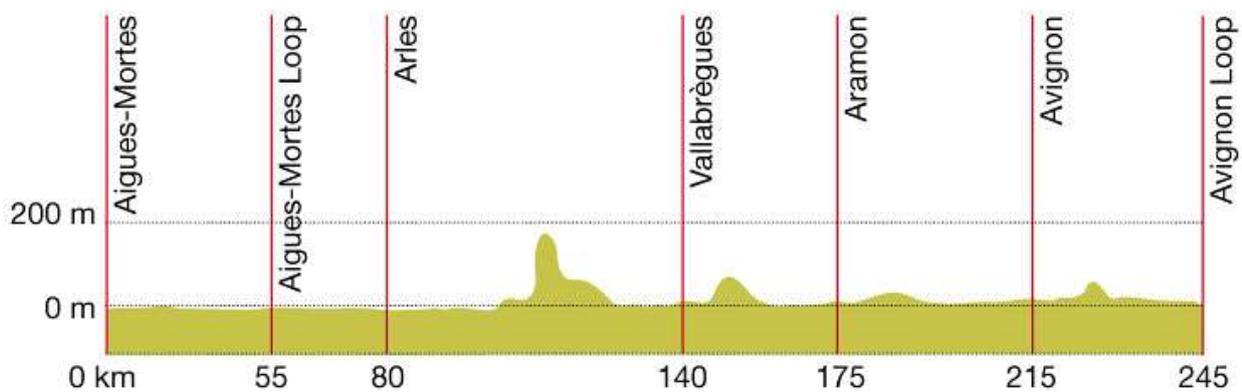
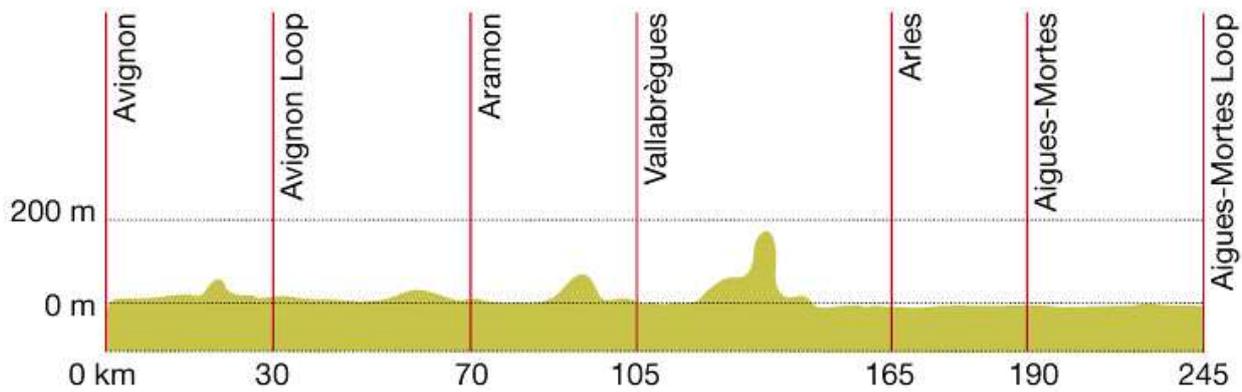
Total length: 240 km

Total vertical up: 620 m

Terrain: 95% tarmac, 5% unpaved

An easy to moderate self-guided or group bike and boat tour on country roads. Average daily distances between 16 and 34 miles (25 and 55 km). Route on bike paths and low traffic roads in rural and city areas. Short stretches are on unpaved roads and few on not avoidable busy roads. A minivan is available on the area for emergencies. The same van offers alternative excursions for those customers who don't want to cycle on some days or can organize transfers to shorten the longest stages. These extra services are not included and must be paid on site. Programs and prices are available on board.

The tour is totally flat in the lowlands in the two stages in Camargue, while the stages north of Arles present some ups and downs, which are however easy to overcome. There is just one more demanding slope towards Les Baux de Provence, but you will be fully repaid with an extraordinary landscape. There will also be some navigation stretches to make the stages more enjoyable.



Daily programme:

The programme has been planned to feature navigation along the Rhone River and Rhone-Sète Canal. Due to organisational reasons, weather conditions or provisions issued by local authorities, the itinerary may be subject to some changes before and/or during the holiday. Issues with high and low water, as well as logistic obstacles such as officially ordered - previously not announced - repair work on locks or bridges can modify some of the daily stretches or overnight stays and may even request a transfer by bus. These decisions are only taken by the barge's captain.

Day 1 Arrival in Avignon

Individual arrival in Avignon. Avignon's architecture is marked by papal history since in the early 14th century, the pontifical court was exiled to France. The cardinals, arriving at the papal court and finding no accommodation in Avignon, began to build magnificent residences across the river in Villeneuve ("new town"). Boarding is at 6 p.m.

Day 2 Avignon, round trip

After breakfast we will cycle on the other side of the river Rhone, crossing the island Île de la Barthelasse. The island of Barthelasse is home to many species of birds: sparrow hawks, brown kites, minor harrier and moorhens. Trees along the river shore (poplars, willows, olms and alders) are home to sparrows, thrushes and herons. We cycle among

vineyards and orchards. We will visit Villeneuve les Avignon, once known to be the of the cardinals town. In the afternoon time to discover the historic centre of Avignon.

Distance: 30 km / 18,6 miles

Vertical up: + 100m

Day 3 Avignon - Aramon

The boat navigates to Aramon. From here you will make a circular route through a hilly landscape to the best preserved Roman aqueduct in all of Europe, the Pont du Gard. This bridge, with its three levels of stone arches, spans the Gardon Valley, being part of an aqueduct built during the 1st century in order to transport water from the Eure spring near Uzès to the Roman town of Nîmes, a distance of over 50 kilometres. You pass ancient villages and hillside vineyards Overnight in Aramon.

Distance: 40 km / 25 miles

Vertical up: + 110m

Day 4 Aramon - Vallabrègues

The boat navigates to Vallabrègues, a village on the banks of the Rhône Located on the plains at the northern edge of the Alpilles, 20 km south of Avignon, is where Van Gogh painted Starry Night. Here starts the circular cycle tour, you will pass a landscape of limestone cliffs, flower fields, and olive trees. You cycle along quiet country roads to Barbentane with its castle, situated on the confluence of the Rhone and Durance rivers. Then you continue cycling to the impressive abbey of Saint Michel de Frigulet. Then a nice downhill ride to Bourbon, a nice medieval town. Your overnight is in Vallabrègues.

Distance: 35 km / 25 miles

Vertical up: + 90m



Day 5 Vallabrègues - Arles

Today's stage is more challenging than usual, but the breathtaking panoramic views are worth the sweat! A long, downhill road will take you towards St-Rémy-de-Provence. Lodged in a bare rock spur detached from the Alpilles, the picturesque village of Les Baux-de-Provence, is one of the most popular tourist attractions in France, because it is the birthplace of Nostradamus and Van Gogh stayed here during his mental illness. This stage will bring you through the chain of the Alpilles, whose arid peaks standing out against the

blue sky are reminiscent of some Greek landscapes. The day ends in the beautiful town of Arles. Today the whole morning is dedicated to visit Arles, the ancient capital of Gaul with beautiful Roman ruins. This town and its surroundings are what inspired Van Gogh in several of his paintings. He sought to find "a different light" which the Provençal countryside and its luminosity provided.

Distance: 55 km / 34 miles

Vertical up: + 300m

Day 6 Arles - Aigues - Mortes

This morning there is time enough to visit the town of Arles. You will also have the opportunity to be welcomed by a professional guide, who will accompany you around the jewels of the town. You will cycle among cane and rice fields on very pleasant and easy country roads with white horses and Camargue bulls as your companions. You arrive at the lock of Saint-Gilles from where the boat navigates to Aigues-Morte.

Distance: 25 km / 16 miles

Vertical up: + 0m



Day 7 Aigues - Mortes, round trip

Literally translated Aigues-Mortes means "dead waters", probably referring to the location of the town in the heart of the marshy Camargue region on France's Mediterranean coast. However, do not be deceived by this description. In this charming medieval town with its massive towers and walkable defensive curtain wall surrounding it, visitors can still wander about in a 13th century town. Today's cycling will provide the opportunity to explore Camargue, where nature still prevails over civilization. A quiet, uneven dirt road between a canal and some salty ponds, where you will probably see some flocks of pink flamingos feeding in the shallow waters, will lead you to the seaside village of Le-Grau-du-Roi. You can enjoy a rest on the beach of Le-Grau-du-Roi. In the afternoon, you can't miss a visit to the incredible salt marshes on the way back to Aigues Mortes, where the production of salt goes back to Antiquity. It's an easy, flat cycling day, which will make for a great first encounter with Camargue's beauty. You can also enjoy a refreshing swim in the Mediterranean Sea.

Distance: 55 km / 34 miles

Vertical up: + 20m

Day 8 Departure

Individual departure after breakfast.

You can also book the reverse itinerary, from Aigues-Mortes to Avignon.

Type of Tour: self-guided or guided tour

Good to know this tour offers the chance to choose if pedalling alone (taking advantage of a very detailed route description) or with the whole group, following the tour leader.

When booking the tour please specify which option you prefer.

Guided tour

The tour guide will welcome you on board and during the tour he will be available for any questions you may have on the itinerary. He will always be present during breakfast and dinner and will cycle every day with those who want to do the guided tour. Every evening after dinner the guide will present you the cycling program of the following day.

Self guided tour

If you want to cycle independently, you are free to do it by following the roadbook you have. Please communicate us when you book if you want to do the guided tour or want to cycle independently (self-guided). In case of an emergency and also in case of a technical problem with your rented bike of course you can always contact the tour guide by phone. If you change your mind during the week and you want to join the guided tour, please inform the tour leader the evening before.

If you choose the guided option, the tour leader will be always present during breakfast and dinner and will cycle every day with you.

The tour leaders are carefully selected and rigorously trained. They are all multi-lingual, and speak at least English and German. Smart, entertaining, caring and endlessly enthusiastic, they have a true passion for sharing their love of the outdoors, people, culture and local food. Thanks to a deep knowledge of the territory, they can give you useful hints and help you appreciate the place you are visiting. Of course they love cycling and will be happy to give you some advice about how to correctly use the bicycle gears and whenever necessary they can fix your flat tyre. As we like to say, our tour leaders are CDO (Controlled Designation of Origin), a real traveller's ticket to discover the land with ease and to live an unforgettable active travel experience.

A minivan is available in the area for emergencies. The same van offers alternative excursions for those customers who don't want to cycle on some days or can organize transfers to shorten the longest stages. These extra services are not included and must be paid on site. Programs and prices are available on board. On board you'll find also some proposals to do free excursions on your own, with no tour leader and no minivan.

Price per person 2022:

	Price in Euro
Standard cabin Season 1*	1.020,00
Supplements	
Season 2*	360,00
Season 3*	410,00
Season 4*	460,00
Single Cabin	350,00
Special diet (like gluten and lactose free - vegan)	50,00
Bike rental	
Bike	85,00
E-bike	220,00

*Season 1: 26.03 – 2.04 and 9.07 – 13.08.2022

*Season 2: 9.04 – 30.04 and 15.10 – 22.10.2022

*Season 3: 7.05 – 2.07. 2022

*Season 4: 20.08 – 8.10.2022

Extra Nights on request in Aigues-Mortes or Avignon
--

Cancellation policy:

Cancellation before 90 days of the beginning of the tour: 10%

From 89 to 60 days beginning tour: 40%

From 59 to 30 days beginning tour: 60%

From 29 to 7 days to beginning tour: 85%

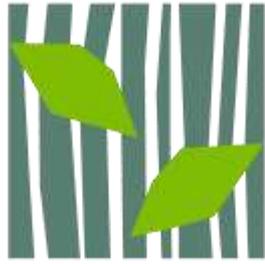
From 6 to 1 day to beginning tour: 100%

Included in the price:

- 7 overnight stays
- Full board (breakfast, dinner and a self-made packed lunch)
- Coffee and tea and other hot drinks on board
- Sheets and towels
- Courtesy kit
- Daily short cleaning + mid-week cabin cleaning service and towel change
- Bike helmet
- App including maps, points of interest and GPS tracks, digital tour information
- English speaking tour leader within an international group
- Guided visit of Arles and Avignon
- Harbour charges
- Emergency van in the area

Not included:

- Beverages on board
- Museums and extras in general
- Tips
- Everything not mentioned in the section “included in the price”



ECOLOGICOTOURS

ECOLOGICO TOURS

Cantonal 41B / Marmotta B19

6565 San Bernardino

Svizzera/Schweiz/Suisse

info@ecologicotours.com

tel. (0039) 3463254167 - (0041)(0) 79 2457505

www.ecologicotours.com

www.meravigliosaumbria.com