Cycling the Canal du Midi: from Toulouse to the Mediterranean - 7 days comfort

7 days / 6 nights

Toulouse is your point of departure for this journey along the 'Canal du Midi', which was classed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. The journey is one of exceptional beauty; the canal is bordered almost all of the way by plane trees, sometimes pine trees, poplars or cypresses. The canal takes you through the heart of the countryside in both the Midi Pyrenees and the Languedoc-Roussillon region of South-West France. This is an area of extensive farm land and in particular, vineyards. The wine in this region can be superb. There are plenty of opportunities to taste the wine, as well as visit ancient towns and monuments along the way. This particular tour takes in the ancient cities of Castelnaudary, Carcassonne, and Narbonne.

YOUR PROGRAM

Day 1 - Toulouse

Arrive at Toulouse and settle into your hotel.
Toulouse is a wonderfully vibrant place and it is well worth spending some time looking around.
Night in a three-star hotel only a short walk away from the heart of the old city.

Day 2 - From Toulouse to Castelnaudary

If you have paid in advance for rental bikes, make your way to the rental agency, a 10-minute walk from your hotel. Familiarise yourself with the many locks ('Ecluse') which abound along the route. Allow yourself time to listen to the many birds that spend their time around the canal, chat to the local fishermen and watch the tourist boats chugging ever so slowly through this idyllic scenery. Spend the night in a delightful two star hotel on the banks of the canal, at Castelnaudary. Dine out on "Cassoulet" which has made this particular town famous throughout France.
This stage is roughly 40 miles.

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Day 3 - From Castelnaudary to Carcassonne

This is a day which urges you to dawdle! One cannot help but feel at the very heart of the French countryside. The views along the tree-lined canal out towards the agricultural fields and to the Pyrenees beyond make it a special day. You cannot miss the fact that you are entering wine country, with plenty of vineyards within metres from the banks of the canal. The destination for this evening is a real treat. Carcassonne boasts two World Heritage Sites and is really unique. Spend time in the medieval city before heading back to your three-star hotel, at walking distance from "La Cité".
This stage is under 30 miles.

Day 4 - Carcassonne, Castles and Caves

With an extra day in Carcassonne, you have the opportunity to take it easy and spend more time exploring this fabulous city. For those feeling fit and adventurous, we have prepared a fantastic day's cycle ride away from the canal, heading into the heart of Cathar country. The ride takes you into the Black Mountains where you can visit the Chateaux de Lastours as well as an underground cave at Limousis which stretches over 1.2km. There are many opportunities to taste the local wines. Return to Carcassonne.
Up to 30 miles round trip with some reasonably steep climbs.

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Day 5 - Carcassonne to Narbonne

This is a challenging day, as the distance covered is the longest on the trip and the cycle track by the side of the canal is rough and slow going. However, with plenty of time, this is a rewarding day with many small towns, villages and ports to enjoy along the route. Once more, there are numerous places at which you can stop to taste the local wines, sample the local food or purchase local products. Near the end of the ride, you will leave the Canal du Midi to join the Canal de la Robine. This canal takes you into the ancient city of Narbonne, where you will spend the night in a three-star hotel outside the city center but just next to a wine tasting center!.
This stage is roughly 48 to 50 miles depending of the options.

Day 6 - Narbonne to the Mediterranean

After the previously long day, this makes for an easy ride and a rewarding one as you reach the Mediterranean with the possibility of a dip in the sea! The purpose built cycle route takes you easily from the centre of Narbonne, and then out through a cluster of lakes before arriving at Port-la-Nouvelle. The Port has a fabulously long golden-sand beach and hosts many restaurants at which you can celebrate the end point of your ride from Toulouse.
For those inclined to finish there, it is possible to take the local train back to Narbonne. Night in Narbonne.

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Day 7 - From Narbonne to Toulouse

Possible return journey by train. About 2 hours from Narbonne to Toulouse.

Additional information

TARIFFS

Price from 1090 euros per person.

OPTIONS

July and August departure : 60 euros per person.

Single room supplement : 520 euros per person.

Bike rental (hybrid bike) including delivery and pick up - 1 helmet, 1 front bag and 1 back bag (20 liters), locks and repair kit. : 260 euros per person.

E-bike rental including delivery and pick up - 1 helmet, 1 front bag and 1 back bag (20 liters), locks and repair kit. : 340 euros per person.

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INCLUDED

- Nights in 3-star hotels in double room
- 6 breakfasts per person
- Luggage transfer between cycling stages
- Route notes and maps on our app (a smartphone is required)
- Local hotline (everyday from 08.00am until 08.00pm).

NOT INCLUDED

- Lunches and dinners
- Extra transfers
- Bike rental (see options)
- Return train from Narbonne to Toulouse (about 25€ pp).
- Everything not mentioned on "included" part

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Flat itinerary except for the optional loop from Carcassonne. Long stage from Carcassonne to Narbonne with 48 to 50 miles. From 14 miles to 50 miles a day. Note that the path alongside the canal is mainly a dirt track rather than tarmac.

CARRYING

Your bag (one per person) is transferred by taxi between the hotels.

ACCOMMODATION

3-stars hotels. All with ensuite facilities.

SIZE OF GROUP

From 2 persons only.

DEPARTURES

Everyday, except Saturdays from beginning of April until end of October.

DEPARTURE

At your hotel in Toulouse.

DISPERSION

End of your holiday in Narbonne.

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