

Vineyards and castles in Cathar country

8 days / 7 nights

From the city of Carcassonne, this route takes you through vineyards before reaching the coast in the Muscat country and then back up to the Cathar castles.

Stay in friendly 3-star hotels and charming chambres d'hôtes.

YOUR PROGRAM

Day 1 - Carcassonne

Carcassonne, a hilltop town in the Languedoc area of southern France, is a wonderful place to start your holiday. Famous for its medieval citadel, explore the lanes, bars and restaurants that nestle inside the fortress. Dinner in one of the hidden gardens is a must.

Night in a three star hotel or chambre d'hôtes with swimming pool.

Day 2 - From Carcassonne to Rennes les Bains.

After breakfast, your cycle ride will take you north. Very quickly you will leave the bustling city of Carcassonne to enjoy a peaceful surrounding. The hills begin as you enter The Cathar country and a visit to the Abbaye de Saint-Hilaire. From there, your ride takes you through genuine charm vineyards where you may be tempted to taste their wines. Cross Limoux before heading towards Rennes-Le-Chateau. Continue up to Rennes les Bains, a small village known for its thermal baths, where you will spend the night.

Approximately 60km, +1000m, -900m

Night in a three-star hotel at the heart of the village.

Day 3 - From Rennes les Bains to Rivesaltes

A wonderful day's ride where nature is really in the spotlight. Superb landscapes follow one after another, such as the Gorges de Galamus, where vultures fly majestically above you. It's possible to stop in one of the vineyards or take a short stroll to the Galamus hermitage, perched on a cliff and overlooking the gorge. The itinerary continues through the Côtes du Roussillon via little-known roads which are a dream for cyclists. Your day ends in Rivesaltes, the capital of the Muscat wine, where we suggest that you taste the "muscat ambré".

Approximately 75km, +800m, -1100m

Night in a three star hotel in the heart of Rivesaltes.

Day 4 - From Rivesaltes to Tuchan

Begin the day by cycling alongside the river on small roads until you reach the cycle path that takes you to the sea. Take a

well earned break to dive into the Mediterranean! From here you'll make your way back to Rivesalte and then on to climb some of the surrounding hills favoured by local cyclists. Enjoy the simply magical scenery before reaching Tuchan, your stop for the night.

Approximately 59km, +850m, -550m.

Night in a chambre d'hôtes.

Day 5 - A loop of the Cathar castles

Today, you'll start your cycle ride heading south through the vineyards. Work out those calf muscles on the hills to reach the château de Quéribus and a bit further, the château de Peyrepertuse. Cycle past some stunning gorges to reach Tuchan once more.

Approximately 65 km, +1200 m, -1200m. The distance and altitude climbed can be easily reduced by not visiting the two castles.

Night in a chambre d'hôtes.

Day 6 - From Tuchan to Lagrasse

Today's ride takes you through more vineyards before entering an area of hills, forests and rivers (sometimes dry in summer). Visit some of the Cathar monuments, including Villerouge Termenès. Finish today's wonderful cycle ride in Lagrasse, classified as one of the most beautiful villages in France.

Approximately 55km, +730m, -760m.

Approximately 49km, +635m, -755m - Option without château de Villerouge Termenès.

Night in a chambres d'hôtes.

Day 7 - De Lagrasse à Carcassonne

A shorter ride today means you can either enjoy Lagrasse in the morning or Carcassonne upon arrival. Your ride will take you through rural countryside and small villages until you reach the much celebrated medieval town of Carcassonne.

Approximately 36km, +368m, -389m.

Night in a three star hotel or chambre d'hôtes with swimming pool.

Day 8 - Carcassonne.

End of your trip after breakfast.

Additional information

TARIFFS

Price from 899 euros per person.

OPTIONS

"Giant" (brand) electric bike with panniers. Distances possible depends upon usage of the battery. : 216 euros per person.

Road bike rental (aluminium frame) : 162 euros per person.

Mountain bike rental with panniers and handlebar bag. : 126 euros per person.

Road bike rental (carbon frame) : 188 euros per person.

GPS tracks on a USB key : 25 euros per person.

INCLUDED

7 nights in a double/twin room, breakfasts, luggage transfers, the route notes and maps, assistance throughout your holiday.

NOT INCLUDED

Travel personal arrangements prior to the start of the tour and after, bike hire, lunches and evening meals, entrance tickets to touristic sites, optional activities, personal spending, insurance.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Between 36 and 75 km daily with some steep hills. Some options for shorter or longer rides. A good physical condition is required, although electric bikes are also available for assistance.

CARRYING

Your bags will be transferred daily to your accommodation.

ACCOMMODATION

3-star hotels and chambres d'hôtes.

SIZE OF GROUP

From two people.

DEPARTURES

Any day from the beginning of April to the end of October.

DEPARTURE

Carcassonne.

DISPERSION

Carcassonne.