

Heart of Provence

Hotel-to-hotel independent cycling

- Explore timeless and sun-drenched Provence, unchanged for centuries and full of historic and romantic interest
- Charming hotels – all with swimming pools – great food and local wines
- Poppy fields, olive groves, vineyards; more than 300 days of sunshine a year
- Wonderful views from the pretty perched villages such as Tourtour and Cotignac
- Option to spend extra nights in Nice



This popular cycling holiday follows a triangular route, exploring the heart of “secret” Provence. It is almost wholly unspoiled, combining rural tranquillity with beautiful landscapes, and it hardly seems to have changed in centuries.

You’ll see dozens of châteaux, and lovely churches, chapels and abbeys. The cycling is relaxed with rural routes taking you through vineyards, woodlands and up to pretty perched villages with the most amazing views. The summer sun is softened by breezes coming in from the Mediterranean and, everywhere, there’s the scent of the garrigue to remind you you’re in Provence.

This holiday starts and ends at our hotel in Le Thoronet. In between, you stay in a lovely family-run hotel in Pontevès, and a beautifully converted C16 coaching inn in Tourtour. All hotels offer private outdoor swimming pools and there’s a jacuzzi in Tourtour.



HEART OF PROVENCE | DAY BY DAY



Day 1 Arrive at Le Thoronet

We meet you at Les Arcs and take you to your hotel (35 mins) - time for a relaxing swim before dinner.

Day 2 Le Thoronet to Pontevès 32km/20mi or 37km/23mi

First stop is the atmospheric C12 Cistercian Abbaye du Thoronet then it's a lovely leisurely cycle beneath huge pink cliffs, dotted with white villages, vineyards and tempting picnic spots. Highlights include Carcès (great wine tasting and lake) and picturesque Cotignac with its C13 church, fortress and amazing troglodyte dwellings!

Day 3 At Pontevès

Walk to the ruins of the castle or cycle (6km/4mi round trip) to Barjols, a little town utterly dominated by water (it has four rivers running through it, 16 lavoirs and 27 fountains) - pottery and tambourines are made here too! Keener cyclists enjoy the trip along the river to Sillans-la-Cascade and its stunning waterfall.

Day 4 Pontevès to Tourtour 37km/23mi or 44km/27mi

It's a lovely ride today to Tourtour, with the longer route taking you through the Forêt de Péleuc and on to the pretty hill village of Moissac Bellevue. Both routes take you via Aups, a great spot for lunch. Time to explore its narrow streets before heading on to the picturesque village of Tourtour where you spend the next two nights in a beautifully converted C16 coaching inn with jacuzzi and two private pools.

Day 5 At Tourtour

This may be a small village, but it packs quite a punch! Explore the medieval old quarter, art galleries and lovely little church before lunch beneath the old lime trees. The more energetic can cycle to the picturesque villages of Ampus and Chateaudouble. Or, of course, you can just laze by the pools!

Day 6 Tourtour to Le Thoronet 42km/26mi or 47km/29mi

Your day starts with a wonderful downhill whizz through pine forests to Villecroze, a picturesque village founded by a retired Roman General and later the site of a Templar commandery. On to Salernes - famous for its colorful tiles and pottery - then via the Bresque Valley to mediaeval Entrecasteaux: fortified Gothic church and C17 château. Your final stretch takes you up through a series of sleepy hamlets and back to Le Thoronet in time for a swim and laze by the pool before dinner.

Day 7 Leave Le Thoronet



HEART OF PROVENCE | WHERE YOU STAY



Hotel de l'Abbaye
★★
Le Thoronet
Days 1+6



Hotel le Rouge Gorge
★★
Pontevès
Days 2+3



L'Auberge St Pierre
★★★★
Tourtour
Days 4+5

For extra nights we recommend Tourtour, and city add-ons can be arranged in Nice.



"A very enjoyable, hassle-free experience. An absolutely fantastic week!"

Mrs McGavin

Dates and Prices

Departs every two days **Tour Only**

2012 departures

Apr 3-May 25	\$2,543
Sep 22-Oct 10	\$2,543
May 27-31, Jun 8-12	\$2,581
Sep 2-20	\$2,543
Jun 2-6, Jun 14-Jul 8	\$2,631
Aug 29-31	\$2,631
Jul 10-Aug 27	\$2,617
Child (any dates, see notes)	\$1,667

Singles: Add \$53 per night for sole occupancy of a double room.

Apr 23 departure no single supplement.

Child: Over 2 and under 12, sharing with 2 adults.

Holiday type: Independent cycling, hotel-to-hotel, no minimum group size.

Departs: Every two days from Apr 3 to Oct 10.

Duration: 7 days (6 nights). This holiday may be adapted into a 4 night version – just deduct \$440 per adult and \$296 per child from the prices above.

Meals: Continental breakfast and evening meals.

Other details: For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 48-51.

Tailor-made travel choices

Nearest Arrival Airport: Nice Airport

Flights can be arranged from most US/CANADA airports, with connecting transfers as required, prices and details on request.

The above prices include our standard transfers: Les Arcs, Draguignan train station at 16:37 (transfer to hotel, 35 mins, provided). **Return:** Les Arcs, Draguignan train station by 10:51 (transfer provided).

Rail options: Nice Ville to Les Arcs, Draguignan 15:28/16:37. Return: Les Arcs, Draguignan to Nice Ville 10:51/12:04 Mon-Fri, 08:50/10:04 Sat & Sun.

Second Class French Rail: Add \$58 per person, round trip.

First Class French Rail: Add \$86 per person, round trip..

Tour only: Transfers included from Les Arcs, Draguignan train station at 16:37, and back to Les Arcs, Draguignan train station departing hotel at 10:00 Mon-Fri, 08:00 Sat & Sun.

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