



October in Provence Tour Provence 2024

Great things are done by a series of small things brought together

Vincent Van Gogh

Itinerary

October 10th - 18th, 2024: 8 nights / 9 days

Day 1 (Thursday, October 10th):

- Pick-up at **Avignon - TGV train station around 10:30 am**
 - Time to be confirmed once all arrival times are gathered.
 - Choose to arrive in Provence the day before and be picked up at your Avignon hotel.

- We'll start our group tour in the center of **Avignon** for a historic walking tour. UNESCO sites **Pont d'Avignon** and **Popes Palace** and some off-the-beaten-path spots in the center (does not include the *inside* of the Popes Palace). After lunch in Avignon we make our way to the **Pont du Gard** - (30 minute drive from Avignon). Marvel at this Roman masterpiece and the story behind it. A 30-minute drive from Avignon will take us to **Saint Remy**. Arrival around 4:30 pm with time to settle in and relax (or walk into the town for some boutique shopping on your own). Dinner arrangements for the group in Saint Remy.

Lunch & dinner included

Day 2 (Friday, October 11th):

- Today is **market day in Lourmarin**. You'll have free time to roam the market and also be guided on a short historical tour of the village. Picnic lunch together with your market goodies near a Romanesque chapel (should the weather not be good we'll have a bistro lunch). Return to Saint Remy area for exploring the world of Van Gogh at Saint Paul de Mausole where Van Gogh stayed for a year after his time in Arles. Relaxing time back at the B&B and then dinner arrangements together in Saint Remy.

Lunch (a sharing of our market goodies) & dinner included

Day 3 (Saturday, October 12th):

- In the morning we'll drive south to the **Camargue region** (classified as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO) to connect with nature and wildlife. The fresh water from the Rhone and the saline waters from the Mediterranean Sea create a mosaic of ecosystems unique to the area. Flamingoes, herons, white Camargue horses & bulls along our off-the-beaten-path routes. Autumn is a unique time in the Camargue with the flora turning to its winter colors and the arrival of many birds for spending winter or resting on their route further south. We have a **private ranch tour at Manade Laurent**. Lunch at **La Telline** to taste the specialties of Camargue and then we lunch plunge into the Roman world in **Arles** and the **footsteps of Van Gogh** who lived here from 1888 to 1889. Dinner arrangements for the group in Saint Remy.

Lunch & dinner included

Day 4 (Sunday, October 13th):

- Explore the Luberon and two exceptional villages for their geographical layout and historical anecdotes: Gordes & Fontaine-de-Vaucluse. Lunch will be memorable at a farmhouse restaurant. Our last stop is in Isle sur la Sorgue, known for its canal-lined streets and antique shops. The Sunday flea market will be set up and possibly you'll find a unique treasure to take back home. Arrival back at B&B around 5:30 pm with relaxing time and dinner at your leisure.

Lunch included

Day 5 (Monday, October 14th):

- We start the day with the inspiring sound & light show in a former rock quarry near Les Baux-de-Provence: Carrières de Lumières. Before leaving the Alpilles region we'll stroll through the village Les Baux and also taste the **best olive oil** in the world at nearby mill. Light lunch before leaving Les Baux. Changing regions after lunch making our way to the vibrant city Aix-en-Provence, we'll stop at one of the original soap making factories to learn the story of Marseille soap and traditional fabrication process. Around 5 pm, check in to our luxury hotel Les Lodges Saints Victoire. Time to settle in and perhaps you'll even enjoy some spa time. Dinner at the fabulous hotel restaurant (Michelin).

Lunch & dinner included

Day 6 (Tuesday, October 15th):

- Time to explore **Aix markets** (flower market, Provencal market, fruit & Vegetable market, flea market). Emily will explain where the markets are, give you maps, you can explore at your leisure. At 12:30 we meet up for lunch at an 18th century tea salon. Then we meet our expert city guide for a 2 hour walking tour taking us to the secret story spots of the city. Later afternoon we return to our hotel to relax (spa time can be scheduled) before our evening meal outing.

Lunch & dinner included

Day 7 (Wednesday, October 16th):

- We escape to the sea today. Peaceful strolls with the sounds of seagulls and and boat flags swooshing in the breeze. The fishing village **Cassis** along with the limestone inlets, known as *Calanques*, always capture the heart. The Cassis tour includes the **Wednesday market**, a **boat tour** and lunch on the port. On our way back to Aix, we stop at a **Santon shop** to see the detailed work of these hand sculpted figurines so popular in Provence at Christmas. Evening group dinner outing in Aix.

Lunch & dinner included

Day 8 (Thursday, October 17th):

- **Cooking lesson & winery tour near Aix-en-Provence;** Chef Gilles will guide us through the produce market and then to a winery to pick up our wine. At his house we will learn the art and simplicity of Provencal cuisine. The feast usually doesn't end til mid-afternoon and the rest of the day will be enjoyed at the foot of Saint Victoire (spa time or countryside walk at the base of the mountain). Free evening for dinner at the hotel
 - You may not feel like dinner this evening (we finish full and late lunch). There is the hotel bar restaurant for snacks and drinks should you like (not included in package price).

Cooking lesson lunch

Day 9 (Friday, October 18th):

- After breakfast, transfer to Marseille airport or Aix TGV for you return trip home.

Tour notes

- ▶ This Tour is a nice mix of culture, alluring atmospheres, history, relaxing time (spa options) and time to shop in the cities and at markets.
- ▶ Should you enjoy relaxing at the spa, the hotel the last four nights is one of the best intimate spas in the region. The hotel is located next to Cezanne's mountain, Sainte Victoire...a truly inspirational backdrop to our breakfast, dinners and relaxing time.

Tour Price:

4,100 EUROS

1,100 EUROS single room supplement

** Prices converted to USD three months prior to tour date*

Includes:

- **All breakfasts (8)**
- **All lunches (8)**

- **6 Dinners (two dinners not included; one in St Remy and last night at Saint Victoire/Aix hotel)**
- *** Wine is included at meals.**

Not included:

- Transportation to/from Provence, Avignon
- * Further drinks at meals after your complimentary wine are not included and at your charge directly with the restaurant.

Activities included:

- Country walks, sometimes a little off-the-beaten-path to get up close to the fauna and flora
- Olive oil mill tour/tasting
- Cooking lesson
- Provençal markets (Lourmarin, Cassis, Aix)
- Flea market Isle sur la Sorgue
- Boat tour in Cassis
- Santon artisan shop
- Marseille soap factory tour
- Carrières de Lumière sound & light show
- Guided tours - learn the historical & cultural anecdotes that shaped the sites, towns, villages, and region as a whole

Villages, towns & places visited:

- Avignon
- Pont-du-Gard
- Arles
- Camargue region
- Lourmarin
- Saint Remy
- Les Baux de Provence
- Isle sur la Sorgue
- Gordes
- Fontaine-de-Vaucluse
- Aix
- Cassis

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