FRANCE - HAUTE PROVENCE - £1,089

23rd May 2020 - 1st June 2020 (10 days)

This is the 16th year for this popular fixed-centre tour, with a mix of flat and mountainous terrain, hotel-based at Buis-les-Baronnies, just to the north of Mount Ventoux. There will be a choice of gentle or more challenging rides with rest days and the option of ‘doing your own thing’. The shorter rides will be simple to follow, though will not usually be led or guided. A support vehicle will accompany the longer rides. A limited number of non-cycling partners can be accommodated.

HOLIDAY TYPE: Guided
TOUR MANAGER: Chris Ellison
GRADE: Challenging
BOOKING STATUS: Places Available
ACCOMMODATION: Hotel
BOARD BASIS: Half Board
TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS: Coach
ROAD / OFF ROAD: Road
HOLIDAY STYLE: Centre-based
VEHICLE SUPPORT: Full Vehicle Support
HOLIDAY REF NO: 03359

Holiday Itinerary

Saturday 23rd May
Travel by European Bike Express (Bike Bus) from your chosen pick-up points to Dover for the P&O Ferry crossing to Calais and thence through the night towards the early morning drop-off in Orange. Meals are available for purchase on the bus, at several service stations and on the ferry. Meals: None

Sunday 24th May
Coffee (or tea) and pastries in Orange and then riding across the plain of the Rhone as the sun rises to Vaison la Romaine for a mid morning break in the cafes by the market place before riding up the valley of the Ouveze through Mollans and past Pierrelongue with its remarkable chapel, perched on a spire of rock. Lunch in Buis-les-Baronnies. Arrive and check in at the hotel from 1400 onwards. Stay 7 nights. Meals: D

Monday 25th May
Both groups cycle over the Col d’Ey with its wonderful panorama to St-Jalle. The long ride continues over the Col De Soubeyrand to view the colony of Gryphon Vultures at Remuzat before returning via the gorge of the river L’Eygues. The short ride returns over the gentler Col de Peyruegue with great views of the hills of the Baronnies and a gentle downhill most of the way back to the hotel. Meals: B D

Tuesday 26th May
Both rides go over the Col de Fontaube to the mountainside village of Brantes, a World Heritage Site. From here the long ride returns via Montbrun-les-Bains, built on a hillside below a ruined Chateau, and Sédéron over another col with 25km of mostly gentle descent all the way to Buis. The short ride first turns west and returns via the picture-postcard village of Mollans with its famous one-handed clock and medieval washhouse and fountain. Meals: B D
Wednesday 27th May
Rest day. Market day in Buis-les-Baronnies with its many colourful stalls, or a first attempt at Mount Ventoux from Malaucene, or even Bedoin for the stronger and keener riders. Meals B D

Thursday 28th May
The long ride goes on a back road over a tiny col to Villedieu with its beautiful and shady square and on to St-Maurice-sur-Eygues for a light lunch, then after a small meander through the back country hills, to the famous little village of Vinsobre, which means ‘Wine-Sober’, for ice-cream and cold drinks, while the short ride visits Vaison-la-Romaine and its impressive, well-preserved Roman ruins. Meals: B D

Friday 29th May
The long ride follows a route to Beaumes-de-Venise around the Dentelles de Montmirail (‘Dentelles’ are ‘teeth’, and from a distance these hills look just like them), possibly meeting the short ride group at Malaucene for lunch at the Source du Grozeau cafe/restaurant at the western foot of Mount Ventoux, where you can watch the descending riders swoop past, and visiting the award winning ‘Cave’ (vineyard) at Entrechaux. Meals B D

Saturday 30th May
Keen riders can cycle to the top of Mount Ventoux (1,912m) using the easiest of the three possible ascent routes via Sault. There are free toilets and water at le Chael Reynard plus snacks. For lunch we recommend the Café Vendran, set back and hidden on the corner 50m before the summit, or Malaucène and the cafés before and in the town. There are superb views on the climb up and on the long descent (be careful that your brakes don't overheat!). From the top on a clear day it is possible to see the Central and Southern French Alps. For riders wanting a rest, easier rides will be suggested, or the more laid-back can potter around Buis or shop for souvenirs and relax. Meals: B D

Sunday 31st May
Check out of the hotel at 1100. Ride via the rail trail road in parts to Vaison la Romaine for lunch and a final look at the Roman ruins and thence to Orange for our journey to the European Bike Express pick up point, riding through Camaret-sur-Aigues with its ramparts, accessed by several gates including the impressive Porte de l’Horloge (clock gate). At Orange there should be time to visit the Roman Arc de Triomphe and Amphitheatre and eat. The Bike Bus departs at approximately 1930 for the return overnight journey to Calais. Meals: B

Monday 1st June
Wake in the early morning for the P&O Ferry crossing to Dover and your chosen Bike Bus set-down point in the UK. Meals are available for purchase on the ferry, and at several service stations. Meals: None

Distances: 40-100 kilometres per day depending on choice – ‘A’ rides average 85km, ‘B’ rides average 50km.

Meals: B = Breakfast  D = Dinner

Holiday Summary

Accommodation & Meals
Staying at a small 3-star hotel. Rooms are based on two people sharing, breakfasts included. Dinner is also included in the hotel on some nights and in local restaurants on others. Choices for vegetarians are likely to be very limited and poor quality.

Vehicle Support
A support vehicle will be provided for the longer rides.

Passports, Visa & Health
EU citizens must hold a passport that is still valid on the date of their return to their home country. Holders of non-EU passports are advised to check whether they require a visa. There are no compulsory health related requirements for UK residents, but you are strongly advised to check that your tetanus protection has not expired. You must also carry your European Health Insurance Card.

Travel Insurance
Our Booking Conditions stipulate that, for holidays outside the UK, travel Insurance is mandatory. Details of the level of cover needed and other conditions you should check are stated in the Booking Conditions. CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours Ltd cannot accept responsibility for any costs that may be incurred due to insufficient insurance cover.

Price
The price of £1,089 is based on a minimum number of 7 people taking part in the holiday; please note Booking Conditions, clause 3. If there are insufficient bookings by 14th March 2020, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

Price Includes
- Return coach travel between Orange and any Bike Bus pick-up point in England
- 7 nights hotel, sharing room
- 7 breakfasts, 7 dinners
- Support vehicle for the longer rides
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price Does Not Include
- Drinks with dinner
- Lunches or refreshments during the day
- Entry fees at any attractions visited
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance
• Single occupancy supplement (£308, subject to availability)

Payment Schedule
A deposit of £389 per person is payable upon booking, with the final balance of £700 per person to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 14th March 2020.

Cancellations
Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written notice received</th>
<th>Cancellation charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 14th March 2020</td>
<td>Deposit (£389)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 14th March 2020 through to departure</td>
<td>100% (£1,089)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Information

Area Covered By The Holiday
The week is based at Buis-les-Baronnies (Buis pronounced ‘Bwee’), sometimes described as one of the most beautiful small towns in France. Buis is just north of Mount Ventoux and the Luberon where Peter Mayle wrote A Year in Provence. The scenery is interesting, with olive and apricot groves, vineyards, lavender fields and cherry orchards and often spectacular with gorges and cols (mountain passes). The area is also known for the Roman ruins at Vaison-la-Romaine and wine making. The terrain varies from flat (the plain of the Rhone) to rugged. The roads are mostly very quiet with little traffic.

Rides & Rest Days
The long ride group will spend most of the day cycling and sightseeing from the saddle at a pace of 16-20kph on the flat, slower on the hills, their rides average distance is about 80km (50 miles) The ride over Mount Ventoux is 103km (65 miles). The short ride group will spend about half of each day cycling with plenty of time allowed for sightseeing. The pace will be slower perhaps 12-16kph and the average distance is 50 km (32 miles). You are of course free to ride separately. We usually ride spread out in small sub-groups meeting up at road junctions, cafes etc, and both groups follow the same route to morning coffee. Everyone should return with plenty of time for a rest or swim in the hotel swimming pool. The rest day can be used to visit the local market, or we can suggest rides for the more energetic.

If you cycle fairly regularly (i.e. go out once a week and do 50 miles) and know that you can climb hills steadily, then you will probably have no problems. If you are not used to hills but are willing to gear low and have a go, then you will probably find the tour moderately challenging. Having said that, most people find the local climbs easier than the equivalent English climbs in that they are well graded and longer, allowing riders to settle into a steady pace. Beginners should aim to build up to a target of at least 64km (40 miles) in a day before coming on this holiday.

Detailed route descriptions will be sent with the final tour information approximately three weeks before the tour starts.

Accommodation & Meals
The hotel has a swimming pool and gardens and is close to the centre of town. The hotel breakfasts are 'continental'. There is a range of restaurants and bars that do meals within a few minutes’ walk of the hotel, and four of the evening meals will be at restaurants in the town. Choice for vegetarians may be very limited and poor quality. There will be bars and cafes on all the routes that do light lunches: sandwiches, salads, etc. We usually find a bar for ice cream or drinks two or three times a day.

Travel
Both you and your bicycle will be transported from your chosen pick up point (between York and Dover) on a luxury air-conditioned club class coach to Orange where the cycling will commence. The service is operated by European Bike Express; cycles travel in a custom built trailer that offers maximum security and careful transport. The bus is non-smoking. The return journey will commence from Orange and end at your chosen drop-off point in the UK. When booking this holiday online it is necessary to complete a booking form for the European Bike Express and to email that to the Tour Manager. The form can be downloaded here.

Alternative Travel Options
For those that wish to travel to Buis-les-Baronnies independently a 'without Bike Bus' version of the tour is available. A discount of £288 will be applied to the tour price. Please indicate on the Booking Form under Special Requests if you would like to take up this option.

Air: Buis-les-Baronnies is about 150km (94 miles) from Marseille Airport, 112km (70 miles) from Nimes airport and 72km (45 miles) from Avignon airport.
Train: There are various trains to Avignon or Orange although the TGV high speed train does not carry bikes and there is a branch line to Carpentras from Avignon, which is an easy 40km (25 mile) ride from Buis.
Car: Using the N7 toll motorway from the North, it is possible to drive from Calais to Buis-les-Baronnies in a day, though taking two or three days is much more enjoyable.

Group Information
The maximum number of participants will be 18 excluding the Tour Manager(s).

Weather & Clothing
At this time of year it should be cool in the early morning and evening, warm and sunny during the day - but changeable weather with showers or rain are a possibility, and you should carry clothing such as a lightweight windproof / showerproof jacket to ensure that you can remain warm at the top of the cols and Mount Ventoux and (reasonably) dry. Suncream is strongly recommended. Bring lightweight summer clothing with extra layers in case of cool weather (or to protect from sunburn), and a change for evenings.
Cycles & Equipment
A touring cycle, hybrid or lightweight ATB is suitable and must be in good working order, especially the brakes. Lights are recommended for the two very short tunnels we encounter. A low bottom gear of 30 inches or less is recommended. Mudguards are optional. Each participant will be expected to carry sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs. Two inner tubes, a pump and a mobile phone enabled to work in France are useful accessories. There is a small bike shop in Buis with a well-equipped workshop, but it might not be open when needed.

Maps & Guides
Daily route plans will be provided, but it is useful to carry a map in case you become separated from the group. Maps can be purchased in Buis-les-Baronnies at the newsagent in the centre of town.

Travel Insurance & Advice
Currently, in addition to travel insurance, EU nationals should carry a European Health Insurance Card, obtainable from www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/. This enables you to take advantage of emergency medical services free or at a discount under a reciprocal provision that exists between EU member states. Your travel insurer may refuse to meet the extra costs of medical treatment if you do not carry this card.
Before booking you should check the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, at www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice or on 0845 850 2829.

Tour Manager's Contact Details
If you require any assistance, or have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the Tour Manager using the information provided below.

Chris Ellison

Email:
chris@halchemy.com

Mobile:
07967 584409