FRANCE - PROVENCE (5 WEEKS) - £650

23rd May 2020 - 28th June 2020 (37 days)
Multiple-centre unsupported camping tour starting with a short loop northeast via Nyons and Sault, then southwest from Orange via Uzes, southeast to Arles, further southeast to Istres, northeast to Loumarin and northwest to Avignon, thence turning southwest, finishing at Narbonne. Varied terrain, from gentle undulations to mountain roads. Staying three nights at most campsites will give you the chance to ride unladen and explore Provence inside and outside the loop.

In addition to this 5-week tour, 2-, 3- and 4-week options using the European Bike Express are also offered (find out more), depending on space being available when you book, though land-only bookings can be made for any period of time.

HOLIDAY TYPE: Guided
TOUR MANAGER: Pat & Mike Strauss
GRADE: Moderate
BOOKING STATUS: Places Available
ACCOMMODATION: Camping
BOARD BASIS: Self Catering
TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS: Coach
ROAD / OFF ROAD: Road
HOLIDAY STYLE: Multi-centre
VEHICLE SUPPORT: Carry Own Luggage
HOLIDAY REF NO: 03432

Holiday Itinerary

Saturday 23rd May
Travel by European Bike Express from your chosen pick-up point, through the night, to Orange, arriving following morning.

Sunday 24th May
Cycle to Nyons. Stay three nights. 50km (450m total ascent).

Monday 25th May
Day rides in the vicinity.

Tuesday 26th May
Day rides in the vicinity.

Wednesday 27th May
Cycle to Sault. Stay three nights. 65km (1,170m total ascent).

Thursday 28th May
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Friday 29th May**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Saturday 30th May**
Cycle to Orange. Stay one night. 75km (560m total ascent).

**Sunday 31st May**
Cycle to campsite near Uzes. Stay three nights. 54km (560m total ascent).

**Monday 1st June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Tuesday 2nd June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Wednesday 3rd June**
Cycle to Arles. Stay three nights. 62km (420m total ascent).

**Thursday 4th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Friday 5th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Saturday 6th June**
Cycle to Istres. Stay three nights. 45km or 54km (230m or 420m total ascent).

**Sunday 7th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Monday 8th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Tuesday 9th June**
Cycle to Lourmarin. Stay two nights. 58km (750m total ascent).

**Wednesday 10th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Thursday 11th June**
Cycle to Avignon. Stay three nights. 65km (470m total ascent).

**Friday 12th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Saturday 13th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Sunday 14th June**
Cycle to Sommières. Stay three nights. 75km (420m total ascent).

**Monday 15th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Tuesday 16th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Wednesday 17th June**
Cycle to Ganges. Stay three nights. 55km (640m total ascent).

**Thursday 18th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Friday 19th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Saturday 20th June**
Cycle to the Lac de Salagou. Stay four nights. 56km (675m total ascent).

**Sunday 21st June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Monday 22nd June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Tuesday 23rd June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Wednesday 24th June**
Cycle to Cessenon-sur-Orb. Stay three nights. 60km (640m total ascent).

**Thursday 25th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Friday 26th June**
Day rides in the vicinity.

**Saturday 27th June**
Cycle to Narbonne (50km, 430m) for European Bike Express back to the UK, departing at approximately 1800 and travelling through the night to Calais.

**Sunday 28th June**
Ferry to Dover and continue on the European Bike Express to your chosen drop off point.

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**Holiday Summary**

**Accommodation & Meals**
All nights will be at established campsites that are expected to be of a high enough standard to provide hot showers and clean washing areas. You need to bring your own tent and other camping equipment and will be expected to share a pitch (emplacement) with others in the group.

You are responsible for all your own meals. There will usually be a supermarket (small or large) within a couple of kms from each campsite (and occasionally at the campsite), though things can change, so carrying an emergency meal would be wise. No cooking equipment will be provided by the campsites.

**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 £650 is based on a minimum number of 2 people taking part in the tour; 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 for you and your cycle from your chosen European Bike Express pick-up/drop-off point in England to Orange and back from Narbonne
- 34 nights camping, using your own tent and other equipment
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

**Price Does Not Include**
- Travel to and from your chosen European Bike Express pick-up point in England
- European Bike Express supplements: handlebars wider than 60mm (£10 each way); tyres wider than 55mm (£10 each way); electric bikes (£25 each way); cycle trailer (£10 each way)
- Car park fees associated with your pick-up point
- Any meals for drinks
- Entry fees at any attractions
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance

**Payment Schedule**
A deposit of £100 per person is payable upon booking, with the final balance of £550 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:
Cycles & Equipment
A touring cycle, hybrid or lightweight ATB would be suitable for this tour. You should ensure your cycle is well maintained, paying particular attention to wheels, tyres and brakes. Tyres should be at least 28mm diameter and in very good condition if not new. A low bottom gear (e.g. small chainring the same size or smaller than the largest cog on your rear wheel) is strongly recommended. If you are unsure about gears, please discuss with the Tour Manager. Mudguards are optional but show courtesy to those who are following you in wet weather. Lights are recommended but might not prove essential. You will be expected to carry all your luggage on moving-on days and sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs on day rides.

Weather & Clothing
We will no doubt experience a range of weathers, with temperatures fluctuating from cool to very warm and the possibility of rain at any time. Bring appropriate clothing to ensure that you can remain warm and (reasonably) dry, both during the days and around the campsite in the evenings. Also bring things that wash and dry easily. Suncream will hopefully be an essential item. A swimming costume might get used, though most pools don't open until July.

Maps & Guides
Detailed route sheets will be provided approximately three weeks before the tour, but it is strongly recommended that you carry a map as well. Michelin

Additional Information
Area Covered By The Holiday
The first week heads northeast from Orange into the Baronnies, riding through the Roman town of Vaison-la-Romaine to the market town of Nyons, then through a land of vineyards, sunflowers, perched villages and olive trees to the lavender-growing centre of Sault, and finally down the dramatic Gorges de la Nesque and back to Orange. There we pick up those doing the 2-week or 4-week tours and head southwest to just past Uzes for our first campsite not far from the Pont du Gard. Heading southeast we get to the very attractive city of Arles, well-placed for exploration of the Camargue and/or the old hilltop village of Les Baux-de-Provence and the town of St-Remy-de-Provence, then Istres, situated next to the largest étang (lagoon) in Europe. A loop around it would be a full day's ride! The 'quintessential village of Provence', Lourmarin, is next on the list, nestled amongst olive trees, almond trees and vines, followed by Avignon, another city full of Mediterranean charm and lovely architecture, its very famous 'pont' being easily visible from our campsite. The final two weeks take us southwest along the base of the hills just south of the Cévennes, stopping at or passing through a number of attractive stone villages and small towns while generally enjoying quiet roads away from the more well-known areas.

Rides & Rest Days
On the moving-on days the planned route will be the most efficient way we found of getting to the next campsite, a compromise between staying off main roads yet not having to climb any more significant hills than necessary. The day rides from campsites can be shortened, or lengthened, depending on your personal cycling or exploring interests, and you are free to choose which ride you want do on which day as well as when you wish to take rest days. Typically everyone starts off in the mornings when they want, in small groups of riders with similar ability or riding style, cycling at a pace comfortable to them and stopping when they want during the day at scenic viewpoints, cafe stops, lunch, etc.

It is helpful if you have had some previous experience with cycle camping and carrying all your gear on your bike in lumpy countryside and over the distances we will cover on moving-on days. However, reasonably strong cyclists who have done other lightweight camping are usually able to put the two together without any real difficulty. It is important that you are fit enough to undertake a tour with no support vehicle.

Accommodation & Meals
Established campsites of a high enough standard to provide hot showers and clean washing areas will be used. You need to bring your own tent and other camping equipment and will be expected to share a pitch or emplacement with others. No meals are included.

Alternative Travel Options
It is also possible to join this tour on a land-only basis at the price of £350 for two weeks. Enter this in the 'Special Requests' field on the booking form.

Group Information
The maximum number of participants taking up the 5-week option will be 6 excluding the Tour Manager(s), though it is expected that those coming for other periods of time, and those travelling land-only, will increase the group size during weeks 2, 3 and 4. Most of the group is expected to be experienced cycle campers, but reasonably strong and enthusiastic newcomers to cycle camping are more than welcome.

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You are advised to do some riding before the tour with a similar load to that which you will be carrying during the tour to get a feel for how your bike will handle.

There is a law in France requiring cyclists to wear yellow hi-viz waistcoats 'when riding outside of built-up areas under conditions of low-light or poor visibility'. A fine can be levied by an eager gendarme if this is not done. Their design specifically includes two horizontal reflective bands. You might find them in shops and websites in the UK before you go, but they are readily available in France.

Maps & Guides
Detailed route sheets will be provided approximately three weeks before the tour, but it is strongly recommended that you carry a map as well. Michelin
Local’ 1:150,000 series maps 332, 334, 339, 340 and 344 will be needed to cover the tour. A possibly more efficient alternative is to take pages from a road atlas – bring pages that include approximately 30km each side of each campsite to cover loop rides. IGN maps (1:100,000) are more detailed, with a few more roads, and show contours. You would need nos 163 (59), 164 (60), 170 (66), 171 (67) and 174 (72).

We will also provide GPS tracks nearer the time.

Travel Insurance & Advice
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.

Other Information
All transport-included places for this 5-week version of the tour have provisionally been spoken for by regular participants, but if you would like to be put on a waiting list in case any places become available, please contact the Tour Manager.

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.

Pat & Mike Strauss

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