FRANCE - PROVENCE - £995

28th August 2020 - 6th September 2020 (10 days)
Based at a welcoming rural guesthouse in Aurel, well used to cycling groups and with excellent home cooking, this tour offers an exploration of the quiet lanes and medieval villages of the Vaucluse and Albion Plateaux in Provence. The climate is Mediterranean with olive and fig groves, vines and herbs, vultures and other exotic raptors. One ride, usually of medium length, is led every day, and in addition to the rides to and from the hotel, there is a choice of 15 routes of varying length and difficulty. For mountain enthusiasts there are optional ascents of the Montagne de la Lure and all three on-road ascents of Mont Ventoux. Routes can be ridden on any day, though the ascent of Mont Ventoux will be attempted when the clearest views are possible.

HOLIDAY TYPE: Guided
TOUR MANAGER: Sheila Simpson
GRADE: Moderate
BOOKING STATUS: Places Available
ACCOMMODATION: Guesthouse
BOARD BASIS: Half Board
TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS: Coach
ROAD / OFF ROAD: Road
HOLIDAY STYLE: Centre-based
VEHICLE SUPPORT: Carry Own Luggage
HOLIDAY REF NO: 03435

Holiday Itinerary

Friday 28th August
We travel by European Bike Express (Bike Bus) from our chosen pick-up points to Dover for the P&O Ferry crossing to Calais and thence through the night towards Montpellier. Meals are available for purchase on the bus, at several service stations and on the ferry. Meals: None

Saturday 29th August
Arriving at Orange (40m) at approximately 0600, we cycle a short distance, past the Roman Arc de Triomphe, through vineyards to Camaret sur Aigues for coffee, continuing to Roaix to access a cycle route. We pause to ponder at a standing stone memorial to the victims of a flash flood before continuing into Vauson la Romaine for a break, shopping for picnic lunch and exploration. We leave, past the Roman bridge, via St Marcellan les Vaison and over a narrow packhorse bridge to access the cycle route again. At 40km we commence the well-graded climb in woodland up the Toulourenc Valley, descending to the fountain at St Leger du Ventoux for lunch. We continue downhill before a short climb back to our guesthouse (791m). 71km. Stay 7 nights. Meals: D

Sunday 30th August
We cycle to Sault to shop before heading for St Jean, a gentle climb alongside woodland with views over the valley to Mont Ventoux and occasional WW2 memorials to resistance fighters. From St Jean those wanting a short day can cut to Monieux. 32km. Others climb gently to 995m for a long wooded descent towards St Saturnan, exploring a partially restored windmill just before the town. We picnic in St Saturnan and continue through the Javon Forest,
descending towards the Nesque with views over Monieux. On the descent we follow a camping sign to see autumn crocus and visit the cafe opposite the pool. We return, following the Nesque almost to its source outside Aurel. 62km. Meals: B D

**Monday 31st August**

We leave the guesthouse east with views over the village and lavender fields of the upper Nesque. Then ride across the Plateau d'Albion, a dry, limestone upland of woods, pasture and lavender to Revest du Bion for a break. From here those wanting an easy day shortcut to St Christol. 43km. We continue across the plateau and descend a little gorge to Banon for lunch before continuing to the splendid village of Simiane le Rotunde, turning into the village to explore and view the Rotunda, a 12th century former keep. Continuing to St Christol we should see both Mont Ventoux and its twin, la Lure at one point. After a break we return across the plateau, either to Sault to visit the bike shop or round Foreign Legion barracks to Aurel via St Trinit. 63km. Meals: B D

**Tuesday 1st September**

We ascend Mont Ventoux (1,910m) on the day with the clearest views and most people ride out and back. We descend the Lavender Way and begin the ascent gently, more steeply approaching the forest where plenty of bends provide opportunities for resting. At Chalet Reynard (1,430m) there are snacks, meals, outside free toilets and water. The final 6km moonscape is steep, look out for tiny yellow Greenland poppies in the scree and Tom Simpson's memorial. Best to take an early lunch at Cafe Vendran and walk the final bend to avoid conflict with pedestrians. Most descend to Sault and the cafe in the Boules park. 59km. Those wanting a longer ride descend towards Bedoin from Chalet Reynard and ride the Gorges de la Nesque. 88km. Meals: B D

**Wednesday 2nd September**

The area to the north of Aurel provides two especially scenic circuits. We all descend to the outskirts of Montbrun les Bains where those who choose the longer circuit of the Col de Perty (1,302m), continue east. 88km. Others turn up the charming little valley of the Upper Toulouren with its gorges and impressive chateau, to the Col d'Aulan (844m). From here we ride past La Rochette (King Louis nose) to St Auban for coffee before the long descent of the beautiful Ouveze Valley and through the Gorges d'Ubiereux to lunch in Buins. In the afternoon we ascend both the Col de Fontaube (755m), with views of Mont Ventoux and the downhill Col des Aires (644m), returning to Aurel after a possible diversion to explore Montbrun. 67km or 71km. Meals: B D

**Thursday 3rd September**

We head for the heart of the Vaucluse with a rare short sharp climb and fine views across the Nesque Valley, followed by a gradual ascent into remote limestone upland (1,100m) with several WW2 memorials. We descend, first through woodland, then emerging to sweeping views across the Cavalon Valley and over the red rocks of the Colorado Provencal to the Grand Luberon. We picnic, take a look at the Ochre quarry, and ride into Ruster village for coffee. In the afternoon we return over the lower Albion plateau via a break at St Christol, noting an interesting Albion information board opposite the cafe, and St Trinit. 72km. Alternatively, for Mont Ventoux enthusiasts there is the opportunity to ascend from Malaucene. 90km. Meals: B D

**Friday 4th September**

On the last day we have a short scenic circuit of two cols with the possibility of a restaurant lunch at Revest. We leave east via Ferrassieres and climb north, into the forests of the Montagne d'Albion, to the Col de l'Homme Mort (1,211m), regrouping at the viewpoint over the plateau. We descend less than 200m and keep right into the upper valley of the Jabron, which we leave by way of the Col du Negron (1,242m) for a superb gradual descent from the mountain to the plateau and Revest. The little restaurant in the centre is usually open, or one of the two cafes. We return via Ferrassieres. 52km. The alternative strenuous circular ride to the summit of the Montagne de Lure (1,826m), is only suitable for the fittest riders. 135km. Meals: B D

**Saturday 5th September**

We ride almost entirely downhill to our European Bike Bus pick-up point. Down the Lavender Way, then a short, gradual climb to the viewpoint at the head of the Gorges de la Nesque for a break. The long descent through the gorges has several very short rock tunnels and many fabulous views. We take a break at Villes sur Auzon then ride through vineyards to Aubignan to shop and picnic by the old town gates. In the afternoon, we ride through vineyards to Violes and Camaret and into central Orange to the Place de la Republique to park near the Statue of Rambaud for a meal and to explore the Roman Amphitheatre and Arc de Triomphe. 89km. The Bike Bus departs at approximately 1930 for the return overnight journey to Calais. Meals: B D

**Sunday 6th September**

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

Meals: B = Breakfast  D = Dinner

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**Holiday Summary**

**Accommodation & Meals**

Accommodation is at an ancient inn, now a guesthouse, in the small village of Aurel at the foot of Mont Ventoux. Rooms are based on two people sharing. Vegetarians, and those with other dietary requirements, should detail these when booking.

**Vehicle Support**

Riders will carry their own luggage. No backup is provided.

**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 £995 is based on a minimum number of 8 people taking part in the holiday; please note Booking Conditions, clause 3. If there are insufficient bookings by 19th June 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 guesthouse, sharing room
- 7 breakfasts, 7 dinners
- Daily cycle routes on marked-up maps, cue sheets, profiles and GPS tracks
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price Does Not Include
- Meals in transit
- Drinks with dinner
- Lunches or refreshments during the day
- Entry fees at any attractions visited
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance
- Single occupancy supplement (£180, subject to availability)

Payment Schedule
A deposit of £295 per person is payable upon booking, with the final balance of £700 per person to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 19th June 2020.

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

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<th>Written notice received:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Before 19th June 2020</td>
<td>Deposit (£295)</td>
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<tr>
<td>From 19th June 2020 through to departure</td>
<td>100% (£995)</td>
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Additional Information

Area Covered By The Holiday
Our base is on the Vaucluse Plateau, surrounded by spectacular scenery with limestone gorges and medieval villages. To the west and east, are the twin peaks of the ‘Giant of Provence’, Mont Ventoux and the Montagne de la Lure. The terrain varies from rolling to hilly to mountainous depending on your choice of rides. If you cycle fairly regularly and climb hills steadily in a low gear, then you will almost certainly rate any of the routes on this holiday as comfortable. If you are not used to hills, then you will want to choose the shorter rides. Having said that, most people find French climbs much easier than the equivalent English climbs in that they are well graded. Road surfaces are generally very good. Traffic density is low.

Rides & Rest Days
There will be plenty of time for photography and exploring villages, ruins and natural features on the majority of our rides, though most of the time on the three longest routes (90, 90, 135km) will be spent cycling and sightseeing from the saddle. Each day there will be a led group ride at a pace of 18-20kmph on the flat, tackling hills at a slower pace. We use minor roads almost entirely, though as with any tour, road closures and landslips can affect our route choice. You are free to ride separately, but it is important that you are fit enough to ride the 70km (44 miles) to the guesthouse, climbing from Orange at 40m to Aurel at 790m. The return route at the end of the week is almost entirely downhill. Discrepancies in hill-climbing speeds will be inevitable, but for those who wish to ride in the group, frequent photo opportunities and snack stops should keep us together. The Tour Manager knows the area well and can suggest worthwhile extensions for riders who would like to ride further than the led group.

Accommodation & Meals
Our guesthouse is well used by cycling groups and provides excellent meals. Cycles are stored in a locked garage. We buy supplies individually for lunch, which is often at or near a bar-cafe, and stop at cafes whenever possible mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

Travel
When booking this holiday online it is also 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.

Group Information
The maximum group size will be 12 excluding the Tour Manager(s).

Weather & Clothing
The climate is Mediterranean so weather should be warm, even hot, but at elevation in the mountains it can be cold, particularly on the descents. Bring lightweight summer clothing, with some extra layers with covering for arms and legs, for warmth in the mountains or in case of sunburn, a change for
evenings and a light waterproof.

Cycles & Equipment
A touring cycle, hybrid or lightweight ATB is suitable. All routes are on-road but there is plenty of excellent off-road cycling or walking directly from the hotel if you research these routes yourself. You should ensure your cycle is well maintained, paying particular attention to wheels, tyres and brakes. Tandems should have at least one hub brake. A low bottom gear (eg a small chainring the same size or smaller than the largest cog on your rear wheel) is recommended. Mudguards are optional. Participants will be expected to carry each day sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs, along with any waterproofs and spare clothing needed for the day. Please note that it is French law that cyclists outside of urban areas at night, or at times of poor visibility, must wear a retro-reflective gilet and carry lights.

Maps & Guides
Each day you should carry the route sketch map which will be provided. To travel further afield you will need Michelin 527, ‘Provence, Alpes, Cote d’Azur’, 1:250,000, which covers the area (and much more) and is sufficient for on-road rides. You will need several 1:100,000 IGN maps if you want to ride or walk off-road. For more information, Michelin Tourist Guide ‘Provence’ covers the area of the rides and is available in English. A more detailed itinerary with marked-up maps, cue sheets, profiles and GPS tracks will be sent with the final tour information.

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.

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.

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