

FRANCE – CANAL DU MIDI CYCLING

7-days/ 6-nights **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn cycle tour from Sète to Carcassonne



Discover Sète with its canals and waterways, the French region of Languedoc's equivalent to Venice. Visit Béziers' 15th Century cathedral, explore Narbonne and the picturesque Canal de la Robine, wonder at the engineering feat of the seven locks at Fonsérannes, the Oppidum at Ensérune with relics of Iberian, Greek, Celtic and Roman civilisations and of course, the UNESCO World Heritage listed walled city of Carcassonne.

The architectural marvel that is the Canal du Midi is the stunning backdrop for this weeklong self-guided cycling holiday where we pre-book your accommodation, move your bags each day, provide suitable bike hire and information about the route including detailed maps and route notes.

The cycling route takes you to the most interesting sites in the Languedoc region, including Minerve, the amazing Cathar fortresses of the Pyrenean foothills and the amazingly well-preserved medieval city of Carcassonne. Cycling is mostly on the quiet back-roads often favored by Tour de France organizers with some undulations.

This is a region with a well-deserved reputation for its original cuisine, dishes such as the bean and sausage stew *cassoulet*, served with one of the delightful white wines, a perfect complement to an active day's cycling.

Dates: Daily on demand from April to October (subject to a minimum of two people travelling) For group bookings of 4 or more people, it is possible to start any day except Saturday.

Cost from: \$1560 per person twin share Single room supplement from \$330

Grading: This cycle tour is best described as moderate. You will need to be reasonably fit and prepared to cycle 30 to 50 km in a day (4 to 6 hours of cycling), over flat and also undulating terrain.

Included: Breakfast daily, dinner on 2 nights, luggage transfers, hybrid bike hire, route information and maps, tax and service charges and telephone support (if required).

Not included: Daily lunches and dinners not mentioned, drinks, personal expenses including entrance fees, extra nights of accommodation or arrival/departure transfers (can be arranged at extra cost)

Starts: Sète Nearest train station: Sète (connections via Montpellier, Nîmes or Narbonne)

Ends: Carcassonne Nearest train station: Carcassonne (onward connections at Toulouse or Narbonne)

Accommodation and Meals: Accommodation is in small, comfortable *Chambre d'hôte* and 2 or 3-star hotels in rooms with private bathroom facilities, on a bed & breakfast basis on 4 nights and half board (dinner, bed & breakfast) basis on 2 nights. Other dinners are at own arrangements and there are many choices in the towns and villages on the route. Lunches are not included in the tour cost, but picnic materials can readily be bought in local shops or a packed lunch ordered the night before from your accommodation.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Suggested itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Sète

Arrive in Sète, a small picturesque port town located halfway between Toulouse and Marseille – both cities have major international airports. Sète is well served by regular trains from both Toulouse (via Narbonne) and Marseille (via Montpellier or Nîmes). After checking into your hotel, explore this town also known as the “Venice of Languedoc.” Overnight accommodation in Sète in a 3-star hotel with breakfast and dinner included.

Day 2: Sète – Agde / Cap d’Agde

Cycling distance @ 35km

Cycle on a beach road all the way to Cap d’Agde. Sitting on a geological fault, Agde has been built with black volcanic rock, making this town so singular and so different from its neighbouring towns. There, be sure to visit the old quarter and its cathedral. A few pedal strokes further, and you’ll be in the village of Cap d’Agde where you stay tonight in a 2-star hotel with breakfast. Dinner is at your own arrangement.

Day 3: Cap d’Agde - Béziers

Cycling distance @ 30km

Following the canal there are many inviting lunch options along the way. Béziers offers over 6,500 years of history, and it is one of the oldest towns on the Mediterranean ring with many sites of interest including its 15th Century Saint-Nazaire Cathedral. Overnight in a 2-star hotel with breakfast. Dinner at your own arrangement.

Day 4: Béziers - Narbonne

Cycling distance @ 50km

Cycle over the river Orb to the “Oppidum of Enserune,” testimony to the importance of this region as a crossroads, shown by the number of pre-Roman artefacts from all corners of the Mediterranean. See Capestang and its imposing Gothic church and many vineyards on the way to Narbonne. Overnight in a 3-star hotel with breakfast. Dinner is at your own arrangement.

Day 5: Narbonne - Homps

Cycling distance @ 45km

Explore Narbonne, a place of importance on the route to Spain since Roman times with many sites of interest, including its medieval cathedral and Archbishop Palace (Palais des Archeveques). Then cycle along the Canal de la Robine, a canal that runs perpendicular to the Canal du Midi and links Narbonne to the Mediterranean Sea. Then follow the Canal du Midi on quiet roads to the small village of Homps where you stay the night. Overnight in a *Chambre d’hôte* with breakfast and dinner included.

Day 6: Homps - Carcassonne

Cycling distance @ 50km

Your destination is the medieval city of Carcassonne. This fascinating walled town with its two circular walls and huge medieval fortress – the largest in Europe – was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Site list in 1997. On the way, ride along the canal through picturesque villages that offer many lunch options. Overnight stay in a 3-star hotel with breakfast; you are free to discover the local cuisine with dinner at your own arrangement.

Day 7: Tour ends in Carcassonne

Tour arrangements end after breakfast. You can leave this picturesque historical city at any time today. However, there is plenty to see here and we can arrange additional nights – ask about cost and availability of extra nights.

Outdoor Travel offers a wide range of guided or self-guided inn-to-inn cycling holidays in Europe including France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Sweden, Ireland and the UK. Outdoor Travel offer **Bike & Barge** holidays for those interested in a more relaxed pace combination of cycling and cruising in many areas of Europe including France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Austria and Romania.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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