

FRANCE

Provence & St. Rémy

A Self-Guided Walking Adventure



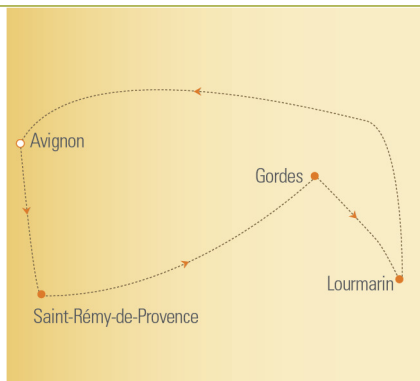


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Travel Style

Our Self-Guided Walking Adventures are ideal for travelers with an independent spirit who enjoy exploring at their own pace. We provide authentic accommodations, luggage transfers, and some meals, along with comprehensive Route Notes, detailed maps, and 24-hour emergency assistance. This gives you the freedom to focus on the things that matter to you—no group, no guide, and no set schedule to stand in the way of enjoying your adventure, your way.



Overview

The essential Provence literally unfolds at your feet on this easygoing Self-Guided itinerary where open ridge walks along the Alpilles and Luberon mountain ranges provide sweeping views over the southern French landscape. The route takes you to picturesque hilltop villages—Gordes, Goult, Lacoste, and Bonnieux—and through countryside straight out of Van Gogh paintings (in fact you walk in his footsteps in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence). Trails gently descend through olive and almond groves to quaint medieval villages shaded by ancient trees, where colorful markets, fountains, and narrow cobbled lanes invite exploration. Accommodations offer signature Provençal hospitality and style, as well as the true Mediterranean flavors of fresh local cuisine and wine.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Arrival in Avignon. Transfer to Saint-Rémy-de-Provence

You are met in Avignon and transferred about 25 minutes to the classic southern French town of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, where you may relax with an apéritif of chilled *pastis* (the local anise-flavored liqueur) in the shade of the fig trees your hotel is named after. Dinner tonight is either on-site at your hotel or a short walk away at a local restaurant.

Hôtel Sous les Figueiers, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence

A charming small hotel built around an interior courtyard with individually decorated guestrooms highlighting Provençal decor supplemented by antiques and artwork. Fresh local products and home-baked regional breads and pastries are on the breakfast menu, served either in the shaded terrace or the contemporary Baroque small salon. An on-site art studio exhibits contemporary works and encourages local artistic endeavors. A pleasant Provençal town, Saint-Rémy is best known for the Saint-Paul de Mausole monastery where Van Gogh received psychiatric treatment.

DAY 2

Van Gogh loop; 6.2 miles, easy to moderate, 800-ft. elevation gain and loss

Today you follow the Van Gogh trail, through the very scenes that inspired him. At the outset of your walk, explore the Roman ruins of Glanum, or the former monastery where Van Gogh

spent the last year of his life, before following a winding botanical path up a gradual trail and to the crest of the Alpilles Mountains. Aromatic herbs and wildflowers carpet the hills as the views extend far into the horizon—a perfect setting for a picnic lunch. Upon your return to Saint-Rémy, the rest of the day is at your leisure.

Hôtel Sous les Figuiers, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence

DAY 3

Saint-Rémy-de-Provence to Les Baux-de-Provence; 6.2 miles, easy to moderate, 900-ft. elevation gain and 350-ft. elevation loss. Transfer to Gordes

Today, once again, you leave Saint-Rémy on foot, but this time taking a different path than yesterday's walk, to the top of the windswept Alpilles. A rolling trail following the ridge is complete with awe-inspiring 360-degree views, which continue as the path gently undulates toward the medieval village of Les Baux-de-Provence, set atop its rocky perch. In addition to eating lunch (before 2 p.m. if you opt for a sit-down restaurant), there is time to visit the village, including the Carrières de Lumières, famed for its unique audio-visual shows, before a one-hour afternoon transfer to the Luberon Mountains and the village of Gordes, your home for the next two nights, and classified as one of the “most beautiful villages of France.” After settling in to your hotel, you step out for a dinner of Provençal specialties.

Le Mas des Romarins, Gordes

A fully restored 19th-century farmhouse complex with a veranda overlooking Gordes offers newly renovated rooms with Provençal decor and all amenities. In the late afternoon, a swimming pool and surrounding terrace and grounds are bathed in the region's unique golden light. The intimate dining room offers fireside authentic regional cuisine, or al fresco dining, depending on the season.





On a rocky outcropping overlooking classic Provençal landscapes, Gordes, one of France's loveliest towns, delights with its charm and history dating from the Middle Ages.

DAY 4

Abbey de Sénanque loop; 6.2 miles, easy to moderate, 800-ft. elevation gain and loss

The paths around Gordes are lined with old stone walls, lone farmhouses, and *bories*—centuries-old round shepherd's huts constructed from dry stone. You follow the paths into the valley and soon the vision of the 12th-century Sénanque Abbey appears, situated among some of the very few lavender fields in the area (which are in bloom from late June through July). After a picnic lunch overlooking the magnificent 850-year-old Cistercian abbey, a somewhat steep climb brings you back to your hotel, where the late-afternoon relaxation may include a refreshing swim before a drink and dinner.

Le Mas des Romarins, Gordes

DAY 5

Goult to Bonnieux; 7.5 miles, easy to moderate, 1,050-ft. elevation gain and 800-ft. elevation loss or Lacoste to Bonnieux; 3.5 miles, easy to moderate, 750-ft. elevation gain and 200-ft. elevation loss. Transfer to Lourmarin

Today offers two walking options of varying lengths. For the longer option, a short taxi transfer brings you to the Calavon Valley and the timeless village of Goult—perhaps the least known and visited of the beautiful towns in the Petit Luberon. Starting at its Romanesque church, medieval lanes lead you to the restored 18th-century Moulin de Jérusalem—one of the few remaining windmills that were strategically placed on the region's ridges to grind grain. With sweeping views of the Calavon Valley below, you make your way past *bories* and farmhouses to the neighboring village of Lacoste, once home to the infamous Marquis de Sade and now to the remains of his castle (For a shorter walking option, you may ask the morning's taxi to bring you directly to Lacoste). Heading back into the valley and through cherry orchards, vineyards, and truffle oak plantations, you reach the village of Bonnieux, crowned by its 12th-century

church huddled under the canopy of massive cedar trees. There are many dining options to choose from for lunch in Bonnieux, some with spectacular views over the valley. Your afternoon transfer brings you to your home for the next two nights in Lourmarin.

Hôtel Bastide de Lourmarin, Lourmarin

Located at the entrance of the beautiful town of Lourmarin, this four-star boutique hotel offers just 19 individually decorated rooms combining authentic Provençal furnishings, fabrics, and tiles with modern comfort and unique artwork. Among its grounds are meticulous gardens, heated swimming pool, solarium and lounge in an olive grove, and on-site sauna. A terrace provides shaded and sunny outdoor seating for breakfast, weather permitting.



DAY 6

Lourmarin loop via Cadenet; 4.3 miles, easy to moderate, 400-ft. elevation gain and loss or Lourmarin loop via the crest of the Grand Luberon; 9.6 miles, challenging, 2,050-ft. elevation gain and loss

The day begins in Lourmarin, a small village nestled on the southern slopes of the Luberon Mountains. With its maze of cobblestone streets and centuries-old buildings, you'll soon see why it's listed as one of the most beautiful towns in France. From here, choose from two walk options along paths scented with wild thyme and rosemary through picturesque, vine-laden countryside bathed in sunlight. While the northern part of the Luberon is a mix of forest and fruit orchards, these routes amble through the majestic, arid landscape of the south, a region of bare limestone outcroppings, castles, vineyards, and private villas. Following small country roads still used by local farmers, an easy to moderate option leads you to the sleepy village of Cadenet in time for lunch. There is plenty of time to relax and soak in the atmosphere of this authentic Provençal village before returning to the trail to walk back to your hotel on foot. A more challenging alternative loops into the heart of the Grand Luberon Mountain. The Combe des Cavaliers—literally “horseback riders’ hollow”—takes you on a steady climb toward the upper slopes. Continuing through oak forest, a steep, yet short ascent delivers you to the very crest of the Luberon, with picture-perfect views of Mount Ventoux framed in the distance. From here, an optional



short detour further rewards with spectacular 360-degree views extending as far south as the Mediterranean Sea, and as far north as the snow-capped Alps. The mostly easy-going descent offers constant views of the Durance Valley before the final leg through farmer fields returns you to Lourmarin.

Hôtel Bastide de Lourmarin, Lourmarin

DAY 7

Departure from Avignon

You bid farewell to Provence and a complimentary transfer back to Avignon is provided after breakfast (approximately one hour).

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Itinerary Overview

PLEASE NOTE: your detailed Route Notes will be mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure. While these Route Notes may list a number of accommodation options, your specific accommodations are listed below. Please make sure to bring this Itinerary Overview with you.

STARTING POINT

Avignon, France

Based upon individual arrival times

NIGHTS 1 & 2

Hôtel Sous les Figuiers

3 Avenue Gabriel St René Taillandier

Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, France

Tel 011 33 432 60 15 40

Email hotel.souslesfiguiers@wanadoo.fr

hotel-charme-provence.com

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHTS 3 & 4

Le Mas des Romarins

Route de Sénanque

Gordes, France

Tel 011 33 490 72 12 13

Email info@masromarins.com

masromarins.com

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHTS 5 & 6

Hôtel Bastide de Lourmarin

Route de Cucuron

Lourmarin, France

Tel 011 33 490 07 00 70

Email info@hotelbastide.com

hotelbastide.com

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

ENDING POINT

Avignon, France

Based upon individual departure times

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH

7 days, 6 nights

DEPARTURES

This tour is available daily, on request, from April 1 through June 26 and September 1 through October 31, 2017. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table. Please also note that the tour price includes one arrival transfer from Avignon to Saint-Rémy-de-Provence on Day 1 of the tour and one departure transfer from Lourmarin to Avignon on Day 7 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate arrival and/or departure times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

TOUR PRICE

2017 departures	Per person 2 guests	Per person 3–5 guests	Per person 6+ guests	Single +	Solo Surcharge
April 1–June 26 & September 1– October 31	\$2,698	\$2,598	\$2,498	\$775	\$530

STARTING POINT

Avignon, France

Based upon individual arrival times

ENDING POINT

Avignon, France

Based upon individual departure times

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 4 to 10 miles per day and limited options. There are daily ascents and descents—with some steep sections—up to 1,000 feet. One optional walk on Day 6 has an elevation gain and loss of 2,000 feet. Walks are through oak and pine forests, rugged hills dotted with Mediterranean herbs and shrubs, terraced farmland, and hillside vineyards. The terrain includes single-track trails, mostly cobbled but also loose stones or gravel. The terrain also includes farming tracks, some dirt roads, and occasionally a paved country road. This diverse itinerary combines both the Alpilles and the Luberon mountain ranges, passing scenes painted by Van Gogh as well as golden hilltop villages, with plenty of time for trailside picnics and to explore archaeological sites or markets.

Many people travel to Provence to see the lavender. Except for a few areas around the town of Gordes, lavender actually grows further north. Please also note that at the time of year our tours operate it will not be in bloom, as this generally happens between the end of June and the end of July, when it becomes too hot for walking and the risk of forest fires and path restrictions is high.

INCLUSIONS

- » Breakfast daily and three dinners (days 1, 3, and 5); beverages not included
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary
- » Orientation meeting with a Country Walkers representative
- » Luggage transfers between the hotels
- » Detailed Route Notes and maps (mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure)
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers' local partner
- » 24-hour One Call International Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Participation Agreement and you will receive:

- » A Guest Information Form to complete and return at least 45 days prior to your tour

- » Luggage tags
- » Route Notes and maps
- » Your trip invoice

GRATUITIES

Standard gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers; however additional tips are always welcome. Should you wish to tip for meals or services not included in the cost of the tour, please do so at your discretion. Local currency is preferred.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

STARTING POINT

Avignon, France

Based upon individual arrival times

A taxi driver will meet you at either the Avignon TGV (high-speed) train station, Avignon Centre (central) train station (on the ground floor in front of the newspaper stand, holding a sign with Country Walkers and/or your name on it), or an Avignon city hotel and transfer you approximately 25 minutes to the first hotel in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence. A tour representative will meet you on Day 1 or 2 of the tour to provide an orientation meeting, ensure you are comfortably settled, and answer any questions you may have.

In order to arrange your arrival transfer and orientation meeting, please provide us with your arrival and departure details by returning your Guest Information Form at least 45 days prior to the departure.

Please note that the tour price includes one arrival transfer from Avignon to Saint-Rémy-de-Provence on Day 1 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate arrival times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORTS

Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG), Paris
aeroportsdeparis.fr or paris-cdg.com

Marseille Provence Airport (MRS), Marignane
marseille-airport.com

GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

The most convenient way to travel to the tour starting point is by train. There are two train stations serving Avignon:

- » The Avignon TGV Train Station (Gare d'Avignon TGV; gares-sncf.com/fr/gare/fravg/avignon-tgv): servicing long-distance and high-speed trains, this station is situated 6 km from the city center.
- » The Avignon CENTRE Train Station (Gare d'Avignon Centre; gares-sncf.com/fr/gare/fraes/avignon-centre): dedicated to local trains, this

station is located in the city center—just outside the medieval ramparts and only a few minutes' walk from the main sights and hotels of historic Avignon.

- » There is a regular train shuttle—“La Virgule,” meaning “comma”—that runs every 15 minutes between the two stations. The journey takes five minutes and costs 1.60 euros.

If you are spending pre-tour time in Avignon, be sure to select “Avignon Centre” as your destination when making your train reservation. This way, if arriving into Avignon TGV station, your tickets will include the train shuttle that runs from the TGV station to the city center.

From Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG), Paris:

From Paris you can travel to the tour starting point via a direct TGV (high-speed) train from the Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport to the Avignon TGV train station. Upon arrival at the airport, follow the directions to the train station (“gare SNCF” or “Paris par train”) located in Terminal 2 of the airport. The journey from Paris to Avignon takes between 2½ and 3½ hours. Prices can vary greatly depending on how far in advance you purchase your train ticket. Be sure to validate your ticket in the small yellow machines located on the platform prior to boarding, or you may be assessed a large fine. For the TGV, your ticket indicates the train car number of your reserved seat, so you can wait in the designated platform area as shown on the platform chart.

If you plan on spending pre-tour time in Paris, you may take the RER B train from the airport to central Paris, which takes approximately 35 minutes, depending on your destination. The B line stops at the Gare du Nord, Châtelet-Les-Halles, Saint-Michel, and Denfert-Rochereau, and allows you to connect with the Paris Metro system. You can purchase your ticket for the RER at the SNCF desk of the airport (although the wait can be long) or by using one of the blue automated machines (which accept coins and some cards, but no bills). Trains to Avignon from central Paris depart from the Gare de Lyon train station. For more details on Paris public transportation, including interactive maps, schedules, and a journey planner, visit ratp.fr and click on “Finding your way.”

From Marseille Provence Airport (MRS), Marignane:

From the Marseille Provence Airport, you can travel to the tour starting point combining a short shuttle bus ride and train from the Vitrolles Aéroport Marseille Provence train station to the Avignon Centre train station (60–90-minute train ride).

A free shuttle bus connects the Marseille Provence Airport (platform No. 3) with the Vitrolles Aéroport Marseille Provence train station in five minutes. Shuttles depart 20 minutes prior to every scheduled train departure. While there is no need to purchase tickets in advance, you may purchase train tickets online at voyages-sncf.com. You may also purchase tickets upon arrival at the airport from machines by the entrance to Terminals 3–4, as well as at the train station itself. Be sure to validate your train ticket in the small yellow machines located on the platform prior to boarding, or you may be assessed a large fine.



Arrival at Avignon TGV Train Station:

» **Train shuttle & walk:** take the train shuttle—“La Virgule”—that runs every 15 minutes from Avignon TGV train station to Avignon Centre train station. The journey takes five minutes and costs 1.60 euros. The Hôtel Cloître St-Louis, our recommended pre- and/or post-tour hotel, is no more than a 5-minute walk from Avignon Centre train station. Standing in front of Avignon Centre

and looking at the walled city, the gate in front of you is the Porte de la Republic. Enter the walled city through that gate and you will be on Cours Jean Jaurès. Inside the wall, ignore the first street on the left, Cours Président Kennedy. The second left, immediately after the chamber of commerce building, is Rue du Portal Boquier. Turn left there and the hotel door faces you in about one hundred feet.

» **Taxi:** a taxi from Avignon TGV train station to Avignon city center takes approximately 15 minutes.

Arrival at Avignon Centre Train Station:

» **Walk:** The Hôtel Cloître St-Louis, our recommended pre- and/or post-tour hotel, is no more than a 5-minute walk from Avignon Centre train station. Standing in front of Avignon Centre and looking at the walled city, the gate in front of you is the Porte de la Republic. Enter the walled city through that gate and you will be on Cours Jean Jaurès. Inside the wall, ignore the first street on the left, Cours Président Kennedy. The second left, immediately after the chamber of commerce building, is Rue du Portal Boquier. Turn left there and the hotel door faces you in about one hundred feet.

» **Taxi:** a taxi from Avignon Centre train station to Avignon city center takes approximately 4 minutes.

For further rail information, including reservations, schedules, and up-to-date fares, please call Rail Europe at 877.257.2887 or consult their website:

raileurope.com. Or you may consult the French rail website: voyages-sncf.com. We recommend making train reservations in advance for major train routes. Reservations are required for all TGV trains.

PRE- AND POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

You may wish to stay in Avignon, a provincial town you will not explore during the tour. We recommend the Hôtel Cloître St.-Louis, a beautiful hotel blending ancient architecture with modern design, and boasting amenities including a rooftop swimming pool and sun terrace. To make a reservation, please contact the hotel directly. Please note that standard rooms do not have true windows looking to the outdoors, so we suggest reserving rooms of a higher category.

Hôtel Cloître St.-Louis

20 rue Portail Boquier
84000 Avignon
Tel 011 33 490 27 55 55
Email hotel@cloitre-saint-louis.com
cloitre-saint-louis.com

Double room rates start at approximately 150 euros (depending on the room category), including breakfast.

An alternate hotel that you may reserve on your own is the Avignon Grand Hotel, which is close to the Hôtel Cloître St-Louis. It is ideally located at the foot of the city ramparts and has 122 spacious rooms. Please contact them directly for a reservation.

Avignon Grand Hotel

34 Boulevard Saint Roch
84000 Avignon
Tel 011 33 490 80 98 09
Fax 011 33 490 80 98 10
Email reservationagh@cloitre-saint-louis.com
avignon-grand-hotel.com

Double room rates start at approximately 110 euros (depending on the room category), including breakfast.

ENDING POINT

Avignon, France

Based upon individual departure times

A transfer will be provided (approximately one hour) from the final hotel in Lourmarin to Avignon (TGV or central train station, or city hotel). The most convenient way to travel from Avignon to your next destination is by train. Please refer to the Getting to the Starting Point section for more details on train travel.

In order to arrange your departure transfer, please provide us with your arrival and departure details by returning your Guest Information Form at least 45 days prior to the departure.

Please note that the tour price includes one departure transfer from Lourmarin to Avignon on Day 7 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate departure times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

Several trains depart Avignon for Paris each day. Please check airline schedules carefully. If you plan to schedule return flights immediately following the tour's conclusion, please contact your airline directly for specific check-in requirements and allow plenty of time (several hours at least) between your rail and flight connections.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, self-guided experience. For best availability, reserve your trip today!

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. A \$350 per person deposit is required at the time of the reservation request. Final tour cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As arrangements are confirmed at least a year in advance, the tour price is subject to change.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Please notify us in writing. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.