

## France: Aix-en-Provence, Vaison-la-Romaine & St. Rémy

### Tour-Only Itinerary

Embark on a walking tour through one of France's most beloved provinces – Provence. Make your way through medieval villages, open countryside, and lush vineyards, all the while soaking up the region's rural charm. Your senses come alive with the sights and sounds of vibrant open-air markets, while traditional Provençal cuisine enchants your taste buds as you sample delectable local cheeses, wines, meats, and pastries. Pause to gaze up at the magnificent, Gothic Palais des Papes and explore Avignon's city center, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Your comfortable accommodations are perfectly situated, near restaurants, shops, and attractions. From tiny villages clinging to rugged mountainsides to serene olive groves, Provence has inspired artists for centuries and this walking tour of Provence is bound to inspire you too.



### Highlights

- Enjoy a picnic in a Provençal potter's workshop
- Savor the surroundings and wine offerings at Domaine de Mourchon
- Stroll through the villages of Seguret and Les Baux, noted for being some of the most beautiful in France
- Marvel at the multitude of smells, flavors, and colors as you make your way through the sprawling Vaison-la-Romaine outdoor market
- Experience a “zen” moment at the sensational multimedia art show at Carrières de Lumières in Les BauxGaze upon sweeping landscapes and beautiful backdrops that inspired Vincent van Gogh's most influential paintings
- Admire Gothic architecture in historic Avignon, including the imposing Palais des Papes, a

UNESCO World Heritage site

## On all Flex-Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Opportunities to break away from the group and explore on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 20 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious multi-course meals—a majority are included.

## Activity Level

This tour is one of our Flex-Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy with moderate sections with an average of 2 to 6 miles per day. There are daily ascents and descents up to 450 feet, with some steep sections. Trails are exposed or through oak and pine forests, sometimes on rugged hills dotted with Mediterranean herbs and shrubs, terraced farmland, and hillside vineyards. The terrain includes mostly single-track trails with loose stones or gravel, and some dirt roads, rocky wooded paths, and ancient ruins with uneven stone steps. The itinerary balances invigorating walks in the countryside with stops at outdoor

picnic sites, and explorations of markets, an olive oil farm, or village cafés, to ensure a full immersion in the Provençal art de vivre. It's important to be aware of the heat during the dates this tour is offered..

Temperatures at this time can be very warm, from high 70s to low 90s, with very bright sunlight, which can increase the perceived activity level. As one of our Flex-Guided tours, some days offer options for self-exploration, cultural visits, or free time to relax on your own.

## DAY 1

### Join your *France: Aix-en-Provence, Vaison-la-Romaine & St. Remy* tour

Vaison-la-Romaine; 2 miles, easy

Enjoy lunch on your own before meeting your guide(s), who will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt, in the lobby of the Grand Hôtel Roi René Aix-en-Provence Centre-MGallery by Sofitel, 24 boulevard du Roi René, Aix-en-Provence (tel. 011 33 4 42 37 61 00) at 12:50 p.m. Be dressed and prepared to start the warm-up walk upon your arrival at Vaison-la-Romaine, as we will not visit the hotel first. You'll transfer via private coach to Vaison-la-Romaine (a journey of approximately 90 minutes, depending on traffic).

If your arrival in Aix-en-Provence is later than 1:00 p.m. or if your arrival is delayed, you must make your own arrangements for travel to our hotel in Vaison-la-Romaine. A taxi from Aix-en-Provence to Vaison-la-Romaine costs approximately 150 euros one way.

Please contact the hotel to let them know if you are delayed. The hotel will pass your message along to your guides.

**Included Meals:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hostellerie Le Beffroi

## DAY 2

### Walk from Sablet to Seguret. Wine tasting at Domaine de Mourchon. Visit and picnic lunch at potter's home

Sablet to Séguret; 2 miles, easy and Séguret to Bel-Air; 3 miles, easy

After a very short transfer this morning to the village of Sablet, you will start your walk to one of the official “most beautiful villages in France,” Seguret. The village lies at the foot of a hill topped by the ruins of its feudal chateau. There will be time to explore the charm of this village, with its typical Provençal atmosphere and medieval character.

Just outside of the village is located the Domaine de Mourchon, where you will stop to taste their wines. Your walk then continues to the workshop of potter Amélie Berthéas. She is known for producing ceramic jewelry. Here we will all enjoy a picnic lunch in her garden.

Later, we return to Vaison-la-Romaine, where the remainder of the day is yours. Recognized as one of the “Plus Beaux Détours de France,” Vaison-la-Romaine lies at the foot of Mont Ventoux, the “giant of Provence” (altitude 1,912 m) and its Gallo-Roman remains and medieval quarter are a pleasure to explore on foot. Enjoy a stroll through the town and try one of its many wonderful restaurants for dinner on your own.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hostellerie Le Beffroi

## DAY 3

### Vaison-la-Romaine market. Walk to Le Crestet

Vaison-la-Romaine to Le Crestet; 5 miles, easy

After breakfast, you’ll walk straight from the hotel to the market of Vaison-la-Romaine, where you can immerse yourself in the wonderful scents, colors, and sounds of Provence. You’ll be tempted by the local produce such as white asparagus, purple artichokes, and a large array of olives. Sample baked goods and artisanal cheeses. Or pick up some dried lavender, fragrant handmade soaps, or the colorful tablecloths, napkins, and other linens that are emblematic of Provence. You might wish to pick up few local delicacies for your lunch, which you’ll pause to eat later during your walk through open countryside to the pretty hilltop village of Le Crestet. As you stroll its narrow, winding cobblestone streets, you’ll be treated to magnificent views of the Ouveze Valley and majestic Mount Ventoux. Pause for an included drink.

After leaving Le Crestet you’ll meet our bus and shuttle to your next hotel in Villeneuve-les-Avignon (a journey of approximately 60 minutes, depending on traffic). Upon arrival you will enjoy free time to settle in

before we regroup for dinner in the hotel's restaurant.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel La Magnaneraie

## DAY 4

### Avignon

Avignon walking tour; easy and La Magnaneraie through La Colline des Mourgues; 3.5 miles, easy

This morning, you hop on a local bus to the center of Avignon where you'll meet a local guide for a walking tour of the famed "City of Popes," so named for the 67-year period during the 14th century when seven popes, beginning with Clement V, abandoned Rome and made the city their permanent residence. During your stroll, you'll tour Avignon's historical center, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and view the fortified Palais de Papes, or Palace of the Popes, the magnificent Gothic complex where the popes lived.

After lunch, the rest of the afternoon is yours to do as you please. Perhaps you'll venture inside the Palais de Papes, or browse for pottery or handmade tablecloths at the many shops and market stalls. Wander over to the city's signature Pont de St. Bénézet, the medieval bridge upon which the famous children's song "Sur le Pont d'Avignon" is based.

Later, you'll regroup with your guides and take the public bus back to your hotel. Your guides will also offer an afternoon walk from the hotel around Villeneuve and follow the canal along the Rhone and through community gardens. After returning back into Villeneuve, you can relax by your hotel's pool before dinner on your own.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel La Magnaneraie

## DAY 5

### Les Baux. Carrières de Lumières. St. Rémy

Val d'Enfer to Les Baux; 2-3 miles, easy to moderate

Today's discoveries begin with a transfer (one hour) near Les Baux, another one of the official "most beautiful villages in France" that is perched on a rocky plateau more than 800 feet high, and which can only be reached on foot. In the Middle Ages, its court was famous for the minstrels and troubadours who came here to sing songs of courtly love. Walk to this mountain village and enjoy some free time to explore on your own, admiring the village's carefully restored medieval facades, browsing its art galleries and craft shops—and delighting in the sweeping views of the surrounding countryside. Enjoy lunch on your own in Les Baux.

You'll then transfer to the charming small city of St. Rémy. Explore the hidden gems of St. Rémy including the neo-classical Church of St. Martin and its 14th-century bell tower and the 15th-16th century Renaissance Palace Hotel de Sade, once owned by the Marquis de Sade, now the site of a small archaeological collection. After checking in to your hotel, unwind by the pool, spa, or terrace.

Tonight, enjoy dinner on your own at your hotel's restaurant, or venture into St. Rémy and choose from among its many inviting bistros.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Hôtel Le Saint-Rémy

## DAY 6

### Walk in Les Alpilles. Market visit at Eygalières

St. Rémy to Eygalières; 5 miles, easy

Today you'll have a short shuttle ride to your trailhead, where you'll follow an undulating footpath that skirts the bottom edge of Les Alpilles through olive groves and vineyards. From a distance, before you arrive in the village, you'll see the old part of Eygalières perched on the summit of a small hill. As you approach the inhabited section of the village, you'll be able to observe the small houses that make up the village and the busy Friday market. Stop here to explore the village and market, perhaps buying some local produce for a picnic lunch.

Returning to St. Rémy, you will meet up with another local friend, historian Mathilde Duvillier, who will escort you on a walking tour following in the footsteps of Vincent van Gogh. The artist's paintings come alive as you visit the very scenes he immortalized. One of Van Gogh's most famous paintings, *The Starry*

*Night*, is believed to have been inspired by night views of St. Rémy. You will also stop inside the sanitarium where the layout and furnishings of Van Gogh's room have been reproduced.

You'll return to St. Rémy by foot, where you'll have time at leisure to explore before returning to your hotel.

Tonight, toast your discoveries of southern France with your fellow travelers during a special farewell dinner at the hotel.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hôtel Le Saint-Rémy

## **DAY 7**

### **Transfer to Aix-en-Provence. Free time. Your *France: Aix-en-Provence, Vaison-la-Romaine & St. Remy* tour concludes**

After breakfast, transfer to the Aix-en-Provence Grand Hôtel Roi René Aix-en-Provence Centre-MGallery by Sofitel, arriving at approximately 11:00 a.m. Your tour ends here.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## What's Included

### Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
10 on-tour meals: 6 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Emergency travel assistance hotline available 24/7	✓