

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

Tour-Only Itinerary

Golden Provençal sunlight floods cypress-fringed fields of red poppies and sunflowers just outside St. Rémy, and it suddenly hits you: *déjà vu*. As your historian guide illuminates the sites that inspired Van Gogh, you realize that you've stepped into one of his paintings. Aesthetic revelations are nothing new in Provence: perched medieval villages of stone walls and powder blue shutters; market stalls fragrant with fresh-cut lavender, honey-almond nougat and multi-hued soaps. Break your morning stroll through the olive groves with a wine tasting amidst a sea of grapevines. Pause for lunch with a jeweler in her courtyard garden. Prowl Avignon's papal palace or the Roman ruins of Vaison-la-Romaine. When you walk through Provence, village to village, market to market, you put yourself right in the picture.



Highlights

Stroll through the villages of Séguret and Les Baux, noted for being some of the most beautiful in France. Experience a “zen” moment at the sensational multimedia art show at Carrières de Lumières in Les Baux. Gaze upon the sweeping landscapes and beautiful backdrops that inspired Vincent van Gogh's most influential paintings.

On all 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.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



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



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all 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. Rémy* 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. +33 (0)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.

Accommodation: Hostellerie Le Beffroi, Vaison-la-Romaine

Accommodation Alternate: Hotel BURRHUS, Vaison-la-Romaine

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2

Walk from Sablet to Séguret. Wine tasting at Domaine de Mourchon. Visit and picnic lunch at artisan's home. Independent exploration of Vaison-la-Romaine

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

After a short transfer to the village of Sablet, you will start this morning's walk to one of the official "most beautiful villages in France," Séguret. The town 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 Séguret is the Domaine de Mourchon, where you will stop to taste their wines. Your walk then continues to the workshop of artisan Amélie Berthéas, known for her ceramic jewelry. Here, you will enjoy a picnic lunch in her garden.

Later, 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 meters) and its Gallo-Roman remains and medieval quarter are a pleasure to explore on foot. Take a stroll through the town, and try one of its many wonderful restaurants for dinner on your own.

Tucked between seven hills in the Haut-Vaucluse region, Vaison-la-Romaine owes its reputation to its heritage. On the right bank of the Ouvèze River, the village's lower town stretches out, revealing a rich Roman history. This city was once the capital to the Voconces, a Gallic people allied with the Romans. The Roman Theatre houses prestigious cultural events, such as the Festival of Vaison-La-Romaine and the Choralies. On the left bank of the Ouvèze River, the medieval town, called the "high town", clings to the abrupt slopes of the hill and surrounds the ruins of a 12th-century castle.

Accommodation: Hostellerie Le Beffroi, Vaison-la-Romaine

Accommodation Alternate: Hotel BURRHUS, Vaison-la-Romaine

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

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 an array of olives. Sample the market's 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 may wish to pick up a 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 Le Crestet's narrow, winding cobblestone streets, you'll be treated to magnificent views of the Ouvèze Valley and majestic Mount Ventoux. Here, you pause for an included drink.

Leaving Le Crestet, you'll meet your bus and shuttle to your next hotel in Villeneuve-lès-Avignon (a journey of approximately 60 minutes, depending on traffic). Upon arrival, take your time to settle in before regrouping for dinner in the hotel's restaurant.

Accommodation: Hôtel La Magnaneraie, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4

Avignon. Independent exploration of Avignon and Villeneuve-lès-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 years 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 des Papes, or Palace of the Popes, which is 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 des 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 offer an afternoon walk from the hotel around Villeneuve, following the canal along the Rhone and through community gardens. After returning to Villeneuve, you can relax by your hotel's pool before dinner on your own.

Avignon and Villeneuve-lès-Avignon are located in the Gard department of the Languedoc-Roussillon region of France. Though the Rhône separates them, they are indisputably linked by history.

Accommodation: Hôtel La Magnaneraie, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

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) to your trailhead near Les Baux. Another one of the official "most beautiful villages in France," Les Baux is perched on a rocky plateau more than 800 feet high, 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. Today's walk leads to this mountain village, where you have free time to explore on your own. Admire the village's carefully restored medieval façades, browse its art galleries and craft shops, and delight in the sweeping views of the surrounding countryside. Enjoy lunch on your own in Les Baux followed by the immersive multimedia art show at Carrières de Lumières.

You'll then transfer to the small, charming city of St. Rémy where you'll explore its hidden gems. Visit the neoclassical 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, it is now the site of a small archaeological collection. After checking in to your hotel, unwind by the pool, spa, or terrace.

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

Accommodation: Hôtel Le Saint-Rémy

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6

Walk in Les Alpilles. Market visit at Eygalières

St. Rémy to Eygalières; 5 miles, easy

Today, it's 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 Eygalières, you'll see the old part of the village perched on the summit of a small hill. As you approach, you'll spy the village's tiny houses and the busy Friday market. Stop here to explore the streets 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 on 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.

Accommodation: Hôtel Le Saint-Rémy

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 7

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

After breakfast, say goodbye to your guides and transfer to the Grand Hôtel Roi René Aix-en-Provence Centre-MGallery by Sofitel, arriving at approximately 11:00 a.m. Your walking tour of Provence 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	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz	✓