

Bridge & Walking at Provence

Tour Style: European Centre Based
Destinations: France & Mediterranean
Trip code: PVBRW



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Provence offers a great opportunity to exercise your mind and brain. Get outside and experience the seductive scenery of the French Riviera and the region's unique landscape during the day. During the evening, take part in friendly Bridge competitions that can be enjoyed by all.

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Easy walks of between 4 and 6 miles
- Harder walks of between 8 and 10 miles
- Daily Bridge competition
- Comfortable Bridge rooms, quiet and as light as possible
- Small prizes offered, for fun

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Day 2: Sunday -Introducing Greoux, A Town Between Plateau And River.

Easier Walk

Today we will climb up to the vast plateau of Valansole situated behind the town to take in the wide sweeping horizon towards Manosque and the mountains. Using an old livestock droving route passing lavender and olive plantations we travel across the plateau. Meeting the old road from Manosque we start our descent to arrive eventually beneath the ancient walls of Greoux castle. We can look around before a final short descent into the heart of the old town, where you can choose to explore its narrow streets and linger over a drink or continue back to the hotel for a swim perhaps.

6.9 miles(11kms) with 1020 feet (310m) of ascent and descent

Harder Walk

Today we start out by crossing the Verdon tracks to Les Tronnes. Views open up as we travel towards the remote hamlet of Les Maurras, an area known for its truffles. We pass over the subterranean route of the old Verdon canal which we will see later in the week. Arriving at the highest point of the day we are greeted by a view of Greoux's castle in the distance. Descending from the ridge and climbing again to pass the remote chapel of Notre Dame des Oeufs which is known for its traditional fertility custom. Here we have views over the lower Verdon valley.

8.5 miles(13.5 kms) with 1740 feet (527m) of ascent and descent.

Day 3: Forcalquier And The Abbey Of Salagon At Mane

Easier Walk

Forcalquier is a charming town rich in culture, history and great views from its Citadel. There will be plenty of time to explore this major attraction and soak up the atmosphere of the lively street market before setting off. Leaving Forcalquier on good paths we descend a limestone edge with good views, before climbing to enter more wooded paths and then a final descent to the Abbey at Salagon. This Benedictine abbey is a worthwhile visit (if there is time) and renowned for its gardens. From the Abbey it is then a short walk into the medieval village of Mane where refreshments at a local bar conclude our day.

4 miles (6.6km) with 580 feet (178m) of ascent and 710 feet (215m) of descent

Harder Walk

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4.5miles (7.6km) with 698 feet (213m) of ascent and 820 feet (230m) of descent

Day 4: Discovering Régusse And The Surrounding Forest

Easier Walk

Starting on the edge of the village we enter mature oak and cedar woodland. Climbing steadily we reach the lower slopes of La Colle, we don't go all the way to the top like the Harder group, but sufficiently high enough

for good views south over the village of Regusse and the vast forests of the Var that stretch towards Mont St Victoire near Aix en Provence. We return to the village where we will see the two preserved windmills before finishing with a welcome drink.

4.3 miles (7kms) with 272 feet (83m) of ascent and 272 (111m) of descent.

Hardar Walk

Starting on the edge of the village we enter mature oak and cedar woodland. Climbing steadily we reach the lower slopes of La Colle, for good views south over the village of Regusse and the vast forests of the Var that stretch towards Mont St Victoire near Aix en Provence. We return to the village where we will see the two preserved windmills before finishing with a welcome drink.

6.9 miles (11kms) with 633 feet (192m) of ascent and 700 (211m) of descent

Day 5: Free Day

Each week there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest.

Day 6: Quinson And The Gorge Of The Verdon

Easier Walk

We climb up to the plateau of Male Sauque then follow fairly level tracks until we descend to the chapel of St Maxime. This is an ideal lunch spot and gives time to admire the view down to the gorge. We descend to a shady woodland path that leads us to the Verdon gorge and old Napoleonic canal. Passing through a short tunnel before walking on top of the retaining wall of the old canal. We then follow a suspended wooden walkway with a handrail that is a few feet above the river.

6.5 miles (10.3km) with 900 feet (273m) of ascent and 910 feet (276m) of descent.

Harder Walk

Today our walk starts in the gorge on a fairly level path with occasional steps cut into the rock, there are metal handrails and staircases in places and a timber walkway suspended above the river before the path follows the top of the retaining wall of an old Napoleonic canal. After passing through a short tunnel we initially ascend in woodland before a final ascent on to the ridge and chapel of St Maxime. We then descend a stepped route down the side of gorge to arrive back at river level and follow our outward route to the Verdon bridge and welcome refreshment.

6 miles (9.65km) with 914ft (277m) of ascent and 907feet (275m) of descent

Day 7: The Ridges Above Moustiers Saint Marie

Easier Walk

Today the walk follows the shore of Lac Ste Croix which is fed by the waters of the Verdon gorge. We take picturesque paths through woodland and emerge to splendid views of the cliffs above the village of Moustiers Ste Marie.

3.2 miles (5.25 kms) 750 feet (230) of ascent and 220 feet (68) of descent.

Harder Walk

Today we start the walk near to the ancient monastery of Notre Dame de Ségrîès. Descending on a minor road and following woodland tracks we get tantalising views through the trees as we make our way down to the hamlet of Manaysse. A short steep ascent takes us to a track which contours around the olive plantation of Les Claux before joining an old mule track to enter the beautiful village of Moustiers St Marie through the ancient Porte de Riou.

6 miles(9.8kms) with 1,023 feet (312m) of ascent and 1150 feet (350m) of descent.

Day 8: Departure Day

ACCOMMODATION

Villa Borghese - Provence

The 4-star Villa Borghese has a fine tradition of service and is a member of the prestigios Châteaux Demeures de Tradition and the Relais du Silence groups. The owners of Villa Borghese will be very happy to welcome you to their hotel which is in a lovely, quiet and comfortable setting surrounded by gardens and woodland. Gréoux-les-Bains is close to the Verdon Gorges, the Luberon and the lavender fields in Provence. The hotel has an outdoor pool, tennis courts, fitness centre and spa.

Accommodation Info

Rooms

Villa Borghese has 50 en-suite bedrooms, most of which have a balcony or terrace.

Facilities in the bedrooms include:

- Telephone
- TV
- Hairdryer
- Safe deposit box
- Air conditioning
- Shaving point
- Mini-bar (extra charge)

The hotel is surrounded by a small wood and offers pleasant views from the bedrooms.

Facilities

There is a small outdoor heated swimming pool next to the pleasant terrace.

Villa Borghese contains tennis courts, table tennis, and a spa offering treatments (extra charge).

Relax at the cosy bar with an open fireplace.

The hotel offers it guests free WiFi.

Food & Drink

Holidays at Gréoux-les-Bains are Half Board with a 3-course served dinner.

The hotel prides itself on serving locally sourced produce from within 20km of the town.

Your Evenings

The friendly atmosphere of our holidays continues into the evening.

Enjoy a glass of wine or local beer before hearing about the next day's activities. Your evening meal is the main focus of the evening. After dinner relax on the terrace or in the bar, with a drink and chat with your fellow guests or try your hand in a friendly game of boules.

Travel Details

THE HASSLE-FREE OPTION

We offer flights from Heathrow to Marseille airport (UK connections via British Airways shuttle available from Manchester, Leeds Bradford, Newcastle, Glasgow or Edinburgh airports: £139). For flight times and prices please see the Dates & Prices tab.

If you choose this option we automatically include return transfers between the airport and the hotel. The coach transfer takes approx 1 hour 15 minutes to the Villa Borghese.

THE FLEXIBLE TRAVEL OPTION

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flight' allowing you the freedom to book your own flights from your local airport.

If you choose this option, transfers are not included in the price. We recommend independent travellers meet our **HF Holidays' transfer coach** from Marseilles airport. This is timed to meet the HF Holidays' flights* (provisional flight times can be found on the dates and prices tab or you can call us on 020 8732 1220 for more information). Cost per single journey is £21.50

Our airport taxi service operates at this resort: £150 per single taxi journey

Transfers must be pre-booked. Please call 020 8732 1220 for more details

* Please note that HF Holidays is not responsible for your onward travel if you fail to meet the transfer coach

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Joining Instructions

'With Flight' Holidays – The Hassle-free Option

Book your holiday 'with flight' and choose between Heathrow or Manchester (via Heathrow) flights to Marseille airport. For flight times and prices please see the Dates & Prices tab.

If you choose this option we automatically include return transfers between the airport and the hotel. The coach transfer takes approx 1 hour 15 minutes to the Villa Borghese.

'Without Flight' Holidays – The Flexible Travel Option

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flight' allowing you the freedom to book your own flights from your local airport.

If you choose this option, transfers are not included in the price. We recommend independent travellers meet

our HF Holidays' transfer coach from Marseilles airport. This is timed to meet the HF Holidays' flights* (provisional flight times can be found on the dates and prices tab or you can call us on 020 8732 1220 for more information). Cost per single journey is £38.

Transfers must be pre-booked. Please call 020 8732 1220 for more details

* Please note that HF Holidays is not responsible for your onward travel if you fail to meet the transfer coach

What To Bring

Bridge

All your Bridge stationery and equipment will be supplied. You may, however, like to bring a notebook and pen to make your own notes. EBU Members - don't forget to bring your EBU membership number to earn Master Points on this holiday.

Walking

To enjoy your walking comfortably and safely, it is essential that your footwear, clothing and equipment are suitable for the conditions likely to be encountered.

Bring a rucksack, a thermos flask for a hot drink, a water bottle (at least 1 litre) and spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar, a small torch (in spring, autumn and winter) and first aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed). Many guests find walking poles useful, particularly for descents. Insect repellent, sun hat, sunglasses and protection cream and a camera are all optional extras you may choose to bring.

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday & Sunday: 9am – 1pm Bank Holiday Monday: 9am – 1pm

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

ASSOCIATE'S FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying an Associate's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full life membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking

confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after

your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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