

Provence Discovery Tour

Destinations: France & Mediterranean

Trip code: PVLEL



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

With its rolling landscapes, pretty hilltop towns and fields of lavender and sunflowers, Provence has long provided inspiration to many artists including Van Gogh, Matisse and Cezanne. This discovery tour gets to the heart of this beguiling region with guided visits to some of the area's most attractive towns and villages plus its most dominant natural feature – the plunging Verdon Gorge. In the spring the almond trees blossom, creating a wonderful scent in the air while in the summer months, many of the fields turn purple as the lavender blooms. Whatever the time of year, Provence delights with its historic, picturesque buildings and appealing landscapes.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Half Board en-suite accommodation
- The services of an experienced HF Holidays leader
- Full day excursions with all essential transport in resort
- 'With flight' holidays include return flights from the UK and hotel transfers

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Immerse yourself in the landscape of Matisse, Cezanne and Van Gough
- Explore the traditional hilltop towns of Forcalquier

- Enjoy the Lavender Route and the Verdon Gorge
- Visit the elevated town of Les Baux de Provence for sweeping views across the landscape

TRIP SUITABILITY

Discovery holidays involve active sightseeing and you should expect to spend lots of time on your feet. Optional short walks of approximately 2½ miles allow you to stretch your legs and see the best of the local scenery.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Welcome to Hotel Villa Borghese. Unpack and settle in.

Day 2: Moustiers-Sainte-Marie

Famed for its tradition of ceramic art, the cliffside village of Moustiers-Sainte-Marie has been designated as one of the 'prettiest villages in France' since 1981. The balance between water and stone is evident here in the church, village walls, fountains and aqueduct, all perfectly complemented by the pastel tones of the tilework. We'll spend time here soaking up the atmosphere and exploring the history of the ceramic workshops as well as the local links to the Crusades.

Day 3: Folcalquier And The Lavender Route

Today we'll visit the bustling market in the ancient town of Forcalquier – once an independent state. The market here is known as the biggest in the region and is an important gathering of farmers, craftsmen and locals alike. The Citadel is the best place for 360-degree views of the surrounding countryside – see if you can spot the Alps! Later we'll move on to the remains of the Abbey of Salagon which houses historical exhibitions and a selection of gardens with plants from around the world, a typical provençal garden and an area where medicinal plants are grown. We then visit the village of Valensole (or 'sunny valley') located on a magnificent plateau famous for its lavender and almond production. With more than 300 days of sun per year, this village is

a delight to wander through. In the spring the plateau is filled with almond blossom.

Day 4: The Verdon Gorge

Also known as the Grand Canyon of Verdon, the Verdon Gorge is a spectacular canyon that forms the border between the departments of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence and Var. Although smaller than Arizona's Grand Canyon, the Verdon Gorge is deep, compact, beautiful and wild. We'll take a short walk along the rim of the gorge and learn about the first canoe descent here in 1905 by a group led by Edouard Martel. His memory lives as we will see hikers undertaking the six-hour gorge-walk that bears his name.

Day 5: Free Day

On our 7-night holidays, there is a free day when no excursions are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, go for a walk or visit local places of interest. Options include:

Gréoux-les-Bains: Explore the town of Gréouxles-Bains and learn about the therapeutic qualities of its natural spring - discovered by the Romans. Walk up to the Castle of the Templars before stopping for lunch at one of the town's many restaurants.

Hotel facilities: Enjoy the facilities of the Hotel Villa Borghese; swim in its heated pool, enjoy a relaxing lunch on the terrace or play a game of table tennis or boules.

Manosque and Aix-en-Provence: There are bus connections to Manosque and Aix en Provence. Your leaders will be able to direct you to the timetable and the right bus stop.

Day 6: Aix - En - Provence

The city of Paul Cézanne; built around water and art with a wealth of fascinating buildings and museums to explore. Street names here appear in the traditional Provençal language as well as French and the city has a sense of grandeur which is only enhanced by the large number of fountains. Throughout the day, we'll have time to explore the old town, the Villeneuve, Cours Mirabeau, and the Mazarin Quarter.

Day 7: Les Baux - De - Provence

Set on a rocky plateau in the heart of the Alpilles, the town of Les Baux-de-Provence provides breathtaking views of the surrounding areas. We shall wander through the Medieval streets of Les Baux, perhaps passing one or two of their 22 listed buildings en route. There will also be the option to experience a light show in the Carrières de Lumières – Quarries of Light – which are currently presenting an incredible and immersive show using Van Gogh paintings.

Day 8: Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

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 54 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 sun terrace.

Villa Borghese has a tennis court, table tennis, and a spa offering a range of treatments (extra charge).

Relax at the cosy bar with an open fireplace.

The hotel offers its guests free Wi-Fi.

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

Essential Information

To enjoy your holiday comfortably and safely, it's essential that your clothing and footwear is suitable for the conditions likely to be encountered. Changeable weather is possible throughout the year, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities – hot, cold, wet or dry.

All of our Discovery Tours involve active sightseeing and you should therefore be prepared for walking between the sights and wear flat, comfortable shoes. In the evening most guests wear casual clothing. You will probably find a small rucksack or cross-body bag useful for carrying spare clothing, camera, sun protection, drinks (at least 2 litres) etc during the day. A money belt is always a good idea.

You'll also need to bring your:

- Booking confirmation
- Travel insurance cover note and contact details
- European Health Insurance Card (if applicable)
- Completed guest registration form
- Photocopy of photo page of passport
- Sunhat, sun cream and sunglasses
- **Medication:** If you require any medication, please take adequate supplies for the duration of your holiday. It's advisable to carry your medication in your hand luggage instead of packing it in your suitcase

Trip Information

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out travel insurance and any other personal insurance relevant to you and the holiday. It is particularly important with the possibility of flight changes and cancellations due to the challenging weather conditions that can occur on the islands and might impact your onward travel arrangements.

Dietary Requirements

Vegetarians and special diets can be catered for if requested in advance of the holiday.

Useful Information

The local language is French.

Is considered safe to drink, but if you prefer, bottled mineral water can be purchased from the hotel or local supermarkets.

If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialling the number.

To dial a UK number 0044

To dial a French number 0033

Local Currency

The local currency is the Euro.

Electricity

220 Volt AC with round two pin plugs; you will need an adaptor for any appliances brought from the UK.

ATM Availability

There are several ATM machines in Gréoux-les-Bains where you can obtain money.

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: 9am – 1pm Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday: closed

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.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £30 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full 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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