



AMC ADVENTURE TRAVEL

VOLUNTEER-LED EXCURSIONS WORLDWIDE

Day Hiking and Culture in Provence and the Luberon Mountains

May 26- June 3, 2017

AT # 1708



South Eastern France is a magical place where light, landscapes and people have simultaneously woven a patchwork of striking beauty and refined living. It has inspired some of the most recognizable works of art and the most delightful wines and French dishes imaginable. PROVENCE is one of France's most visited rural destinations and yet, it maintains a refreshingly quiet, natural air about it. From its craggy limestone outcrops adorned in pines and cedars to the lavender fields below and the ageless hilltop medieval towns, you will certainly gain a sense of how unique the region is. We invite you to explore some of the classic day hikes of Provence with us!

Our hiking tour is considered active but not as demanding as trekking excursions can be. Expect to be on your feet throughout the day exploring the authentic and natural side of Provence's best kept secrets. From the Baby Alps (**Les Alpilles**), to the enchanting forests and crags of the **Luberon** and the inspiring landscapes of **Sainte Victoire**, you will be exposed to the greatest diversity the region has to offer. There will also be opportunities to visit the colorful markets of Provence and see some beautiful historic buildings, grand architecture and sample a wide range of local gastronomy.



The tour is a week in duration and to make the most out of the experience we stay in 3 locations over that period. Short transfers between 20 minutes and 1 hour max are required to bring us to trail heads and you carry only a day pack each day. The hikes are led by an experienced team of AMC guides and a local professional guide who is a specialist in the region.

ITINERARY

Day 1-Friday, 26 May: Leave USA on overnight flight to Marseille

Day 2 – Saturday, 27 May: Arrive Marseille / Transfer to St. Rémy de Provence

Meals included: Welcome Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Les Castelet des Alpilles, 3 stars (or similar) St. Rémy de Provence <http://www.castelet-alpilles.com/index-english.php>

Activities:

Your journey will start in Marseille where you'll be met in the afternoon by your AMC guides and your local guide. We will transfer 1.5 hours to St. Rémy de Provence, our first hiking base in the beautiful Les Alpilles (Baby Alps) region of central Provence. Depending on our arrival time, we may stroll through the wonderful village setting before our welcome dinner.



Day 3 – Sunday, 28 May: Hiking Les Baux to St. Rémy (Provence’s Baby Alps)



Meals included: Breakfast, Picnic lunch

Accommodation: Same as above

Activities:

Today we hike the classic Les Alpilles route from the fortified village of Les Baux back to St.

Rémy. Covering approximately 8 miles total and 650 feet elevation gain, the route is largely on a rural track and cuts its way over the spine of the forested and limestone craggy escarpment of the Alpilles range. Starting with a short bus transfer to Les Baux (25 min), we take a short interpretive walk through the Bauxite stone walls of Les Baux’s wonderful medieval streets before making our way by foot back to St. Rémy. Upon arrival to St. Rémy, one can visit the enchanting Hospital of St. Paul where Van Gogh spent a year of his life. There is also an informative trail around the Hospital dedicated to Van Gogh’s art. This region also boasts many fine vineyards, markets and restaurants for you to sample at your own leisure this evening.



Day 4 – Monday, 29 May: Hiking Gordes & the Veroncle Gorge region (or Roussillon & Ochre Mines hike)

Meals included: Breakfast, Picnic lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: TBA GORDES

Activities:

Straight after breakfast we transfer 1 hour to the naturally beautiful and historically rich lands of the *Luberon*. Our day hike brings us on foot into the

heartland of the Luberon and we'll explore the lush valleys of fruit orchards, farmsteads and vineyards – including the stunning *Veroncle Gorge*. A final ascent hikes us up to the magical village of Gordes - the symbolic and breathtaking stone village that has made the Luberon a sought after traveler's destination for centuries. Total hiking distance today will be approximately 7 miles with a 680 foot elevation gain.

Day 5 – Tuesday, 30 May: HIKING Gordes & the Sénanque Abbey

Meals included: Breakfast, Picnic lunch

Accommodation: TBA GORDES

Activities:

This morning we set off on foot from the hotel to make a circuit of approximately 6.5 miles with an altitude gain of 700 feet. The hike brings us to the beautiful 12th Century Sénanque Abbey – an architectural masterpiece set in the Luberon's pristine natural setting. From the Abbey we carry on through the western hillsides, pastures and forests, climbing our way back to the village of Gordes – returning us back to the hotel in time to enjoy the lovely ambience of our guest house and Gordes itself. Tonight you are free to experiment with the authentic flavors of Provence's Luberon style gastronomy.

Day 6 – Wednesday, 31 May: Hiking Bonnieux & The Gran Luberon Range



Meals included:
Breakfast, Picnic
lunch, Dinner

Accommodation:
Hotel
Panoramique

César, Bonnieux <http://www.hotel-cesar.com/en/> or similar

Activities:

After breakfast we have a 20 minute shuttle to Bonnieux - the region known as the *Gran Luberon*. Here we make a 7-9 mile hike (*distance to confirm pending final route selected*), that takes us to the higher reaches of the Luberon range itself – offering sweeping views of Provence, including Mount Ventoux – a famous summit stage in the Tour de France. Today is arguably the longest and more challenging walk of the week but none the less a pleasant, informative hike that exemplifies the diversity of this stunning landscape. Total altitude gain approximately TBA. Bonnieux is a quintessential Luberon village surrounded by fruit orchards, lavender fields and vineyards. It reached high acclaim after the novelist Peter Mayle wrote *A Year In Provence* and based himself in Bonnieux.

Day 7 – Thursday, 1 June: FREE DAY



Meals included: Breakfast only

Accommodation: Hotel St. Christophe 3* Aix en Provence <http://www.hotel-saintchristophe.com/en>

Activities:

After breakfast we transfer 1 hour to the most elegant of southern France towns, *Aix en Provence* (Aix). This will be our base for the final 2 nights and you'll have an opportunity to soak up much of the charm, history, architecture and ambience in the home of Cezanne and a number of significant

aristocrats. On this free day you can visit the colorful street markets of Aix and shop in the boutiques. If museums and galleries are of interest, Aix has the finest collections in all of Provence. Visiting Cezanne's studio in the countryside is worth the walk to/from the hotel or you may care to visit one of Aix's top vineyards for a wine tasting – there is plenty to do. Today will be unguided and you are free to lunch and dine in Aix's many unique eateries.

Day 8 – Friday, 2 June: HIKING Lac Zola & The Landscapes of Cezanne



Meals included: Breakfast, Picnic lunch, Farewell Group Dinner

Accommodation: Same Hotel

Activities:

A Provence hiking tour wouldn't be complete without walking through the limestone outcrops and pine forests beneath the peak of Sainte Victoire in the Aix en Provence region. It was here that Cezanne spent countless hours with easel and paints capturing the contrasting light between the mountain and sky. The hiking here is wonderful, diverse and we'll cover an undulating 6 miles over an elevation gain of approximately than 600 feet

today. Tonight we'll have our farewell dinner in Aix's lively centre ville.

Day 9 – Saturday, 3 June: Departure / Transfer back to Marseille

Meals included: Breakfast only

Accommodation: None provided / Departure day

Activities:

Today after breakfast we have a return transfer to Marseille organized for the group. From Marseille you are free to travel to other destinations in the region or onward travel home. Please note, this is a group transfer in private coach and departure time depends on the final group logistics. Individual transfers must be arranged separately and at a cost external to the tour price.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN YOUR HIKING TOUR

7 nights (in shared double occupancy rooms) accommodation in small, comfortable hotels and guest houses (some with swimming pools)

4 dinners and all picnic lunches supplied during the hiking days (meals indicated as per itinerary below)

Private **group** transfer to / from the tour starting point – Marseille (normally from the airport)

Private shuttles in comfortable, air conditioned mini buses and where necessary on local public buses

5 guided - full day hiking routes in 3 distinct regions of Provence (Les Apilles, Luberon and Sainte Victoire)

Tips for included meals and bus services

Medical Evacuation Insurance

AMC 20% overhead expense Fee

Services of two AMC Adventure Travel Leaders

Modes of Transport

On foot

Local bus and / or taxi where applicable (short transfers between trail heads)

Private Air Conditioned Coach for most transfers

Non-included Meals

Some meals are not included on our tour (please refer to itinerary). We feel you'll benefit from getting out and discovering the local cuisine. So when a meal is not included, it's a great opportunity to try something new. Your guiding team will offer tips on where to get the best meal, or you might decide to dine out as a group and experience the fun together.

Not Included in Trip Cost

International flights (to/from France)

Trip Cancellation insurance

Meals (where not listed as included in the itinerary)

Additional transfers to/from airport or during the tour. Airport transfers are subject to one set group travel time.

Optional additional tours or activities during free time

Tips for LOCAL guides not included



YOUR TRIP – WHAT TO KNOW

This trip can be enjoyed by just about anyone with a reasonable level of fitness and with consecutive day hiking experience. The longest hike is approximately 8 miles while most average 6 or 7 miles. Trail conditions are varied and consist of old, cart tracks through hillsides and fields, narrow, stony trails in National Parks and even some road connecting sections. Solid hiking shoes or light boots and walking poles are recommended, this is HILLY countryside. Weather wise, due to proximity to both the Mediterranean and the Alps, some rain showers and strong winds may exist but generally short lived. Expect warm, spring temperatures of up to mid-80's in the day and nightly lows in the mid 50's.

GENERAL MAP OF REGION / TOUR



Customs and Culture

France is in many ways a modern, European nation and at the same time, backwards compared to what you may be used to – especially in reference to customer service and the leisurely pace many rural Provence folks go about their daily routines. Come to Provence with an open mind and take everything in stride – you wouldn't be travelling to foreign lands if you expected everything to be the same as home! The French, in their own unique way love to share their land, culture, traditions and gastronomy with visitors. They have immense patience, especially in the rural areas to meet visitor's quirky demands and they deserve our respect and tolerance as well.



Special Dietary Needs and Medicines

Vegetarian diets can generally be accommodated to with ease, but don't be surprised if fish is offered to you! Provence remains an old world mentality in many places. Special diets such as gluten free (celiac) and lactose intolerance can be a challenge to get right in some places so we recommend you bring supplements from home just in case. Medicines and glasses / contacts subscriptions we strongly recommend you bring from home as resources can be very scarce in the remote parts of this

excursion.

MARSEILLE arrival and departure Information

When arriving to Marseille, the airport is quite a ways from the busy city center itself. We will organize the group transfers (*beginning and end of tour*) from the airport. If you have extra time or arrive a day or two early, we recommend you spend some time in *Arlès* (famous for Roman heritage and Van Gogh's flourishing period), and/or head down to *Cassis* on the coast. Cassis is a wonderful seaside town very reminiscent of the Riviera but without the heavy expense and busyness that one finds towards Nice. Cassis is found about 20-30 minutes (depending on your mode of travel), on the other (East) side of Marseille city.

FURTHER READING / CINEMATOGRAPHY

Guide Book - Lonely Planet Travel Guides – Provence & The Cote D'azur

Novel - A Year In Provence – Peter Mayle

Film – A Good Year (Russell Crowe)

SAFETY, RISKS AND HAZARDS:

As participant safety is a high priority for all AMC-sponsored events, procedures and policies have been developed to attempt to limit participant risk. Participants are expected to work with the leaders to reduce risks and make the experience successful for all. Participants should be aware that there are risks associated with outdoor adventure activities, including but not limited to adverse weather and environmental conditions, remote locations of our trips, and transportation in vehicles, on foot, or by boat. Aside from any personal medical problems, participants should be aware of the possibilities of hypothermia, hyperthermia, insect bites, altitude sickness, dehydration, sun burn and other hot and cold related problems. You should regularly use sun screen and insect repellent, wear long sleeves and pants, take care to be adequately hydrated and bring water on all day trips as well as wind/rain gear, warm hat and gloves, sun protection, snacks and personal first aid kit. Please carefully read and sign the *AMC Participant Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks and Release and Indemnity Agreement* and contact us if you have any questions. Participants' understanding of these risks and adherence to our policies and procedures can contribute to making this experience rewarding.

RESERVING A PLACE AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

The land cost of the trip is \$2519, plus estimated airfare of \$1,550-1750. To reserve your place, please contact the trip leader or co leader for an application, the Confidential Medical Form and the Acknowledgment & Assumption of Risks & Release and Indemnity Agreement, then send to the leader these forms along with deposit of **\$1,000.00** made out to: **Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)**. \$100.00 of this initial \$1,000.00 deposit is a non-refundable administration fee. Once we receive your application and other forms and have approved you for the trip, we'll send you additional information on the trip, including planned hikes, equipment lists, and travel tips. The maximum number of participants is 18, so apply early to reserve your place. The cost of the trip is based on shared double occupancy rooms. If you are a single traveler we will do our best to match you up with a same sex roommate, however, be advised that if that is not possible, there will be a single supplement fee for having a single room. Likewise, those single travelers who do not wish to have a roommate will also be subject to a single supplement fee.

The single supplement for this trip is: \$632 and is due at time of application.

PAYMENTS DUE:

2nd Payment of \$1519 due by January 1st, 2017

Single supplement is due with application for those desiring to have a single room.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Below is a list of the required and recommended gear for the trip.

Required and Essential Gear

- Passport, at least six months from expiration
- Daypack, at least 1000-2000 cubic inches
- Waterproof pack liner or both a liner AND a pack cover (a pack cover will not keep water out in very high wind, but can keep the outside of the pack drier)
- Sturdy, comfortable, waterproof hiking boots with extra shoelaces
- Synthetic hiking clothing (tops and bottoms)
- Waterproof rain gear (tops and bottoms)
- Sweater/jacket, wool or fleece
- Long pants, wool, nylon or fleece
- Nalgene bottles/Camelback (at least 2 liters total capacity)
- Sun hat or bandanna
- Warm hat, neckband or balaclava
- Gloves/mittens
- 3 pairs of hiking socks with liners
- Tevas, Crocs or other similar footwear (to wear around our lodging)
- Headlamp/flashlight with fresh batteries
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- Personal blister kit, first aid kit and personal medications
- High-energy trail snacks
- Whistle and knife (knife not in carry-on luggage)

Recommended and Optional Gear

- Small daypack/lumbar pack for sightseeing (or adaptation of full pack)
- Gaiters (for rain and debris)
- Hiking poles (not in carry-on), highly recommended for stream crossings, in rain and high winds

- Casual clothing
- Camera and spare batteries/charger and voltage converter or adapter as required.

Note about foreign currency: The best exchange rates euros are at ATMs in each country (Italy, France). In-country banks and money exchanges away from airports are probably next best. Traveler's checks are not recommended.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

If you cancel after being accepted for the trip, \$100 is non-refundable. But if you cancel after Feb 1st, 2017, minimally \$200 is nonrefundable; if (and only if) another person takes your place. We will establish a waiting list. However, your cancellation shall not raise the cost of the trip to any of the participants or the leaders. Thus, if you cancel and are not replaced, you will forfeit the \$200 plus the per capita expenses already incurred and any other unpaid expenses for which the trip cannot obtain a refund. You may forfeit the entire trip fee. Flight tickets once purchased become your property and are generally non-refundable. We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance. Information on a company recommended by the AMC will be sent to you.

PLEASE NOTE: The price of the AMC Adventure Travel trip is given in good faith based on current tariffs and rates and is subject to change. ***Any tariff, exchange rate increases will be passed on to participants.***

Conversely if the minimum number of participants does not sign up, the leaders reserve the right to cancel the trip and refund the amounts paid. If the trip is full, we can put your name on a waiting list, or return your deposit.

AIR COSTS (ESTIMATED \$1,550-1750):

Leaders will explore the best possible options for air travel – most likely on Delta or Air France, since they usually offer good connections. You will receive notification when we are aware of a good fare. For this trip we estimate a range of \$1,600-2,000. We will assist you in any way to make your reservations, but you should not make any booking on your own without consulting the leaders. We will notify you with a list of acceptable flights once we know that we have a confirmed trip. Once you purchase tickets, they are wholly owned by you.

FLIGHTS:

Your flight should leave the USA on May 26th for arrival in Marseille, France on May 27th, 2017 no later than 11 AM. The return flights should leave Marseille, France on June 3rd no earlier than 3 PM to allow time for the charter bus transfer to the airport. If you schedule flights outside of these times, you will be responsible for your own transport to/from the Marseille airport.

Trip insurance is highly recommended, since an illness, accident or death in the family can interfere with your plans. Trip insurance can be obtained through your travel agent or the leaders will provide you with information about an AMC recommended/approved trip insurance company.

TRIP LEADERS:

LEADER: GINETTE BEAUDOIN



Ginette has been a member of the AMC since 1988 and has led several day and weekend trips in the White Mountains of NH, as well as various parts of Maine. She has led adventure trip in July 2014, July of 2011, August 2012 and July/August to Austrian Alps. She has also lead Adventure travel trips to Yosemite National Park, Azores Archipelago, Tuscany and Superior Hiking Trail in Minnesota for the AMC. She has participated in numerous AMC Major Excursions to Switzerland and Austria, involving hiking and cross country skiing. She has hiked in the Stubai valley as part of a 2006 Major

Excursion and hiked to 26 of the high Alpine Huts throughout Austria, Germany and Switzerland. She has hiked all of the NH 4000 footers. Her interests include hiking, photography, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, travel, information volunteer for AMC and introducing others to outdoor activities.

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CO-LEADER: ANNA PANSZCZYK

Anna is a Boston Chapter INTRO (AMC) Leader. Anna has co lead AMC Adventure Travel trips to Austria, Azores, Yosemite National Park, Minnesota and Morocco. Anna leads hiking trips in the White Mountains and most recently led an excursion to Waterville Valley and Craftsbury Vermont for snowshoeing and cross country skiing. She has also co led the Claybrook ski trip on previous years.

During the summer of 2014, she and the trip leader backpacked the Haute Route from Chamonix France



to Zermatt Switzerland. This is in addition to trips that she takes to all corners of the world! Anna has completed SOLO Advanced Wilderness First Aid course as well as CPR training.

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