



Tour Information



Pre-Historic Rock Art in the Ariège





Travel

Passports

You may need to renew your British Passport if you are travelling to an EU country. **Please ensure your passport is less than 10 years old (even if it has 3 months or more left on it) and has at least 3 months validity remaining from the date of travel.**

For more information, please visit: [passport checker](#)

Visas

You do not need a visa for short trips to France. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

For further information, please check here: [travel to the EU](#)

French consulate: PO Box 57, 6A Cromwell Place, London SW7 2EW; Tel (020) 7838 2000/1. Information Service: Tel (0891) 887 733, Fax: (020) 7838 2046. Opening hours: 09:00-11:30 (and 16:00-16:30 for visa collection only) Mon-Fri (except British and French national holidays).



Tickets

Included with your detailed itinerary is an e-ticket, which shows your flight reference number. You will need to quote/show this reference number at the check-in desk and you will be issued with your boarding pass. **Online check-in is not available for this booking.**

Your Group Scheduled or Club Class ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

With British Airways your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45 x 5 cm and a personal bag (handbag or computer case) no bigger than 45 x 36 x 20 cm.

Please contact the airline for further information.

<http://www.britishairways.com>

Transfers

On arrival in Toulouse, transfer by coach to Mirepoix (approx. 1 hour 15 minutes) to Hotel les Minotiers.

Special Requests

If you haven't already done so, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

Border Control

At border control, you may need to show a return or onward ticket, show you have enough money for your stay, use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queuing.



Accommodation

Hotel les Minotiers, Mirepoix

This three-star hotel, located near the medieval main square in the small town of Mirepoix, offers a terrace, bar, and restaurant, and comfortable bedrooms with ensuite bathroom, TV, WIFI, hairdryer and iron.

For more information visit their website

<https://www.lesminotiers.com/>



Food

General de Gaulle once asked, with a certain amount of pride, how it was possible to rule a country which produced 365 different kinds of cheese; the alpine region of Haute Savoie makes an important contribution to this selection. *Tomme de Savoie*, *Beaufort*, *Abondance*, *Reblochon*, *Bleu de Sassenage*, and the goat's *Picodon d'Ardeche* are enjoyed with bread and fruit, or used as an ingredient of one of the many cheese-based dishes of the area. Try a *Fondue Savoyarde*, a *Raclette* (potatoes with melted cheese and dried meats), or a *Tartiflette* (potatoes, bacon, onions topped with Reblochon cheese). Fresh lake fish such as trout or perch are popular around Lake Geneva.

Traditional desserts include *Tarte aux Myrtilles* (bilberry tart), *Nougat de Montelimar* and *Marrons glacés* (chestnuts candied in sugar syrup).

Almost all restaurants offer two types of meals: *a la carte* (extensive choice for each course, generally more expensive) and *le menu* (a set meal at a fixed price).

The bill (*l'addition*) will not be presented until it is asked for, even if clients sit and talk for half an hour after finishing their meal. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required.

Generally speaking, mealtimes in France are strictly observed. Lunch is as a rule served from noon to 13:30, dinner usually from 20:00-21:30, but the larger the city, the later the dining hour.



Drink

Wine is by far the most popular alcoholic beverage in France, and the choice will vary according to region. The Savoie vineyards extend over 2,000 hectares and mainly produce white wine, among which the AOC quality label *Vins de Savoie* and *Roussette de Savoie*.

In elegant restaurants the wine list will be separate from the main menu, but in less opulent establishments will be printed on the back or along the side of the *carte*. The waiter will usually be glad to advise an appropriate choice. If in doubt, try the house wine; this will usually be less expensive and will always be the owner's pride.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily

Dinner – 2 dinners – on the first and second evening

Taking food and drink into EU countries

You are not able to take meat, milk or products containing them into EU countries.



Destination

This tour looks into cave art from the French Pyrenees region. The tour includes visits to the Niaux cave following in the footsteps of some of the earliest cave art tourists; Le Mas d'Azil, the only cave with a road running through it; Bédailhac, with its enormous entrance, which was used as an ideal natural aircraft hangar during the last war; a subterranean river tour of the Labouiche cave; and a visit to the Prehistoric Park at Tarascon sur Ariège.

Details of places of interest included in the tour:

The real cave of Niaux

The real cave of Niaux is one of the few caves in Europe still open to the public where you can view authentic prehistoric cave paintings in situ. Its magnificent galleries feature vivid depictions of bison, horses, and ibex, dating back over 13,000 years. Visitors walk deep into the cave by flashlight, experiencing the art much as our ancestors might have.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.sites-touristiques-ariège.fr/grotte-de-niaux/>

Canal du Midi

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Canal du Midi is a 17th-century marvel of engineering that once connected the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. While not prehistoric, its tranquil setting and historical importance make it a charming stop along the tour route. Walking along its shaded towpaths offers a relaxing contrast to the caves' ancient mystery.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.tourismecanaldumidi.fr/>

Prehistoric Park at Tarascon sur Ariège

This interactive park offers an engaging introduction to prehistoric life with lifelike reconstructions, workshops, and exhibitions. It's an ideal place to understand the daily lives of the people who created the cave art seen throughout the region. Children and adults alike can try prehistoric tools, fire-making, and even spear-throwing.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.sites-touristiques-ariège.fr/prehistoric-park/>

Bédailhac Cave

The Bédailhac cave is remarkable for its combination of prehistoric paintings, engravings, and clay sculptures. Its vast chambers provide a dramatic backdrop to some of the region's most unique ancient artworks. The cave also preserves footprints and torch marks, offering an intimate glimpse into Ice Age ritual practices.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.sites-touristiques-ariège.fr/grotte-de-bédailhac/>

Toulouse

Known as "La Ville Rose" (The Pink City) for its terracotta architecture, Toulouse offers a blend of history, culture, and vibrant city life. It serves as a convenient gateway to the prehistoric sites of the Ariège region. The city also houses archaeological collections at the Musée Saint-Raymond and natural history exhibits at the Muséum de Toulouse.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.toulouse-visit.com/>

Le Mas-d'Azil

The Grotte du Mas-d'Azil is a unique cave you can actually drive through, famous for both its geological structure and prehistoric significance. It contains remains and art from various prehistoric periods, including the Magdalenian and Azilian cultures.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.sites-touristiques-ariège.fr/grotte-du-mas-dazil/>

Tour manager

Your tour manager **Dr. David Saunders** will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.

David is a prehistorian and expert in Palaeolithic cave art, with a doctorate from the University of Buckingham. He has undertaken over a decade of

excavations at various significant prehistoric sites, including Blick Mead near Stonehenge.

His passion for early human expression is matched by his deep knowledge of the animals and signs depicted in ancient cave art. David's tours bring this fascinating subject vividly to life.

Grading

This tour has been graded as **Demanding**: due to the amount of walking involved at each site, and also due to the limits involved with visiting the caves, for example low height, sometimes poorly lit spaces and also the floor may be slippery and uneven underfoot. On day 2 the Niaux Cave visit lasts for around one hour and forty-five minutes, starting with a 800-meter walk through a vast gallery. Accompanied by a guide, you move in the dark, lit only by portable lamps past spacious galleries, low vaults and underground lakes. On day 3 the guided tour at Bédeilhac lasts 90 minutes. On day 5 the tour of Mas-d'Azil is approx 1.5km long, and includes a 1 hour guided tour. The Labouiche boat trip lasts 75 minutes for approx 1.5km underground



The Basics

Climate – The weather at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.

Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – French.

Religion – Roman Catholic.

National holidays – New Year's day (01 Jan); Easter Monday; Labour day (01 May); Victory in Europe day (08 May); Ascension day; Whit Sunday; Whit Monday; National day (14 Jul); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' day (01 Nov); Armistice day (11 Nov); Christmas day (25 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities,

as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

Shops and museums – Annecy has a wide variety of shops; Smaller towns have quaint boutiques and beautiful markets. Department stores are open 0900-1830 Monday to Saturday. Most shops are closed between 1200-1430. Some food shops (particularly bakers) are open Sunday mornings, in which case they will probably close Monday. Many shops close all day or half-day Monday. Please note that most museums close on Mondays.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended. .

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – The guarantee of free mobile phone roaming throughout the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway has ended. Check with your phone operator to find out about any roaming charges you might get from 1 January 2021. A new law means that you're protected from getting mobile data charges above £45 without you knowing. Once you reach £45, you need to opt in to spend more so that you can continue using the internet while you're abroad. Your phone operator will tell how you can do this.

Tipping –To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour,



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.

but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention

Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC)

Before you travel, make sure you've got a valid UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or travel insurance with health cover.

You may not have access to free emergency medical treatment and could be charged for your healthcare if you do not have an EHIC or GHIC when visiting an EU country, or travel insurance with full healthcare cover when visiting Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. If you have an EHIC it will still be valid while it remains in date. Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) will be valid if you're travelling to an EU country.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For further information about the GHIC please visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>



Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 09:00-17:00), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7841 023807 or 07441 343850

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Consulate General, Bordeaux

353 Boulevard du Président Wilson

33073 Bordeaux Cedex, France

Tel: +33 (0)5 57 22 21 10

Open Mon-Fri 09:00-12:30 and 14:00-17:30.

Travel Editions Group Ltd

Email: tours@traveleditions.co.uk www.traveleditions.co.uk

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