



Tour Information



Southern Provence and the Côte d'Azur by rail





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 6 months or more left on it) and has at least 6 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. Opening hours: 0900-1130 Mon-Fri (except British and French national holidays).



Tickets

The tour manager will distribute Eurostar tickets at St Pancras. Please meet at the statue underneath the big clock on the first floor 1½ - 2 hours prior to departure time.

Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate. Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

A light meal will be served to passengers travelling Standard Premier on Eurostar. Standard class Eurostar tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although there is a buffet car serving drinks and snacks.

Train Seats

On all legs of the journey you have reserved seat and carriage numbers which are shown clearly on your ticket.



Baggage

As with most trains, passengers are responsible for carrying baggage onto and off the train. Baggage can be stored on overhead shelves or at the entrance to the carriages. Trolleys are available at St Pancras, but bags do need to be carried on to the platform. Porters are sometimes but not always available at St Pancras.

Travel Editions recommends a luggage delivery service called **thebaggageman**, where your suitcase can be picked up from your home before departure and delivered straight to your hotel; therefore removing the worry about carrying your cases onto and off the trains.

For further information:

<http://www.thebaggageman.com>

Transfers

On arrival, transfer by coach (approx. 1 hour) to the seaside village of La Ciotat and the Best Western Premier Viuex Port La Ciotat.

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.

Taking food into EU countries

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



Accommodation

Best Western Premier Vieux Port La Ciotat Hotel

Located in the middle of the old picturesque fishing port of La Ciotat the four-star Best Western Premier Vieux Port La Ciotat offers a panoramic seaside terrace, cocktail lounge, outdoor heated pool, hot tub, fitness room and steam room. Bedrooms are modern and comfortable with en-suite bathroom, TV, telephone, wifi, minibar, hairdryer and tea/coffee making facilities. Upgraded rooms with a seaview and balcony are available at a supplement.

For more information visit their website:

<https://www.bestwestern-laciotat.com/en/#>



Food

The words *Provençal cuisine* conjure colourful and mouth-watering images of red and yellow peppers, glorious tomatoes, aubergines, fresh fish, olives and olive oil, citrus fruits and golden melons ripened in the Mediterranean sunshine. Locally grown fruit and vegetables, Provençal herbs (basil, thyme, rosemary, sage, marjoram...), olive oil and garlic form the basis of many of the local dishes, of which the most famous is *Ratatouille* (stew of courgettes, tomatoes, red and green peppers and aubergines braised with garlic, olive oil and *Herbes de Provence*). Other typical Provençal dishes include *Bouillabaisse* (fish soup), *Soupe au Pistou* (vegetable and bean soup with fresh basil), *Pissaladière* (golden onion, anchovy and olive pizza), *Ratatouille*, *Daube Provençale* (classic French beef stew), *Salade Niçoise* (made with fresh tuna, olives, green beans, anchovies, new potatoes and boiled egg), *Aïoli* (garlic mayonnaise generally accompanies fish, vegetables or crusty bread) and *tapenade* (luscious Provençal paste made with olives, olive oil, anchovies, capers and garlic).

Enjoy the traditional southern Provençal sweets, such as *Tarte Tropezienne* (rich tart filled with crème patissier), *Calisson d'Aix* (made from a paste of ground almonds, candied melon and orange peel, covered with bright royal icing) and *Nougat*. Coffee is served after the meal and will be

black, in small cups, unless a *café au lait* (or *crème*) is requested.

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.

Mealtimes in France are strictly observed. Lunch as a rule is served from noon to 1330, dinner usually from 2000-2130, 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. Provence is best known for its rosé wine; the pink wines of Massalia (today's Marseille) were famous in Roman times. Côtes de Provence AOC is the main wine region, producing about 75% of all wine in Provence, principally a fine rosé. The local Côtes du Rhône, Côtes de Provence, Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence, and Coteaux varois en Provence wines are an excellent accompaniment to the regional cuisine. *Pastis* (such as *Ricard*), the local anise-flavoured liqueur, is diluted with water to make a refreshing and hugely popular aperitif.

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



Destination

This glorious stretch of coastline is sprinkled with dramatic hill towns, chic cities, glamorous resorts and spectacular coastal scenery. Being full of the colours and charms of the Mediterranean, the region has long been a mecca for great painters and is overflowing with artistic heritage just waiting to be discovered. Enjoy the characterful seaside towns, modern art, southern glamour and delicious seafood.

Detail of places of interest included in the tour:

Cassis and the Calanques

Along the coastline between *Marseille* and *Cassis*, the turquoise sea has pummelled the limestone cliffs into a series of deep, dramatic inlets – the *Calanques*, a series of jagged white cliffs (some up to 400 metres high) reflected in the dazzling turquoise water. The best way to view this beautiful area is from the sea and there are plenty of boat trip options if you would like to.

For more information about Cassis and the Calanques, please visit:

<http://www.ot-cassis.com/en/>

<http://www.informationfrance.com/towns/241:les-calanques>

Hyères & Toulon

The palm-tree-lined streets of *Hyères* make for a charming town, one of the oldest resorts in the south of France, attracting such luminaries as Queen Victoria, Robert Louis Stevenson and Edith Wharton since its 18th century inception. The town is gathered around the *Castle of Saint Bernard* which sits on a hilltop four kilometres from the sea. The 13th century *church of St Louis*, the delightful old town, elegant Belle-Epoque buildings, the *Place Massena*, Mediterranean gardens of *Castel Sainte-Claire* and the gardens of the modernist *Villa Noailles* are must visits.

Tucked into a fine natural harbour, *Toulon* is home to France's Mediterranean fleet. Sights here include the *opera house*, the *Cathedrale Ste-Marie-de-la-Sedo* and several interesting museums including the *Musée des Arts Asiatiques*, the Baroque *Musée de la Marine* and the *Hotel des Arts*. The daily produce market on *Cours Lafayette* is lovely for a browse

and the *Quai Cronstadt* is a great place to watch the world go by.

For more information about Hyeres & Toulon, please visit:

<http://www.hyeres-tourism.co.uk/>

<http://toulontourisme.com/en/>

La Ciotat

The base for this tour is the charming seaside village of La Ciotat. Sometimes overshadowed by the more bourgeois town of Cassis, La Ciotat is nevertheless well worth a visit. The birthplace of cinema and *pétanque* – two of France's pride and joys – La Ciotat also harbours a wealth of not-to-be-missed natural gems. The village also boasts a legacy of shipbuilding and has an attractive harbour and old town.

For more information about La Ciotat, please visit:

<https://www.francethisway.com/places/la-ciotat.php>

Marseille

Marseille, a port city in southern France, has been a crossroads of immigration and trade since its founding by the Greeks circa 600 B.C. At its heart is the Vieux-Port (Old Port), where fishmongers sell their catch along the boat-lined quay. Grit and grandeur coexist seamlessly in Marseille, an exuberantly multicultural port city with a pedigree stretching back to classical Greece and a fair claim to the mantle of France's second city. Once seen as somewhat dirty and dangerous, and lacking the glamour of Cannes or St-Tropez, this black sheep of the Provençal coastline has blossomed in cultural confidence since its 2013 stint as the European Capital of Culture. Marseille's heart is the vibrant Vieux Port (old port), mast-to-mast with yachts and pleasure boats. Just uphill is the ancient Le Panier neighbourhood, the oldest section of the city. Also worth an explore is the République quarter, with its stylish boutiques and Haussmannian buildings, and the Joliette area, centred on Marseille's totemic Cathédrale de Marseille Notre Dame de la Major.

For more information about Marseille, please visit:

<https://www.marseille-tourisme.com/en/>

Aix-en-Provence

Known as the city of a thousand fountains, Aix-en-Provence, is a lovely spa town with a host of classical mansions, elegant boulevards and beautiful paved squares. Highlights include the *Cathedral of St Sauveur*, noted for Froment's "Triptych of the Burning Bush" and several museums, including the *Musée Granet* of fine art and archaeology and the *Tapestry Museum*.

There is a Cézanne trail, too, that takes you to significant locations in the artist's life, such as the family estate, Jas de Bouffan, the quarries at Bibémus, and his studio at Les Lauves, preserved exactly as he left it when he died in 1906.

Aix is a wonderful place to linger, too, at an outdoor café, particularly one of many along the elegant tree-lined *Cours Mirabeau*.

For more information about Aix-en-Provence, visit:
<http://www.aixenprovencetourism.com/en/>

Sanary-sur-Mer

Sanary-sur-Mer is another beautiful seaside town with its delightful harbour lined with pretty pink and white houses, and its lovely coastline of small beaches and medieval tower. Full of attractive harbourside cafés, bars and restaurants, Sanary is a wonderful place for an evening stroll and delicious dinner. Enjoy browsing the 300 stalls of the lively market that sets up along the harbour every Wednesday morning – fresh fruit and vegetables, fish, *produits du terroir*, textiles, flowers, pottery, spices and herbs can all be found at this buzzing market.

For more information about Sanary-sur-Mer, please visit:
<http://www.sanarysurmer.com/>

Bandol

Bandol, a cheerful seaside resort with a tree-lined promenade, a casino, and a yacht harbour, is renowned for its superb red wines, produced here since 600 BC and, unusually, often served cold.

Cassis has managed to retain its small fishing village charms and has remained largely unaltered since it attracted artists such as Signac and Derain in the early 20th century. It is a lovely place to relax at a waterside café.

For more information about Bandol, please visit:
<https://www.provenceweb.fr/e/var/bandol/bandol.htm?r=1&Largeur=1919&Hauteur=1080>

Reading suggestions

Graham Robb, *The Discovery of France*.

A general introduction to French culture, landscape and history, it also features an excellent insight into the distinctive character of France's regions.

Bernard Levin, *From the Camargue to the Alps: A Walk Across France in Hannibal's footsteps*.

As the title suggests, English journalist Bernard Levin follows the Carthaginian military commander's path across France to Italy, describing history, landscape and culture on his way.

James Pope-Hennessy, *Aspects of Provence*.

A concise and vivid survey of Provence.

Peter Mayle, *A year in Provence*.

An entertaining account of the author's life as an expatriate in Provence and his take on the locals and their customs.

Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy, 1766*.

Laurance Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy, 1768*.

Both 18th century authors travelled through France, to Nice, continuing along to Italy. Sterne's personal and sentimental account can be seen as a response to quarrelsome and deriding Smollett's.

Lady Winifred Fortescue, *Perfume from Provence, 1935*.

This bestseller related the everyday life in a village in Provence during the inter-war period.

F Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night*.

Fitzgerald's famous novel is set in the glamour and extravagance of the 1920s French Riviera.

Tour manager

Your tour manager 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.

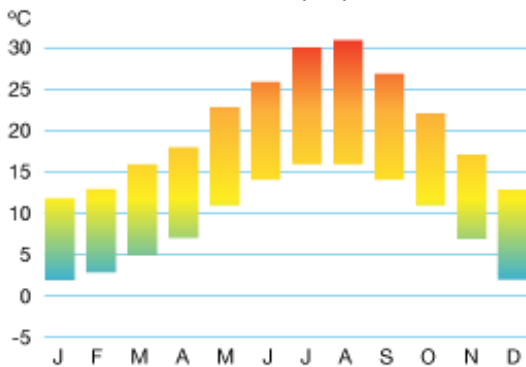
Grading

This tour has been graded as **Demanding**: On your feet all day, uneven terrain (e.g. cobbles).



The Basics

Climate – The weather in Southern Provence and the Côte d’Azur 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. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

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 – Saint-Tropez and Aix-en-Provence have a wide variety of shops. Smaller towns have small 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 some museums close on Mondays.

Clothes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good 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.

Shoes – we suggest good grip/flat walking shoes for walking on excursions.

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 that might be applied after 1st January 2021. A new law means that you are 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 are 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 awards with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, 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.



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.



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/>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7841 023807 or 00 44 7831 133079

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 Marseille

24 avenue du Prado

13006 Marseille

France

+33 (0)4 91 15 72 10

Marseilleconsular.marseille@fco.gov.uk

Mon, Wed and Fri: 0900 to 1230. Outside these hours a consular Emergency Service is in operation and can be contacted on +33 (0)4 91 15 72 10

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