

CULTURAL WALKING ADVENTURE

Provence

Vineyards & Villages of the Luberon

CLASSIC JOURNEYS
THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS



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*Classic Journeys
provides unbeatable
access to experiences
around the globe.”*

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TRAVEL + LEISURE

The South of France You've Dreamed Of

Practice saying: 'I'm vacationing in the south of France this year.' Wonderful as it sounds, it's even better in real life. Think quiet country trails that wind through cherry orchards beneath rustic perched villages. In season, purple ribbons of lavender drape the hills. A friend (who also happens to be your local guide) drizzles your warm bread with the award winning olive oil she presses herself. You bask in the legendary sunlight, in the very landscapes Cezanne and Van Gogh painted. The cultural landmarks are inspiring too from the Romans' Pont du Gard aqueduct to serene Sénanque Abbey. And fair warning: you can get very used to lunches that end with ripe figs, goat cheese and a final sip of chilly rosé. This is Provence at its purest, and you will never forget it.

The Classic Journeys Difference

- ACTIVE HIKING & WALKING
- LOCAL WELL-CONNECTED GUIDES
- PREMIERE HOTELS
- FOODIE FOCUSED
- HANDCRAFTED TRIP DESIGN
- MORE IS INCLUDED

What's Included

- All breakfasts, 2 lunches, 3 dinners, and 1 cooking instruction
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to tastings, historic sites and other scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

Above & Beyond Benefits

→ PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS

One-of-a-kind access to remarkable people, places and activities arranged just for you.

→ WINE ON US

In many regions, we uncork wonderful local wines at every dinner, compliments of Classic Journeys.

→ PERFECT PAIRINGS DINNERS

A special dinner prepared by one of our favorite chefs with a procession of wines tailored to each course.

→ INVISIBLE CHECK-IN

When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately. No waiting – no tipping.

Terrain

Easy to moderate on good trails, always with mini-van support.

CLASSIC JOURNEYS ITINERARIES MAY BE SUBJECT TO SLIGHT CHANGES, HOTEL SUBSTITUTIONS, AND OTHER MODIFICATIONS.

DAY 1 »

Avignon

From the moment you set foot in Avignon, there's no question that you're in Provence. The sunlight has the special hue and clarity that drew legions of painters, and the Rhône flows past the city's ancient walls as you begin your walking explorations at the iconic Pont d'Avignon, the bridge to nowhere. From there, make your way through the city's cobblestone streets where the region's trademark geraniums overflow the window boxes, then along a scenic canal that owes its place to Avignon's thriving textile industry in the Middle Ages and to the Jardin des Doms for panoramic views of the Provençal countryside.

The exclamation point of the walk is a guided visit to the Palais des Papes. Now protected as a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Palace of the Popes is an impressive fortress-like palace that was once the residence of the popes in the 14th century, during a period known as the Avignon Papacy. Today, its sweeping forecourt is sprinkled with inviting cafes and it's a stage for street performers who vie for your attention. Explore its grand halls, chapels, and beautifully preserved frescoes for a fascinating glimpse into medieval history.

MEALS: D

OVERNIGHT: AVIGNON

DAY 2 »

Châteauneuf-du-Pape / Pont-du-Gard

Today, you become a part of the storied history of peoples dating to the Romans two millennia ago who came to Provence for the wines that flourish under the sun in the chalky soils of the Rhone River valley. Over the course of a morning walk through the vineyards of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, you'll pass ruins of medieval chateaux, and charming stone cottages and farmhouses with their brightly painted shutters that dot the countryside. Along the way, your guide, the ultimate well-connected local friend, shares stories and anecdotes of the people who had the vision to plant vines in the unique *terroir* and the grape varieties that thrive in this Mediterranean climate. Your walk leads to one of our favorite wineries. Because our groups are small, you're welcomed from your vineyard walk directly into the cellars for a private tasting, while other larger groups are not permitted. Joining the winemaker, you'll sample a selection of red, white, and rosé wines, from bold and spicy Grenache blends to crisp and aromatic Viognier. And nothing pairs better with the wines than a light lunch of locally sourced ingredients. So of course, you'll savor Provençal specialties that include artisanal cheeses, charcuterie, fresh bread, olives, and seasonal salads. *À votre santé* ("to your health").

Fueled and recharged from the food and wine of the region, be ready to marvel at the architectural wonder that brings water to this spectacular countryside. An afternoon walk follows a scenic countryside footpath to the famed Pont-du-Gard, one of the surviving Roman wonders of the world. An iconic portion of an aqueduct system built over 2,000 years ago, the cinematic arched structure soars over the Gardon River. It's a classical treasure and a monumental lesson in the history of this region.

Later this afternoon, relax and enjoy an aperitif in the garden or poolside before sitting down for a dinner of local specialties.

MEALS: B, L, D

OVERNIGHT: SAUVETERRE

DAY 3 »

Vacqueyras

There are three spectacular mountain ranges that form the cinematic backdrop to your explorations in this impossibly beautiful corner of southern France this week. The majestic Alps dominate the eastern border, with Mont Ventoux, often referred to as the "Giant of Provence," standing as its iconic peak. To the south, the Dentelles de Montmirail are known for their sawtooth peaks, and the Luberon range in the west has gentle slopes, dotted with olive groves and vineyards, and historic villages perched atop its hills. Start your day with some of that breathtaking scenery on a walk from Vacqueyras to Plateau de Courens, enjoying the amazing views of the nearby Dentelles de Montmirail along the way. En route, you'll literally step back in time on visits to a 7th-century chateau and 11th-century chapel. and amazing views overlooking the village of Beaumes-de-Venise. Making your way to the quaint town, you'll wind through vineyards, past limestone rock walls, along forested footpaths, and by the gardens of Chapelle Notre-Dame d'Aubune soaking in the beautiful landscapes all around you.

You could consider this afternoon sort of a foodie's equivalent of Mont Ventoux... a culinary pinnacle of the week as you join a Michelin-starred chef for an unforgettable cooking instruction. Chef shares the secrets of *cuisine à la Provençale*, immersing you into the complex and savory flavors built on fresh herbs, peppery olive oil, garlic, and tomatoes. On this 'only with Classic Journeys' experience, join your chef in the kitchen that is bursting with fresh Mediterranean produce, then roll up your sleeves, fire up the stove, and get a memorable hands-on lesson from a true master. Appetites stoked by the kitchen aromas, you'll sit down to the spectacular dinner that you helped prepare.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: SAUVETERRE

DAY 4 »

Alpilles / St. Rémy

The weekly market in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence is a tapestry of sights, sounds, and aromas, showcasing the best of Provençal culture and cuisine. This morning you're an active participant. Together with your guide, you'll go from stall to stall, bantering with the vendors, filling a basket for the midday picnic. (Don't speak French? No problem, our guides... your local, well-connected friend, are right at hand.) Near St. Rémy lies St. Paul de Mausole, the 12th-century cloister where Vincent Van Gogh spent the last year of his life. Joined by a Van Gogh specialist, you'll visit the monastery for incredible insight into the talented artist's life and see how much of the local landscape appeared in his paintings.

In time for lunch, walk to the nearby Roman ruins for an *alfresco* picnic featuring your morning market provisions. Stretch your legs afterward on a walk through olive groves, arriving on foot at a mill that dates to the 18th century and is still active today. The 'makers' welcome you in and explain their production process and their harvest season traditions that have been passed down for generations. Then you sit down with them to savor an olive oil tasting of their handpicked favorites.

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: SAINT-RÉMY-DE-PROVENCE

DAY 5 »

Luberon / Gordes

You may already have adopted the locals' preferred way to start the day and fueled yourself with croissants and *café au lait*. It will serve you well, as you make your way to Sénanque Abbey, set in an incredibly beautiful and isolated valley, surrounded by a field of lavender and oaks. One of only three Cistercian monasteries in Provence, you'll learn about its historic and cultural significance while walking through the postcard-perfect Provençale countryside.

From there, make your way to Gordes on foot, along trails that wind past one of the trademark structures of Provence. *Bories* are mind-bending corbelled vaults of flagstone, stacked high with no mortar to secure them. Similar to Neolithic examples found elsewhere in Europe, these are believed to be from the 18th or 19th century. They're scattered across the landscape, and some experts speculate that they were built to escape the plague. Nowadays, they are a particularly cinematic addition to the landscape. In time for lunch, you'll arrive at a truffle farm for an 'only with Classic Journeys' experience to learn first-hand about this prized delicacy with the farm owner, who is an expert in finding and preparing them. Then savor regional dishes that highlight their flavor during a memorable lunch together on their scenic property... *Bon Appétit!*

Most of the rock and landscape of Provence are shades of white limestone and honey-colored sandstone. So prepare for a beautifully jarring contrast this afternoon, when you visit the village of Roussillon, which was constructed from 17 different shades of red sandstone. From the village, stretch your legs on a walk through the impossibly beautiful ochre quarries, with the deep red sandstone juxtaposed against the brilliant blue sky and bright green of the cypress and pine trees. Later, enjoy some downtime back at the hotel before your dinner of fine local specialties.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: SAINT-RÉMY-DE-PROVENCE

DAY 6 »

Aix-en-Provence

From farm country, you'll venture southeast to the elegant university town of Aix-en-Provence, home of Cézanne. A guided walk retraces many of the artist's footsteps including the beautiful Cours Mirabeau Boulevard with its outdoor cafes, sculpted plane trees, and vibrant flower and vegetable market. It's often referred to as the "City of a Thousand Fountains" due to its numerous ornate fountains scattered throughout its streets. See how many you can count as you stroll through this picturesque town.

MEALS: B

Tour Hotels



Hotel D'Europe

Built as a marquis' private residence in 1580, this 5-star property has been a hotel since 1799. The rooms are quiet and lovely, and you are steps from the Palais des Papes and the lively street life of Avignon.

NIGHTS: 1 nights



Chateau de Varenne

This 18th-century château has views of Mont Ventoux and the Luberon. Renovated to reflect its original splendor, it offers a garden where you can relax under a 400-year-old cedar tree, or cool off on a warm Provençal afternoon with a dip in the pool.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



Le Saint-Rémy

At the foot of the Alpilles and in the heart of the historic village of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, this 5-star hotel is nestled in a 19th-century townhouse and features a spa, outdoor pool, and a restaurant with garden and terrace

NIGHTS: 2 nights

Arrival & Departure

→ ARRIVAL DETAILS

START LOCATION: **Hotel d'Europe lobby**
START CITY: **Avignon**
START TIME: **2:30 PM**

→ DEPARTURE DETAILS

END LOCATION: **TGV Station**
END CITY: **Aix-en-Provence**
END TIME: **2:00 PM**