

French Wine

EXPLORERS



A TASTE OF PROVENCE & THE FRENCH RIVIERA

7 DAYS, 6 NIGHTS | PRIVATE TOUR
AVAILABLE YEAR ROUND

Wine Tours in the Rhone Valley and Provence boast some of the most spectacularly beautiful vineyards in France. Vines cover the landscape as far as the eye can see, punctuated by olive groves and lavender fields. This region is also a food lover's paradise with both sweet and savory treasures to be discovered. The French Riviera provides an incredibly rich variety of fascinating sites to discover while enjoying the full-bodied, expressive local wines and sun-drenched Provençale cuisine. And if you travel during the early fall, you may also enjoy a private wine harvest activity to experience wine from grapes to glass!

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DAY 1 (Tuesday or Wednesday arrivals are preferable) **WELCOME TO AVIGNON** **D**
Arrive in the beautiful walled city of **Avignon**. Check into your lovely **5* centrally located hotel La Mirande** near the Popes' Palace. This 18-century mansion has interiors that reflect the period, with painted woodwork and antique tile floors. Rooms are sophisticated with a touch of whimsy. A special **welcome dinner** awaits you at the hotel this evening. Every Tuesday and Wednesday night, a delightful '**table d'hôte**' is hosted by the chef in the 19th century kitchen. Guests are invited to sit around a huge wooden table, where at one end, the **chef prepares the meal**, making use of the antique wood-fired stove. The fixed menu, made using local produce, is chosen according to the daily market and the chef's own inspiration. This is an entertaining way to encounter Provence's lifestyle and people.

DAY 2 **ICONIC WINES OF THE SOUTHERN RHONE** **B,L**
Today our journeys take us to **Chateauneuf-du-Pape and Gigondas**. You'll be greeted by your English-speaking, wine expert guide/driver for a visit to **three leading wine estates** in **Chateauneuf-du-Pape** and **Gigondas**. The morning commences in vineyards high up in the Gigondas hills where your guide explains how "**terroir**" influences the wines that you will taste at the cellar of a leading producer. After a **wine tasting lunch** at an excellent local restaurant, you will travel to **Chateauneuf-du-Pape**. The 14th century Papal chateau - a monument to this village's rich wine history - towers over the village. As you tour the scenic vineyards and the cellars of two leading estates your guide will explain how the diverse terroir, grape varieties and winemaking methods define the characteristics and quality of the wines that you taste. Return to your hotel for an evening on own.

DAY 3 **PROVENCE MARKETS | AIX EN PROVENCE** **B,D**
Today, discover lovely highlights of Provence. Visit **Isle sur la Sorgue**, a lovely village romantically surrounded by the river Sorgue. Antique lovers will find a slice of heaven by the nearly **300 permanent antique dealers** and second hand shops here. Then travel to **Aix en Provence**, the capital of Provence with a rich heritage thousands of years old. Discover streets shaded by trees and lined with 17th and 18th-century mansions, punctuated by beautiful fountains. Pause for lunch. Then you will be transferred to your home for the next few days, the lovely **5* Relais Chateau member property, L'Auberge at Chateau de Berne**. *At about 1.5 hours from Nice or Avignon, L'Auberge lies just to the north of Lorgues in the heart of the Chateau de Berne estate where 1,360 acres of woodlands and vineyards stretch out between the Mediterranean and the Gorges du Verdon.* Check into the hotel and spend the remainder of your day relaxing and discovering this enchanting property. Enjoy a **welcome wine-tasting dinner** tonight with a tasting of Chateau de Berne's wines.

DAY 4 **COOKING CLASS** **B,L,D**
Today we enjoy a **cooking class on the property**, in the professional kitchen dedicated for cooking classes. The chef reveals the secrets of his recipes, either classical or original, with fresh and sunny flavors that are easy to replicate. The respect for products is a fundamental value for the chef who works every day with the **vegetables of the kitchen garden**. He will welcome you at the **Cooking School** specially fitted out in a bastide of the estate. All the necessary material is provided for an enjoyable lesson. You'll end the lesson with **lunch, feasting on your creations!** Following your lunch, enjoy the remainder of the afternoon discovering the property. **Dinner at the hotel included tonight.**

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DAY 5 GRAPE HARVEST | EZE B,L

The **grape harvest** is the climax of the winegrower's work. Take part in this convivial harvest equipped with a bucket and shears. The winegrowers will welcome you and share with you their noble passion for the wine making process, from grapes to glass. End your harvest experience with a **guided tour of the cellars, wine tasting and lunch**. (Outside of harvest season, a private tour of the region and tour of cellars and tasting, followed by lunch will replace the harvest.) Enjoy a transfer to the train station and take the train to **Eze Village**, a veritable eagle's nest perched high above the Mediterranean, just seven and a half miles from Nice. Your accommodations will be at **Chateau de la Chevre d'Or**, an outstanding boutique Relais and Chateau member hotel that literally is integrated into the medieval stone village of Eze. The views are inspiring; on one of the frequent clear days, the view extends all the way to St. Tropez. Take the rest of the afternoon to enjoy the scenery. With small narrow roads, archways and superbly restored stone houses, shady squares, refreshing ancient fountains... you will be easily seduced by the marvels of Eze. Evening on own.

DAY 6 NICE AND THE FRENCH RIVIERA B,L

It's worth taking the time to discover **Nice** in depth. Start with a visit to the **famous farmers' market**, split between its famous **flower market** lined with bucketfuls of blooms, and a magnificent **food market** with long tables displaying exotic spices, colorful in season fruits and vegetables, pastries and more. Wander with your guide through the narrow streets of the old town and then stroll along the famous "**Promenade**" before entering into the heart of the city with its rich architectural and cultural heritage and its parks and gardens. A **delicious lunch** uncovering the gourmet treasures of the area is included. We will **customize your afternoon to your requests**, which could include: free time for shopping; a drive along the coast of the Riviera featuring iconic Monaco, Cannes and Antibes; a visit to Grasse - the perfume capital of Provence; or perhaps additional wine touring. Return to your hotel end of the afternoon, and evening on own.

DAY 7 AU REVOIR B

Transfer to the Nice International Airport or train station, and continue your journeys with fond memories of your Provence wine, culinary and cultural discoveries.

LEGEND FOR MEALS INCLUDED IN YOUR TOUR: B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

**Itinerary subject to change: every effort will be made to keep the itinerary as close as possible to what appears here; however, the final itinerary may vary due to wine producer schedules, availability and factors beyond our control.*

Pascale, I talked to John yesterday and your tour was the highlight of an already fantastic trip. They loved their guide, the wine tasting, the vineyard visits and of course the chateau dinner. I so loved hearing him talk so enthusiastically and I know...I can book with your company with confidence. Julianne F., travel consultant, Rhone wine tour

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YOUR LUXURY TOUR OF PROVENCE & THE FRENCH RIVIERA INCLUDES:

- Creation of your customized itinerary, crafted to your preferences, and all arrangements for your tour
- The services of a professional local expert guide as mentioned, private tours as mentioned in itinerary
- All transfers by chauffeur-driven, air-conditioned sedan, as mentioned in the itinerary
- 2 nights deluxe accommodations at 5-star luxury Relais and Chateau member Hotel l'Auberge de Berne
- 2 nights deluxe accommodations at 4-star Relais Chateau Member Chateau de Chevre d'Or in Eze
- 2 nights deluxe accommodations at 4-star boutique Hotel La Mirande in Avignon
- Gourmet Buffet breakfast each day
- Train tickets to Eze
- 4 gourmet lunches, 3 gourmet dinners, highlights include:
 - Table d'hote welcome dinner with chef in Avignon
 - A hands on cooking class followed by lunch at Chateau de Berne
 - Private grape harvest, followed by a tour and tasting in the cellars, and wine grower's traditional lunch
- Information on the region and its wines sent to you in advance of your tour

Price based on 2 guests, double occupancy: US \$7990.00 per person

Price based on 4 guests, double occupancy: US \$6990.00 per person

Price based on 6 guests, double occupancy: US \$6590.00 per person

(Monday through Friday tour dates are preferable, as more wine estates are open. Saturday is also possible if necessary.) Subject to availability. Single supplement: please inquire. For groups of 7 or more guests: please contact us for a price quote. Not included: any personal expenses, or any services not specifically mentioned above as included in the price of your tour.

WINE CHATEAUX AND ESTATES

We include only top-quality wine chateaux and estates in our programs. Chateau visits are scheduled by special arrangement, and some chateaux or estates, including any mentioned in the Itinerary, may not be available on your dates. Once you book your program with us, we will contact the estates to determine which are available. If there are specific chateaux or estates you would like to visit, please let us know, and we will contact your preferences first when arranging visits and tastings for you.

To reserve this program: contact us at info@wine-tours-france.com

Tel.: 1-877-261-1500 or 410-745-5406 (outside the USA)

We look forward to meeting you!

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