

AROMATIC FLAVOURS OF ARDÈCHE AND PROVENCE, ART, AND GALLO-ROMAN RUINS



Inroads into the **SOUTH OF FRANCE** with **LE FRENZ CONNECTION**



Bienvenue to a seamless and unique journey into life and culture in the South of France!

Please contact us directly for **2023** dates:

NZ \$ 4250 (twin share) max 8 travellers

You will enjoy:

- 3 nights in 18th century Ardèche stone house,
- 2 nights at Uzès
- 2 nights at St-Rémy-de-Provence

Dive beyond the impressionist's canvas for a sensory discovery of authentic Provence; unspoilt, fiercely authentic, a stronghold of prehistoric, Gallo-Roman treasures and natural beauty. This itinerary offers you both irresistible savours and vistas of Provence, as well as a unique journey into the southern Ardèche, with clear bold rivers, ruggedly beautiful limestone formations, and its listed 'most beautiful villages' of France - all against a backdrop of olive groves, vineyards and lavender fields. Join us for a gastronomic and aromatic journey through an authentic landscape in the South of France. Your tour leaders share a friendly relaxed spirit of professionalism and the savoir faire from a shared homeland of Provence and New Zealand.



Day 1 Arrival Valence TGV

You will be met off the train at Valence TGV station, then we travel down the Rhone Valley and into the rocky light infused world of Ardèche to visit two of the most beautiful villages in France.

A stop at a riverside café/restaurant at Vogüé with its superbly preserved castle and viaduct. Then it is onto Balazuc, a stone village of

character that clings to limestone rock leading down to the Ardèche River. A relaxing walk along its shores leads to the farming hamlet and eco-village of 'le Vieil Audon, restored by hand from ruins in the 1960s.

We travel to Vallon Pont D'Arc, named after its mighty rock arch that spans the Ardèche River. Internationally renowned for kayaking, this lively village has a relatively new claim to

fame with the discovery of the Chauvet Cave having the oldest, most abundant and reputedly highest quality collection of prehistoric rock art in the world.

Day 2

A morning visit to Chassiers for a wander through pretty streets steeped in history with a 12th century chapel, gothic church, and castle.

This is followed by lunch at the timelessly beautiful village of La Beaume in a square shaded by plane trees where the locals pitch their skills at a match



of pétanque. An afternoon journey into our prehistoric

past in the heart of Ardèche at the Caverne du Pont d'Arc, a scientific, artistic and technological triumph and replica of a relative the Chauvet cave which hit New Zealand's cinema screens with Herzog's "Cave of Lost Dreams", and received UNESCO world heritage status in June 2014. Here is the world's most extraordinary collection of cave paintings, drawings and etchings, some of which were created 36 000 years ago.

Day 3

Discover the unspoilt beauty of the Gorges of the Ardèche from the water with a morning kayak option that takes you under the 60m arch. Otherwise a dip in the courtyard pool at Vallon and a wander through its streets and boutiques is a morning well-spent. We picnic at the riverside by the arch then journey into the heart of protected reserve land with magnificent views of the river, and traces of fossils from 110 million years. Small caverns hidden at the foot of the cliffs bear witness to prehistoric times whilst the flora reflects the Mediterranean climate. We turn away from the river and up to the Plateau des Gras and its vibrant purple fields of lavender; the symbol of Provence. Here's your chance to wander alongside rows of blue tipped stalks and breathe in their fragrance. A visit to the distillery shows how the flowers are turned into essential oils, perfumes soaps and little sachets for your drawers.



Noses finely tuned for aromas and bouquets we visit a local vineyard for some wine tasting followed by a home cooked dinner with local ingredients.

Day 4

Depart the Ardèche for the delightful Provençal town of Uzès – 'City of the Bishops' where arcaded streets, medieval towers, and generous squares all testify to its noble past. Colourful boutiques and cafés prove a delight for the visitor. En route we stop to explore a fascinating underground world at one of the most beautiful European caves and one of

France's four Grand Sites l'Aven D'Orgnac. Two nights accommodation in a charming bed and breakfast.

Day 5

A visit to the spectacular Pont du Gard (UNESCO World Heritage Site) sets the tone for the day, for this is one of the finest Roman aqueducts which has spanned the Gard river for more than 2000 years. Return to Uzès then an afternoon drive to a neighbouring hilltop village which you can explore at leisure.

Day 6

Your guide will take you onto Nîmes, known as the "Rome of France" thanks to three of the best preserved monuments:

- the Arena which once hosted chariot races and fights between gladiators and wild beasts
- the Maison Carrée one of the most superb surviving Roman temples.
- the Magne Tower which offers a remarkable view over the city of Nîmes.

2 nights' accommodation in St-Rémy-de-Provence with a garden and pool.

Day 7

It's market day at St-Rémy-de-Provence, one of the most lively markets that the South of France has to offer.



We take our market provisions and picnic in an olive grove with a priceless view of Roman antiquity. This is where Van Gogh used to paint during his long stay at St Rémy's psychiatric hospital following a row with Gauguin. We visit the former monastery and beautifully kept grounds where he filled canvases with irises and twisted olive trees. A short walk serenaded by wood pigeons and doves takes us along a trail of his paintings to St Rémy and then it's time to linger over a pastis in the shade of a plane tree.



Day 8

We will visit this beautiful fortified town with gardens and palaces, and its renowned bridge over the Rhône river. A fine way to finish the tour in the 'City of the Popes.' Your guide will accompany you to the Avignon TGV station or airport for your onward travel.

Our price includes the following:

- All excursions and accompanied walks
- 7 nights' twin-shared accommodation in a charming selection of quality hotels and bed and breakfasts.
- 7 x French breakfasts
- 3 x 2-course dinners in local restaurants specially selected to provide a choice of regional specialities. Comprises a choice of entrée or dessert and main within a fixed menu. (Beverages not included.)
- 2 table d'hôte dinners with local wines in an 18th century Ardeche stone house
- A picnic lunch.
- Lunch at La Beaume (Beverages not included.)
- Transfers from Valence TGV station and to Avignon train station, or Avignon airport.
- We provide daily handouts of key phrases and vocabulary you will need as well as the opportunity to practise them with a French speaker over a glass of wine before the real thing.

Not included:

- Telephone charges
- Laundry
- Beverages and snacks
- Extras on fixed menus
- Personal travel insurance



For information and bookings, please contact:

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For terms and conditions please refer to booking form.