

Cycling Safaris

“Cote to Cote” Rhône to Riviera Cycle 2016

This cycle covers several distinct regions of France. It begins in the Cote du Rhone region with the vast vineyards fanning out from river. The wonderful region of Provence follows with its lavender fields, (more) vineyards and pretty hilltop towns. A shorter day is scheduled to allow maximum time to tackle the famous “giant of Provence”, Mt Ventoux. The Luberon national Park and Mont St Victoire provide further wonderful scenery before we drop down onto the Cote D’Azur.

Day 1

Saturday 4th June



Suggested departure on a 12pm flight from Dublin T2 to Lyon.

Arrive Lyon 3pm, collection from airport and transfer approx 1 hour to the town of Valence on the Left Bank of the Rhone river.

Valence has been recognized as one of the French Towns and Lands of Art and History and has been given a high "four flowers" rating as a tourist destination by the *Concours des villes et villages fleuris*.

Day 2

Valence to Vaison La Romain (105km/130km)

Sunday 5th June

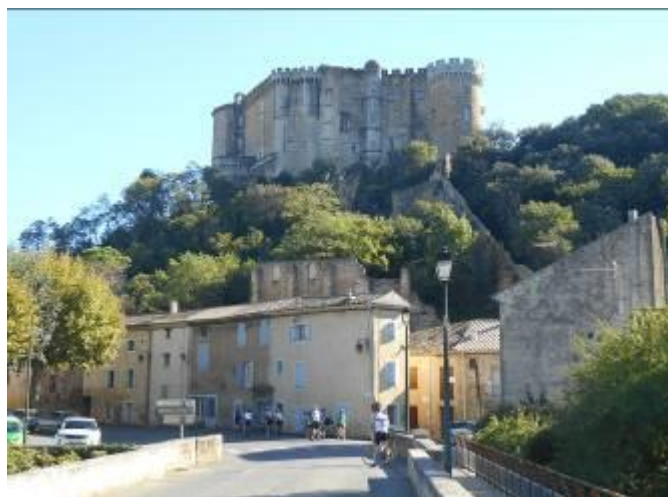


As we leave Valence we soon pick up the Rhone cycle path for some traffic free riding by the river. In the distance we can clearly see the great backdrop of the hills of the Vercours Nature Park and the Chateau de Crussol, a 13th century castle resting 200 metres up on cliffs.

Soon we leave the Rhone and head into the surrounding countryside where we find many wonderful villages. One of which is the fairytale village of Grignan, with its renaissance castle, often pictured amidst the surrounding fields of lavender. Vaison-la-Romain has two very distinct parts a Roman and medieval town linked together by a 1st century bridge.

Optional Climb: Serre Mure

Crossing the river Rhone this climb gives us a taste of the undiscovered Ardeche region on a lovely quiet road. Great views down to the Rhone are the reward for our 10km at an average of 6.6% - a good warm up for Ventoux!



Day 3 ***Vaison to L'Isle Sur la Sorgue (50km/85km/129km/170km)*** ***Monday 6th June***



Just a mere 10km from Vaison is the famous and dominant Mt Ventoux, a true Tour de France favourite.

For the stronger cyclists the opportunity exists to tackle this wonderful climb. The bare limestone summit creates an interesting barren landscape with views for many miles around. If you want to join the elites, then you can descend to Bedoin, refuel and hit the mountain from this side, then finally descend to Sault and tackle it again!

For everyone else is a wonderful cycle taking in some of the pretty villages such as Mazan, St Dider and L'Isle sur la Sorgue is famous for its many antique shops. It has many waterside cafés and restaurants, all within walking distance of each other. Its many attractive water wheels throughout the town are still in working order.

Optional Climb: MONT VENTOUX! 21km / 7.2% Ave / Gain 1535m /Top 1912m



Day 4 ***L'Isle sur la Sorgue to Aix-en-Provence (82km/120km)*** ***Tuesday 7th June***

Today our cycle heads across the beautiful Luberon National Park, famous for its Hill top Towns, Wild Boar and Vultures. Menerbes and Bonnieux provide some climbing for us as we enjoy these wonderful Provencal towns. We then cross the Luberon with dramatic rock formations and windy roads to arrive in Loumarin, dominated by its chateau. Our destination is the wonderful Aix-en-Provence, a truly lovely town that has been linked with many great artists.

Optional Climb: Col de Murs

A nice detour to the famous Provence village of Gordes. Then lovely quiet roads meandering through a gorge over the Col de Murs. Its 12km and averages a very pleasant 3.4%.

Day 5 **Aix to Draguignan (122km)**

Wednesday 8th June

The cycle today is a great ride across the Aix region. It begins by following the “route de Cézanne”. This road follows the base of Mont Sainte Victoire, his favourite subject, and it is not hard to see why the shifting light patterns on this beautiful mountain would be so appealing to an artist. Along this route are many attractive medieval towns and villages interspersed with typical provincial countryside.

Draguignan was originally a Roman fort built on the hill which is now dominated by the distinctive 17th century clock tower with its wrought iron campanile, and a splendid view of the region from the top.



Day 6 **Draguignan to Nice (110km)**

Thursday 9th June

We begin by venturing into the nearby forests dominated by umbrella pines. We then take a wonderful quiet road with fantastic views across the surrounding landscape, gradually edging our way closer to the Mediterranean. Just when it is hard to imagine more dramatic scenery, we venture into the Massif de l'Esterel national Park which includes a wonderful traffic free route and our first glimpse of the sea.

We then pick up the coastal road that twists and turns its way towards the glamorous resorts of Cannes and Antibes. Then follows long sections on cycle paths before picking up the famous Promenade des Anglais and finishing in the wonderful resort of Nice.



Day 7 **Departure**

Direct Flight with either Ryanair or Aer Lingus to Dublin.

Price 1170 euro per person sharing

Includes

- 6 x Nights Accommodation in 3* Hotels
- 6 x Dinners
- 5 x Lunches
- Snack/feed Stations on Route
- Support Vehicles including daily luggage transfer and Mechanical Support
- Careful transportation of Bikes from Dublin to Start and from Finish back to Dublin
- Cycling Guides at ratio of 1:10 cyclists
- Fully researched route
- Private Transfer from Lyon Airport to Start Hotel
- Training Program provided by level 3 cycling coach
- Secure Bike Storage in Accommodations