

FRANCE – CRUISING PROVENCE and THE RHONE RIVER DELTA

8-days / 7-nights A choice of barges from historic Avignon to the Camargue wilderness paradise



Departs: Weekly **every Saturday** from 7th April to 6th October 2012

From: Aigues Mortes to Avignon or return

Cost: AU\$1590 per person twin share. Single cabin supplement \$630

Includes: Cabin accommodation for 7-nights with private bathroom, full board (ie breakfast, packed lunch, dinner each day), bed linen and towels, cycle hire (we recommend you bring your own helmet) with panniers and a lock, an experienced cycling tour guide, route information pack with maps, tea and coffee on board, harbour fees and wine tasting at Chateauneuf-du-Pape.

Not Included: Entrance fees, transfer to/from barge, drinks on board, travel insurance, personal expenses

Highlights: The Rhone Delta and the marshlands of the Camargue with its flamingos, bulls and wild horses, ancient churches and Roman history, Van Gogh's Arles, the mediaeval village of Les Baux and wines of Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

Bike & Barge cruising combines two popular ways of exploring Europe (cycling and river cruising), these tours allow partners of different abilities and interests to holiday together (tours are just as interesting for non-cycling partners, leisure cyclist OR cycling enthusiasts), you unpack once, come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom. Well-maintained multi-geared bikes are provided (you can bring your own if you prefer). The cycling is fascinating and varied with free time at each day's destination.

Our barges on this route are in the classic Dutch barge style converted to accommodate passengers in comfort with air-conditioned spacious saloon bar and dining areas with lots of natural light, comfortable sofas and armchairs and large picture windows. There is an outdoor sundeck with a fixed awning and tables and chairs.

There are up to twelve comfortable air-conditioned twin cabins each with a well-equipped bathroom/shower/toilet.

Our cycling and cruising itinerary winds its way through the scenic backroads and calm waters of the Camargue and along the River Rhone in the glorious south of France. Known for its wildlife flocks of pink flamingos, pelicans, cormorants and other sea-birds abound. Here we discover the traditional black bulls bred for the bullrings, the horses and Camargue cowboys, the flamenco music of the gypsies, fields of wild rice, sunflowers and salt farms.

An area rich in history and art we see many reminders of the might of the Roman Empire and the inspirational landscapes that attracted many 'impressioniste' painters including Vincent Van Gogh.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Suggested itinerary – from Avignon to Aigues Mortes:

Day 1 Aigues Mortes: The boat is moored near the town centre and cabins are available from 4pm. We stay the first 2-nights at this spectacular walled town with its craft and art shops, its square and fountain surrounded by cafes and restaurants. Time to meet the crew, learn about the boat and test-ride your bicycle.

DAY 2 Aigues Mortes circular ride (cycling distance @ 45km).

Today we offer a circular guided bike ride along quiet backroads to discover the spectacular Camargue.

DAY 3 Aigues Mortes – Gallician (60km).

We cycle past cane and rice fields and salt lakes - just a stone's throw from the Mediterranean coast - past horses, flamingos and bulls and small fishing communities to the spiritual home of the gypsies and popular tourist centre of St Marie-de-la-Mer. Overnight in the village of Gallician.

DAY 4 Gallician – Arles (15km)

A day to cruise to the city of Arles, the ancient capital of Gaul with a bridge built over the Rhone by the Romans. We arrive by bike at the wooden bridge, which was famously painted by Vincent Van Gogh.

DAY 5 Arles – Vallabreguès (50km)

Moving into more undulating countryside, past olive groves, lavender fields and the famous limestone escarpments we reach the Alpilles, with the picturesque village of Le Baux de Provence on its rocky outcrop. We cycle to the lovely town of Saint Remy de Provence, birthplace of Nostradamus. Van Gogh also stayed here in the days of his mental illness and many of his paintings are brought to life by following the Van Gogh walking trail. In the evening you will moor in Vallabrègues, pretty village on the banks of the Rhone.

DAY 6 Vallabrègues – Villeneuve-lès-Avignon (53km)

Today we will visit a tourist landmark, the best-preserved Roman aqueduct in Europe: the Pont du Gard. And in the afternoon we reach Avignon with its Palace of the Pope and many historical buildings dating back to mediaeval times. Our barge is moored in Villeneuve lès Avignon on the opposite bank of the Rhone.

DAY 7 Villeneuve-lès-Avignon. (42km)

We cruise to the wharf at Avignon and cycle towards one of France's most famous wine growing regions, Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Carefully avoiding the traffic we follow backroads to explore this scenic area with its many vineyards. We cross the Rhone at Roquemaure and return to Villeneuve following the river.

DAY 8 Tour ends in Villeneuve-lès-Avignon.

The tour arrangements end after breakfast.

Please note: We offer this tour as a Bike & Barge but you can decide each day if you want to join the bike ride or to relax onboard. On some days distances can be adjusted to allow more or less cycling.

Outdoor Travel offers Bike & Barge or Bike & Boat cruises in the Loire Valley or Burgundy in France, several routes in Holland and Belgium, in Italy from Venice along the Po delta or the Tuscan Archipelago, in Germany along the Saar, Moselle & Rhine, Croatia's spectacular Dalmatian Coast, the islands of Greece and Turkey.

Contact our experienced staff for more details, travel brochures and reservations:

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From the Camargue to Avignon



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