

Vineyards and Villages of Southern France

September 7–16, 2019



ITINERARY

DAY 1

Saturday, September 7

Depart from your closest airport to Montpellier Airport. Overnight, plane.

DAY 2

Sunday, September 8

Arrive in Montpellier Airport where you meet Discover Europe's representative for transfer to the city-center hotel. Unpack and relax before a brief walking tour to introduce you to the heart of Montpellier. In the evening, the group will gather for drinks before a welcome dinner at the hotel. Overnight, Montpellier. **D**

DAY 3

Monday, September 9

Travel just south of the city and spend the morning exploring the ancient Etruscan port city of Lattara, discovered in 1963. Tour the site and go on a guided visit of the Musée Archéologique Henri-Prades. This museum is well known for the many artifacts uncovered in the area and contemporary art exhibits. In the late afternoon, return to Montpellier where the rest of the day will be yours to enjoy. Overnight, Montpellier. **B**

DAY 4

Tuesday, September 10

Head east from Montpellier into Provence where your first stop will be the Roman city of Nîmes. You take a walking tour and visit the beautifully preserved Roman Temple, Maison Cavée. Take some time to explore, have lunch on your own, and retire to the nearby Domaine de Poulvarel for a tasting of local Costire de Nîmes wines.



Streets of Montpellier



Dolium, Musée Archéologique Henri-Prades



Arena de Nîmes

The final stop of the day will be to marvel at the grandeur of the Pont du Gard, an incredible feat of Roman engineering. Return for your final night in Montpellier for dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight, Montpellier. **B D**

DAY 5

Wednesday, September 11

Leave Montpellier behind as you follow the coastal strip between the Mediterranean and the mountains of Massif Central, past the city of Beziers. Your next destination is Chateau Maris, a vineyard specializing in bio-dynamic wine production techniques. Meet the owner, Robert Eden, for a tour of the facility and taste some of the excellent results of this process over lunch. This afternoon, stop to admire the walled city of Carcassonne on your way to the chateau base for the rest of the tour. Pay a visit to the Château Comtal, the inner residence of the Viscounts of Carcassonne. On arrival, settle in for drinks on the terrace before sitting down to dinner in the neighboring town of Mirepoix. Overnight, Camon. **B L D**

DAY 6

Thursday, September 12

Prepare for a day of time travel! Take a walk along the subterranean riverbed and find yourself the Magdalenian period (B.C. 11000). Visit the vast underground chamber of the Grotte de Niaux, home to the most beautifully preserved image of horses, ibex, stags, and bison. Some still look as fresh as the day they were painted. In the afternoon, head to Montségur, a ruined castle set high on a rocky crag and home to the final refuge of the Cathars. Make the ascent to the castle for a great hike to admire the views and reflect on the infamous past of this location. Take a brief stop to the village museum before returning to the Chateau for relaxation before dinner. Overnight, Camon. **B D**

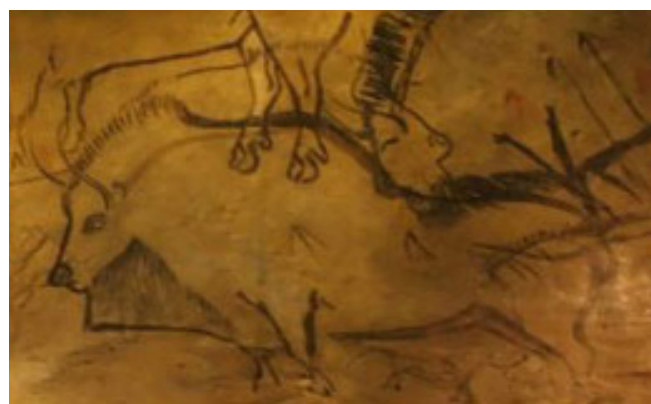
DAY 7

Friday, September 13

Travel across the heavenly Ariège Countryside to the magical Romanesque abbey of Saint-Hilaire. Then it's on to Limoux, a town famous for its blanquette (a drink similar to champagne). Enjoy free time for shopping in the heart of old town before continuing to the fabulous Domaine Gayda vineyard for a gourmet lunch with the head vintner, Tim Ford. Tour the vineyard and estate and end the excursion with a tasting of vino in the Viticole (meaning wine school). After lunch, head to the mountain-top village of Rennes-le-Château for a visit to the parish church which may spark (or rekindle) your interest in Dan Brown's mystery novels. This church is filled with symbols and secret codes possibly related to the lost treasure of Solomon. At the end of the day, return to the Chateau for an evening of village exploration. Overnight, Camon. **B L**



Tarascon-sur-Ariège



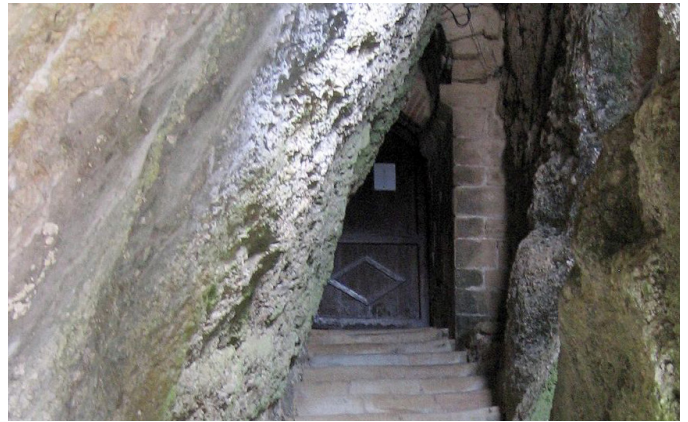
Grotte de Niaux

DAY 8

Saturday, September 14

This morning, visit the nearby archaeological site of Teilhet. We'll see the Merovingian Necropolis of Tabarione discovered in 1870 and excavated in 1998. Leave this site and go to the neighboring village of Vals where you visit the fascinating Eglise Rupestre (Trogladyte Church) and have lunch in Café Vals. The rest of the afternoon is yours to explore, shop, eat, and enjoy. Overnight, Camon.

B L



Stairwell, Eglise Rupestre

DAY 9

Sunday, September 15

A full day in the mountains. Head first for the village of Montaillou, famous for the last holdout of the persecuted Cathars, where you'll take an easy hike around the ruins of the Chateau. Stop for lunch in the spa town of Ax-les-Thermes. In the afternoon, you return to the hotel for relaxing time by the pool or enjoying a cocktail on the terrace before a final dinner at the Chateau, always beautifully presented by master chef Tom. Overnight, Camon. **B L D**



Montaillou Chateau

DAY 10

Monday, September 16

Depart from Toulouse Airport back to the U.S. at any time. **B**



Breathtaking vistas of Southern France

B = breakfast, **L** = lunch, **D** = dinner

Itinerary subject to change

Crow Canyon Archaeological Center has secured permits and special permissions from Michael Induni of Discover Europe LTD for this program

Crow Canyon Archaeological Center

crowcanyon.org

800.422.8975, ext. 457

travel@crowcanyon.org