



Libation Vacations

Provence Dreams Tour

June 8 – June 17, 2023

Day 1- Thursday June 8th - Avignon **D**

- 15:00** Check in to **Hôtel de l'Horloge**
1 Rue Félicien David 84000 Avignon +33 4 90 16 42 00
- 17:00** Meet in Lobby for **Happy Hour Toast**
- 17:55** Depart Hotel for **Les Estivales du Rhone** a local wine festival (weather permitting)
- 19:45** **Group Welcome Dinner** at **Carrie du Palais**



Welcome to Provence! After settling into our Hotel, the **Hôtel de l'Horloge**, our 4-star boutique property in Avignon, we will gather for a welcome toast with your fellow Provence Dreamers. Then we'll have the opportunity to "drink local" and taste your way through some of the best wines this region has to offer at **The Estivales du Rhône**, a local wine fest where the winegrowers from the Côtes du Rhône gather in the most beautiful streets of Avignon to share their wines, their know-how and a taste of their terroir.

A **multi-course gourmet welcome dinner** in a beautiful, historic setting just steps from our hotel will be the perfect ending to our 1st day. After dinner, if you are not too tired, you may want to stroll around the town for a sunset view (the sun sets very late here during the summer!) of the magnificent **Popes Palace** before heading back to the hotel for a good night's rest.

Dinner

Day 2 - Friday June 9th - Avignon / Distillery B

Breakfast in Hotel de l'Horloge

09:15 Depart Hotel

EVENTS:

- **E-Bike** to explore the nearby **île de la Barthelasse**
- **Maison Manguin** for tour and tasting of the Distillery

12:45 Free Time on your own to explore Avignon

Lunch & Dinner on your own



After Breakfast at the hotel, we will we will head off the beaten path with e-bikes to explore the nearby **île de la Barthelasse**. The views of the Popes Palace and the Pont d'Avignon are fabulous from our vantage point, just across the Rhone river. Our ride on the quiet road around the island will lead us through orchards and farms to the **Manguin Distillery**. During our visit here, we'll learn how this artisanal distillery has been creating amazing fruited brandies and other delicious spirits via traditional methods for over 60

years. (Those who prefer not to bike can take the river shuttle or walk over to the island to enjoy the views and meet us at the distillery) .



After we return to Avignon, you'll have time for lunch on your own. Choose from one of Avignon's many restaurants with tables outside in the Provence sunshine, or pop in to **Les Halles**, the amazing covered market where you can wind your way through a mind boggling array of fresh produce, seafood, meats and other local specialties. A few of the the stands even have tables nearby, where you can relax and enjoy your finds for a casual lunch. If you are an oyster lover, the variety here can't be beat. Buy a bottle of local rose wine to wash it down with for a perfect Provencal market experience.

The rest of the day is yours to explore the sights, sounds and tastes of Avignon. From the Pope's Palace to some great shopping, there is plenty to see and do. If you are looking for some local craft beer, Mike can point you to some **great local beer bars** and likely will meet you there for happy hour! Dinner is on your own this evening. Avignon is a foodie's city, so check the app and/or ask our hotel concierge for suggestions.

Breakfast

Day 3 - Saturday June 10th - Avignon / Chateau Pesquié / Sorgues B,L,D

Breakfast in Hotel de l'Horloge

09:00 Art Class, optional, (art supplies will be provided)

11:45 Check out of Hotel de l'Horloge and load bus

12:00 Bus Departs from Avignon

EVENTS:

- Château Pesquié, for Wine tasting and Picnic Lunch

16:40 Arrive & Check in at Château Gigognan

- Château Gigognan, tour and wine tasting

19:45 Dinner with wine at Château Gigognan with private chef



This morning you have your choice of sleeping in or joining a local artist for a **Travel Journal Sketchbook Workshop**. Discover a different way to experience the places you visit and record your memories during our private 3-hour sketchbook workshop. The travel sketchbook is the art of capturing the story of what we see and experience, wherever we are. Learn to look and to really see what you have in front of you so that you will be able to transcribe it into your personal souvenir travel journal using drawing and watercolor techniques. Journals and other art supplies are included and no experience is necessary!



After we've all channeled our inner artist and our masterpieces are complete, we will check out of our hotel and head to **Chateau Pesquié** for a tour, tasting and picnic lunch overlooking the grounds of this beautiful wine estate. (Tables and Chairs will be available)

From here, it's time to move into our home for the next week. Staying in our own private chateau gives new meaning to the expression "a person's home is their castle". Once we are settled in, we will take a short tour of the chateau and grounds and enjoy a welcome toast with one of the many delicious wines made with grapes from the vineyards surrounding the property. Tonight we will certainly feel like royalty when we are treated to a **welcome-to-the-chateau wine-paired dinner** created for us by our own amazing private chef!

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4 - Sunday June 11th - Isle sur la Sorgues

B,L, D

08:30 Breakfast at Château Gigognan

09:15 Depart Château Gigognan

EVENTS:

- Market Day at [Isle sur la Sorgue](#)
- Lunch at [Le Jardin du Quay](#)

15:30 Arrive at Château Gigognan

- Happy Hour and optional pétanque lessons at the Château

19:00 Light picnic dinner with wine, beer, sausages, cheese, salad, etc at Château or dinner on own if you'll like



This morning, after breakfast in the Château, we will head off to one of the best markets in Provence and maybe even in France! **The Sunday market at L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, "The Venice of Provence"**, has it all – a food market, "brocante"(flea market) and antique market all in one- so you can buy everything from artisanal cheese to colorful tablecloths with Provençal prints to an antique chaise lounge! Stroll along the streets

lined with vendors and flower-filled riverside cafés. Check out the waterwheels, do some great people watching and take a peek into the local church. Taste your way along the vendors sampling tapenade, olive oil and cheese!

Once you've shopped up an appetite, we'll meet for lunch at one of our favorite hidden gems, **Jardin du Quay**, for a magnificent meal that captures the spirit of Provence. Their seasonal menu, which changes daily, is served in the heart of a lovely, tranquil garden, hidden away from the hustle and bustle of the market.

Full and content, we will head back to our chateau to relax. Enjoy a dip in the pool, sneak off for a well deserved afternoon nap or learn to play pétanque, the French game of boules, with Mike. This evening, you are invited to join us for "**Ruth and Mike's Favorite Provence Vacation Dinner**": a casual picnic al fresco, weather permitting, of local meats, cheeses, bread, fruits and vegetables, fresh from the market and of course, accompanied by local wines.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

08:00 Breakfast at Château Gigognan

09:00 Depart Château Gigognan

EVENTS:

- Ornithological Park of Pont de Gau for tour
- Aigues-Mortes for Free time & Lunch on own
- Take the petit train through the Salt Mines in Aigues-Mortes
- Visit to a local Intermarché, for shopping (optional)

19:15 Arrive at Château Gigognan

TBD Dinner on your own



Appropriately, as we reach the end of our tour, we head off to the far end of Provence to where this region meets the Languedoc region. Here we will visit the amazing **Carmague**– a flat, salty, sandy, marshy terrain where black bulls and white horses roam free. The Carmague is like nowhere else in France, or should I say, there is nowhere in France quite like

the Carmague. The gorgeous pink-purple lakes that are actually part of the largest salt pan in the Mediterranean is our first destination. We will board a “petit train” which will take us on a journey to the heart of **Le Salin d’Aigues-Mortes – the Aigues-Mortes saltworks**. We will see how the ubiquitous Carmague salt is mined. As we travel past the colorful waters along the route, and climb to the top of “camelle” (salt hill) we will have a breathtaking view of our next stop, the medieval walled village of Aigues-Mortes, rising up out of the purple and pink waterscape.



Aigues-Mortes dates back to 1240. Its ancient fortifications, its town walls, are said to be among the best preserved of their type in the country. Inside the walled town you will find restaurants, museums, markets, shops and art exhibits. There will be free time to explore here and for lunch on your own. If you are motivated to work off lunch, you might consider a walk around on the ramparts

surrounding the town.

Dinner tonight will be on your own. Restaurant suggestions will be in your app and we are happy to arrange taxis for you. Reservations are suggested if you are planning on going out. If you’d rather relax at the chateau, we will have some quiches (supplied by our chef) as well as some light picnic supplies available.

Breakfast

Day 6 - Tuesday June 13th - Free Day at the Chateau B,D

08:30 - 9:30 **Breakfast at Château Gigognan**

Free Time & Lunch on own at the Château

Optional Bike Rentals

17:30 **Cooking Class, optional, followed by Dinner at Château Gigognan**



Today is yours to spend as you please. Relax poolside with a good book and a glass of wine, join in on a pétanque match or perhaps a run through the vineyards to work off some of last night's dinner? **E-bikes may be reserved** in advance by those who want to explore the local surroundings. A short bike ride away (or a little bit longer by foot), the local **sunflower fields** are worth a visit. Picnic

makings and quiche are available in the chateau kitchen for a light lunch at your leisure. Today is informal and relaxed. It is your vacation do as little or as much as you choose!

This evening, those who are feeling inspired will join in on a **cooking class with our private chef**, the rest of the group are free to relax until dinner is served!

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7 - Wednesday June 14th - Châteauneuf du Pape B,D

08:30 Breakfast at Château Gigognan

Free Time and Lunch on your own at the Château

15:05 Depart Château Gigognan

EVENTS:

- **Domaine le Prieuré des Papes** for tour and tasting
- Short stop back at the Château
- Restaurant **la Mère Germaine** for a 5 course Beer vs Wine paired **Dinner** at this Michelin Starred Restaurant in Châteauneuf-du-Pape

23:00/23:30 Arrive at Château Gigognan

This morning is all about YOU!

Sleep late, it's vacation! We'll have the morning free to swim, sleep, take a hike through the vineyards or maybe a few games of billiards in the billiard room? Brunch will be available later this morning (coffee, tea and croissants will be put out for early risers) so we can fuel up for a big day dedicated to the wines of Châteauneuf du Pape.

This afternoon is all about Châteauneuf du Pape!



Visiting a vineyard in one of Châteauneuf's many wine estates is a must for any visitor. But since we are not just "any visitors", our vineyard visit will be to the iconic parcels of the **Domaine le Prieuré des Papes** and we will be **guided by the winery's technical director**. Here, he will explain the winery's philosophy and the different terroirs. Then we are off to **visit their different production sites** to learn about the wine making process. Once we are all "experts", we will test our new skills during a **blending workshop** and try to re-create our own version of the winery's red "Vieilles Vignes" cuvée. Each person will have

three samples in total to create their own cuvée. After all of our hard work as winemakers, we will **taste our way through a number of delicious wines** from the Chateau.

When our day in the winery winds down, we will head back to our Chateau to clean up and get dressed for what is going to be a **one-of-a-kind dining experience, created specifically for Bon Beer Voyage**, thanks to our Belgian connection!

Now it is time for us to make the transition from wine makers/tourists to epicurean experts as we head to the **Michelin-starred restaurant: La Mère Germaine**, where we will be treated to a **Multi-Course Wine vs Beer Paired Michelin Dinner!** This is a concept that we came up with Ruth met the chef, Christophe Hardiquet, during a visit with the local tourism board and learned that before he had the Michelin star in Provence, he had a 2 star Michelin restaurant in Brussels! Of course we immediately made the beer connection and knew that this was fate and happily, the chef agreed. **Breakfast/Brunch, Dinner**



Day 8 - Thursday June 15th - Séguret and More! B, brunch, D

08:30 Breakfast at Château Gigognan

10:45 - 11:30 Brunch on your own at the Château

11:45 Depart Château Gigognan

EVENTS:

- Séguret & free time in town
- Château du Barroux for tour and tasting
- Demoiselles Suzette for tour, tasting and picnic Dinner

21:00 Arrive at Château Gigognan

The morning after our Michelin meal and pairings, we thought you might want to take advantage of the opportunity to sleep in and enjoy another late morning brunch.



Just before noon, we'll depart for our first excursion of the day, a visit to the charming village of **Séguret**, classified as one of the plus beaux villages (most beautiful villages) in France. We'll have some time to explore the cobblestone lanes, check out the views and stroll through history in this lovely medieval town. Bonus- the local tea salon serves amazing ice cream right in front of an awesome photo op 😊



Then we are off to visit the **Chateau du Barroux**, where we will tour the whiskey distillery located within the rooms of the chateau, home to Fanny and Jean Baptiste and their family. Here, they are producing a unique local whisky using a very special type of still from 1928 which was restored by Jean Baptiste. The whisky is made with einkorn, a regional cereal, that adds a special note to the spirit. After touring the distillery, (and a tasting!) we will have a chance to enjoy some of the amazing views from the rest of the chateau.

Next, we will visit a truly unique winemaker and experience some guided

tastings in a whole new fashion. **Demoiselles Suzette** is a small, award-winning winery owned by Richard Orange, an incredibly passionate winemaker, who gives his all to his wines. After a short visit to the cellars with Richard, we will be treated to a magnificent view over the vineyards while, with the help of a wine educator, we will learn about wine through different tasting games. Our sensory tasting experience will help us learn to analyze, understand and talk about wine with the vocabulary of connoisseurs, while having fun. While the sun sets in the background, we'll feast on a smorgasbord of fresh local products- goat cheese and other cheeses from a nearby farm, charcuterie boards, vegetable pies, breads, tapenades and more- all pairing fabulously with our wine. To experience this all in such a magical setting is a *Provence Dream* come true.



Breakfast/Brunch, Dinner

Day 9 - Friday June 16th - Pont du Gard & Uzes B, D

08:00 Breakfast at Château Gigognan

09:00 Depart Château Gigognan

EVENTS:

- Pont Du Gard for tour
- Uzes for free time & Lunch on your own
- Musée 1900 for tour

17:45 Arrive at Château Gigognan

19:30 Farwell Dinner w/wine at Château with private chef

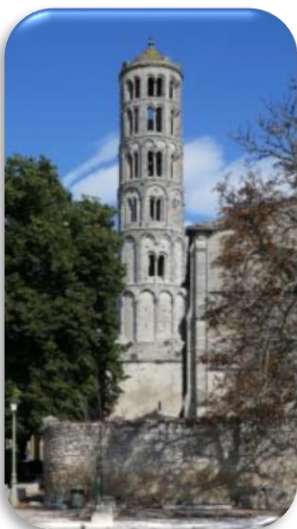
Breakfast is served at the chateau before we are off to visit the spectacular **UNESCO**

Heritage site: The Pont du

Gard. This ancient **Roman aqueduct** bridge was built in the first century AD. It is estimated that it took the work of a thousand men 5 years to build the Pont du Gard, which stands as the principal piece in a 50 km-long aqueduct. A tribute to the Roman empire's

greatness, it was built to supply

water to the area and to the town of Nîmes. Our guided visit will take us to the top of the bridge as well as the museum which will allow us to discover the construction, functions and use of this engineering marvel over time.



Next we are off to charming medieval **Uzes**-yet another of the *plus beaux villages* that we are fortunate enough to visit on this tour! Located in the Gard department, Uzes is just across the Rhône River from Provence. On the lovely Place aux Herbes you can enjoy a drink and some lunch under the shade of a parasol or the lovely plane trees at one of the many outdoor cafes. Wandering about the town you will find some nice shops and galleries, the Duke's castle- which is still sometimes inhabited by the latest Duchal family, and a beautiful Romanesque bell tower- The Tour Fenestrelle.

Tonight we'll feast at the chateau with a wine-paired meal created for us by our own amazing private chef as a Farwell Dinner.

Breakfast, Dinner

Day 10 - Saturday June 17th - Departure Day B

08:00 Breakfast at Château Gigognan

08:30 **Check out** and Depart Château Gigognan

08:40 Transfer to Avignon TGV Station

09:20 Arrival at TGV in time for either the 9:42 or 10:00 train to Paris or the 10:40 train to CDG

Time for a final breakfast at the Château then on to wherever your travels will bring you. Au revoir until next time!

All good things must come to an end... this morning we must say adieu... (unless you are staying for back to back tours!)



After breakfast, a group transfer to the Avignon TGV will be provided for those heading out by train. Feel free to ask us for assistance reserving local taxis or private transfers to the airport or your next destination.

Breakfast