

French Castles

Duration: 10 Days
Distance: 2.700km



Executive Tour Description:

This tour will take you back through French History. A leap in the past from medieval castles to the Renaissance ones, from strong walls to the magnificent beauty of the last kings places. We will even ride and stop by the Lascaux Cave, one of the very first places where the humankind started painting hands and animals.

Riding the lovely curvy roads of France on 21st century bikes you will be take, centuries and millenniums back through time!

Map:



Precise Tour description:

Day 1: The tour begins in St Raphaël riding up along the Provence inland sceneries to reach Castle Ansouis, a surprising architectural example, its history starting in the Xth century. Following the originally medieval Castle of Gordes, which got modified during the XVIth century. Passing through St Rémy de Provence the tour will ride up to the Baux de Provence.

Day 2: Rivers being a major communication way in the past it is obvious that some magnificent castles stand on their banks. The Rhône river being a major one we will ride towards Avignon to enjoy the Palais des Papes a major gothic piece of work. Facing it on the over bank on the Rhône stands Villeneuve-lès-Avignon and its XIIIth century castle. Riding up the Rhône valley the tour will reach Castle Grignan (Renaissance), Castle Cruas (XII to XIVth century), Castle Crest (Dungeon XVth century, highest exiting in France) and Castle Lavoulte (Renaissance).

Day 3: Time to ride west and ride by the very few castles one can find in the middle of France: Castle Murot (medieval place on the top of a hill dated XIVth century) and Castle Bourbon l'Archambault (medieval place from where the Bourbon dynasty started).

Day 4: Leaving the fortresses from the center of France the tour rides now north towards the Loire valley. On the way Castle Sarzay (XIVth century, one of the last medieval places, outdated thanks to the artillery progress). Castle Villegongis (XVIth century) is a soft introduction, through its charm and finesse, to the extreme magnificence of the King castles. But before enjoying style and richly decorated castles the Castle Loche will remind us that in the XIth century the Touraine region was, like many others, changing hands after some fighting.

Day 5: Rest day dedicated to some of the most beautiful castles in the Loire valley: Castle Amboise, Castle Chambord and Castle Chenonceau.

Day 6: Leaving Touraine can't be done without having a look at what is renowned worldwide as a model of the French "Elégance": Castle Azay-le-Rideau. After all those magnificent Touraine Castles the tour will take you to the Chinon Fortress (XIIIth century) and its history (people like King Charles VII and Joan of Arc spent some time in it). Following comes Castle Oiron (XVI-XVIIth century). As this day is full of contrasts here comes Castle Parthenay (XIIIth century) a superb example of the defensive solutions evolutions over time. Castle Coudray-Salbart (XIIth century) is one more example and among the most impressive French powerful fortresses, small but strong. Last castle of the day Castle Niort (XIIth century) has only its strong dungeon left standing but again what an impressive one. The end of the day will take you to the Atlantic coast for a peaceful rest.

Prices:

Motorcycle	Premium	Medium
R1200GS	3 990	No Medium
F800GS	3 900	No Medium
F650GS	3 750	No Medium
Passenger	2 800	No Medium
Own Bike	3 400	No Medium
Chauffeur Service	4 600	No Medium

2009 tour prices per person, in Euros

For people coming with their own bike please contact us

Dates: 2009

June	22nd to 1st July
August	8th to 17th

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Day 7: Say good-bye to the Atlantic as the time has come to dive back to history. Castle Puyguilhem demonstrates that there is no need to be on the Loire valley to create a castle full of harmony. Definitely not the style used for Castle Bourdeilles (XIIIth century) and its huge octagonal tower. As the tour is in Dordogne it is time to set the time machine to go back 17 500 years!! Here comes the Lascaux cave.

Day 8: On the way south the tour passes by Castle Najac and its ruins. Albi and its Berbie Palace will demonstrate that the XIIIth century is not all about big stones and walls. But the cherry on the cake of this day will be the city of Carcassonne! 3 kilometers of walls, 40 towers and a history starting around the VIIIth century.

Day 9: Starting with a ride through the Languedoc vineyards the curvy roads ride through some lovely towns like Béziers and its historical monuments before getting to the Mediterranean sea. Close to the sea and on the left side of the Rhône delta lies the Town of Aigues-Mortes and its huge walls (defined in 1250 by Louis XI who wanted a port on the Mediterranean sea). The day will end in Nîmes with a time slide towards the roman era.

Day 10: Last day of the tour and more castles. Crossing the Rhône river from the west by Castle Beaucaire to the east by Castle Tarascon (XVth century) it is time to ride back through Provence towards Saint Raphaël.

Overnight towns: Saint Rémy de Provence, Soyons, Bourboin Archambault, Joué-les-Tours, Royan, Sarlat, Carcassonne, Nîmes.

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