



TRAVEL PLANNER

CLASSIC PROVENCE—LEGENDARY VINEYARDS & HILLTOP VILLAGES



BIKING | Premiere Hotels

PRO-B-HP-R-003-23 12/5/2022

CLASSIC PROVENCE—THE LUBERON & RENOWNED WINE VILLAGES

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 **BACKROADS**





DAY 1

On the first day of the trip, meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads T-shirts) at 10:00 a.m. at the Avignon TGV train station in Avignon, France (Gare Avignon TGV is NOT the Avignon Centre train station. If you arrive at Avignon Centre, you'll need to take a 15-minute taxi ride to the Avignon TGV station). Look for a Trip Leader in the parking lot below by the rental cars and taxis just next to the bus parking area—follow signs to "Sortie Nord" and "Rental Cars."

Please arrive dressed in your biking clothes and bring your luggage and a daypack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today's ride (your luggage will be transported to our first night's accommodations).

LATE TO THE TRIP START? See "Arriving & Departing" for more information.

SHUTTLE TO CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE 30 Minutes

BIKING OPTIONS:

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Route: 10 Miles (500' elevation gain)

Château to Château Route: 26 Miles (1,300')

Bienvenue en Provence! After meeting we shuttle to Châteauneuf-du-Pape, a historic town that got its name (meaning new castle of the Pope) when Pope Clement V relocated the papacy to the area in the early 14th century. Pope Clement V was said to be a great lover of

wine, and the town is famous for its spicy, full-bodied reds. Later on, we'll have a chance to sample some of these renowned white and red wines.

After your Backroads Trip Leaders fit your bike and give a brief talk on biking techniques and safety, set out on today's route—a great introduction to the joys of biking in Provence as we head through agricultural fields and into vineyards and forests.

Bike through the small back roads of the Drôme all the way to our home for the night, Château de Massillan. Set inside the former estate and hunting grounds of King Henry II and Diane de Poitiers, the hotel offers a taste of 16th-century France while immersing you in modern-day luxury and innovations with everything from organic food and linens to solar-powered energy and hemp-based insulation.

Settle into your room, stroll the peaceful gardens or cool off with a swim before we gather for a welcome reception and gourmet dinner at our *château*. The selection of all certified organic French and international dishes is complemented by an extensive wine list featuring local domaines. *Lodging: Château de Massillan*

DAY 2

BIKING OPTIONS:

Séguret Route: 26 Miles * (1,600' elevation gain)

Beaumes-de-Venise Route: 36 Miles * (2,100')

Crillon le Brave Route: 44 Miles (3,100')

Dentelles Route: 51 Miles (4,000')

VAISON-LA-ROMAINE SELF-GUIDED WALK 1 Hour

**with shuttle*

This morning we pedal to the venerable Côtes du Rhône, biking through Cairanne and continuing through Rasteau and Roaix. All three of these villages have been awarded Côtes du Rhône Village AOC status for producing a superior-quality wine under strict criteria.

Make your way to the town of Vaison-la-Romaine, tucked along the banks of the Ouvèze River and the perfect spot for a coffee break. Resting on the former site of the ancient Roman city of Vasio Vocontiorum, Vaison-la-Romaine is renowned for its elaborate 2nd-century ruins. In addition to checking out the ruins, you have a chance to

explore the medieval and antique city of Vaison. From here, we ride to our lunch spot in the beautiful village of Séguret.

Back in the saddle with renewed vigor, pedal to the village of Gigondas, whose name comes from *jocunditas*, the Latin word for joy. You may very well experience this emotion after your first taste of the superb Gigondas wine! Then, spin past immaculate vineyards, promenades of cypress trees and through Vacqueyras en route to Beaumes-de-Venise, a picturesque market town known for its sweet white muscat. Our long route will take you into the Dentelles de Montmiral, limestone mountains with dramatic serrated ridges.

Continue on to Hôtel Crillon le Brave, an elegant converted hamlet of village houses perched on a hill amid vineyards and olive groves. Tonight, join your leaders for a friendly game of *pétanque* before we gather for a casual family-style dinner at our hotel. *Lodging: Hôtel Crillon le Brave*



DAY 3

BIKING OPTIONS:

Gorges Route: 17 Miles* (2,000' elevation gain)
Sault Route: 28 Miles* (3,000')
Sault Loop: 58 Miles (4,600')
Mont Ventoux Loop: 60 Miles (7,500')

**with shuttle*

As you head out this morning you're treated to unsurpassed views of imposing Mont Ventoux, the Giant of Provence. This mountain is perhaps best known for its

occasional appearance in the Tour de France, and with its 13-mile, 5,400-foot, average 7.5-percent-average gradient climb, it strikes fear in the hearts of even the most seasoned cyclists. You, however, can rest easy knowing that you don't have to take on this daunting challenge if you don't want to!

Instead, a gorgeous 11-mile climb takes you through the Gorges de la Nesque, a deep canyon separating Ventoux and the Vaucluse Plateau. The ascent is gradual—and very worthwhile. Relish stunning views from the impressive winding road, as well as the shade provided by several unique tunnels through the mountainside. Go at your own pace and remember to drink plenty of water! Your next stop is Sault, where spacious squares and friendly cafés make it an appealing place to have lunch on your own and do a little exploring.

If you wish to tackle the daunting climb up Mont Ventoux, let your leaders know and they will set you up with directions and extra snacks to take on this challenge.

Shuttle back to the hotel for a leisurely afternoon, perhaps pampering your cycling muscles at the spa. (Spa treatments are not included in the trip price. Advance reservations are recommended.) Or, if you're feeling energetic, stay on your bike to log a few more miles to return to the hotel on your own two wheels. This evening we savor an elegant dinner in the hotel's dining room. *Lodging: Hôtel Crillon le Brave*

DAY 4

BIKING OPTIONS:

Venasque Route: 21 Miles* (1,300' elevation gain)
Joucas Route: 32 Miles (2,700')
Le Beaucet Route: 44 Miles (3,600')
Lioux Cliffs Route: 50 Miles (4,400')

**with shuttle*

Start the day by pedaling through beautiful vineyards to the charming village of Venasque, where we take in the superb view. For some extra miles this morning, tack on an additional loop and get in a hefty climb through limestone landscapes en route to Le Beaucet before joining back up with the group in Venasque.

Thanks to its quaint serpentine streets and tidy homes

embellished with flower-filled window boxes, Venasque is listed among Les Plus Beaux Villages de France (The Most Beautiful Villages of France). It takes some effort to reach this hilltop treasure, but we think you'll agree that it's well worth it.

Back on your bike you may want to take a short but steep detour to remote 12th-century Abbaye de Sénanque, set amid oak groves and a fragrant sea of lavender. If not, plenty of more gradual climbing awaits as you ride through a gorgeous limestone canyon to the Vaucluse plateau.

After lunch choose to ride on just a bit more by way of the stunning Lioux Cliffs or pedal directly down and across the Luberon Valley toward our home for the next two nights, La Coquillade, an incredible property in the heart of Provence. If you're in the mood for some extra TLC, saunter downstairs and select from a decadent menu of spa services. This evening, we shuttle to the nearby *village perché* (perched village) of Roussillon for a tour before you enjoy dinner on your own. *Lodging: La Coquillade*

DAY 5

BIKING OPTIONS:

Ménerbes Route: 21 Miles (1,400' elevation gain)
Luberon Loop: 32 Miles (3,100')

Oppède Route: 42 miles (3,000')
Bonnieux Route: 49 Miles (4,400')

Set out this morning to return to the town of Roussillon. Resting on one of the world's biggest ochre deposits and adored by artists for centuries, this village is renowned for its striking natural surroundings, especially the Chaussée des Géants, a canyon radiant with 16 shades of ochre.

From here, spin on to Gordes, a picture-perfect *village perché*, where old stone buildings cling to the craggy southern face of the high Vaucluse Plateau, and a massive medieval castle watches over fields, forests and neighboring hilltop towns. Meander along cobblestone lanes leading to shady squares, historic monuments, chic boutiques and cafés.

From Gordes, carry on to Ménerbes, the village immortalized by Peter Mayle's best-selling *A Year in Provence*, and toward a gourmet lunch "à la Provençale"

with a glass of Luberon wine close by. Add some extra miles to your morning to explore the 1000 years-old medieval hamlet of Oppède-le-Vieux.

This afternoon, tackle the ride north to Lacoste, once the residence of the Marquis de Sade, the controversial 18th-century author. Ascend to the ruins of the Marquis' former castle, now owned by fashion designer Pierre Cardin, for spectacular views of the Vaucluse ridge and, clouds willing, Mont Ventoux. If you have energy for it, go on a detour through Bonnieux, another hilltop village with charming old streets. Finish the ride by pedaling across the Pont Julien, a Roman bridge built around 3 BC, that connected the Luberon valley to the capital of the empire: Rome.

This evening we adjourn to the hotel's elegant restaurant for a farewell dinner overlooking the Luberon Valley.

Lodging: La Coquillade

DAY 6

AU REVOIR ROUTE 13 Miles (850' elevation gain)

SHUTTLE TO AVIGNON 1¼ Hours

If you're not quite ready to bid your bike adieu, take one last spin in this cyclist's paradise. If you'd rather sleep in, spend a relaxed morning by the pool and follow up with a leisurely breakfast. Later, we gather to say good-bye and grab a quick packed lunch for your travel day before you depart for Avignon, where our trip ends. See "Arriving & Departing" for end-of-trip logistics.



KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE

We are always seeking opportunities to enhance this itinerary. We'll be certain to notify you of any important changes prior to departure; other changes may be communicated on trip by your leaders.

SHIFT GEARS

Our trips are designed to be flexible, giving you the freedom to experience the best of the region the way YOU want. Feel like you're ready to go, go, go? We can show you the way! Want some downtime or prefer to head out on your own? No problem!

Your Trip Leaders will make sure to tell you the best days to take time for yourself (if you want it) without feeling like you're missing out.

So feel free to shift gears and make it your day!



TRIP ACCOMMODATIONS

Premiere Hotels



1 Night

Château de Massillan

With elegant contemporary interiors, this castle nestled in Côtes du Rhône vineyards was built in 1555 for a mistress of Henry II. (pool, spa) | Uchaux | www.chateaudemassillan.fr | +33-(0)4-90-40-64-51

2 Nights (Pictured)

Hôtel Crillon le Brave

Flawlessly combining rustic charm and luxury, an "evocative country house hotel crowning an ancient hamlet, backdropped by Mont Ventoux," according to the *Hideaway Report*. A Relais & Châteaux member. (pool, spa) | Crillon le Brave | www.crillonlebrave.com | +33-(0)4-90-65-61-61

2 Nights

La Coquillade

Set in the heart of the Luberon and surrounded by vineyards, this hotel features exceptional views and refined elegance. A Relais & Châteaux member. (pool, spa) | Gargas | www.coquillade.fr | +33-(0)4-90-74-71-71

ARRIVING & DEPARTING

After reviewing the following information, please inform us of your arrival and departure plans on your *Personal Information Form*.

Depending on train schedules, you may need to spend the night before your trip in our meeting town or wait at the train station between your arrival and the start of your Backroads trip.

All prices are in US dollars and subject to change.

Meeting Time & Location

On the first day of the trip, meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads T-shirts) at 10:00 a.m. at the Avignon TGV train station in Avignon, France (Gare Avignon TGV is NOT the Avignon Centre train station. If you arrive at Avignon Centre, you'll need to take a 15-minute taxi ride to the Avignon TGV station). Look for a Trip Leader in the parking lot below by the rental cars and taxis just next to the bus parking area—follow signs to "Sortie Nord" and "Rental Cars."

Please arrive dressed in your biking clothes and bring your luggage and a daypack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today's ride (your luggage will be transported to our first night's accommodations).

Arriving Late to the Trip Start?

If you have a delay or emergency on the day your trip starts and need to contact Backroads, please email your Trip Leaders (you'll receive an email 48 hours prior to the trip start with their contact info) or call the Backroads office at 800-462-2848 (domestic) or 510-527-1555 (international).

If you miss the pickup at the TGV train station in Avignon, it is possible for you to get to the first night's hotel, Château de Massillan, in Uchaux on your own. (Check outside for the coach before assuming you've missed it.) Taxi service is available from Avignon to Uchaux for \$110–\$120.

Conclusion of the Trip

On the last day of the trip, a private coach will drop you off at the Avignon TGV train station at approximately 1:15 p.m., in time to catch an afternoon train to Paris or other destinations.

Flight Arrangements

This trip starts and ends in Avignon, France. We recommend flying into Paris and then taking a train to the Avignon TGV station. Another option is to fly into Marseille (MRS; www.marseille-airport.com) and take the train to Avignon or rent a car and drive.

For information on Paris airports, visit www.adp.fr, the Aéroports de Paris website, which offers maps of the airports' terminals, up-to-date security advisories, and details on transportation options to and from Charles de Gaulle and Orly Airports.

For help arranging air transportation to and from your Backroads trip, please work with your own travel advisor, or you may work with our travel agency partner. Their professional expert travel advisors are ready to share their insiders' knowledge of Backroads and our worldwide destinations and are available to assist you with any of your travel needs. Please note that they are an independent travel agency and consulting and ticketing fees may apply, based on the services requested. Simply ask your Backroads Trip Consultant to connect you! You can also book directly with the airline, or through a travel website.

Taking the Train to the Avignon TGV Station

Depending on train schedules, **you may need to arrive in Avignon the day before the trip starts.**

From Charles de Gaulle Airport: It's possible to take the TGV (*train à grande vitesse* or high-speed train) direct from the airport to Avignon. There are several daily departures to the Avignon TGV station; the trip takes about 3½ hours and tickets start around \$100.

From central Paris: You can also catch one of the regularly scheduled TGV departures from Paris' Lyon station (Gare de Lyon). Travel time is about 2¾ hours. Tickets start at \$80.

From Marseille: Regularly scheduled departures are available from Marseille to Avignon. If you are traveling

from the Marseille airport, you'll need to take the 25-minute shuttle from the airport to the Saint Charles train station. A train from the Saint Charles station to Avignon takes around 30 minutes; tickets start at about \$20.

Transportation between Charles de Gaulle Airport & Central Paris

Taxi: The fare to central Paris is \$60–\$80. Rates vary according to the time of day; supplements are added on Sundays and holidays, for each piece of luggage and for additional passengers. Although the airport is just 15 miles outside of central Paris, the trip into the city often takes close to an hour because of traffic.

Naveco (www.nav-eco.fr/en; +33-(0)4-78-02-45-07): This is a convenient and stress-free way to reach your Paris destination. Reservations are required and prices are fixed ahead of time, starting around \$70 and varying by car type.

Roissybus (www.ratp.fr; +33-(0)8-92-69-32-46): The Paris Transit Authority's (RATP) Roissybus offers service between the airport and Place de l'Opéra (at the corner of Rue Scribe and Rue Auber) every 15–20 minutes, 6 a.m.–12:30 a.m. Cost per person is approximately \$12. Travel time to central Paris varies from 45 minutes to well over 1 hour, depending on traffic. RATP also offers **RER (or "RoissyRail")** metro service between the airport's TGV stations and several Paris stations including Gare du Nord, Châtelet-Les Halles and Denfert-Rochereau. Trains run every 10–20 minutes 5 a.m.–midnight. The trip takes 25–45 minutes depending on your destination, and tickets cost about \$10 per person.

Transportation Between Orly Airport & Central Paris

Taxi Expect to pay \$45–\$70 for the trip into central Paris. Rates vary according to the time of day; supplements are added on Sundays and holidays, for each piece of luggage and for additional passengers. Orly is located about 9 miles south of the city center, a 20- to 40-minute ride, depending on traffic.

Naveco (<https://www.nav-eco.fr/en>; +33-(0)4-78-02-45-07): This is a convenient and stress-free way to reach your Paris destination. Reservations are required and prices are fixed ahead of time, starting around \$70 and varying by car type.

Orlybus (www.ratp.fr; +33-(0)8-92-69-32-46): The Paris Transit Authority's (RATP) Orlybus provides service every 8–15 minutes, 6 a.m.–12:30 a.m. to Denfert-Rochereau Metro station for around \$9 per person; average trip time is 30 minutes. Another option is the Orlyval monorail, which departs for the Antony RER station from each terminal's arrivals area every 4–7 minutes, 6 a.m.–11 p.m.; the 6-minute trip costs about \$10. From here the RER B line will get you to Paris in about 25 minutes.

Train Travel in France

In case of a change to the schedule, it's a good idea to verify departure times close to your time of travel. See the following sections for details on purchasing tickets, making reservations and more.

Purchasing Tickets

You have a few different options when it comes to booking and purchasing rail tickets. Keep in mind that ticket prices and schedules may vary, depending on which of the following methods you choose. We recommend reviewing the websites listed below for current information and detailed instructions.

Travel advisor: If you need assistance booking your rail tickets, please contact your travel advisor or ask your Backroads Trip Consultant to connect you to our preferred travel agency partner.

TGV: SNCF Connect website (sncf-connect.com/en-en/) is the most reliable source for purchasing

TGV tickets. We recommend purchasing e-tickets through the Oui-SNCF website and printing them at home.

When purchasing your e-tickets, make sure to select USA as your "ticket collection country." The site will tell you that you are being redirected to their local website, but you **do not** want to be redirected. **You must select "Continue on sncf-connect.com/en" to purchase your tickets.**

To purchase e-tickets:

- Visit sncf-connect.com/en-en/
- Enter your train and traveler details.
- Select **USA** as your **Ticket Collection Country**.
- A pop-up window will appear. Select **Continue on sncf-connect.com/en**.
- Choose your train and confirm your order.
- Select **E-ticket service** and enter your payment details.

If you have issues using your credit card on the Oui-SNCF website, please contact your travel advisor or choose a different method below.

Trainline or Rail Europe: You can also buy tickets and make reservations through Trainline (www.trainline.eu) or Rail Europe at www.raileurope.com. Please note that service fees and restrictions may apply. Ticket delivery options for online orders include:

- **Print at Home e-tickets:** Print tickets yourself on any printer.
- **Print at Station e-tickets:** Print tickets at any self-service kiosk at the train station by following these instructions:
 1. Touch the welcome screen to begin. For English, select the British flag.
 2. Select **File and Electronic Ticket Withdrawal**, then **Withdrawal with a File Reference Number**.

3. Enter the e-ticket number included in your email confirmation and select **Confirm**. (Make sure you have your e-ticket number; you will not be able to retrieve your ticket using a different method of identification such as swiping a credit card.)
 4. Enter your name and select **Confirm**.
 5. Select **Collect the Chosen Journey** and retrieve your printed tickets from the kiosk.
- **Paper tickets:** Tickets will be mailed to a US address for a shipping fee of \$18.

Waiting until you arrive: SNCF ticket and reservation offices are located in both Charles de Gaulle and Orly Airports, as well as in every French train station. In the larger stations, the reservation counters are located away from the main departure area. Many stations have automatic ticket machines that sell tickets and reservation coupons for travel in France and for principal cross-border routes. The reservation counter accepts cash, credit or debit cards. The machines accept debit cards with a chip only.

TGV reservations: Reservations are required for all TGV departures. (Reservation costs are included in the price listed on the SNCF and Rail Europe's websites.) Seat reservations are nonrefundable and nonexchangeable. For all other SNCF rail service, reservations aren't mandatory; however, you may want to pay the extra reservation charge for a guaranteed seat, simply for peace of mind. (If you know you'll be taking the train during a peak local travel period, such as a holiday, you'll definitely want to make reservations or you risk standing.) On TGV lines, seat reservations can be made up to 60 days in advance until just minutes prior to boarding. For regular SNCF service, you may reserve a seat 60 days in advance but only up to midday for a same-day departure after 5 p.m. and until 8 p.m. for a next-day departure before 5 p.m.

Your seat reservation will sometimes appear as a separate coupon along with your actual train ticket. It will specify the train number, the car number, class of travel and seat number.

Boarding the Train

To find your platform, which will be listed at least 10 minutes prior to departure, check the small television screens or the larger schedule boards in the main station area (larger stations only). Four columns will be listed: destination, type of train, platform number and departure time.

If you purchased or retrieved your ticket at the train station (not a print-at-home e-ticket), **you'll need to validate your ticket before boarding your train** by stamping it at one of the yellow *composteur* machines located on each train platform. (The machine stamps the date and time on the ticket to prevent multiple use.) If you forget, tell the onboard ticket inspector immediately in order to avoid a supplementary fee. If you're using a European Railpass, it must be activated at a ticket counter before first use.

Trains can be long and you'll want to be standing in the right place to quickly board the train when it arrives. Your ticket will list the number of your car (or *voiture*). The train platform is typically marked by letters of the alphabet. In order to know which lettered sign you should stand near, look for a screen with a graphic of the train. This will show you to stand, for example, between the U and V signs on the platform in order to quickly board Car 5 when the train arrives.

It's possible that not all cars on your train are continuing to your destination. Therefore, it's important to make sure the nameplate on your train car (usually posted outside near the door) corresponds to your travel destination. Once inside the car, look for your reserved seat. If it's a small train and reservations are not required, you can sit anywhere. Keep your bags in sight, if possible, and stay alert; many luggage thieves and pickpockets specialize in dashing on and off trains.



PRICES & SCHEDULES

All prices and schedules were current at the time of printing, but are subject to change at any time.

DURING YOUR TRIP

Trip Leaders

Each of your Trip Leaders plays many roles during your vacation: guide, host, caretaker, naturalist, chef, historian, troubleshooter, interpreter. These remarkable individuals have highly developed instincts for making people comfortable, for seamlessly handling the logistics of travel and for successfully navigating a wide range of unexpected situations. They're passionately committed to ensuring you enjoy an exceptional vacation—smooth, flexible and tailored to your needs. According to past guests, the caliber of our leaders is what sets Backroads apart from all other travel companies. With their knowledge, professionalism, enthusiasm and service ethic, they're the number-one reason people return to travel with us again and again. We look forward to having you meet them.

A Word about Gratuities

We think our leaders are unparalleled at what they do—you be the judge.

Gratuities for most services during your trip are included in the price. While we've thought about including a Trip Leader tip as part of the overall trip cost, we acknowledge that gratuities are customary in the industry as a way to recognize excellent service on a more personal level.

We offer specific Trip Leader tip recommendations because our guests have consistently asked for them. The exact amount is up to you.

Our recommended gratuity for this trip is \$200 per guest.

This amount can be covered via cash (preferred) or PayPal. To learn more about PayPal and how to sign up, visit www.paypal.com. You will receive a contact list for Trip Leaders at the beginning of the trip which also serves as their PayPal information. Regardless of the number of leaders on your trip, you can pay the full amount to any one of them. Cash and PayPal gratuities are then divided among your Trip Leaders and other Backroads support staff (van drivers, etc.).

When traveling on your own in France, keep in mind that

most restaurants and cafés add a 15 percent service charge to the bill. When in doubt, check the menu—if service is included, it will say *service compris*; if it's not included, you'll see *service non compris*. If gratuity is not included, a 5–10 percent tip is fine, but not obligatory. When tipping your taxi driver, round up the fare to a maximum of 5 percent.

Accommodations

Our accommodations for this itinerary have been carefully chosen to bring you an authentic European experience that melds the best of old-world charm and modern comfort based on a combination of amenities, character and location. Because the properties we stay in are often centuries-old buildings that have been renovated and turned into hotels, it is common for the rooms to vary in size and style. If you request a double bed, please keep in mind that European double beds are often two twin beds adjacent to each other. All rooms have private baths. Single room availability is limited.

Cell Service & Internet Access

Cell phone and data service is available in nearly all of the areas we visit on this trip. All of our hotels have internet access, although the connection may be slower than ideal.

Meals

Food is an important part of the Backroads experience. For lunch we look for the best way to capture the essence of the region. It may be a Backroads Grand Picnic, when your Trip Leaders prepare the freshest and healthiest local fare at a carefully chosen setting along the day's route; a boxed lunch; a packed lunch; a meal together at a favorite restaurant; or the opportunity to have lunch on your own.

Our dinners typically feature regional specialties and classic French cuisine.

All breakfasts, five lunches and four dinners are included in the trip price. One lunch and one dinner are on your own.

On this trip we often dine according to local custom, which may mean that meals progress at a leisurely pace. We understand that on some nights you may want to retire earlier, so feel free to opt out of dessert, or when

possible, request it in your room. You're always welcome to opt for dinner on your own; check with your Trip Leaders to find out what other options might be available.

Be aware that vegetarian/vegan, gluten-free and low-carb dishes are not always available. If you have special dietary requirements, please indicate them on the *Personal Information Form*. Your Trip Consultant will pass on the information to your Trip Leaders. Alcoholic beverages at meals are not included in the trip price, unless otherwise noted.

Recommended Dinner Attire

Sophisticated-casual attire is appropriate at the restaurants on this trip.

Please do not wear jeans, shorts, athletic shoes or T-shirts to dinner.

Lost Luggage

On any flight, there is the possibility of lost luggage. Backroads believes that it's a great idea to take a small carry-on bag with enough clothing and supplies to last a day or two. Also be sure to bring with you any personal gear you deem indispensable on the trip. This way, in the event of lost luggage you won't have to spend time replacing essential items and miss activities while you wait for your bags to catch up. Please note that Backroads does not assume responsibility for any luggage lost or damaged during your trip.

Security

When traveling, there is always a possibility of theft. While you're enjoying the sights, remember to stay alert and always be aware of your immediate surroundings, especially in crowded locations and tourist areas. The best rule of thumb is to carry only the cash you need for the day, along with a copy of your passport, on your person and leave the rest in a locked safe in your room. If no safe is available, it's a good idea to keep your cash and passport in a money belt worn under your clothes. For more safety tips, refer to the Country Specific Information page on the US State Department's website at travel.state.gov.

Trip Guest List

During the trip, leaders will distribute a guest list that

includes the names and contact information of everyone on the trip. If you do not want your contact information to appear on the guest list, please inform your Trip Consultant at least 30 days prior to the trip start.



Spa Treatments

Spa treatments are not included in the trip price. Advance reservations are recommended. Also, be sure to review the spa's cancellation policy to avoid any unexpected charges on your credit card.

Days 2 & 3

Hôtel Crillon le Brave: On **Days 2** and **3** book an appointment for after 4 p.m.; Day 2 dinner starts at 7:30 p.m, and Day 3 dinner starts at 7:00PM.

Days 4, 5 & 6

La Coquillade: On **Day 4** book your appointment for any time after 4 p.m.; we shuttle to our walking tour before dinner on your own at 6:15 p.m. On **Day 5** make your appointment for after 4 p.m.; we meet for a farewell toast at 7 p.m. On **Day 6** you can skip the morning ride to enjoy a spa treatment. Keep in mind checkout is at 11:30 a.m.

ENTER TO WIN!

BACKROADS GUEST PHOTO CONTEST



Share your favorite trip images
for the chance to win

1 of 5 GRAND PRIZES

up to \$5,000 in Backroads Trip Credit
or Honorable Mention

\$250 in Backroads Trip Credit awarded to 75+ photos

FOR RULES GO TO [BACKROADS.COM/PHOTO_CONTEST](https://www.backroads.com/photo_contest)

DESTINATION DETAILS

Climate

Provence is known for its sunny and relatively mild climate. However, July and August are usually quite hot, and humidity is often high in June and September. Rain is possible year-round—don't forget to bring waterproof breathable rain gear. The Mistral, Provence's famously strong wind, can whip up at any moment, so come prepared with a windbreaker and warm layers.

Avignon

Average:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
High °F	49	53	59	67	74	82
Low °F	34	36	41	45	51	58
Precip. inches	0.9	1.3	1.9	2.1	2.5	1.7
Average:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
High °F	87	87	78	68	56	50
Low °F	61	60	57	49	41	37
Precip. inches	1.3	1.8	2.6	3.3	3	2.1

Temperatures in this region are measured in degrees Celsius. Zero degrees Celsius is 32 degrees Fahrenheit. For a quick conversion, double the Celsius reading and add 30 to determine the approximate temperature in degrees Fahrenheit.

Time Zone

France is 6 hours ahead of eastern time and 9 hours ahead of Pacific time.

In Europe, the 24-hour clock is used. Times are the same as what you're used to in the United States up until noon. From then on, just keep going: 1 p.m. becomes 13:00, 2 p.m. becomes 14:00 and so forth. To convert these times into "p.m." times, simply subtract 12 and add p.m. (19:00 minus 12 is 7 p.m.).

Phone Facts

Many US cell phones can operate internationally. Check with your service provider before leaving home for information about international calling and data plans, and on making and receiving international calls. If your cell

phone is unlocked and operates using a SIM card, you may want to consider purchasing a SIM card from a local cell phone company. These should be readily available at airports and convenience stores, and typically come loaded with prepaid credit which can be used for domestic and international calls and data service. Rates will vary.

Alternatively, it may also be possible to rent a phone for use during your international travels. We recommend Cellhire, which offers a wide range of wireless rental options in more than 180 countries. Visit www.cellhire.com or call 877-244-7242 for details and reservations.

International Dialing Instructions

The international phone numbers in this Travel Planner are listed in the following format:

+33-(0)#-##-##-##-##

33 is France's *country code*, followed by a 0 (used only when calling within France), and then a nine-digit local number.

To place an international call to France, dial + or the *international access code* of the country from which you're calling (e.g., 011 from the US) - 33 - *nine-digit local number*.

To place an international call from France, dial + or 00 (France's international access code) - *country code* of the country to which you're calling (e.g., 1 for the US) - *area code* - *local number*. For example, to call the United States, dial 00 - 1 - *area code* + *local number*.

To place a call within France, drop the country code 33 and dial 0 - *nine-digit local number*. All calls placed within France must begin with a 0.

For bilingual French/English telephone directory assistance, dial 118-247.

For additional information on placing international phone calls, visit www.countrycallingcodes.com.

Money Matters

The standard unit of currency in France is the euro. For the most up-to-date exchange rate, visit www.xe.com (Universal Currency Converter).

The best way to access cash is to use ATMs. Before you leave home, it's a good idea to verify with your bank that your card will work overseas and inquire whether or not your financial institution has a local partner bank that will waive ATM fees. Most international ATM keyboards have only numbers, so if your PIN contains letters, make note of the corresponding numbers. Additionally, most international ATMs only accept four-character PINs, so if yours is longer, arrange to have it changed before your trip.

If you need to exchange cash or traveler's checks, avoid exchange bureaus, which charge sky-high rates. The rates at banks are slightly better, but still expensive. It may also be possible to exchange cash and traveler's checks at airports, train stations, post offices and some tourist offices.

Electric Current

France's electricity runs on a 220-volt, 50-cycle current. A plug adapter is necessary if you plan to bring appliances from home. (French electrical sockets have round holes, not straight ones.) You may also need a converter, but most new appliances, such as computers and digital devices, are designed to work/charge over a wide range of voltage levels. Check the manufacturer's label on the back of your appliances to see what level of input they can handle. Converter/adapter kits can be purchased at travel, hardware or electronics stores for \$40-\$60 and adapters can be found from \$4.

Business Hours

In larger towns and cities, shops and supermarkets (*supermarchés*) are generally open from 9 or 10 a.m. until 7 or 7:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday; some markets and bakeries (*boulangeries*) are open on Sunday until noon. (In Paris, large grocery stores such as Monoprix stay open until 8 or 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday.) In smaller towns, some businesses are closed on Mondays. Also in small towns, expect businesses to close for lunch, usually from noon or 12:30 p.m. to 2 or 3 p.m. All stores are closed on Sundays and some are closed on Mondays. Restaurants tend to be closed on Sundays and Mondays.

Standard banking hours vary. Most banks are open 8:30 a.m.-noon. and 1:30-6 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. Some banks are open Saturday morning. Most post offices (*La Poste*) are open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-7 p.m., and Saturday 8 a.m.-noon. You can buy

stamps at just about any *tabac* (newsstand). Most museums are closed one day of the week, usually Monday or Tuesday. For specific museum hours, refer to a guidebook, local tourist information office or the museum website for information on hours, entrance fees, reservations, free days and special events.

Helpful Information

Visit www.backroads.com/trip_prep for links to other websites offering helpful travel information.

RECOMMENDED READING



The more you know about your destination before you go, the more you'll appreciate all that you'll see when you get there. We've selected a few of our favorite books to help capture the essence of the region.

- *The Most Beautiful Villages of Provence*, Michael Jacobs
- *Provence: A Cultural History*, Martin Garrett
- *A Year in Provence*, Peter Mayle
- *The Road from the Past: Traveling through History in France*, Ina Caro



TRIP DOCUMENTS & MORE

Travel Documents

A valid passport is required for travel to France. A visa is not required for US citizens, provided you are staying in the country less than 90 days.

Note that some countries require your passport to be valid for a specified amount of time beyond your departure date (up to 6 months). Be sure to check the expiration date and physical condition of your passport and verify the travel document requirements with the consulates of the countries you are planning to visit during your trip. Passports issued to minors under the age of 16 are set to expire every 5 years. Check your expiration dates carefully!

The best way to ensure you have the most current information on entry requirements is by contacting the French Embassy in Washington, DC, at 202-944-6000, or the nearest consulate (visit www.info-france-usa.org for more information). You can also find helpful information on the US State Department's website: travel.state.gov.

IMPORTANT: Each time you renew your passport, you are issued a new passport number. Depending on the trip, some of our service providers (like hotels or airlines) may require current passport information for each guest, so if you renew your passport after booking your trip, please make sure to update us with the new information prior to your departure date.

We recommend that you make two photocopies of your airline ticket/e-ticket confirmation and your passport. Leave one set of copies at home with a friend or relative, and bring one set with you, keeping it separate from the original documents.

Travel Protection Plan

Backroads' travel protection plan, offered through our insurance partner, provides coverage for trip cancellation or interruption, trip delay, medical expenses and evacuation/repatriation, lost baggage, and more. Given the active nature of our trips (and our guests!) we know that the unexpected sometimes happens and we strongly recommend protecting your travel investment with our

Travel Protection Plan. Our plan offers competitive pricing and excellent customer service and can be purchased up to 15 days before your departure. If you're interested in purchasing the plan, give us a call at 800-462-2848.

Cancellations & Refunds

If you must cancel your reservation, a fee will be charged. Please review your trip invoice for cancellation policy details. **Exceptions to this policy cannot be made for any reason**, including those of weather or personal emergencies. There is no refund for joining a trip late or leaving early. Private rooms and staterooms, bike rentals and internal air charges are considered part of the trip price and are subject to cancellation fees. You are required to provide a signed *Release of Liability, Assumption of All Risks and Arbitration Agreement* and a completed *Personal Information Form* prior to your trip departure. If you fail to provide a signed release form, you will not be allowed to join the trip and will be subject to Backroads' cancellation policy. For complete details on our cancellation policy, see www.backroads.com.

Transfers

With the exception of Private and Custom Trips, you may transfer from one trip to another without penalty, within the parameters of your trip's transfer policy. When transferring to a different date or trip, if the trip costs more than your original trip, you are responsible for the difference in cost. Please review your trip invoice for additional transfer policy details. After the allowable transfer date, our cancellation policy applies. Cancellation penalties will not be charged if you are able to fill the vacancy with another guest(s).

Itinerary Changes

If unforeseen circumstances require a change in the trip itinerary, Backroads will make every effort to select alternative accommodations of the same quality and to keep the activity modifications minimal.

Electronics & Other Valuables

It is best to leave valuables at home. If you must bring valuables on the trip, please understand that they are 100 percent your responsibility, regardless of what anyone (including leaders) might tell you. Cash, jewelry and passports are especially important to keep in your possession. It's not safe to leave valuables in Backroads

vans; while not common, break-ins do happen. You may choose to lock them in your room's safe, if one is available to you. If you're concerned about forgetting items in the safe (easy to do!), a good trick is to leave something on top of it that you can't forget, such as a single shoe.

On Biking and Multi-Adventure Trips, if detachable bike bags are available to you, you can store your valuables in the bag and take it with you when you're not biking. **Please note that our bike bags are water-resistant but not waterproof.** Be sure to protect your valuables from the elements accordingly.

Although we will transport your valuables during your trip as a convenience, **we do not assume responsibility for any damage or loss.** This policy applies to personal electronics as well as other items, such as luggage, jewelry, and fragile and delicate accessories, whether purchased on the trip or otherwise.

After your trip ends, if you realize that you've accidentally left an item behind in Backroads' possession, we'll do our best to honor return requests. However, we're not able to guarantee returns based on leader availability limitations to find and send items (our leaders are on the go!) and possible shipping issues. If you've left an item at a hotel, please contact them directly to make arrangements.

On-Your-Own Activities

During, before or after your Backroads trip, there may be time for you to enjoy some of the area's special activities on your own. These activities are not included in your Backroads trip itinerary and are not options sponsored by Backroads, but they can often be a highlight for those who choose to participate. We mention them so you are aware and because you might enjoy these activities on your own. Please understand that Backroads is not responsible for any problems which may occur during any on-your-own activities.

GETTING ACTIVE FOR YOUR TRIP



check out the **WAHOO FITNESS** ELEMNT



Our state-of-the-art GPS devices offer easy-to follow directions and come pre-loaded with all the route options specific to this Backroads trip.

Activity Level

The routes on this trip are rated Levels 2–5.

ACTIVITY LEVEL	BIKING		WALKING	
	Avg. Time in hours	Avg. Miles	Avg. Miles	Max Elev. Gain in feet
1	2-3 hrs	8-22	2-5	800'
2	2-4 hrs	18-32	4-7	1300'
3	3-5 hrs	26-42	5-9	2000'
4	4-6 hrs	36-54	6-11	3000'
5	5-7+ hrs	48-70+	7-13+	4000'+

Review the "Activity Level" section on the web for more details on daily route options.

Terrain

Provence is quite hilly, so come ready to climb! Our routes follow rolling terrain with some longer and steeper ascents to hilltop towns. Many of the roads we ride on do not have shoulders, but drivers are usually very respectful of cyclists.

Remember, take your time and go at your own pace—you're on vacation! Your Backroads Trip Leaders are there to provide the support you need when you're ready for a snack, a cool drink, or a lift back if you're done for the day. Most days you'll have a choice of mileage options, so you can decide how active you want to be—it's always up to you.

Conditioning Tips

Every Backroads trip is designed to appeal to a wide variety of interests and fitness levels. We know your pace may vary from one day to the next—and your traveling companions' may differ somewhat from yours. So we present a range of mileage options, and each day you decide exactly what and how much you want to do.

Before your trip, we suggest biking regularly and hitting a few hills whenever you can. Review the route options in the daily itinerary for the range of mileages offered on this trip. But mostly, just show up and have fun!

Cadence & Gearing

The steady rate at which you pedal is called “cadence.” Ideally you should try to maintain a constant high cadence in any gear. This technique not only lets you bike for longer periods without tiring, but also puts less strain on your knees. Shifting to lower gears when riding up hills will help you maintain the same cadence you established on more level terrain and get you up the hills without overextending yourself. Using lower gears also helps you to be more efficient when riding against the wind.

Pacing & Endurance

It's important to pace yourself throughout the day, so you have the stamina to ride or walk as far and as long as you'd like. Keep your energy level constant by eating high-energy snacks (your leaders will have plenty on hand). Drink fluids often—before you are thirsty—to avoid dehydration.

Resources

One book we recommend is *The Bicycling Big Book of Cycling for Beginners* by Tori Bortman. It offers valuable advice for new cyclists, from choosing the proper clothing to basic riding and etiquette skills.

Visit *Bicycling* magazine's website at

www.bicycling.com to browse for tips on how to improve your technique—as well as advice on nutrition, gear and safety, and basic bike maintenance.

Your local outdoor store can be an excellent resource too; ask to speak with an experienced employee.

Staying Comfortable: FAQs

Q: How do I prevent soreness while bicycling?

A: Think padding! Padded shorts make sitting on the bicycle seat a lot more comfortable, and padded bicycling gloves help prevent blisters and hand numbness.

Q: Should I buy a pair of biking shoes for my trip?

A: Rigid shoes maximize the power of your pedaling stroke, but there's really no need to purchase a pair of biking shoes just for this trip. Any athletic shoes—provided they have stiff soles—will be sufficient.

Q: It's not really going to rain during the trip, is it?

A: Well, it just might! Rain is possible no matter where you travel. Your best bet for staying comfortable during a shower is to wear quality rain gear that is both waterproof and breathable.

Q: Does wearing layers really make a difference?

A: Yes! The trick for staying comfortable in fluctuating temperatures is to wear three basic non-cotton layers of lightweight clothing: innerwear (to wick moisture away from your skin), insulating garments (for warmth) and outerwear (to protect against wind or rain). The different layers let you add or remove clothing in response to changes in the weather or your internal temperature.

BIKING SAFETY & GEAR

Rules of Biking Safety

Good judgment and alertness are the most important factors for safe bicycling. Follow these rules at all times to ensure your safety and the safety of those around you.

- **Wear a helmet. Bicycling without a helmet is extremely dangerous. Backroads requires that all guests wear helmets while biking.**
- Ride predictably, defensively and in a straight line.
- When biking with others, ride single file and maintain several bike lengths between cyclists. Allow more distance when riding downhill.
- Do not use headphones while biking; you might not hear traffic coming up behind you.
- Be as courteous to motorists as you would like them to be to you, and get completely off the road when you stop.
- Keep your speed under control on downhills. Use both brakes simultaneously, but be aware that the front brake is more powerful than the rear. Gently pump your brakes on long descents for maximum effectiveness. Check brakes frequently to make sure nothing is loose or dangling.
- Wet slippery roads require extra caution and greater stopping distance—especially on downhills. Wet brakes must be dried by pumping before they have an effect, so start braking early in damp weather.
- When riding on sand or gravel, downshift into low gear so you can spin your pedals faster while still going slowly.
- Obey all traffic regulations. Stop at all stop signs and red lights, yield the right-of-way and use hand signals when turning, slowing down or stopping. Ride on the right side of the road (except in countries where traffic moves on the left), at a safe distance from traffic.



- Do not ride too close to the bike in front of you; keeping several bike lengths between you and the bike ahead gives you more time to brake or go around obstacles.
- Be cautious around road obstacles. It is safest to dismount and walk your bike across railroad tracks and cattle guards. If you decide to bike across them, do so at right angles. Avoid potholes, metal grates, glass, rocks and thorns. Ride at a safe distance from parked cars and watch for vehicles pulling out and/or doors opening in your path.
- You must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians. Do not ride on sidewalks.
- When making a left turn (or a right turn in countries where traffic moves on the left), it is safest to pull off the road, dismount, look both ways for traffic and then walk your bike across the road. Never follow other riders when turning without confirming for yourself that it is safe to do so.
- Listen carefully for approaching motorists. (Look over your shoulder only if you can do so without swerving.)
- We do not bike after dark on Backroads trips. If you decide to do so on your own, you must bring your own bike equipped with a white light on the front, a red light on the rear and reflectors on the spokes and pedals.
- If a dog chases you and you are not able to ride away quickly, stop your bike and walk out of the dog's territory, keeping the bike between you and the animal.
- Wear appropriate clothing for bicycling. Brightly colored clothes make you more visible to motorists. Double-tie shoelaces and tuck them inside your shoes.
- You should wear corrective lenses while bicycling if you use them while driving.

Bringing Your Own Gear

Backroads provides everything you'll need to participate in the activities on this trip. If you'd prefer to have your own pedals, helmet or seat, feel free to bring these along. Your own gear can help to make your time on the bike as comfortable as possible, especially if you're someone who likes to log a lot of miles. Your Backroads leaders will be happy to put on your pedals and seat for you at the beginning of the trip. (For trips where electric-assist bikes are available, please note that if you're riding an e-bike, you may not—for safety reasons—use your own pedals.)

Bike Equipment

The following items are included with all Backroads titanium bikes. Trip Leaders also have full tool kits on hand and are available to do mechanical repairs.

- bike helmet
- two water bottles
- safety triangle
- lock and cable
- tube and patch kit with tire levers
- pedals (with toe clips/straps, if requested)
- rear rack and reflective trunk bag
- map case
- wide range of gears
- GPS device

If you are bringing your own bike and are comfortable doing minor on-the-road adjustments, you may want to bring a multi-tool. If your bike is highly specialized, bring any tools—and extra spokes and tubes!—that are specific to your bike. Use the above list as a guide for recommended equipment if you are bringing your own bike.

Bringing Your Own Bike

If you plan to bring your own bike, it should be tuned and in excellent mechanical condition and ready to ride before the trip starts. Otherwise, you are welcome to use a Backroads bike. If your bike is new, ride it at least 50 miles (to break it in) and then have it adjusted by a professional mechanic. Please bring only one bike per person.

The following items on your bike should be properly adjusted and in good condition: brakes and brake pads; the headset, pedals, cranks and hubs; gears; derailleurs; handlebars; tires and tubes; brake and derailleur cables; and the chain. Make sure the bike is well lubricated, the wheels are true, and the seat, seatpost and handlebars are adjusted and tight.



WHERE TO STAY BEFORE & AFTER YOUR TRIP

For help arranging hotel accommodations for before and after your Backroads trip, or an extension to your trip, please work with your own travel advisor, or you may work with our preferred travel agency partner. Their team of professional travel advisors are ready to share their insiders' knowledge of Backroads and our worldwide destinations and are available to assist you with any of your travel needs. Please note that they are an independent travel agency and consulting and ticketing fees may apply, based on the services requested. Simply ask your Backroads Trip Consultant to connect you! You can also book directly with the hotel, or through a travel website.

Please note that Backroads does not block rooms and does not offer special rates for pre- and post-trip stays. If you plan on extending your stay at our first night's hotel before the trip starts or our last night's hotel when the trip ends, let the hotel reservations agent know that you're traveling with Backroads—you may be able to avoid changing rooms. **We recommend booking your rooms as early as possible, especially during peak travel season!**

The following is a selection of recommended properties that span a range of prices, amenities and locations. Refer to the Hotel Room Rates guide for the starting double-occupancy rates, which were accurate at time of printing. Note that rates are subject to change and some hotels may require a minimum stay.

HOTEL ROOM RATES
IN US DOLLARS PER NIGHT

\$501 and up..... ◆◆◆◆◆

\$300 to \$500..... ◆◆◆◆◆

\$201 to \$300..... ◆◆◆◆◆

Up to \$200..... ◆◆◆◆◆

Avignon

Hotel map: bit.ly/AvignonHotels

La Mirande

Located near the Palais des Papes, this hotel is the place to stay in Avignon if you want to feel like a 17th-century aristocrat. After a painstaking restoration, the historic integrity of this former cardinal’s palace is preserved in its authentic belle epoque antiques. | 4 Place de la Mirande | www.la-mirande.fr | +33-(0)4-90-14-20-20 | 26 rooms | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆

Hôtel d’Europe

A former 16th-century home, Hôtel d'Europe has welcomed such famous guests as Victor Hugo, Tennessee Williams, Pablo Picasso and even Napoléon Bonaparte. *Travel + Leisure* World's Best. | 14 Place Crillon | www.heurope.com | +33-(0)4-90-14-76-76 | 44 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆

Auberge de Cassagne & Spa

The Auberge de Cassagne is a quintessential Provençal house removed from downtown’s hustle and bustle. A Small Luxury Hotels of the World member. (pool, spa) | 450 Allée de Cassagne | www.aubergedecassagne.com | +33-(0)4-90-31-04-18 | 40 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆

La Banasterie

Located in the heart of town, this charming bed-and-breakfast was originally an 11th-century residence. Each comfortable guest room is uniquely decorated and

named with a chocolate theme. | 11 Rue de la Banasterie | +33-(0)4-32-76-30-78 | www.labanasterie.com | 5 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆

Paris

Hotel map: bit.ly/ParisPPH

Hôtel Barrière Le Fouquet's

A Leading Hotels of the World member, this elegant five-star hotel is just a short walk from the Champs-Élysées and the Arc de Triomphe. Quintessentially Parisian, the hotel also features five restaurants and three bars and is eco-certified, committed to both luxury and sustainability. (pool, spa) | 46 Avenue George V, 8th Arrondissement | www.lucienbarriere.com | +33-(0)1-40-69-60-00 | 82 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆ | *Contact Barrière Group's Louise Wirrmann at lwirrmann@groupebarriere.com and mention Backroads to claim one complimentary continental breakfast per person per day and VIP welcome amenities.*

Hôtel Bel Ami

The Bel Ami hides a sleek and funky interior in a narrow street of lively St-Germain-des-Prés. The rooms are Parisian-sized, but extras like chocolates left on pillows and a delicious breakfast make them feel like home, and supremely strollable Boulevard St-Germain is just around the corner. (spa) | 7/11 rue St-Benoît, 6th arrondissement | www.hotelbelami-paris.com | +33-(0)1-42-61-53-53 | 108 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆ | *Contact B Signature Hotels' Agathe Jousse at agathe.jousse@bsignaturehotels.com and mention Backroads to claim one complimentary continental breakfast per person per day, a VIP welcome, early check-in and late check-out upon availability, and a room upgrade if available at check-in time.*

Hôtel de Sers

Constructed in 1880 as the private mansion of the Marquis de Sers, the Hôtel de Sers became a hotel in 1935 and underwent an interior remodel in 2015. Sumptuous elegance reigns within, and the splendor of the Golden Triangle district awaits without—a feast for those with a robust appetite for the City of Lights. | 41 Avenue Pierre 1er de Serbie, 8th arrondissement | www.hoteldesers-paris.com | +33-(0)1-53-23-75-75 | 52 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆ | *Contact B Signature Hotels' Agathe*

Jousse at agathe.jousse@bsignaturehotels.com and mention *Backroads* to claim one complimentary continental breakfast per person per day, a VIP welcome, early check-in and late check-out upon availability, and a room upgrade if available at check-in time.

Le Meurice

This hotel features a three-Michelin-starred restaurant, a full-service health club with Valmont spa treatments and one of the finest locations in Paris—right across from the Tuileries Gardens. *Travel + Leisure* World's Best and *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List. (spa) | 228 Rue de Rivoli, 1st Arrondissement | www.meuricehotel.com | +33-(0)1-44-58-10-10 | 160 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Park Hyatt Paris-Vendôme

Housed in five separate Haussmann-era buildings, the Park Hyatt Paris-Vendôme stands as a monument to modern-day luxury. The superb location, not far from the Champs-Élysées and Place de la Concorde, gives the Park Hyatt an edge over many comparable five-star hotels in the city. *Travel + Leisure* World's Best. (spa) | 5 Rue de la Paix, 2nd Arrondissement | www.paris.vendome.hyatt.com | +33-(0)1-58-71-12-34 | 162 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel Le Cinq Codet

Excellent concierge service and eclectic modern design are the hallmarks of the Cinq Codet. The on-site bistro, Sundāri spa, views from top-floor suites and location in a chic Left Bank neighborhood are just icing on the cake. (spa) | 5 rue Louis Codet, 7th arrondissement | le5codet.com | +33-(0)1-53-85-15-60 | 67 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ | *Booking code "BACKROADS" will entitle you to one complimentary breakfast per person per day, a VIP welcome, and a room upgrade upon availability.*

Hôtel d'Aubusson

A petite gem with an unbeatable location between the Seine and Boulevard St-Germain, Hôtel d'Aubusson offers the amenities of a larger hotel along with unusually (by European standards) spacious guest rooms. | 33 Rue Dauphine, 6th Arrondissement | www.hoteldaubusson.com | +33-(0)1-43-29-43-43 | 49 suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel Pullman Paris Montparnasse

Located in the heart of Paris, close to Montparnasse train station, the Eiffel Tower and Saint-Germain-des-Prés, this 25-floor modern hotel is a convenient choice. | 19 Rue du Commandant René Mouchotte, 14th Arrondissement | www.pullmanhotels.com | +33-(0)1-44-36-44-36 | 957 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel Relais Christine

This boutique hotel offers a more intimate experience than many others. With its location in St-Germain-des-Prés on the Left Bank, there's no shortage of great cafés, restaurants and shops nearby. A Small Luxury Hotels of the World member. (spa) | 3 Rue Christine, 6th Arrondissement | www.relais-christine.com | +33-(0)1-40-51-60-80 | 51 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel Splendid Étoile

Its enviable address near the iconic Champs-Élysées and Arc de Triomphe is just one of the reasons guests love Hôtel Splendid Étoile. This is a luxurious little corner of Paris not to be overlooked. | 1 Avenue Carnot, 8th Arrondissement | www.hsplendid.com | +33-(0)1-45-72-72-00 | 57 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel Balmoral

Housed in a 19th-century Haussmann-style building, this elegant hotel is set on a peaceful street just a stone's throw from Champs-Élysées and the Arc de Triomphe. | 6 Rue du Général Lanrezac, 8th Arrondissement | www.balmoral-paris-hotel.com | +33-(0)1-43-80-30-50 | 52 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel Caron de Beaumarchais

This charming hotel's eponym, Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, the 18th-century playwright best known for *The Marriage of Figaro*, lived just up the road at one time. While not particularly spacious, guest rooms are well appointed with modern conveniences. You'll enjoy the location in the heart of historic Le Marais. | 12 Rue Vieille du Temple, 4th Arrondissement | www.carondebeaumarchais.com | +33-(0)1-42-72-34-12 | 19 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel du Panthéon

Set in the heart of Paris opposite the Panthéon, the hotel allows easy access to sightseeing, shopping, and a variety of restaurants and cafés. | 19 Place du Panthéon, 5th Arrondissement | www.hoteldupantheon.com | +33-(0)1-43-54-32-95 | 36 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel du Petit Moulin

This stylish boutique hotel, housed in a completely renovated 17th-century building, is conveniently situated near the Picasso Museum, the Carnavalet Museum, the Place des Vosges and the Hôtel de Ville. A Small Luxury Hotels of the World member. | 29/31 Rue du Poitou, 3rd Arrondissement | www.paris-hotel-petitmoulin.com | +33-(0)1-42-74-10-10 | 17 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel Mathis

Subtle but undeniably chic, this four-star boutique hotel is ideally located in the heart of the Triangle d'Or (Golden Triangle): Champs-Élysées, Avenue Montaigne and Avenue George V. Set on a quiet street but close to some of the city's best-known sites, this hotel is the ideal place to fall in love with Paris. | 3 Rue de Ponthieu, 8th Arrondissement | www.hotelmthis.com | +33-(0)1-42-25-73-01 | 23 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel Montalembert

Built in 1926, this five-star boutique hotel is ideally located in the heart of St-Germain just steps away from art galleries and designer boutiques, and within walking distance of the Louvre and Musée d'Orsay. | 3 Rue de Montalembert, 7th Arrondissement | www.hotel-montalembert.fr | +33-(0)1-45-49-68-68 | 54 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel Victoria Palace

Set between St-Germain and Montparnasse, the Victoria Palace has been a Left Bank landmark since 1913, hosting such luminaries as writer James Joyce and painter Giorgio de Chirico. | 6 Rue Blaise Desgoffe, 6th Arrondissement | www.victoriapalace.com | +33-(0)1-45-49-70-00 | 62 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Grand Hôtel Français

Occupying a beautiful 18th-century building, the Grand

Hôtel Français sits on the bustling Place de la Nation, one of Paris' major crossroads. The city's key sights are just a 5- to 10-minute ride away by bus or metro line. | 223 Boulevard Voltaire, 11th Arrondissement | www.grand-hotel-francais.fr | +33-(0)1-43-71-27-57 | 36 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Hôtel du Collège de France

Sitting pretty next to the renowned Sorbonne, this cozy hotel offers comfort and a bit of old-world Paris in the heart of the Latin Quarter. | 7 Rue Thénard, 5th Arrondissement | www.hotel-collegedefrance.com | +33-(0)1-43-26-78-36 | 29 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Hôtel Thérèse

Enjoy the warm relaxed atmosphere at Hôtel Thérèse, located within walking distance of the Louvre, Palais Royal, Rue St-Honoré and L'Opéra. Guest rooms are small, but the hotel has great character and excellent service. | 5/7 Rue Thérèse, 1st Arrondissement | www.hoteltherese.com | +33-(0)1-42-96-10-01 | 43 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

New Orient Hôtel

The New Orient's location near the Villiers Metro station in the "Europe" district makes getting anywhere in Paris quick and easy. The Champs-Élysées and Montmartre are just a leisurely 20-minute stroll away, and you're only 5 minutes from Rue de Levis (the open-air market). | 16 Rue de Constantinople, 8th Arrondissement | www.hotel-paris-orient.com | +33-(0)1-45-22-21-64 | 30 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Marseille

Hotel map: bit.ly/MarseilleHotels

Hôtel La Résidence du Vieux Port

Built in 1954, the hotel's chic contemporary exterior is in stark contrast to the typical Provençal accommodation. Upgrade to a Club room for remarkable views of Vieux Port and the surrounding waterfront. | 18 Quai du Port | +33-(0)4-91-91-91-22 | www.hotel-residence-marseille.com | 50 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Hôtel Sofitel Marseille Vieux Port

Overlooking the Vieux Port, this luxury hotel mirrors the fluid nature of the meandering waterway below. Take advantage of the short walk into town to explore Marseille's many historic and cultural attractions. (pool, spa) | 36 Boulevard Charles Livon | www.sofitel.com | +33-(0)4-91-15-59-00 | 134 rooms & suites | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦

Radisson Blu Hotel

The Radisson Blu exudes casual seaside elegance. Relax by the rooftop pool while soaking up panoramic views of the ancient Fort Saint-Nicolas. (pool) | 38-40 Quai de Rive Neuve | www.radissonblu.com/hotel-marseille | (800) 333-3333 (from the US) or +33-(0)4-88-92-19-50 | 189 rooms & suites | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

LUGGAGE REMINDERS

Please limit your luggage to one medium-sized suitcase (we recommend 25"–28", preferably not hard case) and one small carry-on bag. Be sure to mark your luggage with your contact information.

Essential

Travel Items

- international travel documents (i.e. passport, visa, etc.)
- photocopy of front page of passport (kept in a separate place from passport)
- wallet (credit cards, bank cards, ID)
- cash for incidentals & leader gratuities
- airline tickets/e-ticket confirmation details
- sealable, quart-size plastic bags for stowing small liquid containers, swimsuit, etc.
- toiletries (including sunscreen & lip ointment)
- medications & copies of prescriptions
- list of important addresses & contact numbers

Biking Clothing & Gear

Some of these items, such as biking shoes and pedals, are suggested only if you're accustomed to and feel safe riding with them.

- stiff-soled sneakers or biking shoes (& pedals; note that e-bike pedals may not be changed)
- biking socks
- biking shorts (preferably with padding/chamois)
- short-sleeved biking jerseys
- non-cotton base layers of varying weights
- short-fingered biking gloves
- sunglasses (with retention strap)
- lightweight biking jacket or vest

Active Clothing (Non-Biking)

- walking/hiking shorts and/or lightweight pants
- walking/running shoes
- hat with brim, bandana or sweatband
- swimsuit

Rain Gear & Cold Weather Clothing

You may not need all of the items listed here, but they are necessary to stay comfortable in case of rain or unseasonably cold weather.

- waterproof (breathable) rain jacket & pants
- arm & knee/leg warmers (for biking)
- toe covers/booties (worn over bike shoes)
- waterproof/water-resistant warm gloves
- lightweight, but warm, cap that fits under helmet (skullcap) or headband that covers ears

Non-Active Clothing

- clothing & shoes for downtime & restaurants
- lightweight jacket (like fleece) or warm sweater
- warm hat

Backroads provides water bottles & cyclometer or GPS device.

Optional

- camera & charger (**remember to enter our Guest Photo Contest!**)
- cell phone & charger
- voltage converter/plug adapter (if applicable)
- helmet and/or saddle (if you prefer your own)
- bike mirror and/or flashing daytime bike lights
- clear glasses/replaceable lenses for rainy days
- sport sandals and/or flip flops
- notebook/travel journal & pens
- guide book and/or field guides
- reading material
- earplugs