

Provence – Bed by the Med

- ‘Back on a bike after many years away – your encouragement and simple cycling tips really boosted my confidence. Thank you so much. ‘

Moriah, Steyning,

- ‘We just loved Le Lavandou and the easy cycling along the coast towards St Tropez was such a surprise.’

Janet and Ron, Cheshire,

- ‘What a fantastic ride to Paris. It’s hard to put into words the euphoria I felt when we were cycling down the Champs-Élysées.’

Ian, West Sussex,

- ‘You were just wonderful guides on our first ever trip to Provence . . . we will definitely be back – in fact we’ve just booked!’

The Crane Family, Warwickshire,

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Highlights:

Riviera Magic
Port Cros Island
Spectacular Views
Swimming in the Sea
Great Beaches
St Tropez

Summary

In a little corner of Provence, this great cycling tour holds a huge variety of experiences and, lets you explore the delights of the Côte d'Azur in a gentle and relaxing way. Often just tucked behind the glitz and the glamour, you will have plenty of opportunities to dip into the Riviera lifestyle or you can choose to glide by along its lesser known trails.

This part of the Riviera issues some of the international spotlight that can bear down on Cannes, Nice and Monaco but it has some beautiful coastal towns and villages offering a quieter and slightly more gentle pace of life.

Start your holiday by dipping your toes in the sea before beginning your ride along the crest of the Massif des Maures. Then take an exhilarating rush down to the azure water of the Mediterranean before exploring the harbours and perching villages of this beautiful part of Provence.

You can choose to cycle on every day of the tour or create your own excursions; a boat over to explore the island of the Port Cros National Park or, a day just soaking up the sights, sounds and sun in St Tropez.

Unwind in a Bed by the Med.

Tour in Brief:

- Fellow Velo Welcome Briefing
- 7 Nights Accommodation

- 7 Continental Breakfasts
- 4 Lunches on Fully Guided
- Luggage Transfers
- Cycling Guide on Fully Guided
- Carefully Selected Routes
- High Quality Bikes
- Support Vehicle

Tour Map

Introduction

A gentle easy going tour of a beautiful stretch of the Provencal coast. Relatively short riding days allow ample time to explore the landscape, its flora and fauna, and the small towns and villages along your route. There are some gentle hills along the way but all give access to some fantastic locations – we even help you start the tour from a wonderful vantage point high above the sea and, that means more downhill riding for you. Should you wish, you will have the time and opportunity for a reinvigourating swim in the sea on every day. In case you seek more varied discovery, we have also planned for two non-cycling days too but, a great self-guided ride could always be taken instead.

Day 1 Arrive at Saint-Raphaël

Arrive in Saint-Raphaël and book into your hotel in this delightful riviera town, just next door to Frejus with its Roman architectural heritage and, a great location to begin your tour of the Provence coast.

(The first and last nights of this tour may be accommodated in an alternative coastal town depending upon the local calendar of events and your potential travel arrival plans. The cycling route would remain as described below.)

Day 2 Massif des Maures to Le Lavandou – 23 km

On your first cycling day, we will meet you at your hotel and take you up onto the Massif des Maures for your Fellow Velo holiday briefing. Your tour starts high above the coast in cork-oak hills with spectacular views out over the Mediterranean and, takes a fantastic undulating route along the crest of the massif. As you ride the ridge, views alternate between sea and a wooded heartland. The end of the day's ride will surely put a smile on your face as you descend to the coast for your second bed by the med.



Day 3 Le Lavandou

A day of wonderful choices, there is a great opportunity to take a short boat ride over to the island of Port Cros for a half day exploration on foot of this beautiful tiny national park or, you could stay in the saddle for a self-guided ride over to Brégançon with its coastal vineyards, more remote beaches and former presidential 'palace'. Alternatively, you could spend the whole day exploring Le Lavandou and relaxing on the beach.



Day 4 Le Lavandou to La Croix Valmer – 24 km

A short and gentle ride today but with plenty of temptations

to linger along the coast, small harbours, marinas and beaches dot the coastline here. You even have the time to start and finish your ride with a dip in the sea. Cycle a mixture of dedicated routes, quiet lanes and a hidden part of the old coastal railway line. You finish the ride in La Croix Valmer, still below the Massif des Maures and, overlooking the Bay of Cavalaire-sur-Mer, one of the scenes of the allied landings in August 1944.



Day 5 La Croix Valmer to Sainte Maxime – 32 km

Today's ride starts with a brief turn inland to cross the peninsula on slightly more undulating (but hugely rewarding) lanes towards St Tropez. Along the route you will visit one of Provence's classic perching villages at Ramatuelle, in a dense medieval core, tightly packed houses peer over cooling narrow lanes. Ride on to St Tropez, you will emerge from quiet back streets into an archetypal village square with an expanse of boulevards and bordered by restaurants. More narrow streets will bring you through to the old fishing harbour now usually punctuated by gleaming yachts.



Day 6 Sainte Maxime

A second day of holiday choices, if you chose to take up the

exploring options on your day in Le Lavandou then this could be a day for real relaxation. Sainte Maxime is one of the slightly quieter resort towns of the Riviera, a popular holiday retreat for the wealthy in the 1930s and relatively unspoilt since then, there are choices of beaches and a lovely evening atmosphere. Of course, if you want just a little more glamour and some more serious people watching then, you can always hop onto the little ferryboat back over to St Tropez.



Day 7 Sainte Maxime to Saint-Raphaël – 24 km

Your final ride is the most gentle of the whole tour, in part clinging to the coastal edge, a combination of cycle lanes, quieter roads and the old course of the coastal railway line (the Train des Pignes) carry you alongside the Mediterranean to journey's end. This stretch of Provence's coastline was central to the allied landings which helped to liberate the south of France towards the end of the Second World War, the drama of those events is still celebrated every summer. Once more there are plenty of peaceful spots along the route for picnics and dips in the warm waters.



Day 8 Depart Saint-Raphaël

After your final bed by the med, leave Saint-Raphaël on your onward journey or homeward return.

Eat Sleep Drink

Eat

From your arrival before the cycling starts, to the day of your departure,

breakfast is included at each of your accommodation venues on the tour. That means that even if you take it in a leisurely fashion, you will have enough fuel onboard to start each ride or, head out on one of the optional exploring days of the tour. On each of the cycling days, lunches are included, either gathered up near the beginning of the ride or planned at a local hostelry (and if you are on the Fully Guided Tour, there will be one day when you will just come upon a picnic laid out for you around a corner on the journey). On your exploring days we will give you suggestions on where lunch can easily be tracked down, whatever your plan for the day. On this tour, we leave the evening meal venues with you; there are options to eat in at your accommodation and, on most evenings, you will be in a small town where there is plenty of choice from traditional Provençale, to Italian influence or the bounties of the adjacent sea.



Sleep

For groups on our Fully Guided Tour most of the accommodation will be in small or specially selected hotels; welcoming

staff, lovely comfortable rooms and the promise of a great night's sleep. Chambre d'hôtes can be included in the mix on this tour, particularly for couples and smaller groups on the Self-guided option. On whichever tour you choose, the sea will be on your doorstep, either right there in front of you or just a short walk away from nearly all of your individual venues. With two nights in each of three locations on this tour, you will have that little bit of extra time to explore and to soak up the atmosphere, particularly in the long summer evenings.



Drink

Maintaining both your energy and hydration levels while cycling is very important. On all but one cycling day of this tour, it is easy to keep yourself supplied with water and soft drinks. We will provide all the information you need to track down supplies and, will make sure that on the one ride where they are a little more sparse, that we set you off with plenty of water onboard. As we are in the south of France, it will be of no surprise that, when it comes to more profitable liquid refreshments from the land, wine is at the fore. Provence is renowned for its Rosé but it also produces some high quality red wine too. There is also a great tradition of co-operative wine producing by smaller producers often centred around small towns and villages. This tour takes you through that landscape with easy options to try before you buy.



Bed by the Med Recommended Tour Months

We normally recommend that customers undertake this tour in any of the following months in our cycling season; May, June, July, August, September or October – August in Provence can be a little warm for some cyclists but, we can help you plan your days and routes to make best use of the cooler hours, shady lunchtime rests and, we often provide additional support to ensure you can still enjoy your cycling experience – just contact us to check on availability.

Bed by the Med Fully Guided – Tours from £1075.00/person

Bed by the Med Self-guided – Tours from £930.00/person

Our standard prices for this tour, whether Fully Guided or Self-guided, are best achieved when we have as much advance booking time as possible (we would still try to match the price even on last minute bookings but, accommodation is normally the largest component in a tour price and, the one which can vary the most).

The tour price is based on 2 people sharing rooms but, we can also quote for single room occupancy if that is what a customer wants (there is nearly always a supplement to be paid with such a booking but we would advise on the details before you committed to your holiday).

Most holiday accommodation in France is charged on a room basis rather than a per person price and, there is often very limited or no discount on the price for children. However, for any booking where a group is happy to share family or multi-bed rooms, we may even be able to quote a lower price per

person for the tour (if you advise us that you would be happy with such an accommodation arrangement).

We do not add margins to the accommodation we book for our tours so, if we can book accommodation at a lower price, we will pass these savings on to our customers.

More Information

Travel to and from your Tour

This Tour starts and finishes in Saint-Raphaël, which is easily accessible by train, plane and automobile. Because there are so many options we do not book this part of your trip for you, however we can guide you through the multitude of options.

For anyone joining by car we can provide a location to leave your car for the duration of your Tour. Eurostar and TGV trains offer excellent services from the UK to Saint-Raphaël and can be seen on:

www.raileurope.com

www.voyages-sncf.com

Travelling by train can be a fascinating way to travel and competes very favourably time wise with travelling by plane.

Both budget and scheduled airlines fly into Nice and we can supply information for onward travel to Saint-Raphaël by train.

There also flights to Toulon, via Flybe and again, we can assist with onward travel information.

If you are bringing your own bike

- For those of you bringing your own bicycle, again we can help you with this, however it is worth considering at this point the cost of putting your bike on a plane or train against using one of our special Fellow Velo bikes.

Fancy a longer holiday

- For anyone who wants to extend their holiday with us, we can book additional hotels for you at the start or end of your

Tour, just call us on 07811 285021.

- If you like a longer holiday you can combine our Provence coastal Tour with the Hidden Provence Tour for a 15 night trip. It's our Hilltop to Harbours Tour. The linking of these 2 Tours would raise the level to adventurous, however if you wish to avoid the steeper hills we can offer you a taxi/van transfer to avoid this with your 2 extra linking nights by the coast. Please call to discuss further the options.

Families, and/or non cycling companions

- We think Bed by the Med is ideal for families, you get to stay 2 nights in 2 different locations, by fabulous beaches, and most of our selected accommodation stops have swimming pools (opening periods will vary). Call us to discuss the different cycle options (tag along, child bike etc) available to children.

- A partner, spouse or friend who doesn't share your love of cycling. On any of our Fully Guided Tours, a non-cycling person can get a lift with the support vehicle from location to location. Again Bed by the Med is a good one as there are 2 days where you can choose not to cycle so you can further explore the delights of Provence together with your non-cycling companion.

Travel Pack

- Your personally tailored travel pack will be with you approx 3 weeks prior to your Tour start date. There will be oodles of information for you in this pack.

Any queries at all before you book

- We don't want to bombard you with masses of text to read, so anything at all that needs clarification please call us on 07811 285021, 01788 568371 or email us at jane@fellowvelo.com