

Provence – Independent 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:

Spectacular Sea Views
Vineyards & Olive Groves
Great Beaches
Riviera Magic
Swimming in the Sea
Port Cros Island

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 western end of the French Riviera. Ride alongside the azure water of the Mediterranean and explore the harbours and perching villages of this beautiful part of Provence. Then traverse the Massif des Maures with a more adventurous ride through the green hills just behind the coast.

You can choose to cycle on every day of the tour but there should be time for exploring beautiful villages and even a boat over to explore the island of the Port Cros National Park.

Unwind in a Bed by the Med.

Tour in Brief:

- Fellow Velo Tour Pack
- 7 Nights Accommodation
- 7 Continental Breakfasts
- Carefully Selected Routes
- Telephone Support

Tour Map

Introduction

A great cycling tour which blends an easy coastal riding first half, with a more adventurous return through the cork oak hills of the Massif des Maures; all in a beautiful stretch of the Provencal coast. Varied length riding days allow time to explore the landscape, its flora and fauna, and the small towns and villages along your route. There are some more adventurous hills along the way but all give access to some fantastic locations. Should you wish, you will have the time and opportunity for a reinvigorating swim in the sea on most days of the tour.

Day 1 Arrive at Saint-Raphaël

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

Day 2 Saint-Raphaël to La Croix Valmer – 40 km

Your first cycling day is one of easy riding along the coast heading west. A mixture of dedicated cycle routes and quiet lanes tucked just behind the coast road make for a great introduction to the tour and, guide you through some of the Riviera's smaller village resorts. At Sainte Maxime you can

choose between an entirely land based route and, an option to take a ferry boat across the bay to St Tropez – the cycling miles are much the same in the end.



Day 3 La Croix Valmer to Le Lavandou – 24 km

You begin the day just below the Massif des Maures and, overlooking the Bay of Cavalaire-sur-Mer, one of the scenes of the allied landings in August 1944. 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. Cycle a mixture of dedicated routes, quiet lanes and a hidden part of the old coastal railway line. You should have plenty of time to finish your ride with a dip in the sea.



Day 4 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 halfday 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 5 La Lavandou to Cogolin – 37 km

The first of the tour's more adventurous days as you cross one of the ridges of the Massif des Maures from the sea, via the Col du Canadel to Cogolin. Returning to near sea-level means a few miles of sustained climbing but, the rewards are to be found in spectacular views and a thrilling descent. Relax in the lovely village of Cogolin and let your limbs rejuvenate themselves overnight for the easier day that follows.



Day 6 Cogolin to Le Plan de la Tour – 20 km

A few more hills today but a much shorter and easier ride,

from the coastal plain at Cogolin to the charming Provençale village of Le Plan de la Tour. Along the way you will have time for the very smallest of diversions into the historic perching village of Grimaud, with its castle ruins and narrow medieval streets. There are fantastic views of the Gulf of St Tropez and much of the landscape through which you have already ridden. Finish the day in the peace and quiet of the hills.



Day 7 Le Plan de la Tour to Saint-Raphaël – 42 km

Your final ride is the second of your more adventurous cycling days. Though never too severe, it is a sustained first half of the route, which ultimately leads you into wonderfully remote locations. It makes for great picnic venues, seemingly hidden away from the world but with views all across it. The climb is of course rewarded by a great long descent, to the village of Roquebrune-sur-Argens, followed by a gentle return to the sea at Saint-Raphaël.



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. Your Travel Pack will include information on convenient locations for gathering picnic supplies for lunch and, hostelries where you can have

it all provided on a plate. 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 Provencale, to Italian influence or the bounties of the adjacent sea.



Sleep

Most of your accommodation will be in small and specially selected hotels; welcoming staff, lovely comfortable rooms and the promise of a great night's sleep. Chambres d'hôtes are often included in the mix on this tour, particularly for couples and smaller groups.



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 (Independent) Recommended Tour Dates

We normally recommend that customers undertake this tour in May, June, July, September or October but you could choose almost any time during our cycling season but, some cyclists may find August in Provence a little warm – just contact us to check on availability.

Bed by the Med Independent Tour from £730.00/person

Fellow Velo Independent Tour recommended dates have been chosen on the basis of factors such as;

- Climate and Weather Norms
- Convenient Holiday Dates
- Maximising Landscape Beauty
- Local Facility Holiday Seasons
- Local Traffic Patterns

We can offer our Fellow Velo Independent Tours between Easter and October, with the flexibility to meet your needs. Just let us know which date you would like to start your tour on and, we will do all that we can to deliver the holiday package you are looking for.

Our standard prices for this tour 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.

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.

Families

- We think Bed by the Med Independent is ideal for more adventurous families, though you are cycling on most days, there will be time for dips in the sea and time to familiarise yourself with a few towns where you will spend two nights on

the tour.

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 or 01788 568371 or, email us at jane@fellowvelo.com