

# VéloRoo's South of France Cycling Holiday

## Day 1: Bonjour!

Welcome to your discovery of the Real South of France! Your VeloRoo holiday commences when we collect you from either Beziers town, train station or Beziers International airport Sunday afternoon.

We will have the opportunity to visit the Cathedral of Saint Nazaire and then visit the World Heritage listed UNESCO Canal du Midi, built during the reign of Louis XIV, from 1666 to 1681. It spans an incredible 240km. We visit the Ecluse de Fonserannes, a staircase lock allowing boats to be raised a height of 21.5m over a distance of 300m through a series of locks.

After a short transit we arrive at our quaint French village situated amongst the vineyards and to your Chambre d'hotes, your home away from home for the week. It's time to unpack and get ready to Live, Laugh, Ride...

We introduce you to your VeloRoo steed and get you set up with any final adjustments. Now it's time to settle in for a welcome drink and dinner at the B&B and talk about the week ahead and the wonderful region you will be discovering!

**Included meals:** dinner

## Day 2: It's all about wine and circulades!

**78km** with **1100m** accumulated elevation gain

**7:30am** Breakfast **8:30am** Ride. Framed by both the Mediterranean sea and the dramatic Massif Central this narrow region is blessed with fertile land. Before modern wine was established in the 1800's, before the turbulent Roman era of over 1000 years ago, the Greeks arrived 2500 years ago and recognised and created a wine and olive region.

On today's ride we discover how the region has adapted and survived intact despite it's turbulent history of religious crusades and land conquests. Our ride takes us to the best medieval Circulade villages, unique to this tiny region of France. They have protected their citizens for over 1,000 years and are identified as some of Europe's oldest examples of small town planning. We also discover the schiste terroir of our local appellation AOC Faugeres that gives our wine it's character.

The roads we ride are predominantly free of traffic providing a sense of remoteness whilst sometimes only being a few kilometres from the main road. We also pass some of the 18th Century castles and chateau's that were established on the wealth from success of the new age agricultural exploitation of the time.

And if you're not up to the distance there is always short cuts or shorter ride options available.

We will return to your B&B for showers and to freshen up before heading to lunch. Today we have a relaxed picnic style lunch experiencing local produce. For those joining us on our September Vendange tour, the vineyards will be a hive of activity. You may even get caught in traffic – French style – with heavily laden trailers of grapes making their way to their Domaines.

After lunch we visit a nearby village and walk through its narrow streets up to the site of its medieval castle and its restored fortified chapel to take in the wonderful expansive view over the plain below. Then we will revisit one of this mornings villages for some wine tasting .... of course !

**7:00pm.** This evening we dine at a local wine & tapas bar in one of the neighbouring villages. They have an amazing selection of wines, a great place to try some variety!

**Included meals:** breakfast, lunch, dinner

## Day 3: Explore another wine region - St Chinian

**85km** with **1330m** accumulated elevation gain

**7:30am** Breakfast **8:30am** Ride. Today's ride highlights the terroir diversity in this special corner of the Occitanie. We'll ride though 2 completely different Wine Appellation regions. Also en route is a wonderful climb, the original road across the range in fact, long since bypassed. 6 kilometres long and averaging 6% winding up through fragrant Mediterranean garrigue scrub. Towards the top you will be rewarded with views across the vineyards to the Mediterranean.

Lunch is at one of our favourite cafe's under the plane trees. After lunch we have a 15 km ride home, but not just on any road. The exact route Cadel Evans took the year he won the coveted Maillot Jaune!

After freshening up at the Chambre d'notes we take a drive to visit to a local Olive Farm. You will get to see the olive oil production process and taste their variety of quality olive oils.

This evening we take a short drive to discover an 11th century chapel in the ruins of a medieval village and enjoy sunset aperos.

**Included meals:** breakfast, lunch, dinner

## Day 4: Gorges l'Orb

**75km** with **1250m** accumulated elevation gain

**8:00am** Breakfast **9:00am** Ride. One of our personal favourites. Today's cycling route will highlight the diversity of the landscape over a relatively short distance. Starting with our beautiful vineyard landscapes we head into the foothills with a gentle climb through a typical vigneronne village to the limestone plateau and into the native scrub land. At 20km in we will stop for a coffee in a picture postcard village on L'Orb river. After taking in the views, we discover the L'Orb river gorge, flanked either side by the mountains. With picturesque scenery we follow the river towards its junction with the river Jaur, crossing the

river over a stone arched bridge and commence climbing. The scenery is your reward as the expanding views unfold before you.

**12:30pm** We arrive at our lunch stop in a quaint little village tucked away in the valley. After a delicious lunch we return to home riding through the St Chinian vineyards and limestone landscapes.

And remember, on all of our rides, if you're not up to the distance there is always short cuts or shorter ride options available.

**7:30pm** Relaxing dinner at the B&B.

**Included meals:** breakfast, lunch, dinner

## Day 5: It's time to bag a Col!

**67km** with **1626m** accumulated elevation gain and Summit Altitude of **1124m**

**7:30am** Breakfast **8:00am.** depart for a short transfer to the start of your ride.

**8:30am** Ride. Today you will experience the thrill of conquering one of the most spectacular HC rides in the Massif Central.

After a short transfer in the vehicle, we set off on the bikes along the same valley that Hannibal brought his elephants through in 200 BC. Our 23 kilometre climb commences in the local thermal spa town of Lamalou les Bains. Leaving the town, we climb through many levels of forest with chestnuts, pines and birch. The views along the route offer some of the most breathtaking scenery.

Peaking at 1124 meters, you have earned your victory VeloRoo Salute of a HC climb conquered!

Our next part of the ride is no less spectacular as we descend from the roof of the Cevennes and follow the river all the way back to our start point where you will have a well deserved lunch.

We then transfer back to the B&B for you to freshen up and have some time to rest and relax before dinner.

**7:00pm** Depart for our farewell dinner. Tonight we dine in a stunning restaurant located within the walls of a 12th century abbey in the heart of a medieval village on today's route. A beautiful way to end your week.

**Included meals:** breakfast, lunch, dinner

## Day 6: Au Revoir!

After breakfast you bid farewell your fellow VeloRoovians and continue on your adventures. Transfers to Beziers train station or Beziers airport at pre-arranged times.

**Included meals:** breakfast