

# *W Travel France*

*5 Days Classic Tour of Provence  
For FIT*

*From the Maison d'Aix or the Villa Gallici*



# The Maison d'Aix en Provence – Luxury BB

Neither fish nor fowl, neither Riviera glitz nor Provence farmhouse rustic, the old Roman town of Aix-en-Provence isn't easy to pigeonhole. Fitting, then, that one of its finest hotels should be such a unique one. The Maison d'Aix isn't an attempt at false modesty — it really is essentially just a house, one with just four bedrooms plus a pint-sized spa and a common room that's somewhere between a library, a cinema and a games room.

It doesn't get much more low-key than that. Which certainly doesn't mean it's unimpressive. A pair of contemporary architects spent three years refiguring the old residence, and the result is something modern (if not *modernist*, something full of life and personality — there's little you'd be tempted to call "design," but no shortage at all of style.



# Villa Gallici – 5\* Aix en Provence

Under the light Cézanne once knew, the Villa Gallici Hotel, 18th century Provençal house member of Relais et Châteaux, provides many luxury services, a gastronomic restaurant registered in the main guides, a shady seven acre garden with a swimming-pool, a nice place to relax a few steps away from the heart of the city of Aix-en-Provence.

The Villa Gallici Residence is richly furnished with French and sumptuous fabrics. Time seems to have stood still, throughout the day whether dining or enjoying the calm of the gardens and pool, every experience has a charm of its own.



# Day one – Arrival

In the morning arrival at

- Nice Airport ( 01h30 drive from Aix en En Provence)
- Marseilles Airport
- Avignon, Aix en Provence or Marseille train station transfer.

Meet and Greet by your private english speaking driver/guide who will follow you during your all stay.

Departure for Aix en Provence and check in at your hotel .

In the afternoon, visit of **Aix en provence**

Diner at Pierre Reboul 2\* Michelin Restaurant

**Overnight at your hotel**

# Aix en Provence



Aix-en-Provence is the city of art, and a city of light and activity. Aix is also a home of art schools and several universities, including some American, attracting a youthful population that sparks the atmosphere.

Aix is also ancient: a Celtic-Ligurian capital from the 3rd century BC was pushed aside for the founding of Aix in 122 BC, as *Aquae Sextiae*.

The center of Aix is the old town (vieille ville), ringed by a circle of boulevards and squares. It's a small-enough area to explore by foot, but there's way too much to see in one or two days. The medieval Aix was protected by a wall with 39 towers. Today only the 14th century "Tourreluquo" tower remains, at the northwest corner of the town.

**Cours Mirabeau** is the center of the center, and the heart of Aix. The Cours Mirabeau is a beautiful tree-lined avenue, with one side lined with wonderful terrace cafés and bookshops. If you sit at only one French sidewalk café outside of Paris, it should be here, where the air is warm, the light sublime and the sidewalk alive. Large plane trees overhang the length of the avenue, giving day-long shade on hot summer days



# Restaurant Pierre Reboul – 2 star Michelin

The restaurant offers a setting where old Aix vaults mingle with modern furniture, the Chef Pierre Reboul suggests to you a creative cooking and relaxing and confides « I like reinterpret classics by giving a playful decoration to a plate without forgetting that the quality and the taste are essential . I've heard that my cooking is molecular! Actually speaking, that's true! However one has to set the record straight : in the cooking of the Hôtel de France in Châtillon en Diois, my grandfather Gaston, had already transformed molecules by cooking his leg of lamb... ».

A cooking of taste and texture according to seasons and the Chef's inspiration.

The wine waiter will make you discover and taste his favourite wines by presenting you a wine card with a main choice of Provençal wines but also with a large choice of Vallée du Rhône wines and from other regions.



# Day 2 – The Lubéron

In the morning, departure with your private driver/guide for the Lubéron .

During the day you will enjoy a visit of the **famous villages of Gordes, Roussillon and the Abbaye de Sénanques.**

Lunch at leisure ( depending on your tastes and requirements your guide will suggest you the best place for lunch)

Return to your hotel by the end of the day

In the evening , **diner at Les 2 Frères** , the most famous « Brasserie » in Aix en Provence

# Lubéron



"**The Luberon**" applies to a range of mountains running about 55 km between [Cavaillon](#) and Manosque, and a regional park, the Parc Régional du Luberon. The western end of the range is called the Petit Luberon and the eastern end is the Grand Luberon. The two parts are divided by the beautiful Combe de Lourmarin that cuts across the mountains from Bonnieux and Lourmarin. Geologically, the Luberon range extends west to the Chaines des Alpilles.

The Luberon is a beautiful region for visiting, by car, foot, bicycle or horse. The mountains and forests are beautiful. There are scores of lovely, ancient villages, many with castles, forts, ruins, towers, and other geographical and historical sites. This is a region for the dry-stone [bories](#) that link the present with the past.

The Parc Régional du Luberon roughly follows the mountain range east-west, but extends out further north-south, bounded by the Durance (south) and Calavon (north) river valleys. This is a regional park, not national, and the boundaries follow some unusual contortions to meet the political and economic needs of the local communes.





# Gordes

Gordes is a very beautiful old village, perched on the southern edge of the high Plateau de Vaucluse. The stone buildings built in tight against the base of the cliffs and those perched on the rocks above, including the 12th-century castle, are made of an beige stone that glows orange in the morning sun. The view from the village is a southern panorama out across fields and forests and small perched villages to the Montagne du Luberon.

Behind the village (to the north), small roads lead into the rocks and valleys and forests of the Plateau de Vaucluse, with the picturesque **Abbaye de Sénanque** only 4 km away, yet isolated in its little valley

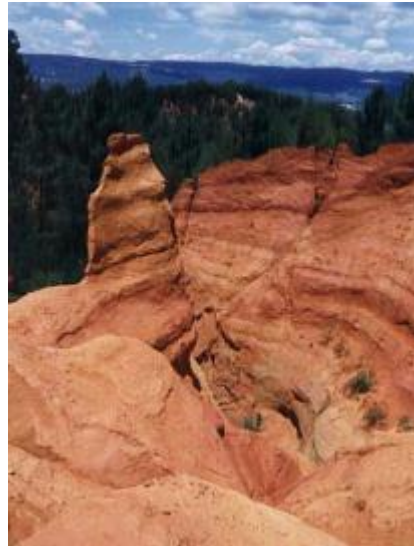


# Roussillon



The ocre-red village of Roussillon, one of the *Plus Beaux Villages de France*, is a tourist destination on the southern edge of the Plateau de Vaucluse. Roussillon is a beautiful village, with its red rocks, red stone buildings and red tile roofs.

Roussillon is lovely from the outside, set in a deep green pine forest on bright red-ocre hills. Roussillon is even more spectacular inside the village, with the colorful old buildings and narrow medieval streets. The village center is fairly small, so wandering the streets to discover the many lovely sites doesn't take very long. A couple of our favorites are: the square with the pair of old buildings and the 19th-century clock and bell tower with its, bells and ancient sundials.



# Abbaye de Senanque

Senanque is a beautiful and still-working 12th century abbey, tucked into an isolated valley north of Gordes (Vaucluse).

The **Abbaye Notre-Dame de Sénanque** is a lovely medieval Cistercian abbey that is one of the best places to see Provence's famed lavender fields. Founded in 1148 and once again populated by Cistercian monks, the peaceful abbey welcomes visitors and provides overnight retreats.



# Restaurant les 2 Frères – Aix en Provence

Family story..., the two brothers work perfectly well together in this restaurant where there are many regulars. It is also appreciated by those who are in the region for a while and who are on the lookout for the new place to be... We can also note that the décor is beautiful, nice materials and beautiful ideas like an enormous terrace with bamboos and exotic wood. Nothing is lacking here, there is even a screen to follow the work in the kitchen or a giant glass screen and even a lounge area.



# Day 3 – The Alpilles

In the morning departure for the Alpilles for a visit of the **Morning market of Saint Remy de Provence**.

Then you will depart for a **lunch at Oustau de Baumanière**

In the afternoon after a visit of **Les Baux de Provence**, you will enjoy the visit of an Olive Oil farm .

Return to your hotel by the end of the day

In the evening diner at the **Table de Ventabren 1\***

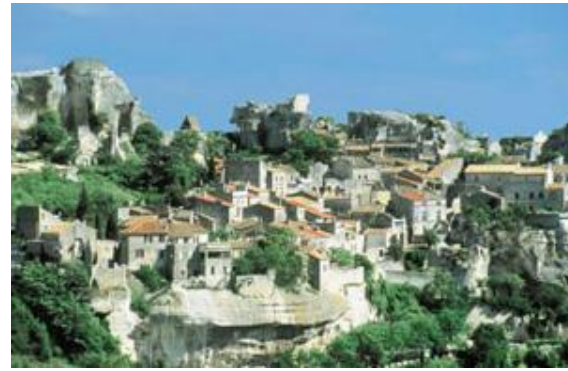
Overnight at your hotel

# Alpilles



This chain of limestone hills running east-west is where bauxite was first discovered (named after the village of Baux-de-Provence). The Alpilles are an extension of the Luberon mountains, which stretch out to the east.

Although the ridge along the top seems white and barren, the Alpilles have been rich in almonds, apricot, olives and grain since the middle ages. The steep slopes were terraced, and the trees and grains were planted because of their adaptability to the arid conditions.



# Saint Remy de Provence

The village of St. Rémy is pretty and picturesque, and the old Gallo-Roman interior is circled by the remnants of the circular 14th-century wall and the protective circle of buildings.

Located on the plains at the northern edge of the Alpilles, 20 km south of Avignon, this is where Van Gogh painted *Starry Night*, Nostradamus was born and Dr Albert Schweitzer was prisoner.

The most obvious remains of the 14th-century protective wall are the old *portes*, still in use today as the entrance ways into the ancient center of old Saint Remy. The old center is circled by a ring-road of boulevards, small enough that you can walk around the circumference in 20-30 minutes



# Restaurant Oustau de Baumanière

Oustau de Baumanière was one of the first restaurants, if not the first, outside of Paris to gain the coveted three Michelin stars and kept them for the better part of three decades until 1990.

The cuisine is excellent, modern and refined without losing track of the fact that in the end, what is on the plate is food, however artistic it may be made to look before consumption.





# Baux de Provence

The village of the Baux de Provence is situated in the heart of the Alpilles on a rocky plateau 245m high. A brilliant view of Arles, the Camargue and the Alpilles can be seen from the look-out points! This immense and superb stone fortress is without doubt one of the "must-sees" on the Provençal tourist trail! The village is officially classified and labeled as "one of the most beautiful villages in France". Its cultural heritage is exceptionally rich, with 22 architectural treasures classified as "Historic Monuments" The village has been painstakingly restored and is now one of the most popular attractions in the region... The village can only be visited by foot and you will admire the ancient houses that have been carefully restored, beautiful Renaissance façades and several magnificent "hôtels particuliers" which today serve as art galleries or museums.



# Restaurant Table de Ventabren – 1 star Michelin

Don't pass up the opportunity to enjoy a fine dining experience on the terrace of this restaurant. It is set in the heart of a picturesque village and overlooks the valley. The reasonably priced cuisine is both fresh and perfumed, successfully highlighting the true flavours of top quality ingredients.



# Day 4 – Isles Sur Sorgues ( only on Saturday and Sunday) & Avignon

In the morning departure for the most famous and biggest flea & Antiques Market of Provence situated in the village of the **Isles Sur Sorgues**.

Then you will be driven to **Avignon for a visit of the old town and the Popes Palaces**

Return to your hotel by the end of the day

Evening at leisure

# Isles sur Sorgues & Fontaine de Vaucluse

**Isles sur Sorgues** is a compact medieval town built on the islands of five branches of the Sorgue river, 7 km downstream from its source at Fontaine-de-Vaucluse. The river flows through, past, in and around the town, in its many natural beds and several canals. Even without gondolas, water adds a special beauty and character to a town. Sorgue has its many river branches and canals, huge overhanging plane trees and several large, lovely waterwheels. Even if the many mills are no longer working, some of the waterwheels still turn.

**Fontaine du Vaucluse:** At the base of high, rocky cliffs, a deep pool of seemingly still water is actually a full-fledged river gushing up out of the depths. A few meters from this pool, the white water rapids crash down over black rocks, giving away the truth of the "still waters" of the source of the Sorgue river. Below the rapids, the river settles down to a wide expanse in front of dams and waterwheels, passing under the bridge at the center of the village, and then flowing on downstream as a lovely river.



# Avignon



Once in Avignon, you won't want to leave, and the town is too interesting to let you go. Avignon is ancient, full of history, life, youth, art, music and activity. Just to "see" the town itself, you could wander the narrow streets inside the fortified walls for days without tiring of them. Avignon is a **UNESCO World heritage site**.

A great shopping area, with pedestrian streets without automobiles (not always the case in France), and loads of shops of all kinds. Southeast of the Place de l'Horloge: rue des Marchands, rue Rouge and adjoining streets are full of clothing and other shops.

Book market on the Cours Jean Jaures, just inside the wall in front of the train station.



# Day 5 – Marseille

After a morning at leisure for some shopping in Aix en Provence , you will depart around 3 pm for **Marseilles** for a visit of the town including the Notre Dame de la Garde Cathedral and the « Vieux Panier » .

Before returning to your hotel , you will enjoy a diner either

- **At l'Épuiette situated on the Vallon des Auffres**
- **The Petit Nice 3\* Michelin situated on the Famous Corniche**

Return to your hotel after diner.

# Marseille

Marseilles is a Provençal city with vitality, centered around 26-century-old port, with a dynamic downtown, big parks, a medieval-village-style neighborhood, downtown shopping and wonderful seafood. If you have an "image" of Marseilles that isn't good, a visit here will be a wonderful surprise.

Marseilles is, first of all, ancient. Started by the Phoenician around 600-BC (ignoring of course the Ligurians who already lived here), taken over by the Greeks in 540 BC, and conquered by the Romans two thousand years ago, it is full of sites and artifacts of Antiquity. Marseilles is the second-largest city in France, with its metro and its Parisian-style division into "arrondissements".

The flavor of Marseilles is antiquity, seaport, seafood, museums, history and travel. On the darker side, the reputation of Marseilles included gangsters and plague, with the gangster reputation from the "old days" accented by many French films and the American film "The French Connection". The plague gained its entry into Provence in 1720 from a ship of silk and cotton unloaded at Marseilles.



# Restaurant l'Épuiette

Restaurant l'Épuiette\* is really a peaceful haven if you want to have a gourmet break with the sounds of the Mediterranean as a background, dolce vita and relaxing are really key words here.

This little place with its pretty charm is located in Marseille, in vallon des Auffes to be precise, and it offers a view overlooking the old fishing harbor and the islands. When you enter l'Épuiette, you will be charmed by the décor, mixing simplicity and refinement perfectly. In the large dining room, with its beautiful natural light brought by the sea and the sky, couples can enjoy a truly unique moment.





# Restaurant le Petit Nice – 3 star Michelin

Chef Gérard Passédat's cuisine is steeped in Provence, the mistral, port life and a taste for travel and freedom! His style is very much a product of the Mediterranean and influenced by the vegetable garden. Rediscover seafood dishes, and the mythical bouillabaisse.

