

Country Walks in Provence – Hiking and walking around Avignon

Itinerary in full:

Day 1: Avignon - Vaison-la-Romaine

Transfer day from Avignon TGV station to Vaison-la-Romaine, Le Beffroi. Starting in the former Papal city of Avignon, we depart for the town of Vaison-la-Romaine.

Day 2: Dentelles de Montmirail

The Roman town of Vaison is one of the most beautiful. With its amphitheatre and old town perched high above the valley floor, this is one of the finest architectural wonders of Provence. Our first day is the complete circumnavigation of the Dentelles Massif, a giant, limestone fin that juts above the local vineyards. The day is capped with an evening of wine tasting and a taste of fine provençale cuisine.

Day 3: Buis les Baronnie

From Vaison we drive to Bédoin at the foot of the Mt Ventoux, where we take in local fare at this bustling market. From there, we drive to Buis, where we enter the arid landscape of the Baronnie massif. Our walk takes us through olive groves and vineyards to a little-known spring for an afternoon dip. Return to Vaison late in the afternoon for an evening of boules or free time in town.

Day 4: Mont Ventoux

An early start gets us the best choices at this typical provençal market, specializing in olive paste, olive oil and roasted meats. After purchasing picnic supplies, we head to the top of the Ventoux, or the 'windy one', a 2,000 meter peak (6'562 ft) that dominates the landscape. Standing atop the Ventoux is quite an accomplishment. We spend the day traversing the north side, admiring the views of oak forest and occasional mountain goats which saunter by.

Day 5: Gorges de la Nesques

After a quick market visit in Sault, the minivan takes us to Monieux, where we begin our walk into the Nesques gorges for one of our longest days of walking. We climb out of the gorges at the Chapelle St. Michel, where the van meets us and drives us to Gordes for the night.

Day 6: Gordes

Overlooking the Vaucluse plain, Gordes dominates the landscape. Prehistoric ruins and a huge historical past make this one of the highlights of this trip.

Day 7: Les Baux de Provence

Filling our rucksacks with fresh bread, tapenade (olive paste) and goat's cheese, the van takes us to St. Remy de Provence. From there, we have time to explore this ancient village before going over to Les Baux, in the Alpilles Massif. Steeped in history, this village dates back to the III century BC but was definitively settled in the X century. Drive back to St Remy and evening meal in local restaurant.

Day 8 Departure day