



Trip description

Cycling holiday along the Canal du Midi from Toulouse to Sète

This cycling tour follows the course of the Canal du Midi from Toulouse to Sète, but sometimes also diverts away to discover the patrimonial pearls around the canal.



Destination	France
Location	Canal du Midi
Duration	8 days
Difficulty Level	Moderate
Validity	From March 31 to Nov 1
Minimum age	From 14 years old
Reference	M0702

Type of stay
itinerant trip



Itinerary



This cycling tour takes you from Toulouse to the Mediterranean sea along the Canal du Midi. You ride on the hauling path or further to discover here and there an abbey, nice vineyards or a lake. You start your cycling holiday in Toulouse, where you already feel the way of life of the South of France, discover its gastronomy and wonder at its soft colors. You then ride through the Lauragais, a vast fertile plain dotted with nice churches and ride through Castelnaudary, the home town of cassoulet before reaching the cute port of Bram. You head then to Carcassonne and its famous medieval fortress before riding into Minervois, where you will pass many peaceful wine villages along the canal. You stop in one of them before going to your next stop in Béziers. Afterwards, the sea is only a few kilometers away. You reach first Agde and the Thau Lagoon. You ride the last stretch along the sea and arrive in the town of Sète and its port, the destination of your adventure.

DAY 1

Toulouse

You start your cycling holiday in Toulouse, where the Canal du Midi starts. Its architecture stands out with its pink and orange tinted buildings, which confer the city its nickname of the "Pink City". Walk across the famous Place du Capitole and admire the many architectural masterpieces like the roman style Basilica of Saint-Semin, the Church of the Jacobins or the Renaissance town house of Assézat. Toulouse is also a dynamic and gastronomic city, where you will be able to taste a wide range of French South West culinary specialities.

DAY 2

Toulouse - Gardouch

Bike
43km

You leave Toulouse on a cycling path along the Canal du Midi and enjoy riding out of the city away from cars, lulled by the soft sound of the water. You reach the first villages of the Lauragais, an area where the landscape is dotted with typical flat bell towers like in the village of Montesquieu-Lauragais. This rich plain surrounded by hills is opened to trade for centuries thanks to the canal.

DAY 3

Gardouch - Bram

Bike
40 ou 50km

You leave the canal to ride on a nice overhanging road offering magnificent views on the canal and countryside. You reach the Cathar village of Avignonet-Lauragais before passing by Port Lauragais and the watershed between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean sea. You then head towards Castelnaudary, where you will be warmly welcomed with a tasty cassoulet on the nice port. You keep on through the countryside to the charming abbey of Saint-Papoul and get back on the canal in Bram.

DAY 4

Bram - Carcassonne

Bike
27km

You ride today on the canal hauling path to Carcassonne. You go through the new town and arrive on the banks of the Aude river, from where the impressive walls of the medieval city rise in the sky. Don't miss out the visit of this fortress, which was very well restored.

DAY 5

Carcassonne - Le Somail

Bike
65km

Shortly after Carcassonne, the canal route takes you in Minervois. A La Redorte, be sure to observe the outfall of the Argent Double designed by Vauban, built to drain the excess water during floods or to clear the channel. The charming wine villages follow one another, each with its little harbor. Homps offers a possibility of a little more lively stopover before proceeding to one of the next villages where you step.

DAY 6

Le Somail - Béziers

Bike
55km

At the beginning of this stage, you stay along the Canal du Midi and the Canal de la Robine. You then bike on nice country roads through Ouveillan. You follow the canal again which is meandering till the lively port of Capestang. It is worth to stop to admire the collegiate church of Saint-Etienne, which is dominating the village with its 45m-high bell gothic bell tower. You keep following the canal, pass under the Malpas tunnel and ride down the cascade of the 9 Fonsérannes locks. Your ride ends with a nice view on Béziers, where you sleep.

DAY 7

Béziers - Sète

Bike
55km

Cycling along the canal is very easy on this stage. You ride on a cycle path and very smooth paths. You reach Agde effortlessly, and discover on the way the Estagnol marshes, the quiet port of Cassagières or the many constructions works like the lock of Libron or the bridge of Saint-Joseph. After Agde, you follow the Hérault river which flows into the lagoon of Bagnas. You then cycle the last stretch of the canal and end up at the Onglous light tower, and feel like you've "made it" as it is where the waters of the canal flow into the sea water of Thau Lagoon. But it's not finished yet! A cycle path along the sea takes you to Sète, your final destination.

DAY 8

Sète

Enjoy the liveliness of Sète port, built by Louis XIV to give the canal a gate to the sea. The charming hilly streets of this seaside town have inspired many artists. You leave after breakfast or extend your stay as you wish.

Accommodation

Category A

You sleep in family-owned hotels ideally located in your overnight stop or in bed & breakfasts along the canal. The B&Bs will give you the opportunity to refresh in their swimming pools (3 nights). Breakfast is included.



** Example of the type of accommodation*

Category B

You sleep in *** hotels with an elegant setting and a warm atmosphere or in charming bed and breakfasts along the canal. Relax and for most of the stops, enjoy their refreshing swimming

pool (5 nights). Breakfast is included.



* Example of the type of accommodation

Category C

You'll enjoy a higher level of service in these 3-4 Star properties. Properties are selected for their high standards and impeccable service. This category is for guests looking for a higher-end vacation. Of course, breakfast is included daily.



* Example of the type of accommodation

Practical information

Main features:

Itinerant tour

Difficulty level: moderate. The itinerary is flat along the canal but hilly as soon as you divert from the canal. The route takes you on the boat hauling path of the canal and quiet country roads. The stages are 27 to 65 km long, which means 3 to 6 hours biking at a slow pace (10km/h). The boat hauling path being still a dirt track on several portions, it is sometimes bumpy to ride.

To get to departure point:

By plane: many airlines fly to Toulouse. A regular shuttle is going to the city center every 20 min (price € 8/pers). It takes 20 to 45 min to get to the city center depending on traffic.

By train: because of the geography, trains going to Toulouse are not high speed. As a consequence, it is quite a long train ride to get there: 5h30 from Paris, 4h from Marseille, 4h30 from Lyon and 2h from Bordeaux. To plan your trip, www.raileurope.com.

Parking

If you drive to Toulouse, you need to know that secured car parks in the city center of Toulouse are very expensive. The week rate in all the secured car parks of the city center is € 118 (7 days). Another option is to park your car at the airport in the car park of Radisson Blu hotel. The rate for 1 week is € 50. You can book a spot on the website or the application of MobyPark. You can then take the shuttle (see upper).

All details will be given in your travel documents.

To get back to starting point:

Trains take you back to your starting point if you wish. Direct trains (duration about 2 hrs) need to be booked in advance and have a surcharge of € 10/bike upon reservation (€ 35/pers without bikes). You can also take regional trains (TER) with a connection in Narbonne. These trains take bikes without surcharge. You can buy your ticket on spot (full rate € 34.40/adult).

You will find the timetable of the day in your travel documents.

Meeting time:

The first day is an arrival day without cycling. You arrive whenever you want depending on from where you come. Please note that rooms are usually available in the middle of the afternoon depending on your accommodation. We thank you to advise us if you plan to arrive late.

Price description

Rates valid between April, 26th and September, 29th

From March, 30st to April 25th and september 30th to November 3th a luggage extra applies.

Category A

Double room fare

€ 799 /pers

7 nights in ** hotels or B&Bs
7 breakfasts
6-day rental of a fully-equipped bike (packs, locks, toolkit)
the luggage transport
a road book with maps, descriptions of the routes and tourist informations
the delivery and return of the bikes
local visitors' taxes
sending charge of the travel documents in France
7/7 hotline

High season (*)

€ 40 /pers

Half-board

€ 28/diner

Extra for a single room

€ 37 /night

Extra night in Toulouse

€ 60 /pers

Extra night in Sète

€ 50 /pers

Category B

Double room fare

€ 995 /pers

7 nights in *** hotels or deluxe B&Bs
7 breakfasts
6-day rental of a fully-equipped bike (packs, helmets, locks...)
the luggage transport
a road book with maps and descriptions of the routes
a touristic leaflet
the delivery and return of the bikes
local visitors' taxes
sending charge of the travel documents in France
7/7 hotline

High season (*)

€ 50 /pers

Half-board

€ 29/ diner

Extra for a single room

€ 52 /night

Extra night in Toulouse

€ 80 /pers

Extra night in Sète

€ 85 /pers

Category C

Double room fare

€ 1345 /pers

7 nights in *** or **** hotels or B&Bs

7 breakfasts

6-day rental of a fully-equipped bike (packs, locks, toolkit)

the luggage transport

a road book with maps, descriptions of the routes and tourist informations

the delivery and return of the bikes

local visitors' taxes

sending charge of the travel documents in France

7/7 hotline

High season (*)

€ 70 /pers

Half-board

€ 36/diner

Extra for a single room

€ 84 /night

Extra night in Toulouse

€ 110 /pers

Extra night in Sète

€ 100 /pers

Discount if you ride your own bicycle

€ -120 /pers

Extra for an electric bike

€ 55 /pers

Entry to the medieval fortress in Carcassonne

€ 8.5 /adult

Low season luggage transport extra (from March, 30 to April, 25th and september 30th to November 3)

€ 130 /pers

(*) **High season :**

from 01.07 to 15.09.2019

Children discount (in the same room as 2 full rate participants):

0-4 years: -70%

5-11 years: -50%

12-17 years: -30%

The package doesn't include:

the journey to the tour location

the drinks

the meals which are not included

the entrance fee to sites

insurances (optional)

For more information or booking : www.levelovoyageur.com

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