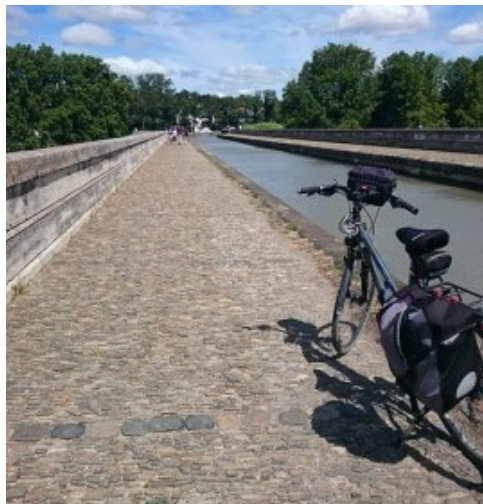




Trip description

Bike tour from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean Sea

This self-guided bike tour takes you during 2 weeks along the Canal de Garonne and the Canal du Midi and will bring you from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. Discover the diversity of the South West of France from coast to coast on bike lanes and canal towpaths.



Destination	France
Location	Canal de Garonne
Duration	14 days
Difficulty Level	Moderate
Validity	From Mar 15 to Oct 15 (logistic...
Minimum age	From 14 years old
Reference	C2M1401

Type of stay
itinerant trip



Itinerary



On this bike tour, you will go leisurely across South West France from Bordeaux to Sète. The route is overall flat as you cycle on greenways and canal towpaths, along the secret Canal de Garonne first and then along the emblematic Canal du Midi. After admiring Bordeaux on the banks of the Garonne, you cycle across vineyards to the small town of Sauveterre-de-Guyenne, and La Réole, where you start cycling along the Canal de Garonne. You ride along the canal passing charming villages such as Mas d'Agenais, Damazan, Agen with its beautiful canal bridge or Moissac and its beautiful abbey and cloister. You continue through Montauban to Toulouse, the Pink city. In Toulouse, you start riding along the Canal du Midi, which takes you through Castelnaudary to Carcassonne and its outstanding medieval fortress. Continue cycling along the canal to Béziers then Agde and the pond Thau. Just a few strikes later you can go for a swim in the Mediterranean Sea before arriving in the vibrant city of Sète, where your cycle holiday finishes. Unless you decide to add an extra day and cycle to Montpellier, the Gifted.

If you look for quietness, nature and a pinch of culture, you will definitely love this cycle holiday between Bordeaux and Sète. Difficulty level: moderate. The first part of the itinerary is easy from Bordeaux to Gardouch (except the fact that some distances are large). The path 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 68 km long, which means 3 to 6/7 hours biking at a slow pace (10km/h). The boat hauling path being still a dirt track on several portions overall between Bram and Béziers (a lot of roots, the path can be muddy in case of rain), it is sometimes bumpy to ride. The second part of the itinerary requires more attention on the bicycle.

Day 1

Bordeaux

You might want to enter the old city section by riding along the quays of the Garonne. The Bordeaux quayside is one of the most magnificent waterfronts in the world. Bordeaux was awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in 2007 because of the beautiful 18th century facades and outstanding buildings. Discover the banks of the Garonne River and check out the buildings made with white chiseled stone.

Day 2

Bordeaux – Saint-Martin-de-Lerm

Bike
68km

Altitude
±290m

This morning you'll leave Bordeaux and take a pleasant, designated bike path out of town. Upon reaching Latresne, the path meanders away from the river and you'll be riding on a converted railroad track. Don't worry. No trains will be coming! The old train stations along the route offer friendly services for cyclists such as food, coffee and information. We suggest you leave the cycle path and explore the bastide of Creon (Bastides are towns built from scratch in the 13th and 14th century). Check out the remains of the La Sauve Abbey or the Church of Sauveterre-de-Guyenne.

The final leg of your route is a bit hilly until you reach your destination, Saint-Martin-de-Lerm.

Day 3

Saint-Martin-de-Lerm – Le Mas d'Agenais

Bike
42km

Get warmed up this morning by biking on a few hills before reaching the medieval town of La Reole on the Garonne River. From there, the path flattens out as you ride along the dikes and reach the Canal de Garonne. The pleasant cycle path runs alongside the canal. If you like, make a detour to the village of Couthures-sur-Garonne, where you can learn about ancient and present river life. The day ends when you reach the charming village of Le Mas d'Agenais and its outstanding church and its remarkable Rembrandt.

Day 4

Le Mas d'Agenais – Agen

Bike
49km

Start the day by biking along the path next to the canal. The route is dotted with quaint villages, containing locks where you can watch boaters navigate each lock. Just a stone's throw from the canal, admire the bastide of Damazan with its colorful facades or the bastide of Serignac-sur-Garonne with its bell tower made of slate. Towards the end of the route, the bike path crosses the magnificent canal bridge over the Garonne River on the outskirts of Agen. You'll soon be very close to the city center where you can absorb the sights, sounds and smells of southwest France's way of life.

Day 5

Agen – Moissac

Bike
46 / 54km

Leave Agen on the canal bike path and wind amongst the hills. If you're looking for a pleasant rest stop, check out the bastide of Valence d'Agen, built by the English. Continue biking past cute lock keepers' houses, many decorated with abundant flowers. Up to a challenge? Leave the canal path and head slightly uphill towards the fortified village of Auvillar, listed as one of the most beautiful villages in France. Your shorter choice is to follow the Canal path until you reach Moissac. The town is known for its medieval buildings, including the abbey church, which has famous and important Romanesque sculpture around the entrance.

Day 6

Moissac – Montauban

Bike
44km

Today's ride takes you along the canal bike path across the plain to Castelsarrasin. The route leaves the canal path for a short time and transfers over to quiet, backroads to the Abbey of Belleperches on the riverside of Garonne. From there, get on the canal path again until you reach the Montech Marina. Now the route follows another canal path all the way to Montauban, an old city built with pink bricks.

Day 7

Montauban – Toulouse

Bike
60km

The day starts with an easy ride back to the Canal de Garonne where you enter the suburbs of Toulouse. Soon you'll see the junctions of the Garonne and Midi Canals. Cycle a bit further and you'll be in the city center of Toulouse. Stroll around and explore the Roman Cathedral of Saint-Sernon, the Jacobins Church or the Renaissance mansion of Assezat.

Day 8

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 9

Gardouch - Bram

Bike
40 ou 50km

Altitude
±80m

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 10

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.

When you start cycling inside the Aude department, the cyclable path becomes bumpy. Be careful to the roots and the mud in case of rain.

Day 11

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 stop.

The path becomes very narrow and leafy sometimes during the journey. The cyclable path can be bumpy because of the roots along the canal. This part of the circuit requires more attention.

Day 12

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.

Be careful on the towpath, which is very narrow and bumpy. Some vigilance is often required.

Once you arrive around Béziers, you will find a beautiful cyclable path to enter in the city.

Day 13

Béziers - Sète

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,

Bike
55km

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 14

Departure from Sète

You can extend your stay to give you more time to explore this delightful area. Otherwise, check out of your hotel after breakfast.

Extra day : Sète - Montpellier

Bike
51km

You leave the Venice of Languedoc towards Frontignan. Then you cycle along a lagoon towards Vic where you have the option of following the Canal in the middle of the lagoon (gravel) or taking a small detour towards the hinterland. Just before Palavas-les-Flots, you can visit the ancient cathedral of Maguelone. Pedal joyfully along the Lez river enjoying the panoramas of the lagoons, pink flamingos, horses... This towing path takes you directly to port Marianne, an emblematic district of the city, before taking you to the city center of Montpellier, the Gifted.

Accommodation

Category A

You'll enjoy staying in these clean and cozy 2-Star hotels and Bed and Breakfasts that give you a pleasant rest after your day of biking. Breakfast is included when you spend the night in these friendly and family-run hotels.



** Example of the type of accommodation*

Category B

You'll get a good night's sleep when you stay in these 2-3-Star hotels or Bed and Breakfasts. All properties have been selected for their cleanliness, style and friendliness of the staff. A hearty breakfast is included!





* Example of the type of accommodation

Practical information

To get to departure point:

By plane: fly to Bordeaux Mérignac. A bus shuttle takes you to the city center in about 30mn depending on traffic.

By train: go to Bordeaux Saint-Jean train station. To plan your trip www.trainline.eu

Parking

If you drive to Bordeaux, you can park your car in a secured car park located next to Bordeaux Saint-Jean train station. On an indicative basis, the week rate (7 days) is about € 50 subject to availability.

All details will be given in your travel documents.

To get back to starting point:

You take the train back to your departure point. You can take a direct regional trains. Regional trains are without reservation and take bikes without extra charge. You buy your ticket yourself. 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

Category A

€ 1799 /pers

Double room fare

13 nights in ** hotels or B&Bs

13 breakfasts

12-day rental of a fully-equipped bike

the luggage transport

the access to our mobile app including the roadbook and the practical and tourist information

the return of the bikes

7/7 hotline

High season (*)

€ 100/pers

Extra for a single room

65 €/night

Extra night in Bordeaux (**)

€ 66 /pers

Extra night in Sète

€ 70 /pers

Extra day towards Montpellier

(discount for children applicable according to age and room repartition)

- 1 night in a 3* hotel in Montpellier

- 1 breakfast

- 1 extra day for a rental bicycle

- 1 extra day of luggage transport

- repatriation of the rental bikes

Low season:

199 €/pers

High season (*):

205 €/pers

Category B

€ 2149 /pers

Double room fare

13 nights in 2*, 3* hotels or deluxe B&Bs
13 breakfasts
12-day rental of a fully-equipped bike
the luggage transport
the access to our mobile app including the roadbook and the practical and tourist information
a touristic leaflet
the return of the bikes
7/7 hotline

Extra for a single room € 62 /night

Extra night in Bordeaux (**) € 77/pers

Extra night in Sète € 105 /pers

Extra day towards Montpellier

(discount for children applicable according to age and room repartition)

215 €/pers

- 1 night in a 4* hôtel in Montpellier

- 1 breakfast

- 1 extra day for a rental bicycle

- 1 extra day of luggage transport

- repatriation of the rental bikes

Options

Discount if you bring your own bicycle € -141 /pers

Extra for an electric bike € 125 /pers

Half board Prices upon request

(*) from 01.07 to 02.09

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

tourist taxes

insurances (optional)

For more information or booking : www.levelovoyageur.com

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