

Traveling Fig



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Guide to the Best of Provence



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No Comments

PROVENCE IS

Soul quenching. That's the phrase Matt used to describe our time in South of France, and I honestly couldn't agree more. Provence exceeds quaint, it surpasses lovely.

Our trip was absolutely perfect aside from being too short. So instead of just offering my normal format of must-sees, I'll just recount the details of our holiday in heaven in the itinerary I suggest you follow to a t.

>>Lodging

We chose to **stay in Gordes** for two reasons. One, it provided us the perfect centralized location to explore our surroundings. And two, it is one of the most beautiful villages in the world.





We booked a suite at the **Domaine les Martins**, and it was magical. Down a quiet gravel road, the gate opens to a winding cypress-lined pathway that leads you to a stone manor with Provencal blue shutters. The smell of Jasmine envelops you as you are escorted to your chic quarters. Mornings are spent under an old fig tree in the garden, noshing on fresh-baked croissants and homemade jams. Perhaps the owners have curated a special itinerary for you – complete with reservations – so you take off to explore. Or maybe you decide to just relax and spend your afternoons lounging poolside with a good read. At night by the firepit, under the star coated sky, you drink local summer reds and nibble on cheese you purchased from the farmers market. If this speaks to you, then stay at Domaine de les Martines, you won't regret it. Be sure to request a room with a balcony.

If you prefer full amenity five-star service, a more lively and social setting, and jaw dropping views from the pool, then La Bastide de Gordes is the hotel for you. This is where our friends we traveled with stayed and it had the most incredible valley views from their cliffside vantage point. It is also located right in town and home to one of the best restaurants we dined at!

<<Itinerary

Spend your first two days exploring the surrounding villages. Depending on when you get in, I suggest doing the following loop until you tire of it on day one, then picking up where you left off to finish on day two. Or even stretch it out to 3 days if you've got the time. Driving through the countryside from town to town with the breeze carrying the scent of lavender is intoxicating in its own right.

Day 1-2 THE VILLAGE CRAWL

Starting in **Gordes**, walk through this adorable village and peek down each and every alley for breathtaking views. Visit the **Abbaye Notre-Dame de Sénanque** for the quintessential lavender shot if you're visiting in season. If you're hungry, stop by the **La Bastide de Gordes** hotel restaurant for an incredible meal with a valley view.





Drive to **Roussillon** to walk through the reddish-orange city. The dramatic red cliffs are unique to Roussillon, and something not to miss. There is also a hiking trail here worth mentioning.

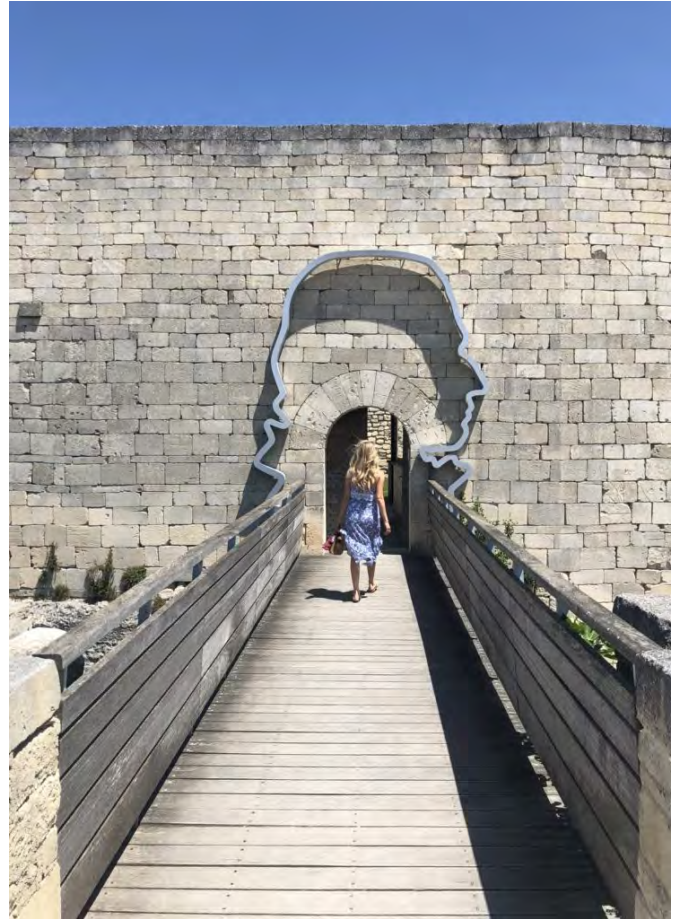


Carry on to **Bonnieux** which will afford you the most authentic glimpse into french life, as this village is less catered to tourism. Treat yourself to a macaroon and a cappuccino or a glass of rosé at one of the quaint outdoor eateries.





Next stop is **Lacoste**, quite possibly my favorite of the cities to stroll through. Carry on up the winding cobblestone roads all the way to the castle on top of the hill, which has been transformed into a modern art museum.



From Lacoste, you're in the perfect spot to take a wine tasting detour. Head to the back patio of **Domaine de Marie** to try their more than reasonably priced varietals.



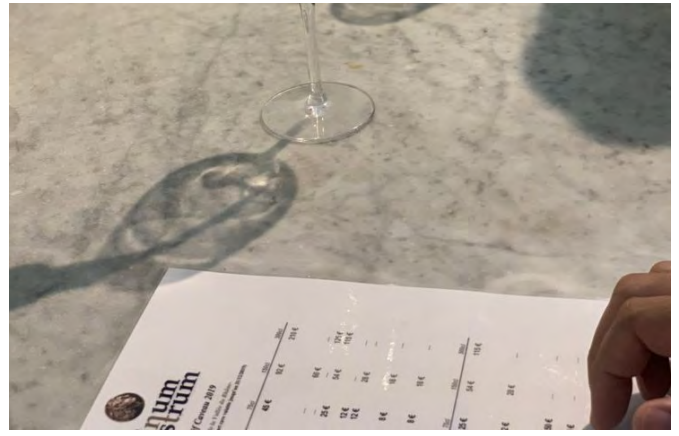


If you're within lunch or dinner hours (which are strictly observed in Provence, typically 12-2PM and 5-9PM), you have to make a special trip to **Menerbes** for **Le Bistrot 5**. If you are late to lunch you still might be able to order their picnic tray and rosé.



Speaking of rosé, following Menerbes, you are well situated to visit **Domaine de la Citadelle's** tasting room and vineyard.





And finally, end your evening in **Oppède** for a dinner reservation at **Le Petit Cafe** on their sprawling outdoor patio.

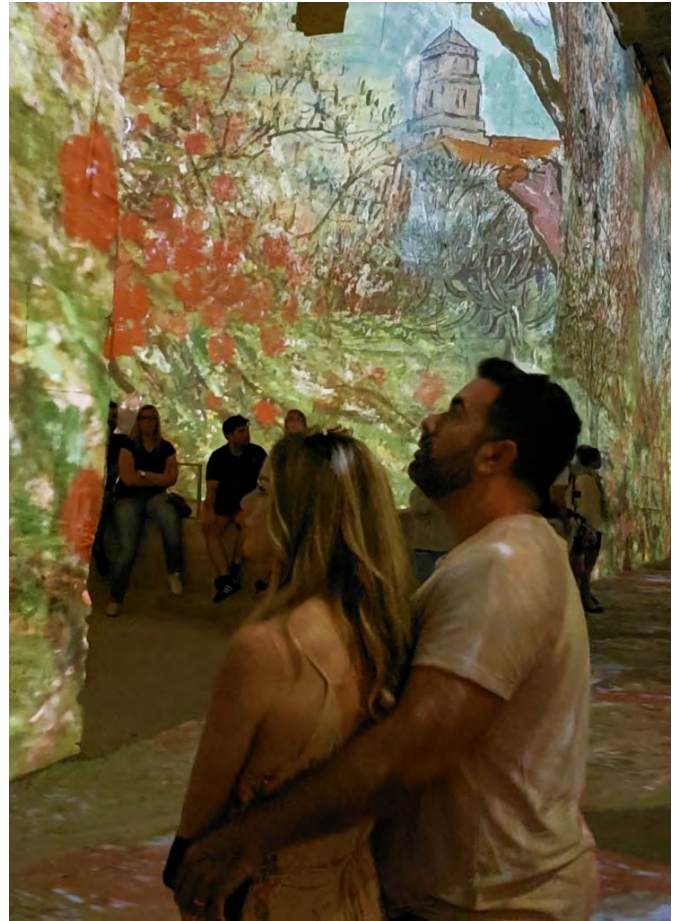


Day 3

Leisurely enjoy your croissant and cappuccino al fresco, you're in the South of France, which is just about as close to heaven as you can get.

Today you're setting off for **Saint Remy le Provence**, which is about a 45-minute drive. Stop frequently for lavender fields.

Book your tickets ahead of time for the Van Gogh experience, **Carrières de Lumières**. Hard to describe, this immersive show tells the story of Van Gogh through his art projected across every inch of the grand room you'll walk through. You should go see the show before noon, so you have time to hit the world's best lunch place afterwards.



You're going to have a 4 course lunch at **le Bistro du Paradou** and you are going to absolutely love it. You'll have a choice between two starters and two main dishes, followed by a grand cheeseboard and your choice of dessert. All courses are served with local wine. And everything is earth-shattering delicious.





On your way home stop by **Arles**, and see the colosseum. I don't have a photo because I was too drunk from lunch to pull it together. yolo?

Your last stop is at the antique town of **L'isle**. This unique village is lively and fun, with bars and restaurants lining the river that runs through the center. But what makes this spot so special is the dozens of rare antique shops, art stores, and museums. Have dinner along the water and grab a gelato in town afterwards. This is the most young and lively of the villages in my opinion!





Day 4

Post breakfast, might I suggest a morning bike ride followed by logging some pool hours?



In the afternoon, make the drive out to **Chateau La Coste** – a winery with modern art installations.

Day 5 – until you here

We regrettably didn't make it to day 5, but if we did, I'd have booked a lovely spa morning followed by a cooking class / truffle picking / botany class / shopping day / farmers market / continually pinch myself to remind me that my life has peaked.

>>GETTING THERE

The easiest way to access Provence is to fly into Marsailles and rent a car. The drive from Marsailles to Gordes is one hour. The roads are not lit so driving during the daylight is recommended.

<<Where to Next?

If next on your list is a roadtrip through the Cote d'Azur, check out my guide here

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Blue & White Dress: N12H via Rent the Runway, use code CHELSEA50 for half off of their unlimited membership

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