

Verdon Gorge - Europe's Grand Canyon

Trip Code: VER

Version: VER Verdon Gorge - Europe's Grand Canyon



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Dramatic landscapes and picturesque provencal villages
- Enjoy characterful accommodation and sample the wine and food of Provence
- Verdon Gorge National Park; an UNESCO listed site
- Wander past lavender fields and olive groves

AT A GLANCE

- 5 days trekking
- Max altitude - 1412 metres
- Join at Saint André Les Alpes

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 7 Breakfasts
- 7 Dinners
- 7 nights Hotel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

This stunning walking holiday through Europe's most beautiful river canyon takes in some truly dramatic scenery and offers a colourful and genuine flavour of Provence. The gorge itself is around 25 kilometers long; the bottom 8m to 90m wide, while the rims are 200m to 1500m apart! The National Regional Park of Verdon was created in 1997 to protect an environment that has evolved over two million years and also prides itself in being labelled a UNESCO World Heritage Site as the largest geological reserve in Europe. We'll explore the gorge and its charming surrounding area with a variety of beautiful walks! The most impressive section lies between the medieval towns of Castellane and Moustiers-Sainte-Marie where the river has cut an impressive ravine into the limestone, reaching down to a jaw dropping 700m deep in places.

This superb walking journey shows us the very best of Provence, a region filled with picturesque villages, crystal clear rivers, towering rock formations, hidden tunnels, meandering rocky ladders, glorious views and some of the best food and wine in the world, including a night in the famous and beautiful medieval village of Moustiers-Sainte-Marie and concluding perfectly in the ancient Roman town of Gréoux-les-Bains.

Is this holiday for you?

All six days of walking are moderately paced with time available for photo stops and occasionally simply 'taking in the view'. However each of the days are a reasonable length, typically 7 - 8 hours of walking and so a good base level of fitness is required. Your main bag will be transferred for you, meaning you only need to carry what you require for each day.

Itinerary

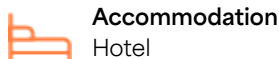
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DAY 1

Meet at the group hotel in Saint André.

We will meet at the group hotel in Saint André Les Alpes. Saint André is a quiet, local Provençal village and rests on a 12th century medieval castle built by the Templar Knights. KE Land Only package services begin with the overnight at the hotel.

Meals: **D**



DAY 2

Walk from Saint André Les Alpes and onto Castellane.

After breakfast our walk begins with a steady ascent through beautiful woodland and out into high meadows, from here we are rewarded with wonderful views out onto the Lac de Castillon and back towards the peaks of Haute Provence. We head up over the limestone plateau - reaching our highest point of the trip at 1412m. From here we descend to join the Voie Imperiale; a trail used by Napoleon on his return from Elba, in March 1815. After around a further hour of walking we reach the village of Castellane. Depending on our arrival time, there is also the option to walk up to the 'Notre Dame de Roc', from here we gain commanding views of Castellane and the Verdon River.

Meals: **B D**



DAY 3

Walk from Castellane via towering rocky outcrops to the village of Point Sublime

We leave Castellane and join the famous GR4; this follows the old route used by the Romans to reach Lyon. We climb for a short while up to a balcony trail; from here we can look down on the trail leading out ahead of us. As we continue along the Verdon valley we find ourselves surrounded by rocky outcrops and passing through unspoilt peaceful hamlets, we stop at one of these for lunch; the beautiful

Chasteuil. There will also be the opportunity to buy soaps, balms and oils here, all made with lavender which is grown locally - Provence's perfume. We now climb again up to a plateau at 1228m and continue onto the village of Rougon, where we can take a break and sample the crepes and ice cream; if we're lucky we might catch a sight of a Griffon Vulture soaring overhead. From here it is a short descent to our hotel for the night in Point Sublime.

Meals: **B D**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 700M		Descent 650M		Time 6 - 7 hrs walking		Distance 23KM
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DAY 4

Traverse from Point Sublime along the Verdon Gorge Provencal village of la Palud

Today we enter the famous 'Grand Canyon of Europe' -The trail today is a little more challenging underfoot. Once we have accessed the Couloir Samson we descend toward the river along the steep walls of the gorge, to join what is known as the 'Martel Trail'. We are then surrounded by stunning limestone walls and towering cliffs. Our trail works its way along the gorge passing fantastic view points and perfect riverside picnic places. A couple of other highlights of the day include a 650m tunnel straight through the rock and an impressive stairway. A final pull up and we exit the gorge; just a little way from the Chalet de la Maline bar and if time allows we can stop for a rest here and have a well-earned drink - while looking out on the breath taking panorama. We then take a short transfer to the lovely Provencal village of la Palud where we spend the night.

Meals: **B D**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 550M		Descent 600M		Time 7 hrs walking		Distance 16KM
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DAY 5

Walk from La Palud to the picturesque village of Moustiers Sainte Marie.

Firstly into the pine tree forest of Col de Plain Voir and up to a most memorable viewpoint above the turquoise lake of Saint Croix. We continue on through giant limestone crags and rock towers over the Crete de l'Ourbes, to reach 1213m. A relatively steep descent follows, which brings us down to the picturesque village of Moustiers Ste Marie. Steeped in the history of the Knights Templar Moustiers, it is truly a gem of a village; totally Provencal in its nature and character and with many lovely cafes, art workshops and galleries.

Meals: **B D**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 750M		Descent 1000M		Time 6 - 7 hrs walking		Distance 19KM
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DAY 6

Le Grand Marges Mountain Summit (1576m). With stunning views of the Valensole plateau and the lower part of the Verdon gorges.

Today we literally climb a mountain, Le Grand Marges, which is a stunning view point above the beautiful quaint village of Aiguines. We begin with a short transfer (30 minutes) to the village of Aiguines where we begin our hike. Aiguines, situated on a hillside, is a very traditional French village with its own privately-owned chateau, dating back to the Renaissance. The village is also well known for its crafts and wood workers. Our climb is rocky but steady and the views at the summit, 1576 metres, are wonderful. You can see Sainte-Croix lake, the Valensole plateau, the lower part of the Verdon gorges, the Digne and Castellane pre-Alps, including the Lachens mountain, the top of the Var region. Well worth the effort of getting there. Our route home is back along our ascent trail.

You may want to sit out this day and enjoy spending time exploring Moustiers Sainte Marie and perhaps hiking up to the historic chapel above the village. We overnight once again in Moustiers.

Meals: **B D**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 798M		Descent 798M		Time 6 hrs walking		Distance 9KM
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DAY 7

Lower Verdon Gorges

This morning we travel to the old village of Quinson, just 35 minutes from Moustiers-Sainte-Marie. We have a stunning circular hike today as we explore the Basses Gorges du Verdon, the lower gorges of the Verdon river. The lower gorges have a fascinating history as humans in prehistoric times settled here in a number of caves and there is a museum in Quinson which details these communities. It does in fact claim to be the largest prehistoric museum in Europe. We will also hike along the old Verdon Canal path which was constructed in 1865 and used until the 20th century to direct the flow of water to Aix-en-Provence. Along the way we wander through the oak trees which supplied the raw material for the local charcoal industry. This walk is pure pleasure as we continue along the Lower Verdon Gorge with its turquoise water, dreamy pools, and peaceful coves before heading upwards to a high point above the gorge at the ancient chapel of St Maxime. At the end of the day we will take a private transfer from the village of Quinson to our overnight accommodation in the ancient and very lovely village of Gréoux-les-Bains. The village has many shops and cafes and is a wonderful place to end our traverse of the Verdon Gorge.

Meals: **B D**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
300M



Descent
420M



Time
5 hours walking



Distance
12KM

DAY 8

Departure day

KE Land Only packages end after breakfast at the hotel.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional English-speaking guide
- All accommodation as described in the trip dossier
- Services of a support vehicle for baggage transfers

What's not Included

- Travel Insurance
- Lunches
- Visa fees (if applicable)
- Airport transfers
- Miscellaneous personal expenses

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

TRAVEL TO YOUR DESTINATION

In some cases you may choose to take a ferry and/or train to your holiday start and end destination. Please see further information on [Travelling by Train](#).

If flying from the UK there are low cost airlines available to the start and from the end of your holiday.

To benefit from full financial protection, ease your holiday planning, and avoid dealing with airlines, we can book scheduled flights from the UK as part of a flight inclusive package. Scheduled flights are usually more expensive than low cost alternatives, however potentially less stressful if your flight is cancelled or delayed. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will [offset the carbon of your flight](#).

There are no group transfers for this trip, the group will meet at the group hotel in Saint André Les Alpes.

The most convenient airport is Nice. From Nice there is a spectacular train ride to the start of your trip at St Andre. It is on one of the very few private railways in France and with trains running four times a day it is an easy way to get to the start. It is also excellent value for money being about 18 Euros per person for a single journey of about 2.5 hrs. Please note that it is not possible to book these train tickets in advance and it is very easy to purchase these at the station; the timetable for the train service from Nice to Saint André Les Alpes on the historic Train des Pignes can be found here - <http://tourisme.trainprovence.com/horaires-et-tarifs/?lang=en>

To reach Nice train station from the airport either take a taxi from the arrivals areas costing about 30 Euros or if you have time use the local bus service costing 4 Euros per person. Previously we have used bus No. 23, but there maybe others that go there too.

The welcome meeting at your accommodation will be at 7pm followed by the evening meal.

At the end of the walk in Greoux-les-Bains there are several methods for onward travel. Marseilles is the closest airport but there are also options to return back to Nice plus an easy bus ride reaches Manosque where connections are possible across France including the near by Luberon region. Marseille airport is 1hr by road and 2hrs by train, Nice airport 2hrs by road and 3h30 by train.

If you have any problems on arrival please contact your leader (exact details will be sent prior to departure).

Meal Plan

All breakfasts and dinners are included from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 6. Lunches are not included.

Food & Water

Water is drinkable from the taps on this holiday. Please fill your personal bottles for your day in the morning. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

In this beautiful area it is only fitting that the food come up to the same standards. Breakfasts will be continental style with French breads and pastries, lunch is an occasion as well as a meal with different types of fougasse (Provençal local flat bread with different fillings; olive/ham/cheese/sausage/herbs), fresh fish and local dishes flavoured with provençal herbs. Evening meals will also be locally sourced food as much as possible, a particular highlight is the homemade hearty pesto / vegetable soup at the Auberge Pointe Sublime - local wine also available to buy every evening if you wish! With ice cream and crepes as possible additional snacks en route, you most certainly will not be going hungry.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by an experienced and qualified mountain leader.

Altitude

This holiday does not involve any significant ascent to altitude and we would not expect any altitude issues with this trip.

Spending Money

All breakfasts and dinners are included in the holiday price. For the non included meals we suggest you budget around 25 Euros meal. You should also make your normal allowance for extra drinks and snacks etc as you would on any European holiday. In total we would expect 225 - 275 Euros to cover all miscellaneous personal expenditure.

Baggage Allowance

There is no weight restriction as such on this holiday other than that imposed by your international carrier (normally 20kg). However, we do ask you to restrict your luggage to one trek bag/suitcase and one small daypack per person.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

Currency

The currency for part or all of this holiday is the Euro.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking or climbing trip getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. For this trip you need to be aerobically fit and also capable for walking up to 7 or 8 hours each day for four days continuously. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime.

Climate

Temperatures in this area of France, range from daily highs of 17°-21°C (63°-71°F) in April, and May, to daily lows of 5-9°C (41°-48°F) . In September and August the daily temperature ranges from an average 24-29°C (76°-84°F), down to 11-15°C (53°-59°F).

At these times of year the days are often clear and sunny, however, as is not unusual in mountainous areas, this can mean that storms build up in the late afternoon.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](https://www.travelaware.com)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Please note that a paper copy of your travel insurance is required if you are travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

You must bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Trainers or sandals
- Socks Underwear
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof overtrousers
- T-shirts and/or casual shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Gloves
- Sunglasses
- Daypack 30 litres (and a way of keeping the contents dry)
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including for lips)
- Water bottles 1 litre x2 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Washbag and toiletries

- Antibacterial handwash
- Swimwear
- Small towel

Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters, blister treatment, insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets.

The following items are optional:

- Gaiters
- Trekking poles
- Shorts / Skort (though preferable in the hotter summer months)
- Camera
- Spare laces
- Small padlock (to lock your KE trek bag)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Note:

We do ask you to restrict your luggage to one trek bag and one small daypack, however. Please bear in mind that you will have to carry your own bags for short distances. Some clients have found wheeled luggage to be more useful on this trip rather than a kit bag.

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.
[>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

We sell this holiday on a Land Only basis and recommend that you book your flights to Nice Airport which is approximately a 2.5 hour train journey from Saint André Les Alpes. Please refer to the 'Joining arrangements and transfers' for further details.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

If flying from the UK there are a number of low cost airlines offering flights to Nice. These include Easyjet who have flights from London, Bristol, Liverpool, Newcastle & Edinburgh and Jet2 who have flights from Manchester and Leeds Bradford.

If you would prefer to book a 'flight inclusive package' using scheduled airlines from the UK please contact our flights department for a quote. Whilst flight prices are likely to be more expensive you will benefit from full financial protection.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 20/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change