

Self-Guided Walking in Provence

Trip Code: SGPL

Version: SGPL Self-Guided Walking in Provence



WALK & TREK



SELF-GUIDED



LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience in real life the scenes of Van Gogh's famous paintings
- Live like a local and visit the bustling Provencal markets
- Discover incredible Roman ruins and a vibrant arts culture in Arles
- Explore the perched village of Les Baux de Provence, one of the most beautiful villages in France
- Walk through idyllic landscapes of lavender fields, olive groves and vineyards

AT A GLANCE

- Self-Guided
- 5 days walking and sightseeing
- Daily departures available
- Join at Avignon / End in Apt

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 7 Breakfasts
- 6 nights Hotel
- 1 nights Guesthouse with swimming pool

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

Introduction

Provence is a wonder for the senses; the instantly recognisable scents of lavender and thyme fill the air; the landscape is simply Van Gogh's art brought to life and the food and wine will leave you wanting more. It is these characteristics which create the magical atmosphere of Provencal life. Starting your holiday in Avignon you will discover the history of life along the Rhone before stepping into the Alpilles landscapes, which inspired some of Van Gogh's greatest work, to walk to Les Baux de Provence, officially recognised as one of the most beautiful villages in France. You have a free day mid-week to immerse yourself into the gorgeous villages of Arles and Isle sur la Sorgue. Throughout the week, your walks take you to pretty villages and dreamy and scented landscapes of thyme and lavender fields, vineyards and orchards.

You will stay in charming guesthouses and hotels on a bed and breakfast basis allowing you the opportunity to dine in the many fantastic restaurants the region offers. You will also step off the beaten track to experience the rustic charm of Auberge des Seguins nestled beneath the Aiguebrun Gorge. This technology-free haven is the perfect place to unwind with its rural location, swimming pool and communal dining on home cooked Provencal specialties. This is a slice of authentic Provencal life from which to explore on foot.

Is this holiday for you?

If you are looking to experience the culture of Provence, dine on fantastic local produce and explore the romantic French landscape on foot then this is the holiday for you. Staying in a selection of small 2* and 3* hotels and guesthouses you will experience true Provence, full of charm. You should be comfortable walking an average of 4-5 hours a day with ascents of up to 450m. In return your routes will take you through vineyards, olive groves and fragrant lavender fields; to photogenic medieval villages and bustling markets; and into the stunning mountains of the Alpilles and Luberon. June is the best time to visit if you wish to see the lavender in full bloom.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Arrive in the heart of Avignon.

Your holiday begins in the heart of Avignon where you can check into your accommodation for the evening. Standing high above the immense plains of the Rhone River it is easy to see why Avignon was chosen as the site for a fort. This strategic town is full of charm and tells its story through its architecture. Depending on your time of arrival, you will have the chance to wander through the labyrinth of ancient streets, relax with a coffee in the courtyards or visit the spectacular Popes Palace and famous Pont d'Avignon.



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Transfer to St Remy and walk through Alpilles Hills to discover Saint-Paul de Mausole Monastery.

Today begins with a short transfer to St Remy de Provence. This pretty village is the epitome of Provencal France; its century-old plane tree lined streets leading you to welcoming squares and water fountains surrounded by boutiques and cafes. You will have time to enjoy a coffee, pick up a picnic lunch and soak in the atmosphere before heading off on your walk.

Your route will take you up in to the Alpilles Region Natural Park along a spectacular ridge-line for breathtaking views over the lavender fields and honey-coloured stone villages. Along the way you will reach Saint-Paul de Mausole Monastery where Van Gogh painted during his year of confinement. Today the Monastery remains a psychiatric health institution that encourages its residents to express themselves through art which is exhibited to visitors. It is said that Van Gogh created over 150 paintings during his time here along with some of his best work. Returning to St Remy you can appreciate how an artist could draw so much artistic inspiration from the region as you experience the village by evening light.

If you are feeling energetic today there is an option to add an extension to your walk to enjoy a longer and more challenging route home.

18km / 550m ascent / 550m descent/ 6 hours walking

Meals: **B**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 300M		Descent 300M		Time 3-4 hours		Distance 10KM
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DAY 3

Walk from St Remy to Maussane through landscapes of wildflowers, olive groves and vineyards.

Today you will cross the craggy limestone range of the Alpilles mountains to reach the village of Maussane. Heading south out of St Remy, your route will take you to Peirou Lake, dammed in Roman times to manage the flow of water into the ancient town of Glanum. From here, you will pick up the GR6 trail and follow the waymarks to reach a panoramic forest path. Tracking through shrubby landscape, you may catch the scent of thyme and cistus flowers, and enjoy far-reaching views of the mountains to the north and the flatlands to the south.

Dropping down on the other side of the ridge, the trail winds gently toward the base of the Alpilles, taking you through olive groves and vineyards before arriving to the village of Maussane. As you wander through its narrow streets, you can find old olive presses, producing high quality oil from the olive groves that you will have walked through earlier. Be sure to enjoy a tasting of this famous local product, protected under the label of Huile d'Olive des Baux de Provence. Tonight you will stay in this charming town nestled at the foot of the Alpilles.

Meals: **B**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 270M		Descent 290M		Time 4 hours		Distance 13KM
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DAY 4

Walk to the ancient village of Les Baux-de-Provence. Transfer to Arles.

Your route today will take you to discover Les Baux-de-Provence, perched high on a rocky spur from which it takes its name (in Provençal, a *bauc* is a rocky spur). Setting off on your loop walk this morning from Maussane, you will walk through bucolic fields to reach the foot of the imposing outcrop on which the village, also called Baux, is positioned. Taking a hidden path, you will ascend the steep-sided flanks, gaining views of the Alpilles as you climb. Reaching the medieval village of Les Baux-de-Provence, you can wander through its pretty streets and chateau ruins and understand why the village has been accredited as 'one of the most beautiful villages in France'. Ironically, the village is technically owned by Monaco's Royal family, the Grimaldis, having been gifted in 1642 but is administrated by France. You will have time to explore this popular spot before walking through vast olive groves to return to Maussane. At the end of your walk, you will be transferred to your accommodation in the heart of Arles.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
250M



Descent
250M



Time
4-5 hours



Distance
12KM

DAY 5

Enjoy a free day in Arles before taking the train to Isle sur la Sorgue.

Positioned on the banks of the Rhône River, the city of Arles has been recognised on UNESCO's World Heritage List and boasts of numerous impressive Roman remains. You have a free day today to soak up the atmosphere of this fascinating city, stroll the narrow streets and discover little cafes in which you can watch the world go by.

Heading out from your hotel on foot, you are within easy reach of the major Roman ruins in the compact old centre, such as the magnificent Arenes d'Arles and the Theatre Antique. The Vincent Van Gogh Foundation can also be found in Arles, paying homage to his works as well as a broader exploration of his influence upon contemporary artists. A fitting tribute to his finest masterpieces inspired by his time in Arles.

In the afternoon, make your way by rail to Isle sur la Sorgue with your luggage. Encircled by clear waters of the Sorgue River and crossed with emerald-green canals, it is little surprise that this pretty island city came to be known as the 'Provençal Venice'. Originally a fishing village, the ability to harness the power of water enabled industries to thrive; the remnants of the textile and paper-making industries are evidenced by the water wheels that still turn in the canals around the town. Once you are settled in to your hotel, head into the old town and enjoy an al fresco dinner at one of the many restaurants available, basking in the lively atmosphere.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel






DAY 6

Discover Lacoste and stay in the tranquillity of the Aiguebrun Gorge.

After breakfast you will take a transfer to the medieval village of Lacoste, a little gem which remains untouched by modern tourism. Your route will take you past old stone farmhouses and into Lacoste where the imposing ruins of castle of Marquis de Sade sit at the heart of the village. Here you can stroll through the cobbled streets and soak up its charm before continuing on to the town of Bonnieux, famed for its setting for Peter Mayle's novel 'A year in Provence' and a good spot to stop for lunch. Leaving Bonnieux you enter into the Grand Luberon accompanied by lavender fields before reaching the village of Buoux. Your accommodation for the evening is just beyond the village nestled within the peace and tranquillity of the Aiguebrun Gorge. Here you will be welcomed by the Pessemesse family who restored the 17th century goat farm into a peaceful guesthouse providing a detox from the modern technologies

of wifi, mobile phones and television allowing you to truly relax into the Provencal way of life.

Meals: **B D**

	Accommodation Guesthouse with swimming pool		Ascent 450M		Descent 350M		Time 5-6 hours
	Distance 17KM						

DAY 7

Walk through the Aiguebrun canyon and relax in beautiful town of Saignon before ending your week in Apt.

Your final walk of the week takes you through the Aiguebrun canyon, passing stone wall terraces and farmlands to reach the lost hamlet of Sivergues. Your route continues through the town and surrounding lavender fields before reaching the truffle plantations of Saignon. It is beneath the shaded oak trees which line the plantations where the 'black diamonds' grow, waiting for the locals to harvest them in the new year. Saignon itself is a beautiful town with its shuttered buildings lining the village square and fountain. Life moves at a slow pace here in the village; making for an idyllic spot to take your lunch and enjoy a coffee while you watch the world go by. The rest of the way is a leisurely descent to your final stop, Apt, where you can tuck in to a celebratory meal to round off a wonderful week of walking in beautiful Provence.

Meals: **B**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 400M		Descent 600M		Time 5 hours		Distance 14KM
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DAY 8

Departure Day.

Enjoy a relaxed breakfast at your accommodation before making your onward journey. If you are lucky enough to have the time we recommend exploring this beautiful town further and indulging yourself in some of the delicious fare that is abundant here - hence its classification as a "site remaquable du gout", or a place of wonderful tastes. On Saturday mornings, Apt hosts the biggest market in the Luberon which draws many locals from all around. The town also hosts a farmer's market with local produce every Tuesday morning. If you would like to extend your stay here, please speak with one of our friendly sales team for more details.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Self-guided information pack containing your map and route notes
- Luggage transfers (except Day 5 from Arles to Isle sur la Sorgue)
- Transfer from Avignon to St Remy on Day 2
- Transfer from Maussane to Arles on Day 4
- Transfer from Isle sur la Sorgue to Lacoste on Day 6
- GPX tracks available

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)
- Travel to Avignon
- Travel from Apt
- Train fare from Arles to Isle sur la Sorgue on Day 5
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Personal equipment
- Any entrance fees
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

Your Self-Guided Pack & Route Notes

Each self-guided holiday comes with comprehensive route notes and a map or pocket guidebook of the area you are exploring. The route notes contain information about the places you will visit, about the local transport you might need, along with the detailed route notes for your daily walks or cycle rides. We even include some tips for the best places to stop for lunch.

You can expect to receive your Self-Guided Pack containing your route notes, a map or guidebook and all your relevant documents no later than 3 weeks before your holiday start date. We will send your documents using signed for courier so that you can track your package and know that they are safely on their way to you. For bookings of more than 4 people we will send an additional Self-Guided Pack. If you do not need this additional pack please inform our sales team. Your pack will be sent to the lead booker so please remind them to pack it before you set off.

Should your self-guided trip be part of a longer adventure requiring you to leave home more than three weeks before your holiday start date, please do inform our sales team so that we can make alternative delivery arrangements.

Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking holiday for your family, a centre based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a days walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool or visiting museums is calling.

Please discuss this further with our sales team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

This trip starts at your hotel in Avignon. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a land only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The nearest airport for this trip is Avignon Airport; however Marseille Airport and Lyon Airport offer many more departures from regional UK airports.

If you are flying into Marseille Airport you can take the direct train to Avignon Centre. The journey takes approx. 1-2 hours. If you are flying into Lyon Airport you can take the train to Avignon Centre. The journey can be undertaken on a direct high speed train or with one change and takes approx. 2-4 hours. For more information visit www.sncf.com

Alternatively, we can offer a private transfer from Marseille Airport to your accommodation. Please ask our sales team for a quotation.

Your trip ends in the town of Apt. From here you can take a bus to Cavaillon or Avignon, from where you can take train to Marseille Airport; or you can utilise buses to reach Marseille Airport via a change at Aix-en-Provence. To return Lyon Airport, take the bus to Avignon, from where you can continue to Lyon Airport by rail. Private transfers are also available.

Meal Plan

This trip offers 6 nights bed and breakfast, and 1 night half board at the Auberge des Seguins.

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.

If you were to describe Provencal food in just two words it would be simple and seasonal. Food in this part of France is all about home cooking, making use of the fresh produce which is available in that season and making something truly tasty. Early spring brings asparagus, broad beans, melon and deep red strawberries to menus with dishes such as nicoise salad. Late spring and summer sees the sweet cherries, figs and other amazing fruits, perfect for enjoying with the local cheeses and a glass of wine. The autumn months fill menus with deliciously warming game stews before the truffles come into season once more in the new year. Ratatouille is also a firm favourite, made with aubergines, courgettes, onions, peppers and tomatoes and reduced to a tasty compliment with most evening meals. Needless to say there are plenty of delicious dishes for you to sample during your holiday, and while it may not be the fine dining of Paris it is certainly tasty.

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.

Accommodation

We have handpicked a great selection of family run guesthouses and 2* and 3* hotels for this trip, each has been chosen for their warm hospitality and local flair. You will also spend a night at the charming Auberge des Seguins, a unique 17th century goat farm which has been lovingly restored into a guesthouse by the Pessemesse family with the addition of a relaxing swimming pool. The guesthouse is set in the remote Aiguebrun Gorge and offers a real slice of Provencal life with communal meals and a technology detox allowing you to relax into the local way of life.

All accommodations offer a typically French breakfast of fresh bread, croissants, jams and cheeses served with a cup of hot coffee. Aubergue des Seguins also offers a tasty evening meal, and can provide a picnic (payable locally) for your walks.

It is possible to arrange additional nights accommodation if you would like to enjoy this magnificent region a little longer. Please speak to one of our sales team for more information.

Baggage Allowance

Your main luggage will be transferred between each of your hotels while you are out on your walks, except on day 5 when you will take your luggage with you on the train. We ask that you please ensure your luggage is under 20kg and that your luggage is ready for collection each morning. You will also need a daypack to carry your daily essentials with you. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

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

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.

Severe Allergies

Please inform our KE Sales and support team of any severe allergies you may have before travel. We will always do our best to help but we are unable to guarantee an allergy free environment on our KE trips. We advise that you always carry your own treatment for the allergy with you such as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' if required. We also recommend that you discuss this with your accommodation on arrival so that they can better assist you.

Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided walking holiday is that you decide the pace however getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable your walks will be. You should be comfortable with walking 4 to 5 hours for consecutive days.

Climate

Provence welcomes hot sunny summer months and mild winters similar to the rest of the Mediterranean areas with temperatures averaging 30 degrees in the months of July and August along with little rainfall. Due to the lack of rain in the summer months Provence footpaths are closed throughout July to mid-September.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' 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.

Books

- A Year in Provence by Peter Mayle
- Lonely Planet: Provence & the Cote d'Azur

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.

Equipment Information

Self Guided Equipment List

- Hiking boots with good grip soles
- Functional base layer
- T-shirts
- Hat
- Windproof jacket
- Fleece / extra layer
- Long/short hiking trousers
- Hiking socks
- Waterproof Jacket
- Waterproof Trousers
- Rucksack (approx. 20 l)
- Small first aid kit for your rucksack

- Sunscreen
- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Camera (batteries/memory card)
- Mobile Phone (ensure your data package covers your destination)
- Power bank
- Waterproof phone cover
- Sun glasses
- Personal wash kit
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Tupperware for picnics
- Walking poles
- Headtorch & spare batteries
- Your self-guided route notes

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

Please note our 'from price' listed is based on 4 persons on twin or double occupancy, however we can quote for any number of travellers, including solo travellers, contact our sales team for a quote.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights accommodation before or after your self-guided trip, ask our sales team to find out more about this.

Our sales team will be happy to provide you a quote for scheduled flights or alternatively you may wish to book your own flights with a low cost carrier from your nearest regional airport.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

We offer some transfers to your hotel from the nearest airports, please refer to the 'joining arrangements and transfers' for further details for this trip.

Why Choose KE

why KE?

Provence is all about tasting, smelling and feeling the culture. We have combined the 'must sees' with getting off the beaten track, staying with the Pessemesse family at their fantastic guesthouse in the Aiguebrun Gorge for a refreshing technology detox and authentic experience. We have included transfers to and from your walks so you can explore further.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 18/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change