

Factsheet | Self-guided cycling | Level 2/5   | 6/7 cycling days

Aude-Corbières : Cycling Carcassonne and the Cathar Castles

Your route in brief

- Itinerant loop with 2 levels of difficulty
- Nights in hotels and guesthouses
- Access to main luggage every day
- Easy access from and to Carcassonne
- Duration 8 days / 7 nights
- Rental of E-bike hire possible

Highlights

- Carcassonne and its medieval city
- Discovery of Cathar Castle
- Corbieres landscapes and vineyards
- Beautiful country roads with little traffic
- Charming villages of Lagrasse, Cucugnan Duilhac sous Peyrepertuse, Roquetaillade...



The mild Mediterranean climate, fantastic landscapes of the Corbières, vineyards, castles perched upon rocky outcrops, this is just a preview of what you can expect to discover during this colourful tour.

In the Cathar Aude, some places steeped in history, such as Carcassonne, Lagrasse, or the Termes, Aguilar, Quéribus or Peyrepertuse Cathar castles, are still living testimonies of a recent past. A host of 7 exceptional Cathar castles and 2 abbeys will unveil their past history!

All of these ancient strongholds are linked by sumptuous backroads in the heart of the Corbières and Fitou vineyards. Being accommodated in lovely guesthouses and hotels, you will have the opportunity to experience the warmest welcome that characterizes this old land of heresy. It will leave you filled with unforgettable memories, not to mention the culinary specialties.

www.gr10-liberte.com / www.respyrenees.com

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•PROGRAM

Day 1 : Start of your holiday in Carcassonne

Arrival in Carcassonne, well-known place thanks to its sumptuous medieval city. Check-in at your accommodation. You can either choose to explore the city by feet or bicycle, to cycle to the lake of Cavayère, or to ride your bike along the Canal du midi (depending on the time you arrive).

Carcassonne : From the fortified town to the city

Settling in at the hotel, depending on the time you arrive, you can choose to visit the famous site of Carcassonne, taking as stroll through its streets and squares, following an urban route which links two monuments registered as UNESCO world heritage sites: the Canal du Midi and the medieval city of Carcassonne.

The canal du Midi

Starting from the Carcassonne harbor, this return itinerary will offer you the possibility to explore by bicycle a short section of the famous Canal, in a peaceful and bucolic environment.

Lake of la Cavayère

This itinerary starts from the « Porte Narbonnaise » of the medieval city and will lead you to the Lake de la Cavayère, real haven of peace and freshness, where you can even take a bath. A cycling path goes all around the lake so you can enjoy at the most these 18 hectares of water surrounded by woods and garrigue.

- Distance : 5,5km, duration : around 2h for the pedestrian city exploration.
- Distance : 23km, duration : around 2h15 for the canal du Midi.
- Distance : 16km, duration : around 1h45 for the Lake de la Cavayère.

Day 2 : From Carcassonne to Lagrasse

A cultural and sporty section, which links Carcassonne to the medieval village of Lagrasse, following the towpaths along the canal du Midi to reach Trèbes, and then, heading to Lagrasse, one of the most beautiful French villages, well protected by its ramparts. The village faces one of the eldest European abbeys, which has its roots in the 13th century.

- Distance : 42km, duration : around 4h, altitude gain : +300m, descent : -280m.

Day 3 : From Lagrasse to Tuchan

From Lagrasse, you will reach the village of Tuchan, capital of Fitou, appellation d'origine contrôlée vineyard. You will be cycling on scenic and rural backroads, and passing by Cathar castles called Durfort, Termes, Villerouge, Termenès, and Aguilar, depending on the option you choose.

- Distance : 42km, duration : around 4h30, altitude gain: +500m, descent : -450m (normal version).
- Distance : 63km, duration : around 6h30, altitude gain : +800m, descent : -570m (sporty version).

Day 4 : From Tuchan to Duilhac

During this stage, you will discover the Cathar castles of Padern, Quéribus and Peyrepertuse, not only famous for their majestic military buildings but also for the spectacular places where they were erected. In the valley, the villages of Cucugnan and Duilhac, are real haven of peace and exude a very special charm. A sportier itinerary gives you the opportunity to pass by the famous village of Tautavel, where our ancestors have left their marks in the Caune de l'Arago. You can visit the very interesting Museum of Prehistory.

- Distance : 25km, duration : around 2h30, altitude gain : +650m, descent : -450m (normal version).
- Distance : 48km, duration : around 5h, altitude gain : +850m, descent : - 650m (sporty version).

Day 5 : From Duilhac to Rennes les Bains

To reach the thermal village of Rennes les Bains, small winding roads will lead you from valleys to small passes to the villages of Rouffiac, Cubières and Bugarach. Going by bicycle allows you to enjoy all the scents and colours of the fragrant vegetation. A variant of equal length but more sportive and more forestry is also proposed.

- Distance : 33km, duration : around 3h30, altitude gain : +550m, descent : -600m (normal version).
- Distance : 41km, duration : around 4h, altitude gain : +800m, descent : -850m (sporty version).

Day 6 : From Rennes les Bains to Limoux

From Rennes les Bains to Limoux, you will follow other backroads, some of them tortuous because of the relief you will cross. Get ready to make emotional discoveries, with, for instance, the architectural beauty of the village of

Roquetaillade. A sportier itinerary can allow you to discover the Arques castle and the lovely but challenging pass of Valmiguère. Limoux is also famous for its «Blanquette », a sparkling wine that « Occitan » people strongly prefer to Champagne, of course!

- Distance : 31km, duration : around 3h, altitude gain : +450m, descent : -600m (normal version).
- Distance : 39km, duration : around 4h, altitude gain : +500m, descent : -650m (sporty version).

Day 7 : From Limoux to Carcassonne

The highlight of this section to rejoin Carcassonne will be the stopover in the village of Saint-Hilaire, considered a major site of the Aude Cathar country thanks to its cloister, built during the 14th century and its Roman abbey. You will make your way through the Limouxin vineyard, dominated by the Mauzac cépage, and the Malepère hillsides. A sportier version passing through a pass rewards you with wonderful views, before starting the descent to Carcassonne.

- Distance : 30km, duration : around 3h, altitude gain : +250m, descent : -300m (normal version).
- Distance : 40km, duration : around 4h, altitude gain : +500m, descent : -550m (sporty version).

This program was defined according to the last elements known during the writing. It may be necessary, if situations arise that are beyond our control, for the itinerary to be modified.

• DATES AND PRICES

Departure

Every day from the beginning of April to the end of October.

For a departure on a different date, consult us.

Booking from 2 people (solo travelers : please contact us).

Price : From 01/04/2022 to 30/10/2022 :

Price per person for a group of 2 persons	775€
Price per person for a group of 3 persons	690€
Price per person for a group of 4 persons	655€
Price per person for a group of 5 persons	635€
Price per person for a group of 6 persons	620€

Extras :

- Single room option : 170€/pers.
- Extra bike hire + bicycle bags 7 days : 125€/pers.
- Extra E-bike hire + bicycle bags 7 days : 225€/pers.
- Extra bike hire + satchel 6 days : 130€/pers.
- Extra E-bike hire + satchel 6 days : 210€/pers.
- Extra night in Carcassonne: please, consult us

The price includes :

- Half board accommodation (except days 1 and 6 : night and breakfast)
- Luggage transfers
- Dossier containing maps, route notes
- GPS tracks if you ask us + access to the detailed itinerary on the Mhikes GPS mobile application

The price does not include :

- Holiday and travel insurance
- Transfers not included in the program
- Evening meals D1 in Carcassonne, and D6 in Limoux
- Entrance fees
- Bicycle hiring
- Drinks and picnics
- Booking fees : 15€

• TAILOR MADE HOLIDAYS

The itineraries are given as an indication; they can be modified according to your wishes and goals. With our tailor-made holidays we always aim to provide you with the best quality at the fairest price.

If you want to :

- increase the comfort of your accommodations,
- change the duration of your trip,
- organize additional activities or visits,
- get a transfer from/to an airport,
- organize an extra night

Contact Gaëtan
Tél : 0033 (0)5 34 14 51 50
gaetan@respyrenees.com

•ORGANIZATION

We propose a self-guided, independent formula. You choose your departure date and we will take care of all the rest from the initial meeting time through to the dispersion point. We transport your bags between the accommodations; we provide the maps and detailed cycling route notes, for 2 to 4 people, we provide the maps and detailed walking route notes sent on the first accommodation as well as access to the detailed itinerary on the Mhikes GPS mobile application. This is a way of enjoying complete flexibility, you dictate the pace and rhythm of your holiday. Moreover, our team will answer all your questions, and will provide all useful advice in order to make this holiday a success.

•TECHNICAL INFORMATION**Level 2/5**

Fairly easy to moderate level with two levels of difficulty: stages staggered between 25km and 42km with ascents between 250m and 600m for the normal version; stages staggered between 42km and 63km with ascents between 300m and 850m for the sports version.

Guide

Self-guided cycling, without a guide.

Carrying

You need to carry a small day sack only with a water bottle, camera, picnic and wind jacket. The main luggage will be transported by vehicle between the different accommodations, it should be easily transportable (see our advices about what to bring and pack).

•ACCOMMODATION / FOOD**Accommodation:**

- Half board except days 1, 6 in BB
- 2 nights in hotel** days 1, 5
 - 1 night in hotel "Logis de France" day 2
 - 2 nights in guesthouse days 3, 4
 - 1 night in a hotel*** day 6

Food :

- Continental breakfast (tea, coffee, milk, butter, jam)
- Evening meals often based on local specialties, include a starter, a main course and a dessert
- Dinner D1, D6 not included. There is plenty of restaurants in Carcassonne and Limoux.
- Picnics not included. Possibility to do some groceries shopping on site
- Drinks not included

•PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Departure : Day 1 at your accommodation in Carcassonne (11), according to your time of arrival.

End : Day 7 in Carcassonne (11), after your cycling day.

How to get to Carcassonne :

- By train :

From Toulouse to Carcassonne, many TER trains, via Castelnaudary, everyday. Many trains from Nice and Marseille.

- By car :

Motorway « Autoroute des 2 mers » A61-RN113-D118

90km from Toulouse, 110km from Perpignan, 300km from Barcelone, 150km from Montpellier, 320km from Marseille, 340km from Bordeaux, 450km from Lyon, 730km from Paris, 950km from Lille.

- By plane :

Carcassonne Airport

Toulouse-Blagnac Airport

CAR PARK :

Non guarded and free car park next to collège le Bastion, 24 Boulevard de Varsovie, 11000 Carcassonne

•WHAT TO BRING AND PACK

Your main luggage

- A bag, rucksack or small suitcase, weighing a maximum of 15kg per person. Please, don't forget to attach the labels we provide you, showing your name and surname.

For cycling

- A personal helmet is compulsory (provided if extra bike rental)
- A day pack to carry your personal belongings during the day (20/25L min) (provided if extra bike rental)
- A warm clothing and a wind and waterproof jacket
- A swimwear and towel, why not?
- Thin gloves and cap depending on the season
- An additional water bottle
- Sunglasses, sun cream and cap (compulsory)
- Appropriate wear for cycle touring: cycling bib shorts + breathable t-shirt or jersey
- For those bringing their one bicycle: a complete repair kit (inner tubes, patches and glue, lubricant, derailleur and brake cables, chain, pump, set of Allen wrenches, fitting kit for tyres), bike lock
- Camera, GPS...

After the exercise :

- Comfortable shoes/trainers or sandal for the evening
- Changing clothes and personal line
- Toiletry kit
- First-aid kit: personal medication
- Your insurance contract

Sleeping :

- Ear plugs

Picnics :

- A sealed plastic box (0,8 L) for salads...
- Cutlery (fork, folding knife)
- Water bottle (1,5L minimum) or Camelbak, much more convenient

Some little things :

- Comfortable shoes/trainers or sandal for the evening
- Sun cream and glasses
- Hat, cap
- Camera
- A small toiletry kit, with a towel
- A torch light or headlamp
- Toilet paper
- A mini first-aid kit : personal medication, blister plasters, Elastoplast, gauze, disinfectant, pellets of arnica and aspirin for minor illnesses... a survival blanket.