

# RUSTIC TRAILS HOLIDAYS

## Autumn Delights

### Highlights

Based at La Maison Rose in the village of Saillans, the highlights of this walking holiday include:

- Five days guided walking of between 3-5 hours per day excluding breaks. There will be some uphill sections but the pace is easy to moderate.
- Provencale towns, ancient villages and busy markets, visit local producers and see their produce being made : wine, cheese, essential oils.
- Spectacular views; mediterranean and alpine scenery.
- Learn about the way of life and heritage of the region.
- Eagles, vultures, chamois and other wildlife.
- We leave one day and evening free for you to explore further or relax.
- Luxurious accommodation with private swimming pool.
- Delicious home cooked cuisine, and a broad selection of superb local wines.

### Summary

After the blistering heat of summer, autumn is a delightful time for walking and exploring. And the usually sedate inhabitants of the Drome become preoccupied with just one thing; grapes.

The autumn colours can be magnificent, and we take the opportunity to visit some charming isolated villages further up the valley and to the north and south. With a series of easy day walks we explore some magnificent unspoilt locations off the tourist trail, offering stunning views.

We are within striking distance of some excellent wine producers, and, between the walks, you can expect to try some of the local wines.

As well as the walking, the wine, and the local produce, you'll find out more about the way of life here, it hasn't really changed, and the heritage of the region. It's a perfect introduction to the Drome, a truly memorable week and an excellent way to get to know a region that remains one of France's best kept secrets.

### Itinerary

#### **Day 1:**

Arrive at La Maison Rose in time for drinks and dinner on the terrace.

#### **Days 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7:**

After meeting your guide and collecting your picnic lunch on Sunday morning, we can either take a quick tour of the busy Sunday market in the village, or start the first walk.

There are many superb walks in the area. Our guide will choose the best area in which to walk each day. It is not possible to be precise about the exact itinerary, but some of the areas we are likely to visit include:

La Vallee de la Roanne, with the lovely perched village of St Benoit-en-Diois. This tiny and beautiful village overlooking the crystal clear waters of the Roanne river marks the start of a lovely walk through vineyards, and rising to a spectacular viewpoint, offering panoramic views of the valley, the distant French Alps and northern provence.

La Foret de Saou, rich with wildlife and distinctly mediterranean flora. We explore the village of Saou, famous for it's annual music festival and Fete du Picodon, the local goat's cheese. A microbrewery here offers tours and tastings of their delicious hoppy beer, rare in France.

Le Col de la Bataille, in the Vercors National Park. We venture along a flat track towards 'La Tete de la Dame', an extraordinary vantage point offering long views over the Rhone valley, the Drome and northern provence.

Les Trois Becs, the highest perched syncline in Europe; there are several different access points all offering different views and wonderful walking and not as taxing as it looks from the terrace!

Le Petit Pommerol, a superb walk offering an exceptional view of Les Trois Becs, La Foret de Saou, and the Vercors National Park.

Le Combau, a beautiful alpine location, one of the most dramatic though little visited areas we know.

Rimon, high altitude but easy walking; great views of the valley and northern Provence, ancient villages and much evidence of the way of life at the start of the previous century.

Grignan, a beautiful chateau, the heart of northern provence, and just off the main tourist trail.

Dieulefit, a thriving market town surrounded by rolling hills offering wonderful walks and views of Provence.

Nyons, the centre of olive oil production and a town with a fascinating history. There is a huge market here on Thursdays, and we can take a tour, and follow up with an afternoon walk in the surrounding hills.

Saillans, the GR9 and GR95 (national marked trails) pass through our village, and there are several circuits to the north and south, each offering excellent views. Vineyards and truffle oaks gradually give way to more rugged terrain and forests, climbing to a number of superb viewpoints.

Perched villages: Espenel, Mirabel, Chabrilan, Piegros, each retains its ancient character despite terrible war damage. You can learn much more about the war and the extraordinary acts of bravery by the local 'Resistance' during your week.

There are many winemakers of course, and we will have time to visit cellars and sample their wares. We also have the chance to visit a local goat's cheese maker – the famous Picodon of the region. If you think you don't like goat's cheese, prepare for a surprise.

#### **Day 5:**

Rest day. A non walking day to relax or visit one of the nearby market towns. The huge Roman walls and mosaics, and the Saturday morning market in Die have been popular. Alternatively, we have some prepared routes that you can do on your own if you would rather walk, or you could try canoeing, cycling or visit some of the local vineyards.

Evening meal in local restaurant

#### **Day 8:**

Saturday: We say our goodbyes; transfers to Valence TGV and Lyon airport.

## **Practical information**

Minimum group size is 4, maximum 10. Minimum age: 18 years. We provide one guide per group who will guide all the walks in the area. The guide will not be provided for anyone walking on a route other than with the group.

### **What to bring**

In addition to your usual clothes, you will need the following:-

- Lightweight walking boots with good ankle support
- Waterproof / windproof jacket
- Sun hat and sun cream
- Water bottle
- Day rucksack (for your belongings and picnic lunch)
- Walking poles if you like to use them.

As well as a camera and binoculars, we suggest you bring a blank CD so that you can take a copy of digital photographs taken by the guide and any other members of the group.

### **Joining the trip - transfers**

Included in the cost of your holiday is an airport transfer to and from Lyon St Exupery or to and from Valence TGV. If you are taking this option you will be given further details with your joining instructions. Alternatively you may prefer to make your own arrangements, in this case please arrive at your accommodation from 4pm onwards on your arrival day.

### **Passports**

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents.

### **Insurance**

It is a requirement of our terms and conditions that you have taken out appropriate travel insurance in respect of your holiday.

### **Extra expenses and spending money**

Allow about 30 euros for the evening meal on the rest day, plus money for drinks etc in bars and cafés. There is a cashpoint in the village.

### **Transport**

A mini-bus is normally used as your support vehicle throughout the week, and all transport costs for the normal programme of guided walks are included. Transport is not usually provided on the rest day.

## **Accommodation**

La Maison Rose has three double and two twin bedded rooms with en-suite facilities. You will have full use of the large sitting room, dining room, terraces, swimming pool and garden. The house is a short walk from the centre of the village and two minutes from the river Drome.

### **Meals:**

Breakfast will be provided each morning on the terrace. It is self-service and comprises cereal, yoghurt, fruit, eggs, croissants, bread, jam, marmalade and honey, tea and coffee.

Lunch: five picnic lunches are provided consisting of filled baguettes of your choice, salad, fruit, cakes, snack bars and soft drinks.

Afternoon tea; tea, coffee and biscuits is served on your return from the day's walking.

Dinner; six home cooked dinners of four courses, including unlimited wine, mineral water, tea or coffee.

We do not offer a choice of meals but if you have a food allergy or are vegetarian please discuss your requirements with us.

### **Facilities:**

A washing machine is available (five euros per load), and a fridge/freezer for any food items. A PC is at your disposal for viewing and copying photographs.

The library contains a broad selection of books; there are also maps and guidebooks to borrow.

The swimming pool is open from 8 am each day.

Most UK terrestrial channels can be viewed on the satellite television in the lounge.

Drinks with meals are free and unlimited; a minibar and wine list is available for drinks at other times, for which a nominal charge is made.

It may be possible to order an english newspaper; please ask for details.

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