

Cycling Europe

FRANCE: THE CANAL DES DEUX MERS BORDEAUX TO SÈTE

Self-Guided Cycling - 12 Days/11 Nights 2020

The 'Canal des Deux Mers' links the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. This bike tour leads you along the Canal de Garonne from Bordeaux to Toulouse, then joins the Canal du Midi, a UNESCO World Heritage site, to the Mediterranean Sea. Follow this ancient canal towpath, undoubtedly the most beautiful canal in Europe, and built between 1667 and 1681 in order to link the Mediterranean to the Atlantic Ocean. There are no cars or industry to ruin the vista and cycling the old tow path along the canal takes you through vineyards, wheat fields and picture perfect villages. Lovers of culture and architecture are in for a real treat.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival in Bordeaux

On arrival take the time to explore Bordeaux. Take a walk along the Garonne docks. Discover its stunning architecture, the Grand Theatre, St Andrew's Cathedral, and the Place des Quinconces. This city, a UNESCO World Heritage site, will fill you with enthusiasm for its quality of life, the green airy spaces, its gastronomy and its wine of course!

Day 2: Bordeaux – Rauzan | 46 km

Once you have crossed the Garonne in Bordeaux, follow the bike path 'Roger Lapébie' (French racing cyclist) through vineyards and forest. This path uses an ancient railway track

which leads you to the heart of the 'Entre-des - Deux-Mers'. You will leave it to reach your accommodation in Rauzan, a medieval village dominated by its imposing castle.

Day 3: Rauzan – Marmande | 69 km

You leave Rauzan and reach the bike path. It ends in Sauveterre-de-Guyenne, a fortified village from the 13th century. Follow quiet countryside routes, before joining the Canal des-Deux-Mers in La Réole, a small village overhanging the Garonne. Continue along the Canal to reach Marmande, the tomato capital city!

Day 4: Marmande – Agen | 64 km

Cycle along the Canal to Agen. Two stops are must-be-seen places. The first at Le Mas-d'Agenais with the church St. Vincent, pearl of the French Renaissance and the 'Christ on the Cross' from Rembrandt. The second is in Damazan, a fortified village from the 13th century. Arrive in Agen over one of the longest canal bridges.

Day 5: Agen – Moissac | 43 km

Follow the river passing through Valence d'Agen, a medieval village with a rich cultural and natural heritage. You arrive in Moissac, an unmissable stage of St Jacques de Compostelle pilgrimage. Visit the ancient Benedictine church, its cloister and the church which has on display one of the greatest exhibits from the Romanesque Art period.

Day 6: Moissac – Toulouse | 68 km

During this stage, enjoy the quietness of the Canal before joining the lively and well-known "Ville rose". The numerous villages welcome you for lunch breaks or relaxation. You arrive in Toulouse, away from the traffic, via the Canal du Midi. You must visit the town centre! Walk around the well-known 'Place du Capitole', the Basilica St Sernin, the Jacobins' monastery...

Day 7: Toulouse – Castelnaudary | 61 km

The 'Canal du Midi starts from the 'pink city' so-called for its numerous brick constructions. Start this stage by crossing 'Lauragais' country with its numerous farms where ducks and geese enjoy a peaceful life, swimming and disturbing cyclists along the canal. Moreover, it is also a land of well-being and gastronomy. Castelnaudary famous for its 'Cassoulet', will welcome you and invite you to taste its local cuisine.

Day 8: Castelnaudary – Carcassonne | 41 km

In the heart of Cathar country, discover the traces of their crusades all along this stage, which will guide you towards Carcassonne and its impressive medieval city. Classified as World Heritage by UNESCO, admire one of the most beautiful fortifications of Europe.



Day 9: Carcassonne – Homps or Olonzac | 42 km

Cycle between the Aude River and the Canal, punctuated with pine and plane trees. Each village hides a treasure to discover. See the canal bridge of Orbiel and the Argent-Double aqueduct.

Day 10: Homs or Olonzac – Béziers | 64 km

Cross through charming and typical small villages such as Paraza and Le Somail. Follow the winding canal bordered by olive trees and vines and reach the lively port of Capestang. Cycle past the Malpas tunnel, Europe's first navigable canal tunnel, to reach the famed 9 locks of Fonsérannes, then onto Béziers.



Day 11: Béziers - Sète | 50 km

Cycle along the canal on a pleasant cycle path towards the Mediterranean Sea. Reach Les Onglous lighthouse, the termination point of the Canal du Midi where the canal flows into the Étang de Thau. Skirt the beaches to arrive in Sète.

Day 12: Arrangements end after breakfast.

GRADE: Moderate to challenging with some climbs.

2020 DEPARTURE DATES:

Start any day March to October (subject to hotel availability).

2020 COST PER PERSON IN EURO

	2*/3* Hotels	3*/4* Hotels
Double/Twin	€1595	€1899
Single Supplement	€ 570	€725
Half Board (9 dinners)	€330	€305

EXTRA NIGHTS, INCLUDING BREAKFAST, PER PERSON

Bordeaux	€89 - €135 twin/double	€84 - €100 single room supplement
Sète	€62 - €112 twin/double	€39 - €89 single room supplement

2020 BIKE COSTS

Bike Rental (21-speed men's or ladies)	€ 140
Electric Bike Rental	€ 320
Bike with 2 rear saddlebags, 1 front bag, lock, helmet, repair kit	

2020 COST INCLUDES:

- 11 night's accommodation
- MEALS: Breakfast daily plus 2 dinners
- Luggage transfers
- Detailed route maps and directions, tourist brochures
- City taxes
- 7 day service hotline

GETTING TO BORDEAUX:

Trains operate from Paris Montparnasse Railway Station to Bordeaux St Jean Railway Station.



Book through:

A Walker's World

Don't just see the world. Experience it.

Ph 09 4867473 Fax 09 484 0091

Email: info@walkworld.co.nz

