

CARCASSONNE – FORTRESS CITY OF THE LANGUEDOC



Date: 10 – 19 September 2010
Type of Tour: Easy Riding
Mountains & Lakes
Historical Interest

This is a relaxing ten-day tour through rural France, including a visit to the walled, medieval city of Carcassonne – used several years ago as ‘Nottingham Castle’ in the film “Robin Hood – Prince of Thieves”. On our way to Carcassonne we will pass through spectacular regions including the Loire, Limousin, Auvergne and Languedoc. Close by are Andorra, the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean and the city of Toulouse, all of which can be visited during your free time in Carcassonne.

This tour will appeal to those who prefer slightly lower mileages, riding through rural

France, a spot of sight-seeing and overnight stays at some wonderful locations with fine cuisine.

Day 1 (10 September) – Portsmouth ferry

The tour party will take the overnight ferry from Portsmouth to St Malo, with cabin accommodation reserved. The ferry leaves at 20.30hrs, allowing plenty of time for dinner and a nightcap before retiring for the night. During the crossing there will be a briefing of the day ahead.

Day 2 (11 September) – St Malo to Saumur

After an early morning arrival in France the tour will head south, keeping away from the worst of the traffic towards the Loire Valley. As usual,

coffee and lunch stops will be taken en route. Upon arrival in the Loire we will stop at the town of Saumur, where we will stay in an elegant hotel with comfortable rooms, an excellent restaurant in the garden and a wonderful view over the river. (Mileage: 165)

Day 3 (12 September) – Saumur to Rocamadour

After breakfast we will continue south past Limoges, with the option of visiting the haunting historic village of Oradour sur Glane. Obliterated by the Nazis one afternoon during WW2, the village has been left exactly as it was by the French, as a memorial. The tour then continues through the increasingly dramatic scenery of the Limousin region, towards the unique

location of Rocamadour – a town which appears to have been stuck to the cliff face. Those arriving early may take the opportunity to walk down through the tiny cobbled streets. (Mileage: 220)

Day 4 (13 September) – Rocamadour to Carcassonne

The dramatic roads and scenery continue as we wind our way south, past Cahors and Albi, on some fantastic biking roads with magnificent scenery. Eventually, we will reach our destination of the medieval city of Carcassonne – the tour’s base for the next three nights. Our hotel is within the old walls and, once all the tourists have left for the evening, you are free to stroll around and select your restaurant from the wide choice available for dinner. (Mileage: 190)

Day 5- Day 6 (14 & 15 September) – Free days

Over the next two days you will be free to fill your time exploring the old city, walking the ramparts and checking out the shops. Alternatively, there are some amazing roads for those wanting to make the short ride to the Pyrenees, Andorra, the beach resort of Narbonne on the Med coast, the city of Toulouse, or even Spain for a spot of lunch. Each night we will return to Carcassonne for dinner in the old town at your choice of restaurant.

Day 7 (16 September) – Carcassonne to Vals les Bains

Today we leave Carcassonne

and head north along more biking back roads, taking time to visit the magnificent new bridge at Millau – a triumph of British design! Then on through the Languedoc and Rhone Alpes regions to our next overnight stop at a World of BMW favourite – an elegant hotel located in the village of Vals les Bains. With its reputation for excellent food, many will dine in tonight. (Mileage: 235)

Day 8 (17 September) – Vals les Bains to Dijon

The tour continues its way north on Day eight, along the valley of the Rhone, past the city of Lyon and on towards the wine growing regions of Burgundy and Beaune. Tonight’s destination is the city of Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, where we will stay at an elegant hotel, close to the city centre. Again, the hotel has an excellent restaurant but the city has many other dining options to choose from. (Mileage: 225)

Day 9 (18 September) – Dijon to Reims

After breakfast we will head away from the city, continuing north towards the Champagne region, passing the city of Troyes on the way. As we are in Champagne you may take the opportunity to pause in Epernay, the home of many of the great Champagne Houses, all of which line both sides of the Avenue de la Grand Champagne – it is quite a sight! We will then continue on to the capital of the region, Reims, for our last night of the tour where we will enjoy

a final group dinner together. (Mileage: 190)

Day 10 (19 September) – Reims to Calais

Those with an interest in motor racing, and particularly Grand Prix racing of the 50’s and 60’s, may wish to make a small diversion to see the remains of the old Reims GP circuit. The pits complex around the start/finish line has been restored and a reunion meeting now takes place each year, with classic cars competing from all over Europe. You’ll then have the option of a quick Autoroute blast, or a last ride along the back roads, towards Picardy. We will then congregate at the port of Calais for the afternoon ferry back to Dover. The ferry is at 15.25hrs, with a latest check in time of 14.45. (Mileage: 190)

Rider Price: £1,375
Couple Price: £1,695

Tour includes: return ferry fare with cabin accommodation on the outward sailing; halfboard accommodation in Saumur, B&B in Rocamadour, three nights accommodation in Carcassonne (one with dinner), B&B in Vals les Bains and Dijon, halfboard in Reims; the programme as outlined; all the necessary maps and route details; travel pack; local parking charges; a World of BMW Tour Leader to accompany the group; and VAT.

Not included are: fuel; lunches and dinners (except where specified); drinks, tolls or travel insurance.

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