



Tour Information



Cathars to Crusaders





Travel

Passports

You may need to renew your British Passport if you are travelling to an EU country. Please ensure your passport is less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left on it) and has at least 6 months validity remaining from the date of travel. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Swiss valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel.

For more information, please visit: [passport checker](#)

Visas

As a tourist visiting from the UK, you do not need a visa for short trips to most EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. You'll be able to stay for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

For further information, please check here: [travel to the EU](#)

French consulate: PO Box 57, 6A Cromwell Place, London SW7 2EW; Tel (020) 7838 2000/1. Information Service: Tel (0891) 887 733, Fax: (020) 7838 2046. Opening hours: 0900-1130 (and 1600-1630 for visa collection only) Mon-Fri (except British and French national holidays).



Tickets

Included with this documentation is an itinerary which includes a reference number for your flight. At check-in you will need to quote/show this and you will be issued with your boarding pass. **Online check-in is not available for this booking.** Visit the British Airways website for more information: www.britishairways.com

Please check that the details on your documentation are accurate and that all names are spelt correctly and match the names on your passport. Your flight ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Departure Tax

UK Flight Taxes are included in the price of your holiday.



Baggage Allowance

We advise that you stick to the baggage allowances advised. If your luggage is found to be heavier than the airlines baggage allowances the charges at the airport will be hefty.

With British Airways your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45 x 25cm including handles, pockets and wheels, and one personal bag, such as a handbag or computer bag. For more information please visit: www.britishairways.com

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Border Control

At border control, you may need to:

- show a return or onward ticket.
- show you have enough money for your stay.
- use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queueing.

Taking food into EU countries

Please note, you are not able to take meat, milk or any products containing them into EU countries.

Transfers

On arrival in Toulouse, transfer by coach to your hotel in Carcassonne, The Donjon (1 ½ hour drive).

Special Requests

If you haven't already done so, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



Accommodation

Hotel Donjon, Carcassonne

The four-star Best Western Hotel Le Donjon is part of the heritage of the medieval citadel of Carcassonne. Located in the heart of the city and surrounded by the city's ancient ramparts, this hotel offers a high standard of accommodation and service. Facilities here include comfortable rooms with private bath/shower, TV, telephone, safe and wi-fi. The hotel also offers a bar, an adjacent brasserie and a tranquil enclosed garden.

For more information visit their website
<http://www.cite-hotels.com/best-western-donjon/?lang=en>



Food

Typical dishes include *Cassoulet* (casserole of haricot beans, mutton, pork or sausages and preserved goose), *Confit de Canard* (pieces of duck preserved in the bird's natural fat for extra taste), *tapenade* (luscious paste made with olives, olive oil, anchovies, capers and garlic). Truffles, asparagus, wild mushrooms and oysters are local products you will see on menus.

Crème Catalane (baked custard with a thin and crisp caramel coating) and *Clafoutis* (flan like dessert made with local grown apricots, cherries and peaches) are traditional Languedoc Roussillon desserts.

Almost all restaurants offer two types of meals: *a la carte* (extensive choice for each course, generally more expensive) and *le menu* (a set meal at a fixed price).

The bill (*l'addition*) will not be presented until it is asked for, even if clients sit and talk for half an hour after finishing their meal. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required.

Generally speaking, mealtimes in France are strictly observed. Lunch is as a rule served from noon to 1330, dinner usually from 2000-2130, but the larger the city, the later the dining hour.



Drink

Wine is by far the most popular alcoholic beverage in France, and the choice will vary according to region. With 400'000 acres under vines in the region, Languedoc Roussillon is responsible for about a third of France's total wine production. As early as the 1st century AD, in his *Natural History*, Pliny the Elder mentions wine production in this area, the roman province of Gallia Narbonensis.

Languedoc Roussillon mainly produces red wines, such as *Corbières*, *Côtes du Roussillon* and *Coteaux du Languedoc*. The sparkling *Crémant de Limoux* and the sweet *Muscat* are well appreciated white wines.

In elegant restaurants the wine list will be separate from the main menu, but in less opulent establishments will be printed on the back or along the side of the *carte*. The waiter will usually be glad to advise an appropriate choice. If in doubt, try the house wine; this will usually be less expensive and will always be the owner's pride.

Meals included in the holiday

Breakfast daily and two dinners.



Destination

Forty years ago, nobody had heard of 'Cathar country', the term had not yet been coined. 'Cathar country' was first used by the tourist service of the Aude department of southern France, to create a coherence between many of the remarkable local historic monuments that marked the area's turbulent history.

In the early Middle Ages, the France of today was a mix of kingdoms, duchies and counties, some with allegiance to the French crown, others with loyalties elsewhere. "Languedoc" was the generic name given to the southern half of the country, where they did not speak French at all, but a family of languages between French and Spanish known as "les langues d'oc", or Occitanian. Some areas in this "Occitania" were largely independent, others belonged to the Holy Roman Empire, others, including parts of "Cathar country", to the kingdom of Aragon.

As in later centuries, religious dissent was a way by which local rulers and the people could assert their differences and cultural independence from the great powers of the day, that included the Catholic church and the Kings of France.

'Cathar country's' fortified hilltops, castles and towns remain to this day a stark reminder of the area's turbulent history.

For more information visit:

<https://www.france.fr/en/occitanie-south-of-france/list/all-you-need-to-know-about-the-cathar-castles-in-5-minutes>

Details of places of interest included in the tour:

Carcassonne

The citadel of Carcassonne is a perfectly restored medieval town. Crowning a steep bank overlooking the River Aude, it offers a fairy-tale skyline of turrets and ramparts. The walled city, some parts of which date back to the 5th century, was extensively restored in 1853. Highlights of the fortified old town include the *Château Comtal* and the *Basilica of St-Nazaire* which houses the famous Siege Stone, the *Musée Lapidaire* and the *Porte Narbonnaise*, the gateway to the old city, which is almost like stepping back in time.

For more information about Carcassonne, visit:

<http://www.tourism-carcassonne.co.uk/>

Chateau de Queribus

Perched more than 700 metres high on the southern ridge of the Corbières, the massive silhouette of this castle looms over the vast panorama that stretches below. The castle was the last stronghold of the Cathars, falling in 1255. A mere 15 – 20 men were all that were required to man the castle so clever were its systems of defence. It remains to this day a monument to the dramatic events that have marked the turbulent history of this border country.

Chateau Peyrepertuse

The name Peyrepertuse is derived from the word Pèirapertusa, Occitan, meaning Pierced Rock. The castle ruins are impressive, set high on a defensive crag. From the approach road it is difficult to see where the rock stops and the castle starts.

This immense fortress, 800 metres above sea level is equal in size to that of the City of Carcassonne. By the quality of its constructions, Peyrepertuse is probably the most remarkable example of military architecture of the Middle Ages. It lost its strategic importance in 1659 but remained in use till the Revolution.

Abbaye de Frontdroide

Founded in 1093 by a few Benedictine monks, Fontfroide was linked in 1145 to the Order of Cîteaux and quickly became one of the most powerful Cistercian abbeys in Christianity. The abbey is located in the heart of the Fontfroide Massif made up of 4000 hectares of unspoiled nature. During the Crusade against the Albigensians, it asserted itself as a bastion of Catholic orthodoxy in the face of Catharism.

For more information about Abbaye de Frontdroide visit:

<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/france/fontfroide-abbey>

Narbonne

The charming town of Narbonne is bisected by the 17th century *Canal du Midi*, with the restored medieval quarter to the north, where most of the sights are to be found. These include the impressive 13th century *Cathédrale Saint-Just et Saint-Pasteur*, the *Archbishops' Palace* and "horreum," an intriguing underground warren of granaries and grain chutes dating from the 1st century BC when

Narbonne was the capital of the largest Roman province in Gaul.

For more information about Narbonne, visit:
<http://www.narbonne-tourism.co.uk/>

Rennes le Chateau and Rennes les Bains

Rennes-le-Château is a small French hilltop village that is known internationally, and receives many visitors each year, predominantly due to various conspiracy theories about an alleged buried treasure discovered by its 19th-century priest Bérenger Saunière, the precise nature of which is disputed by those who believe in its existence. Mountains frame both ends of the region—the Cevennes to the northeast and the Pyrenees to the south. The area is known for its scenery, jagged ridges, deep river canyons and rocky limestone plateaus, with large caves underneath.

Chateau Arques

During the 11th century, the village of Arques was at a crossroads, linking Fenolhédès to Carcassès. By the end of the 12th century, a single seigniorial tower in the centre of the village was the only evidence of the power of the Termes family. In 1260, Olivier de Termes sold Arques to Pierre de Voisins, a powerful French knight. His grandson, Gilles de Voisins, began the construction of the castle in 1280, and decided to expand the village. Gilles and his descendants built a castle-residence away from the centre of town. They must have called upon the King's craftsmen, at work in Carcassonne and in the whole Corbières region, to build this magnificent residence, which combined comfort with military power.

For more information visit
<https://www.payscathare.org/les-sites/chateau-d-arques>

Chateaux de Lastours

This castle is made up of four royal fortresses, Cabaret, Tour Régine, Surdespine and Quertineux, that join forces along a long, dry ridge which dominates the village of Lastours. The remains of the medieval village can still be seen on the slopes. Here, the history of Bronze Age settlers intersects with that of the Cathars, villagers, craftspeople and farmers, all seeking protection.

Reading Suggestions

Marcus Cowper, *Cathar Castles: Fortresses of the Albigensian Crusade 1209-1300: No. 55*

Andrew Phillip Smith, *The Lost Teachings of the Cathars: Their Beliefs and Practices*

Jérôme Sabatier, *Carcassonne A World Heritage Site: Travel guide Carcassonne, medieval City - 2019 Kindle Edition*

Your Lecturer/Guide

Julian Humphrys. Julian read history at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, has worked at historical sites both in Britain and overseas and is now Development Officer at the Battlefields Trust. He has a very infectious enthusiasm for history and has published numerous books on castles and battles. He currently leads more than a dozen tours for Travel Editions and imparts his extraordinary historical knowledge with wit and panache, making a tour led by him both an educational and entertaining experience.

Tour Manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions, please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.



The Basics

Climate – The weather in Languedoc Roussillon at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.

Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – French.

Religion – Roman Catholic.

National holidays – New Year's day (01 Jan); Easter Monday; Labour day (01 May); Victory in Europe day (08 May); Ascension day; Whit Sunday; Whit Monday; National day (14 Jul); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' day (01 Nov); Armistice day (11 Nov); Christmas day (25 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you are eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it is advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

Shops and museums – Department stores are open 0900-1830 Monday to Saturday. Most shops are closed between 1200-1430. Some food shops (particularly bakers) are open Sunday mornings. Many shops close all day or half-day Monday. Please note that most museums close on Mondays.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – The guarantee of free mobile phone roaming throughout the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway has ended. Check with your phone operator to find out about any roaming charges that might be applied after 1st January 2021. A new law means that you are protected from getting mobile data charges above £45 without you knowing. Once you reach £45, you need to opt in to spend more so that you can continue using the internet while you are abroad. Your phone operator will tell how you can do this.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one awards with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment, and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

Before you travel, make sure you have got a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or travel insurance with health cover.

You may not have access to free emergency medical treatment and could be charged for your healthcare if you do not have an EHIC or GHIC when visiting an EU country, or travel insurance with full healthcare cover when visiting Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. If you have an EHIC it will still be valid while it remains in date. Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) will be valid if you are travelling to an EU country.

For further information about the GHIC please visit: <https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7841 023807

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Consulate Marseille

24 avenue du Prado

13006 Marseille

France

+33 (0)4 91 15 72 10

Marseilleconsular.marseille@fco.gov.uk

Mon, Wed and Fri: 0900 to 1230. Outside these hours a consular Emergency Service is in operation and can be contacted on +33 (0)4 91 15 72 10

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