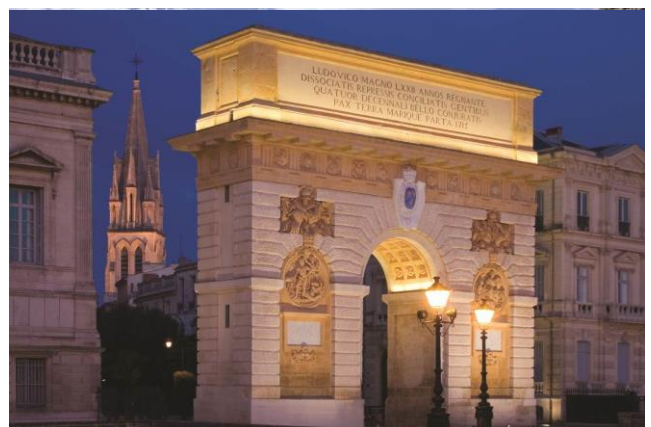


Tour  
Information



# Christmas in Languedoc Roussillon





## Travel

### Passports

Please ensure your 10-year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to France.

### Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

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

You will be issued with a return train ticket.

Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate. Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Standard Premier on Eurostar tickets is indicated by two asterisks in the class type section in the top right hand corner. A light meal will be served to passengers travelling Standard Premier on Eurostar. Standard class Eurostar tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although there is a buffet car serving drinks and snacks.

TGV tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although a buffet car is available.

### Train Seats

On all legs of the journey you have reserved seat and carriage numbers which are shown clearly on your ticket.



### Baggage

As with most trains, passengers are responsible for carrying baggage onto and off the train. Baggage can be stored on overhead shelves or at the entrance to the carriages. Trolleys are available at St Pancras and Lille, but bags do need to be carried on to the platform. Porters are sometimes but not always available at St Pancras.

Travel Editions recommends a luggage delivery service called **thebaggageman**, where your suitcase can be picked up from your home before departure and delivered straight to your hotel; therefore removing the worry about carrying your cases onto and off the trains.

For further information:

<http://www.thebaggageman.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.

### Transfers

On arrival, transfer on foot about 200 metres to your hotel, the Oceania Montpellier Hotel.

### Special Requests

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



## Accommodation

### Oceania Montpellier Hotel

A four-star hotel ideally located in the heart of Montpellier city centre, built in 1898 and modelled on the Belle Epoque hotels on the Cote d'Azur, and an extensive refurbishment was completed in 2016. The hotel's restaurant, La Closerie, serves contemporary Mediterranean cuisine. Bedrooms are contemporary with private bathroom facilities, air-conditioning, free wifi, TV, safe and minibar.

For more information visit their website

<https://www.oceaniahotels.co.uk/h/hotel-oceania-le-metropole-montpellier>



## 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. In Sète enjoy the traditional fish stew, *Bourride*, made with fresh monkfish and served with a garlic mayonnaise.

*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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

### **This tour is on a bed and breakfast basis and includes;**

- Christmas Eve dinner at the Pullman Hotel restaurant.
- Christmas Day dinner at the Pullman Hotel restaurant.



## Destination

Step into the past wandering through the streets of *Saint-Guilhem-le-Desert*, be confronted by wonderful modern architecture at the *Millau Viaduct*, enjoy characterful seaside towns and experience Cathar history at the breath-taking citadel of *Carcassonne*.

From our base in the delightful southern city of Montpellier visit all the beautiful sites the region of Languedoc Roussillon has to offer.

### Places of interest included in the tour:

#### Montpellier

The capital of the Languedoc-Roussillon region, Montpellier is an attractive and lively southern city, and the perfect base for touring this area. The main sights here include the *Promenade de Peyrou*, a grand 18<sup>th</sup> century square dominated by the *Chateau d'Eau*; the old town lined with 17<sup>th</sup> century mansions including the *Hotel des Trésoriers de la Bourse*; the 12<sup>th</sup> century *Towers de la Babote and Des Pins*, and the *Musée Fabre* that houses an excellent collection of French paintings. Eating out here is an affordable delight with plenty of restaurants catering to most tastes and budgets.

Explore the vibrant quartier Saint Roch for excellent restaurants.

For more information about Montpellier, visit:  
<http://www.ot-montpellier.fr>

#### Millau Viaduct & St-Guilhem-le-Desert

Stretching 1.5 miles over the Tarn River valley, the *Millau Viaduct* has been hailed as one of the engineering wonders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and it is certainly a spectacular sight. Standing 1,125 feet tall it is the highest bridge in the world, taller than the Eiffel Tower and more than 100 metres taller than Canary Wharf. The huge bulk of the 242,000 tonne structure, designed by British architect Lord Norman Foster, is belied by its elegant lines, described by its creator as a "sculpture in the landscape."

Remotely situated in the Hérault Valley, the stunningly picturesque village of *St-Guilhem-le-Desert* grew up around the *Abbaye de Gellone* founded by William of Aquitaine in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. It is dominated by the strikingly simple *Romanesque*

*Abbey church*, famed for its possession of a fragment of the True Cross.

For more information about the Millau Viaduct, visit:  
<http://www.leviaducdemillau.com>

For more information about the St-Guilhem-le-Desert, visit:  
<http://www.saintguilhem-valleeherault.fr>

#### Carcassonne and Narbonne

The citadel of Carcassonne is a perfectly restored medieval town. Crowning a steep bank overlooking the River Aude, it offers a fairytale skyline of turrets and ramparts. The walled city, some parts of which date back to the 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

The charming town of Narbonne is bisected by the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> century *Cathédrale Saint-Just et Saint-Pasteur*, the *Archbishops' Palace* and "horreum," an intriguing underground warren of granaries and grain chutes dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC when Narbonne was the capital of the largest Roman province in Gaul.

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

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

#### Nîmes, Aigues-Mortes & the Camargue

Located between the sea and the Cevennes hills, Nîmes is one of the most attractive towns in Mediterranean France. The city was established by the Romans, on the edge of the Mediterranean plain, some twenty-five miles inland from the sea; and to this day, Nîmes has the finest collection of Roman remains in France. The perfectly preserved walled town of *Aigues-Mortes* ("Place of Dead Waters") is approached across the salt marshes of the Petit Camargue just to the east of Montpellier. The fortified town was established by Louis XI in the 13<sup>th</sup> century to consolidate his power on the Mediterranean and was built to a strict grid pattern.

Now marooned three miles from the sea, it was from here that Louis XI twice departed for the Crusades.

The Camargue region is a protected area of outstanding natural beauty and numbers wild horses and migrant flamingoes amongst the wildlife it accommodates.

For more information about Nimes, visit:

<https://about-france.com/cities/nimes.htm>

For more information about Aigues-Mortes, visit:

<http://www.ot-aiguesmortes.fr>

For more information about the Camargue, visit:

<http://www.visitprovence.com/en/territory/camargue>

## Pézenas and Sète

The charming and compact town of Pézenas is easily appreciated in a gentle stroll that takes in most of its (well-indicated) sights, such as the *Hotel des Barons de Lacoste*, the *Maison des Pauvres* and the *Porte Faugères*. Host to medieval fairs, seat of the Governors of Languedoc during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and adopted by Molière and his *Illustre Theatre* troupe of actors, Pezenas is delightfully rich in history and culture.

The fishing port of Sète is very much a working town as well as a tourist seaside resort, and its quayside restaurants selling fish straight off the boat are as likely to be frequented by sailors as visitors. Sights here include the *Grand Canal* lined with Italianate houses decorated in pastel colours and seafood restaurants and the *Marin Cemetery* above the town, where poet Paul Valéry is buried.

For more information about Pézenas, visit:

<http://www.pezenas-tourisme.fr>

For more information about Sète, visit:

<http://www.en.ot-sete.fr/>

## Christmas

It is traditional in France for families to have their main Christmas dinner on Christmas Eve. Most shops will be closed on Christmas Day although there will be a limited selection of bars and restaurants open. Your tour manager will have details of opening times and Christmas services.

## 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.

## Reading Suggestions

**Graham Robb, *The Discovery of France*.**

A general introduction to French culture, landscape and history, it also features an excellent insight into the distinctive character of France's regions.

**Bernard Levin, *From the Camargue to the Alps: A Walk Across France in Hannibal's footsteps*.**

As the title suggests, English journalist Bernard Levin follows the Carthaginian military commander's path across France to Italy, describing history, landscape and culture on his way.

**Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy, 1766*.**

**Laurance Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy, 1768*.**

Both 18<sup>th</sup> century authors travelled through France, to Nice, continuing along to Italy. Sterne's personal and sentimental account can be seen as a response to quarrelsome and deriding Smollett's.

**Rupert Wright, *Notes from the Languedoc***

Wright describes Languedoc's history, culture and renowned inhabitants in a light hearted fashion, making this a easy, enjoyable read.

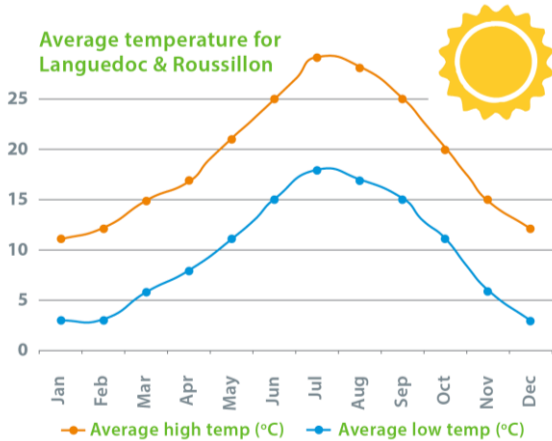
**Angela Murrills (author) & Peter Matthews (illustrator), *Hot sun, cool shadow: Savouring the food, history and mystery of the Languedoc***

Award-winning food writer Murrills gives a delightful account of the region's history, culture, and of course, delicious food and wine.



## The Basics

**Climate** – The weather in Languedoc Roussillon at this time of year is likely to be cold, 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** – Montpellier has wide variety of shops. Small towns have quaint boutiques and beautiful markets.

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, in which case they will probably close Monday. 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** – You should be able to use your mobile phone in France, depending on your operator and contract.

**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 does award 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](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

### 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

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also 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)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

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

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



## Emergencies

**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 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

**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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