

Tour
Information



The Rhone Valley by Rail





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Please ensure your 10 year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit.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 by coach to Tain l'Hermitage (approx. 30 minutes) and the Pavillon de l'Ermitage 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

Hotel Pavillon de l'Ermitage Tain l'Hermitage

Owned by the renowned Chapoutier wine merchants, the Pavillon de l'Ermitage is a modern four-star hotel conveniently located in the centre of the wine town of Tain l'Hermitage with a selection of shops and restaurants nearby. It is also a 5 minute walk to the Chapoutier wine cellars and the Valrhona chocolate factory!

Hotel facilities include a restaurant, bar, swimming pool (seasonal opening) and wi-fi. Rooms all have a private bath/shower, TV, telephone and hairdryer.

For more information visit their website

<http://www.pavillon-ermitage.com/gb/hotel-tain-hermitage.html>



Food

The splendours of Rhone Valley cookery start with pates featuring ham, goose and game. Superfine sausages and preserved meats are a feature. Exceptional amongst these are the saucisson de Lyon (air-dried sausage) used in Lyon's trademark dish, saucissons aux pommes (sausages with potatoes) and Saucisson chaud au Macon (pork sausage cooked in red wine) or the andouillettes, (smoked sausages often made from veal and served with a mustard sauce) or rosette sausages or boudin blanc (veal or chicken sausages). Quenelles de brochet (pike dumplings) are usually served with sauce Nantua (a creamy crayfish sauce) is one of the best known Rhone dishes and are light and savoury. Chicken quenelles are also served. You can follow this with a Lyonnaise salad which includes chicken livers and lamb shanks. Meat lovers will enjoy game such as mousse de pigeon, (pigeon terrine), or tablier de sapeur (literally, fireman's apron - a beef tripe cut in pieces, breaded, grilled and served with garlic butter) or Chevreau a l'Ail et Herbes Sauvages (Baby Goat with Garlic and Wild Herbs) or Grillades de boeuf a la moelle (grilled steak with bone marrow). Patisseries specialize in extremely rich chocolate gateaux which make great desserts.

Rhone's favourite cheese is Saint Marcellin, a soft white goat's cheese, great with Cotes de Rhone wines. Or indulge in superb regional cheeses such as Beaufort, Tomme de Savoie, Reblochon, Chevrotin des Alpes, and Dauphinois.

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. Cotes de Rhone wines are world renowned. The various AOC wines of the Rhône Valley region are produced by over 6,000 wine growing properties including 1,837 private wineries and 103 cooperatives. The entire Rhône region produces around 4 million hl of wine each year, of which over half is classified under the Côte du Rhône and Côte du Rhône-Villages appellations.

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 price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily

Dinner – two dinners in the hotel restaurant



Destination

The culturally diverse centre of France, the Rhone Valley is a world renowned wine region, and offers a wealth of sights, ranging from the caves and prehistory museum at Aven d'Ornac to the lively cities of Lyon and Grenoble, a steam train ride with spectacular scenery, wine and chocolate tasting, and the hidden and relatively unknown Vercors mountain range.

Places of interest included in the tour:

Tain l'Hermitage

Situated on the banks of the Rhone directly opposite Tournon, and overlooked by hillside vineyards Tain l'Hermitage is famous for its Hermitage and Crozes-Hermitages AOC wines. There is also the Ecole du Grand Chocolat in the Valrhona chocolate factory on the main street.

Lyon

Dramatically sited on the banks of the Rhône and Saone rivers, France's second city, Lyon, has long been a vital gateway between north and south. Rich from industry that spans back to the 16th century, Lyon is a charming city, renowned as the gastronomic centre of the country with a wealth of excellent restaurants from humble bistros to Michelin-starred centres of gastronomy and is bordered by the two important wine regions of *Beaujolais* and *Côtes-du-Rhone*. Sights here date back to Roman times with two theatres which still stage events (and an excellent Gallo-Roman museum). The old town is an atmospheric warren of cobbled streets, covered walkways and Renaissance palaces, perfect for a leisurely promenade. The main sights include the *Basilique de Notre-Dame de Fourvière*, the *Cathédrale St Jean*, the 15th century *Hotel de Gadagne* that houses two museums (Museum of Lyon history and Museum of puppets) and the *Chemin du Rosaire*, a beautiful path that leads down from Fourvière offering spectacular views of the city. A centre for the production and weaving of silk since the Renaissance, Lyon also houses a splendid textile museum.

For more information about Lyon:
<http://www.en.lyon-france.com/>

Train de l'Ardeche

The historic steam train line, dating back to 1891 runs from Tournon to Lamastre, winding gently through glorious scenery along the Gorges du Doux climbing up the Ardèche mountain to Mastrou.

For more information about the train de l'Ardeche:

<http://trainardeche.fr/wp/en/>

Vercors & Grenoble

The Vercors is one of the most magnificent regional parks in France, a spectacular landscape of mountains, waterfalls, caves, gorges and forests. Grenoble is a vivacious place nestled amongst the peaks of the Belledonne, Chartreuse and Vercors mountains and is, surprisingly, France's lowest city. Home to the 1968 Winter Olympics, it is a thriving university city with a buzzing arts scene whilst at its centre you'll find a tightly packed maze of modern and medieval buildings. Highlights include the cable car to the *Fort de la Bastille*, the lively *Place St-André* in the heart of the medieval city, the 13th century *Church of St-André* and several museums.

For more information about Grenoble:
<http://www.grenoble-tourisme.com/en/>

Aven d'Ornac

The Cité de la Préhistoire is a fascinating museum detailing the lives of our ancestors from 350,000 years ago, brought to life through sound and 3D animations.

Adjoining the museum are magnificent limestone caves. Discovered in 1935, the cave system stretches out over 10,000m² with roofs reaching up to 30m. Note that you will descend 121m on foot along uneven paths with lots of steps. Suitable footwear should be worn. You ascend by lift.

For more information about Aven d'Ornac please visit:
<http://www.orgnac.com/en/>

Caverne Pont d’Arc

Newly opened in 2015, the Caverne Pont d’Arc is the largest decorated cave replica in the world with an extraordinary collection of paintings, drawings and engravings from the Chauvet Cave, a UNESCO site, which was only discovered 20 years ago and is not accessible to the general public.

The replica features full-scale reproductions of 14 different species of animals including cave bears, woolly rhinoceros, mammoths and big cats.

For more information about the Caverne Pont d’Arc visit:

<http://en.cavernedupontdarc.fr/>

Travel books to read

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.

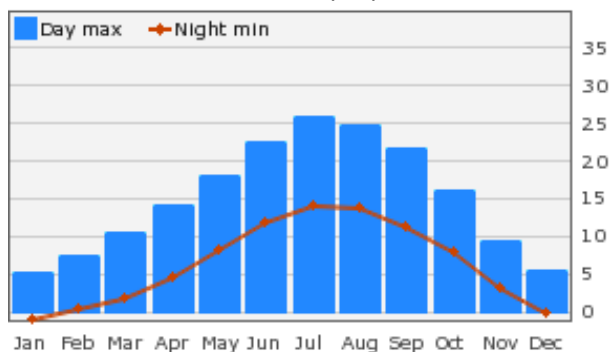
Tour manager

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 Savoie at this time of year is likely to be pleasant with similar temperatures to the UK, 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're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to

carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

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 – Lyon has a wide variety of shops. Smaller towns will 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

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

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 20 7431 8201 or

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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