

Viva Travels goes to the Tour de France!



6 nights/7 days

**Arrival day:
July 21**

**Arrival city:
Geneva**

**Departure day:
July 27**

**Departure city:
Avignon**

**Price for 7-day
tour: \$3,650***

* Prices are per person, double occupancy. 12 people or less: \$3,899.



Les Alpes to Provence

Tour Highlights

- View stages 17, 18 and 20, three very exciting stages of this Tour!
- Watch stages 16, 19 and 21 on television at our hotel terrace.
- Climb the Hors Category Col de la Colombière on race day from the same challenging direction of the stage. You also have an option to climb the easier side and still view the stage from the top.
- Experience the legendary Hors-Category Mont Ventoux for the final major climb of the Tour, sure to be one of your most memorable climbs of all time.
- Optional climbs up Col des Saisies, Col des Aravis, Col de



la Croix Fry and Col de la Forclaz

- Ride through beautiful vineyards, lavender groves and medieval villages in Provence on two days.
- View the finale on TV on our final night on a terrace while sipping a local Cote du Rhone!

Accommodations

3 nights in a very nice 3* hotel in the swanky ski town of Megève, and 3 nights in a typical Provencal Mas in the Lubéron. Both have delightful pools; the hotel in Megève has a spa.

What makes this tour so special?

Cycling routes and ability level

Riders should be of intermediate level or above, although with properly focused and consistent training, we believe a rider of any level can tackle most of these routes/climbs. All guests will be sent a cycling training plan to help prepare for this magnificent week of riding. Daily mileage will be 40 – 120 km (25 – 80 miles) with elevation gains of 3,000 – 6,500 feet (or more if you select additional options). Most days have options to shorten or lengthen the ride, with van support available on most routes. Van access will be limited on the Tour routes due to road closures.

Non-cycling partners

We will make every effort to include non-cycling partners on race days, although we cannot guarantee access along the climbs (viewing options are available from the bottom, or as far up as one can hike). Non-cycling partners can ride in the van or select from a plethora of other outdoor activities such as hiking, exploring villages, relaxing poolside, spa services at some locations, renting mountain bikes, or shopping. Non-cycling partners may consider renting a vehicle for full flexibility, although we cannot offer any discounts for non-cycling guests.

Experience does matter!

Jennifer Sage, proprietor of Viva Travels, has been leading and organizing bicycle tours in France since 1989, working for several high-end bicycle tour companies before starting her own specialized Tour Company in 2003. Her familiarity with France, French culture, history, language and joie de vivre makes for a very special experience. Her familiarity with the Tour de France and with cycling in general allows her to select an itinerary and routes to maximize your experi-



ence. For her tours, she selects guides with a special flair for human interaction and service as well as experience.

With Viva Travels, there is no need to change hotels often or to take a daily bus from stage to stage. In this way, you'll spend more quality time riding and less time shuttling.

The first hotel is located in the swanky ski town of Megève, conveniently located close to most of the famous beautiful climbs of this region. Our second hotel is located near the famous Lubéron village of Gordes in sunny Provence, the land of lavender, olive groves, vineyards and Roman and medieval villages. Your climb up the venerable Mont Ventoux will be a lifelong memory for you, where you'll be able to witness this historic stage on the penultimate day of the Tour de France.



On the final day of the Tour, we will explore more medieval villages and ruins amongst the vineyards and olive groves on our bicycles, without the Tour traffic, and then ride back to the terrace of our hotel to

watch the finale on TV over a glass of local wine! The next morning, we'll shuttle you to the train station in Avignon for departure to Paris or Geneva.

Viva Travels Alpes Tour to Provence Tour Itinerary

July 21-27, 2009



Day 1: July 21

Meet your guides at the Geneva train station/airport in the morning for a transfer to Megève. We will help assemble your bikes followed by a moderate warm-up ride to familiarize you with the area. If you're feeling adventurous, you can climb the Col des Saisies not far from our hotel. Tonight, we'll have a very special welcome cocktail and banquet at our hotel where your guides will give you the exciting details of the week.

Day 2: July 22, Stage 17

TdF Route: Bourg-Saint-Maurice to Le Grand Bornand

Mileage options: 60-98 km/37-61 miles.

Our hotel is right on today's stage route, perfect for non-cycling partners! Cyclists will ride along the stage route to Sallanches where we'll climb up the Col de Romme and continue on to stake our position at the top of the Hors Category Col de la Colombière. Return via the beautiful Col des Aravis with views of Mont Blanc. Tonight, dinner on your own in Megève..



Day 3: July 21, Stage 18

TdF Route: Annecy to Annecy Time Trial

Mileage options: 100-130 km/62-81 mi (shorter options available).

The Lac d'Annecy is the perfect place for the Time Trial with many viewing spots along the route. You'll have several choices to access the course; ride there via the Col des Aravis and maybe even add on the Col de la Croix Fry, or take a short van shuttle to access the amazing bike paths of the region to bring you to the south end of the lake where you can ride part of the course. For either option we recommend tackling the short but

steep Col de la Forclaz with its incredible views overlooking the lake. Then settle into watching the time trial. We also recommend a swim in the lake, one of the cleanest of Europe! The van will shuttle you back to our hotel (unless you prefer to ride). Tonight, a special dinner of local *Haute Savoie* specialties.

Day 4: July 24, Stage 19

TdF Route: Borgoin-Jallieu to Aubenas.

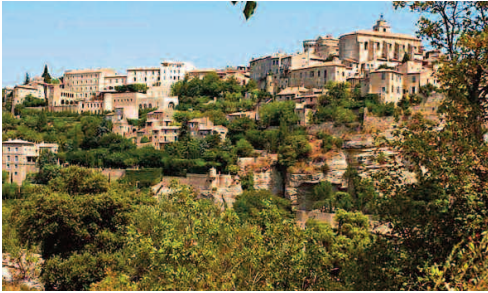
Mileage options: 50 km/31 mi. Longer options available.

It's time to transfer to the land of olive groves, vines and lavender! An early departure will allow us plenty of time to take a pleasant ride to Fontaine de Vaucluse, and Vénasque, listed as one of the most beautiful villages in France (*Plus Beaux Villages*). You'll then enter the holm oak forests to climb the Col de Murs to the Abbaye de Sénanque, surrounded by fields of lavender still tended by the monks today. From the abbey you'll descend into the fairy tale village of Gordes, another *Plus Beaux Village*. We'll return in time to view the last climb of the stage into Aubenas on television. Dinner together at a very nice restaurant near our hotel.

Day 5: July 25, Stage 20

TdF Route: Montélimar to Mont Ventoux.

Mileage options: The ascent is 21 km/13 mi. Your total depends on how much riding you prefer before or after the stage, up to 40 – 80km/25- 50 mi.



Today is the day you will remember forever! A short shuttle will take you to within 20-30 km of Bédoin, to warm up your legs before this climb. The bottom half of the climb is in the forest, but before long you'll emerge onto the moonscape that makes Mont Ventoux so daunting. As we climb, we'll keep a lookout for where we want to view the arrival, but our goal is the top! Following the stage, you have the choice to ride all the way back to our hotel on small un-trafficked roads, or to jump in the van for a lift. Tonight, dinner on your own in Gordes.

Day 6 - July 26 Stage 21

TdF Route: (Montereau-Fault-Yonne to Paris Champs Elysées).

Mileage options: 42-65 km/20 – 40 mi.

A day of pure Provencal enjoyment on the Perched Villages circuit, riding through one quaint village after another, each one vying for your favorites list. It will be too difficult to pick a favorite; each one has its own special quaintness and flair; Ménerbes, a Plus Beaux Villages, Bonnieux and its steep cobblestone alleys leading to the ancient church overlooking the valley, Lacoste, the ruins of the Marquis de Sade manor, Rousillon and its endless shades of red and ochre. All these villages, which came to life in the book *A Year in Provence*, are now yours to explore. You can make this an easy day, or add on even more villages over more hillsides!

After a dip in the pool back at the hotel, we have a “date” with the television and a bottle of sparkling wine to celebrate the victor of this year's Tour de France! We'll continue our celebration with a final banquet together.

Day 7: July 27

After breakfast, we will escort you to the TGV train station in Avignon to depart for Paris or Geneva. Or, stay a few extra days in paradise on a self-guided tour.

Why aren't we viewing the finish in Paris?

The Tour organizers created a challenge by scheduling Mont Ventoux on the second to last day. It is a 6 hr drive, or a 3+ hr train to Paris. There is no way to ride up Mont Ventoux and still be able to catch a train that evening to Paris, and we didn't want to put you on a bus directly after your hard ride (without a shower) only to arrive well after midnight. A very early departure the next morning by train would still not get you into Paris with enough time to get to the hotel and then to stake a claim along the Champs Elysée for good viewing – the crowds would already be thick enough that you'd be standing on tip-toes the entire time. A VIP section on the Champs would have added \$600 dollars to the final price so we opted against that.

Missing the amazing Mont Ventoux was not an option, so we were pretty sure that you would prefer a leisurely ride in the vineyards to standing on a concrete roadside all day.

However, you can still view the finale in Paris if desired! If it is your dream to watch the finish in Paris, we will refund you \$165 from the tour price and arrange an early taxi on the 25th to take you to Avignon for a 7:30 am TGV to Paris. All additional expenses (taxis, train, hotel in Paris) are your responsibility, but we will make all arrangements and provide you with a handbook with tips on viewing the Tour de France in Paris.

Tour Extensions

Arrive 3 days early for our Alpes to Ventoux tour for a memorable climb up the mythical Alpe d'Huez



Only \$1,199*

The Tour de France organizers left Alpe d'Huez out of the 2009 Tour, which gives us a wonderful opportunity to climb this famous mountain without Tour traffic and to train for and achieve a stellar time!

July 18: We'll pick you up at the train station in Grenoble and drive to our lovely inn at the top of Les Deux Alpes. After assembling bikes, we'll take a moderate ride in the afternoon, with only a few climbs, in order to save your legs for tomorrow's epic experience. Dinner at our hotel in Les Deux Alpes.

July 19: Today is the day you climb the epic Alpe d'Huez. Take your time, rely on the van for support if needed, or go for your own personal best up the 21 switchbacks of the Alpe. Photos from professional photographers will be available so you will remember this moment forever! Dinner on your own in Les Deux Alpes.

July 20: Another famous climb awaits you today, up the Col du Galibier, one of the most beautiful views in the Isère (bottom left). On the return, you have the choice of riding up the 12km to Les Deux Alpes, taking a chair lift to the village (yes, with your bike!) or taking the van.

We'll load up the van in the late afternoon for the drive to Megève. Dinner together in Megève.

July 21: Today is the start of the regular 7-day tour, but you have an advantage. Explore Megève, go hiking, take the day off of from cycling, or meet the group later for a mild climb up the Col des Saisies. Or if you want even more riding, we'll give you route notes for a longer more challenging ride in the region. There are no shortage of activities!

* double occupancy. Includes pick up in Grenoble, 3 nights accommodation, 3 breakfasts, 2 dinners, van support, and transportation to the start of the main tour in Megève.

Stay a few days longer in Provence in a self-guided capacity

From \$180/pp/day (double occupancy).

There's so much more riding in the Lubéron, you won't want to leave after our tour is over! We can provide you with highlighted maps and detailed route notes for more incredible riding, plus all the additional information and tips you'll need for self-guided cycling. Includes accommodation, breakfasts, route notes, maps and tips. Transportation to Avignon not included.



Alpes to Ventoux Tour Details

Alpes 8-day Tour: \$3,650*/pp

For fine accommodations, stage viewing opportunities and maximum riding time, this tour is an exceptional value! Maximum 20 guests (*fewer than 13 guests requires a slightly higher fee of \$3,899).

Ride/view up 3 stages, 6 days of riding. Change hotels only once. Single supplement \$600. A deposit of \$1,000 is required at registration. The balance is due on April 15th.

Price includes transportation from the airport/train station in Geneva to the start of the tour and to the train station in Avignon at the end of the tour; 6 nights accommodation in charming boutique 3-star hotels; hotel tips and taxes; all breakfasts, four dinners including a gastronomic farewell banquet on the final night; one gourmet picnic lunch you will never forget; a welcome cocktail on our first evening; van support en route providing encouragement, refreshments and a lift if needed; two bilingual guides to assist you along the way who take care of every detail; detailed route notes and highlighted maps; Tour de France viewing tips and stage information; historical and cultural information; packing tips; water bottle and a phone card. In the months prior to departure, receive via email Tour de France updates and anecdotes, and training tips** to help you prepare for your trip.

Not included: airfare, transportation to pick up point or from departure point, five lunches, two dinners, alcohol/beverages at meals, incidentals, or bicycles (bring your own bicycle. Minimal rentals available – please contact us soon to reserve a bicycle if available).

The pick-up and drop-off point are the train station (which is also the airport) in Geneva, and the train station in Avignon. We recommend you arrive/depart by plane in Paris or Geneva. Viva Travels can help arrange travel plans prior to or after our tour, including airfare, train tickets, accommodations and automobile rentals for extended stays. Please contact us for more information.



** All guests receive a training guide and training tips. Jennifer Sage, owner of Viva Travels, is a Certified Personal Trainer, Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist and a Master Instructor for Team Spinning USA. Your training program will be geared specifically with climbing in mind!

Help us fight cancer!

For every person who signs up for a Viva Travels tour, we will donate \$20 to Team Fatcyclist: Fighting for Susan, a team participating in Lance Armstrong's Livestrong Challenge to raise money to find a cure for cancer.



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