

Art and Culture Andalucía

Provence - Art & Architecture

Wednesday 2nd to Sunday 6th September, 2026



Marseille Vieux Port

This is a wonderful opportunity to see some of the best art and architecture that Provence has to offer, as well as enjoying exceptional food and wine. We stay at carefully selected and well-positioned hotels in Aix-en-Provence and Nîmes, excellent bases from which to explore the surrounding areas.

Everything is taken care of – we know just where to eat and how best to travel around. The hotels provide breakfast, and many restaurant meals are also included in the price, as this is the best moment to discuss the art you have seen with like-minded art enthusiasts.

Join us for an uplifting five days in late summer, an ideal time to tour Provence.

“The whole future of art is to be found in the South of France.”

Vincent van Gogh. Arles. 1888.

Wednesday 2nd

Aquabella Hotel & Spa, Aix-en-Provence. Meet in the hotel lobby at 15.30.

16.00 -19.00. Musée Granet, & Jean Planque Collection

The Musée Granet itself has an excellent collection of French 19th Century art, particularly Cézanne. Just nearby, the stunning, white Penitents' Chapel houses the collection of Jean Planque (1910-1998), donated in 2011. Consisting of some 300 paintings, drawings and sculptures ranging from the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists (including some Cézanne, Monet, Van Gogh, Degas) to the major artists of the twentieth century such as Bonnard, Picasso, Braque, Léger, de Staël and Dubuffet.



Baigneuses. Cézanne. 1895. Musée Granet

20.30. Group supper

Thursday 3rd

Meet in the hotel lobby at 08.30. Coach to Cézanne's Studio

09.00 – 10.00 Visit to Cézanne's Studio.



Cézanne's studio, Aix-en-Provence

The Atelier des Lauves was Cézanne's last workshop, where he worked daily from 1902-1906. In this mythical place, Cézanne reached the maturity of his art, drawing inspiration from walking the paths of his olive grove. Here he created masterpieces such as his paintings of the "Great Bathers". The workshop first opened to the public as a museum in 1954, and following a recent, major restoration of its collections and its building, this emblematic place offers visitors an authentic leap back in time.

10.30 – 11.00 Travel by coach to Chateau La Coste

11.00 – 13.00 Art & Architecture at Chateau La Coste – Private Guided Tour

The collection consists primarily of sculptures by famous artists. It features more than forty pieces of contemporary art, dotted around the hills, olive groves and vineyards, in locations chosen by the artists themselves.

13.00 – 15.00 Lunch at Chateau La Coste – Tadao Ando restaurant

15.30 – 17.00 Travel by coach to Hotel Marquis de la Baume, Nîmes

18.00 – 19.30 Early evening visit to the Roman Arena

Built around 100 AD, shortly after the Colosseum of Rome, it is one of the best-preserved Roman amphitheatres in the world. In Roman times, the building, which could hold 24,000 spectators, functioned as an arena where gladiators battled each other and wild animals. The advent of early medieval Christianity marked the end of these events, prompting the transformation of the amphitheatre into a fortress and subsequently a walled town. The 19th century saw the restoration of the largely intact arena.



Roman Amphitheatre, Nîmes

Free evening in Nîmes

Friday 4th

Meet in the lobby at 09.00. Short walk to Maison Carrée (3 mins)

09.30 – 10.30 Visit to Maison Carrée

We will explore this outstanding Roman temple and compare the building with the exterior of the juxtapositioned Carré d'Art contemporary art museum, designed by Norman Foster.

The Roman building is similar to a Tuscan style temple as described in the writings of Vitruvius. This is one of the best-preserved Roman temples to survive in the territory of the former Roman Empire. It inspired churches in Paris and Poland, as well as the Virginia State Capitol in the USA, which was designed by Thomas Jefferson after a stucco model he had made of the Maison Carrée while he was minister to France in 1785. In September 2023, the Maison Carrée was given UNESCO World Heritage status.

11.00 – 12.30 Visit to the Musée des Beaux Arts, Nîmes (11min walk)

Founded in 1821 and originally housed in the Maison Carrée, the museum has since 1907 been housed in a building designed by the architect Max Raphel, which was renovated by the architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte in 1987. The collection now includes 3,600 works. The current director, Barbara Gouget, is responsible for innovative exhibitions which present paintings and sculptures from the 14th to the 19th centuries in imaginative ways.

12.45 – 13.30 Travel by coach to Pont du Gard

13.30 – 16.00 Walk at the Pont du Gard; lunch at Les Terrasses restaurant

A fabulous opportunity to walk across an ancient three-tiered Roman aqueduct, built in the first century AD to carry water some 50km to Nîmes, with lunch al fresco at a delightful adjacent restaurant.



Pont du Gard, Provence.

16.00 – 17.00 Return by coach to Nîmes

Evening – free to further explore Nîmes and its restaurants

Saturday 5th

Meet in the hotel lobby at 09.00.

09.00 – 10.00 Travel by coach to Avignon

10.00 – 11.30 Locally guided visit to the Palais des Papes

As well as its bridge, Avignon is famous for being the seat of the papacy from 1309, when Clement V decided Rome was too violent and unstable, until 1377, when the seat returned to Rome, as the resting place of St. Peter. However, when the pope in Rome died the following year, a conflict arose between Rome and Avignon, resulting in the Western Schism (1378–1417), a period when the Catholic Church had two competing claims to the papacy, one based in Rome and another in Avignon. The Papal Palace in Avignon was built to impress, with its immense scale and was enormously expensive, consuming much of the papacy's income during its construction.



Cathedral and Palais des Papes, Avignon

12.00 – 13.30 Visit to the Musée Petit Palais

Opened in 1976, the museum houses a significant collection of both medieval and early Italian renaissance art. Built in the early 14th century as the residence of the bishops of Avignon, the building occupies the north side of the square overlooked by the Palais des Papes. It was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995



Virgin and Child with St. John. Late 15th Century. Petit Palais, Avignon.

14.00 – 15.30 Bistro lunch.**16.00 – 17.00 Collection Lambert – unguided visit**

This contemporary art museum, occupying two 18th century mansions, focuses on works from the 1960s to the present. Works span from minimalist and conceptual to video and photography, a unique collection of two thousand works of art from the 1960s to the present day, deposited by art dealer and collector Yvon Lambert, including six hundred major works donated to the French state.

17.00 – 18.00 Avignon Cathedral

A world heritage site and a beautifully restored Romanesque building, housing the tombs of popes.

18.30 – 19.30 Return by coach to Nîmes**20.30 Group supper in Nîmes****Sunday 6th.****08.30 Check out of the hotel****09.00 – 11.00 Travel by coach to, Marseilles****11.00 – 12.30 Guided visit to Musée des Beaux Arts**

The museum occupies a wing of the stunning Palais Longchamp, and displays a collection of paintings, sculptures and drawings from the 16th to 19th centuries. The extensive collection includes French, Italian, Spanish and Northern Renaissance artworks. We will see works by Corot, Daumier, Courbet and other great artists.

12.30 – 14.30 Travel by coach to Vieux Port, for a final group lunch.**15.00 – 16.00 Visit to Basilica of Notre Dame de la Garde, Marseilles**

Known to local citizens as *la Bonne Mère*, it is the city's best-known symbol and the most visited site in Marseille. It was built on the foundations of an ancient fort at the highest natural point in the city, 150 metres above the Old Port of Marseille. The first chapel built on this site was completed in 1218, but the current basilica was consecrated in 1864. Because of its strategic location, the site has a varied and colourful religious and military history, matched perhaps appropriately by its highly colourful marble, gilt and mosaic interior.



Basilica Notre Dame de la Garde, Marseilles

16.30 – 17.00 Travel by coach to Marseilles airport

Tutors

Dr. Jacqueline Cockburn is co-founder and director of Art & Culture Travel. She is a course director at the V&A, and also lectures at the Royal Academy and The Art Fund.

Ian Cockburn is co-founder and director of Art & Culture Travel and has an MA from the Courtauld Institute in medieval Spanish art history.

Dr. Kathy McLauchlan graduated at Oxford University and took her Doctorate at the Courtauld Institute. She is a published author specialising in 19th century art, and is also a course director at the V&A.

All are lecturers accredited by The Arts Society.

Fees (minimum 12 people/maximum 18 people): £2,450 per person (shared room). Individual room supplement 20%.

The fee covers accommodation at carefully selected and conveniently located four-star hotels, in Aix and in Nîmes; one night at the Aquabella Hotel & Spa, Aix-en-Provence and three nights at the Hotel Marquis de la Baume, Nîmes, all including breakfasts; teaching and guiding by three specialist tutors over five days; private coach travel around Provence; all museum and other entry fees; all meals except Thursday and Friday evening.

Not included in the fees: Flights, transfers from Marseilles airport to the Boutique Hotel Cézanne, Aix-en-Provence, travel and medical insurance, Thursday and Friday evening meals.

Note: Itinerary subject to change, if necessary.

Fitness: Please note, a good level of fitness and mobility is required for walking and visiting galleries. This is for your own comfort and to ensure your fellow travellers are not inconvenienced.

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