

WALKING & HIKING ITINERARY
CASUAL INN TRIP

BACKROADS
THE WORLD'S #1 ACTIVE TRAVEL COMPANY

Provence

A FEAST FOR THE SENSES

TO RESERVE YOUR
TRIP CALL
800-462-2848 OR
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Important Facts
at a glance

6 DAYS, 5 NIGHTS

Click [here](#) for departure dates
and pricing details

ROUTE RATING

Levels 2–5

See [below](#) for details.

**IN BUSINESS FOR
29 YEARS,
BACKROADS IS
RECOGNIZED YEAR IN
AND YEAR OUT AS
ONE OF THE WORLD'S
TOP 10 TRAVEL
COMPANIES BY
TRAVEL+LEISURE**

Walk through a landscape immortalized by Cézanne, van Gogh and Picasso. Leisurely hikes open the door to the region's most charming towns. Discover the *village perché* of Gordes, the allure of St-Rémy and the Alpilles countryside, and the hilltop towns of the Lubéron. Strolls along the Grandes Randonnées, France's extensive trail network, are highlighted by dramatic vistas and friendly exchanges with locals. All the while, you're treated to delicious cuisine and warm hospitality—a wonderful way to experience the allure of this distinctive geographic area warmed by Mediterranean sun.

DAY 1

Meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks wearing Backroads T-shirts) at 1 p.m. at the Avignon TGV train station. Note: There are two train stations in Avignon—we are meeting at the Avignon TGV station not Avignon Centre. **Please arrive dressed in your hiking clothes, and have a daypack and your rain jacket handy.** See “Arriving & Departing” for additional logistics information.

SHUTTLE TO TRAILHEAD 45 MINUTES

LES ALPILLES ROUTE 4.7 MILES (164-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)

SHORTER OPTION: ORIENTATION TABLE 2.8 MILES (164-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)

Bienvenue en Provence! After meeting we shuttle to a trailhead between the towns of St-Rémy and Les Baux for a warm-up hike along the Grande Randonnée (part of France's extensive network of hiking trails) in the Alpilles Mountains. Enjoy sweeping views of St-Rémy, Les Baux and, weather permitting, majestic Mont Ventoux. Then descend into the Val d'Enfer (Valley of Hell), an eerie landscape pockmarked with caves that, according to legend, was frequented by witches and goblins. This is the valley that inspired Dante to write *Inferno*, the first canticle of *The Divine Comedy*. Make your way to the Auberge de la Benvenuto, a cozy hotel just outside of Les Baux, surrounded by a peaceful garden. This evening we get further acquainted over aperitifs before sitting down to dinner at our hotel's restaurant.
Lodging: Auberge de la Benvenuto

DAY 2

ST-REMY DE PROVENCE ROUTE 10.1 MILES (403-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)

SHORTER OPTION: MOULIN CALANQUET ROUTE 6.5 MILES (403-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)

After breakfast walk up to Les Baux. With narrow lanes, old houses and the ruins of a castle “dismantled” in the 1600s by order of Cardinal Richelieu, Les Baux is a fascinating place to explore. In the Middle Ages, it was home to the Seigneurs des Baux, self-proclaimed descendants of Magus Balthazar (one of the Three Wise Men), who erected fortifications and proceeded to wage incessant warfare on neighboring clans—and eventually each other.

We head to the top of the limestone hills and into the piney woods. Hiking mostly on wide fire trails, make your way down to Moulin du Calanquet for a tour and tasting of its fine olives and oils, followed by a Provençal picnic. As you walk, keep your eyes open for goats



AUBERGE DE LA BENVENGUDO

(1 night) Nestled in a tranquil garden, this hotel offers a swimming pool, a tennis court and comfortable rooms furnished with antiques. Les Baux-de-Provence
phone: 33-(0)4-90-54-32-54
www.benvengudo.com

HOTEL GOUNOD

(2 nights) Along with an expansive garden and a gorgeous swimming pool, this celebrated hotel features guest rooms with a king-size bed, a terrace and luxury Provençal amenities.

St-Rémy-de-Provence
phone: 33-(0)4-90-92-06-14
www.hotel-gounod.com

AUBERGE DU PRESBYTERE

(2 nights) Located in the heart of Saignon, a village dating back to Roman rule, this inn features individually decorated rooms and a restaurant specializing in regional cuisine made from the freshest local ingredients.

Saignon
phone: 33-(0)4-90-74-11-50
www.auberge-presbytere.com

**EACH YEAR,
3 OUT OF 4 OF OUR
GUESTS HAVE
PREVIOUSLY
TRAVELED WITH US OR
BEEN REFERRED BY
SOMEONE WHO HAS**

happily grazing on wild *herbes de Provence*. (These herbs, which include rosemary, thyme and sage, give the local goat cheese *chèvre* its excellent flavor.)

This afternoon's shady walk leads to the Gallo-Roman village of St-Rémy, with its fountains, gardens, cheery cafés and tree-lined boulevards. Still thriving as an artists' haven, St-Rémy has hosted its share of famous names over the centuries: Nostradamus was a native St-Rémois, Albert Schweitzer recuperated here in 1917, Vincent van Gogh spent time in the local asylum, and Gertrude Stein lived here for several years.

Dinner this evening is a true Provençal feast created from garden-fresh ingredients at a favorite local restaurant. *Lodging: Hôtel Gounod*

DAY 3

FREE TIME IN ST-REMY

VAN GOGH WALKING TOUR 1 HOUR

ST-REMY TO CHATEAU ROMANIN 4.7 MILES (175-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)

LONGER OPTION: CHATEAU ROMANIN LOOP 10 MILES (175-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)

OPTIONAL ROUTE OVER THE ALPILLES 5.8 MILES (900-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)

Explore St-Rémy at your leisure this morning. The town's outdoor market—one of the most celebrated in Provence—is a great place to rub elbows with locals and purchase Provençal crafts as well as bread, fruit and cheese for lunch or an afternoon *goûter* (snack).

Later this morning, we gather just outside town to meet charming local guide and scholar Marie-Charlotte Bouton. Madame Bouton leads a tour of St-Paul-de-Mausole, telling us about the asylum's most famous resident Vincent van Gogh, who voluntarily secluded himself here for a year in 1890 after cutting off part of his left ear in Arles. Although it was likely the most difficult period of the artist's life, it was also one of the most prolific, as he produced more than 100 drawings and 140 paintings, including *Irises* and *Wheat Fields with Cypresses*.

After lunch on your own in St-Rémy, head out on a hike along the base of the Alpilles, past vacation homes, vineyards and olive orchards before entering an oak and pine forest near the vineyards of Château Romanin. If you're looking for a challenge, join a Backroads Trip Leader for the strenuous but beautiful climb over the top of the Alpilles and to the Plateau de la Caume. You'll be rewarded with spectacular views of the valley and (on a clear day) Mont Ventoux, the Alps, the Dentelles de Montmirail and even the Mediterranean! (This optional route includes some technically difficult sections with steep slippery rocks and gravel on the descent to Château Romanin.)

The Château Romanin wines are completely organic and the grapes are picked by hand according to the lunar calendar—a production style referred to as “bio dynamic.” The estate's main building is covered with earth so it blends with the terrain, and the interior of its cellar, designed to look like a cathedral, buttresses up against the mountain. It's quite a sight! After a private tour and tasting, walk back to St-Rémy along a canal lined with beautiful homes and fruit orchards, or hop in the Backroads van. Tonight you're on your own for dinner to discover St-Rémy's many culinary treasures. *Lodging: Hôtel Gounod*

DAY 4

SHUTTLE TO GORDES 1 HOUR

GORDES TO RED ROCK ROUTE 6 MILES (492-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)

SHORTER OPTION: GORDES TO DOMAINE DE TARA 4.3 MILES (150-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)

LONGER OPTION: GORDES TO PONT JULIEN 9.8 MILES (531-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)



We provide a variety of route options so you can do as much or as little activity as you like each day.

You don't have to sweat the details! Backroads takes care of everything--from making sure your luggage is waiting for you in your room to appearing with a cool drink or a lift when you need it the most--allowing you to enjoy a carefree vacation full of fun and relaxation.

Traveling with Backroads is about making connections: with places and people, history and culture, fellow travelers--perhaps you'll even discover something new about yourself!

Our Trip Leaders have undergone hundreds of hours of training and are the best in the industry.

WHEN YOU SIGN UP FOR A TRIP, YOU'LL RECEIVE A COMPREHENSIVE TRAVEL PLANNER WITH ALL THE INFORMATION YOU NEED TO PLAN AND PREPARE

SHUTTLE TO SAIGNON 30 MINUTES

This morning begins with a short shuttle to Gordes, a picture-perfect *village perché* clinging to the craggy southern face of the high Vaucluse Plateau. Old stone buildings stand in orderly terraces and khaki-colored cliffs glow amber in the sunlight. Cobblestone lanes lead to shady squares and cafés, while a large 12th-century castle keeps watch from above. We leave Gordes from the south side in order to get picture-perfect views of the town.

Walk along country roads, amid wildflowers, wheat fields, cypress trees and almond orchards en route to Roussillon, which rests on one of the biggest ocher deposits in the world. Adored by artists for centuries, this village is renowned for its striking natural surroundings, namely the Chaussée des Géants, a canyon radiant with 17 shades of ocher. After checking out the canyon, spend time exploring the town, with its beautiful golden-hued buildings and spectacular views over the Lubéron Valley. Roussillon is also a good place to purchase a wide array of Provençal items, ranging from inexpensive souvenirs to fine art. Wander down one of the side streets and you're sure to come upon the ideal restaurant or café to enjoy lunch on your own.

This afternoon we shuttle to Auberge du Presbytère, our hotel in the historically rich village of Saignon. Reputedly one of the 10 oldest towns in France, Saignon's history can be traced to pre-Roman times. The village's lengthy past is visible in the architecture, churches, ancient fountains and picturesque town squares. The vibrant village life revolves around La Place de la Fontaine, where our authentically restored abode is located. Relax by the fountain before gathering for dinner. *Lodging: Auberge du Presbytère*

DAY 5

AIGUEBRUN VALLEY ROUTE 6 MILES (833-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)

LONGER OPTION: CRETE DU LUBERON 8.7 MILES (1,500-FOOT ELEVATION GAIN)

Both of today's rather technical (watch your footing!) and gorgeous hikes begin in Saignon and take you through the remote untouched trails of Provence. You'll walk up and down, and up again, through varying sun and shade, and past an occasional house or farm, enjoying beautiful views of the Lubéron and Aigueburn River Valleys and Grand Lubéron Range.

We stop for lunch at a *ferme auberge* (farm inn) called Le Castelas, which offers sweeping vistas to the west and towering rock formations to the east. The farm is not far from the picturesque 16th-century village of Sivergues (population 39). At 1,935 feet, it's the highest inhabited village in the Lubéron.

After shuttling back to the hotel, relax outside on the terrace and enjoy a *verre de vin* while the sun sets over Saignon. This evening we gather for a farewell dinner at the hotel's cozy restaurant and raise a toast to new friends and an unforgettable Provençal adventure. *Lodging: Auberge du Presbytère*

DAY 6

WALKING TOUR OF SAIGNON 1 HOUR

SHUTTLE TO AVIGNON TGV STATION 1 HOUR

After breakfast we're joined by local guide Francesca Anzilotto, who takes us on a private walking tour of Saignon that includes some otherwise unnoticed corners and reveals tidbits of cultural and architectural history. Later a private coach takes us to the Avignon TGV station. Please see "Arriving & Departing" for end-of-trip logistics.



Route Rating to map your activity level

Backroads' route rating system is the most comprehensive and accurate in the travel industry. To find out how these ratings translate into varying levels of physical challenge and activity, please visit our Web site

—www.backroads.com—

and select the route rating button for the trip of your choice.

LEVEL 2

5–7 miles/day
2–4 hours/day

LEVEL 3

7–9 miles/day
3–5 hours/day

LEVEL 4

9–11 miles/day
4–6 hours/day

LEVEL 5

11–13+ miles/day
5–7+ hours/day

**ASK FOR REFERENCES
FROM PAST GUESTS
WHO HAVE TAKEN THE
TRIP THAT INTERESTS
YOU**



Note

While the information presented here details this trip's planned routes, activities, accommodations, meeting and departing times, we are constantly seeking new opportunities to enhance this itinerary and your experience. Naturally, we will keep you up to date on any changes that may affect your arrival, departure or lodging.

ARRIVING & DEPARTING

Please note that meeting and departing times provided here were current at the time of printing, but are subject to change. **PLEASE DO NOT BOOK YOUR FLIGHTS UNTIL YOU ARE CONFIRMED ON YOUR VACATION AND HAVE VERIFIED THE DETAILS OF ARRIVING & DEPARTING WITH YOUR TRIP CONSULTANT.**

MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

On the first day of the trip, meet your Backroads Trip Leaders at 1 p.m. at the Avignon TGV train station (gare Avignon TGV). Please be aware that there are two train stations in Avignon—we are meeting at the **Avignon TGV station** not **Avignon Centre**. Look for a leader, who will be wearing a Backroads T-shirt, in front of the main entrance to the station (“*sortie nord*”), next to the bus parking area. If you arrive at the Avignon Centre station instead, you’ll need to take a 15-minute taxi ride to the Avignon TGV station. **Please arrive at the trip start dressed in your hiking clothes and have a daypack and jacket handy.**

CONCLUSION OF THE TRIP

On the last day of the trip, Backroads provides a private coach shuttle back to the Avignon TGV train station, arriving in time for you to catch an early afternoon train to Paris or other destinations.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

We suggest flying into Paris and then traveling to Avignon by train. Another option is to fly into Nice (airport code: NCE; www.nice.aeroport.fr) and travel to Avignon by train or rental car. For help arranging air transport to and from your Backroads trip, please work with your own travel agent, the airline directly or an online travel site. For assistance locating a travel agent, please visit www.backroads.com/gettingthere. (Note that most travel agents and online travel sites charge a fee for their consulting services.)

WHERE TO FIND CURRENT AIRPORT INFORMATION

CHECK THESE WEB SITES FOR INFORMATION ON AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION, TERMINALS, SECURITY ADVISORIES AND MORE.

Paris: www.adp.fr (for Roissy-Charles de Gaulle and Orly Airports)

Nice: www.nice.aeroport.fr

TAKING THE TRAIN TO THE AVIGNON TGV STATION

From Roissy-Charles de Gaulle Airport: It’s possible to take the TGV (*train à grande vitesse* or high-speed train) directly from the airport to Avignon. There are several daily departures to the Avignon TGV station; the trip takes from 3 to 3½ hours and costs around \$100.

From central Paris: You can also catch one of the regularly scheduled TGV departures from Paris’ Lyon Station (Gare de Lyon). Travel time is about 2 hours, 40 minutes. Tickets cost around \$90.

From Nice: Several trains run each day between Nice Centre and the Avignon TGV station, taking just over 3 hours. Prices start around \$65.

Visit www.voyage-sncf.com for an up-to-date departure schedule and to make reservations. See the following pages for more details on purchasing tickets, making reservations and more.

TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN ROISSY-CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT (CDG) AND CENTRAL PARIS

Taxi: The fare to central Paris is about \$70, with an additional \$2 per piece of luggage. Fares increase after 7 p.m. and on Sundays and holidays. Although the airport is just 15 miles outside of central Paris, the trip into the city often takes 50–60 minutes because of traffic.

Door-to-door shuttle: This is a convenient and stress-free way to reach your Paris destination. Service is provided at a fixed price, generally \$30–\$40 per person, depending on how many people are in your group. Reservations are required. You can also reserve a private shuttle; the price is based on the number of passengers. We recommend Airport Connection (www.airport-connection.com; phone: 33-(0)1-43-65-55-55).

Air France Coach and Roissybus: Air France buses provide service from all terminals to several specific locations in central Paris, including L'Arc de Triomphe, Gare de Montparnasse and Gare de Lyon. Buses leave every 15–30 minutes (depending on your destination) from 6 a.m.–11 p.m.; single, one-way fares are \$17. Tickets can be purchased at the Air France Coach ticket office at the airport or from the driver. For schedules, specific pick-up/drop-off locations and prices in English, please call the Air France Coach at 33-(0)8-92-35-08-20 or visit www.cars-airfrance.com.

The Paris Transit Authority's (RATP) Roissybus offers service between the airport and Place de l'Opéra (at the corner of rue Scribe) every 15 minutes from 6 a.m.–11 p.m. Cost per person is approximately \$12. Travel time to central Paris ranges from 30 minutes to well over an hour, depending on traffic. Visit www.ratp.info/informer/anglais; or phone Roissybus at 33-(0)1-48-04-18-24.

TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN ORLY (ORY) AIRPORT AND CENTRAL PARIS

Taxi: Expect to pay \$50 for the trip into central Paris. Fares increase after 7 p.m. and on Sundays and holidays. Orly is located about 9 miles south of the city center, a 20- to 40-minute ride, depending on traffic.

Door-to-door shuttle: The Airport Connection (see above) also provides service from Orly to central Paris for around \$20–\$30 per person depending on the number of passengers.

Air France Coach, Orlybus and Jetbus: The Air France bus runs between Orly, Gare Montparnasse and Invalides Metro station every 15 minutes from 6 a.m.–11 p.m. The cost one-way, per person is approximately \$12; average trip time is 30 minutes. For schedules, specific pick-up/drop-off locations and prices in English, please call the Air France Coach at 33-(0)8-92-35-08-20 or visit www.cars-airfrance.com.

The Paris Transit Authority's (RATP) Orlybus provides service every 15–20 minutes to Denfert-Rochereau Metro station for around \$8 per person; average trip time is 30 minutes. Another option is the Orlyval monorail, which leaves each terminal's arrivals area every 7 minutes for the Antony station (for about \$10) where the RER B line heads into Paris. Visit www.ratp.info/informer/anglais for more information.

Hotel Room Rate Guide
(U.S. dollars per night)

Up to \$100	\\
\$101–200	\\ \\
\$201–300	\\ \\ \\
\$301–500	\\ \\ \\ \\
\$501 and up	\\ \\ \\ \\ \\

WHERE TO STAY BEFORE & AFTER YOUR TRIP

SUGGESTED ACCOMMODATIONS

For help arranging pre- or post-trip hotels in conjunction with your Backroads trip, please work with your travel agent or the hotels directly. For assistance locating a travel agent please visit www.backroads.com/gettingthere. (Note that most travel agents charge a fee for their consulting services.)

Of course, we also recommend extending your stay at any of the hotels that we visit on this trip; see the sidebar above for details.

Please refer to the Hotel Room Rate Guide in the sidebar for starting double-occupancy rates. Note that the chart reflects the Internet and/or Best Available rates, which were accurate at the time of printing, but **hotel rates are always subject to change**.

PARIS

HOTEL VERNEUIL

This Left Bank jewel is a guest favorite and considered by many to be the city's best kept secret. It enjoys an ideal location near St-Germain-des-Prés, fine antique shops and the Musée d'Orsay. The cozy and inviting interior, tastefully decorated with classic furniture, Provençal quilts and fine French fabrics, will make you feel right at home. 8 rue de Verneuil, 7th arrondissement; Phone: 33-(0)1-42-60-82-14; www.hotelverneuil.com; 26 rooms. Rates: 🍷 🍷

HOTEL DES GRANDES ECOLES

Ernest Hemingway lived right next door to this peaceful retreat in the heart of the historic Latin Quarter. The hotel's most charming feature may be its flower-filled courtyard garden, which makes for a perfect spot to enjoy a leisurely breakfast *en plein air*. Guest rooms range from medium size to spacious. Early booking is essential. 75 rue Cardinal Lemoine, 5th arrondissement; Phone: 33-(0)1-43-26-79-23; www.hotel-grandes-ecoles.com; 51 rooms. Rates: 🍷 🍷

HOTEL DES JARDINS DU LUXEMBOURG

This is the place to stay if you want to live like Parisian bourgeois without breaking your budget. The hotel is just around the corner from the Luxembourg Gardens on a quiet tree-lined cul-de-sac. Entering past the honey-colored façade, you'll find a welcoming and colorful Art Deco interior. Guest rooms range in size from small to medium; all are elegantly decorated and some have balconies. The hotel has a loyal clientele (Sigmund Freud stayed here), so reserve early if possible. 5 impasse Royer-Collard, 5th arrondissement; Phone: 33-(0)1-40-46-08-88; www.les-jardins-du-luxembourg.com; 26 rooms. Rates: 🍷 🍷

HOTEL BRITANNIQUE

Just a stone's throw from the Louvre, Les Halles, the Pompidou and Notre Dame, the Britannique is a solid three-star value in the heart of historic Paris. The hotel lobby is stylishly decorated with richly colored fabrics, dark wood paneling, upholstered armchairs and 19th-century Anglo bric-a-brac. Expect rooms to be small and modestly furnished. Air-conditioning, soundproofed windows and English-language cable TV and newspapers are nice touches. 20 avenue Victoria, 1st arrondissement; Phone: 33-(0)1-42-33-74-59;

www.hotel-britannique.fr; 40 rooms. Rates: 🌟 🌟 🌟

HOTEL DE NOTRE DAME

You'll find this friendly little inn tucked away on an atmospheric side street on the Left Bank. The hotel is central to some of city's best attractions, yet manages to feel well off the beaten path. Room sizes vary, but tend to be on the small side. What the rooms lack in size, they make up for in charm. 19 rue Maitre Albert, 5th arrondissement; Phone: 33-(0)1-43-26-79-00; www.hotel-paris-notredame.com; 34 rooms. Rates: 🌟 🌟 🌟

HOTEL DE BUCI

You'll feel like a guest in a Parisian home during your stay at the charming Hôtel de Buci, with its elegant individually decorated guest rooms featuring cherry wood furniture and luxurious fabrics. Nestled in the heart of St-Germain—just off boulevard St-Germain—this family-owned haven offers ideal access to shops, bars, cafés, transportation and many of the city's most famous sites. 22 rue de Buci, 6th arrondissement; Phone: 33-(0)1-55-42-74-74; www.bucihotel.com; 24 rooms. Rates: 🌟 🌟 🌟

HOTEL RELAIS SAINT-SULPICE

This charming hotel is located behind the St-Sulpice Church in the heart of the St-Germain shopping district and around the corner from the Luxembourg Gardens. It's tastefully decorated and features a patio where you can relax after a fun-filled day in Paris. The superior rooms with queen beds are the most spacious. 3 rue de la Garancière, 6th arrondissement; Phone: 33-(0)1-46-33-99-00; www.relais-saint-sulpice.com; 26 rooms. Rates: 🌟 🌟 🌟

HOTEL BOURGOGNE & MONTANA

Well-situated on a quiet street across from the Palais Bourbon, just two blocks from the Seine, this boutique hotel is a great find. The suites and superior rooms are uniquely decorated with antique furniture. Some rooms offer views of the Grand Palais or the Assemblée Nationale. 3 rue de Bourgogne, 7th arrondissement; Phone: 33-(0)1-45-51-20-22; www.bourgogne-montana.com; 32 rooms. Rates: 🌟 🌟 🌟

HOTEL LE LAVOISIER

This stylish boutique hotel is located near the Place St-Augustin, within walking distance of the Opéra and the fine boutiques on rue du Faubourg St-Honoré. While there is an energetic spirit here, the hotel has an understated charm, with décor that has been described as “traditionalism-with-a-twist.” 21 rue Lavoisier, 8th arrondissement; Phone: 33-(0)1-53-30-06-06; www.paris-hotel-lavoisier.com; 30 rooms. Rates: 🌟 🌟 🌟 🌟

ARTUS HOTEL

Overflowing with style and whimsy, this hip hotel features unique touches like doors that have been hand-painted by local artists, and zebra-striped chairs in the lobby. Located in the rue de Buci outdoor market area, Artus Hôtel is great fun as well as a peaceful haven in the heart of St-Germain. 34 rue de Buci, 6th arrondissement; Phone: 33-(0)1-43-29-07-20; www.artushotel.com; 27 rooms. Rates: 🌟 🌟 🌟 🌟

AVIGNON

LA BANASTERIE

Located in the heart of town, near the Palais des Papes, this charming bed-and-breakfast

was originally an 11th-century residence. Guest rooms have either a shaded terrace, a balcony or a flowering patio with a fountain, and each is named after a type of chocolate. Computer and Wifi available. All rooms have air-conditioning and breakfast is included. 11 rue de la Banasterie; Phone 33-(0)4-32-76-30-78; www.labanasterie.com; 5 rooms. Rates: 🍷 🍷

HOTEL MERCURE CITE DES PAPES

This modern three-star hotel is the ideal place to discover the charms of the city and make the most of your visit to Avignon. Located on the Place de l'Horloge square, the vibrant center of the old city, you'll be just steps away from its theatre, numerous cafés and the Palais des Papes. Computer and WiFi available. All rooms have air-conditioning. 1 rue Jean Vilar; Phone 33-(0)4-90-80-93-00; www.mercure.com; 89 rooms. Rates 🍷 🍷

HOTEL DE BLAUVAC

There is a familial and unpretentious ambience at Hôtel de Blauvac, once a 17th-century nobleman's home. Located within walking distance of the Palais des Papes, the hotel offers rooms with painted brick walls, vibrant Souleido fabrics, tall windows and oak furniture. To accommodate groups of three or more, some rooms have a built-in loft. 11 rue de la Bancasse; Phone: 33-(0)4-90-86-34-11; www.hotel-blauvac.com; 16 rooms. Rates: 🍷 🍷

AUBERGE DE CASSAGNE

Arriving at Auberge de Cassagne, a quintessential Provençal house set amid flower gardens and century-old trees, you'll feel as though you've come to a friend's home for the weekend. The spacious guest rooms have tile floors, fine antiques and bright toile fabrics. Enjoy superior regional cuisine in the restaurant, where the cozy interior is enhanced by exposed beams, french doors and a stone hearth. 450 allée Cassagne; Phone: 33-(0)4-90-31-04-18; www.aubergedecassagne.com; 30 rooms. Rates: 🍷 🍷 🍷

NICE

HOTEL LE GRIMALDI

Applauded by numerous travel magazines and critics, this boutique hotel has plenty of personality. The atmosphere is friendly and unpretentious, and the location—in the heart of Nice—provides an ideal base for exploring the city. Colorful Provençal fabrics enliven the guest rooms' contemporary décor. 15 rue Grimaldi; Phone: 33-(0)4-93-16-00-24; www.le-grimaldi.com; 46 rooms and suites. Rates: 🍷 🍷

BOSCOLO PARK HOTEL

Chic, not showy, seems to be the theme at this fashionable property, situated in the city center. Most guest rooms have either a terrace or balcony overlooking the Côte d'Azur or the Albert Premier Gardens. Here you'll be treated to pleasant lounges, a piano bar and a private beach. Le Passage restaurant features Provençal cuisine and French wines. 6 avenue de Suède; Phone: 33-(0)4-97-03-19-00; www.boscolohotels.com; 104 rooms, 4 suites. Rates: 🍷 🍷 🍷

We hope you've found this information useful, but nothing substitutes for speaking with one of our experienced Trip Consultants. Please call 800-462-2848 Monday-Sunday, between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific time.