

VERDON GORGE SHORT HAUL ACTIVITY BREAKS

Green Provence and The Grand Canyon of Europe



Located in the south of France, the Verdon Gorge forms the heart of Green Provence. This is the biggest canyon in Europe, with truly breathtaking landscapes, and the setting for our tailor-made activity holidays offering trekking, biking and kayaking!

The following is an example itinerary which can be tailor-made to suit your requirements. We give the choice of either triple activity (kayak, trek and bike) or double activity (trek and bike). Options for tours with tour leader throughout and self-guided tours are offered. We can provide e-bikes in place of standard bikes. The programme assumes you will arrive either by train or coach into Marseille; Nice is also an option. Hotel upgrades and single rooms can be arranged.

Day 1 Arrive Marseille Rail Station : Transfer (Hotel Le Provence) D

You will be met off your Eurostar/SNCF rail connection from the UK at Marseille Train Station and transferred approx. 2½ hours into the Lower Alps of Upper Provence.

You stay tonight in the village of La Palud-sur-Verdon, a perfect base from which to explore the beauty of the Verdon Gorge. Your hotel, the Hotel Le Provence, is run by a French family and made up in the French Provençal style. All rooms overlook the mountains. The hotel is booked on a half-board basis.

Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

This first evening you'll enjoy a welcome dinner à la Provençale, featuring typical southern French cuisine, during which your guide will also present the programme for the following day. This a good chance to ask any questions you may have about the activities, preparation, kit, etc.

Day 2 Lac St Croix & Verdon Gorge: Kayaking & Hiking B, L, D

The first adventure day begins with kayaking in Lac St Croix and the Verdon Gorge, with options for moderate and challenging difficulty levels.

You will be transferred by minibus to the picturesque village of Bauduen (Challenging) or Galetas Beach (Moderate), where you will receive a final safety briefing before taking to the two-man kayaks.



Kayaking from Bauduen (Challenging):

Starting from Bauduen, you will paddle 10km (the length of Lac St. Croix) and explore the Gorge to finish back at Galetas Beach (Plage de Galetas). This will take approximately 4 hours, depending on the weather conditions.

Kayaking from Plage de Galetas (Moderate):

This option sees you start off from Galetas Beach and enter directly into the mouth of the Gorge, covering a distance of 5km in approximately 2½ hours, before returning to Galetas Beach.

The kayaking ends with a picnic lunch at the Plage de Galetas.

The second activity of this day – hiking – can also be offered in challenging or moderate variations, focusing on either the Martel or Bastidon Trails, respectively.

The Martel Trail (marked as challenging as it is the second activity this day):

The Blanc-Martel Trail is one of the most famed hikes in southern Europe. It's a 14km hike through some of the most spectacular sections of the Verdon Gorge, incl. the famous panorama from Point Sublime (pictured). Dropping down to the Verdon River from the Chalet de La Maline, the trail heads first east and then north following sometimes close to the river and at other times far above. There are several points of exposure and two tunnels to walk through. Depending on the strength of the group, the walk from Chalet de La Maline to Point Sublime will take from 4-6 hours to complete.

The Lower Bastidon Trail (Moderate):

This part of the Bastidon Trail is a demanding hike, shorter (6km), but no less picturesque than the famous Martel Trail. The trail contours high above the Verdon River and heads in a westerly direction along the right bank of the Verdon Gorge. As with the Martel Trail, there are points with exposure. Given the several valleys and ridges to be crossed, the trek will take 3-4 hours to complete, with spectacular vistas of the canyon along the way. Highlights include the Ravine de Mainmorte, and the trail ends at the Belvedere de Mayreste, where a fabulous viewpoint marks the end of the trek.



Following the walk, you'll be met by your transfer car for the transfer back to the Hotel Le Provence for a Provençal supper and a well-earned rest!

HIKE ONLY OPTION: For those choosing only to hike this day, then we offer the full Bastidon Trail, a demanding one-day trek, or the Martel Trail, a marginally shorter trek. Picnic lunches provided.

The Full Bastidon Trail (a challenging full day hike):

The Full Bastidon Trail is perhaps the most demanding of the listed trails in the region of the Verdon Gorges. The trek starts from and finishes at your hotel in Palud. Descending 3km from Palud to the Ravine of Mainmorte, the Lower Bastidon trail then follows the Gorge for around 5km to reach Mayreste. Crossing over several valleys and ridges, the trail at times overhangs the Verdon. There is some exposure and iron safety railings are placed on a few sections.

After taking time for a picnic lunch and to admire the views from the Belvedere de Mayreste, continue about 400 metres on the road north. Then a steep and winding climb up the south-facing upper cliff of the Gorge. This tough but rewarding climb offers great views back to the ancient fortress at Mayreste and the Verdon River. Then a lovely forest walk heads east on the ridges high above the Verdon Gorge, before finally descending back down to Palud. This is a demanding 16km trek with over 850m of height gain. Allow around 7 to 8 hours to complete this trek.

The Martel Trail (a moderate full day hike)

We have selected the Martel Trail (described above) as your moderate hike.

Day 3 Verdon Adventure: Cycling B, L, D



The second activity day of your Verdon Adventure will be spent on two wheels, as you explore the region by road bike! Again, we propose moderate and challenging routes.

Tour de Gorges du Verdon (Challenging):

The “Tour de Gorges du Verdon” is a loop around several of the most scenic and iconic passes of the Verdon region, encompassing 100km of road and more than 2000m of altitude! There are no major climbs along the way, though the whole itinerary is uphill with few descents.

This is a full day activity, incl. a lunch break midway.



St. Croix Lake Loop (Moderate):

This route sees you start off at the Plage de Galetas on Lac St Croix. The ride consists of a 60km loop around the lake. It includes one steep climb with inclination of approx. 15%, while the rest of the itinerary is predominantly downhill with only gentle uphill climbs. The total route takes 3.5-4 hours at a moderate pace, and ends at the Plage de Galetas from where the transfer vehicle will take you back to your hotel.

While biking, you will be accompanied by a support vehicle driven by our bike mechanic with onboard medical assistance.

At the end of the day, enjoy a farewell dinner and drink at the Hotel Le Provence.

Day 4 Departure

B

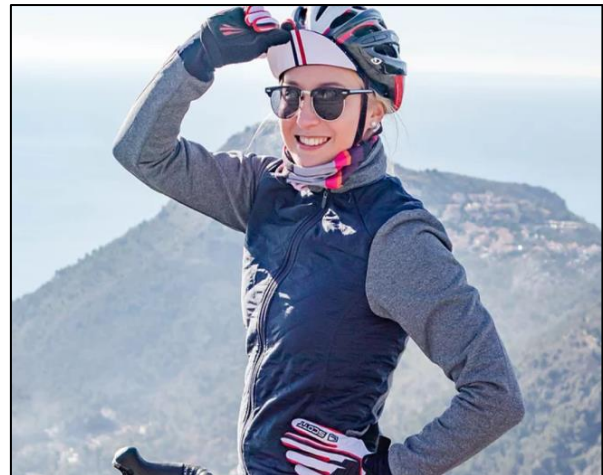
After breakfast at the hotel, you will be transferred by bus to Nice or Marseille Train Station for your return train or you may choose to extend with time on the Cote d'Azur.



Meet the Team



Jeremy Gane, founding director of Gane and Marshall, launched the first Verdon Challenge in April 2019. He is French-speaking and loves Provence and the region around the Verdon Gorge. Jeremy is extremely knowledgeable about adventure travel around the world. He project-managed the 2009 Comic Relief expedition to the summit of Kilimanjaro, and has managed several high profile adventure challenges. If you are interested in an activity-based challenge, Jeremy will be glad to help.



Passionate about cycling, trekking, going places and meeting people, **Aleksandra Bursiak** has worked in travel and event organization in Europe since 2017, mostly in incentive and adventure travel projects. Experienced in designing and guiding tailor-made challenges and incentives for groups and individuals, Aleksandra is always looking for new adventures. Aleksandra is fluent in English, French and Polish.

Please see price guide overleaf

Price guide (based on Two Activities – Hiking and Biking):

Guided: from £1,494 per person in a family of four

*For **Three Activities** please add £75 per person*

Optional:

Single room supplement: £115

E-bike supplement: £119

Rates based on travel in season (April-June and September-October). Please contact us for: alternative group sizes; option to travel to France by Eurostar and French Rail; option to upgrade your hotel to the Spa Hotel at Palud.

Includes:

- Meet & greet service at Marseille or Nice
- All transfers as listed in the itinerary
- Accommodation in Hotel Le Provence 3* (twin / double rooms)
- Breakfast each day
- Lunches or picnic lunch during the activity days
- Evening meals at the hotel
- French & English-speaking tour leader accompanying group throughout
- Guided cycling, hiking & kayaking activities
- Hire of kayaks
- Hire of road bikes
- Back-up vehicle and a bike mechanic

Excludes:

- Rail or coach fare to and from France
- Drinks
- Any meals not listed in the itinerary (e.g. lunch on day of arrival and departure if required)
- Tips

For Self-Guided Tours

Price: from £998 per person

***From the above Inclusions please remove:** Tour Leader, Back-up vehicle and a bike mechanic.*