

HEARTCYCLE BICYCLE TOURING CLUB

Relaxed in Provence

- Dates:** Orientation meeting Sunday April 22, 2018. Riding Monday April 23 - Monday April 30 with departure Tuesday May 1. Lodging included Monday April 30.
- Leaders:** Polly Page, Rich Crocker
- Miles:** 240 miles with 9200 feet
- Rating:** Easy/Intermediate
- Riders:** 18 (plus leaders)
- Price:** \$2,495 (Double Occupancy), \$800 at registration. Balance due Jan 15, 2018. After November 7, Couples or Single private (\$3,095) only. Available rooms only have queen beds.
- Cancellation:** Due to hotel contracts: \$160 after registration to January 2, 2018; January 23, 2018 to February 22, 2018 - 50% of deposit; after February 22, 2018 - no refund. *Travel insurance is strongly recommended*



Relaxed in Provence was designed for relaxed riding with time to pause and enjoy Provence's countryside and small towns.

The tour includes 8 days of riding, 9 nights of lodging, 9 breakfasts, and one group dinner. We overnight in Avignon, Uzès, St. Remy de Provence, and Fontaine de Vaucluse in 3 and 4 star hotels located in the town centers and convenient to shopping and dining. The average daily distance is 29 miles with an average daily elevation gain of 1150 feet. The tour name includes the word RELAXED. It does not include the word EASY. There will be hills. Remember, older interesting, historic town sites were often chosen for their defensive positions which means they were often built UP on the top of the hill.

We anticipate that some folks may leave immediately after breakfast each morning and others may enjoy relaxing and having that second cup of coffee before pulling on the bike shorts. Some will desire a leisurely restaurant lunch over a glass of wine while others will be delighted with a quick bite of bread and cheese from the local Carrefour in the shade of a plane tree. In essence, we expect everyone to ride at their own pace.

You will have daily cue sheets and maps for the rides as well as gpx files for Garmin. Riding through the countryside on minor roads and through ancient towns can involve MANY twists and turns and we recommend using a Garmin rather than having to stop frequently and put on your reading glasses to check the cue sheet. If you have your own Garmin, please bring it along with a European map card. In addition, we will have 6 Garmin loaners.

There will be no daily SAG support along the route. However, small towns and possibilities for a *cafe au lait* or lunch are plentiful. Support service is available for mechanical problems or if an injury or illness prevents you from cycling. Luggage will be picked up from the lobby of the hotel around 9 AM and transported to our next hotel for us.

Bikes are included in the price of the tour. You have your choice of a Hybrid (Scott SUB Sport 20), a Road bike (Synapse Carbon 105 6), or an E-bike (Scott E-SUB Tour 10).

We start and finish in Avignon, France. Avignon can be reached from the states by flying into Paris, Charles de Gaulle (CDG airport) and then either taking the 3.5 hour TGV (high speed train) from the CDG airport to Avignon, or by flying on from Paris to Marseille (Aéroport de Marseille Provence), then taking a free 10 minute shuttle bus to the Vitrolles Airport train station and a 60 to 90 minute Regional train (PACA, cost 18 euros, about \$21) to Avignon Centre. From the train station, it is an easy, uncomplicated, one turn, 5 minute walk to the hotel.

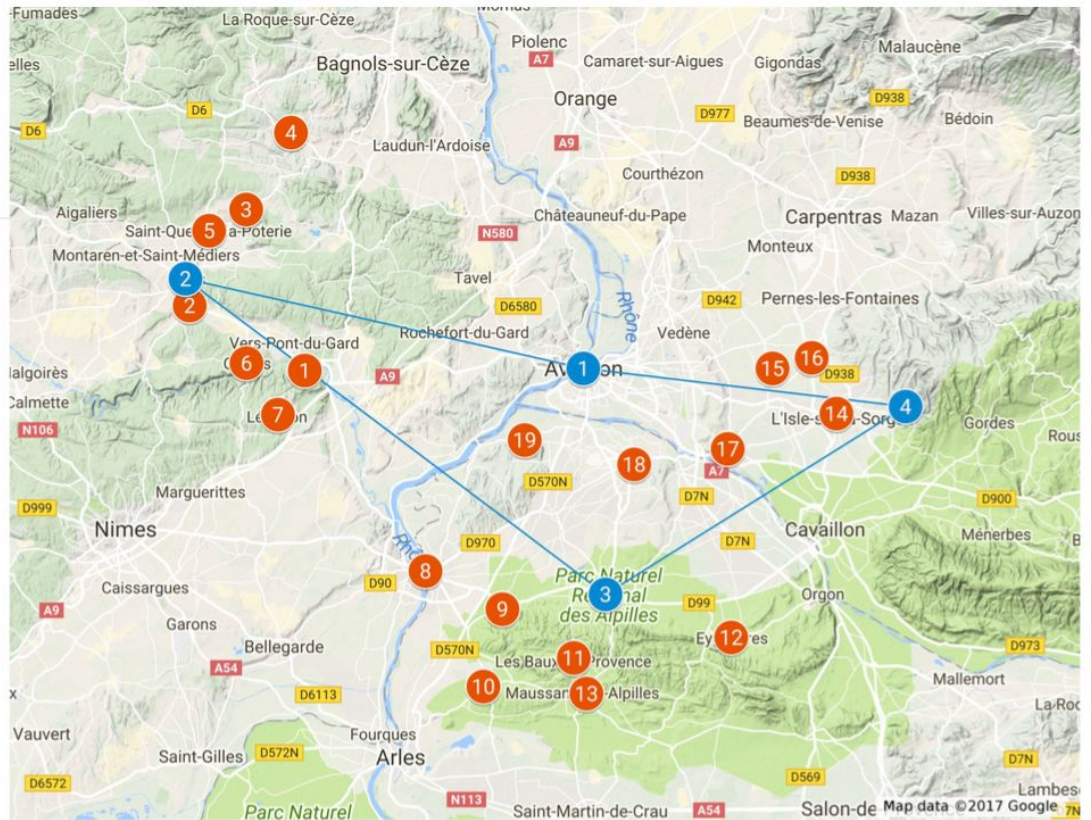
Relaxed in Provence - Heartcycle - April 2018

Overnights

- 1 Avignon 1 and 9
- 2 Uzès 2,3
- 3 St. Remy de Provence 4,5,6
- 4 Fontaine de Vaucluse 7,8

Along Our Route

- 1 Pont du Gard
- 2 Musée de Bonbons Haribo
- 3 Vallabrix
- 4 Cavillargues
- 5 Saint Quentin la Poterie
- 6 Collias
- 7 Ledenon
- 8 Beaucaire/Tarascon
- 9 Saint-Etienne-du-Gres
- 10 Fontvieille
- 11 Les Baux-de-Provence
- 12 Eygalieres
- 13 Maussane-les-Alpilles
- 14 L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue
- 15 Les Grottes de Thouzon
- 16 Velleron
- 17 Caumont-sur-Durance
- 18 Chateaufrenard
- 19 Barbentane



Day 1 Sunday, April 22

Arrive at the hotel in Avignon by 3 PM to check in, pick up bikes, and attend 5:30 PM meeting. There are several restaurants close by or dine in the hotel dining room tonight.

Overnight in Avignon

Day 2 Monday, April 23

Overnight in Uzès

Avignon to Uzes - 32 miles /1700' vertical.

Depart west from Avignon crossing the River Rhone, and passing through Castillon du Gard on our way to Pont du Gard, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The intact Roman aqueduct and bridge stands 165 feet above the River Gardon! Stop at the modern Visitor's Center for the museum and cafeteria or simply pause for a rest and to enjoy the view and a picnic lunch before continuing on to Uzes where we will have our group meal at La Restaurant Parenthese.

Day 3 Tuesday, April 24

2nd night in Uzes

Loop ride from Uzes - 24 miles /1500 vertical

Head north to the villages of Vallabrix, Cavillargues, and Saint Quentin la Poterie (home to 23 pottery workshops and a designated "City and Crafts" *commune*) or you can chose to stay in town and enjoy Uzes which is friendly and calm and has an attractive pedestrian shopping and outdoor cafe area.

Day 4 Wednesday, April 25

Overnight in St. Remy de Provence

Uzes to St Remy de Provence - 35 miles /550 ' vertical.

Begin today riding south to Collias and Ledenon, and then southeast through Beaucaire and Tarascon, where you can visit Chateau de Roi Rene or Chateau de Beaucaire, before heading on to Saint Remy de Provence.

Day 5 Thursday, April 26

2nd night in St. Remy de Provence

Loop ride from St Remy - 27 miles /1500 ' vertical.

Today starts out flat as you head to Molleges . The route then becomes hilly when you turn south to Eygalieres and Maussane Les Alpilles.

Today can also be the perfect non-riding day. Start by following the Van Gogh Walking Tour route to visit the Cloitre Saint Paul de Mausole, the mental asylum where Van Gogh spent a year and produced many of the 150 paintings he created during his time in St Remy. Nearby (a 5 minute walk) is the Site Archaeologique de Glanum, the ruins of an ancient Gallic city where you can do a self guided tour with a brochure in English. If you are eager for more about Van Gogh, the Estrine Musee in St. Remy, has an excellent English audio guide of their Van Gogh section along with a film and slide show.

Day 6 Friday, April 27

3rd night in St. Remy de Provence

Loop ride from St Remy de Provence - 24 miles /1250 ' vertical

We do a counterclockwise lollipop loop riding west and then south through Fontveille ending *UP* on top of the rocky outcrop of Les Baux de Provence - a 2000 year old town made out of stone.(Highly Recommended - 3 star rating from Michelin's Green Guide). There are plenty of restaurants and shops and incredible views. An excellent audioguide explains the ruins of a village and a chateau from the Middle Ages on the same site. Then, almost as soon as you get your helmet and sunglasses adjusted and mount your bike to head home to St Remy, you come around a corner and there is the Carrieres de Lumieres. Inside, within the walls of a bauxite quarry, in the dark, you can experience an extraordinary multimedia show of light, images and music.

Day 7 Saturday, April 28

Overnight in Fontaine de Vaucluse

St Remy to Fontaine de Vaucluse - 30 miles /700' vertical

Leave time today or tomorrow for the 30 minute walk along the River Sorgue to its source, the real 'Fountain of the Vaucluse' where the water of an underground river bubbles up at least 315 meters into a cave and then emerges as the River Sorgue.

Day 8 Sunday, April 29

2nd night in Fontaine de Vaucluse

Loop ride from Fontaine de Vaucluse - 26 miles /820' vertical

Begin the clockwise loop heading south, skirting below the village of Lagnes before turning north to L'Isle sur la Sorgue (pretty with canals and waterwheels and worthy of a stop for lunch or coffee and a walk around). Continue northwest to Les Grottes de Thouzon and Velleron where we turn southeast and head home to Fontaine de Vaucluse.

Day 9 Monday, April 30

Overnight in Avignon

Fontaine de Vaucluse to Avignon - 34 miles /1000' vertical

Depart west from Fontaine de Vaucluse to Caumont sur Durance where we cross the River Durance - leaving the Vaucluse and returning to the Bouche de Rhone *departement*.

Continue west to Chateaurenard and Barbentane where we cross the River Rhone, return to the *departement* of Gard and follow the Rhone north back to Avignon.

Turn in your borrowed Garmin and bikes.

Day 10 Tuesday, May 1

Depart after breakfast

Consider visiting the Roman Theatre Antique, in Orange today or the Palais des Papes in Avignon, both UNESCO Heritage Sites.

For further information contact:

Polly Page at mspollypage@gmail.com

Rich Crocker at richcrocker@hotmail.com.