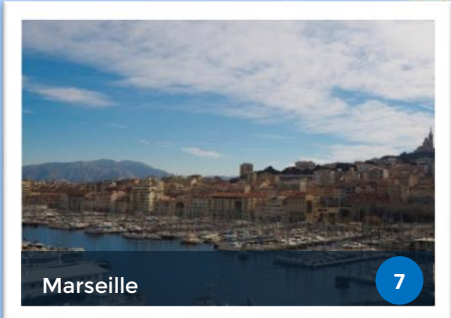
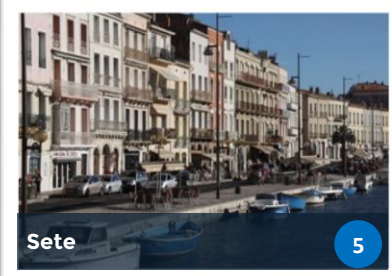
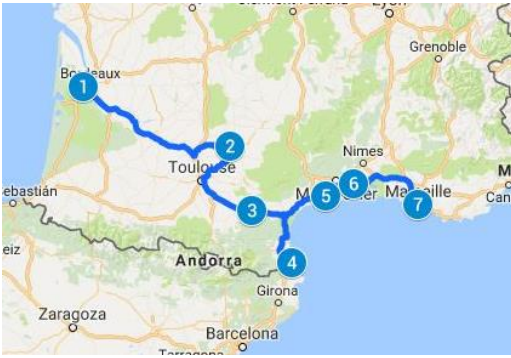




DRIVE TO DISCOVER FRANCE

EXPLORING THE SOUTH OF FRANCE: A ROAD TRIP GUIDE





Guest Blog Series - This guest blog post is written by Janice Chung of the popular travel blog, France Travel Tips.

Road Trip Drive	Distance	Driving Time
Bordeaux to Cordes sur Ciel	174 miles	2 hours 54 minutes
Cordes sur Ciel to Carcassonne	109 miles	1 hour 57 minutes
Carcassonne to Collioure	92 miles	1 hour 32 minutes
Collioure to Sete	109 miles	1 hour 46 minutes
Sete to Aigues-Mortes	33 miles	48 minutes
Aigues-Mortes to Marseille	85 miles	1 hour 33 minutes
To Marseille Provence Airport	15 miles	23 minutes
Total Distance Covered:	615 miles	

The journey from Bordeaux to Marseille along the south of France covers just about 600 miles and takes you to a wide variety of sites and experiences. There are so many opportunities where you can discover the world of wine, fortresses, and châteaux, seaside towns with great seafood, and unspoiled hillside villages.

TO/FROM:

In this road trip guide, you'll begin your journey at the Bordeaux-Merignac Airport and end your journey at the Marseille Airport.

1. Bordeaux: La Cité du Vin

Certainly the southwest area of France is renowned for its wine, and recently Bordeaux opened an interactive museum called La Cité du Vin where one can discover everything there is to know about wine: history, culture, and the wine making process from around the world. The latest technology has been incorporated into the exhibits and visitors are provided with headphones and an electronic guide that syncs to the various displays. Adults and children will find the "Le Buffet Des 5 Sens" (Buffet Of The Five Senses) exhibit particularly interesting as it is very hands-on. When you're ready to depart, pick up your car rental at Bordeaux-Merignac Airport and hit the road!

2. Cordes-sur-Ciel: One of Les Plus Beaux Villages of France

Cordes-sur-Ciel is a town perched high on a hill just north of Toulouse and is so well preserved, you might think you were back in the 1200s when the town was built. There are many homes built in the 1300s still standing. For centuries the town was known as Cordes. In 1993 the town's people decided to change the name to Cordes-sur-Ciel to indicate that it was high above in the clouds ("Cords in the sky").

It has been designated "Les Plus Beaux Villages de France", which means one of the most beautiful villages in France and it is one of the popular places to visit in the south of France too. Today it is a major arts and crafts center with the Cordes sur Ciel Music Festival running each July where concerts are held in the Église Saint-Michel.

3. Carcassonne: Medieval Castle

If you were to imagine seeing a medieval castle, Carcassonne would be the perfect model. It has La Cité, the fortified walled town from the 1200s that became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997. As you might expect from a castle, there's a drawbridge, double walls, and stone towers that form the fortress. Enjoy exploring the ramparts and wandering through the network of cobblestone paths past local stores and restaurants.

4. Collioure: Seaside Relaxation and Hiking

Collioure is a seaside town in the south of France that is just 15 miles north of Spain and therefore has a strong Spanish (Catalan) influence. While not as flashy as some of the towns in the Côte d'Azur, Collioure is known to have one of the best beaches in Europe. It's worth hiking up to Fort Saint-Elme to get a panoramic view of the harbor and 800-year-old fortress (Château Royal de Collioure) which overlooks the bay.

5. Sète: Little Venice of Languedoc

While Sète is a busy fishing port, it is also known as the Little Venice of Languedoc due to the network of canals. Visitors and locals enjoy relaxing at one of the bars, cafes and restaurants which overlook the Canal Royal. If you're interested in art, be sure to check out the Musée Paul Valéry. While pieces related to the sea are often highlighted, recently a major exposition of the work of Spanish painter, Joan Miro was featured. A long, steep hike (or drive) up to Mont Saint-Clair is also worth the journey for the magnificent views of Sète and the Mediterranean.

6. Aigues-Mortes: Medieval Festival

Aigues-Mortes is a medieval walled town located 20 miles east of Montpellier in the Gard department of France. You can walk around the entire perimeter of the town on the upper ramparts where there are video displays in some of the towers. At the end of August, the town holds a medieval festival to celebrate "La Fête de la Saint Louis", named after the town's founder.

7. Marseille's: Harbor

Marseille is the third largest city in France and in 2013, it was named the European Capital of Culture, by the European Union. The Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MuCEM) focuses just on the Mediterranean and it has a large outdoor area giving you great views of the city and harbor. Be sure not to leave Marseille without sampling the seafood which is plentiful and incredibly fresh in this town.