



A FESTIVAL OF ROSES

A LONG WEEKEND IN THE LANGUEDOC

MAY 14TH - 19TH 2020

The village of Couiza is set in the foothills of the Pyrenees, in the valley of the river Aude, from which this area of southern France takes its name. Together with the neighboring departments of Ariège and Pyrenees-Orientales, it forms a region commonly known as Cathar Country.

It is a region with a fierce sense of independence and a long memory. It has been 800 years since the Albigensian Crusade was launched against the heretic Cathars, but it has never been forgotten. In the 12th century, this area of France was not really under the control of the King in Paris at all and the people spoke a different language. At that time the word for “yes” in northern France was “oil.” Down here in the south, it was “oc” – hence this area is also known as the Languedoc (le langue d’oc means, literally, the language of yes). Just recently, in 2016, the French government reorganized the official regions of France and, in a tip of the hat to its historic past, renamed the combined regions of Languedoc-Rousillon and Midi-Pyrenees, as Occitanie – the place where they speak Occitan.

It is also a region of incredible natural beauty. The majestic Pyrenees march down to the fertile valley of the Canal du Midi and the high mountain pastures, with their unbelievable variety of dairy products, give way to endless vineyards, producing such wonderful wines as Corbieres and Minervois.

With Château des Ducs de Joyeuse as our base for four nights, we will be immersed in the history of the region and, each day, we will set off to explore the antiquities of the Aude and Ariège. From the ruins of Cathar castles to the medieval grandeur of Carcassonne, it will be impossible to head home without feeling touched by the shadows of the past!



CHÂTEAU DES DUCS DE JOYEUSE



CARCASSONNE

THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED):	\$2460
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:	\$ 520

Airfares are available from most U.S. departure cities. Please call for details.

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

HOTELS: 4 nights in the Château des Ducs de Joyeuse
COACHING: All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
MEALS: Breakfast daily, 2 lunches, 3 dinners
GUIDES: Discover Europe tour director throughout
EXPENSES: Portage of one large suitcase per person
ENTRANCES: Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour. Insurance information will be sent to each registrant on receipt of deposit.

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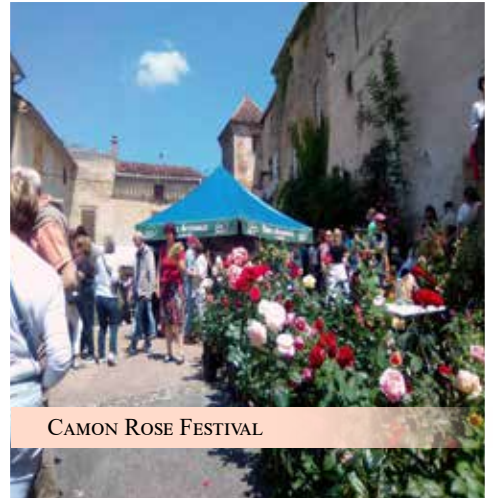


THURSDAY, MAY 14TH - Departure from your US gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

FRIDAY, MAY 15TH - Your arrival in Toulouse will be met by Discover Europe’s representative for the transfer (1hr 30min) to the Château. The rest of the day is free to unpack, relax and begin exploring the neighborhood. For those with the energy, your tour guide will lead a short hike up into the hills overlooking the village for magnificent views all the way to the Pyrenees. This evening the group will gather for drinks before dinner. **(D) OVERNIGHT: COUIZA**

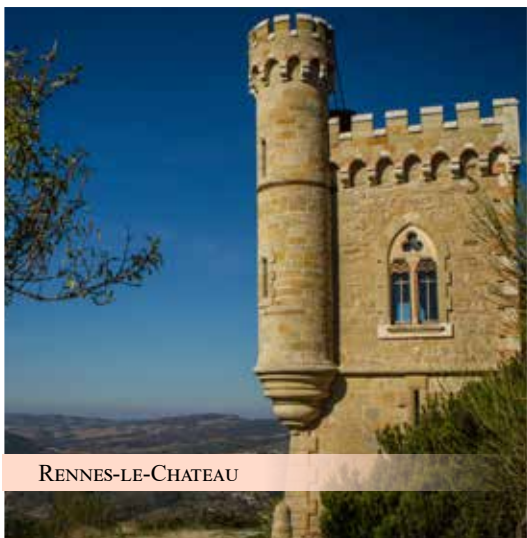
SATURDAY, MAY 16TH - If you had to choose one medieval fortress town to visit, Carcassonne would be it. Restored to perfection, your imagination need only re-dress your fellow travelers, some in sackcloth, some in doublet and hose and you’re back in the medieval world! We will visit the beautiful St. Nazaire church with some of the loveliest stained glass in France. There will be time to visit the inner fortress, Château Comtal, and to wander the narrow alleyways. After time for lunch, we’ll return to Couiza for some free time to explore the village. We dine at the Château again this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: COUIZA**

SUNDAY, MAY 17TH - Today is the annual Festival of Roses in the village of Camon, 40 minutes from our hotel. Camon is known as the “Village of Roses” because of the climbing roses growing on the fronts of most of the houses in the village. We’ll spend the morning exploring the festival, with stalls selling local produce,



CAMON ROSE FESTIVAL

crafts, and everything you could possibly imagine to do with roses! Then we will head to the fabulous Gayda vineyard. After a leisurely lunch, we will have a tour of the vineyard and estate, ending with a tasting of their excellent produce in the Vinecole (literally, wine school). On our return to Couiza we head to the local mountain-top village of Rennes-le-Château for a visit to the parish church which may spark (or rekindle) your interest in Dan Brown’s mystery novels. This church is filled with symbols and secret codes possibly related to the lost treasure of Solomon. This evening you can choose to eat at the hotel again or venture out to a local restaurant in the town. **(B, L) OVERNIGHT: COUIZA**



RENNES-LE-CHATEAU

MONDAY, MAY 18TH - Today we head up into the Pyrenees. Our first stop will be the village of Montaillou, famous as the last enclave of the persecuted Cathars. Here we’ll take an easy hike around the ruins of the Chateau and then stop for lunch at the Col de Chioula, with some of the most magnificent views that a restaurant

could wish for! We then descend to visit the spa town of Ax-les-Thermes, before returning to the hotel, passing by the hilltop fortress of Montsegur. There will be time to relax by the pool or enjoy a cocktail on the terrace before our final dinner at the Chateau. **(B, L, D) OVERNIGHT: COUIZA**

TUESDAY, MAY 19TH - Reluctantly we will bid farewell to the Château this morning and return to Toulouse Airport for flights back to the US. If you are booking your own flights, please bear in mind that Couiza is some distance from the airport. A 7.00 am flight would require a 4.00 am departure from Couiza! **(B)**



MONTSEGUR

Key to included meals: B - breakfast, L - lunch, D - dinner