



Lyon & Provence

THE VIKING SAVINGS EVENT

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Day 1 — Avignon, France

Embark your ship and settle into your stateroom. Avignon's narrow streets are lined with churches and remarkable medieval buildings. This "City of Popes" was the papal seat for 70 years during the 14th century after the sitting pope abandoned Rome and fled here. The massive church-fortress Palais des Papes, or Palace of the Popes, was the center of the Christian world during that controversial period. It remains a work of Gothic splendor. Another of Avignon's notable structures reaches into the Rhône, the ruins of the Pont d'Avignon. The 12th-century bridge, immortalized in folk song and dance, once spanned the river.

* Ground transfers are included with Viking Air purchase.

Day 2 — Arles, France

In the last days of the Roman Empire, Arles was the capital of Roman Gaul and boasts many Gallo-Roman ruins including Les Arènes; this ancient amphitheater seats 20,000 and is still used today for bullfights and plays. The town has an energetic feel, attracting farmers from the countryside to the frequent and famous Provençal market. It also enjoys a rich artistic heritage; the Mediterranean sunlight here inspired legendary Impressionist Vincent van Gogh to paint a number of works. Many of Arles's sights are immortalized in his paintings.

Day 3 — Avignon, France

When the Catholic Church acquired Avignon during the 1300s, it quickly transformed the quiet riverside village into a major religious and cultural center. Evidence of the makeover is everywhere. In addition to the enormous palace, the church constructed a wall around Avignon and provided mansion-like residences to its cardinals. Avignon Cathedral was dwarfed by its neighbor, the Palace of the Popes. Centuries after the papacy returned to Rome, the Vatican called for a gilded statue of Mary to be placed atop the cathedral; her golden gaze still welcomes visitors today.

Day 4 — Viviers, France

The sleepy town of Viviers was founded during the 5th century. This former Roman settlement became a bishop's seat, and conflicts during ensuing centuries required the town to be fortified. With the Renaissance came a more stable period of wealth that allowed many new houses to be built, including a fine example of the era that still stands, the Maison des Chevaliers. Some buildings date back to the Middle Ages, and time seems to stand still along the cobblestone streets of its Old Town, dominated by the 12th-century St. Vincent Cathedral with its beautiful windows.

Day 5 — Tournon, France

Tournon lies secluded between the river and the vineyard-blanketed granite slopes that nurture fine vintages. An ancient castle, built snugly into a rock, overlooks the riverside setting. A settlement has perched on this hill since Celtic times, but the stunning views from its overlook have never changed. The name of its neighboring wine-producing region, Tain-l'Hermitage, comes from the hermit who planted vines here after returning from the Crusades. Today, his vines are awash in sunshine and produce a port-like wine and some stellar whites.

Day 6 — Lyon, France

Lyon straddles the Rhône and Saône Rivers. After Paris, it is considered the country's most significant cultural center. Amid a cityscape of red-roofed buildings, tree-lined boulevards and riverside promenades, the cobblestone streets of Old Lyon host a rich collection of Renaissance architecture and intimate *traboules*, unique passageways through buildings that connect adjacent streets, all of it overlooked by the grand basilica atop Fourvière Hill. The city also boasts a wealth of outstanding museums, cultural treasures and excellent Lyonnaise eateries.

Day 7 — Lyon, France

Lyon is known as the food capital of France. It is not uncommon for well-heeled Parisians to travel to Lyon for dinner. The city is surrounded by towns and villages that produce excellent fresh produce, and gastronomic outlets are plentiful here. The great chefs of Lyon enjoy celebrity status, whether they prepare classic recipes the traditional way or elevate them with their own signature touches. Their delicious meals may be paired with a glass of light, fruity Beaujolais from the north or a bold Rhône red from the south.

Day 8 — Lyon, France

One of Europe's densest concentrations of urban Renaissance buildings, Old Lyon is pure pleasure to explore. The dwellings of this UNESCO site date back to the city's silk weaving success during the 15th century, when Italian merchants and bankers put their profits into building town houses; today some of their elegant residences house museums. St. Jean Cathedral lies in the heart of Old Lyon and is a stunning example of Romanesque and Gothic architecture. It has weathered periods of political turmoil and religious wars and is now one of the city's most prominent symbols. Bid farewell to your fellow guests and journey home. Or spend more time exploring, perhaps joining one of our extensions.

* Ground transfers are included with Viking Air purchase.

** One shore excursion included per port; all others available at an extra charge.*