

Sailing Adventures

“INAUGURAL”

Le Canal du Midi

11 Days 4th – 15th MAY 2020

CASTELNAUDARY

to PORTE CASSAFIERES

- ✓ HISTORY
- ✓ SCENERY
- ✓ FOOD
- ✓ WINE
- ✓ UNIQUE EXPERIENCES
- ✓ CAMERADERIE
- ✓ ENJOYMENT
- ✓ MEMORIES



Sailing Adventures

Le Canal du Midi

Cruising the Canal du Midi in Southern France is a romantic escape, a journey into history, a gastronomic delight, a wine lover's paradise and an opportunity to move very slowly in a totally relaxed atmosphere.

The Canal du Midi and the adjoining Embranchement de la Nouvelle (Canal de Jonction and Canal de la Robine) form the biggest and most popular boating region, enjoyed by thousands of holiday makers every year. Bathed in warm sunshine from April to October, the canals wind their way past a diverse spectrum of remote and picturesque countryside, quaint and sleepy villages and bustling cities full of history and charm.

France has quite a complicated structure and the way it is divided up can be a little confusing. Until recently, the country was divided into 27 administrative regions, but in March 2016, several regions were merged, reducing this number to 18. The Canal du Midi and the Embranchement de la Nouvelle run through the merged regions of Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi-Pyrénées, now collectively named 'Occitanie' by the new regional council. Though, this region is still referred to as 'Languedoc' when referring to wine, culture and traditions. The regions are the top tier of a very complex multi-tiered system of local administration. Each region is divided into departments and then into local areas called 'communautés de communes' and finally into communes.

Truly an outstanding feat of engineering when completed in 1694, the main course of the Canal du Midi runs for 240 kilometres (150 miles). Its very name is imbued with resonance—the canal of two seas—since its network of waterways connects the Atlantic to the Mediterranean and once served as a major trade route.

Its designer, Pierre-Paul Riquet, created a work of art with aqueducts, bridges, 91 locks and a tunnel. More than 42,000 plane trees line its often-shaded banks!

A Canal du Midi, Sailing Adventures' holiday presents an opportunity to experience this fabulous waterway firsthand with your friends or family, inviting you to travel at a pace that lets you get to meet the people and relax amidst stunning natural beauty.



Cruising Le Canal Du Midi from Castelnaudary to Porte Cassafières you will pass through spectacular scenery, medieval castles & historic buildings from the earliest times.

Let your hosts and support crew look after your needs while you relax and discover exotic towns, villages and cities on your journey towards the Mediterranean.





Our aim is to ensure that you experience and enjoy one of the most interesting, relaxing and eventful holidays; all at the same time.

With iconic architectural structures that date back 1000's of years, cultural traditions, lots of sunshine, gastronomic delights, castles that will amaze you as well as an array of recreational activities.



A CULINARY JOURNEY

Le Canal du Midi boasts a gastronomic scene that is typical of this region. From Michelin Star restaurants to local cafes, the food, local produce and hospitality will leave you wanting more.

LOCAL PRODUCE

Taste the local produce that underpins the French culture – Charcuterie, Mediterranean vegetables, breads & pastries, jams, honey from our garrigue scrubland, and recipes using truffles that grow naturally in the region. What could be better than strolling along colourful country market stalls? Under the cool shade of the ancient plane trees, local producers, craftsmen and souvenir sellers have set up shop and their stalls overflow with luscious, fragrant Mediterranean fruit and vegetables of all colours, accompanied by sing-song southern accents and the gentle hum of cicadas.

RESTAURANTS & CAFES

Friendly cafés and gourmet restaurants abound on the Canal du Midi! Like La Raffinerie in Béziers, Carcassonne's La Marquiere and L'Arbousier in Homps. We won't miss the slow-cooked bean and meat cassoulet, a French gastronomy specialty of Castelnaudary.



The Vines, Vineyards & Wines of France...is there need to say more?

Nestled in the Languedoc wine region, the Canal du Midi is an ideal location for wine tasting holidays. On your Canal du Midi cruise, tour vineyards, visit wine caves and sample wines of the regions. Trèbes, Homps, Ventenac, Paraza, Marseillette and Capestang offer so much for wine connoisseurs!



Sailing Adventures

The Itinerary Overview

DAY 1: MONDAY

D.

CASTELNAUDARY

0km / 0 locks / 0hrs cruising

Castelnaudary is a market town, and the capital of the territory of Lauragais. The town is located 50 kilometres southeast of Toulouse, about midway along the route from that city to the Mediterranean. This route has been used since at least Roman times. Castelnaudary is the main port of the Canal du Midi to which it owed a period of prosperity in the 17th century when agricultural and manufactured produce became easier to export. The Grand Bassin in the town is, at 7 ha, the largest open area of water in the canal, and is today its major pleasure port. This will be our start point. Boarding our canal boat in the morning, we will have the day and night to discover this ancient historic city of Castelnaudary, the town which is also the home of the "Cassoulet", a regional dish of white beans and chunky pieces of pork and duck. There are several places in town claiming to serve the best.

DAY 2: TUESDAY

B.L.D.

CASTELNAUDARY TO VILLESÈQUELANDE

26km / 19 locks / 6hrs cruising

Fresh Baguettes and croissants for breakfast on board, before beginning our Midi adventure, passing through flat, open farmland and sleepy stone buildings as the canal winds its way east. Lunch on our sundeck while the locks are closed and in the afternoon, stop and unload the bikes for a short cycle into Bram, an attractive town arranged in a concentric circle around the pretty church. Then onwards to overnight in quiet Villesèquelande.

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY

B.L.D.

VILLESÈQUELANDE TO CARCASSONNE

14km / 5 locks / 3.5hrs cruising

After another morning meandering through the tranquil French countryside, we'll arrive at the most famous of all stops along the Midi - Carcassonne, with its impressive fortified ramparts. After the Eiffel Tower, this citadel, known as 'La Cité de Carcassonne', is the second most visited tourist attraction in France. Once you catch a glimpse of the Canal du Midi's fairy-tale turrets and imposing walls from your boat as we approach the city, you'll soon understand how magical it really is. A UNESCO World Heritage site, this fortified, medieval, walled city is unique in Europe by its size and its state of conservation. It is renowned for its double wall of ramparts, running nearly 3km around the perimeter and 53 conical-roofed, fairy-tale towers.

Head straight to the centre, a bustling network of cobbled streets thronging with restaurants and shops, all nestled inside the imposing city walls. After lunch, it's time to explore! Take a guided tour around the huge 12th Century Château Comtal and don't miss the ethereal magnificence of the Basilica of Saint Nazaire. Later we will head back into the city for dinner.

DAY 4: THURSDAY

B.L.D.

CARCASSONNE TO TRÈBES

12km / 6 locks / 3.5hrs cruising

We will head away from the canal on a visit to the spectacular Domaine Gayda, one of the leading and most impressive wine producers in the area. Touring the state-of-the-art winery and learning how their wines are made whilst enjoying a relaxed and fun tasting of their excellent range of wines. Finishing with a three-course lunch, accompanied by local wine, in their superb restaurant that overlooks the Pyrenees before we return to Carcassonne for our onward journey to Trèbes.

DAY 5: FRIDAY

B.L.D.

TRÈBES TO ARGEN MINERVOIS

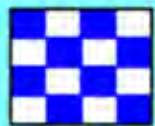
26.5km / 15 locks / 8 hrs cruising

Chill on deck, soak up the sunshine and enjoy the slow pace of the canal as we spend most of the day cruising. There's time to stop in the peaceful and pretty village of Marseillette for a stroll on the way. For lunch, we will find a spot to moor in the middle of nowhere and enjoy the surrounding beauty whilst the locks are closed. The countryside becomes even more picturesque from this point, with open farmland giving way to tree lined tow paths and rambling meadows. Our destination is the beautiful town of Argens Minervois, clustered around a 14th century chateau, with plenty of time to have a wander around before dinner.

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The Itinerary Overview

- DAY 6: SATURDAY** **B.L.D.** **ARGENS MINERVIOS TO LE SOMAIL** 16km / 1 lock / 2.5hrs cruising
A short hop to Paraza where the Chateau de Paraza overlooks the canal - the site of an impressive winery. Look around, sample the produce and find lunch in a local restaurant. Then it's another short meander to Le Somail our mooring for the night. In the afternoon, why not hire the most legendary of convertible cars, an old Mythic 2 CV? It's a fun way to drive through the vineyards and countryside toward L'Oulibo Olive Caves for a tour. Enjoy sampling the olives while receiving a fascinating insight into their history.
- DAY 7: SUNDAY** **B.L.D.** **LE SOMAIL TO CAPESTANG** 22km / 0 locks / 5hrs cruising
Pick up fresh bread and pastries from the grocery barge to enjoy with breakfast on your sundeck. Then, visit Madam Gourgue's Antiquarian Bookshop, where you'll find everything from cheap paperbacks to very rare editions, crammed in bookshelves from floor to ceiling. Then we will untie the lines and set off towards Capestang, stopping along the way in the peaceful surroundings for a canal-side picnic lunch. For something exquisite, dress up for dinner and take a short ride to the very grand Château les Carrasses for a fine-dining experience in a beautiful setting.
- DAY 8: MONDAY** **B.L.D.** **CAPESTANG TO COLOMBIERS** 13km / 0 locks / 2.5hrs cruising
Explore Capestang, including its 14th century castle & impressive painted ceilings. Back on board, we'll stop for lunch in Poulhes before reaching Le Malpas. A 20 minutes walk to explore the Oppidum of Enerune, an archaeological site and museum with impressive views over the dried Montady Lake. Then it's time to navigate through the 165metre long Malpas tunnel, Europe's first navigable canal tunnel. In Colombiers, visit the Saint Sylvestre church, which is full of history and at night, the rectory's gardens are lit up and are perfect for a charming walk.
- DAY 9: TUESDAY** **B.L.D.** **COLOMBIERS TO BÉZIERS** 13km / 11 locks / 5hrs cruising
After a lazy start and a leisurely breakfast aboard we head off towards the famous Fonsérannes staircase of locks. The flight consists of eight ovoid lock chambers and nine gates, which allow boats to be raised or lowered a height of 21.5m, in a distance of 300m. Then it's onwards, past Béziers, to moor just past the bustling city in the quieter surroundings of Villeneuve Béziers. Spend a restful afternoon chilling with a book or exploring the towpaths by bike.
- DAY 10: WEDNESDAY** **B.L.D.** **BÉZIERS TO PORT CASSAFIÈRES** 9km / 1 lock / 2.5hrs cruising
Explore Bezier, one of the Midi's largest cities. Don't miss the 13th century Romanesque cathedral which occupies one of the best sites in town; from the concourse at the front there are terrific views out over the surrounding vineyards and hills. Or visit the Musée des Beaux Arts – to view paintings by Rubens and Delacroix. After finding lunch in one of Bezier's many restaurants, head back to your boat for the final stretch to Port Cassafières. A stroll along the beach at Portiranges will build your appetite for our farewell dinner. Afterwards, spend the evening on deck under the stars reminiscing about the happy memories you've created or have a night time wander through the city.
- DAY 11: THURSDAY** **THIS DAY IS SET ASIDE SO THAT WE CAN ADD ANOTHER "SPECIAL DAY" ALONG THE WAY.**



Sailing Adventures: Le CANAL Du MIDI 2020

\$ 8,750	Per Person (Twin Share)
\$ 7,875	With inaugural discount
\$ 2,950	Single supplement
\$ 3,750	Deposit on booking
BALANCE	8 weeks prior to departure

INCLUDED:

Luxury Canal Boats with Ensuite Facilities, Host/Hostess, Qualified Skipper, All Meals (as indicated, aboard & ashore), Restaurants, Wineries, Historic Sites, Local House Wines, Beers & Soft Drinks whilst aboard as well as at Dinners Ashore, Mooring Fees, Fuel & Local Taxes.

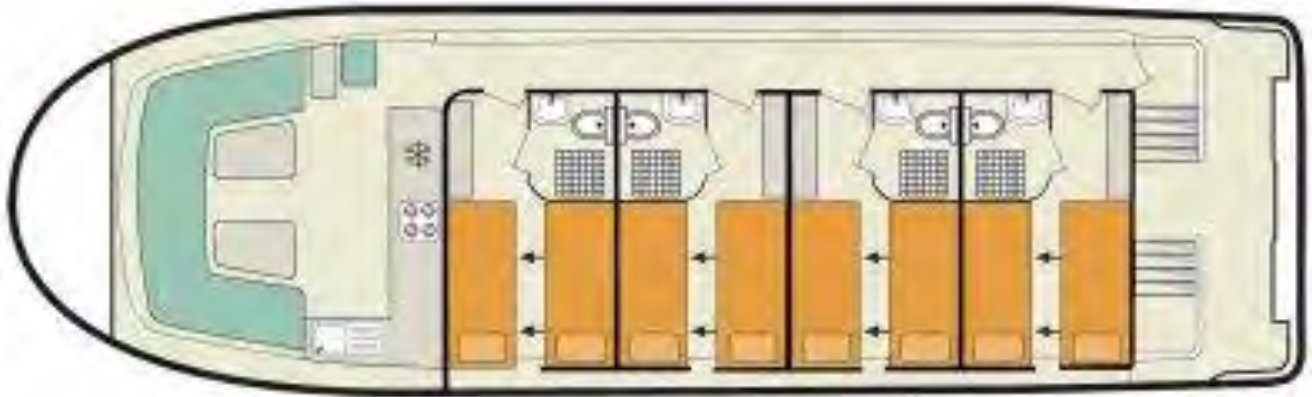
NOT INCLUDED:

Air Fares, Personal Travel Insurance, Pre & Post Accommodation & Spirits .

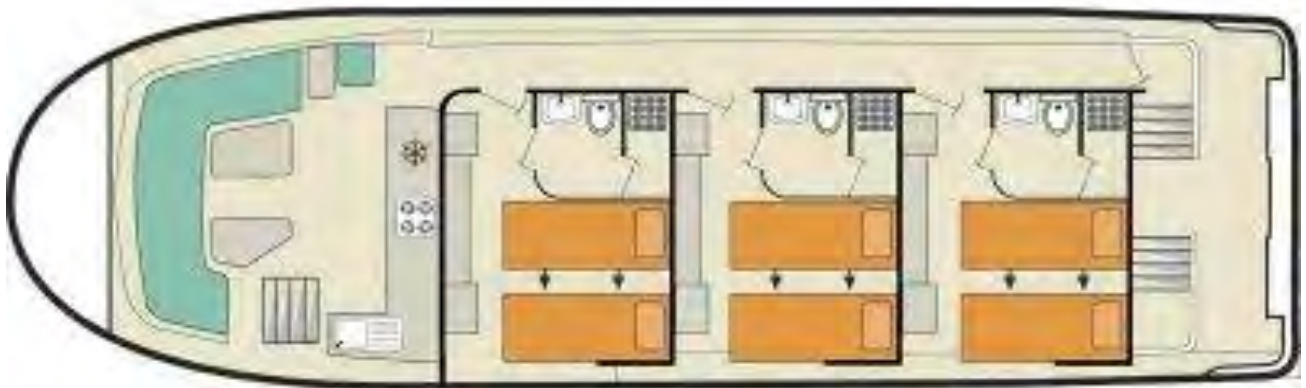
B. Breakfast

L. Lunch

D. Dinner



Vision 4 - 4 Cabin (Double or Twin)



Vision 3 - 3 Cabin (Double or Twin)

TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE VISION 3
<https://www.leboat.com.au/boats/vision-3-sl>

Luxury Canal Boats, all with ensuite facilities & Air Conditioning.

Ranked amongst the most popular canal boats, this Vision 4 model offers luxurious and spacious 4 X ensuite cabin accommodation. A settee in the elegant saloon converts to a single bed, upping the total sleeping capacity to nine. The saloon has a full entertainment centre. Fully air conditioned, this boat was designed for comfort & space.

Huge upper sundeck, luxurious saloon and gorgeous private cabins! Sideways thrusters at front and rear make the boat as easy to manoeuvre as a car. The three staterooms have full-size twin beds that convert to doubles, and an extra bed in the saloon, making the boat ideal for families and friends! Vision 3 SL models have stairs that allow direct access to the bridge from the galley, making moving around that much easier.