Blue-Roads | Europe (BRT)

Delicious oysters. Exquisite wines. Rich Bayonne ham. Take time to savour the finer things in life on this journey of discovery through Southwest France. Starting in Bordeaux (just a two-hour train journey from Paris), we'll seek out the region's gastronomic gems and treasured vineyards – travelling over soaring mountains, along the Atlantic coast, and into enchanting castles and prehistoric caves as we go.

TOUR CODE:

BTBBB3

Thank you for choosing **Blue-Roads**

Your extraordinary adventure awaits!

About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey.

We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

IMPORTANT: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

THE BLUE-ROADS DIFFERENCE

- Savour the tantalising flavours of fresh Arcachon Bay oysters, Bayonne ham, Blanquette de Limoux wine and world-famous Bordeaux reds
- Admire the famous prehistoric paintings of the UNESCO-protected Lascaux Cave at Lascaux II
- Stay in the UNESCO-listed medieval citadel of Carcassonne

TOUR CURRENCIES

- France - EUR

Your **itinerary**

DAY 1 | BORDEAUX (FRANCE)

Where better to begin our journey of Southwest France than beautiful Bordeaux? After meeting the group, we'll clink glasses over a delicious welcome meal. Bon appétit! Accommodation: Hôtel de Normandie (or similar)

MEALS:

- Dinner

DAY 2 | BORDEAUX – ARCACHON BAY – BIARRITZ

This morning we'll move on to Atlantic Ocean-fringed Arcachon Bay, where we'll get our first taste of coastal cuisine with fresh oysters and a glass of local wine from one of the port's traditional cabins. We'll then stop to see the Great Dune of Pilat – Europe's highest sand dune, with panoramic views over the bay. This afternoon, we'll round off our day in the glamorous seaside town of Biarritz – where we'll have the evening free to wander the waterfront promenade and sample more local delicacies at our leisure. Accommodation: Hôtel Georges VI (or similar)

MEALS:

- Breakfast

DAY 3 | BIARRITZ – BAYONNE – BIARRITZ

Today we've a full day taking in the beauty of the French Basque Country. First, we'll indulge our cultural sides in Bayonne – an art and history hub just a short drive away from Biarritz. Here, we'll discover a local family business going back three generations at the Bayonne Ham Museum – where we'll indulge in a ham tasting before returning to the hotel for an afternoon of leisure time. Accommodation: Hôtel Georges VI (or similar)

MEALS:

- Breakfast

DAY 4 | BIARRITZ – LOURDES – MIDI-PYRÉNÉES

Today we´ll turn to the east - and on to beautiful Pau. We´ll then travel through the Midi-Pyrénées region (along roads made famous by the Tour de France), pausing en route at the spiritual town of Lourdes. Whilst here, we´ll have the opportunity to see the Sanctuaires Notre-Dame de Lourdes and the Massabielle Grotto - a significantly holy site within the Christian faith. In keeping with the spirit of our surroundings, we´ll check into our atmospheric accommodation before enjoying this evening´s included dinner. Accommodation: Hotel du Barry (or similar)

MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

DAY 5 | MIDI-PYRÉNÉES – CARCASSONNE

Following the trail of knights, we'll continue our own crusade through the Midi-Pyrénées and past picture-perfect bastides. Along the way, we'll visit a local winery and enjoy a glass of the region's speciality – a sparkling Blanquette. Our final stop of the day will be medieval Carcassonne, where we'll have the evening to spend at our leisure. Accommodation: Hôtel Le Donjon (or similar)

MEALS:

- Breakfast

DAY 6 | CARCASSONNE

Today you'll be free to discover Carcassonne's chivalric secrets at your own pace. From the alleys, passageways and 52 towers of the UNESCO-listed medieval citadel (which dates back two millennia) to the Château Comtal and its ramparts, there's plenty to keep you occupied. Later this evening, we'll come together for an included dinner at a local restaurant – swapping stories and photographs of the day's discoveries. Accommodation: Hôtel Le Donjon (or similar)

MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

DAY 7 | CARCASSONNE – ALBI – SARLAT-LA-CANÉDA

Today we'll leave the stronghold of Carcassonne behind and make tracks to the 'red city' of Albi. Here, we'll enjoy a leisurely stroll around the town - taking in the magnificent Cathédrale Sainte-Cécile as we go. Later, we'll move on to Sarlat-la-Canéda - one of the most beautiful towns in the Dordogne. Accommodation: Hôtel Saint-Albert (or similar)

MEALS:

- Breakfast

DAY 8 | SARLAT-LA-CANÉDA – BEYNAC-ET-CAZENAC – SARLAT-LA-CANÉDA

On the itinerary today: a stroll through stunning Sarlat-la-Canéda, followed by a delightful visit to the riverside town of Beynac-et-Cazenac. We'll enjoy some free time to explore the town's magnificently well-preserved medieval château – which has kept watch over the Dordogne from its hilltop position for nine centuries. Afterwards, we'll return to Sarlat-la-Canéda for an evening spent at our leisure – perhaps exploring the picturesque alleyways or dining at one of the charming local restaurants in town. Accommodation: Hôtel Saint-Albert (or similar)

MEALS:

- Breakfast

DAY 9 | SARLAT-LA-CANÉDA – VÉZÈRE VALLEY – SARLAT-LA-CANÉDA

Today our travels through the Dordogne will lead us to the prehistoric paintings of the UNESCO-protected Lascaux Cave – which was discovered when it was happened upon by a group of teenagers back in 1940. We'll admire the replica Lascaux Cave II before making a stop at the pretty village of Les Eyzies. Then, we'll follow the 'Royal Road', winding between craggy rocks and flowing rivers until we get to a local truffle farm – where local guides will give us an exclusive lesson in seeking out the rare delicacies. Tonight, we'll come together and savour a farewell dinner at a local restaurant. Accommodation: Hôtel Saint-Albert (or similar)

MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

DAY 10 | SARLAT-LA-CANÉDA – SAINT-ÉMILION — BORDEAUX

We'll spend the final day of our tour in historic Saint-Émilion, a village perched above beautiful rolling countryside and countless vineyards. Here, we'll have the chance to sample some of the region's 'heavy reds' and say a final santé. We'll then return to Bordeaux, where we'll say our goodbyes.

MEALS:

- Breakfast

Tour information

Meals

INCLUDED MEALS

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

Other **information**

Finances

CHANGING MONEY

CASH: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

CREDIT CARDS: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

CASH MACHINES: ATMS are widely available.

TIPPING

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Blue-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our FAQ page: **www.blueroadstouring.com/faqs**

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team: **www.blueroadstouring.com/contact-us**

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

PLEASE NOTE: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your

original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires some mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team: **www.blueroadstouring.com/contact-us**

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

What to **bring**

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Blue-Roads tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

CLOTHING:

- Sun hat
- Sunglasses
- Sleepwear
- Warm jacket
- Underwear
- Long-sleeved tops
- Short-sleeved tops
- Shorts/skirts
- Socks
- Smart casual evening wear
- Light jacket
- Waterproof jacket
- Trousers
- Swimwear
- Walking shoes/comfortable shoes

OTHER THINGS TO PACK:

- Multi-use adapter plug
- Batteries
- Umbrella
- Any personal medication
- Toiletries
- Sunscreen
- Reusable water bottle
- Basic medical kit (including paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc)
- Camera
- Towel
- Insect repellent

That's it!

We look forward to seeing you on tour.