

# France's Impressions Voyages

*The ultimate travel experience in France*

## CANAL DU MIDI



**ATHOS** is a newly renovated 10 passenger first class barge and the longest-established Hotel Barge cruising on the Canal du Midi.

1<sup>st</sup> Class, 10 passengers  
Sunday to Saturday,



**This** luxury barge cruise is operated by Danielle and her husband, **Captain of 17 years**, Julian Farrant. A tour guide and driver, a full-time onboard Chef, and 2 hostesses make up the friendly crew. The ATHOS Crew has a well-earned reputation for hosting their guests with charm and competence. Combined with the scenic and historical Canal du Midi, ATHOS is a perfect choice for vacationers who enjoy comfortable accommodations with air conditioning/heating, the sunny Mediterranean climate, and gourmet French cuisine and wine with good company.

## Highlights

- The **Canal du Midi** lined with towering plane trees is listed WHS by Unesco
- The medieval fortified town of **Carcassonne** listed WHS by Unesco
- **Olive tasting** at the local press, L'Oulibo
- Vibrant market town of Narbonne built on Roman foundations
- Town of **Pezenas**
- Cruise the open waters of the **Etang de Thau** with its famous oyster beds
- Visit and tasting of the distillery of **Noilly Prat Vermouth**
- Opportunity for walking or biking and explore the pretty village



## Itinerary: The Canal du Midi in the Languedoc Roussillon

### Sunday ARGELIERS

At 4pm, you will be met by ATHOS Captain and Manager at a designated point in Montpellier. In the comfort of ATHOS' private air-conditioned Chrysler minivans, you will be chauffeured to where the ATHOS awaits you at her moorings. You will be treated to a full-crew Welcome Aboard, whilst toasting with Champagne and Mediterranean canapés. Once you are settled into your cabin, you will be invited to a 4-course dinner, prepared by our highly acclaimed onboard Chef.

### Monday ARGELIERS to CAPESTANG

Enjoy your first coffee of the day sitting in a comfortable chair on the upper deck of ATHOS. While coffee is available at any time from the bar, continental-style breakfast is served, at your leisure, beginning at 8:30am. The proposed morning visit is a drive to the famous **medieval double-walled city of Carcassonne**. Your knowledgeable on-board guide, Danielle, will offer the historical & guided visit - making sure that you have time to browse those shops! While the Captain gets ATHOS underway for an

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afternoon's cruise to Capestang, Chef will serve up another local 3-course gourmet meal (perhaps including the famous duck confit stew or a Cassoulet). There should be enough time for a brisk stroll into the village before Chef starts serving up the next delight!

## Tuesday CAPESTANG – RIGEMONT le HAUT

This morning's suggested visit is a tasting at L'Oulibo - the local **olive oil pressoir**. After tasting those organic and wholesome olives (accompagnied, bien sur by a small glass of rosé!!), a short drive up the Gorge de la Cesse and into the hilltop village of **Minerve** is in order. Danielle will regale you with the harrowing tale of the **Cathar siege launched at Minerve** during the 13th C. Lunch and an afternoon of relaxation on board awaits your return to the ATHOS. We arrive early evening in the charming village of Capestang. ATHOS will be moored with a clear view of the flood-lit St. Etienne cathedral. The village is a 5-minute walk -- and dinner will be waiting on your return!

## Wednesday REGIMONT le HAUT - FONSERANNES



Why not take a side-trip to the **weekly morning market** in Narbonne? Even for non-shoppers, **Narbonne** offers much entertainment on a Thursday morning! Explore an excavated portion of the original Roman road, the Via Domitia, or browse through the well-compiled **Roman Museum**, or discover the beauty of **St. Juste Cathedral**, or simply take a moment to blend into the scene: sit and relax in one of the many cafés. The afternoon promises spectacular views of the Pyrenees across the sunny, clear Plain. This evening's mooring is the breath-taking view-point at the **Fonserannes locks**. Enjoy the marvelous view of the town of **Béziers** and **St Nazaire Cathedral**.

## Thursday FONSERANNES - PORTIRAGNES

Today visit the beautiful village of **Pezenas**, with its rural and urban architectural heritage like some XVI C. "Hotel Particuliers", private mansions from noble families. Later in the afternoon, the cruised takes you to a 17th Century feat of engineering, the **"Neuf Ecluses"** (or staircase locks) and o the 18th Century Canal Bridge which carries ATHOS over the Orb River to our mooring near the village of Portiragnes. You may enjoy walking or cycling among the river bank of the Canal du Midi or just a relaxing afternoon on board of Athos.

## Friday PORTIRAGNES - MARSEILLAN

Cruise through the **"Petite Camargue"** part of the western Europe's largest river delta, with exceptional biological diversity, and home to unique breeds of Camargue Horses and Camargue Bulls, and to more than 400 species of birds including Pink Flamingoes. Later in the day, ATHOS will enter to the open-waters of the **Etang de Thau**. It hosts Europe's largest mussel and Oyster Park. As ATHOS comes to moor in the port at **Marseillan**, you will notice the enclosure which makes up the **Noilly Prat** Vermouth distillery. End a perfect day with a fascinating tour of the Distillery - and, of course, a taste of Noilly Prat vermouth! Chef's efforts are sure to make this evening worth remembering! Captain Julian will join your party for your final dinner onboard this evening. During the evening, he will also invite the crew to make a farewell toast with you.

## Saturday MARSEILLAN

After breakfast, disembark the hotel barge and transfer by private bus to Montpellier by 10.00 AM.

Note: This itinerary may be in reverse direction and is subject to change at any time.

## Floor Plan



The five cabins can be made up as twins or doubles.

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## **Barge Features**

**Passengers:** 10

**Crew:** 5

**Barge Size:** 128 ft by 17 ft

**Cabins:** 5

**Cabin Size:** approximately 14m<sup>2</sup> with storage space for luggage, and a hanging cupboard and en suite toilet/shower

**Accommodations:** each cabin set up with either queen sized bed (200cm x 160cm), or two twins 2(200cm x 80)

**Heat & Air:** Central heat and air conditioning

**Laundry:** Not available

**Amenities:** Hairdryers, bathroom toiletries, bicycles, sundeck with comfy chairs, hot tub, polished mahogany interior, 2 minivans

**TV/DVD/CD:** CD Sound System

**Electricity:** 220V

## **ATHOS 2014 - 2015 SEASON PRICES**

**For the best rate, please contact us: [contact@voyages-france-impressions.com](mailto:contact@voyages-france-impressions.com)**

**Theme cruise: Wine, Tennis, Golf, Painting, Family**

For further information please contact us.

### **What is Included in cruise price:**

- 7 days and 6 nights on the barge, in a cabin with private bath
- transfers from Montpellier to the barge and return
- all meals beginning with dinner on Sunday, through breakfast on Saturday
- all wines with lunches and dinners
- open bar
- all escorted side-excursions
- use of bicycles