

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.

**1st 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 itself is a Unesco World Heritage Site lined with towering plane trees
- The medieval fortified town of Carcassonne
- Olive tasting at the local press, L'Oulibo
- Vibrant market town of Narbonne built on Roman foundations
- Old town Agde with Greek origins
- 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 SALLELES D'AUDE

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 SALLELES D'AUDE - ARGELIERS

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, Dannielle, will offer the historical & guided visit -- making sure that you have time to browse those shops! While the Captain gets ATHOS underway for an afternoon's cruise to Argeliers, Chef will serve up another local 3-course gourmet meal (perhaps including the famous duck confit stew, Cassoulet?). By early evening you have arrived in Argeliers, where ATHOS' mooring is beside the picturesque Argeliers bridge. There ought to be enough time for a brisk stroll into the village before Chef starts serving up her next delight!

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Tuesday ARGELIERS - CAPESTANG

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. Dannielle 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 CAPESTANG - FONSERANNES

Visit the 6th Century establishment and archeological site at the Oppidum d'Enserune with amazing look-out and landscape of the Lac de Montady. To maintain your enthusiasm for local fare, Dannielle would like to invite you to a wine-tasting at one of the few remaining traditional method 19th Century wineries. On returning to ATHOS, a stylish al-fresco lunch awaits you (along with more traditional, dry, fruity rosé!). 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 Fonserrannes. Perhaps a little cycle ride down to the staircase locks and the Canal Bridge will work up your appetite for the Chef's creations this evening?

Thursday FONSERANNES - VILLENEUVE LES BEZIERS

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. As Chef and the hostess begin serving up today's luxury meal, Captain Julian and his deck hand are busy getting ATHOS underway. This 17th Century feat of engineering, the "Neuf Ecluses" (or staircase locks), is sure to impress! ATHOS crew expertly tie her up in each lock, and wait for the gates to close safely behind her before the water levels empty out and allow her to pass one lock into the next. But it's not over yet! Coming up next is the 18th Century Canal Bridge which will carry the ATHOS over the Orb River. The evening's mooring will be at the small village of Villeneuve les Beziers. The paved tow path and the many locks leading to this village make it an ideal afternoon for walking or cycling alongside the ATHOS before dinner on board.

Friday VILLENEUVE les BEZIERS - AGDE/MARSEILLAN

From the shaded and scenic mooring of Villeneuve, we get underway earlier than usual to make it into the Greek-established village of Agde for before lunch. Discover Agde! This morning will see bustling activity in the tiny centre ville. Take the opportunity to explore the Old Town and the Romanesque Cathedral which overlooks the River Herault. Enjoy the short walk into Agde for a little exploration, or relax on deck with a book. Late morning, ATHOS leaves your shaded mooring at Agde, and cruises towards Marseillan. A spectacular (and appropriate!) seafood lunch awaits you, as you enter the open-waters of the Etang de Thau. The Etang 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, wave goodbye to the Crew, who have looked after your every need throughout the week. The minivans will now depart to the appointed destination in Montpellier.

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

Floor Plan

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

Barge Features

Passengers: 10

Crew: 5

Barge Size: 128 ft by 17 ft

Cabins: 5

Cabin Size: approximately 14m² 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 2010 SEASON PRICES in US \$

Value Season is March 28 thru April 24, June 27 thru August 28, October 17 thru November 6

Regular Season is April 25 thru June 26, August 29 thru October 16

Cabin (per person, double occupancy)	VS	\$ 3,690	/	RS	\$ 4,350
Single Occupancy Supplement	VS	\$ 950	/	RS	\$ 950

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