

Provence, France



A tour that every kosher epicurean could only dream of until now! Hilltop towns, village markets, Cezanne, Van Gogh, lavender, fine cuisine andwine!!

Possibly for the first time ever, a Michelin star restaurant is being made kosher - its award winning chef Marc de Passorio (3 toques Gault & Millau) will prepare haute cuisine for a select few guests.

The restaurant is situated in a beautiful hotel, the Vallon de Valrugues near Saint Remy de Provence, which will be our luxurious base for the week. Check it out on www.vallondevalrugues.com

Touring will include Jewish and general sites of interest in the area and some of the gorgeous towns in this fabulous region of Southern France. Hiking and biking will also be on the menu!!

For details, email eric@naomicatering.com

7 days, 6 nights: from 3250 euro (March & November) from 3500 euro (May & September). Places limited, early booking advised.

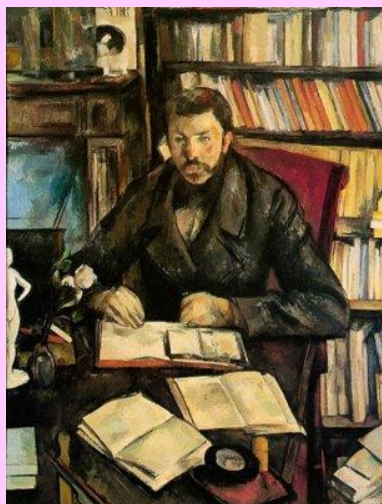


Sample Itinerary, 2011

Each tour itinerary is tweaked according to arrival day and for shabbat times.

Arrival day, (usu. Tuesday)

Marseille airport: meeting Air France flights from TLV, NYC and LHR (via Paris CDG) **15.00h (3pm).... And off we go!!!!**



Aix en Provence: town of water, town of art – the perfect start to a tour of Provence –

we'll enjoy a late lunch, followed by a walking tour. Aix is a small, classically Provençal town, famous for being home to Cezanne. Aix has always been a rich city. There is a stark contrast with Marseille (30 km away). Whereas Marseille is one the poorest French cities, Aix is perhaps one of the richest. It is a quiet, clean and comfortable city. The city center is mostly pedestrian and, though it is quite small (you can cross the center in 15 minutes by foot), offers long hours of nice walks. As in all Provençal towns, the city center consists of narrow streets, lined with 17th century buildings and paved plazas.

The city's main thoroughfare (and the most famous one) is the Cours Mirabeau, a street lined with cafes, restaurants and elegant mansions, and shaded by several rows of centuries-old plane trees. We'll sit down at one of the cafes and watch life go by while sipping a cappuccino or a latte and listening to the sounds of water playing in the fountains nearby.

Those who wish may visit the studio of Cezanne, or the Granet Museum of Art.

Welcome Dinner: in the **Michelin–starred restaurant**



of our hotel in Saint-Remy-de-Provence, the “**Vallon de Valrugues**”.

Day 2, (usu. Wednesday)

Saint Rémy de Provence: our base and one of the "must-sees" in Provence.

The main reason is without a doubt Vincent Van Gogh, who produced more than 150 paintings of the countryside surrounding Saint Rémy, including the "vase avec iris". Many of the places painted by the artist can be rediscovered, the wild flowers, olive trees, cypresses, the Alpilles - and, sadly enough, the room in the Saint Paul de Mausole Asylum where Van Gogh stayed from May 1889 to June 1890. Were it not for Vincent van Gogh and his paintings, St.Rémy would be just another historic town in France. It has wonderfully restored town houses, it is the birth place of Jewish astronomer Nostradamus, lovely shops and a weekly market.

Wednesday is **market day**, then a visit to the famous **Jewish cemetery** with graves from before 1400.



Les Baux de Provence:

one of the 'most beautiful villages of France' and said to be the most visited village in France. The real highlight of Baux is in its great location - nestling in the Alpilles mountains, it has great views across the plains that stretch to the south, and on to the Mediterranean beyond, as well as the attractive rocky landscape of the Alpilles themselves. It is a typical 'Provence perched village', and the drive up to the village is also very scenic.

The ruined castle - the Chateau of Baux-de-Provence - sits on top of a rocky outcrop above the village. We'll tour the ruins of the castle, then relax and enjoy the views that stretch as far as the Mediterranean. The village that we now see largely dates from the 15th-16th centuries. Steep cobbled streets lead you through the grey houses, onwards and upwards until you reach the entrance to the castle. Lunch in Baux.

Arles: its Roman Amphitheatre and Arlatan Museum

Tarascon: the town, its castle and the Provençal textile design centre **Souleiado**.

Cooking

Demonstration: by chef **Marc de Passorio**,



followed by dinner!!!



Day 3 – (usu. Thursday) Jewish history of Provence day

In the 14th Century, France expelled the Jews, but the Pope offered them refuge in Provence, a papal territory in the south. For about a century, the Papacy made its headquarters in Avignon. The Jews of Provence became known as the “Pope’s Jews” and there they lived in relative freedom, enjoying the Pope’s protection (though they were made to observe curfews and wear identifying hats) and being employed in many occupations and professions.



Cavaillon: visit to the **Synagogue** and the museum **Judéo – Comtadin**.

One of the most remarkable synagogues of Provence, the Cavaillon Synagogue, bears the hallmarks of a unique history specific to the Jews of this region. The present structure, built in 1774 in a place of another synagogue dating to the 15th Century, features many of the extravagant decorative flourishes and color palette (including pink, gold, green and blue) of the Rococo style that was fashionable at the time. Gold and crystal chandeliers hang over the main room and the gilded ark is flanked by neo-classical columns topped with carvings of flowers indigenous to Provence.

Avignon: visit to the town, famous for its bridges on the river Rhone, the Pope's palace, and the synagogue

Arpaillargues: a kosher wine-producing Castle for lunch

Chateauneuf du Pape: vineyards and views

Carpentras : the oldest active synagogue in France!!

Jews lived in Carpentras since at least the 12th century, when its scholars and doctors were esteemed in Paris and the rest of France. Expelled in the early 13th century from Carpentras, they returned half a century later and spent several centuries in Carpentras, often required to pay taxes or homage to the Pope.

The original synagogue dates from 1367 and formed the base for the reconstruction of the synagogue in the 18th century, then restored in the 1950's. The exterior facade is plain, similar to neighboring buildings, as required by law.

Velleron: a typical **produce market**; then back to our hotel for another feast!!

Day 4 (usu. Friday) Fun day by the sea

Les Calanques:

on foot, by bike or by boat.

The **Massif des Calanques** is a wild and rugged terrain stretching from Marseille to the east towards Cassis, spanning 20 km in length and 4 km in width along the coast. Its highest peak is Mont Puget at 565m.

This is one of France's great natural beauty areas and we will offer a choice of ways to enjoy it.



Lunch at Cassis: pretty fishing village with lovely and lively harbor. Depending on the time of the year and the weather, we may spend some time on the gorgeous beach.
Back to St. Remy top prepare for Shabbat.

Day 5 (usu. Shabbat)

After davening and a full late breakfast, we'll walk 10 minutes to reach **Saint Remy**, visiting some of the highlights of this lovely unspoiled town.

After every Shabbat, they say, there's a Motza'ei Shabbat: evening entertainment!!

Day 6 (usu. Sunday) Lavender Luberon day

Lavender is the most popular of aromatic plants known for its perfume and therapeutic virtues. The Romans already used it for its olfactory qualities.



It is only in the beginning of the 20th century that lavender start to be cultivated. The first flowers appear in June and are cut at the end of July or beginning of August.

Driving through the Luberon, we will discover a very beautiful countryside with extraordinary sites and some wonderful stone constructions called "Bories" made by shepherds and farmers with the stones they found in the fields. These strange huts are built in various shapes and the

dry stone construction even covers the roof.

This massif presents also many exceptional villages remarkably set in the surrounding countryside. Most of them have been built in the Middle Ages and were constructed in the mountains for defensive necessities. All offer fascinating architectural walks with many ancient monuments from the Middle Ages to the 19th century: castles, fountains, churches and bell towers.



Four of "the most beautiful villages in France" are located in the Luberon – hiking and biking options will be available.

Isle sur la Sorgue: visit of the Sunday antiques market and town.

Olive oil tasting: then picnic lunch planned in the press

Roussillon: Situated in the heart of one of the biggest ochre deposits in the world, Roussillon is famous for its magnificent red cliffs and ochre quarries. The red, yellow and brown shades of the earth form a striking contrast with the lush green pinetrees. The vivid blue of the Provençal sky and the exceptional quality of light make this a magical site.

Gordes: The village has a world wide reputation due to its famous inhabitants, and Peter Mayle's book **A Year in Provence** certainly helped. While strolling around the tiny streets which climb up between the tall houses, you will discover here and there beautiful old doorways, arcades and walls of flat stone perfectly restored, and on the other side, there is the panorama of the valley and mountains of Luberon.

Fontaine de Vaucluse: The fame of the village is essentially due to the impressive spring which flows out of the high cliff. This gigantic source is the most powerful in France and fifth in the world. 630 million cubic meters of water flow out every year. The emerald green calm summer waters become spectacular in the wet seasons, (autumn and spring) spilling into the bed of the River Sorgue. In all seasons secondary sources flow into the river to create an extremely beautiful shady pool, under the immense plane trees.

Day 7 (usu Monday)

Dep hotel 10.15 Flight dep 13.00 MRS to all destinations

