

Alegria

CRUISING IN SOUTHERN FRANCE ALONG THE CANAL DU MIDI

The Barge Connection
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07/29/08



T H E B A R G E

C O N N E C T I O N

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Alegria

SPECIFICATIONS

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Size: | 100''X16'' |
| Capacity: | 4 |
| Crew: | 4 |
| Cabins: | 2 |
| Accommodations: | 2 Large King Suites (convertable to twins) |
| Cabins Include: | Mini fridge, tea & coffee tray, air-conditioning, heated towel racks, hair dryers and robes |
| Heat & Air: | Central Heating & Air Conditioning |
| Cruising Region: | Canal du Midi & Lanuedoc-Roussillon |
| Length of Cruise: | 6 Nights |
| Hairdryers: | Supplied |
| Departure Day: | Saturday |
| Meals: | All Included |
| Beverages: | All Included |
| Entrance Fees: | All Included |
| Laundry Facilities: | Available (extra cost) |
| Transportation: | Private Motorcoach - Peugeot 807 Pullmann |
| Midi Pick-Up: | Transfers to and from Carcassonne, Beziers, Narbonne or Montpellier (depending the direction of the cruise & locaton of mooring) |
| Midi Pick-Up Time: | 4:00 PM |
| Recreational Items: | Sondsystem with CD, DVD player, internet access, bikes, fully stocked bar, library of books, games & heated pool |
| Cruisng Season: | April until November |

BOAT DIAGRAM - WILL BE ADDED SHORTLY

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SAMPLE ITINERARY

Alegria

CANAL DU MIDI
BEZIERS TO TREBES

SATURDAY/ BEZIERS-POILHES

From 4pm we have the pleasure of welcoming you at the airport or at the railway station and driving you to Alegria. On the way we may pop into the City of Beziers to see the famous locks of Fonsérane. After you settle down on the barge, you'll have a welcome drink of a glass of Champagne and the crew will be introduced to you. Alegria might even take you for a short introductory cruise, depending on the navigation conditions. We'll also explain to you how the week will work and we'll give you the necessary instructions for your stay on board. We'll serve your first dinner and spend the night in Poilhes, our "home mooring".

SUNDAY/ CAPESTANG AND LA CROISADE

Sunday is "Le Jour du marché" in Capestang: your French Captain, Olivier, will teach you all the secrets of a French Public Market ... We may even find something tasty to buy for lunch which will be served along the beautiful bank of the Canal. The afternoon takes you to La Croisade underneath the lowest bridge on the Canal: the famous bridge of Capestang. We spend the night in a restful place a stone's throw away from an old 17th century stone bridge.

MONDAY/ LE SOMAIL AND ROUBIA

Should you be interested in archeology, you can visit an exceptional site today: the Oppidum of Ensérune, one of the largest around the Mediterranean. This takes you back to pre-Roman times in the South of France, from the 6th century BC. Thereafter, we cruise along Le Sommail, one of the most charming villages along the Canal. Should you need a book for the week you can buy one from a unique book shop that has approximately 50,000 second-hand books in stock in many different languages. The evening and the night are spent along the Canal near Roubia.

TUESDAY/ HOMPS

In the morning we visit Minerve, a fascinating site and a previously fortified village in a very special rocky environment. Minerve was attacked in 1210 by the terrible army led by Simon de Montfort: the right time for us to tell you about the Crusade of the Albigeois in the 13th Century, one of the harshest stories of our past. After the afternoon cruise you'll be offered a dinner "à terre", off the barge. It's the perfect opportunity to enjoy the atmosphere of a French restaurant! We spend the night in the beautiful area of Homps, a significant harbor on the Canal.

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CANAL DU MIDI
BEZIERS TO TREBES

WEDNESDAY/ PULCHERIC

In the morning we drive through the landscape and we visit a beautiful town, Narbonne. Narbonne is full of Roman history and includes the "Palace of the Archbishop". You will love its Mediterranean and Gothic style. And ... we'll offer you lunch there. After lunch we drive back to the barge for the afternoon leg, up to Pulcheric, where we'll stay for the night

THURSDAY/ TREBES

In the morning we visit the great City of Carcassonne, the biggest medieval City in Europe. You will be fascinated by the size of the walls and the narrow streets inside. You will be right there in the middle of French history! There also many shops where you can buy typical souvenirs to bring back to friends or children. After lunch we embark on the last leg of the cruise for the week, from Pulcheric to the area of Trebes. We spend the last night there after the "Captain's Farewell Dinner".

FRIDAY/ DEPARTURE

After your breakfast, it is unfortunately time to conclude this unforgettable cruise. We will transfer you back to the airport or railway station for onward journey.

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Alegria

- **Olivier Baudry**, the owner of the barge, is a French native. He has been passionate about rivers, canals and river boats for thirty years. In the 1980's he had two house-boats moored in Paris and he had a great time cruising with friends across the French capital for several years.

In 1989, with his passion in mind, Olivier left his secure job as a corporate banker and launched two luxurious river-boats in Paris. These were focused on the corporate market for day and evening cruises.

Olivier has just come back from South Africa, where he lived for fifteen years, managing his own tour-operating company.

In order to reconnect with his passion for canals and barges, Olivier has settled down along the Canal du Midi and he now runs Alegria for your pleasure ...

As a French native, Olivier will lead you across a typical "marché du village" and share with you all the secrets of buying the right cheeses, the perfect saucissons and whatever else you are tempted by ...

Olivier is the Pilot of the barge and he will lead some excursions as well.

- **Peter Shaw**. Peter is a famous chef on the Canal as he has been managing the well known hotel barge La Tortue for several years. His reputation as an excellent chef has quickly grown and extends well beyond the borders of the Canal. We are very proud of Peter and have no doubt that he will treat you to some gastronomic delights during your stay on Alegria ...

- **Monique La Puerta** is your French hostess. She has been working in the "Industrie du Luxe" in Paris for the past thirty years. Monique speaks English and she will be an important interlocutor in your daily life on board.

- **Sally Shaw**, Peter's wife, will conduct some of the excursions of the program. She has been guiding hundreds of other guests for years and she knows all the secret places of the region!



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2009 PRICES

Alegria

Cabin-by- Cabin

\$11,250 Per Person (double occupancy)

The single rate is the normal rate for two less a discount of 5%.

Charter

\$22,500 Charter for 2

\$23,750 Charter for 3

\$25,000 Charter for 4

Cruise Cost Includes:

Transfer from the railway station or the nearest airport and return.

Accommodation in a cabin fitted with a king size bed or two single beds.

Service in the cabin, use of a bar-fridge and the complimentary non-alcoholic drinks inside, tray with tea, coffee, kettle.

All meals served both on board Alegria and in outside restaurants (two meals).

All the pre-drinks and beverages with the meals.

Drinks offered on board during the day and the cruises. Excursions as mentioned above, including the guide and the entrance fees.

The internet connection through a 3G+ USB modem.

The use of bicycles.

And above all ... all the surprises or gifts that await you every day and that will not be disclosed to you in advance ...!

Cruise Cost Does Not Include:

Any travel insurance (highly recommended) or Personal expenses

Any exceptional wine that might be proposed to guests above the existing list.

The gratuities to the crew (we recommend between 5 and 10% of the stay, payable to the Captain and then shared between all)

Any alcoholic drinks from your mini fridge: half-bottles of Champagne and others. Prices will be communicated to you on board.

Your own laundry (prices given on board)

Telephone calls

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MENU TYPES

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Is it too early to make your mouth water? ... surely not!

The gastronomy aboard Alegria will vary a lot ... You will taste some typical French local dishes as well as the best French gastronomy.

Every meal will be accompanied by different wines, both local (the St-Chinian, Minerve, Corbières are becoming more and more renowned) and from other regions of France (Bordeaux, Burgundy, Loire, etc. ...) straight from our Wine Fridge on board. You will never be offered the same wine twice during the week (unless you insist on drinking one that you particularly loved again!)

For your added pleasure, we set your table with different services for breakfast, lunch and dinner: from the festive one through the ethnic one to the classic one. When weather permits you can have your meal outside on the deck.

Our Chef will cater specifically for you and might even share some of his cooking tips as he prepares a dish.

And ... we will also offer you some meals ashore in some excellent restaurants! During the week you can count on at least two meals on ashore... We will discuss all these possibilities while you are holding a glass of Champagne on board ...

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History of the Canal du Midi: It was the vision of Pierre-Paul Riquet to connect the Atlantic to the Mediterranean by a canal. It would allow the safe passage of goods and services avoiding the long and dangerous route via the Straits of Gibraltar. This vision was presented to Colbert, Minister of the King of France in 1660.

It took Riquet 6 years of arguing with skeptics and adversaries to finally convince Colbert, the most powerful man in the country. On the advice of his Minister, Louis XIV ordered the construction of the Royal Canal of Languedoc, which, subsequently, under the French Revolution, became the “Canal du Midi”.

At 60 and extremely wealthy, Pierre-Paul Riquet embarked on the greatest adventure of his life. Concurrent to the digging of the canal, Riquet designed a water collection system in the Black Mountains. He built the reserve of Saint-Ferréol to store the water. Lateral canals brought the water to the summit of Naurouze thereby feeding the canal in two directions; to the Mediterranean in the East, and to the Atlantic in the West.

Tragically, Riquet died in 1680, a ruined man, unable to see the fulfillment of his dream; a few months later, the canal opened.

With the completion of the “Canal du Rhône à Sète” in 1829, and the “Canal Latéral à la Garonne” in 1856, the waterway at last connected the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean.

The Canal du Midi represents a huge undertaking for the 17th century: 15 years of work, 12 000 workmen including 600 women, 328 structures (bridges, quays, locks, aqueducts, tunnels...), 45 000 plane trees and cypresses planted along the banks.

On the whole, 240 km were dug by shovel and pickaxe between the cities of Toulouse and Sète.

There are two principal uses of the Canal today: irrigation and tourism. The canal irrigates 300 million square meters per year. River tourism sees on average 400 boats hired which translates into approx 8200 passages listed at the locks of Fonseranes. Boat traffic on the Canal continues to grow, and offers a perfect alternative way for visitors to see the countryside.

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Some significant Dates:

- 1667: first stone laid
- October 1, 1680: death of Pierre-Paul Riquet in Toulouse
- May 24, 1681: official inauguration of the Royal Canal of Languedoc
- October 1996: designation of the locks of Fonseranes as a Heritage site
- December 1996 : The Canal du Midi is classified as a World Heritage Site by NESCO
- April 1997: The Government of France classifies the Canal du Midi as a protected site.
- May 2008: the Exclusive Hotel Barge Alegria is launched!!

Links:

- <http://www.midicanal.fr/>
- <http://canaldumidi.org/>

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TERMS & CONDITIONS

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To confirm a reservation, a deposit of 25% of the cost of the cruise must be made

at the time of the booking. **The final payment of the balance** must be received no later than 90 days prior to departure. If final payment is not received by the due date (90 days prior to departure), we may cancel the booking with no obligation to provide a refund of the deposit.

Cancellation by Passengers: Cancellation by passengers must be made in writing.

The following terms apply to passenger cancellations:

More than 90 days prior to departure, the deposit is not refundable

0 to 90 days prior to departure, full payment is forfeited

Cancellation by Alegria: In the event of cancellation by Alegria (never happened yet!) it will offer an alternative date for your cruise. In the event of an alternative date being unacceptable, a full refund will be made.

Force Majeure: In the case of force majeure Alegria reserves the right to make any necessary changes to the itinerary, cruise dates, pick up/drop off points. The barge will inform you as soon as is reasonably possible of any such changes. Such events would generally include: lock closures, canal works, low water levels, flooding, mechanical or technical problems with the barge, industrial dispute, natural disasters etc.

Smoking policy: For the safety and comfort of all passengers, smoking is not permitted in the interior areas of Alegria, or any of its vehicles.

Surcharges: The right to increase the price in the event of substantial exchange rate fluctuations (including transportation costs, i.e. the cost of fuel and/or government imposed increases to taxes) is reserved. Alegria will absorb an amount equivalent to 2% of the cruise price and only amounts in excess of this 2% will therefore be surcharged. Cruise costs will not be changed once full payment has been received.

Responsibility: The passengers are responsible for any breakages or damage (or loss of a bicycle) caused by themselves during the cruise and it is the responsibility of said passengers to either put right the damage or make proper restitution to the captain before the end of the cruise. Alegria shall not be liable for any injury, damage, inconvenience or expense due to the act of default, or action by any hotel, carrier, restaurant or person providing or rendering any of the services associated with the cruise. By booking the cruise, the passenger represents that he/she is in good general health. All disputes will be settled through the European courts.

Gratuity for the crew recommended: between 5 and 10% of the cost of the cruise in local currency, to be shared between all crew).

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