



PROVENCE & FRENCH RIVIERA

ITINERARY (subject to change) JUNE 30 - JULY 8, 2025

WITH DR. MARC SHAPIRO

MONDAY: MARSEILLE

Arrival in Marseille. Welcome dinner with the group.

TUESDAY: MARSEILLE

The tour begins at 9am with a visit to the famed medieval city Montpellier. On the way there we will pass Lunel and Posquières, now called Vauvert, both of which played important roles in medieval Jewish life in Southern France. We will have a walking tour in Montpellier, visit the medieval mikveh, and see one of the synagogues serving the current Jewish community. We then travel to St. Remy in the heart of Provence. On the way we will see Pont du Gard, the famous Roman aqueduct from the first century CE.

WEDNESDAY: ST. REMY

In the morning we visit Arles, an ancient city on the Rhone River which was also the inspiration for many of Van Gogh's paintings. We will visit the magnificent Roman amphitheater and other Roman sites. While so many important Jewish figures of the past lived in Arles, today almost nothing Jewish remains. In the afternoon we head to Avignon, famous as the seat of the papacy for almost seventy years in the fourteenth century as well as the home of Rabbi Levi ben Gershom (Gersonides). We will visit the palace of the popes and the nineteenth-century synagogue which stands where the medieval Jewish quarter was.

THURSDAY: ST. REMY

In the morning we visit Carpentras, one of the four communities in Southern France under the authority of the Pope ("the Pope's Jews"), and thus spared the various expulsions to which the rest of France's Jews were subjected. Carpentras has the oldest synagogue in France still in use (over 650 years old), as well as a medieval mikveh, and was the center of Jewish life in papal-controlled France. Largely cut off from other Jewish communities, we will learn about how Carpentras preserved a variety of interesting customs. In the afternoon we will see the famous lavender fields of Provence and also visit Cavaillon, another of the communities of the "Pope's Jews" whose synagogue still survives.

FRIDAY: NICE

In the morning we visit the lovely city of Aix-En-Provence, known as the City of a Thousand Fountains. It is here where Cezanne, Picasso, and other important painters were inspired. Following lunch we travel to Nice where we will visit Nice's impressive Marc Chagall Museum, where close to a thousand of Chagall's works are found. Then we will head to the hotel to prepare for Shabbat.

SHABBAT: NICE

Shabbat will be spent with the Jewish community of Nice, and we will attend both the Great Synagogue and the local Chabad. In the afternoon Dr. Shapiro will deliver a class on a Torah theme related to Provence, following which there will be a walking tour.

SUNDAY: NICE

In the morning we will have a walking tour of Jewish Nice. We will see a nineteenth century private synagogue, the 18th century Jewish cemetery, the monument to the Righteous among the Nations, the new Wall of Deportees, and the site of the Medieval Jewish ghetto. Following lunch we head to the picturesque town of St Paul where Marc Chagall lived in his later years and then we will have a chance to stroll on the Croisette on the way to dinner in Cannes.

MONDAY: NICE

We begin our day with a tour of the fascinating city-state of Monaco. After Israel, Monaco's Jewish community has the highest percent of population of any country in the world. We will visit the beautiful Safra Synagogue, the Monte Carlo Casino (made famous by James Bond), and other important Monaco sites. In the afternoon we will visit Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild, a magnificent early-twentieth century home and collection of gardens built by a French-Jewish architect, Aaron Messiah, for Baroness Béatrice de Rothschild.

TUESDAY: NICE

Breakfast and departure to home