Cruise Details

Name:	Spectacular South of France
Reference:	SCENICFRAC200527-1
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Sapphire
Regions:	Saone
Departs On:	20 May 27
Departs From:	Lyon
Arrives On:	30 May 27
Arrives At:	Lyon
Cruise Nights:	10
Total Vacation Days:	11

Itinerary

Day 1: Lyon (France)

Fly from the UK for the start of your cruise.Welcome to France and the ancient city of Lyon. France’s third largest city is its gastronomic capital, promising a blend of fascinating history and a sophisticated dining and shopping scene. Upon arrival, transfer to Scenic Sapphire, where your friendly crew await to welcome you on board. Spend the afternoon exploring your Scenic Space-Ship. Relax in your luxurious suite or take a beverage to the Sun Deck and admire the magnificent views across the city of Lyon. You will remain docked here overnight, so you can go onshore to explore some of the city’s culinary delights. Please book your flight to arrive into Lyon prior to 07:00 PM.

Arrives On: 20 May 27

Day 2: Lyon (France)

Your Scenic Space-Ship will arrive in Vienne today. Boasting a 2,000-year history, this city is brimming with Roman history, including a terraced theatre, first century temple, ancient baths and the Vienne Pyramid, which was the site of the Roman circus where chariot races would have been held. Scenic Freechoice:
Discover your way with this morning’s Scenic Freechoice:

Walking tour of Vienne with Roman theatre: Uncover the fascinating history of this quaint riverside town, once conquered by Julius Caesar. You will visit one of the best-preserved Roman theatres, which was built against the steep slopes of a hill and could hold more than 10,000 spectators.

Cycling tour of Vienne: Discover the city’s glory days on two wheels. Cycle past a marvellously preserved Roman temple, a monument to Emperor Augustus, and see the ruins of a once-thriving district complete with bath houses, villas and workshops. Nature lovers will enjoy the detour to the lush Ile Barlet River Island.

Arrives On: 21 May 27

Day 2: Vienne (France)

Arrives On: 21 May 27

Day 3: Châteauneuf-du-Pape (France)

Châteauneuf-du-Pape is an historic village in the southern Rhône Valley, famous for its full-bodied red wines made primarily from Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre grapes. The name means ‘new castle of the pope’ as it was a papal summer residence in the 14th century.

Today, it is a celebrated wine region with over 300 wineries offering tastings and tours, attracting wine lovers from around the world. Scenic Freechoice:
Explore the area on one of these Scenic Freechoice excursions:

Wine tasting in Châteauneuf-du-Pape: The fertile banks of the Rhône are peppered with Côte du Rhône vineyards, including at the village of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, where centuries of wine production make for a fascinating history. Take this opportunity to sample some of the region’s most celebrated wines.

Chocolate workshop: Experience a delicious tour of Chocolaterie Castelain, featuring a live chocolate-making demonstration followed by a tasting session. Savour their signature artisanal chocolates infused with local Châteauneuf-du-Pape wine, paired perfectly with select regional wines and delicacies.

Bike tour along the Rhône: Follow the gentle paths of the ViaRhôna along the beautiful Rhône riverbanks on this gentle cycling tour. As you pedal through peaceful landscape filled with vineyards on both riverbanks, you’ll reach the impressive Passerelle de l'Oiselay, a striking pedestrian and cycle bridge offering stunning panoramic views over the river.

Arrives On: 22 May 27

Day 3: Arles (France)

Arrives On: 22 May 27

Day 4: Arles (France)

The southernmost point of your journey, Arles is in the Provence region and close to the Mediterranean coast. Founded around 56BC by Julius Caesar, the city has a rich Roman heritage and is thought to have the largest number of Roman ruins outside the Eternal City itself. The remnants of ancient monuments, theatres, baths and administrative buildings are strewn along the river's left bank. It was also the home of Vincent van Gogh in 1888 and he drew inspiration from the landscape for many of his paintings and drawings. Scenic Freechoice:
Explore the city with one of today's Scenic Freechoice:

Guided tour of Arles: Join a local guide for an insightful walking tour. Departing from the ship, you'll visit the heart of Arles to see the ancient Roman amphitheatre, Arènes d'Arles, a 20,000-seat arena that was built in 90 AD, that's still in use today. Experience the vibrant colours and striking quality of light that has inspired many artists.

Visit Les Baux with Carrières des Lumières: Journey to the stunning medieval village of Les Baux. Visit a former quarry that is now the site of Carrières des Lumières, an enormous 7,000 square-metre site that hosts an immersive visual and musical installation highlighting the works of notable artists.

Ancestry of the Kitchen with olive mill: Visit a local farm where you will learn the techniques of olive oil production. Later, the owner will share their experience of life in this region as well as traditional Provençal recipes.

Discovery of lavender – from field to perfume: Provence region is renowned for aromatic herbs, particularly lavender. At certain times of the year (typically from late June to mid-August), fields are transformed into a breathtaking sea of purple. Visit a local organic farm specialising in the production of essential oils from lavender, thyme, rosemary, and other herbs. Discover the health benefits of these plants, learn the process of essential oil extraction, and create your own natural and fragrant lavender mist, made with organic essential oil.

Following Vincent – Van Gogh's Arles: Step into the vibrant world of Vincent van Gogh on a walking tour. Trace the artist's journey through the sunlit streets and historic sites that inspired some of his most famous works during his 15 months in this charming Provençal town, experiencing the colours and atmosphere that shaped his genius.
Relax on board this afternoon as you cruise to Avignon. You could take a seat on the Sun Deck and watch the picturesque landscapes pass by as you enjoy a glass of local wine.

Arrives On: 23 May 27

Day 4: Avignon (France)

Arrives On: 23 May 27

Day 5: Avignon (France)

Wake in the ancient city of Avignon. Known as the ‘City of the Popes’, Avignon is rich in history and astounding medieval architecture. At the same time, it also has a youthful energy and a buzzing arts scene. Encompassed by fortified walls, the former papal capital is home to the World Heritage-listed Palais des Papes (Pope’s Palace), one of the largest surviving Gothic palaces in Europe, and the remaining four arches of the famous Pont d’Avignon bridge, which was once the only way to cross the Rhône between Lyon and the Mediterranean Sea. Scenic Freechoice:
Select your choice from this morning’s Scenic Freechoice:

Walking tour of Avignon including a visit to the Popes Palace: From the ship, you will be guided on a walk through Avignon, visiting the historic city walls and the Pope’s Palace, home to the Papacy and seat of Western Christianity in the 14th century. Avignon is filled with cobblestoned streets and the palace has numerous steps, so a moderate degree of fitness is required for this tour.

Excursion to Pont Du Gard: Visit the ancient Roman aqueduct, Pont du Gard, on a guided tour. Dating to the middle of the first century, this engineering masterpiece was designed to carry water to the city of Nîmes.

Shop with a Chef & Scenic Culinaire: Join your Scenic chef to visit the local market where you will shop for and sample the best ingredients this region has to offer. Return to the ship for an interactive cooking demonstration at Scenic Culinaire cooking demonstration. (Please note: Avignon Market is closed on a Monday).

Excursion to Luberon villages and Sénanque Abbey: Visit the village of Gordes, considered one of the most beautiful in France. Its stone buildings spiral around the rock on which it is perched, with the church and castle at the apex. Later, visit the picturesque Sénanque Abbey.
This afternoon is at your leisure to further explore Avignon at your own pace. If you’re feeling energetic, wander up Le Rocher des Doms. Set 30 metres above the river, it offers excellent views over the city as well as a pretty English-style garden with shady trees, fountains and ponds. Scenic Enrich
Classical concert at the Palais des Papes: When the doors are closed to the general public, you’ll have one of the most visited sites in France to yourself. Upon arrival, you will be ushered into the grandiose palace for an exclusive gala dinner accompanied by classical concert from a trio of musicians, in the very room the Pope used to dine. Be immersed in the beauty of famous classical pieces, which gain a new fascinating dimension inside the palace’s walls.

Arrives On: 24 May 27

Day 6: Viviers (France)

This morning you will arrive in Viviers, often described as an open-air museum thanks to its rich medieval heritage and architecture. The town was founded in the fifth century, and as you walk down the narrow, zig-zagging lanes, you will feel as though little has changed in the past 1,600 years. At its peak in the Middle Ages, Viviers was home to 30,000 people, today less than 4,000 people live here, happily secluded in their own world. Scenic Freechoice:
The choice is yours with this morning's Scenic Freechoice:

Walking tour of Viviers: Join a local guide to explore Viviers on foot. Admire its many monuments

and architectural treasures such as the Cathedral of St. Vincent – first built in the 11th century, it is now resplendent in 18th century Gothic style with a Renaissance facade. Afterwards, enjoy some free time to explore Viviers at your leisure.

French Resistance walking tour: On a walking tour of Viviers, hear stories of the French Resistance, who fought bravely against the Nazi Occupation of France during World War II. Learn local stories of heroism and daring missions as you explore the historic town.

WWII in Viviers: Uncover the layered history of Viviers, whose quiet charm belies a dramatic past. This guided walk reveals how the Rhône Valley became a pivotal stage in the Battle of Montélimar, when Allied and German forces clashed in August 1944 during the final push to liberate southern France. Learn why this battle is still studied at West Point. Scenic Freechoice:
This afternoon, explore further with one of the following Scenic Freechoice:

Ardèche Nature Park with Caverne du Pont-d'Arc Museum: Explore the mountains and medieval fortress ruins of this sprawling park. Then be immersed in the Caverne du Pont-d'Arc Museum, the largest decorated Palaeolithic cave replica in the world. The original site was deemed too fragile for public access, so this replica cave was built only a few kilometres from the actual cave.

Côtes du Rhône Villages tasting: Discover the rich flavours of Côtes du Rhône villages wines on a guided tasting tour through the heart of the Rhône Valley. Enjoy a warm, rustic atmosphere as you explore wines that perfectly capture the charm and character of southern France.

Excursion to Grignan de Provence: Join your local guide on an exploration of the beautiful provincial town of Grignan. See the mighty castle that dominates the town as well as the Collegiate Church of the Holy Saviour before enjoying some time at leisure.

Arrives On: 25 May 27

Day 7: Tournon-sur-Rhône (France)

Arrive in the picturesque town of Tournon this afternoon. This hillside village is known for its terraced vineyards, enchanting castle dating back to the 10th century and quaint cobblestoned streets. Scenic Freechoice:
Spend this afternoon at your preferred pace with one of the following Scenic Freechoice experiences:

Walking tour of Tournon: Explore the town on foot. Learn its fascinating history and visit the castle, built between the 10th and 16th centuries, that still dominates this town. Enjoy free time afterwards. You may like to cross France's oldest suspension bridge to the neighbouring town of Tain l'Hermitage, home to prestigious chocolatiers Valrhona.

Hiking through the vineyards in Tournon: Get close to nature as you hike through the sloping vineyards that overlook the Rhône River above Tournon. Learn about the local wine production and taste some of the delicious drops of the region.

Biking along the Rhône: Cycle the picturesque banks of the Rhône River past charming villages and spectacular scenery to the nearby village of Glun.
Back on board this evening, indulge in an exquisite dessert buffet, where the artistry of a local pastry chef brings classic French cakes to life. Savour a variety of beautifully displayed desserts, each slice a masterpiece that pairs perfectly with fine coffee or a

glass of dessert wine.

Arrives On: 26 May 27

Day 8: Lyon (France)

Greet the day in Lyon. You may like to arrange for your butler to deliver a coffee to your suite and enjoy it in your private Scenic Sun Lounge before venturing out for the day. Sitting at the confluence of the Rhône and Saône rivers, Lyon was founded by the Romans in 43BC. Since the mid-1500s it has been a financial and industrial powerhouse and today is recognised as France's culinary capital. The city is home to more than 4,000 restaurants – including 20 that hold Michelin stars – and eating well is a way of life. Scenic Freechoice:
Explore Lyon with this today's range of Scenic Freechoice:

Guided tour of Lyon: Discover Lyon's historic significance as you traverse its hidden traboules and secret passageways that date back to the fourth century. Then visit the Basilica of Notre Dame of Fourvière, offering a fabulous vantage point for views across Lyon.

Excursion to Pérouges: Visit this medieval walled village, located atop a hill overlooking the Ain River. It has been beautifully preserved, featuring vine-covered stone buildings, cobbled laneways and a market square centred around a centuries-old lime tree. Please note: Due to uneven surfaces and a lot of walking both up and down hill, this tour is recommended only for guests with a high degree of fitness.

Silk painting workshop: Lyon has a rich heritage of silk production that dates back almost five centuries to when Louis XI chose the city as a potential base for the silk weaving industry. In the 19th century, silk was one of the city's largest industries. During this workshop, you'll learn about the history and process of silk painting. Scenic Enrich
Choral concert at Chapelle de la Trinite: Tonight, admire the beauty of one of the city's grandest Baroque buildings, Trinity Chapel. Built in the 17th century, the interior is decadently covered in Carrara marble. Exclusive to Scenic guests, you will be immersed in a breath-taking acapella choir performance in this wonderful setting.

Arrives On: 27 May 27

Day 9: Mâcon (France)

Dock in the town of Mâcon, which will be your base for exploring the surrounding south Burgundy region. Mâcon sits right on the edge of the river, with pretty pastel-hued buildings, ancient churches and picturesque quays. It is close to the Burgundy wine region, one of the most famous in France, which produces exceptional Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Gamay and sparkling. Scenic Freechoice:
Choose from this morning's Scenic Freechoice activities:

Excursion to Cluny and Cluny Abbey: Step back in time to the medieval town of Cluny, which is famous for its Benedictine Abbey, once the largest Christian buildings in the world. Tour the impressive town, learn about its history and soak up its charm during some free time.

Excursion to Château de Cormatin: Transfer by coach to

the historic Château de Cormatin, built in 1606. The castle boasts a fascinating history and has been lovingly restored back to its original glory. Admire the castle's gilded rooms, moat, water features and more than 10 hectares of manicured gardens on a guided tour.

Truffle tasting: Meet a local truffle farmer and his hound to learn the tricks and techniques of truffle farming. Afterwards, enjoy tasting of truffle butter plus chocolate mousse with truffles.

Tour of Tournus: Stroll through the picturesque, narrow streets lined with pastel-coloured buildings on a captivating journey through Tournous' rich historical and cultural heritage. Highlights include the remarkable Hôtel-Dieu, a beautifully restored hospital from the 18th century, and the stunning Saint-Philibert Abbey, dating back to the 12th century.
This afternoon, enjoy a cooperage demonstration. A skilled artisan will show you the secret of this ancient art and learn how it still plays a crucial role in wine and spirit making. Tonight, sit down to an exclusive dinner on board prepared by Michelin-starred Chef Didier Goiffon. This intimate dining experience in Crystal Dining allows you to experience authentic flavours in exquisite regional dishes that showcase the best of French gastronomy.

Arrives On: 28 May 27

Day 10: Mâcon (France)

Stay in Mâcon this morning to discover more of the region's gourmet delights and dramatic architecture. Scenic Freechoice:
Choose from today's Scenic Freechoice activities:

Beaujolais wine region: Drive through the rolling hills of the world-famous Beaujolais wine region and meet a local vintner. Discover how this wine is produced and enjoy sampling some of the region's best drops.

Georges Blanc cooking demonstration: Learn the story of the village of Vonnas, a gourmet destination home to Michelin-star chef George Blanc. Visit one of his famed restaurants for an interactive cooking demonstration featuring classic French dishes.

Monastère Royal de Brou and Bourg-en-Bresse: Discover the cultural treasures of Bourg-en-Bresse with a guided tour featuring the stunning Monastère Royal de Brou. This 16th century masterpiece commissioned by Margaret of Austria combines flamboyant Gothic architecture with refined Renaissance artistry. Today, it serves as a museum showcasing centuries of Flemish and Netherlandish art.

Arrives On: 29 May 27

Day 11: Lyon (France)

Your journey concludes this morning. Farewell your fellow guests and Scenic crew, taking with you delicious memories of this gourmet journey. Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK. This itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for operational reasons such as high and low water. Please refer to our terms and conditions.

Arrives On: 30 May 27

For more information on this cruise, please call +44 (0)1202 767926.

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