

le boat

Who's on board?

CAMARGUE

Region Guide



Canal du Rhône à Sète	Approx time		No. of locks			
Béziers	2 hr 30 min	2 hr 30 min	3	3		
Port Cassafières (La Boat)	35 min	13 hr 35 min	0	2		
Vias	40 min		0			
Agde	1 hr 50 min		2			
Marseillan	1 hr 30 min		0			
Mèze	1 hr 35 min		0			
Bouzigues	40 min		0			
Sète	1 hr 5 min		0			
Frontignan	1 hr 50 min		0			
Maguelone	30 min		0			
Palavas-les-Flots	45 min		0			
Carnon	2 hr 35 min		0			
Intersection at Aigues-Mortes	1 hr 30 min		3 hr 25 min		0	0
Gallician	1 hr 55 min				0	
St-Gilles (La Boat)	1 hr 30 min	3 hr 10 min	0	0		
Bellegarde	1 hr 40 min		0			
Beaucaire						

Times are an approximation only and are calculated on the basis of an average speed of 7.5km/h and an average time of 12 minutes to pass through a lock. Your speed, the flow of the water and the time it takes to go through locks will all affect your progress.



8

Maximum speed allowed on waterways in km/h

3

Maximum speed allowed in ports/marinas in km/h



Pass oncoming boats on the right-hand side



MEDITERRANEAN SEA



View from St. Nazaire Cathedral

BÉZIERS

Béziers is best seen by ambling through its medieval streets, animated squares and leafy parks. Visit the majestic St. Nazaire Cathedral, located on a rocky mount which affords a magnificent panorama across the city and its five bridges. Admire the sculptures and paintings dating from the 15th century to present day at the Museum of Fine Arts, including Rubens and Delacroix productions. Stroll through the Plateau des Poètes garden and discover the works of a local sculptor. You'll find all the necessary shops and plenty of restaurants in Béziers.

Recommended restaurant: La Raffinerie. Walk east along the towpath from the Béziers Moorings.

Amenities: Supermarket, shops, restaurants and cinema (all at Polygone Shopping Centre – 500m from Marina).

Market: Tue to Sun (7:30am-1:30pm) – Place Pierre Semard.

PORT CASSAFIÈRES

From the Le Boat base in Port Cassafières you can relax on the sands at Portiragnes-Plage (1.5km from base) or scale the heights of the tree-top course and zip wires at the Azimut Adventures Park (2km from base). Speak to the base team about bike hire or a taxi to get you there.

Recommended restaurant: La Gibrine. Ask the base team to arrange a taxi or, if walking, head towards Plage Est.

Amenities: There is a restaurant on site. There is a small grocery store in Portiragnes-Plage, but there are plenty of other options further along the canal. There are bigger supermarkets close to the canal in Cers and Villeneuve-lès-Béziers (60-75 minutes west by boat) or, if travelling east, there are grocery stores just a short walk into Agde.



THE LIBRON CROSSING

Just east of Port Cassafières, you'll pass through the 'Ouvrages du Libron', an engineering marvel built in 1858 that cleverly diverts the intersecting River Libron in times of flooding.

Cruise out of Port Cassafières



VIAS

1km north of the canal will take you into the historic centre of Vias with its picturesque streets and alleyways, and the gorgeous Vias Plaza in the centre where restaurants spill out onto the pavements. Check out St. Jean Baptiste church square and admire the building of the 14th built in lava stone. But the real reason to stop in Vias is its leisure parks, perfect if you have active kids (or just big kids) in your crew. Not far from your mooring point, you'll find an outdoor karting circuit, mini-golf and France's largest fixed fairground, Europark, with nearly 80 attractions, from thrill rides to quieter family rides.



Recommended restaurant: Le Vieux Logis, in the centre of town.

Amenities: There is a bakery, butchers, delicatessen, café, ice-cream parlour, and some nice restaurants.

Market: Mid-Apr to mid-Sep: Wed and Sat (am) around the church



Just outside Agde the canal will bring you to Agde Round Lock. When it was built in the 17th century, the lock was perfectly round, but it was extended in 1984 to accommodate larger barges. It has the distinction of having three gates: two gates access the Canal du Midi, whilst the third opens onto the Hérault River (although rental boats are not allowed on this route).

AGDE & LE CAP D'AGDE

Agde is an ancient Greek city largely built using volcanic rock. Walking through its cobbled streets you can discover its ramparts, mansions and 12th century cathedral carved from black basalt. At the Éphèbe Museum admire the city's buried treasures which span 2600 years, with many found in Roman shipwrecks. Then take the footpath that goes to the St. Loup Mount, an extinct volcano which is now a protected nature reserve offering exceptional views.

5km south of Agde is the busy seaside resort of Le Cap d'Agde, with its 14km of fine sand, 300 days of sunshine and a wide range of fun attractions including an aquarium, fairground (from mid-Jun to Sep), mini-golf, a tree climbing park (Agd'Aventure) and a huge waterpark, Aqualand.

Recommended restaurant: Mare Nostrum, overlooking the Hérault River.

Amenities: There is a grocery store and plenty of restaurants in Agde

Covered Market: Tue to Sun (am) – Place Gambetta, Agde.

Cap d'Agde beach



ÉTANG DE THAU

Étang de Thau is a vast saltwater lagoon, separated from the Mediterranean Sea by a thin strip of sand. Whilst it's home to a range of marine life such as seahorses, clams and sea urchins, the real stars are mussels and oysters, which have been farmed here for hundreds of years, with over 20,000 tonnes of oysters and mussels produced each year. Between Bouzigues, Mèze and Marseillan, oyster beds stretch as far as the eye can see. Make sure you try these specialties on your visit.



Étang de Thau



CROSSING THE ÉTANG DE THAU

Cross with extreme care and do not cross in high winds or when visibility is poor. You can get a weather forecast from the Harbour Master at Marseillan by calling +33 612 203 535 or at Bouzigues on +33 679 372 735 or at Sète on +33 467 463 497. Stay within the marked channels. No anchoring is allowed, and do not use showers and toilets while on the Étang de Thau – use port facilities only.



Marseillan-Plage streets

Recommended restaurant: La Table d'Emilie. Head for the centre of town, near the Spar.

Amenities: You'll find cafés, plenty of restaurants, bakeries, butchers and a Spar supermarket.

Market: Tue and Sun (am) - Place du 14 Juillet.

MÈZE

This small fishing port owes its development to the export of Languedoc wines between the 18th and 19th centuries. Take a stroll round the marina and down the alleyways to discover winegrowers' houses built in traditional style. The Penitents Chapel overlooking the ramparts was a place of worship for centuries, until it was turned into a military hospital and then barrel-making workshop. Its terrace offers the best views of the city. North of Mèze, the Sesquiers Park offers a pleasant setting for a picnic.

Recommended restaurant: Le Coquillou, overlooking the port.

Market: Thu and Sun (am) - esplanade and town hall square.

MARSEILLAN

Set between vineyards and the Mediterranean Sea, this fishing port has retained the authentic character of a Languedoc village. A stroll around the town will lead you to the magnificent St. Jean-Baptiste church, the Henri Maurin theatre and the covered marketplace. Learn about the famous Vermouth by visiting the Noilly-Prat cellars, and then enjoy a glass of their aromatic wine on a terrace overlooking the harbour.

Cycle along the path towards Marseillan-Plage to enjoy the sandy beach and turquoise waters, where a whole range of watersports are on offer. At the entrance of this seaside resort, stop at 'Caves Richemer' cellars for to taste the local Côtes de Thau and Oc wines.

Mèze fishing port



BOUZIGUES

Be sure to visit the Étang de Thau museum to discover all there is to know about oyster farming. Then take a seat in one of the many waterside restaurants and bistros that offer a beautiful view of Sète. Sample the famous oysters and mussels, accompanied by a glass of the local white wine, Picpoul de Pinet, while enjoying the sun setting over the Étang de Thau. If you have young children, they'll love the Farm Zoo (450 chemin des Aiguilles) where there is a petting zoo, a playground, and pony rides on offer.

Recommended restaurant: Le Grand Bleu

Amenities: You'll find a bakery, shops, an ice-cream parlour, cafés and dozens of restaurants.

Market: Tue and Fri (am) - Place de la Golette.



SÈTE

Sète is well deserving of its nickname, "The Venice of the Languedoc". Be enchanted by its colourful façades, countless bridges which criss-cross the canals and fisherman boats which travel between the lighthouse and the central food market.

For the best view of the city and the saltwater lagoons, hike or catch the bus to the top of St. Clair Mount. There's nothing better to finish the day than a delicious bouillabaisse on the quays during sunset, or try the local specialty: the 'tielle', a pie filled with octopus and a spiced tomato sauce.

Recommended restaurant: La prohibition.

Amenities: Sète has plenty of grocery stores, supermarkets and restaurants.

Covered market: Tue to Sun (am) - Boulevard Gambetta.

Night Market: Jul to Aug (4pm-midnight) on Tue - Place Édouard Herriot and on Thu - Place du Galion.

SÈTE HARBOUR

To access Sète harbour you must call the harbour master on +33 467 463 436 to book a bridge lift. Call in the evening for the next morning or the morning for the afternoon. Winds and currents are strong in the harbour, which can make manoeuvring difficult. There are only a few moorings available for pleasure boats, which are located in front of the railway station. If you wish to see Sète, we advise you moor in Frontignan and take the train to Sète (5 min and €2.40pp) or cycle there from Frontignan or La Peyrade.



FRONTIGNAN

After crossing the Étang de Thau, you start cruising on the Canal du Rhône à Sète. Frontignan, the first city of this canal, is famous worldwide for its Muscat. This natural sweet wine, recognisable by its golden yellow colour, is perfect as an aperitif or as an accompaniment to blue cheese. After a tour of Frontignan's wine cooperative, admire St. Paul's Church which has an amazing gate decorated with a frieze of fish and boats. If you fancy a dip in the Mediterranean Sea, take the bikes and cycle to Frontignan-Plage.

Recommended restaurant: L'Épicurien. Walk north from the riverside moorings along Boulevard de la République.

Covered market: Tue to Sun (am)- Place Jean Jaurès

St. Paul's Church



MAGUELONE

Before arriving in Palavas-les-Flots, on a small island in the middle of the lagoon you'll find the Maguelone Cathedral. Stop by to discover this jewel of Romanesque art, built in the 11th century. This fortress was home for nearly ten centuries to the Montpellier diocese and successive popes often came to meditate in this peaceful haven.



Maguelone Cathedral



View of Palavas

Restaurant: Le Phare, situated at the top of the lighthouse.

Market: Mon (am) - Parking des Arènes and Wed (am) - Rue Saint-Roch.

PALAVAS-LES-FLOTS

Originally a small village for fisherman who sold their catch to Montpellier's central food market, Palavas-les-Flots is a busy seaside resort where watersports enthusiasts mix with sun seekers on its sandy beaches. In the morning, watch the fishermen hard at work then wander over to the water's edge to choose your fresh fish. Stroll in Levant Park and continue your way to the Redoute de Ballestras, an old alarm tower that hosts the works of the painter and caricaturist, Albert Dubout.

The town's arena, El Cordobés, is open to visitors for a popular game called 'toro-piscine' where participants take part in various games of skills whilst trying to dodge a young Camargue cow.



LATTES & MONTPELLIER

At Palavas-les-Flots, you can navigate up the Lez River, although you will only be allowed to pass the lock if you spend a night in Lattes (Port Ariane). Lattes is a busy town with plenty of shops and restaurants and an excellent Archaeological Museum. From Lattes, you are only 6km from the region's capital, Montpellier. To get there, call a taxi or take your bike and follow the river to the city centre.

CARNON

Carnon is a busy seaside resort which was once reserved for the elite of Montpellier. Nowadays, its six kilometres of protected dunes and beaches are renowned for the quality of their sand and water. Discover the town on a guided tour of the city on a Segway or, if visiting in July and August, the Tourist Office also offers free guided walks on the banks of the 'Golden Pond' where you'll discover the fauna and flora of the lagoon.

Recommended restaurant: La Traîne

Amenities: There is a bakery, butcher, greengrocer, minimarkets, bars and plenty of restaurants.

Market: Mid-June to early-Sept: Tue, Thu and Sat (am) - Rue du Levant

Carnon beach



LA GRANDE-MOTTE

This popular town was built in the 1960s by the architect Jean Balladur, who was inspired by the shapes of ancient pyramids in Mexico. Stroll round the city and observe its striking architecture but don't be fooled by its concrete appearance: La Grande-Motte is a green oasis filled with a multitude of parks and shady paths. The city lends itself to many outdoor activities, such as golf and tennis - there's plenty to do here to keep active. Paddle about on Ponant Lake where you'll see the famous Camargue horses and flamingos, splash about at the 'Grand Bleu' water park, or just relax at the Thalasso-Spa with its heated saltwater swimming pool, hammam and massage treatments.

Market: Sun (am) and from Jun-Sep also Thu (am) - Place du 1er octobre.



Harbour of La Grande-Motte



Aigues-Mortes



AIGUES-MORTES

Founded in 1240 by King Louis IX, Aigues-Mortes is a unique jewel of medieval military architecture. Pull up a chair in Place St. Louis where guitarists warm up the atmosphere with their flamenco tunes. Stroll along the ramparts then hop on a train or a 4x4 to discover the 'Salins du Midi' up close, home of the famous "Fleur de Sel", a thin, delicate salt that forms on the surface of the salt marsh as it evaporates. Visit 'Mas de la Comtesse' Ranch (+33 634 142 886), where you can enjoy a tour, plus bull sorting demonstrations and traditional evenings around paella. Make sure you try Aigues-Mortes fougasse: a soft moist brioche with a light orange blossom taste, and sprinkled with sugar.

Recommended restaurant: Le Dit Vin.

Amenities: There is a café, a bakery, a greengrocer, a butcher, a delicatessen, souvenir shops and a wide selection of restaurants.

Market: Wed and Sun (am) - Avenue Frédéric Mistral

LE GRAU-DU-ROI

Moor at Aigues-Mortes and cycle to Le Grau-du-Roi (approx. 25 minutes).

Although a popular tourist spot, Le Grau-du-Roi has retained the spirit of a fishing village with its small boats and piles of fishing nets. If you walk along the left bank, you'll arrive at the Yachting Marina, Port Camargue. Along the way you'll see the Seaquarium where you'll find tropical fish, sea turtles, sea lions and sharks. Further south of Port Camargue, the wild Espiguette beach with its sand dunes makes this the ideal place to sunbathe, take a dip in the Mediterranean Sea or try horse riding.

Recommended restaurant: La Fabrique. Head across the canal bridge for the beach.

Amenities: You'll find all the necessary shops and plenty of restaurants here.

Market: Tue, Thu and Sat (am) - Place de la République



Le Grau-du-Roi

GALLICIAN

This hamlet halfway between Aigues-Mortes and Saint-Gilles offers the opportunity to do some souvenir shopping. At the 'Cave Pilote de Gallician' cellar, you can taste and buy Costières de Nîmes wine. At the boutique 'La Laupio', you'll find Camargue rice, salt, bull sausage, mead and many other local specialties. Take the time to stroll in the Scamandre Nature Reserve. A raised boardwalk will take you to the heart of the marsh where you can enjoy bird-spotting without disturbing the wildlife. Don't forget your camera!

Recommended restaurant: Le Café du Pont

Amenities: Bakery and minimarket.



At the exit of Franquevaux hamlet, Thomas Stables (+33 6 17 09 82 12) offers the chance to explore the Camargue by horseback, set amongst the beautiful backdrop of the Canal du Rhône à Sète. You'll round off the day with a dinner cooked over a wood fire.

ST. GILLES

St. Gilles is a lovely town, famous for its beautiful UNESCO-listed Benedictine monastery, 4km away from St. Gilles port, the Thibaud Ranch (+33 4 66 87 09 42) offers walking and trailer tours of its bulls and the chance to discover more about herdsman life.

Recommended restaurant: L'atelier des halles.

Amenities: St. Gilles has a choice of supermarkets, shops and restaurants.

Market: Thu and Sun (am) - Avenue Émile Cazelles.

Abbey of St. Gilles





La place de l'Église

BELLEGARDE

Known as "water town", with its 13 fountains, canals, streams and marina, Bellegarde is best explored on foot. Stroll into town and walk to the Tour de la Madone, a medieval tower perched 56m above sea level, overlooking the village. 3.5km west of town, you can visit the Domaine Haut de Broussan with its olive oil mill and eight hectares of olive groves. The oil from their mill is sold on site and is also served in their restaurant overlooking the lake, where you can practice watersports such as jet skiing.

Recommended restaurant: La Halte Nautique, on the port.

Amenities: You'll find bakeries, a butcher, a supermarket and a few restaurants in town.

Market: Fri (am) - Place de la Mairie.

BEUCAIRE & TARASCON

Beucaire has long been one of the most important commercial centres of the South of France, and is well worth a wander around, at the start or end of your holiday. From Beaucaire, cross the bridge and discover Tarascon, a city of heritage and rich in history. By the Rhône River, Tarascon Castle is one of the most beautiful fortresses in Europe. Near the castle, St. Marthe church was built to house the relics of its patron saint. Then stop by the Souléiado Museum where you'll learn the secrets of the famous 'indiennes', a Provençal fabric with colourful patterns.

Recommended restaurant: L'Épicerie de Cécile.

Amenities: You'll find plenty of shops and restaurants in Beaucaire.

Market: Thu and Sun (am) - Place du 8 Mai
Beucaire | Tue (am) - Avenue de la République, Tarascon



Rooftops of Beaucaire

LOCKS

Please refer to the onboard Boat and Navigation Manual for more information about how to operate and pass through locks. The locks on the Canal du Midi, and the few locks in the Camargue, are electric and operated by a lock keeper who will of course help you if you need direction.

OPENING TIMES:

MONTH	CANAL DU MIDI*	CANAL DU RHÔNE À SÈTE ** (NOURRIGUIER LOCK, ST. GILLES LOCK)	CANAL DU RHÔNE À SÈTE (FRONTIGNAN LIFT BRIDGE)	LEZ *** (LA TROISIÈME LOCK)
March	9am - 12:30pm & 1:30pm - 6pm	7am – 7pm	4pm only	8:15am – 11:45 & 2:15pm – 4:45pm
April	9am - 12:30pm & 1:30pm - 6pm	7am – 7pm	8:30am & 4pm only	8:15am – 11:45 & 2:15pm – 6:45pm
May to June	9am - 12:30pm & 1:30pm - 7pm	7am – 7pm	8:30am & 4pm only	8:15am – 11:45 & 2:15pm – 6:45pm
July to August	9am - 12:30pm & 1:30pm - 7pm	7am – 7pm	8:30am, 1 pm & 7 pm only	8:15am – 11:45 & 2:15pm – 6:45pm
September	9am - 12:30pm & 1:30pm - 7pm	7am – 7pm	8:30am & 4pm only	8:15am – 11:45 & 2:15pm – 5:45pm
October	9am - 12:30pm & 1:30pm - 6pm	7am – 7pm	8:30am & 4pm only	8:15am – 11:45 & 2:15pm – 5:15pm

*Canal du Midi locks close on 1st May

** Canal du Rhône à Sète locks close on public holidays (Easter Sunday, 1st May, 14th July)

***You will only be allowed through if you overnight in Lattes (Port Ariane)

MOORING

Between St. Gilles and Aigues-Mortes (good for bird watching) and between Palavas-les-Flots and Frontignan you can generally find mooring spaces along the towpath using your onboard mooring pins, although please refer to your waterways map for exact locations. Otherwise, you are advised to moor in ports or private marinas in the Camargue region, where a fee of between €10-€55 will usually apply. Most will have water refill points and electric hook-up facilities (not available on all boats).

CRUISE
World 

Contact Cruise World on 09 917 4440 | 0800 500 732
info@cruiseworld.co.nz | www.cruiseworld.co.nz

Disclaimer: We have endeavoured to ensure that all the information in this Guide is correct at time of printing. However, opening times and prices are subject to change. Attractions, restaurants, locks and even stretches of the canal can close without notice. Le Boat is happy to recommend all of the attractions and eating establishments featured within this Guide. However, they are not owned or managed by Le Boat and, as such, we cannot guarantee the quality of your experience at any particular time. If anything in this guide is not correct, we'd love to hear from you at guides@leboat.com so that we can revise future editions.

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