

# Provence 2025



## **TOUR HANDBOOK**

**24 – 30 July 2025**

**Avignon, Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, Arles, Abbaye de Frigolet, Aix-en-Provence, La Garde Freinet**



## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Where are we staying?

From Friday 25 July until Tuesday 29 July we will be staying at

**YMCA Gard Pont D'Avignon, 7 bis Chemin De La Justice, 30400 Villeneuve Lez, Avignon, France**

In an emergency parents may also ring Andrea Hemmett on 07980 618019

### Staff going on tour are:

- \* Andrea Hemmett – tour leader
- \* Matt Barker
- \* Jay Robertson
- \* Annabel Stevens
- \* Alex Robinson

You will be given a contact card with the phone numbers for Andrea, Matt and Jay as well as the accommodation details for your wallet!

The YMCA Gard Pont D'Avignon is a short walk to the Pont du Rouyame. The accommodation for musicians is in dormitories (2-5 people) with ensuite facilities. The staff are in five rooms. You will need to bring a towel (two towels if you want to use the pool!)

The hostel has a pool open from 9am – 8pm (but no lifeguard) and communal areas inside and outside. There is free WiFi for all guests.

Breakfast and either lunch or dinner are provided at the accommodation. Meals at the hostel are self-serve. Timings for meals are included in the itinerary.

You will need to bring some food and snacks with you for the journey to Provence and we will be stopping en route too. Our first meal whilst away is the evening of Friday 25 July at the hostel. Whilst we are away, you will need to find your own lunch (or evening meal on the Saturday). There will be cafes, restaurants in the areas we are visiting. We only have breakfast provided on the last day in Provence (Tuesday 29 July). You will need to purchase some food for the journey home!

### Concerts

We have three concerts whilst we are away, all of which are part of the Provençal Festival of Youth Orchestras. It is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this prestigious festival which welcomes orchestras from across the world:

**Saturday 26 July:** 8.30pm concert at **Collégiale Notre Dame des Anges**, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue

**Sunday 27 July:** 4pm concert at **Abbaye de Frigolet**, Mont de Frigolet, Tarascon

**Monday 28 July:** 7.30pm outdoor concert at **Place de la Marie**, La Garde Freinet

We have 90 minutes to set up and rehearse at the first two venues and 60 minutes at the last one. We also have a 90-minute rehearsal scheduled in at the hostel on the Saturday morning.

Concert dress is all black as usual. Shoulders need to be covered. Short sleeve shirts are fine. Skirts should (as always) be knee length or longer.

There is a fair amount of free time to explore places such as L'Isle Sur la Sorgue, Arles, Aix-en-Provence, and Avignon itself. We have also booked two excursions, which are an additional cost – we will be collecting the payment in euros whilst away – please ensure you have 20 euros to cover this (we will give you change):

Unguided visit to the Roman Amphitheatre in Arles on Sunday 27 July **4 euros**

Boat trip in Avignon on Tuesday 29 July **15 euros**

**Total extra cost: around £16.50.**

## CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO TAKE

**Instruments, music, music stand (clearly named), spare strings/reeds etc.** Cellists and bass players need floor protectors. Clothes pegs for music would be useful just in case its windy at the outdoor concert and a set of elastic travel straps might be useful for securing instruments when travelling. You are responsible for your own instrument insurance.

**Concert dress:** black dresses or trousers / skirts plus black top. Shoulders should be covered but short sleeved shirts are fine. Dresses or skirts must be long and wide enough to drop to mid-calf or below when seated.

**YOUR PASSPORT!!!** Please pack this **in your hand luggage** which will be with you on the coach!

**Toiletries and sun cream (it is likely to be very hot!)**

**2 towels:**

- **You will need one for the shower (or you can hire one for 2 euros)**
- **Swimming costume and towel** – there is a pool at the hostel!

**Personal medication**

**Mobile phone and charger**

**Power adaptor(s) for France**

**Student cards**

**EHIC - European Health Insurance Card** (if you have one that is still in date) or **GHIC - Global Health Insurance Card** (if you want to get one). Please check the terms of these and the travel insurance provided by Rayburns to inform your decision. If you apply for a GHIC and it doesn't arrive before we go, you can still get help with emergency treatment with a **PRC - Provisional Replacement Certificate**

**Warm weather clothes, sun hat / cap.** It is potentially going to be very warm whilst we are away. Average temperatures in July are mid 30C. Pack clothes which are lightweight, loose fitting and avoid man-made fibers. Cotton and linen are more breathable and will keep you cooler. Churches can be strict about covering shoulders and legs. You may wish to bring a pashmina, sarong or similar to cover your shoulders / legs if required.

**Lightweight waterproof jacket** just in case!

**Comfortable shoes** to wear whilst sight-seeing.

**A sensible bag** to carry around with you – try to use one that is as “thief-proof” as possible. Backpacks with zipped pockets at the back (i.e., not facing outwards) are probably the safest to have, or cross body bags which are advertised as “anti-theft.”

**Optional items:** camera, hair drier, headphones/air pods, books/kindle, small game/pack of cards – bear in mind it is a long coach journey!

**Money:** enough to buy a meal (lunch or dinner) on four days plus snacks. You also have two 24-hour coach journeys. Whilst you can bring some food with you for the first part of the journey, you will need money for meals during the journey to France and then back to the UK.

We have booked two excursions with the tour company – we will collect payment in euros whilst we are away. Please have **20 euros available**. The amphitheater in Arles costs 4 euros and the boat trip is 15 euros.

You may want further money for any other sightseeing and any presents / shopping you want to buy. You may wish to take a mixture of euros and bank card but check whether you need to let your bank know before you travel!

**LUGGAGE (please label each item)**

Please limit your luggage to:

- \* One suitcase or holdall (pack your music and stand in this)
- \* Your instrument/s
- \* One small piece of hand luggage with things for your journey.
- \* You can bring a pillow for the coach if you wish.

**KEEPING HEALTHY**

We will carry first aid bags including normal painkillers and treatments such as Imodium which can be administered only if your parents have given permission on the medical consent form.

**Any other medication you must take yourself (e.g. asthma inhalers, antihistamines, migraine tablets etc).**

Please make sure that your parents have given full details on the consent form of medication which you need to take regularly or in an emergency along with the doses required.

If you or any of your friends feel at all unwell during the trip, even during the night, PLEASE TELL US, NO MATTER WHAT THE CAUSE. There will be places where you can rest undisturbed if you are ill, but we need to know about it just in case it turns out to be more serious than you think.

**If anyone feels ill when you are sightseeing and out of touch with staff, call Andrea on 07980 618019.**

## TOUR GUIDELINES

We need to have a few basic guidelines in order to keep you all safe and healthy and the staff sane. The rules set out below for the duration of the tour are designed to ensure that you perform at your best in all the concerts, that you have a great time without becoming ill, and that staff know most of the time where you are!

Please comply with all requests and instructions from NYO and hostel staff — we want to make the tour as successful and enjoyable as possible.

- It is illegal in Europe to travel in a coach without your seat belt on, so remember to keep seat belts fastened on all journeys. Please keep the coach litter-free by using the rubbish bags provided.
- Members who are under 18 (i.e. most of you) must not drink alcohol while you are on tour with the orchestra.
- Do not congregate in rooms other than your own as this will disturb other guests in the hostel and NYO members who might actually want to sleep. There are social areas downstairs and in the grounds which you can use in the evenings.
- Please do not use the pool at the hostel without informing a member of the NYO tour staff.
- You should not go out of the hostel grounds in the evenings without an accompanying NYO staff member.
- No smoking in and around the hostel or at the concert venues
- Absolutely no illegal drugs
- On sight-seeing trips and during your free time, do not go around in groups of less than four and make sure that at least one of you has a working mobile phone which is fully charged and switched on. Ensure that you are back at the hostel, or designated meeting place, by the time specified by staff.
- We do not intend to enforce a particular time for going to bed each night — it will depend on the timetable for the next day. We need you to be sensible about this; please go to bed when staff ask you to do so.
- Be considerate — your roommates may want to sleep even if you don't!
- If you or any of your friends feel at all unwell during the trip, for whatever reason, even during the night, PLEASE TELL US. There will be places in the hostel where you can rest undisturbed if you are ill, but we need to know about it. If someone has been sick, they could be in danger if they are allowed to go to sleep without being checked.
- Do not abuse the use of texts and social media when contacting other members of the group. Please respect everyone's privacy and right to courtesy and consideration.
- Please do not post photos or comments on social media websites which might damage the reputation of NYO or any of its members and staff

## Rules for members over 18

Over 18s may drink alcohol **IN MODERATION**, but please stick to the following rules:

- No drinking at lunchtimes
- No drinking at all before concerts
- **ABSOLUTELY NO ALCOHOLIC DRINK TO BE CONSUMED IN BEDROOMS.** Staff reserve the right to confiscate any alcohol found there and to send home (at your expense) anyone who breaks this rule.
- Do not buy alcohol for or give it to anyone who is under 18
- No binge drinking – this is dangerous to you and unpleasant for other people (including hostel staff who have to tidy up after you)
- Stick to beer and wine only – mixing drinks, especially spirits, can be dangerous

N.B. Being allowed to drink alcohol is a concession and not a right - be sensible and do not abuse it or it will be withdrawn.

**IN THE EVENT OF SERIOUS BREACH OF THESE GUIDELINES, THE TOUR LEADERS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO SEND ANY TOUR MEMBER HOME, AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE. IN PARTICULAR THIS INCLUDES CONSUMING OR STORING ALCOHOL IN YOUR BEDROOM.**



**ITINERARY**  
*(subject to minor changes)*

**Thursday 24 July**

12.45pm	Assemble at Becket School and load coach / trailer
1.15pm	Depart for Dover (bring snacks and food for tea!)
8.45pm (UK time)	Ferry departs for Calais
11.20pm (Fr time)	Ferry arrives in Calais. Depart for YMCA Gard Pont D'Avignon, France

**Friday 25 July**

1.30pm	Arrive in Avignon. Unload coach, unpack. Free time to use the pool, chill out, explore the local area – we will make arrangements when there.
7pm	Evening meal at hostel Free time (pool closes at 8pm)

**Saturday 26 July**


8am	Breakfast
9.30 – 11am	Rehearsal at hostel
11am	Free time to use the pool, relax
12.30pm	Hot lunch at hostel
1.30pm	<b>Get instruments. Load coach. Remember your stand, music, concert dress!</b> Leave for Isle-sur-la-Sorgue
2.45pm	Arrive in Isle-sur-la-Sorgue. Drop off at Salle des Fetes. Time at leisure <i>Note: Arrangements being made for instrument storage. Changing facilities are available at Salle des Fetes not at the concert venue.</i>
5pm	Arrive at Collegiale Notre Dame Des Anges
5 – 6.30pm	Set up and rehearse
6.30pm	Free time – get own dinner / meal. Change into concert dress.
8pm	Meet back at Collegiale Notre Dame des Anges
<b>8.30pm</b>	<b>CONCERT at Collegiale Notre Dame des Anges</b>
10pm	Meet coach back at Salle des Fetes. Depart for hostel
10.30pm approx	Arrive back at hostel and unload instruments.

**Sunday 27 July**

8am	Breakfast
9am	<b>Get instruments. Load coach. Remember your stand, music, concert dress!</b> Leave for Arles
10.15am	Arrive in Arles. Drop off at Boulevard des Lices or Rue Emile Fassin (tbc). Walk to Roman Arena (0.5 mile / 11 minute walk)
10.45 – 11.45am	Unguided visit to <b>Roman Arena</b> (4 euros each) Free time – get own lunch.
12.45pm	Meet coach at drop off point. Depart for Abbaye de Frigolet
1.45pm	Arrive at Abbaye de Frigolet
2 – 3.15pm	Set up and rehearse
<b>4pm</b>	<b>CONCERT at Abbaye de Frigolet</b>



### Sunday 27 July (continued)

5.30pm	Load coach. Depart for hostel 
6.15pm	Arrive back at hostel and unload instruments
7pm	Evening meal at hostel
	Free time

### Monday 28 July

8 – 9am	Breakfast
	Free time
10.45am	<b>Get instruments. Load coach. Remember your stand, music, concert dress!</b>
	Leave for Aix-en-Provence (you may want some snacks with you!)
12.45pm	Arrive in Aix-en-Provence. Drop off at Fontaine de la Rotonde
	Free time – get own lunch
2.45pm	Meet coach back at Fontaine de la Rotonde. Leave for La Garde Freinet
4.45pm	Arrive at La Garde Freinet.
	Leave instruments on the coach to be collected after evening meal.
5pm	Evening meal at Place de la Marie (likely to be a buffet)
5.45pm	Collect instruments from coach
6 – 6.45pm	Set up. Short rehearsal
<b>7.30pm</b>	<b>CONCERT at Place de la Marie, La Garde Freinet</b>
8.45pm	Load coach. Depart for hostel.
11.30pm	Arrive back at hostel and unload instruments

### Tuesday 29 July

8am	Breakfast
	Pack
10am	Check out of hostel and leave luggage care of reception.
11am	Walk to Avignon boat trip
11.30am	Boat trip (15 euros each)
	Walk back to YMCA hostel to buy lunch, use pool / relax in communal areas or free time in Avignon (buy lunch!)
4.30pm	Load luggage and instruments on coach / trailer
5.15pm	Depart for Calais (bring snacks and food!)

### Wednesday 30 July

7.20am	Arrive in Calais
9.50am (Fr time)	Ferry departs for Dover
10.35am (UK time)	Ferry arrives in Dover. Depart for Becket School, Nottingham
3.45pm	Arrive back at Becket School

---

### Saturday 2 August

3 – 5pm	Rehearsal at St Mary's Church, Nottingham
<b>7.30PM</b>	<b>POST TOUR CONCERT at St Mary's Church, Nottingham</b>

# PROVENCE

Provence is a beautiful region in southeastern France, renowned for its picturesque villages, lavender fields, and sun-drenched Mediterranean climate. Nestled between the Alps, the Mediterranean Sea, the Rhône River, and the upper Durance River, Provence offers an irresistible mix of natural beauty, history, and culture.

Provence has a rich history of human settlement dating back to the Palaeolithic era. It was once home to Celtic tribes and Greek colonists, and later became part of the Roman Empire in the 2nd century BC. Between 879 and 1486, it existed as a semi-independent state ruled by the Counts of Provence, before being officially incorporated into France.

Despite having been part of France for over 400 years, Provence has maintained a strong and unique cultural identity, particularly in its inland areas. Today, the region is home to about four million people and has the city of Marseille as its capital.

Provence is one of the most popular tourist destinations in France, drawing millions of visitors each year. Highlights include the vibrant markets and historic architecture of Avignon and Arles, the dramatic Calanques National Park, with its limestone cliffs and turquoise waters, the rugged Mediterranean coastline of Marseille and the nearby Alps, offering year-round outdoor adventures. With its sunny weather, stunning landscapes, and delicious cuisine, Provence truly has something for everyone.

The term "Provence" refers not only to the geographic region but also to its distinctive culture and dialect. The Provençal dialect, a branch of the Occitan language, is still spoken by many locals. It features a unique accent and vocabulary that set it apart from standard French, and efforts to preserve and promote the language continue today.

No image captures the essence of Provence better than its lavender fields, which bloom from late June to early August. These rolling purple landscapes are more than just visually stunning—they're deeply woven into Provençal culture. Lavender is used in everything from perfumes and soaps to natural remedies, and it plays a central role in the region's agricultural and artisanal traditions.



## Location of Provence in the South of France



We are staying in Avignon, with free time to explore Arles and Aix en Provence. Our concerts are in Isle sur la Sorgue, Abbaye de Frigolet and La Garde Freinet.



# AVIGNON

Nestled on the banks of the Rhône River, Avignon is a historic gem in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region of southeastern France. Famed for its remarkable medieval heritage, Avignon's historic city centre is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, reflecting its pivotal role in European history—particularly during the 14th century, when it became the seat of the Catholic papacy.

Between 1309 and 1377, Avignon served as the seat of seven consecutive Popes, during a period known as the Avignon Papacy. The most iconic reminder of this era is the **Palais des Papes (Palace of the Popes)**—a fortress-like Gothic masterpiece and one of the largest medieval buildings in Europe. Built in the early 14th century, the palace was both a residence and the administrative heart of the Church. It played a critical role in centralizing Church operations and strengthening papal power. Though the papacy eventually returned to Rome, the Palais des Papes remains a powerful symbol of Avignon's religious and political significance. Today, it welcomes over 650,000 visitors annually and serves as a venue for exhibitions and cultural performances. Just next door stands **Avignon Cathedral**, another testament to the city's religious past.



Perched just above the palace is **Le Jardin du Rocher des Doms**, a tranquil hilltop park offering sweeping



views of the Rhône and the surrounding countryside. From here, visitors can spot another Avignon landmark: the **Pont d'Avignon** (also known as **Pont Saint-Bénézet**). Built in the 12th century, this once-sprawling bridge originally featured 22 arches, but floods reduced it to just four. Still, its romantic ruins and the tiny **St. Nicholas Chapel** on the bridge have inspired generations—and even a popular French children's song.

Within Avignon's well-preserved medieval walls, the old town is a charming maze of cobbled streets, historic squares, and architectural treasures. One such treasure is the **Basilique Saint-Pierre**, a 14th-century church known for its intricately carved wooden doors and serene courtyard. Just behind it, quiet alleys lead to secluded plazas and tucked-away cafés.



If you have time to walk a bit further, you may reach **Rue de Teinturiers**. This centuries-old street, lined with waterwheels and running alongside a peaceful canal, once housed the city's textile dyers and retains a rustic, almost timeless beauty.





We are staying at the **YMCA Gard Pont d'Avignon**, highlighted on the left side of the map. You will also see the **Pont Saint Benezet or Pont D'Avignon**, **La Cite des Papes or Les Palais des Papes (Popes Palace)** and **Le Jardin Rocher des Doms** over the river on the right of the map.



We have free time on the arrival and departure days to chill out at the pool and/or explore the local area. The **old part of Avignon**, including the famous **Pont d'Avignon** and **La Cite des Papes or Les Palais des Papes (Popes Palace)**, are here. Also indicated is the **Basilique Saint Pierre**. To get your bearings from the map, use either the Lotus café or La Cite des Papes as a point of reference. Cheaper places to eat are indicated in red in the map below



↓ Rue de Teinturiers is below this

## ARLES

Nestled in the south-western part of Provence, Arles is a town steeped in history, renowned for its abundant Roman heritage and its deep connection to the painter Vincent van Gogh.

Long before the Romans arrived, the area was inhabited by ancient Ligurians and Celts as early as 800 BC. Later, it became a thriving Phoenician trading port. In 123 BC, the Romans took control and transformed



Arles into a major city. At its peak, Roman Arles spanned 99 acres and featured an impressive array of monumental structures: a grand amphitheatre, a triumphal arch, a Roman circus, a theatre, the Thermae of Constantine (public baths), cryptoporticoes (underground passageways supporting the forum), and a complete city wall. In Roman times, Arles was closer to the Mediterranean and served as a key port, though centuries of river silt have since pushed the shoreline farther away.

The **Arles Amphitheatre**, built in 90 AD, remains one of the city's most iconic landmarks. This two-tiered arena once held over 20,000 spectators, who gathered to witness chariot races and gladiatorial combat. Nearly 2000 years later, much of the structure remains intact, offering visitors a vivid glimpse into ancient Roman entertainment. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century, the amphitheatre was repurposed as a fortress, complete with four medieval towers (only three remain restored today). At one point, it housed over 200 dwellings and included a public square and two chapels within its walls.

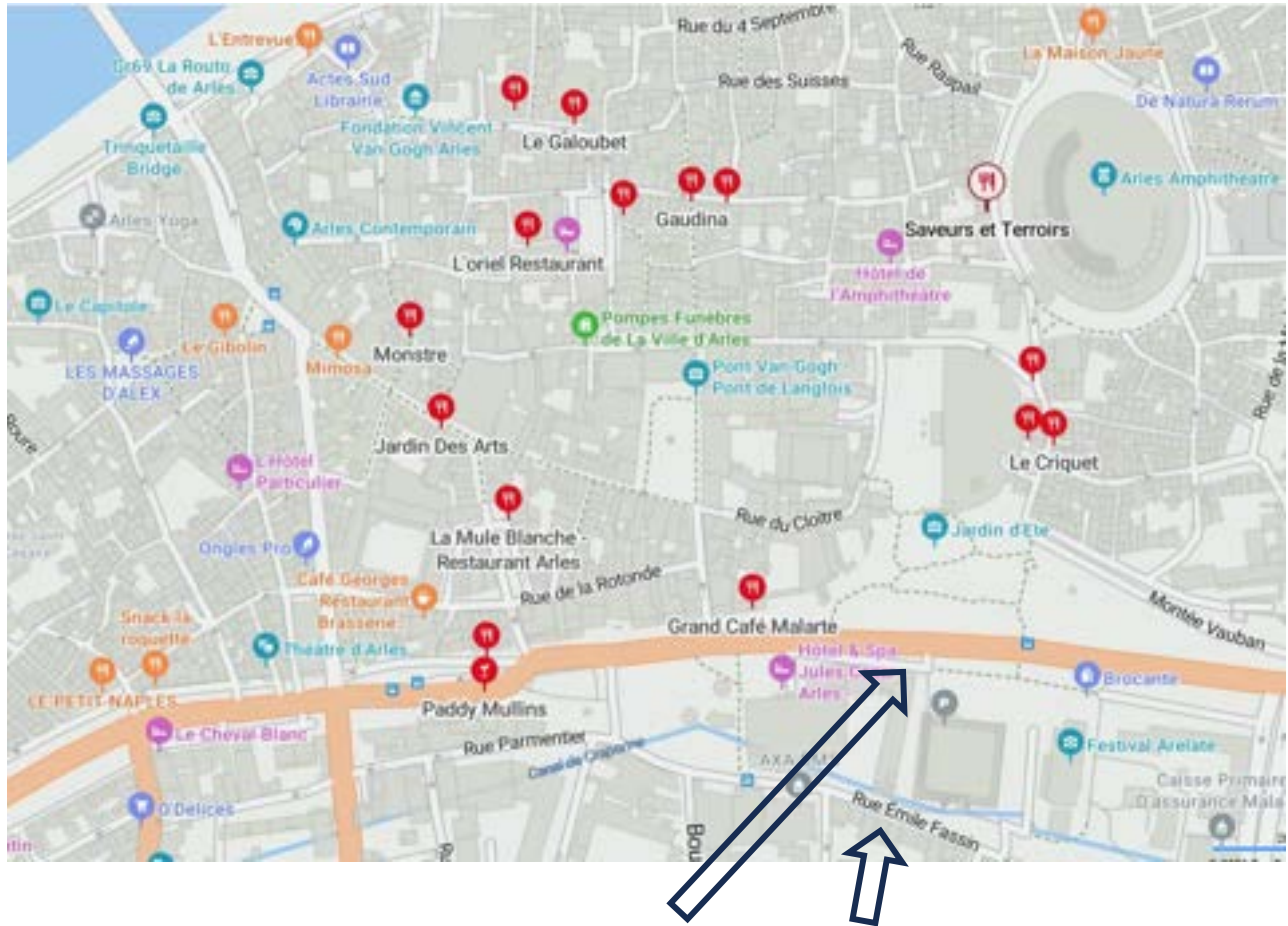


In 1981, the amphitheatre and other Roman and medieval monuments in Arles were collectively designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Today, the amphitheatre continues to serve as a cultural venue, hosting plays, concerts, and, controversially, Provençal-style bullfights during the summer months.



Arles has also long attracted artists. Pablo Picasso and Paul Gauguin both worked in the region, but perhaps its most famous artistic resident was **Vincent van Gogh**. He was fascinated by the Provençal landscapes, during 1888 and 1889 he produced over 300 paintings and drawings there, including Cafe Terrace at Night and The Yellow Room. However, his time in Arles was also marked by mental health struggles. In December 1888, following the infamous incident in which he severed his own ear, van Gogh was twice hospitalized in the Old Hospital of Arles. Growing concerns among locals led to a petition calling for his confinement. In May 1889, van Gogh left Arles voluntarily and entered the Saint-Paul asylum in nearby Saint-Rémy-de-Provence.

## Map of Arles



We should be dropped off either on the **Boulevard des Lices** or **Rue Emile Fassin**, before heading up to the **Roman Amphitheatre** (top right of the map). Saveurs et Terrois is a sandwich shop / café near to the amphitheatre which should be open on a Sunday – there are other options locally too.



## AIX EN PROVENCE



**Aix** is the historical capital of Provence, famous for its music festival, university and as Cézanne's birthplace. At its centre is a broad boulevard called the **Cours Mirabeau**, one side of which is almost exclusively cafes and restaurants with tables set out under the rows of trees. The most famous of these is *Les Deux Garçons* which is beautiful, but very expensive! Aix is known as the city of a thousand fountains. Down the middle of the Cours Mirabeau are four fountains, including the moss covered Fontaine d'Eau Thermale, which is a natural hot spring, spouting water at 34 C.

On the Monday, you will have free time in Aix and we will be dropped off at the **Fontaine de la Rotonde** (above), at the end of the boulevard. There are numerous fountains in the areas on either side of the boulevard. To the south, in the Mazarin district, you will find the Fontaine des Quatre Dauphins, which was apparently the first free-standing fountain in Aix. It's near the *Mignet* (the school that the painter Cézanne attended) and many teenagers often play in the water to cool down in the summer.

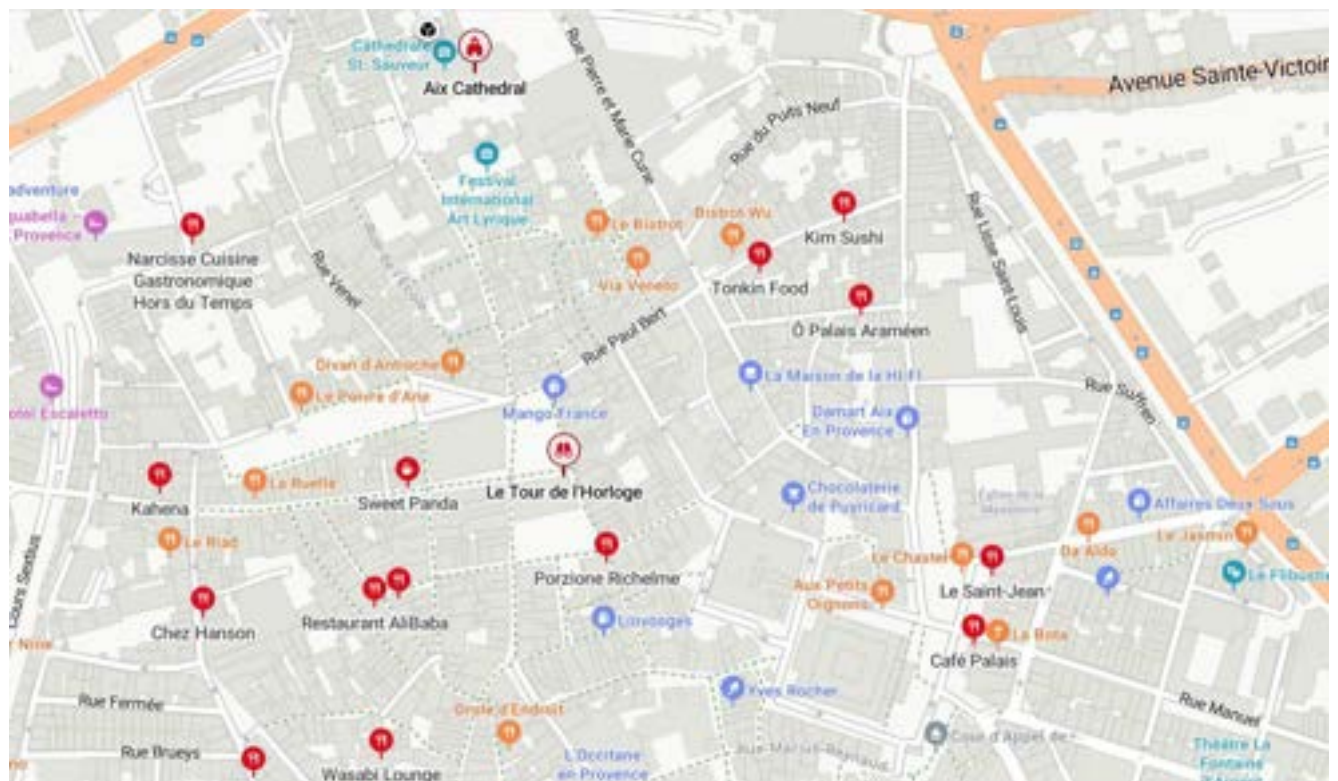
You may wish to explore some of the mediaeval part of the city, known as **Vieil Aix**. This is a lovely area, full of narrow streets with Renaissance buildings as well as many shops and cafes. At the heart of this district is the place de l'Hotel de Ville where there is a 16<sup>th</sup> century bell tower with an astronomical clock (**Le Tour de l'Horloge**) which tells the seasons as well as the time of day. A bit further to the north, is the **Cathedrale de St Saveur**, which has 16<sup>th</sup> century tapestries in the chancel which were stole from Canterbury Cathedral during the Civil War.



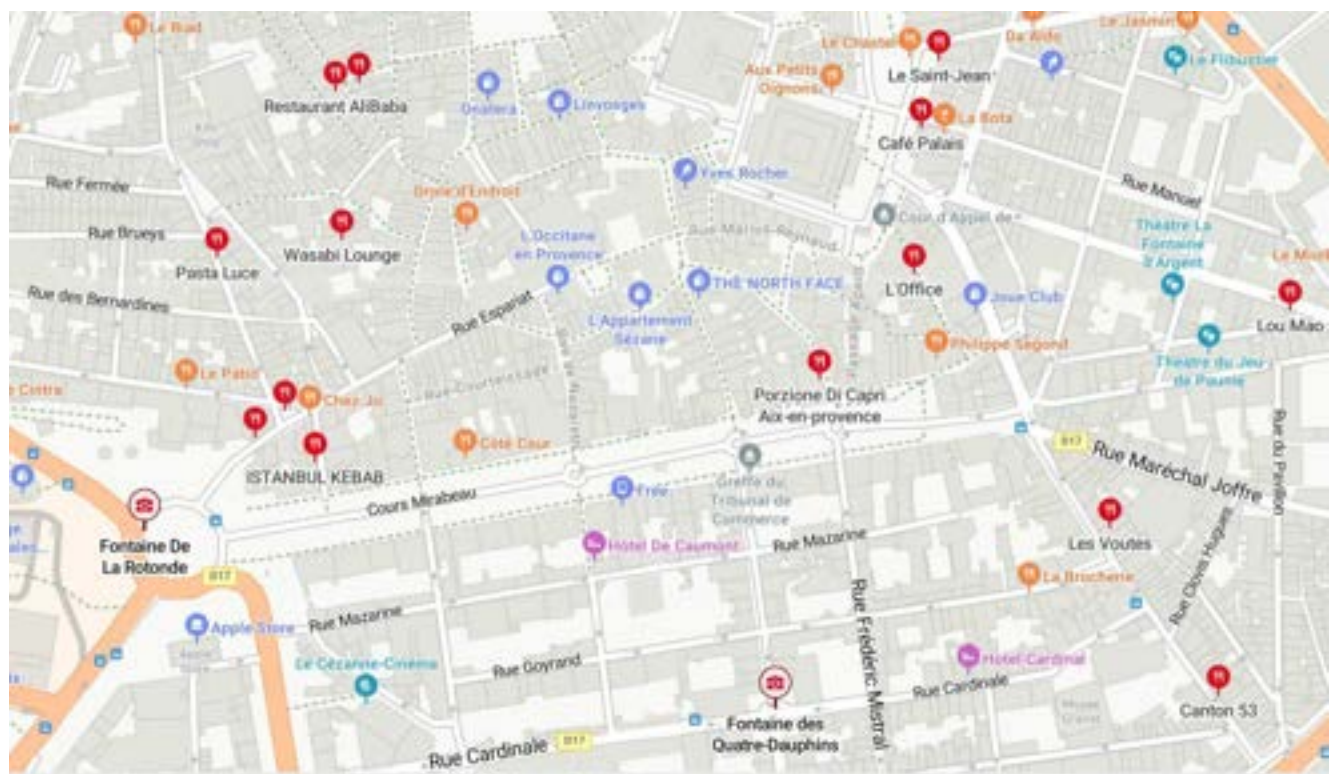
Throughout the Vieil Aix you will find more fountains, and maybe the locals using them. You'll often see dogs cooling down in them, as do local children (but perhaps not at the same time). Some restaurants use the fountains to cool their wine down during the summer months. The water is undrinkable in the main fountains but some of the water fountains on street corners can be used to drink from. If you get lost in the Vieil Aix, you simply need to walk downhill and you will find your way back to La Rotonde.



## Vieil Aix (including Aix Cathedral, *Cathedrale de St Saver* and Le Tour de l'Horloge)



## Vieil Aix, Cours Mirabeau, Fontaine de la Rotonde and Fontaine des Quatre-Dauphins



Eating out place in red are the lower priced / more affordable options.

## ISLE SUR LA SORGUE AND COLLEGIALE DES NOTRES DAME DES ANGES

**L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue** is a small town on the Sorgue river, famous for its many antique shops and hosts antique markets most Sundays. It has many waterside cafés and restaurants, all within walking distance of each other. Its many attractive water wheels throughout the town are still in working order.



At the heart of the town stands the **Collegiate Church of Notre-Dame-des-Anges**, the venue for our first concert on **Saturday, 26 July at 8:30pm**. This magnificent building is the principal Catholic church in L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue and one of its most celebrated landmarks. Classified as a historical monument since 1911, the church has undergone many alterations over the centuries. Its most striking feature is its lavish 17th-century interior, richly decorated in a style reminiscent of Italian Baroque churches. You will find numerous ornately decorated chapels, statues and painting inside.

## ABBAYE DE FRIGOLET

**Frigolet Abbey** is a grand Premonstratensian monastery complex located on one of the numerous hills which lie between Tarascon and Avignon. The canons are also called White Canons because of the colour of their religious habit. L'Abbaye de Frigolet was initially occupied by Benedictine monks having been founded about 960 until 1480 when it was abandoned. In the mid 1800s a new church was built, and it was established as a new priory. Currently, the Premonstratensian canons live a common life according to the model proposed by the apostles and the rule of Saint Augustine.

We are performing here on **Sunday 27 July at 4pm**.





## LA GARDE FREINET

**La Garde-Freinet** is a medieval French mountain village 15km northwest of Saint Tropez in the Cote d'Azur and is accessible via picturesque winding roads that run through forests. Established in the 11th century, the village has preserved its character with its stone houses, old fashioned street names, and a village square framed with restaurants and local art galleries. Its narrow, cobbled streets are home to houses with colourful facades, typical of Provençal architecture. The exposed stone walls, the brightly painted wooden shutters and the flowery gardens give the town an undeniable charm. The historical past of La Garde-Freinet is also very present. Its fort, which overlooks the village, offers a grandiose panorama of the surrounding landscape – all the way to the Alps. Community life revolves around the central square, where cultural events, pétanque tournaments, and open-air concerts are occasionally held.

We are performing outdoors here on **Monday 28 July at 7.30pm.**



## PROGRAMME NOTES

### **Triumphal March from Aida – Verdi**

Verdi's *Triumphal March from Aida* is one of the most iconic and stirring pieces in the operatic repertoire. Composed in 1871 for the grand opera set in ancient Egypt, the march accompanies a spectacular scene celebrating the Egyptian army's victory. With its bold brass fanfares, stately rhythms, and majestic orchestration, the music is admired for its dramatic power and timeless splendour, capturing the grandeur and pomp of a royal procession.

### **Kol Nidrei (arr. violin and orchestra) – Bruch**

Max Bruch's *Kol Nidrei*, originally composed in 1881 for cello and orchestra, is a meditative and soulful work based on Hebrew melodies, including the traditional Kol Nidrei prayer sung on Yom Kippur. In this arrangement for violin and orchestra, the piece retains its spiritual depth and emotional intensity, with the violin's expressive voice bringing a unique, poignant quality to the music. Rich in lyrical beauty and reverence, *Kol Nidrei* remains one of Bruch's most moving and enduring compositions.

### **Romance in F major (arr. violin and orchestra) – Bruch**

Max Bruch's *Romance in F major*, originally composed for viola and orchestra in 1874, is a lyrical and deeply expressive work that showcases Bruch's gift for melody. In this arrangement for violin and orchestra, the piece takes on a new character, allowing the violin's singing tone to bring warmth and intimacy to the music. With its gentle, flowing lines and rich harmonic textures, *'the Romance'* offers a moment of quiet reflection and emotional depth.

### **L'Arlésienne Suite No. 1 – Bizet**

1. Prélude
2. Minuetto
3. Adagietto
4. Carillon

Georges Bizet's *L'Arlésienne Suite No. 1*, composed in 1872, is drawn from his incidental music for Alphonse Daudet's play of the same name. This vibrant suite captures the rustic charm and drama of southern France through four contrasting movements. The bold *Prélude* introduces a powerful Provençal theme; the graceful *Minuetto* offers elegance and poise; the tender *Adagietto* provides lyrical warmth; and the lively *Carillon*, with its rhythmic energy and bell-like effects, brings the suite to a jubilant close.

### **Walk to the Paradise Garden – Delius**

Frederick Delius' *Walk to the Paradise Garden* is a richly atmospheric interlude from his opera *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, composed in 1907. This orchestral piece accompanies the young lovers' final journey to a secluded riverside inn, where their tragic fate awaits. With its lush harmonies, flowing lines, and serene, dream-like mood, the music evokes both deep longing and gentle resignation. *Walk to the Paradise Garden* offers a poignant glimpse into Delius' impressionistic and deeply emotional sound world.

### **Bacchanale from Samson and Delilah – Saint-Saens**

The "*Bacchanale*" from Camille Saint-Saëns' opera *Samson and Delilah* is a vibrant and sensual orchestral piece that depicts a wild, pagan celebration. It's the third act's opening scene, where Delilah and other women dance to seduce Samson and ultimately lead to his downfall. The music is known for its rich orchestration, including powerful low-pitched woodwinds and brass, and a prominent percussion section.

## TOUR PARTICIPANTS PROVENCE 2025

Amelie Almond	Violin	Paige Kirya	Percussion
Evan Au-Yong	Violin	Edward Leeming	Bassoon
Matilda Au-Yong	Viola	Julian Lo	Violin
James Bowden	Trombone	Sophie Mattern	Violin
Winnie Charlton	Clarinet	Isobel McIntyre	Clarinet
Eloise Chita	Clarinet	Louis Millar	Trumpet
Alex Clements	Double Bass	Esther Morris	Violin
Amelia Cocker	Clarinet	Megan O'Connor	Flute
Audrey Cook	Cello	Isabella Raisin-Moss	Double Bass
Holly Crane	Trumpet	Thomas Rhodes	Bass trombone
Casper Davies	Percussion	Bess Scothern*	Oboe
Jess Dawson	Cello	Annabel Skinner	Violin
Jasmina Demir-Wong	Violin	Jess Smith	Tuba
Elisa Empringham	Cello	Michael So	French horn
Norah Flavin	Violin	Isaac So	Violin
Orla Gilmore	Violin	Elise Stevens	Trombone
Max Hardy	Violin	Annabel Stevens (staff)*	Violin / Viola
Tessa Hill*	Oboe	Emily Turner	Cello
Andrew Hines	Cello	Frederick Turner	Violin
Lauro Ho	Cello	Isla Williams	Violin
Jacob Ingram	Trumpet	Collin Wong	Violin
Hattie Jamieson	Flute	Letitia Yu	French horn
Oliver Jamieson	Trumpet	Louis Zhu	Violin
Anais Jauzelon	Cello		

\* Extra player – please make them very welcome!

Annabel Stevens is also a member of staff and our soloist! 😊