



AD'Occ
Région Occitanie



Destination
Occitanie

Agence d'Attractivité, de Développement Economique et Touristique

Press Trip

Vincent Zuiedma & Ivo Hermse

18-26 septembre 2026

Canal du Midi



Contacts

Occitanie
Le Boat
Hérault
Aude

Birgitte Reimers – birgitte.reimers@agence-adocc.com - Mobile : +33 6 10 30 86 52
Vanille Tronche - vanille.tronche@leboat.com – Mobile - +33 6 88 93 11 16
Sabrina Lucchese - slucchese@herault-tourisme.com - Mobile : +33 6 76 68 21 21
Caroline Combis - c.combis@audetourisme.com – Mobile : +33 6 17 09 85 09

Journalistes

Vincent Zuidema
Ivo Hermse

Medias

Motorbot (print: 17.500 - Online: 35.000),
• Vakantiesophetwater.nl (visiteurs : 60.000 mois)

Accompanying partners Marieke Pouwels and Kirsten van der Heiden

...

If you are running late, please let the contact person listed in the programme below know as soon as possible.

...

Share your stay in Occitanie using **#VoyageOccitanie #LeBoat #PlaisirdHerault #AudeTourisme** and follow us on:

@voyageoccitanie - www.instagram.com/voyageoccitanie/

@leboatvacations - www.instagram.com/leboat.france

@plaisirdherault - www.instagram.com/plaisirdherault/?hl=fr

@audetourisme - www.instagram.com/audetourisme/

Canal du Midi, 30 years of UNESCO

2026 sees Occitanie celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Canal du Midi being a UNESCO World Heritage. Pierre-Paul Riquet's visionary project is a feat of 17th century engineering, with 240 km of canal running from Toulouse to the Mediterranean. The canal is now part of the region's identity and attracts thousands of visitors to soak up its locks, plane trees and pretty villages on a bike ride, boat trip or walk.

à Please see The Canal du Midi press kit in English on <https://press.tourism-occitanie.co.uk>

Some history - Pierre-Paul Riquet, the mind behind the Canal du Midi, was neither a royal engineer nor an academic. He was a modest tax collector in Languedoc. Yet it was he, through careful observation and intimate knowledge of the land, who realised that the Pyrenees – the source proposed by King Louis XIV's engineers – could never provide a reliable water supply. The mountains were too distant, the flow too erratic.

Riquet turned his attention instead to the Montagne Noire, south-east of Toulouse. There, rainfall was abundant, and the water could be guided through a network of small rivers and carefully constructed channels – the so-called "Rigoles" – towards the watershed dividing the Atlantic from the Mediterranean, known as "Le Seuil de Naurouze." Undeterred by scepticism, he financed his own experiments and demonstrated, hands-on, that the system could work.

Over a period of around ten years, Riquet put his water supply and lock system to the test in the grounds of Bonrepos-Riquet Castle and constructed a series of "test ponds." It was across this experimental complex, stretching over nearly two hectares, that Riquet meticulously studied and refined the water system for his future Canal du Midi, patiently working out every detail that would one day bring his ambitious vision to life.

Pierre-Paul Riquet risked everything on his audacious project. He invested a large part of his personal fortune and took on not only the financial, but also the technical and political risks – all to prove that it could be done and to secure the king's support. As a reward, King Louis XIV granted him the right to collect tolls from the canal's shipping traffic, giving him hope of eventually recouping his investment.

Without Riquet's keen insight, financial courage, relentless perseverance, and practical solutions, the canal would likely never have been built. Yet he never lived to see his life's work completed – in 1680, he died heavily in debt while construction continued without him. His vision and determination, however, endure in the canal, which still stands as a testament to his genius and tireless efforts.

Other sources of information:

- At the origins of the Canal du Midi : www.visit-occitanie.com/en/discovering/major-sites/sources-canal-du-midi/
- Canal du Midi, Unesco classified site : www.tourisme-occitanie.com/destinations/sites-unesco/canal-du-midi/

Friday 18 September - Béziers

10h20 Departure for Béziers on Ryanair flight FR4822

12h00 Arrival at Béziers Airport

- Airport shuttle – A shuttle bus is leaving the airport every 30 minutes after the arrival of each flight – 20-30 minutes – 2€ per person - <https://beziers.aeroport.fr/en/acces-et-services/navettes/>
- Taxi – taxis are available at the terminal – 15-20 minutes – 25-35€ per trip

As this coincides with the European Heritage Days, it will not be possible to offer a guided tour of Béziers.

REWIND audio-guided tours of the “trompe-l'œil” murals and "Béziers city centre", offered by the tourist office. All you need is a mobile phone with an email address and a pair of headphones for each person.

• *You have received the necessary links by mail (16/09) – Please note that one link is meant for one phone.*

Diner in Béziers (at your charge)

Suggestions:

- Les Ostals: [Les Ostals | Restaurant, bar, événements et art contemporain](#) - Tapas to share or à la carte dishes ranging from €6 to €25; homemade cuisine.
- Le Patio: [Restaurant Le Patio à Béziers - Restaurant Le Patio](#) - À la carte dishes (€12–€42) or set menus (€38 or €64) ; homemade cuisine.
- Les Bons Amis: [\(6\) Instagram](#) set menus (29€ à 36€) ; homemade cuisine.

Overnight in Béziers in **Café Hôtel Le XIX** – 2 double bedrooms with breakfasts covered by Hérault Tourisme.

- 19 boulevard Jean Jaurès - 34500 Béziers / +33 (0)4 67 48 04 00 - www.hoteldixneuf.com/

Saturday 19 September - Port Cassafières > Villeneuve les Béziers

Free time

- Grocery shopping

For lunch, we suggest heading to Les Halles, the recently renovated covered market voted the most beautiful market of France 2025. <https://www.beziers-mediterranee.com/patrimoine-culturel/les-halles-de-beziers/>

14h Transfer with **Olivier Joron** ([+33 783 006 174](tel:+33783006174)) – Gold VTC – from the railway station in Béziers to Le Boat at the Port Cassafières

- 15h Le Boat: Check-in and briefing at the Port Cassafières base for skippers and crew
-  Le Boat offers 4 bicycles, allowing you to explore the areas around the canal.

16h Port Cassafières > Villeneuve les Béziers / 1h30 – 1 lock

19h Dinner in Villeneuve

Suggested restaurant : Le Boucan, Les Enfants Terribles or L'Ecluse

Night on board at Villeneuve les Béziers

You will be able to dock at Villeneuve on your own. Coming from Portiragnes, the docking area is located near La Crémade pizzeria, before the Villeneuve lock. There, you will find hookups for water and electricity. No reservation is required: the docking spots are first-come, first-served and available based on availability. There is generally plenty of space.

However:

- Your boat, a Royal Mystique B, is equipped with a generator, ensuring a reliable power supply on board.
- As for water, refilling the tank around three times during the week should be sufficient for the duration of your stay.

Sunday 20 September - Villeneuve les Béziers > Fonseranes

Breakfast on board

09h Villeneuve-lès-Béziers > Béziers / 1h10 - 2 locks

Lunch on board or in town - *Suggested restaurant: Le Café de Plaisance, near the canal*

15h Béziers > Fonseranes / 40 minutes - 2 locks

16h Fonseranes Locks / 1h30 - 7 locks

Please note: Passage through the Fonseranes Locks is organised in ascending and descending phases during designated time slots.

For Haut de Fonseranes in Béziers, it's important that you arrive before 18:30 considering the lock schedules ([see next page](#)), to avoid any delays and to be able to settle in without any stress. The Tourist Office, located right next door, can provide information and assistance if needed. You can either call the Tourist Office (0033 (0)4 99 41 36 18) or go there in person. Please note that the Tourist Office closes at 18:30, so it's best to plan to arrive early enough to take advantage of their help if necessary.

Période	Horaires de navigation libre			
	MATIN		APRES-MIDI	
	Première descente / dernière descente	Première montée / dernière montée	Première descente / dernière descente	Première montée / dernière montée
Du 27 mars au 30 avril et du 1 ^{er} octobre au 3 novembre	8h40 / 9h25	10h15 / 12h15	13h15 / 15h15	16h05 / 17h45
Du 1 ^{er} octobre au 3 novembre	7h40 / 8h25	9h15 / 11h15	12h15 / 14h15	15h05 / 16h45
Du 2 mai au 30 septembre	8h10 / 9h25	10h15 / 12h15	13h05 / 15h20	16h10 / 18h50

19h Dinner at the foot of the locks or on board



You will be able to use the campsite with water and electricity free of charge (offered by the Tourist Office Béziers Méditerranée).

Overnight on board at Fonseranes

- your boat, a Royal Mystique B, is equipped with a generator, always ensuring a reliable power supply on board. As for water, refilling the tank around three times during the week should be sufficient for the duration of your stay.

Monday 21 September – Fonseranes > Colombiers

Breakfast on board

09h30 Fonseranes > Colombiers / 45 minutes - 0 locks

A place in the port of Colombiers has been booked by the tourist office

12h Lunch on board

13h30 Someone of the tourist office La Domitienne will come and pick you up at the boat to bring you by car to the Visit to the Oppidum d'Ensérune. Guide: **Anais Salle Sazarin**.

Visit of the Oppidum and Museum of Enserune with **Anaïs**, guide of the Tourist Office La Domienne - www.enserune.fr/

*Perched high above the Languedoc plain, the **Oppidum of Ensérune** is a remarkable archaeological site revealing the history of a major Celtic settlement founded around 575 BC, shaped over the centuries by Iberian, Greek, Punic, Etruscan and Roman influences. The newly*

renovated museum brings the site's exceptional archaeological collections to life, offering a fascinating insight into the cultures and exchanges that shaped the Mediterranean world. From the hilltop, visitors can also enjoy spectacular panoramic views stretching across the Languedoc plain towards the Cévennes, the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean coast.

After the visit, go by car to the **wine cooperative "Cave des Vignerons des Pays d'Ensérune"**.
Discovery of the cave and wine tasting. <https://www.vignerons-enserune.fr/>

- 19h Dinner in Colombiers in restaurant **Le Bistrot de Colombiers**
• 19 avenue de Béziers - 34440 Colombiers - <https://www.lebistrotdecolombiers.com/>
Reservation made under the name of the Tourist Office La Domitienne - *100€ covered by the Tourist Office. The rest of the bill will be at your expense*

Overnight on board in Colombiers – the tourist office has arranged the mooring
Yes, Water and electricity

Tuesday 22 September – Colombiers > Capeatang

- 08h Breakfast in Colombiers at the artisanal chocolatier's shop **L'Atelier de Sébastien** before leaving <https://l-atelier-de-sebastien.com/>
The reservation has been made under the name of La Domitienne Tourist Office

- 09h Colombiers > Tunnel de Malpas / 15 minutes

- 09h30 Malpas Tunnel > Capeatang (3h15 – 0 locks)

At your arrival in Capeatang (a place for your boat has been booked by the tourist office), meet **Margaux** at the tourist office quai Elie Amouroux. She will accompany you until the end of the afternoon.

- 13h Lunch with Margaux in restaurant **Chez Marguerite** (set menu 25€ + glass of wine and coffee) –
All four meals covered by the Tourist Office du canal du Midi au Saint Chinian

After lunch, visit of Capeatang and its **Collégiate Church of Saint Etienne**.

Capeatang is a charming small town with a wide variety of shops. Its stone bridge is renowned as the lowest on the Canal du Midi, and its curved shape makes navigation particularly challenging for boats.

Built in the 13th century in the Gothic style by the same craftsmen who worked on Narbonne Cathedral, the Collegiate Church of Saint-Étienne was intended to be much larger but was never completed, which explains the impressive scale of its stained-glass window.

Archbishop's Castle: This former fortress served as the Archbishop of Narbonne's summer residence. Visit the interior to admire the grand reception rooms and beautifully painted 15th-century ceilings. The Tourist Office is located next door.

18h00 Visit of the port accompanied by Margaux, followed by a tasting session with the local producers present that day (Domaine Clos Bagatelle for the wine, and a pork producer, Lo Masel).

Dinner on board or suggested restaurants in Cape tang at your expense (La Batelière, La Grille, Le Provence) - Margaux can make the reservation for you if you wish. In case, just ask her during the afternoon.

Overnight on board in Cape tang
Water and electricity - covered by the Tourist office du Canal du Midi au Saint Chinian

Wednesday 23 September – Cape tang > Le Soma il

Breakfast on board

09h30 Cape tang > Argeliers / 2h30 - 0 locks

12h Lunch on board

14h Argeliers > Le Soma il / 50 minutes - 0 locks

15h Visit to **Le Soma il**

Once an important trading port and a stopover for passengers travelling between Sète and Toulouse, Le Soma il is now a picturesque village in the Languedoc region. Visit the famous bookshop, the village grocery shop and the Tourist Office.

19h30 Diner au Soma il at the restaurant *L'Escale du Soma il*

• 65 All. de la Glacière, 11120 Saint-Nazaire-d'Aude

2 meals covered by Aude Tourisme

Overnight on board in Le Soma il
Yes, Water and electricity



Thursday 24 September - Le Somail > Paraza

Breakfast on board

09h30 Le Somail > Ventenac / 40 minutes - 0 locks

10h30/ 11h00 : **Visit and wine tasting at Château de Ventenac**

An historic wine estate located along the **Canal du Midi**, in the heart of the Minervois. Discover the estate's small winemaking museum, then enjoy a tasting of its wines and learn more about the local terroir and winemaking traditions.

12h30 Lunch on board

14h Ventenac > Paraza / 25 minutes

Visit and wine tasting at **Château Paraza**

- [1 Rue du Viala, 11200 Paraza](#)

19h30 Dinner in Paraza

Suggested restaurant: Café du Port

Night on board in Paraza

NO, Water and electricity, however:

- your boat, a Royal Mystique B, is equipped with a generator, always ensuring a reliable power supply on board.
- As for water, refilling the tank around three times during the week should be sufficient for the duration of your stay.

Friday 25 September – Paraza > Homps

Breakfast on board

10h Paraza > Argens / 30 minutes - 1 lock

12h Lunch on board or at the Guinguette

14h Argens > Homps / 1h50 - 5 écluses

16h Visit to **Homps**.

Located on the opposite side of the bridge from the Le Boat base, Les Vignerons du Minervois offers an extensive selection of wines from more than 100 regional wineries and estates. The team will be delighted to introduce you to some of their finest wines.



Boat cleaning

19h30 Diner in Homps at the restaurant **Les Tonneliers**

- 23 Quai des Tonneliers, 11200 HOMPS

2 meals covered by Aude Tourisme

Overnight on board in Homps

NO, Water and electricity, however:

- your boat, a Royal Mystique B, is equipped with a generator, always ensuring a reliable power supply on board.
- As for water, refilling the tank around three times during the week should be sufficient for the duration of your stay.

Saturday 26 September

Breakfast on board

09h30 Transfer with Olivier Joron ([+33 783 006 174](tel:+33783006174)) – Gold VTC - Transfer to Béziers airport – 1 hour

10h30 Arrival at Béziers airport

11h45 Check in

13h15 Take off for Charleroi on Ryanair flight FR 4823

15h00 Arrival at Charleroi airport

We hope you have enjoyed your stay!

This press trip was organised by the Occitanie Regional Tourism Board and its partners. We would be grateful if you could mention the following websites in your forthcoming articles:

Destination Occitanie : www.voyage-occitanie.com

Le Boat : <https://www.leboat.com>

Tourisme Hérault : www.herault-tourisme.com/fr/

Aude Pays Cathares : www.audetourisme.com/fr/