Exploring the Languedoc from Our Base in a French Château

October 9th - 17th 2020

One of the strongest motivations to travel is the deep yearning we have to connect with the past. Some may explain this by an awareness of past lives, others may simply enjoy the thrill of entering an ancient building or standing in a timeless landscape where their imaginations ignite and conjure the past. If this is the experience you are seeking, there could be no better place to spend a week than in the mysterious and spellbinding Ariège. Set in the south-west of France, in the foothills of the Pyrenees, Gavin Miller has found the perfect setting for a week of time travel, the Château de Camon.

Charlemagne, on his return from harassing the Moors in Spain, put the village of Camon under the authority of Notre-Dame. By the middle of the 10th century a Benedictine Abbey was in place. Troubadors, crusaders, itinerant knights, Spanish princesses and persecuted Cathars passed through the region. The Abbey of Camon was an important sanctuary along the way and by the 16th century a fortified manor (château) had been built to secure the Abbey. The château has now been offering comfort and tranquility to travelers for five hundred years! Vaulted ceilings, four-poster beds, beautiful fabrics and all the amenities of 21st-century living make the château both spine-tinglingly authentic and sumptuously cozy.

With the Château de Camon as our base for seven nights, each day we will set off to explore the antiquities of the Aude and Ariège regions. From the ruins of Cathar castles to the medieval grandeur of Carcassonne, it will be impossible to head home without feeling touched by the shadows of the past!

THE NET COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

- Land only (no airfare included): $3999
- Single supplement: $880

Airfares are available from most U.S. departure cities. Please call for details.

The following services are included:

- Hotels: 7 nights’ accommodation in a French Château
- Coaching: All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- Meals: Breakfast daily, 1 lunch, 5 dinners
- Guides: Discover Europe tour guide throughout
- Baggage: Porterage of one large suitcase per person
- Entrances: Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary
- Faculty: Hosted by Patricia Reilly, Associate Professor of Art History

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour.

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Frida

Friday, October 9th - Departure from your US gateway city. Overnight: Plane

Saturday, October 10th - Your arrival in Toulouse will be met by Discover Europe’s representative for the short (one and a half hour) drive to the Château. The rest of the day is free to unpack, relax and begin exploring the neighborhood. This evening the group will gather on the terrace for drinks before a welcome dinner party. (D)
Overnight: Camon

Sunday, October 11th - A leisurely start this morning, to shake off the effects of the long flights. We’ll take a stroll around the village and visit the abbey church, before we set off on our excursion. Our first stop will be the local prehistory museum in Tarascon, where we will have lunch.
Then we drive up the mountain for a one and a half-mile walk along an uneven subterranean riverbed which will take us back to the Magdalenian period (circa 11,000 BC) and to the vast chamber of the Grotte de Niaux. Leaping from the walls of the cave are the most beautiful images of horses, ibex, stags and bison, some still as fresh as the day they were painted. These are among the best prehistoric paintings you will see anywhere in Europe. Or you can opt to stay in the prehistory park and see the replicas in safety and comfort.
On our way back to Camon, we’ll stop at Montsegur. The ruined castle, set high on a rocky crag, was one of the final refuges of the persecuted Cathars. In 1244 the Catholic Church carried out one of its worst ever atrocities; 225 Cathars, who refused to recant, were burnt on a communal pyre. There will be time to make the ascent to the castle (30 minutes), for those who enjoy a hike, and for those with nothing to prove, a wonderful respite to take in the views and reflect on the horrors of the past!
Before heading home, there will be a stop at the village museum. We dine at the Château again this evening. (B, D) Overnight: Camon

Monday, October 12th - After a leisurely breakfast on the terrace, overlooking the lovely gardens set against the distant Pyrenean peaks, a three mile journey will bring us to Mirepoix on market day. There will be time to explore one of France’s most exquisite medieval squares, and enjoy a coffee at one of the many cafes. Weather permitting, we will have a picnic lunch at the nearby village of Roquefixade where we can take a walk to view the medieval castle.
Then we will head for the regional capital of Foix and visit the chateau, seat of the powerful counts of Foix. On returning to the hotel there will be time to relax and enjoy a cocktail on the terrace, before we go to a local restaurant for dinner. (B, D) Overnight: Camon

Tuesday, October 13th - Weather permitting, we’ll head up into the high Pyrenees today. Our first stop will be the beautiful village of Montaillou, overlooked by the ruins of the medieval castle. This was the village written about by Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie in his fascinating book Montaillou, which gives a vivid picture of life in a mountain village during the time of the Cathar repression. This afternoon we wend our way down the mountains, through the spa town of Ax-les-Thermes, where we will stop for lunch, back to Camon. Tonight dinner is included again at the Château. (B, D) Overnight: Camon

Wednesday, October 14th - This morning we’ll cut across the heavenly Ariège countryside to the magical Romanesque Abbey of St. Hilaire. Then on to Limoux, famed for its Blanquette - a sparkling wine. There will be time to find lunch and then free time for shopping in La Place de la République in the beautiful heart of the old town before returning to Camon in mid-afternoon, the rest of your day is free - you can choose to eat at the hotel again or venture out to a local restaurant in nearby Mirepoix. (B) Overnight: Camon

Thursday, October 15th - Our first stop this morning will be the bio-dynamic vineyard of Chateau Maris. We have a tour of the cellars and taste the delightful product before we have lunch (included). This afternoon we visit Carcassonne. If you had to choose one medieval fortress town to visit, Carcassonne would be it. Restored to perfection, you only need imagine fellow travelers dressed in sackcloth, doublet and hose, and you’re back in the medieval world! We will visit the beautiful St. Nazaire church with some of the loveliest stained glass in France. There will be time to tour the inner fortress, Château Comtal, and wander the narrow alleyways, before we return to Camon for a free evening. (B, L) Overnight: Camon

Friday, October 16th - This morning we’ll head to the mountain-top village of Rennes-le-Château. A visit to the parish church will either spark or rejuvenate your interest in Dan Brown’s mysteries. The church is full of symbols and secret codes which may indicate that Abbé Saunière, the priest from 1885 to 1910, had discovered the lost treasure of Solomon, brought to the region by the Visigoths in the 5th century. We’ll have time here for lunch before a beautiful drive takes us back home, stopping in Puivert on the way. Relatively intact for a Cathar castle, Puivert is in a wonderful position overlooking the surrounding countryside. Tonight, a final dinner at the Château, always beautifully presented by master chef Tom. (B, D) Overnight: Camon

Saturday, October 17th - Reluctantly we will bid farewell to the abbey this morning and head back to Toulouse Airport for flights back to the US. (Please do not book flights departing before 11.00 am) (B)

Key to included meals: B - breakfast, L - lunch, D - dinner
**General Instructions:**
1) Please type or print.
2) Make checks payable to Discover Europe, Ltd.
3) Be sure to read the Terms & Conditions and the Refund Policy contained on the reverse before signing.
4) Complete both sides of this form.
5) Detach the bottom section and mail it to Discover Europe with your deposit of $500 per person. Keep the top section for your records.

**Detailed Instructions:**

**Name(s).** Please make sure that your name appears on this form exactly as it does on your passport. Include your “Known As” or preferred name, if applicable.

**Passport Details.** Having your passport details ahead of time enables Discover Europe to speed up the check-in process at hotels and helps in the event of lost or stolen documents.

**Address.** If you have a different address, please provide us with the details, including dates that you are there, on a separate sheet.

**Special Dietary Requirements.** Please let us know if you have any special dietary requirements.

**Health Information.** A certain amount of walking is involved in this trip. Check the itinerary with your physician to ensure a safe and comfortable journey. Travelers requiring special assistance must be accompanied by a companion.

**Emergency Contact**
This information is essential.

**Independent Flight Arrangements**
If you are arranging your own flights, please provide your complete flight information, giving the following: dates of travel, airline(s), flight numbers, departure and arrival airports and departure and arrival times for all flight segments that you have booked. (Please note that extra charges for transportation to and from the destination airport may be incurred). If you need help arranging connecting flights from your local airport to an international departure city, we will be happy to arrange those for you. There is a nominal charge of $40 per ticket for this service.

**Rooming Requirements**
Please tick the appropriate boxes. We will book non-smoking rooms (where available) unless otherwise requested.

i). If you are sharing a room, please let us know with whom. If you would like to share a room but do not have a roommate, we will be happy to try and match you up but unfortunately cannot guarantee that this will be possible. If no match is available, the single supplement will apply.

ii). A twin room has two separate single beds in it. A double room has one large bed. Please let us know your preference.

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**Passenger Details 1009/DSI**

1.
   **Title**     First     Middle     Last

2.
   **Title**     First     Middle     Last

   **Known As: 1.**     **2.**

   **Passport 1#:**     **Exp.Date:**     **DOB:**
   **Passport 2#:**     **Exp.Date:**     **DOB:**

   **Address:**
   **City:**     **State:**     **Zip:**

   **E-mail:**

   **Preferred Telephone:**
   **Secondary Telephone:**
   circle one
   work/cell/home

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**Special Dietary Requirements:**

**Health Information:**

**Other Comments or Notes:**

**Swarthmore Class Year:**

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**Trip Details**

**Departure Date:**     **Return Date:**

**Departure Airport or City:**

I would like to extend my trip to:

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**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO:**

Discover Europe, Ltd.
95 Adams Street, Keene, NH 03431
**General**
1. Please be sure to complete both sides of this form.
2. Instructions to aid you can be found on overleaf.
3. Space on this journey is limited and registrations are accepted strictly on a first-come, first-served basis.
4. Registration and payment imply acceptance of the terms and conditions described herein. This information, as well as your itinerary description regarding dates, inclusions and prices, form the basis of your individual contract with Discover Europe, Ltd.
5. Registration and payment waive and release Discover Europe, Ltd., Swarthmore College and Engaging Journey's Inc., their affiliates, directors, officers, employees, including any person or entity employed or utilized by them, from all claims arising from any injury, loss, damage, accident, delay or expense resulting from events beyond their control, including, without limitation: natural disasters, war, strikes, incidents of politically-motivated violence, sickness or quarantine, government restrictions or regulations, and in the absence of its own gross negligence, arising from the use of any vehicle or from any act of omission by any bus or car rental agency, airline, taxi or tour service, hotel, restaurant, or other firm, agency, company or individual.
6. Discover Europe, Ltd. reserves the right to substitute hotels, airlines, activities or excursions in response to changes in availability, local events or weather conditions, provided such substitutions do not adversely affect the overall quality of the tour. Such substitutions do not constitute grounds for withdrawal with full refund.
7. Conduct During the Tour: You are responsible for respecting the authority and following the directions of the tour guide and the laws of the countries in your itinerary. We may exclude you from participating in all or any part of the tour if, at our sole discretion, your condition or behavior renders you unfit for the tour or unfit for continuation once the tour has begun. Unfitness may include, without limitation, any behavior that, regardless of its cause, is inappropriate or offensive or interferes with the delivery of tour services, or may constitute a hazard or embarrassment. In such case, our liability shall be strictly limited to refund of the recoverable cost of any unused portion of the tour. Should you decide not to participate in certain parts of the tour or use certain goods included in the tour, no refunds will be made for those unused parts of the tour or goods.

**Payment Schedule**
1. A deposit of $500 must accompany this completed form.
2. The remaining balance will be billed and payable 90 days prior to departure.

**Tour Cost Adjustments**
Discover Europe makes every effort to guarantee that the published cost of your chosen tour will not change. However, we do reserve the right to make adjustments in the following circumstances:
1. Exchange rates. Should the value of the dollar fall against the Icelandic Krona by more than 10% in the 6 months prior to trip departure.
2. Group size. This tour has been based on a group size of 25-30 participants. Should we end up with less than 25 people, Discover Europe will work with Swarthmore College to determine a course of action which will involve either paying a surcharge to keep the tour as is, or making adjustments to the tour in order to keep the cost the same.
3. Airfares. If your tour includes airfare, Discover Europe reserves the right to pass along increases in costs (taxes, airport fees, fuel surcharges, etc.) that are charged by the airline involved.

**Emergency Contact Information**
Name: ______________________
Email: ______________________
Primary Telephone: (______) ______________________

**Flight Information**
(Please check one)
Do you want Discover Europe to book your flights: □ Yes □ No
Flight details (if self-arranged): ______________________

**Terms & Conditions**

**Rooming Requirements**
(Please check one)
□ I would like a single room (see itinerary for supplement)
□ I will be sharing with: ______________________
We would like a □ double □ twin-bedded room

**Permissions**
Discover Europe may include my e-mail address on the tour passenger list. □ Yes □ No

**Signatures**
The undersigned has read the tour itinerary and recognizes and accepts any risk inherent therein. The undersigned also understands and hereby agrees for and on behalf of his/her dependents, heirs, executors, administrators and assigns to abide by the conditions set forth in the terms and conditions listed in this brochure and to release and hold harmless Swarthmore and any of their officers, trustees, agents, licensees, or representatives, from any and all liability for delays, injuries, or death or for the loss of or damage to his/her property however occurring during any portion of, or in relation to, the tour.

Signature: ______________________ Date: ________________

Signature: ______________________ Date: ________________