

Market Days:

L'isle sur la Sorgue on Sundays and Thursdays (small market on Thursdays) –

- Coustellet - Sundays
- Bedoin on Mondays
- Vaison la Romaine on Tuesday
- St Remy de Provence on Wednesdays
- Orange on Thursdays
- Carpentras on Fridays
- Pernes les Fontaines and Le Thor on Saturday
- Farmer's market in Velleron each night at 6 P.M. except Sunday.

L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue distances to :

NOTE : This are direct distances by car. On secondary routes for bikes, can add 25%.

- * Avignon 25-33 km
- * Pernes-les-Fontaines 11 km
- * Venasque – 22 km
- * St. Remy-de-Provence 33 km
- * Le Thor 6.5 km
- * Lagnes 7
- * Gordes 18 km
- * Menerbes 18 km
- * Cavaillon 10.5 km
- * Carpentras 17.5 km
- * Fontaine-de-Vaucluse 8 km
- * Maubec 13 km
- * Oppede-le-Vieux 15.7 km
- * Caumont-sur-Durance 10.5 km
- * Velleron 6.5 km
- * Chateaurenard 17 km

Cabrieres d'Avignon (pop. 1,800)

Located in the heart of the dry stone country, Cabrieres d'Avignon is an extremely charming picturesque village, which has been able to maintain all of its authentic character.

There is a pretty walk along the famous but sad "[Plague Wall](#)" built to protect the residents of the Comtat from the [Marseille](#) Great Plague in 1720. From Cabrieres , the walk will take you as far as the East of [Methamis](#).

Caumont-sur-Durance (pop. 4,800)

Bordered to the south by the River Durance, Caumont sur Durance is concentrated around a small hillock between the river banks and the Comtat plain. The village owes its origin to a large ford built over the river Durance. Overlooked by a Roman oppidum (fortified lookout post) which surveys the Chartreuse de Bonpas, there are wonderful panoramic views towards the [Alpilles](#), the [Luberon](#), the Ventoux Mountain as well as the [Vaucluse](#) plateau.

Between the lively narrow streets and the houses which surround the village church with their stone facades and beautifully painted shutters. A sometimes steep walk takes you up to the heights of the village and the remains of the ancient village.

In the church square you can appreciate the ramparts of the "Porte Neuve" dating back to 1775 and which marked the medieval origins of the village of Caumont. Opposite the church don't miss the sign posted botanical nature trail which takes you up to the viewpoint where you can take in some of the wonderful landscapes surrounding Caumont sur Durance.

Cavaillon (26,300)

For most French people Cavaillon means first of all -melons! Here it is the king of the market and the merchants will show you how to choose them. This is the king of the market. To choose it well, the Cavaillon merchants will teach you to weigh it, it must be very heavy (so full of sap and sugar), its tail ready to fall and slightly cracked at its base (sign that it is ripe to be eaten during the day).

This deserved notoriety and appreciated with each new season should not however make us forget the other charms of Cavaillon.

Cavaillon is lucky to have a green hill (St Jacques hill) in the heart of the city, so you can walk in a fragrant and singing scrubland then reach in a few steps the coffee terraces on the shaded squares of the city center or do a little shopping in its pedestrian streets.

Cavaillon has a heritage which can be visited while strolling through its old districts. You will discover at the turn of small streets and flower plots, one of the most beautiful synagogue in Europe (XVIII°) and its Jewish museum, a cathedral of the XII° and its small cloister, a Roman arch of the I ° century and beautiful old houses.

The marked discovery trail of the St Jacques hill will guide you to its summit from where you will have a very good view of the city, the [Apt](#) plain, the [Luberon](#), and the [Alpilles](#).

Fontaines de Vaucluse (pop. 650)

Fontaine de Vaucluse is truly one of the most visited places in the [Vaucluse](#): In the summer months the streets are literally crowded and the souvenir shops come at you from all angles...

If you're looking for calm walks down the charming village streets, try and come in the morning.

The success of the village is essentially due to the impressive spring which flows out of the 230 m high cliff.

This gigantic source is the most powerful on France and fifth in the world. 630 million cubic meters of water flow out every year.

Gordes (pop. 1,970)

Standing on the edge of the plateau of [Vaucluse](#), Gordes is one of the "in" villages of [Luberon](#) where many movies stars and artists have made their home. Its houses of white and gray stone rise up in a spiral around the rock where the village is set. At the very top is the church and the castle which face out onto the hills of the [Luberon](#). Due to its privileged position, its exceptional charm and its typical architecture, Gordes has been listed as "[one of the most beautiful villages of France](#)".

While strolling around the tiny streets which climb up between the tall houses, you will discover here and there beautiful old doorways, arcades and walls of flat stone perfectly restored, and on the other side, there is the panorama of the valley and mountains of [Luberon](#). Once at the top of Gordes, you can see the fortified castle enclosing the city hall and the [Pol Mara museum](#), (Flemish contemporary painter). The odd

village of the "borie" is intriguing. Bories are little round huts built in stone and were at one time used by shepherds or hunters.

But whatever you do, you must not miss the fabulous [Abbey of Senanque](#) hidden in the green valley.

Cistercian monks still live there producing honey, lavender essence, and liqueurs. The whole twelfth century edifice is open for visits.

Lagnes (1,650)

It is a charming small provencal village strategically located close to the [Luberon](#) and its famous villages, [Gordes](#), [Roussillon](#), [Ménerbes](#), [Bonnieux](#).

Lagnes climbs up the hillside from the foot of the Piei rock. The village is looked over by the XIIIth century chateau (rebuilt in the XVIth and XVIIth) which gives the village a very Medieval atmosphere.

Don't forget to climb up to the summit of the village because there are magnificent panoramic views over the whole [Luberon](#) region, to the [Alpilles](#) and with a bit of luck on a clear day you will glimpse the Cevennes.

In the village itself there are pleasant walks to be had around the quaint, narrow streets bordered by the ancient village house and their floral displays which give the village its charm. You'll pass by residences which date back to the XVIth and XVIIth centuries as well as a few covered passageways.

Le Thor (8,900)

Le Thor is a small town on the banks of the Sorgue, in the heart of the Monts de [Vaucluse](#). This Comtat Venaissin settlement was probably founded in the 7th century. Today it boasts some remains of its past that are worthy of your attention... The church of Notre Dame du Lac has been watching over the town since the 12th century. It retains all of its original character and has beautifully sculptured main doors. It is entirely romanesque, and its single nave is spanned by the most ancient gothic arches in [Provence](#).

Strolling through the streets of Le Thor, you cannot miss the medieval château, which was restored in the last century. You will also discover a monumental gate in its ancient ramparts. It is crowned with the town clock and a wrought iron campanile. This gate, or to be precise this belfry, dates from 19th century..

There are some really beautiful walks in the vicinity of Le Thor, (many hiking trails start out from here). In particular, you will be able to take a walk to Thouzon hill which is capped by the remains of a chateau and a chapel. To get there, simply follow a little road on the west side of the village that leads to a hill covered with scrubland overlooked by the white ruins of the convent buildings..

3 km away on the D16, you can also visit the Thouzon cave, a natural underground cave dating back to the Cretaceous period. The guided tour will lead you along a narrow path which is in fact the fossilised bed of what was once an underground river. You will be amazed at the sight of the very thin stalactites. The cave is two hundred and thirty metres long and was discovered by chance in 1902 by quarry workers. It is the only natural cave in the [Vaucluse](#) open to the public.

Menebres (1,000)

This superb little village, home to Peter Mayles of A Year in Provence fame, is in the [Luberon](#) and is considered one of the finest in France.

Built on a hill, it is surrounded by magnificent countryside.

When visiting Menerbes you will notice that its rich historic past has been well-preserved. The Dolmen de la Pichouno (unique to the [Vaucluse](#)) shows that Menerbes has been inhabited since prehistoric times. Archeological excavations have uncovered the remains of villas and an ancient cemetery dating back to Roman times.

In the Middle Ages, access to the city, then riddled with undergrounds was through the two doors St Sauveur and Notre Dame. The Abbey of St Hilaire, former convent of a Carmelite community, was developed around 1250 from a preexisting religious site, partly troglodyte.

At the time of the religious wars in the 16th century, Menerbes was the capital of the Protestant movement and you can admire the imposing citadel built between the 12th and 16th century.

This dramatic past comes to life when you see the magnificent old houses, now lovingly restored and the power taken by the aristocracy at the time. The houses certainly lend character to the old Menerbes !

[Nicolas de Staël](#) and [Picasso](#) both owned houses at Ménerbes and they have been joined by other famous artists, musicians, comedians and writers, all of whom own one of the farmhouses scattered around the village.

Do not leave Menerbes without making a tour of the picturesque "[Corkscrew museum](#)" where more than 1,000 different varieties of this magic tool are on display. The corkscrew was invented in the 12th century... by a Frenchman of course !!!

Monteux (pop. 12,500)

Monteux is a large village which spreads across the fertile plain surrounding [Carpentras](#). The centre of the old village of Monteux is concentrated inside its 14th century fortified ramparts.

You'll enter the village through the Neuve gate or the Avignon gate which are all that remain of its ramparts. Then you can ramble through the streets and alleyways of the ancient village. The Neuve gate is listed as a historic monument. In the 14th century it was used by members of the parish council who dispensed justice. Close by, you will see the Gothic church of Notre Dame de Nazareth. It underwent restoration recently and is listed as a historic monument. The more curious visitors can walk along the right side of the church to the Clementine tower. It is twenty-eight metres high and overlooks the village.

This square tower was the dungeon of the Chateau de Monteux erected in the 12th century, which was one of the residences used by Pope [Clement V](#). It is the only building to have survived a fire in 1415. The visit will come to an end at the Orange gate which opens onto the thoroughfare encircling the village. If you feel like a snack or a cool drink you will find cafés and restaurants here.

Oppede Le Vieux (1,350)

Oppede Le Vieux is a magnificent little hill-top village. Built high on a rocky outcrop and surrounded by lush vegetation, thick forests and rocks form a striking backdrop. You will be enchanted by this historic village which has so much to offer: a 12th century collegiate church which dominates the skyline, the ruins of an ancient chateau and the remains of historic workshops and boutiques.

It is a pleasure to wander around this village and visitors will admire the charming 15th and 16th century houses that have been skilfully restored.

Numerous artists, writers and movie stars have been so charmed by the style and beauty of Oppede Le Vieux. They bought and then restored beautiful properties ... you too, no doubt, if you like the charm of old stones, you will have a real crush on Oppede Le Vieux.

Pernes les Fontaines (pop. 10,000)

Located between [Carpentras](#) and [Isle sur la Sorgue](#), Pernes les Fontaines as its name suggests is the fountain town...

More than 40 ancient fountains can be found in the village, which took its characteristic title in 1936. Mossy, sculptured, massive, or more discrete the fountains were installed from the second half of the XVIIIth century... Hence a large selection of styles can be found which will please connoisseurs of this genre. The most famous are the so called "Gigot" next to the Ferrande tower and the Cormoran next to the covered market.

The trail which takes you past the 40 little wonders is an excellent excuse to discover the heritage and other charms of the village of Pernes les Fontaines always accompanied by the gentle murmur of water in the background. You'll pass by some beautiful Town Houses from the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, Notre Dame gateway, remains of the ramparts, the dungeon of the ancient "chateau des Comtes.

Take a while to visit the Ferrande Tower from the XIIIth. There are some wonderful frescoes from the same period and a pretty [museum of Comtadin costumes](#) with lace, dresses and other ancient linen and fabrics.

Saint-Didier (pop. 2,000)

This a pleasant little village is set within the superb landscapes of the [Vaucluse](#) Hills. Beautiful walks are to be had across the surrounding countryside especially along the road of the shrines. Pass by Saint Didier and you can't fail to see its stone gateway (set across the road) with its high clock tower. This gateway marks the entrance to the [Thezan chateau](#) built in the XV° and extended in the XVIII° C. The chateau was transformed into a hydrotherapy center in the last century. Today it's a private clinic, not available to visits but you can still stop a while to admire the exterior.

Velleron (3,000)

Velleron is a municipality organised around its chateau which stands at the highest point of the village. Velleron was originally a Gallo-Roman oppidum, and became a fortified village in the Middle Ages. In the 17th century, and up until the revolution, the village was the joint property of the Crillon and Cambis families. Today the former chateau of the Crillon family houses the mairie.

As you walk from Place du Chateau to Place de l'Eglise you will come across the stone fountain of [Caromb](#), the recently restored church of Saint Michel (in olden days the priory of Notre Dame de Nazareth), and you will also discover the beautiful façades of houses once owned by notables. A few steps away, on Boulevard du Barri, cut out from the ramparts, the remains of the 17th century olive oil mill are bound to surprise you. It's also worth taking a look at the old hospital dating from the 18th century, and admiring its fountain.

Velleron was once a spa, and the buildings are still visible, on the road taking you to [Isle sur Sorgue](#). The spring of alkaline sulphur-bearing waters still flows today. As for nature-lovers, they'll enjoy walking along the banks of the Sorgue.

Venasque (1,050)

Perched at the summit of a rocky outcrop, Venasque is a picturesque village classed amongst one of the 126 "[plus beaux villages in France](#)" (*most beautiful villages in France*). Venasque dominates the Nesque valley and the [Carpentras](#) plain. Due to its strategic situation, the village has an interesting and dramatic past.

Protected since ancient times, Venasque has preserved its history: The "[Monuments Historiques](#)" have classified the very beautiful [baptistry](#). Its origins are unclear, but it is believed to be the oldest religious baptistry in the region. The 12th century church and its three Saracen towers are also classified, (the highest measures 18m). From the towers, there is a brilliant view of the north of the Comtat, the Dentelles of Montmirail and Mont Ventoux (1,912 m).

Around the village, you will see the ruins of the ramparts which once surrounded the town. Several beautiful chapels can also be seen on the outskirts of Venasque and they make a good pretext for a scenic country walk.

Venasque is one of the oldest villages of the Comtat Venaissin, from where it takes its name. This respect for the past has almost given Venasque a slightly austere feel, due to its authenticity. Its houses are rebuilt to original specifications.

You will enjoy this special atmosphere, infused with the Provençal lifestyle as you stroll around the pleasant streets. History lovers will be in their element... just like the dozens of painters and artists who have chosen to live here...

Up to the 19th century Monteux was mainly an agricultural market town. A few farmers have managed to withstand the competition and on market day offer quality fruit and vegetables from the region.

Tomatoes, melons, strawberries, apples, peaches, leeks and sweet peppers are still very tasty around here...!

Monteux is also very well known for the quality of its firework display. Each year for the festival of Saint Jean (the last weekend in August), you will be able to admire a magnificent pyrotechnic show lasting 45 minutes; the only one of its kind in France. It is worth noting that the famous [Ruggieri company](#) (Number 1 fireworks manufacturer) is located in Monteux. Ever since the middle of the 19th century, a large proportion of the local population has been employed by the Ruggieri company. This activity that has made Monteux the fireworks capital.

Avignon to Isle sur la Sorgue by way of Le Thor – 25 km.

Turn East off Bd Limbert onto Av de la Folie which has bike lanes. Straight through roundabout. At next roundabout, go straight. At next roundabout which has green space on R, go straight but onto path, not onto Av de la Folie. Path goes under Folie bridge and beside D907. Go 3009 metres and take Right onto overpass.

The path jigs up and back and a half block later becomes Rue des Platanes. Go straight until we encounter Rue Rene Cassin. Turn L. Might have to ride a bit on sidewalk.

Go 500 metres to roundabout, take 2nd R onto Chem de Massillargues. Straight for a km or so and into another roundabout. First R onto Rue Pierre August Renoir. Just before roundabout, there's a path on eastside of the road; take it. Continue for 100 metres riding on path beside main road into another roundabout. Cross over to east side OR take East turn off roundabout onto Chem de la Sacristie. Now onto country road. After a km or 2, route crosses intersection with Av des Aulnes – keep straight as route now becomes identified as Chemin de la Verdier. Small roundabout – keep straight.

When route intersects with D901, take path running R just beside highway. Keep on path till minor intersection and turn left which becomes Av du President Leon Blum. Remain on that for several blocks until small roundabout/intersection and turn R onto Rue Louis Gros. Ride maybe 250 metres into roundabout, take third R (which goes East) onto Av Aristide Briand (might be path there) and proceed into 2 roundabouts. At 1st roundabout, ignore R turn and proceed straight and into 2nd roundabout and take 3rd R which is still Av Aristide Briand. (and D901).

Continue on Aristide Briand/D901 even though no shoulder. Road crosses over E714 which is major highway. Go straight for maybe 2 or 3 kms. After South bend, route turns back east. Turn R (south) onto Chemin des Ariailles and after maybe 400 metres, take first L onto Chem de Fontisson. We're on edge of Chateauneuf-de-Gadagne. When Fontisson ends, turn R, go 50 metres, turn L onto Chemin de Voulonge. Keep going straight, thru intersection with Rte de Avignon (or could turn R onto it there). Go until Voulonge ends in a small intersection, go R maybe 50 metres and then L onto Rte de Avignon which soon becomes Route de Thor and D901 which goes without a shoulder to Le Thor.

OR:

Take Rte de Thor until it drops South and intersects with D6. Turn L (North) onto D6 (aka Rte de Saint-Saturnin)) which has a shoulder. Go a km or bit, then over railway tracks, go maybe 400 metres, turn R onto Chem des Taillades. Go maybe 2 km. There will be a road coming from the north called Trav Fourgasse – ignore it but take first R (south) onto Chem des Coudelieres. At a T intersection, turn L onto route of same name. Ride into Le Thor which is about 1 km away.

In Thor, cross over D1, straight on road which becomes Rte des Taillades again. At intersection (see photo), go R and go straight, straight, straight, merging into Cr Gambetta. Straight some more into roundabout, take third R onto Av de la Liberation. Go straight through next roundabout and then at third boundabout (bigger one) take 3rd R onto Chem de Reydet and follow straight into merge with D901 and Sorgue. We're there!!!

Bike Shops :

Avignon : Provence Bike right by train station...<https://www.provence-bike.com/en/>

Dynamo Cycles, maybe 2 km SE along Avenue Pierre Simard 109
Ayme Cycles 84 NE of walls

L'Isle sur la Sorgue:

JL Carmichael-Kvelo, 4 bis Rue de la Republique, small shop, fantastic reviews for rentals, purchases AND REPAIRS PLUS 1.5 blocks away, just down from main church front

Lagnes (pop. 1,600)

Flat then hill into tow. Launching pad for going to Gordes.

L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue to Cavillion (pop. 26,000) – 11 km

Cross south over river. Choices: Go South on Cr Anatole France and ride on road beside train tracks until crossover maybe 4-6 km away. Some photos indicate traffic can be busy or quiet.

Or:

On south side, go L onto Av des Quatres Otages, turning at first L toward roundabout 200 metres away then take R onto Cr Rene Char. (LK and DK have been on that before, goes by school).

At next roundabout, take South turn (which should be third turn) onto Chem de Palerme. Road gets much quieter.

At next roundabout or junction, continue straight thru onto Chem Traversier for few hundred metres until T junction with Rte de Robion. Turn L and then R after maybe 50 metres and onto Chem des Dames Roses which runs beside railway tracks.

After 2-4 km, there will be a rail crossing to R. Take it, go to T-junction, turn L onto Chem de la Grande Bastide. Straight through, ignoring D900, and notice route is now Chem des Fourches. Maybe a km later, it joins into D938 which has small side lane. It soon changes into Av de L'isle sur la Sorgue and goes right into Cavaillon.

BUT traffic can be heavy on edge of town so best to go L at first chance after first roundabout in town.