

# Athos

Canal du Midi



**Athos:** 🏠 First Class | 👥 10 Passengers | 👨‍🍳 5 Crew

Athos was originally built as a commercial sand, grain & wine barge but has since been converted into the luxury vessel you see before you. Though she now carries a very different cargo, her association with wine continues as she meanders through the Languedoc-Rousillon region of France.

In her saloon there are comfortable sofas and an elegant dining area, while the five air-conditioned, twin/double-bedded staterooms each have all modern comforts including an en suite shower room.

Outside, her spacious sundeck has an adjustable canopy to offer shade, comfortable hardwood deckchairs and for the more energetic, bicycles to explore the towpath.

Athos is one of the most traditional hotel barges cruising the Canal du Midi and her welcoming ambience will make your voyage through the Languedoc landscape truly memorable.



## ITINERARY

### Argeliers to Marseillan

#### Day 1 Argeliers

Guests are met in Beziers and transferred by private chauffeured minibus to Athos where a champagne welcome awaits them. Dinner on board.

#### Day 2 Argeliers to La Croisade

Breakfast aboard before we drive to the famous medieval double-walled city of Carcassonne where you will enjoy a guided tour. Lunch aboard the barge followed by an afternoon's cruise to La Croisade, with plenty of opportunity to walk or bicycle along the towpath. Dinner on board.

#### Day 3 La Croisade to Capestang

After breakfast, we enjoy a tasting at "L'Oulibo", the local olive oil press. Next it's a short drive to Minerve, the ancient capital of the Minervois, which boasts a 12th century Cathar fort surrounded by deep limestone gorges. Relax after lunch on board, whilst we cruise to Capestang, or you can enjoy a wine tasting at a local château, such as Château Cabezac. Dinner on board.

#### Day 4 Capestang to Fonserannes

This morning's excursion is to Narbonne, where we tour the Archbishop's Palace, Cathedral and Via Domitia and explore the indoor market. After lunch in the atmospheric market, we return to Athos and cruise to Fonserannes. Dinner on board.

#### Day 5 Fonserannes to Portiragnes

This morning we visit Pezenas, the delightful Languedoc capital famed for its associations with the French playwright Molière. After lunch aboard we negotiate the Fonserannes Staircase Locks and traverse the 19th century aqueduct over the River Orb to moor at Portiragnes. Dinner on board.

#### Day 6 Portiragnes to Marseillan

This morning we cruise through the "Petit Camargue", passing pink flamingos, bee eaters and Europe's largest mussel and oyster beds, as well as the exceptional "round lock" at Agde. After lunch at Marseillan we end a perfect day with a fascinating tour of the Noilly Prat distillery and if you choose, a tasting before the Captain's Farewell Dinner on board.

#### Day 7 Marseillan

After breakfast, guests are transferred by private chauffeured minibus to their choice of location in Beziers.

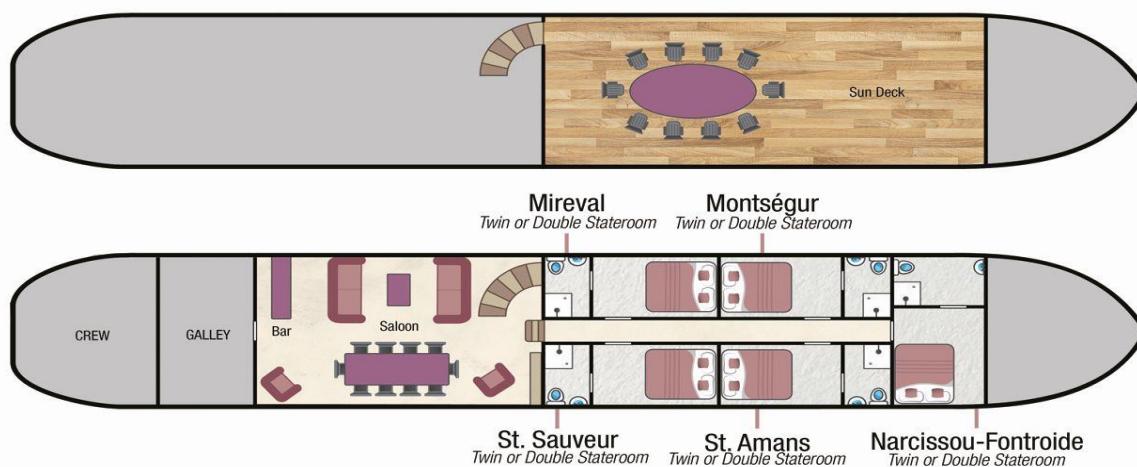
#### Themed Cruises Available:

- Family
- Golf
- Wine Appreciation

## Cruise Highlights

- Tour of the medieval city of Carcassonne
- Private tour and tasting at a Minervois winery
- Organic Olive Tasting at L'Oulibo
- Cruise through the natural haven that is the "Petit Camargue"
- Tour and tasting at the Noilly Prat vermouth distillery
- Excellent towpath for walking and cycling





## Barge Specifics



Former purpose: Commercial sand, grain and wine barge  
 Year of construction: 1964  
 Dimensions: 98.32ft x 16.56ft (29.97m x 5.05m)  
 Year converted into a hotel barge: 1982  
 Generators: Daytime 30KVA Kabuto 5 cylinder  
 Night-time silent running 23KVA Kabuto 5 cylinder  
 Main Engine: GM 180CV 6 cylinder  
 Max Speed: 6 Knots on open water & 2.5 Knots on canals  
 Water & fuel capacity: 9 tons of water & 1,500 litres of fuel

## Your crew on board

Crew of 5: Captain, Tour Guide, Chef and 2 Hostesses  
 Nationality of Crew: International crew, English speaking and other European languages

## Accommodation on board

Maximum 10 passengers / 5 cabin Staterooms.  
 passengers permitted if a charter group with 4 children.

All cabins can be configured with twin beds or a double bed. Narcissou Fontfroide is slightly larger and it is possible to replace the beds with 2 x bunk beds accommodating up to 4 children.

All cabins have en-suite shower, wash basin & WC.

Each cabin has 2 portholes and 1 porthole in the bathroom. All portholes can be opened.

## Cabin Sizes

**St Sauveur & Mireval** are at the Saloon end  
**St Amans & Montségur** are mid cabins  
 These 4 Staterooms each measure 93ft<sup>2</sup> (8.64m<sup>2</sup>)  
**Narcissou Fontfroide** is at the bow and measures 102ft<sup>2</sup> (9.5m<sup>2</sup>)

The ceiling height in all cabins is 7ft (2.13m)

**All cabin sizes are approximate and include the bathrooms.**

### Size of the beds:

As single beds they are each 6ft 4" x 2ft 7" (1.9m x 80cm)  
 As a double bed, they measure 6ft 4" x 5ft 2" (1.9m x 1.6m)  
 We recommend cabins are configured as twin beds for any passengers with restricted mobility.

### Shower Rooms:

All cabins have en-suite shower rooms with a full-sized wash basin, WC and a shower cubicle with base tray measuring 80cm<sup>2</sup>. They are fully tiled in Provencal blue & white tiles and

supplied with towels, hairdryer, shampoo, shower gel, moisturiser, soap and conditioner.

## Climate Control

Separate air conditioning and central heating throughout with individual controls.

## Computer and Telephone

Complimentary Wi-Fi is available on board for guests bringing their own appliances. Connectivity can be limited in remote locations.

There is no passenger telephone on Athos.

## Currency

The local currency in France is the Euro. We are unable to accept credit or debit cards on board.

## Cycling & Walking

You are welcome to walk or cycle using the on board bicycles as often as you wish. Most guests choose to disembark the barge at a lock and visit local villages, returning to the canal and meeting the barge a little further along. The barge travels at a slow speed therefore catching up is not a problem.

There are 10 touring-bikes on board with sloping cross bars & 21 gears. Children's bikes, helmets & child bike seats can be arranged if required. Please contact our Reservations team at least 8 weeks prior to your departure.

## Dining Room & Saloon

The light & airy Saloon is 16.5ft x 30ft (5.05m x 10m) with 2 sofas and 2 armchairs for relaxing, a coffee table and a dining table seating up to 10 passengers at one sitting. The flooring is wooden and there is a small library of books and an open bar area with fridge.

3 steps lead from the Saloon down to the cabin level.

## Electricity

Athos is wired for 220 volts. We suggest you bring an adapter for your particular appliance, which corresponds to the standard French 2 pin plugs.

If you wish to use your electrical appliance on board, please ask one of the crew when you arrive on board to ensure that it is suitable to the barge's electrical system.

European Waterways cannot be held responsible for unforeseen voltage fluctuations which sometimes occur when swapping from one voltage system to another.

## Excursions

Athos has 2 6-seater Chrysler minivans which are both air-conditioned and used for transfers and excursions.

For charter bookings, the itinerary can be adapted to suit your group's particular needs. If a destination or excursion is

within a reasonable distance of the barge, we will do everything we can to arrange it. Please speak with our Reservations team in advance of your cruise and we can pre-arrange with the Captain.

Any guests not wishing to participate in an excursion are welcome to remain on the barge.

## Facilities on board

- 10 Bicycles (See Cycling & Walking)
- A small library of books and maps
- A collection of board games
- Boules
- Binoculars for watching the bird life
- iPod speaker mount for use with Athos iPod or passengers' own devices.
- Guitar (on request)

## Food & Drink

All meals on board are freshly prepared by your chef and most meals are a set-menu (there is no choice available). International and French cuisine is featured.

We are able to arrange special meals, e.g. vegetarian / no fish / vegan etc, and we are able to cater for any preferences or allergies. However, it is most important that we are notified of any specific requirements at least 8 weeks prior to your departure date. Failure to notify European Waterways in advance of your cruise may result in disappointment on board.

There is no assigned seating for meals and the dining table on board Athos accommodates all guests at a single sitting.

**Breakfast:** Your day on Athos starts with a wholesome and balanced variety of breakfast foods, along with fresh breads & pastries, freshly-squeezed orange juice and hot beverages.

**Lunch** is usually a selection of colourful salads, pates and cold meats accompanied by hot soup or entrée, delectable desserts and a different selection of regional cheeses accompanied by quality wines selected by the chef.

**Dinner:** Always a gastronomic adventure created by your talented chef. A taste of regional cuisine by candlelight, complemented by fine wines, followed by a selection of regional cheeses, coffee and liqueurs.

**Captain's farewell dinner** is held on the last night of your cruise. Guests may choose to dress slightly more formal.

**Drinks included in the cruise price:** Non-alcoholic beverages and regular or decaffeinated tea and coffee, whole or low fat milk, are offered with all meals. The well-stocked bar is open 24 hours, which includes wines, spirits, beers & soft drinks. All wines are provided with meals and there is a Champagne welcome on arrival.

**Drinks not included in the cruise price:** Some Champagnes (with the exception of the Captain's reception) and special vintage wines, however these can be purchased in advance of your cruise at cost price, please speak to our Reservation team. We do not recommend specific beverage orders unless you are chartering the whole barge.

## Hot Air Ballooning

The region Athos cruises in is not suitable for hot air ballooning.

## Laundry

We recommend you bring sufficient clean clothing for your cruise as there are no laundry facilities on board. However, the crew may be able to assist in an emergency on a request basis.

## Luggage / What to pack

Space is limited on board so please try and fit everything for your cruise into one medium sized suitcase per person. Soft bags are preferable as there are drawers beneath each bed which fit 2 cases. Space on each minibus is limited to 6 medium / large cases and 6 pieces of hand luggage.

Practical comfort and casual clothing is the norm aboard Athos and for most excursions. The dress code for dinner is relaxed and informal. For the Captain's Farewell Dinner on the final evening, guests often dress up, which is optional.

The weather in the South of France is generally warm. June, July, and August is the warmest often being in the mid 30's.

Suggested things to pack:

- Light clothing including shorts and T-shirts. A sweater or lightweight jacket is recommended for evenings and the air-conditioned interiors.
- During spring and autumn, you may need medium weight clothing. A lightweight raincoat for showery times would be advisable.
- In summer, a sun hat can be useful.
- Comfortable walking shoes with textured non-slip soles are recommended.

## Medical

Please let us know in advance of your cruise if you require frequent or ongoing medical attention.

The crew are unable to administer medicines but can accompany you to a chemist for you to purchase any necessary medicines. Due to your cruise often being in a

rural location, we recommend you bring all necessary medication with you.

Doctors are usually not far away for an urgent consultation and the Emergency Services can be called if required.

## Problem during your Cruise

If you have a problem during your cruise, please give us the immediate opportunity to make things right. Please bring any concern to the private attention of your Captain who will often be able to solve any issue immediately.

## Restricted Mobility

Please let us know in advance of your cruise if you have a physical disability and require any assistance.

Athos is accessed via an aluminium gangplank with handrails and 2 steps mid-way. There are 6 steps between the deck and Saloon with sturdy handrails. There are a further 3 steps between the Saloon to the cabin level. The crew will assist guests whenever required.

Wheelchairs cannot be used on Athos and can only be used to assist on excursions, however many visits encounter cobbled streets or rough ground which may hinder wheelchair access.

We recommend the cabins are configured with twin beds for any passengers with restricted mobility.

If you would like to hire a wheelchair to be available for your arrival, please notify our Reservations team at least 10 weeks before departure. A rental charge will apply

## Safety and Security

Once you are on board, your Captain will talk you through the Cruise Safety Procedures. Safety Instructions are detailed on the last page of this document.

Please note that European Waterways cannot be responsible for any valuables that you bring on board. We strongly recommend that you do not bring valuables with you unless required and that you ensure that all valuables are covered by your travel insurance.

Safes are provided in each cabin on board Athos in the bottom of the closet. Cabin doors are not usually locked, for safety reasons.

## Smoking

We have a strict non-smoking policy for safety reasons and for the comfort of your fellow passengers.

If you would like to smoke, we request that you do so outside or on the deck away from other passengers.

## Sundeck

There is a very large sundeck 16ft 6" x 36ft (5.5m x 12m) which is equipped with 10 reclining chairs with foot-rests and a large table for outside dining. A permanent large hydraulic canopy provides shelter from the sun and rain. This moves up and down automatically when cruising under bridges and allows passengers to remain seated on deck. There is also space on the sundeck to relax on sun-chairs not requiring shade.

## Themed Cruises

Wine Appreciation, Tennis, Golf & Family cruise itineraries are available for charter groups, please contact our Reservations team for more details. Special interest cruises often have a supplement and further details can be found at [www.europeanwaterways.com](http://www.europeanwaterways.com)

## Tipping

Gratuities are not included in the cruise fare. Tipping is entirely discretionary but is greatly appreciated by the crew if you are fully satisfied with the level of service on board.

As a guideline, the average tip given by our guests from around the world is approximately 5% of the Cruise Fare.

The usual way to give the tip is to give the amount in cash as one lump sum to the Captain / Cruise Director on the last day of the cruise. They will distribute the amount equally amongst the crew.

Euros or Dollars are equally appreciated. ATMs are accessible for cash withdrawal on most itineraries during the cruise and the crew can advise where these are located.

## Transfers

For details of the Athos vehicles, please see "Excursions". The approximate transfer duration between Beziers & Athos is 30 minutes.

## Water

Tap water in France and onboard Athos is potable and bottled water is available.

# Safety Instructions on Athos

**On arrival, the Captain will talk you through the Cruise Safety Procedures on board.**

**In addition, it is important that all passengers are familiar with the safety instructions detailed below.**

- Please follow the instructions of the Captain and crew at all times.
- Remember that decks can be slippery. Please wear non-slip shoes and do not run or jump whilst on board.
- Do not walk on the side or rear decks or outside the guard rails.
- Passengers are not permitted in the engine rooms, technical areas or crew accommodation at any time, or in the galley or wheelhouse unless accompanied by a crew member.
- Do not embark or disembark the barge unless the gangplank and handrail are in place or the crew have advised that it is safe to do so. Never do so when the barge is moving.
- Be careful when the vessel is being moored up with the barge ropes. In particular do not step into a loop in the rope or try to release the mooring rope from a bollard.
- Keep clear of any overhead obstructions and remain seated if on deck whilst the barge passes under bridges with restricted headroom.
- Do not attempt to touch the sides of any lock or bridge.
- Do not open lower deck portholes whilst the barge is moving.
- Life jacket preservers are located in designated lockers in your cabin or in designated deck lockers. Once on board, please take the time to identify their location and read the instructions.
- For fire safety reasons, smoking is not permitted anywhere inside the barge.
- The barge's equipment such as bicycles must only be used following preparation by the crew. Use of the bicycles is at your own risk.
- There is an open bar policy on board. However, excessive alcohol consumption can be dangerous, particularly in a warm climate and in proximity to deep water and the Captain has the discretion to withhold alcohol if safety to passengers or crew is at risk.

### **In an emergency**

- Keep calm. Do not return to your cabin to recover your possessions.
- If you discover a fire on board, sound the fire alarm and notify a crew member immediately. If possible, close doors behind you to confine the fire. Please take the time to identify the location of fire alarms and fire extinguishers.
- If the alarm sounds or you hear repeated continuous blasts on the barge horn, you must, if possible, assemble on the sundeck for further instructions.
- If you discover water below deck, notify a crew member immediately and go to the sundeck to await further instructions.
- If you are in your cabin and the way to the sundeck is obstructed, follow the signs to the alternative fire exit. Please take the time to identify all fire exits.
- The emergency number for fire, police or medical assistance on all public phone networks is 112.

**Please ask a member of the crew on board if you require any further safety advice**