

## Get active!

France offers a huge range of breaks for those who just can't sit still, and you can enjoy everything from hiking to hang-gliding, and walking to white-water rafting...



### Canyon capers

The Gorge d'Ardèche is known as the Grand Canyon of Europe, and with good reason. The river winds its way through steep canyon walls and glorious scenery, making it a perfect playground for adventure sports fans. Activities Abroad offers canoeing, climbing and walking multi-activity holidays here and in the neighbouring Cévennes, where you can try canyoning and high ropes.

On the family package, you'll find no kids' clubs or separate adult/child activities as the company believes in providing families with unforgettable experiences together. The base for the adventure holiday is the Provençale-style Hotel Clos des Bruyères, located just 200 metres from the Ardèche River and close to the centre of Vallon Pont d'Arc.

[www.activitiesabroad.com](http://www.activitiesabroad.com)



### Equine excellence

Situated in the Tarn valley, Les Juliannes is a riding school that offers first-class learning facilities. Suitable for both beginners and experienced riders, you can enjoy top-quality instruction and extensive grounds in which to practise, and the flexible programmes mean you can improve your riding in a way that suits you. There's plenty for non-riders to enjoy in this beautiful area too – guests can explore the picturesque medieval villages and vineyards nearby, or simply relax by the on-site pool. Bicycles are available to hire so you can really make the most of the fabulous countryside. Accommodation is offered on either a self-catering basis in rustic gîtes, or full-board in a stunning 17th-century farmhouse, making this the perfect place to start your summer adventures!

[www.inntravel.co.uk/horse/tarn](http://www.inntravel.co.uk/horse/tarn)



### On your horse!

If you want to get off the beaten track and explore the beautiful French countryside, why not try guided horse trekking? The activity is available through two properties from [www.holiday-rentals.co.uk](http://www.holiday-rentals.co.uk). Picking you up from your front door and whisking you along the Chemins Verts, this is a chance to escape the car and feel the fresh air while you experience Normandy's stunning variety of landscapes, including the green fields and beaches that are inaccessible to motorised vehicles.

You don't need to worry about transport to and from the stables, or your level of riding, as the horses are brought directly to your front door in horse boxes and a route appropriate to your level of riding is determined in advance. You just need to saddle up and trot off after your qualified guide, making this a relaxing and invigorating break.

[www.holiday-rentals.co.uk](http://www.holiday-rentals.co.uk) (properties 7114, 10652 and 75250)

### On your bike

Walking is great fun but if you're impatient and want to go places quickly, nothing beats taking to the roads on a bicycle. A cycling holiday is a great leisurely break for those who want to stay active, but also do a bit of sight-seeing at the same time. Headwater offers a range of cycling holidays in various regions, including Brittany, Burgundy, Provence and the Dordogne, on all sorts of terrain. The breaks take in everything from vineyards and medieval towns to wine routes and are perfect for people who are constantly on the move. While they're also great for those seeking independent adventures, staff are always on hand to give you maps and tips on things to see and do as you cycle, while your luggage is moved from hotel to hotel for you, leaving you free to get on with exploring France. So what are you waiting for? Get on your bike!

[www.headwater.com](http://www.headwater.com)





### Sunny Samoëns

There's undoubtedly more to do in the Alps during the summer than you might think. Unspoilt mountain towns have the benefits of being pollution free, and all that rocky terrain and altitude equals lots of exercise. Peak Retreats is an award-winning tour operator dedicated to the active Alpine lifestyle. Holiday activities can be arranged, from gentle strolling to high-adrenaline pursuits including mountain biking, paragliding, rafting and pot-holing. Also featured in Peak Retreats' destinations is the only resort in France to be listed as a historic monument: Samoëns, where visitors can get active against the stunning backdrop of the Giffre Valley. Whether you want to enjoy gentle pursuits such as golf or walking with pack donkeys, or get the blood pumping with airboating, white-water swimming or canyon descents, this is the place to do it!

[www.peakretreats.co.uk](http://www.peakretreats.co.uk)

### Stretch yourself

While the whole world seems to have gone pilates mad (thank you, Madonna), that's no reason to put you off what can be an extremely relaxing and invigorating way to spend your holidays. For complete calming of the body and mind, head to Les Tilleuls, a beautiful country house retreat in Campagnac les Quercy, about an hour from Bergerac airport, for an all-inclusive pilates holiday. You'll be able to unwind and recharge your batteries with daily studio pilates classes, as well as enjoying delicious regional cooking in a gorgeous rural setting. This charming and stylish retreat includes a bed and breakfast, and you're guaranteed to get a personal service, as there are only ever a maximum of eight guests at any one time.

[www.pilates-en-france.com](http://www.pilates-en-france.com)



### Canal capers

Ever wanted to skipper your own boat? European Boating Holidays can help you do just that with its Locaboat and Cardinal boating holidays. With a full induction on arrival and training provided, it's suitable for nautical novices and is a great holiday for those who like to travel with a crew. You can choose from trips all over France, so you can cruise the scenic waterways of Charente or shiver-ye-timbers on the Somme-Picardy route. Great for the independent traveller, you can stop off wherever you like and can even take a bike for those land adventures. The roomy cabins, cosy saloon and practical kitchen mean you'll feel right at home on the water.

[www.locaboat.com](http://www.locaboat.com) / [www.cardinalboating.com](http://www.cardinalboating.com)

### Do it in Dordogne

The Dordogne is home to some of the richest natural scenery in France, from the lush forests of the Dordogne valley to the Massif Central mountains and the rapids of the Dordogne river. As such, it's no wonder that it's so popular with families and thrill-seekers alike. For a refreshing local adventure holiday, check out Chateau Adventure in Argenta where you can enjoy a diverse range of fun-filled activities including horse riding, canoeing, hiking, rock climbing, abseiling, hang-gliding and archery.

Accommodation is in the stunning 17th-century Château de Cautine in the village of St Private, where guests can choose from either self-catering or full-board packages, with activities guided by registered instructors from specialists ADN (Adventures Dordogne Nature) and Elevage du Sagiran.

[www.chateau-adventure.com](http://www.chateau-adventure.com)

