



## Arles, FRANCE

世界遺産とゴッホの足跡 南仏アルル

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Located in southern France, Arles boasts more than 2,000 years of history — from a Greek trading post and a Roman capital in antiquity to a creative center producing famous artists like Pablo Picasso, Paul Gauguin and Vincent van Gogh centuries later.

After leaving my luggage at the conveniently located Hotel Voltaire, I headed toward the Roman **amphitheater**. Very soon I found a colossal building standing at the end of the street. Erected at the end of the 1st century AD, the amphitheater is one of eight monuments listed as Arles' UNESCO World Heritage sites. As I entered the enormous structure that could seat about 20,000 spectators, an image of the Roman crowds watching games and fights formed in my mind. Nowadays, it accommodates up to 12,500 spectators at one time, with bullfighting events organized regularly.

After this short stroll, I met Guillaume Albaret from Taco and

Co., an eco-friendly cycling tour company. Aboard a bicycle-powered two-seater carriage, we visited the main Arles sites that Van Gogh immortalized in his paintings.

This famous post-impressionist painter arrived in Arles in February 1888, and his 15-month stay was one of his most productive periods, with him **churning out** about 300 drawings and paintings. Our first stop was the site of the yellow house where he

lived on the north side of Lamartine Square. He depicted this house and room in classic paintings, but unfortunately the original building was destroyed in bombings during World War II. Next, we went to the nearby Rhone river. Van Gogh's paintings featuring a starry night reflected in the waters of the Rhone and the staircase near Trinquetaille Bridge are unforgettable, and it was easy to recognize the spot. It was a rare opportunity for us to be able to visit places immortalized in paintings, so I was delighted with this Van Gogh tour.

We cycled along the Rhone to discover the colorful neighborhood along the Roquette quay. Many facades were painted in

pastel red, yellow and blue, and I kept asking Albaret to stop to do photo shoots. We soon arrived at the Van Gogh space and media library housed in the former Hotel-Dieu, which served as a local hospital. "Van Gogh came here when he cut off part of his own left ear during an argument with Paul Gauguin," Albaret told me at the entrance of the building. My eyes widened in surprise. I knew the story about Van Gogh cutting his own ear, but I didn't know it had happened in Arles.

As I entered this old building, the central garden came into view, with the hospital's famous white and yellow arches along one side. The layout of the trees and flowers were exactly in harmony with the

