

The Vaccarès Pond

The Vaccarès, from the Latin « vaccarum regio » (cattle country), is a vast expanse of salty water that covers 6,600 hectares (approximately 12 km x 7 km), one third of all the land covered by Camargue ponds. It is 1.5 meters deep, the deepest of all the Camargue ponds.

The Camargue National Preserve

The Camargue National Preserve was created in 1927 by the French National Society for Nature Protection, in order to protect plant and animal species. The Preserve covers 13,117 ha, of which a large part is occupied by the Vaccarès Pond. La Capelière is a tourist information center managed by the National Preserve. You will find there discovery trails, exhibitions, documents.



Pink flamingo and avocet

The "Sansouire" (saltwort plains)

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The "sansouire" is a stretch of salty land where only saltwort grows. The ground is often flooded during wet periods and cracked and covered with salt during dry periods.

Emergency numbers

SOS European emergency number **112**  Marseilles treatment center for poisoning **+33 (0)4 91 75 25 25**

 **15**  **18**  **17**  **3250**

 **Caution! Consult the weather forecast before starting and avoid the mistral wind.**

The Vaccarès Pond

Along the way

Bar and restaurant

- Restaurant la Telline, (Villeneuve) : +33 (0)4 90 97 01 75
- Restaurant chez Bob (Villeneuve) : +33 (0)4 90 97 00 29
- Les Salicornes (Villeneuve) : +33 (0)4 90 54 18 76

Rent a bike

- Europbike (Arles) : +33 (0)6 38 14 49 50
- Hôtel Régence (Arles) : +33 (0)4 90 96 39 85
- Méjanes (Arles) : +33 (0)4 90 97 06 17
- Holiday Bikes (Arles) : +33 (0)4 90 52 07 27
- Taco and Co (Arles) : +33 (0)6 50 29 60 00
- 1Véloc (Arles) : +33 (0)7 68 21 76 68
- Hôtel Longo Maï (Le Sambuc) : +33 (0)4 90 97 21 91

Don't miss

- The Vaccarès Pond
- Pink flamingos
- Mas de Chassagne (Jalabert ranch or "manade")
- Tour d'Amphoux (tower)



Downtown Arles Information Center : Bd. des Lices - +33 (0)4 90 18 41 20
Salin-de-Giraud Information Center : Rue Tournaire - +33 (0)4 42 86 89 77
Mailing address : BP 21- 13633 Arles Cedex
E-mail : ot-arles@arlestourisme.com
Website : www.arlestourisme.com



Trekking Mountain or trekking bike

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From Arles to the Vaccarès Pond



 **Starting point** : Arles Tourism Information Center

 **Distance** : 46 km

 **Extension to La Capelière** : +10 km round trip

 **Take note** :

- Heavy automobile traffic on route D37
- Difficult trek when the mistral wind is blowing



Parc régional de Camargue

4 From Arles to the Vaccarès Pond

How to get there

- **Arles** : start from the Tourist Information Center, Boulevard des Lices



Leave the **Arles Tourist Information Center** **1**. Turn left on the Boulevard des Lices, then right on Rue Gambetta toward **Trinquetaille**. Cross the Rhône River and follow signs to **Les-Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer**. After 1 km, at the roundabout, take Route **C108** toward **Gimeaux**. You will be on the **GR653** hiking trail, marked by two red-and-white stripes.

After 2.5 km, you will arrive in **Gimeaux** **2**. After 3 km at the Mas du Tort crossroads, turn left and go by the wooden arena in Gimeaux, then turn left immediately onto route C112, "Chemin de l'Ecole de Gimeaux" (you leave the GR trail), a one-way street. After 1 km turn right onto route **D570** (⚠ dangerous road). Continue for 250 m, then turn left toward route **C125 "Chemin de la Dougue"** toward **Bouchaud**. Then take your second right onto **C154 "Petit Chemin de Sainte-Cécile"** **3**. At the first crossroads, at the Mas de Pedassas, continue straight ahead toward **the Vaccarès Pond** (C128 – Mas d'Agon). At the crossroads 100 m after the Domaine de Sainte-Cécile, continue straight ahead toward **the Vaccarès Pond**.

1 km after this crossroads, notice the Jalabert ranch (**Mas de la Chassagne**) on your left. When you reach Route **D37** **4**, turn right. After 250 m cross the road and stop at the foot of the **Mas neuf du Vaccarès**

observation deck, built by the Camargue Regional Nature Park.

From the observation deck go back and then continue along **Route D37** (⚠ heavy traffic). 700 m after the Mas Neuf du Vaccarès and 300 m before the Mas de Cabassole, at the end of the wide parking space along the roadside, a little trail on the right will take you to the pond.

At **Villeneuve** continue straight ahead (do not take Route C134) and in the curve 500m after the Restaurant "Chez Bob", take the little road on your left **5**, **Route C132 "Chemin de Roumieu"**. When you reach the Tour de Montmeillan crossroads, continue straight ahead. Then continue to the left on Route **C133 "d'Azegat"**.

6 When you reach Route **C130 "De Bouchaud à Gageron"** (300m before the Mas de l'Ange) **7**, turn left toward Gageron.

In Gageron continue straight ahead on Route C130; you will go by the church and the school. At the junction with Route **C131 leading to Sainte-Cécile** **8**, continue straight ahead (right-hand road), then follow the signs toward **Arles** **9**, until you reach Route **D570**. Go back to Arles via **Gimeaux**, following the same roads you took in the opposite direction coming out.

Extension to La Capelière

10 km round-trip

This extension is a must to completely discover the Vaccarès Pond. At the Villeneuve crossroads, turn right toward the Vaccarès Pond and the Camargue National Preserve. First you will go through woods, then along the shore of the pond. Two observation decks have been placed beside the pond by the National Preserve. The first is located 300m after the "Cabanes de Romieu" and the second 700m before arriving at La Capelière (Camargue National Preserve Information Center. Tel : 04.90.97.00.97 – open between April 1 and September 30 every day from 9:00 to 1:00 and 2:00 to 6:00, between October 1 and March 31 from 9:00 to 1:00 and 2:00 to 5:00, except Tuesdays. Entrance 3 E., reduced rate 1.50 E.)

