FRANCE • 1 H 45

Christmas markets in the south of France by motorhome

Christmas markets in the south of France by motorhome: Perpignan, Narbonne, Carcassonne's floodlit Cité and Montpellier's Les Hivernales, with heating on board.



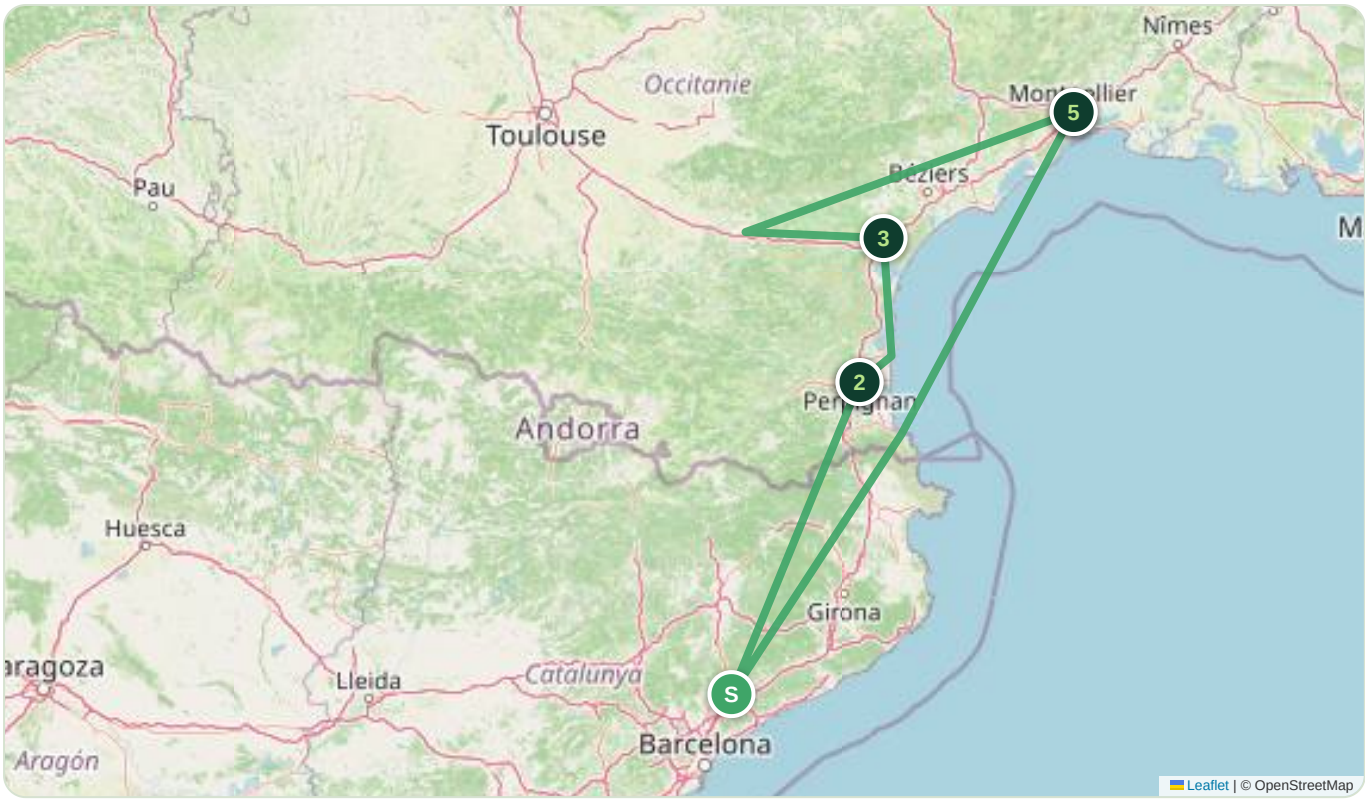
START AND FINISH	DURATION	APPROX. DISTANCE
Les Franqueses del Vallès	5 rental nights	880 km

BEST TIME	MILEAGE	INDICATIVE PRICE
Late November — December	1,500 km included (300 km/day) • extra km €0.40	from €625 rental in low season

In December, Roussillon and Languedoc fill up with lights, wooden chalets, vin chaud and ice rinks. They are closer than you might think: Perpignan is under two hours from Granollers on the AP-7, and five nights are enough to link the Christmas markets of Perpignan, Narbonne, Carcassonne and Montpellier, with the floodlit medieval Cité as the highlight of the trip.

It is about 880 km in total, within the 300 km a day included on 3 to 6 day rentals with Segimon Rental. The markets usually run from roughly late November to late December. Travel in late November or early December and you are roughly in low season (3-day minimum); Christmas dates are high season, with a 7-day minimum (check the booking calendar). If you like the area, come back in spring for our south of France route or the Cathar Country route.

Route map (approximate line)



Route plan

Day 1	Pick-up • Perpignan
Day 2	Perpignan Christmas market • Le Barcarès
Day 3	Narbonne • Carcassonne by night
Day 4	Carcassonne • Montpellier
Day 5	Les Hivernales in Montpellier • Collioure

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 · Pick-up and into France

Collect the motorhome between 16:00 and 19:00 in Les Franqueses del Vallès and head north on the AP-7 without crossing Barcelona. In roughly 1 h 45 you cross the border at La Jonquera and reach the Perpignan area. It gets dark early in December, so go straight to a campsite or authorised area, switch the heating on and save the sightseeing for tomorrow.

Day 2 · Perpignan and Le Barcarès

Perpignan's Christmas market is usually set up in the historic centre, around the squares and pedestrian streets near the Castillet. Leave the motorhome outside the centre and walk or take the bus in. Try the Catalan nougat and sweets of Roussillon, a tradition here too. In the afternoon, about 25 minutes away, Le Barcarès has in recent years hosted a large Village de Noël in the gardens of the Lydia, the ship beached by the sand; its future is not guaranteed, so check whether it opens that season. Spend the night towards Narbonne.

Day 3 · Narbonne and Carcassonne

Narbonne has an unfinished Gothic cathedral with one of the tallest choirs in France, the Archbishops' Palace and the Canal de la Robine running through the centre, lovely for a stroll. Over the festive season a temporary ice rink and Christmas stalls are often set up; check the town programme. Don't leave without a stop at Les Halles. After lunch, an hour's drive takes you to Carcassonne: as night falls, the walled Cité lit up is the picture of the trip. Use the outer car parks signposted for motorhomes and walk up.

Day 4 · Carcassonne and Montpellier

Use the quiet morning to walk the ramparts before the groups arrive, then head down to the Bastide Saint-Louis, the lower town, which usually has festive events as well. Then about 2 hours on the motorway to Montpellier. The easiest plan is to sleep on the outskirts and use the tram: the city has park-and-ride car parks (parkings-relais) along the tram lines. In the evening, the Place de la Comédie and the Esplanade lit up.

Day 5 · Montpellier and Collioure

Les Hivernales, Montpellier's Christmas market, usually fills the Esplanade Charles-de-Gaulle from roughly late November to late December: craft chalets, Occitan produce and vin chaud. Wander the Écusson, the old town, and take the tram back at midday. In the afternoon, about 2 hours south to the Albères coast. Sleeping near Collioure or Argelès leaves you roughly 1 h 45 from Granollers to return the motorhome on day 6 between 9:00 and 12:00.

What you will see



Carcassonne (La Cité, Pont Vieux)



Montpellier, Place de la Comédie



Narbonne (Canal de la Robine)

Where to sleep

Around Perpignan, Narbonne, Carcassonne and Montpellier there are year-round campsites and plenty of municipal aires de camping-car, although many coastal campsites close in winter, so check they are open before you go. Park4Night and Campercontact show facilities and recent reviews; French aires usually have water and waste disposal.

In France each town sets its own motorhome parking rules, and historic centres are usually off-limits. Always sleep in authorised places and leave the motorhome outside the old towns. Find more advice in our guide to motorhome travel in winter.

Practical tips

- Montpellier has a low-emission zone (ZFE) whose rules have changed several times: check the métropole's website for what applies when you travel and for any motorhome exemptions. To be safe, order a Crit'Air sticker in good time from the official French government website.
- French motorways are tolled: expect several tolls between the border and Montpellier. Booths accept cards.
- Travelling to France is allowed, but let us know before pick-up so we can note it on the contract and insurance.
- December nights can drop below freezing in Carcassonne and inland. The V66 has Truma Combi 4 heating with EisEx frost protection and a heated grey-water tank; set off with full gas bottles.
- If a market only opens on certain dates or weekends, check with each town's tourist office before fixing the itinerary.

Information and bookings
segimonrental.com/en/routes/christmas-markets-south-of-france/

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Indicative itinerary. Check road conditions, opening times and restrictions before setting off. Up-to-date information on our website.