

La France

Day 1 ARRIVE IN PARIS, FRANCE. Welcome to Paris! At 5:30 pm, meet your Tour Director and traveling companions, and leave the hotel for a welcome dinner at a local restaurant and an orientation drive for a first impression of this magnificent city. (D)

Day 2 PARIS. In the morning, an optional excursion is available to the impressive Palace and Garden of Versailles, built by the “Sun King,” Louis XIV. Guided sightseeing features the Opéra, Madeleine, Champs-Élysées, Arc de Triomphe, and Notre Dame Cathedral. Visit the impressive COURTYARD of Les Invalides, a complex of buildings, originally built as a home and hospital for war veterans, which houses various museums as well as the Dome Church, burial place of Napoleon. This evening, why not join an optional cabaret show? (B)

Day 3 PARIS–CAEN. EXCURSION TO NORMANDY BEACHES. Arrive in Caen and visit the fascinating MEMORIAL MUSEUM FOR PEACE with its great exhibits and audiovisual show about the Battle of Normandy. Continue to the Normandy Beaches, scene of the Allied Forces’ landing on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Stop in Arromanches and see the Mulberry Harbor. Then, drive to OMAHA BEACH for a picture stop and visit the AMERICAN CEMETERY and memorial. Today’s Distance: 236 mi / 380 km (B,D)

Day 4 CAEN–MONT ST. MICHEL–SAINT-MALO. Visit the famous ABBEY OF MONT ST. MICHEL, with a history going back to the 8th century and spectacularly perched on a rocky isle. Look forward to another highlight: [LF] in the corsair city of Saint-Malo ride the LITTLE TRAIN, the best way to fully discover the historic walled town with Saint Vincent’s Cathedral and St. Peter’s Gate. Enjoy the panoramic views of the Gulf of Saint-Malo. Today’s Distance: 124 mi / 200 km (B)

Day 5 ST. MALO–ESSÉ–ANGERS–LOIRE VALLEY. Drive through Brittany and stop in Essé to visit [LF] LA ROCHE-AUX-FEES, a dolmen dating back to 3500-3000 BC. On your way to the Loire Valley, enjoy an orientation of the beautiful town of Angers. This evening, you may wish to sample traditional cuisine at a local restaurant. Today’s Distance: 267 mi / 430 km (B)

Day 6 LOIRE VALLEY–CHENONCEAU CASTLE–BORDEAUX. Visit the 16th-century castle of Catherine de Medici, lovely CHENONCEAU, a fairytale castle with a moat and towers. Continue to Bordeaux, and join your Tour Director for a walking tour through this elegant city on the Garonne River. Tonight, savor dinner at the well-known Brasserie Bordelaise restaurant. Today’s Distance: 280 mi / 450 km (B,D)

Day 7 BORDEAUX. Today, an exclusive WINE TASTING has been arranged for you to learn all about the local wines for which the Bordeaux area is famous. Balance of the day is at leisure with the possibility to join an optional excursion to the charming village of Saint Emilion. (B,D)

Day 8 BORDEAUX–ARCACHON–DUNE DU PILAT–BIARRITZ. Stop in the seaside town of Arcachon, famous for oyster harvesting, and marvel at the Dune du Pilat, the tallest sand dune in Europe. Arrive in Biarritz, an ancient fishing village. Time to relax and enjoy the beach or browse through the little shops. Your Tour Director will have suggestions how to make the most of your stay. Today’s Distance: 174 mi / 280 km (B)

Day 9 BIARRITZ–LOURDES–CARCASSONNE. In Lourdes, one of the world’s most famous pilgrimage sites, visit the GROTTO where the Virgin Mary appeared to St. Bernadette in 1858. Next is the beautifully preserved, medieval, walled town of Carcassonne. Today’s Distance: 267 mi / 430

km (B,D)

Day 10 CARCASSONNE–AIX-EN-PROVENCE. This morning, enjoy a leisurely walk by the ancient battlements before continuing to Aix-en-Provence, one of France's most elegant cities, and birthplace of painter Cézanne, that has always attracted artists from all over the world. Join your Tour Director for a walking tour through the center of the town and wander through the maze of small streets and along shaded Cours Mirabeau. Today's Distance: 186 mi / 300 km (B)

Day 11 AIX-EN-PROVENCE–GRASSE–FRENCH RIVIERA. Arrive in Grasse, and visit the famous Fragonard Usine Historique, where [LF] an expert will give a lecture about PERFUME-MAKING. Then, enjoy spectacular views as you drive along the Mediterranean coast and the famous Promenade des Anglais in Nice. Today's Distance: 130 mi / 210 km (B)

Day 12 FRENCH RIVIERA. A full day at leisure on the enchanting Côte d'Azur gives you a chance to visit the beach or browse through the elegant shops. Optional excursions are available to the famous artist town of St. Paul de Vence and to Monte Carlo to try your luck at the Casino! (B)

Day 13 FRENCH RIVIERA–ORANGE–LYON. Follow in the footsteps of the Romans and arrive in Orange, Visit the ROMAN THEATER, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and one of the best-preserved examples of Roman architecture in France. Next is Lyon, the third largest city of France. Today's Distance: 298 mi / 480 km (B,D)

Day 14 LYON–DIJON. Sit back and relax during [LF] a PRIVATE CRUISE on the Rhône and Sone Rivers with a Local Guide, who will explain the sights. Time to walk through OLD LYON to discover the Traboules, secret, hidden passageways winding their way through buildings and along staircases, with a history going back to the 4th century. Continue to Dijon, capital of Burgundy and famous for mustard. During your orientation, hear about the dukes who ruled over the area, admire the architecture, and learn about toits bourguignons (Burgundian polychrome roofs). Today's Distance: 124 mi / 200 km (B)

Day 15 DIJON–PARIS. Ride the high-speed TGV TRAIN to Paris, where an optional excursion to the artists' hill of Montmartre, followed by a relaxing cruise on the Seine River, is available. Today's Distance: 199 mi / 320 km (B)

Day 16 PARIS. Your vacation ends with breakfast this morning. (B)