



PARIS, THE LOIRE & THE RIVIERA



*Educational
Tours*

→ **Discover the Global Classroom**

10 or 13 DAYS

Paris, the Loire & the Riviera

France • Monaco



Number of overnight stays in parentheses. This tour may also be reversed.

Walk amid the exquisite sculptures and lush gardens of the Tuileries.

Program Fee includes:

- Round-trip airfare
- 8 overnight stays in hotels with private bathrooms (11 with extension)
- European breakfast and dinner daily
- Full-time EF Tour Director
- 3 sightseeing tours led by licensed local guides: Paris • Loire Valley • Lyon
- 3 sightseeing tours led by your tour director: Avignon • Nîmes • Monaco and Eze
- 1 walking tour: Paris
- 1 orientation tour: Nice
- 10 visits to special attractions: Louvre • Notre Dame Cathedral • Chartres Cathedral • Amboise • Chenonceau • Wine cellar • Palais des Papes • Amphitheater • Pont du Gard • Perfume factory

OPTIONAL:

Versailles

WITH EXTENSION: All of the above PLUS:

- 1 sightseeing tour led by your tour director: Bonifacio

Day 1 Flight

Overnight flight to France • Spend the night flying across the Atlantic.

Day 2 Paris

Arrival in Paris • Touch down in Paris, City of Light. After clearing customs, you are greeted by your EF Tour Director, who will remain with you throughout your stay.

Walking tour of Paris • Our walking tour takes in the chic Opéra district and the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, famous for its haute couture boutiques. Stroll through the Place de la Concorde, the city's largest public square, built to honor Louis XV. During the Revolution, this was the location of Joseph Guillotin's famous machine; the next Louis, Marie Antoinette and many others were beheaded here. Continue through the geometric gardens of the Tuileries as you make your way to the Place Vendôme, a vast square surrounded by elegant 17th-century façades. Pass the Ritz hotel at no. 15, a favorite haunt of Ernest Hemingway. (The exact walking route may vary depending on your hotel location and other activities.)

Visit to the Louvre • Built to defend the city in the 13th century, the Louvre today safeguards one of the world's greatest art collections. Enter the museum through world-renowned architect I.M. Pei's glass pyramid, constructed in 1989. Inside, discover priceless antiquities from Asia, Greece and Rome. You'll also see precious objects from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as well as iconic European paintings like the *Mona Lisa*.

Day 3 Paris

Guided sightseeing of Paris • Discover the city on the Seine: from the imposing Arc de Triomphe, commemorating Napoleon's Grande Armée, to the Île de la Cité, birthplace of Paris. Take a drive down the elegant Champs-Élysées to the Place de la Concorde. Pass the Conciergerie, where prisoners of the Revolution spent their final days, and see Les Invalides, Louis XIV's grand retirement home for wounded soldiers. You'll also see the École Militaire, where Napoleon graduated to Lieutenant and was told he'd go far if circumstances allowed. Next, make a photo stop at the Eiffel Tower to marvel at the 6,000-ton centerpiece for the 1889 World's Fair. You'll hear the story of how this impressive—but once highly controversial—symbol of Paris was spared the wrecking ball in 1909.

Visit to Notre Dame Cathedral • Built between 1163 and 1361 over the remains of an ancient Roman temple, it was here that Napoleon crowned himself emperor in 1804. Victor Hugo once described the sculptured façade of Notre Dame as "a vast symphony in stone." However, had it not been for the creation of his famous hunchback, Quasimodo, the cathedral might never have returned to its former glory. Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* helped inspire a 23-year restoration of the cathedral that began in 1841. Step inside to admire the stained-glass rose windows and seemingly weightless vaulted ceilings.

Optional excursion to Versailles • Join an optional excursion to Versailles, the elaborate palace of Louis XIV. Here, the Sun King held court in the most lavish style imaginable. At one point, 1,000 nobles were attended by 4,000 servants inside the palace, while 15,000 soldiers and servants inhabited the annexes. Stroll through the elegantly landscaped gardens, designed by André Le Nôtre, tour the State Apartments of the King himself, walk through the historic Hall of Mirrors and admire the ornate decor of the State Apartments of the Queen. (Please note: Because of the extreme popularity of Versailles, guided visits of the interior cannot be guaranteed during peak seasons. In this case, your group will hear a presentation from your guide before entering the palace. Please also note that Versailles is closed on Mondays. Participants must enroll in this excursion no later than 50 days prior to departure.)

Day 4 Paris • Loire Valley

Transfer via Chartres • In Chartres, visit Europe's grandest Gothic (13th century) cathedral, which boasts the world's finest stained-glass windows.

Photo stop at Chambord • Make a stop at Chambord, the largest of all the Loire Valley châteaux. It is widely believed that Leonardo da Vinci, an artist with whom François I was personally acquainted, had a hand in this castle's design. Many of Molière's plays premiered here.

Arrival in the Loire Valley • Continue through the French countryside and into the magnificent Loire Valley, Playground of the Kings.

Day 5 Loire Valley

Visit to Amboise • Inspired by the Renaissance architecture he encountered in northern Italy, Charles VIII commissioned the construction of Amboise, one of countless châteaux nestled in the Loire Valley. Charles' desire to emulate the majestic gardens of Italy prompted him to bring gardener Pacello da Mercogliano back to France, so that he might design a suitable garden for the king. Although it was partially destroyed during the French Revolution, you'll experience the medieval grandeur of the château up-close on your visit. Take in sweeping views of the valley below as you explore the former home of Louis XI, Louis XII, François I, and Leonardo da Vinci.

Visit to Château de Chenonceau • Your excursion into the Playground of the Kings includes a visit to the most romantic château in the region: the exquisite Château de Chenonceau. Beginning in the 1500s with Catherine Bohier, Diane de Poitiers, and Catherine de Médicis, an extraordinary succession of women each had a strong hand in the design of the castle.

Wine cellar presentation • Next, attend a presentation to learn about the age-old wine-making industry for which the Loire Valley is renowned during your visit to a wine cellar.

Visit to *les habitations troglodytiques* • See how thousands of years of geological evolution created these subterranean hollows beneath France's Loire Valley. Though originally used as living spaces in the 11th and 12th centuries, many of the maze-like grottos are still in use today as wine cellars, chapels, bakeries and shops. Tonight, enjoy your dinner inside one of these medieval dwellings.

Day 6 Loire Valley • Lyon

Transfer to Lyon • Arrive in Lyon in the heart of the Rhône Valley. Lyon is home to some of France's finest gourmet food.

Guided sightseeing of Lyon • Lyon has grown from a historic transportation hub to a major center of culture and economics. On a guided sightseeing tour of Lyon, you'll get an orientation of the city's layout and view several important sites—most are located in the *vieille ville* (old town). The *vieille ville* was part of a vast Roman Empire 2,000 years ago, but also saw the decline of Roman power and the rise of Christendom. Lyon gained prominence in Renaissance times, when it became a place for kings to finance their wars and poets to publish their works.

Day 7 Avignon • Provence

Tour director-led sightseeing of Avignon and visit to the Popes' Palace • Join your tour director for a tour of Avignon, capital of the Provence region. Pope Clement V, a native of France, moved the seat of the papacy to Avignon in 1309. Stroll through the sprawling Palais des Papes in which he and his six successors resided. View the stunning Italian frescoes in the chapel, step inside the papal vestry, and see the hidden vaults where the church's riches were stored.

Overnight in Provence • Painter Paul Cézanne once said of Provence: "Everywhere are the fragrances of honey, thyme, lavender, all the herbs of the nearby hills." Spend the night in this vibrant land, which also beckoned Picasso, Cocteau and van Gogh.

Day 8 Provence • French Riviera

Pont du Gard • See the astonishing Pont du Gard aqueduct. Dating back 2,000 years, it once supplied Roman villas with running water.

Tour director-led sightseeing of Nîmes • Your tour director will show you the best of Nîmes, the birthplace of denim. Get acquainted with the famous Roman architecture in one of Provence's most important cities. You will have the opportunity to visit an ancient Roman amphitheater, originally built to accommodate thousands of spectators. The arena is still occasionally used for bullfights! (Please note: Depending on hotel location, some groups may instead visit Arles, whose meandering streets once inspired van Gogh. Arles also has an ancient Roman amphitheater.)

Arrival on the French Riviera • Arrive at the spectacular coastline of the glamorous French Riviera, land of sparkling waters, waving palm trees and sun-drenched promenades.

Pope Clement V and six successive popes resided in the Palais des Papes at Avignon.



Day 9 French Riviera

Excursion to Monaco • Follow the coastline of the Riviera to Monaco, a tiny principality that packs wealth, royalty and the world's most famous casino into just 0.8 square miles. The Grimaldi family has ruled Monaco since 1297, making them the longest-reigning family dynasty in Europe. See the royal palace, and pass by the Cathédrale de Monaco, site of Prince Rainier's wedding to Grace Kelly in 1956. The cathedral is also the final resting place of the prince and Princess Grace, who was killed in a car accident in the hills of Monaco in 1982. Catch a glimpse of the stately Monte-Carlo casino as you stroll the streets with your tour director. The casino was built in 1878 by Charles Garnier, who also designed the Paris Opera.

Visit to Eze • En route back to Nice, stop in Eze, a small medieval town perched on a cliff high above the waters of the Mediterranean. Here, you'll enjoy a guided tour of a perfume factory.

Orientation tour of Nice • Acquaint yourself with the palm trees and promenades of this exclusive seaside resort. Walk in the footsteps of the rich and famous as you stroll through the Vieille Ville past white-washed villas, and down the Promenade des Anglais. Nice's spectacular scenery has inspired such artists as Renoir, Matisse and Toulouse-Lautrec.

Day 10 Home

Return home • Your tour director assists with the transfer to the airport, where you'll check in for your return flight home.

EXTENSION

Day 10 French Riviera • Corsica

Ferry to Corsica • Alternatively, you can extend your stay three days to visit Corsica. Make an early morning fast ferry departure to Corsica and discover the most geographically diverse island in the Mediterranean. Its 620-mile coastline harbors snow-capped mountains, red granite cliffs, an uninhabited desert, chestnut groves, vineyards, and more. Culturally and historically, Corsica is a blend of French and Italian heritages, having suffered invasions from both countries throughout the ages. Since the end of the 18th century, Corsica has belonged to France, except during WWII when it was occupied by Italy. While French is the official language on the island, the majority of Corsicans speak their own language, an Italian dialect similar to Tuscan. Upon arrival, your tour director escorts you to your hotel, where you'll spend the night. Enjoy free time to spend as you please.

Day 11 Bonifacio • Corsica

Excursion to Bonifacio • Today, visit Bonifacio, an ancient fortress town set on a cliff-top. According to scholars, the Ville Haute's narrow streets are where Ulysses' fleet was bombarded by the Laestrygonians.

Day 12 Corsica • French Riviera

Free time in Corsica • Enjoy a free day exploring the beautiful island of Corsica. Take a late fast ferry and overnight on the French Riviera.

Day 13 Home

Return home • Your tour director assists with the transfer to the airport, where you'll check in for your return flight home.

For complete financial and registration details, please refer to the Booking Conditions.



ITN0609GOF/G
Itinerary subject to change.

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