PARIS, THE LOIRE & NORMANDY
Rich in art, culture, fashion and history, France is the ideal classroom. Practice your French in Parisian cafés, marvel at haute couture and wander among Louvre masterpieces. Experience the splendor of centuries-old royalty and study the Renaissance architecture as you explore the awe-inspiring beauty of the Loire Valley. On Normandy’s beaches, reflect upon the historic events that took place here during World War II.

**Day 1 Flight**
Overnight flight to France • Relax as you fly across the Atlantic.

**Day 2 Paris**
Arrival in Paris • Touch down in Paris, City of Light. After clearing customs, you are greeted by your bilingual EF Tour Director, who will remain with you throughout your stay. Walking tour of Paris • Meander through Paris and cross over the Seine river. On the left bank, watch the *bouquinists* selling old books and postcards and catch glimpses of the Conciergerie and St. Chapelle from the Pont Neuf, the oldest bridge in the city. Continue through the Latin Quarter, an area dominated by the Sorbonne, Paris' most famous university, founded in 1253. The quarter was named for its inhabitants’ native tongue; Latin was the official language until 1793. As you stroll, look for the Panthéon, created by Louis XV because of a promise he made during a severe illness to build a church dedicated to Saint Geneviève if he survived. Your tour will end at Notre Dame Cathedral.

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.

**Day 3 Paris**
Guided sightseeing of Paris • Discover the city on the Seine, beginning with the imposing Arc de Triomphe, commemorating Napoleon’s Grande Armée. 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. Pass the Opéra Garnier, where the famous Phantom of the Opera haunted his dear Christine, and marvel at Église de la Madeleine, designed as a temple of glory for Napoleon’s army. Continue past the geometric gardens of the Tuileries as you make your way to the Place Vendôme, a vast square surrounded by elegant 17th-century façades.

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 décor 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.)

Day 4 Paris • Loire Valley
Malcolm Miller tour of Chartres • Transfer via Chartres where you will take a guided tour of Chartres Cathedral, Europe’s grandest Gothic cathedral with its foremost expert, Malcolm Miller. Studying Chartres has been his life work, and he has been lecturing here since 1958.

Photo stop at Chambord • There will also be time to snap a photo of 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.

Overnight in the Loire Valley • Spend the night in the magnificent Loire Valley.

Day 5 Loire Valley
Guided 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’s 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 a guided 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 Médici, an extraordinary succession of women each had a strong hand in the design of the castle.

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

Visit to les habitats troglodytiques • See how thousands of years of geological evolution created these subterranean hollows below 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 • St. Malo
Visit to Mont-St-Michel • Tour the breathtaking islet monastery of Mont-St-Michel. Perched high on a granite rock, this 8th-century abbey is surrounded by water at high tide and quicksand at low tide.

Tour director-led sightseeing of St. Malo • Pirates once set sail from this rocky Atlantic island. Learn how the town’s seamen fought Barbary pirates and swindled English, Dutch and Spanish merchants. Take in the narrow streets, tall granite homes and medieval ramparts as you explore the town with your tour director.

Day 7 Normandy
Transfer to the beaches of Normandy • Stand on the actual beaches that witnessed the horrors of D-Day. The World War II battles that took place here became the largest seaborne invasion in history.

Visit to Caen Memorial: Museum of Peace • Pay tribute to WWII troops who fought on the beaches of Normandy as you visit the Caen Mémorial. You’ll see a short film about the D-Day invasion, followed by a slide show on WWII. A third audio-visual presentation recounts the wars in Korea, Afghanistan and Vietnam, as well as the continuing quest for world peace. Afterwards, tour the museum and see displays that depict pre-WWII Europe and trace the events that eventually led to the outbreak of war. Take time to walk through the Nobel Peace Prizewinners’ Gallery; a gallery that highlights the accomplishments of the men and women who struggled for peace.

Overnight in the Normandy region • Spend the night in the Normandy region.

Day 8 Rouen • Paris
Transfer via Rouen • Travel by way of Rouen, known as the City of a Hundred Spires because of its many churches. It was here that Joan of Arc was burned at the stake during the Hundred Years’ War. Rouen’s enormous Notre Dame Cathedral was a favorite subject of Impressionist painter Claude Monet. Nearby, see the Tour de Beurre (Butter Tower), financed by donations made by Catholics who wished to avoid fasting during Lent.

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 price-
less 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 such as the Mona Lisa.

**Arrival in Paris** • Return to Paris for the last night of your tour.

**Day 9 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.