

Provence & the Cote d'Azur

10 DAYS/9 NIGHTS- GROUP TRAVEL
SUGGESTED ITINERARY-CAN BE CUSTOMIZED



France's region of Provence and the Cote d'Azur is home to fields of lavender, rosé wines, castles, bouillabaisse soup, Roman ruins, turquoise beaches, perfume-making, pastis liqueur, ratatouille and picturesque rocky inlets along the Mediterranean. Stroll down Nice's seaside promenade. See the countryside that inspired Matisse, Cézanne and Van Gogh. Experience the glamour of Monaco. Visit the picturesque and historic town of Avignon. Cruise through Marseille's iconic calanques. Visit Nîmes' 2000-year-old Roman amphitheatre. See the Pont de Gard aqueduct. Taste local Provencal wines. This tour will show you the charm of the countryside – and the glamour of the French Riviera.



DAY 1 ~ ARRIVE NICE

Bienvenue à Nice, a beautifully relaxing and utterly scenic city on

France's famed French Riviera. In addition to having fantastic art museums and vibrant, turquoise beaches – Nice is also an excellent base city for exploring this stretch of the Cote d'Azur. Upon arrival to the airport, a local guide will meet your group in the arrival hall and accompany it to the hotel by private bus.

Depending on our flight's arrival time, upon arrival to the hotel you and your fellow group members will either store baggage with the reception staff and enjoy time for free lunch (in the event that you have arrived before the 2:00 pm check-in time) or (in the event that you have arrived in mid-late afternoon) will directly check-in, freshen up and then join the guide downstairs for a walking tour of Nice's beautiful Old Town.

Founded by the ancient Greeks, the historic city of Nice is almost 2400 years old. In the 9th century it was badly damaged by the Muslim Saracens. By the early Middle Ages, it was often politically in league with

Italian kingdoms, particularly with Pisa – and even as few as 150 years ago it was ruled by the Kingdom of Sardinia. By the mid 1700's Nice - because of its pleasant climate – developed as a winter vacation destination for wealthy Northern Europeans, particularly the English. During your afternoon walking tour of Nice's charming Old Town, you will visit the city's lovely flower market on Cours Saleya and see the city's main sights including Place Masséna, Place du Palais, Place Rossetti, the Promenade des Anglais and the city's 19th-century Opera House.

The tour will finish back at the hotel, and your group will have a welcome dinner this evening in the hotel's restaurant.



DAY 2 ~ NICE

After breakfast in the hotel, enjoy a full day at leisure to visit lovely Nice. Shop in the city's boutiques. Have lunch at a seaside café. Swim in one of the most beautiful stretches of the Mediterranean, or pay a visit to one of Nice's fantastic art museums such as the Beaux-Arts Museum, the Musée Matisse, the Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain (all three

INCLUSIONS

- 4 nights in Nice
- 2 nights each in Marseille and Avignon
- 1 night in Aix-en-Provence
- Breakfast daily
- Lunch and dinner per itinerary
- Ground transport via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistant and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in itinerary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Guided tour of a working French perfumery in Eze
- Ride the "petit train" in Cannes
- Day excursion to glamorous Monaco
- Wine taste in Le Lavandou and Châteauneuf-du-Pape
- Boat cruise through Marseille's picturesque calanques
- Tour of Nîmes' 2000-year-old Roman amphitheatre-turned-bullring
- See the Roman aqueduct known as the "Pont de Gard,"
- Sightseeing tours in Aix-en-Provence, Avignon, Nice, Marseille, Arles, Nîmes, Cassis and Monaco

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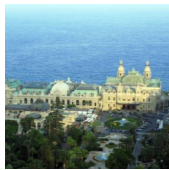
of which are free of charge) or the Musée National Marc Chagall.



DAY 3 ~ NICE

After lunch in the hotel, meet a local guide in the hotel for a fantastic sightseeing excursion by private bus. You'll begin with a visit to Saint-Paul-de-Vence, a picture-perfect medieval village that is home to a thriving art scene. Its boutiques are a great place for those wanting to peruse boutiques that sell Provencal fabrics and local gourmet delicacies (olive oil, wine, fruit liqueurs, etc.). Afterwards you'll carry on to the nearby city of Vence to visit its Rosaire Chapel, whose interiors were designed by Matisse towards the end of his life. This was a project of personal passion and dedication for the artist, and inside you will find gorgeous tile work, stained-glass and murals painted by Matisse himself.

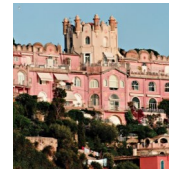
From here you will travel south back towards the coast to one of the French Riviera's crown jewels: Cannes, home to fashion, beautiful beaches and one of the most famous film festivals in the world. As we arrive, you will have free time for lunch and exploring followed by a fun, one-hour sightseeing tour on Cannes' white "petit train" that will take you through Cannes' medieval port and to the city's best known destination: the seaside, star-studded promenade locally known as "la Croisette." Return to Nice in the afternoon, and enjoy the evening at leisure.



DAY 4 ~ NICE

After breakfast in the hotel, meet your local guide for an interesting sightseeing excursion to Eze and Monaco by private bus. You'll begin your day learning all about the world of French perfume in the scenic village of Eze at the Fragonard Perfumery. Enjoy a guided tour here

before continuing east to the Principality of Monaco, the second-smallest independent state in Europe (after Vatican City) and a destination that oozes affluence and luxury. Upon arrival you'll have free time for lunch followed by a guided tour of the Old Town. Then you'll have some time to explore on your own or see the Royal Palace before returning to Nice in the late afternoon. Enjoy one final evening at leisure in Nice.



DAY 5 ~ MARSEILLE

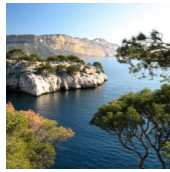
After breakfast in the hotel, your group will check out and begin traveling west by private bus along the pristine Cote d'Azur (which literally means "Azure Coast.") Your first stop is the seaside town of Le Lavandou where you will visit Domaine de l'Anglade, a wine estate that has been run by the same family for the past three generations. Quite unusually for a vineyard – it's located on the beach. In general, Provence is well-loved for its production of rosé wines. That being said - its red wines are beginning to capture the attention of the wine world. (And nearby Cassis produces excellent white wines). Since the time of the ancient Greeks first settlements, wine has been produced in this part of France for almost 3000 years. Enjoy a guided tour of the wine estate followed by a wine tasting. Then head to a local restaurant for an authentic, Provencal lunch with local seafood dishes with your traveling companions in Le Lavandou. After lunch, continue traveling west along the coast to Marseille: the capital of Provence, the second largest city in France and your base city for the next two nights.

Having been founded as a port city by the Greeks, at 2600 years old, colorful Marseille is one the oldest cities in Western Europe. It's also been selected as the official European Capital of Culture in 2013. Upon arrival to Marseille, you will check-in



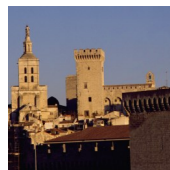


at the hotel and then immediately meet a local guide for a late-afternoon / early-evening walking tour of the Old Port. Tonight, the evening is free for you to enjoy Marseille. For dinner, consider trying bouillabaisse, a fish stew delicacy that hails from Marseille.



DAY 6 ~ MARSEILLE

After breakfast in the hotel, meet a local guide in the lobby. Today you're in for a real treat: a sightseeing excursion of Marseille's famed Massif des Calanques. The calanques can be described as rocky stretch of land along the coastline that contains dramatically carved-out, limestone coves. (They resemble fjords, which differ as they are carved by glaciers and not by the sea). The Massif des Calanques lies between the ports of Marseille and Cassis and spans approximately 12 miles. This is one of the most naturally beautiful areas in all of France. You'll begin today's excursion with a short drive to the scenic fishing town of Cassis. Here you will embark on a 90-minute cruise that will take you to eight of the most beautiful calanques. After this once-in-a-lifetime experience, you'll return back to Cassis and enjoy some free time to have lunch and explore Cassis. It is often described as one of the least spoiled towns on the Cote d'Azur. In the mid-afternoon, your group will return to the hotel in Marseille, and the remainder of the day will be at leisure.



DAY 7 ~ AVIGNON

After breakfast in the hotel, your group will check out and board a private bus for another fantastic day of sightseeing. You'll begin by heading northwest through the lavender fields and vineyards of the Provencal countryside to the very historic city of Arles, which is home to some

remarkably well-preserved Roman ruins. This is also the setting that so inspired Vincent Van Gogh. He painted Café de Nuit, Starry Night and Les Alyscamps while living in Arles. Upon arrival to Arles in mid-morning you will meet a local guide for a walking tour. Afterwards, your group will re-board the bus and make the short drive to the city of Nîmes, which is home to one of the best preserved Roman amphitheatres in the world. Upon arrival you will have free time to have lunch, and then your guide will take you inside the city's 2000-year-old Roman amphitheatre-turned-bullring. After the visit, your group will make a final stop before arriving to tonight's destination of Avignon. You're about to see one of the most famous sites in France: the ancient Roman aqueduct known as the Pont du Gard. This impressively constructed (and preserved) UNESCO World Heritage Site was constructed in 19 BC. In its heyday it transported water to over 30 miles to the Roman community in Nîmes. After seeing this ancient feat of engineering, proceed to Avignon.

Upon arrival to the hotel, you and your fellow travelers can check in and have time to freshen up before a group dinner tonight in the hotel's restaurant.



DAY 8 ~ AVIGNON

After breakfast in the hotel, meet a local guide for a sightseeing tour of the historic, walled city of Avignon. Avignon was one of the most influential cities in Christian Europe during the Middle Ages. In fact - in the 14th century, the Pope moved the papacy from Vatican City to Avignon. This worked out quite well for about 70 years until the Pope returned to Rome and Avignon went ahead and elected a second pope (often called the anti-Pope) to continue ruling from Avignon. This



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caused a major rift in Catholic Europe for about four decades. As a result of the Papacy's temporary home in Avignon, the magnificent Palais des Papes was constructed here – and you will tour it this morning during your sightseeing tour of Avignon. You will also go inside the city's 12th-century Cathédrale Notre-Dame des Doms. After a break for lunch on own, your tour will continue with a short drive to Châteauneuf-du-Pape. The castle there was originally constructed as the Pope's summer residence. Today it is home to some of France's best vineyards. Enjoy a wine tasting before you return to Avignon in the late afternoon. The tour will finish at the hotel, and your evening is at leisure in Avignon.



DAY 9 ~ AIX-EN-PROVENCE

After breakfast in the hotel, your group will check-out and travel south by private coach to the beautiful city of Aix-en-Provence. Founded by the Romans, this city oozes provincial, French charm. Being here really feels like you've gone back in time. Home to gorgeous squares, elegant fountains and lovely café-filled streets, Aix-en-Provence was a source of inspiration for post-Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne and for writers Ernest Hemingway and Émile Zola. Your group will arrive to the hotel mid-morning, drop its baggage off to be stored with the reception staff and immediately meet a local guide for a walking tour of postcard-like Aix-en-Provence. The tour will finish just before lunch time, and you will have the remainder of the day to enjoy exploring. Later on in the evening, your group will go to a local restaurant for one final dinner in France.



DAY 10 ~ AIX-EN-PROVENCE

After breakfast in the hotel, your group will check out and proceed to Marseille Airport for its return flight to the USA.

WHY TRAVEL WITH US ?

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We Make It Easy - We provide a quick turnaround on custom quotes. Multi-city and multi-country itineraries are our specialty. In addition, we can help organize signup deadlines, travel documents and payments.

Experience - Europe Express has managed over 6,000 custom group trips since 1990. We provide expert guides and high quality travel products.

Flexibility - We work with your travel agent to create a tailor-made trip to accommodate your interests, booking whatever combination of travel services fit your plans and budget, including airfare, hotels, rail, transfers, sightseeing and more.

Peace of Mind - Dedicated local ground support means that there is always someone available to help you. Relax knowing that your trip is backed by our commitment to offer world-class quality of service.

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