

16 Wonderful Days **Paris to Nice** **La Grande France**

Discover five of France's seductive regions

From Paris to Nice, this itinerary showcases spectacular history, landscapes, foods and wines of France (plus Monaco!)

Embark on a captivating journey through five alluring regions of France, the graceful châteaux of the Loire Valley, the Dordogne, the land of the Cathars in the Languedoc Roussillon, to ancient Provence and the stunning Côte d'Azur. Wonderful experiences including the extraordinary Carrières de Lumières, the incredible caves of Gouffre de Padirac, wine tasting in the Loire Valley and Roquefort cheese tasting.



Travel in a first-class air-conditioned touring coach



Welcome drink on Day 1

23 meals including breakfast daily (B) and 8 evening meals (D)

A complimentary glass of wine, beer or soft drink with all included dinners



Hotel portorage of 1 bag per person (where available)

15 nights specially selected hotel accommodation

Free WiFi at most hotels (where available)



Personal audio system whilst on tour (where available)

Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager

ALL tips for your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides

Local guides as described in the itinerary



Hand Selected Albatross Experiences including Loire Valley wine tasting, Chateau Villandry gardens, Roquefort cheese tasting, Dordogne barge cruise and Calanques cruise

ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described



Paris

Day 1



Crowne Plaza Paris - Republique



D

Your tour commences this evening in Paris. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers.

Paris to Loire Valley

Day 2



Le Prieuré de Boulogne, Tour-en-Sologne



B,D

We board our coach and make our way south-west to the verdant Loire Valley where, during the 15th and 16th centuries, the Kings of France and their courtiers created their grand holiday palaces. What better way to be introduced to the wonderful Loire Valley than our afternoon stop at Chambord where we enjoy a guided tour through the magnificent château. This enormous château was created by King Francois as a hunting lodge within the surrounding grounds, which consisted of over 5000 wooded hectares. Tonight enjoy dinner in your Loire Valley hotel, where we stay for 3 nights.

Château Chenonceau, Amboise and an evening in Blois

Day 3



Le Prieuré de Boulogne, Tour-en-Sologne



B

This morning we enjoy a visit to the magnificent Château Chenonceau, spanning the River Cher on a series of graceful arches. Possibly one of the most photographed of the Loire châteaux this was the former home of Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Medici. Explore the stunning gardens and interior of the château. Later we stop to explore the charming riverside town of Amboise, on the banks of the River Loire, with its Royal Palace, where Leonardo da Vinci once lived as a guest of King Francois I. We have included a visit to da Vinci's residence – Château du Clos Lucé. Here in the underground rooms, you will see on display, forty machines designed by this amazing inventor.

This evening will be free amongst the cobbled streets of Blois, under the shadow of the cathedral and Royal Palace. Time to discover your own provincial bistro for dinner.

Château Villandry, the old town of Tours and a wine tasting

Day 4



Le Prieuré de Boulogne, Tour-en-Sologne



B,D

Our morning will be spent exploring the wonderful terraces and gardens of Château Villandry. Inspired by the classic gardens of the 16th and 18th century, different levels of the gardens include ponds, topiary, ornamental hedges and an extraordinary kitchen garden covering 12,500 square metres. Lunchtime will be at leisure in the old town of Tours around Place Plumereau. Later we follow the Loire Valley, stopping at a Wine Cave for a tasting of local Loire Valley wines. Dinner this evening is included in your hotel.

Oradour-sur-Glane and Lascaux

Day 5



Hotel Plaza Madeleine À Sarlat



B,D

This morning we make a poignant visit to the 'ghost village' of Oradour-sur-Glane. In June 1944, without apparent provocation, soldiers from the 2nd Waffen-SS Panzer Division massacred all the inhabitants of this quiet, little village. The village was then destroyed. The village was never rebuilt and has been preserved as a memorial to this awful atrocity. We have included entrance with audio guides to the museum 'Centre de la memoire d'Oradour'. Later we continue to Lascaux, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, famous for its magnificent Palaeolithic cave paintings. Whilst the actual caves themselves are now closed to the public, we visit the nearby Lascaux IV museum to see the superb replicas of the cave paintings found in the Great Hall of the Bulls and the Painted Gallery. As a finalé, we continue to the Dordogne Valley with its sleepy villages, medieval châteaux, meandering rivers and lush landscape that so epitomises French rural life. We stay the next three nights in the perfectly preserved Sarlat la Canéda, one of the most stunning towns in France.

Sarlat, River Dordogne Cruise and picturesque Domme

Day 6



Hotel Plaza Madeleine À Sarlat

4Ψ B

A guide joins us for the whole day. First we explore the medieval, architectural time capsule village of Sarlat. Noted for its gourmet food, cheeses, pâté and foie gras, Sarlat is also famous for its beautifully preserved old town with its café filled squares and delightful cobblestoned alleyways. In the afternoon we will drive to the nearby village of La Roc Gageac, set beside the pretty Dordogne River. Here we will board a barge and drift slowly down the River Dordogne past medieval castles. Later we visit the incredibly picturesque village of Domme. We have included a ride on the petit train up through the ramparts to the town square. You will have time at leisure to explore the sleepy village and enjoy the sweeping views across the Dordogne Valley.

Rocamadour & Gouffre de Padirac Caves

Day 7



Hotel Plaza Madeleine À Sarlat

4Ψ B

This morning we will visit the 'pilgrimage town' of Rocamadour. Incredibly picturesque, this town sits on a tributary of the Dordogne. High above the old town are churches and monastic buildings, whilst below is an old town dating back centuries, and which once welcomed those on the 'Pilgrims Trail'. In the afternoon we change our focus from man's creations to that of nature, as we enjoy a visit through the astounding caves of the 'Gouffre de Padirac'. This 25 kilometre underground system boasts massive galleries and chambers. A visual feast and beautifully lit, we also experience a 500 metre boat ride inside the caves to emerge into the spectacular 'Grand Dome'. Your evening is at leisure in Sarlat.

Old town of Carcassonne and Montpellier

Day 8



Hotel Oceania Le Métropole, Montpellier

4Ψ B,D

Heading south we reach the walled city of Carcassonne where we are joined by a local guide to explore the ramparts and old town of Carcassonne. The medieval castle, with its gigantic double walled fortifications and 53 watchtowers, is the 2nd most visited site in France outside of Paris. Dating back to the 13th century, Carcassonne is a magnificent timepiece. We also make sure you have time at leisure to explore. Later, we continue through the Languedoc Roussillon region to the graceful city of Montpellier. This is the perfect base from which to fully explore this region, and why we stay here for the next five amazing nights!

Nimes and Aigues Mortes

Day 9



Hotel Oceania Le Métropole, Montpellier

4Ψ B,D

This morning we visit Nimes, where a local guide will join us for a walking tour of this remarkable city. Dating back to the bronze age, the central part is traffic free. Right in the centre you will find the Maison Carrée Roman temple, and the giant Arena of Nimes – the best preserved amphitheatre in the Roman Empire. Later we will drive into the famous Camargue region and enjoy 'My Time' in Aigues-Mortes. The 13th century walls and ramparts fully encircle this historical town and form a striking contrast to the vast salines (salt flats) that encircle it. This evening we have included dinner in a local wine estate.

Montpellier, 'My Time'

Day 10



Hotel Oceania Le Métropole, Montpellier

4Ψ B

A leisurely start. A local guide will take us on a morning walk around Montpellier's city centre to see the highlights. The rest of your day and evening is entirely free to explore and enjoy 'My Time'.

La Couvertoirade, the awesome Millau Viaduct and Roquefort

Day 11



Hotel Oceania Le Métropole, Montpellier



B

A leisurely start before we drive inland to the UNESCO listed Causse du Larzac region. Our first stop will be at the medieval village of La Couvertoirade, which was voted one of the 'Plus Beaux Villages de France' (most beautiful villages of France). The village was transformed into a dramatic fortified castle by the Knights Templar approximately 800 years ago; the flower bedecked, narrow, cobblestoned streets are steeped in history and the little church is littered with secret Masonic signs. Later, equivalent to the height of the top of the Eiffel Tower, we take the extraordinary Millau Viaduct across the mighty Tarn Gorge. After visiting the Viaduct Museum, we enjoy lunchtime at leisure in Millau. Next stop Roquefort! We have included a guided tour down through the Caves and a tasting of varieties of this rich tasty cheese. (The salami infused with Roquefort is quite unbelievable!).

Les Baux, Avignon and the Pont du Gard

Day 12



Hotel Oceania Le Métropole, Montpellier



B

A busy, but incredibly rewarding day. First up we journey to the crumbling castle and once deserted village of Les Baux to discover the craft shops and cafés scattered throughout the ruins. Set on the craggy hillside, this rejuvenated town is an extraordinary sight. We have also included entrance to enjoy a stunning audio-visual art show – the Carrières de Lumières. Underground, inside an abandoned quarry, you will have a totally unique sound and vision experience as classic works of art are projected as massive fresco all around you, onto the walls and ceilings. Please do check out the video on the web. Astounding! Lunchtime will be at leisure exploring the Papal city of Avignon. Mid-afternoon we stop to enjoy a short walk across the spectacular Pont du Gard – an imposing 2,000 year-old Roman aqueduct which was built with giant stones weighing up to six tons. In a beautiful setting, this remarkable structure spans 200 metres between the craggy hillsides of the River Gard. Your evening is at leisure in Montpellier.

Cassis, Calanques Cruise and Nice

Day 13



Best Western Plus Massena Nice



B,D

First stop today will be in the old fishing village of Cassis, on the Côte d'Azur. We enjoy a morning cruise to explore some of the incredibly picturesque Calanques. These rugged inlets with steep cliffs tumbling into the crystal clear, azure waters are best viewed by boat. Lunchtime will be at leisure in the picturesque harbour of Cassis. Later we continue to Nice, nicknamed the 'Queen of the Riviera', where we stay the next three nights.

'My Time' in Nice, Villa Ephrussi and Monaco

Day 14



Best Western Plus Massena Nice



B

Your morning is entirely free in the elegant resort town of Nice. Make sure you visit the wonderful fresh food, local produce and flower markets which are amongst the best in France! Take time to stroll and shop amongst the winding streets and perhaps enjoy lunch in one of the attractive seaside restaurants. Nice also boasts a number of art museums. This afternoon we will visit Saint-Jean Cap Ferrat and the fabulous Villa Ephrussi – home of the Rothschild family. We have included a self-guided tour through this exceptional villa, perhaps the grandest on the Côte d'Azur, to see Béatrice Ephrussi's grand apartments, tapestry and porcelain collections, and the magnificent gardens. We have also included afternoon tea in the restaurant, which boasts enormous views along the Azure Coast. Later this afternoon we have also included an excursion to Monaco. Following the scenic drive along the 'Moyenne Corniche' to the city of Monaco, we will see the Royal Palace before time in the old town to enjoy dinner at leisure.

Cannes and St Paul de Vence

Day 15

 Best Western Plus Massena Nice

4Ψ B,D

Our morning is spent in the extravagant seaside resort of Cannes. Famous for its movie stars and the Cannes Film Festival, we have time to explore the old port town and ‘La Croisette’ – the seafront promenade lined with palm trees, upmarket boutiques, cafés and grand hotels.

As a finalé, we will drive in to the foothills of the Alpes Maritimes to the old town of St Paul de Vence. With its imposing ramparts, overlooking the Provençal countryside, the wonderful natural light attracted an artists’ colony. Soon they were followed by film directors and movie stars, then galleries and shops. We enjoy a farewell dinner in a local restaurant.

Nice on the Cote d'Azur

Day 16

 Best Western Plus Massena Nice

4Ψ B

Your tour ends today after breakfast.

Hand Selected Experiences

These are just a few of the very special hand selected experiences that will really make your touring experience exceptional and unique, and don't forget, with Albatross they are always included.



Loire Valley
Wine Tasting



Château Villandry
Magnificent Gardens



Amboise
Da Vinci's Residence



Oradour-sur-Glane
Visit the 'Ghost Village'



Dordogne
Sarlat & La Roc Gageac



Carcassonne
Guided Walking Tour



Millau
La Couvertoirade, Millau Viaduct & Roquefort cheese





Avignon & Pont du Gard
'City of the Popes' & Ancient Roman Aqueduct



Calanques Cruise
Along the Côte d'Azur

Dates and Prices

Correct as of 07:21 on 18th April 2025

Start Date	End Date	Twin Price	Solo Price	Guaranteed to Depart	
18 May 2025	02 Jun 2025	AUD\$10,987	AUD\$14,087		 Sold Out

01 Jun 2025	16 Jun 2025	AUD\$10,987	AUD\$14,087	✓	● Sold Out
17 Aug 2025	01 Sep 2025	AUD\$10,987	AUD\$14,087	✓	● Space Available
31 Aug 2025	15 Sep 2025	AUD\$10,987	AUD\$14,087	✓	● Space Available
17 May 2026	04 Jun 2026	TBC	TBC		● Pre-Register
07 Jun 2026	25 Jun 2026	TBC	TBC		● Pre-Register
23 Aug 2026	10 Sep 2026	TBC	TBC		● Pre-Register
06 Sep 2026	24 Sep 2026	TBC	TBC		● Pre-Register
13 Sep 2026	01 Oct 2026	TBC	TBC		● Pre-Register

* Dates, prices, itineraries and hotels shown may be subject to change on specific departures. Please contact our European Tour Specialists for further details.

Tour Suitability

Due to the nature of the niche places we visit on this tour, to explore all of the beautiful towns and sites a level of mobility is required.

- ✎ From experience we know that since this tour is packed with so many top shelf experiences people find it more taxing than usual
- ✎ The Gouffre de Padirac cave visit can be a little more challenging, and persons with mobility difficulties are advised to go down in the lift if they choose to participate in this activity. However, there are a further 70 steps down to the underground river level 103 metres below, which are metal "Eiffel-Tour" style. There are 3 sets of elevators to take you all the way back up. The gallery tour includes several sets of steps. Access to the Salle Du Grand Dome involves 150 steps going up and 150 steps going down, and is a one-way system so once you commence you cannot turn back. Those who have mobility difficulties may choose not to participate in this activity.

Please refer to our Tour Suitability section for more information.

Terms & Conditions

- Information provided is true and correct at time of issue. Airfares not included. For further details please contact your consultant or full terms and conditions may be found at www.albatrosstours.com.au/booking-conditions. Albatross Tours ABN 45 010 585 143. ATAS Accreditation No: A11341. CATO Accreditation No. 69562707