



19 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, at a pace that makes absolute sense. France is bigger than you think, and our multiple three night stays enable us to properly create remarkable Gallic experiences for you. Explore the graceful châteaux of the Loire Valley, picnic in a chateau vineyard, cruise past the crumbling bastides of the Dordogne Valley, stay in perfect Pézenas, in the land of the Cathars and Knights Templar in Languedoc Roussillon, visit extraordinary Carcassonne, and cross the Tarn Gorge on the enormous Millau Viaduct. Linger in Bordeaux, sip wine in Saint-Émilion and dine in a Châteauneuf-du-Pape wine estate, pass wild horses whilst crossing the Camargue to ancient Provence and the stunning Côte d'Azur. Wonderful experiences including the extraordinary Carrières de Lumières in Les Beaux, the incredible caves of Gouffre de Padirac, wine tastings in the Loire Valley, Bordeaux and Châteauneuf-du-Pape and a Roquefort cheese tasting. Croissant anyone?



Travel in a first-class air-conditioned touring coach



Welcome drink on Day 1

30 meals including breakfast daily (B), 2 lunches (L) and 10 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)

18 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 vineyard picnic & Bordeaux wine tasting, Chateau Villandry gardens, Roquefort cheese tasting, Dordogne barge cruise and Calanques cruise, lunch in a Saint-Émilion vineyard, discover the unspoiled charm of Pézenas and dine in a Châteauneuf-du-Pape wine estate

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



Château d'Artigny, Montbazou



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. Easily the biggest chateau in the Loire Valley, the white marble, double helix spiral staircase you walk 'inside' which was designed by Da Vinci, is truly remarkable, and the view from the chateau's rooftop walkways is fabulous.

Continuing to Montbazou we reach our superb 5 star 'grand' chateau hotel – Chateau d'Artigny, where we stay the next 3 nights. There are château hotels, and there are château hotels, and then, with its opulent interior and elegance... there is d'Artigny!

Château Chenonceau, Amboise and an evening in Tours

Day 3



Château d'Artigny, Montbazou



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.

After time to relax and freshen up back in 'your' 5 star Château, we will take you into the nearby city of Tours for an evening at leisure in the old town, with its brightly coloured, half-timbered houses. Time to discover your own provincial bistro for dinner amongst the cobbled streets around Place Plumereau.

Château Villandry, Azay-le-Rideau and vineyard picnic under a shady tree

Day 4



Château d'Artigny, Montbazou



B,L,D

Every chateau is so different! This morning, we visit the pretty little town of Azay-le-Rideau to visit the spectacular Chateau. Whilst yesterday's Château Chenonceau is nicknamed the 'Ladies' Château, Château d'Azay-le-Rideau is a totally different experience. Acknowledged as the finest example of early Renaissance French architecture, it sits on its own little lake, surrounded by romantic grounds, with weeping willows and giant Lebanese Cedar trees. Take time to enjoy a leisurely walk around the lake and through the chateau. Inside is fascinating as each floor is furnished from a historical different era.

Afterwards at nearby Chateau de l'Aulee we have a short tour of the wine cellars before enjoying a delightful picnic lunch and wine tasting in the Château's gardens, beside the vineyards, under a shady tree. This afternoon we will explore at leisure the wonderful terraces and gardens of Château Villandry. These terraced gardens are vast! 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. Time to wander at your own pace or take a seat and literally smell the roses! Dinner this evening is again included in your gorgeous, grand 5 star Château hotel. What a day!

La Rochelle 'Vieux Port' and Bordeaux

Day 5



Hotel Burdigala, Bordeaux City Centre



B,D

For centuries La Rochelle was the most important port on the European Atlantic coast, and in the 12th and 13th centuries the wealth of the Knights Templars passed through it. Arriving late morning, you will have ample 'My Time' to explore the charming, cobblestoned 'Vieux Port'- the 'Old Port', with its pedestrian centre boasting half-timbered medieval houses, passageways covered by 17th-century arches, and numerous seafood restaurants.

Later we continue to Bordeaux where we stay the next three nights. Our 5-star hotel is set in a great location, a short walk from the city centre sights.

Bordeaux walking tour and 'My Time'

Day 6



Hotel Burdigala, Bordeaux City Centre



B

This morning we are joined by a local guide for a walking tour of this delightful city which has rightfully been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status. Known as the 'Pearl of southwestern France', the waterfront along the Garonne River is lined with the magnificent façades of 18th century merchant mansions and stylish buildings such as the Bourse and the elegant Grand Théâtre. Nearby are grand boulevards, pedestrian walkways and elegant squares such as the Place de la Comédie and Place du Parlement. With over 350 historic monuments, it is also recognized as the wine capital of France, and the heart of the city is a gourmet's delight!

The rest of your day and evening is entirely at leisure. 'My Time' amongst the boulevards and grand squares of beautiful Bordeaux.

Saint-Émilion guided tour, wine tastings and vineyard lunch

Day 7



Hotel Burdigala, Bordeaux City Centre



B,L

This morning we visit the picture-perfect village of Saint-Émilion which, with its surrounding landscape devoted entirely to vines and wines, and its richly preserved medieval history was the first vineyard region to be listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. We will spend the morning here. A highlight will be our guided visit to the Cordeliers Cloister, followed by a descent into the underground tunnels where we will learn about Cordelier's sparkling wine making process. Naturally, we have included a tasting of their classic Blanc de Blanc, Rosé, and Blanc de Noir wines plus a genuine Saint-Émilion macaron. Afterwards we drive to a nearby wine chateaux to sample some of their glorious wines and enjoy a leisurely lunch, surrounded by vineyards.

Later we return to Bordeaux where your evening is at leisure.

Périgueux and the Lascaux Caves

Day 8



Plaza Madeleine Hotel & Spa



B,D

Let's go and explore the famous Dordogne region! Arriving in Périgueux mid-morning we enjoy quality free time to explore this medieval city with its majestic 12th century, Cathedral Saint-Front. The old medieval town has narrow stone streets and courtyards, and cafes that spill out into the tiny squares.

In the afternoon we continue to Lascaux, another UNESCO World Heritage Site, famous for its magnificent Palaeolithic cave paintings. Whilst the actual caves themselves are closed to the public, we visit the nearby Lascaux IV Museum. This visit is a remarkable experience as you take a guided walk of over 200 metres through an incredible recreation of the complete caves. Sensitively lit, you are surrounded by hundreds and hundreds of superbly created cave paintings, and you genuinely feel you are deep inside a real cave. The Great Hall of the Bulls and the Painted Gallery are mesmerizing.

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 heart of perfectly preserved Sarlat la Canéda, one of the most stunning towns in France. This evening dinner is included in a local restaurant set in the cobbled streets of this ancient town.

Sarlat, River Dordogne Cruise and picturesque Domme

Day 9



Plaza Madeleine Hotel & Spa

4Ψ B

A local 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 and Gouffre de Padirac Caves

Day 10



Plaza Madeleine Hotel & Spa

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 perfect Pézenas

Day 11



Hotel Garrigae Distillerie de Pézenas

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. Later, we continue through the Languedoc Roussillon region to the charming town of Pézenas where we stay the next two nights. Your hotel is nearby the gorgeous old town. One of the best-preserved medieval towns in the South of France, the cobbled streets are lined with stunning 16th and 17th century French mansion houses, many registered as Historical Monuments. Pézenas absolutely oozes charm, and you will have time to relax and discover the unspoiled character of the winding walkways, artistic boutiques, cozy cafes and restaurants.

La Couvertoirade, the awesome Millau Viaduct and Roquefort

Day 12



Hotel Garrigae Distillerie de Pézenas

4Ψ 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, with an equivalent height to 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!). The rest of the afternoon and evening are at leisure in perfect Pézenas.

Aigues-Mortes, the Camargue and ancient Nimes

Day 13



Hôtel la Magnaneraie, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon



B,D

This morning we drive into the famous Camargue region, known for its flamingos, horses and bulls running wild in the marshes. Here we stop to spend the morning 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 surround it.

Later 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 from the time of the Roman Empire.

Later we arrive in the village of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon where we spend the next three nights. Villeneuve-lès-Avignon is located directly opposite Avignon, on the other side of the Rhône River beneath the imposing hilltop Fort St.-Andre. We choose to stay here in the charming Hôtel la Magnaneraie as, in the busy summer months, it provides a relaxing retreat away from the heat and bustle of Avignon city centre. Maybe take time to play a traditional game of pétanque (boules) on their court, set under the giant 200-year-old plane trees in their shady garden, or have a dip in the pool before dinner which is a leisurely affair in your hotel.

Carrières de Lumières, Les Baux, Pont du Gard and a wine tasting and dinner in a local wine estate

Day 14



Hôtel la Magnaneraie, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon



B,D

First up we have 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 frescoes all around you, onto the walls and ceilings. Please do check out the video on the web. Astounding!

Afterwards we visit 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.

Mid-afternoon we stop to enjoy a 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.

This evening we visit the nearby, famous hilltop village of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. At the top sits the impressive ruins of Pope John XXII's 14th century castle and literally just below we visit a classic local winery. Here we have included a wine tasting of the famous AOC wines followed by dinner on their terrace, with sweeping views across the valley and down to the sleepy River Rhone. Memorable!

Avignon sightseeing and 'My Time'

Day 15



Hôtel la Magnaneraie, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon



B

This morning, we have included a walking tour of the UNESCO listed Avignon city centre with a local guide. Between 1309 and 1377 Avignon was the seat of the Catholic Popes and highlight will be your tour inside the massive Papal Palace in the town centre. The rest of the day will be at leisure exploring this beautiful city. Make sure you visit the Jardin (Garden) des Domes and also take a stroll across the Saint-Bénézet Bridge. Otherwise known from the famous song as the Pont d'Avignon, this medieval bridge with just 4 arches remaining juts out only part way across the Rhône River. The village of Villeneuve les Avignon is only a short stroll away from your hotel and has a range of restaurants and bistros for you to choose from.

Cassis, Calanques Cruise and Nice

Day 16



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 in the very heart of the town just a few steps from the iconic Place Messina and the Boulevard des Anglais. Dinner tonight is a relaxed affair in a local restaurant.

'My Time' in Nice, Villa Ephrussi and Monaco

Day 17



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.

Afterwards, following the scenic drive along the 'Moyenne Corniche' we arrive in the city of Monaco. On arrival we include a ride on 'Le Petit train' that takes you down to Monte Carlo and along the Formula 1 Grand Prix circuit, past the Casino and back to the old town to where you will have time to explore and discover the Princes Palace and Cathedral. Before returning to Nice, there will be 'My Time' in the old town to enjoy dinner at leisure.

Cannes and St Paul de Vence

Day 18



Best Western Plus Massena Nice



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 19



Best Western Plus Massena Nice



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
Châteaux**
4 very special visits



**Château picnic
lunch**
A picnic in the Loire
vineyards under a
shady tree



Château Villandry
Magnificent Gardens



Amboise
Da Vinci's Residence



Bordeaux
Saint-Émilion
vineyard tasting and
lunch



Saint-Émilion
Guided tour and
tasting



Dordogne
Sarlats & La Roc
Gageac



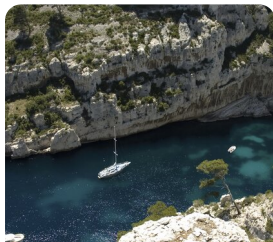
Carcassonne
Guided Walking Tour



Pézenas
Preserved medieval
town in the South of
France



Millau
La Couvertorade,
Millau Viaduct &
Roquefort cheese



Calanques Cruise
Along the Côte d'Azur



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



**Chateauneuf-du
Pape**
Rhône region
vineyard visit



Les Baux spectacle
The extraordinary
Carrières de Lumières
show

Dates and Prices

Correct as of 05:47 on 22nd December 2025

Start Date	End Date	Twin Price	Solo Price	Guaranteed to Depart	
17 May 2026	04 Jun 2026	NZD\$17,476	NZD\$22,976	✓	Space Available
07 Jun 2026	25 Jun 2026	NZD\$17,476	NZD\$22,976	✓	Space Available
23 Aug 2026	10 Sep 2026	NZD\$17,476	NZD\$22,976	✓	Space Available
13 Sep 2026	01 Oct 2026	NZD\$17,476	NZD\$22,976	✓	Space Available
16 May 2027	04 Jun 2027	TBC	TBC		Pre-Register
06 Jun 2027	25 Jun 2027	TBC	TBC		Pre-Register

05 Sep 2027	24 Sep 2027	TBC	TBC	●Pre-Register
19 Sep 2027	08 Oct 2027	TBC	TBC	●Pre-Register

* The itinerary and hotels featured are based on 2026 tour departures and may be subject to change. Any questions, 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. Please note, there are a further 70 metal grated steps down to the underground river level where we catch the boats. To return you can walk up the steps or catch the 3 sets of elevators which will take you all the way back up to the top. The gallery tour involves straight forward walking and naturally also includes several sets of steps. Should you wish to access the Salle Du Grand Dome it involves 150 steps going up and 150 steps going down. You will already be deep inside this astounding cave so you may choose not to add these extra steps to what is already and unbelievable experience.

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. ATIA Accreditation No: A11341. CATO Accreditation No. 69562707