



A Tale of Three Cities

Adventures in France and England

May 18 - 27, 2012

This tour is truly a tale of three cities: Nice, Paris and London. And to continue plagiarizing Mr. Dickens – it is the best of times (to travel to Europe) and the worst of times (to stay at home). Seriously, our trip seeks to compare and contrast three very different European cities, set in three very different regions. We will have time in each to explore the city itself and to see some of the surrounding countryside.

We start on the French Riviera whose legendary beauty has beckoned visitors for centuries. Artists have been inspired by its brilliant light and deep shadows, poets and writers have been moved to pen great works and holidaymakers from the very rich and famous to everyday travelers have come to bask in the sunshine and glamour that this coastline offers.

Taking advantage of the modern trend to inexpensive inter-European air travel, we save time and money by flying from Nice to Paris. From the heady allure of the Left Bank to the majestic sweep of the grand boulevards, the City of Light will be ours to explore. Our included city tour will take in the gothic splendor of Notre Dame, the soaring Tour Eiffel, the Arc de Triomphe, and the unparalleled Louvre Museum. There will also be free time to savor the sights and sounds of the city.

With the new high-speed rail line through the Channel Tunnel, the journey from Paris takes under three hours to reach the heart of London. Here, in Dickens' home town, we explore the city and visit Hampton Court Palace, idyllically located on the banks of the River Thames, and the scene of much of Henry VIII's notorious carousing.

Come carouse with us this spring on *A Tale of Three Cities*.



Nice - the Promenade des Anglais



The Eiffel Tower

The cost of this itinerary, per person, double occupancy is:

Washington, Dulles departure:	\$3490
Land only (no airfare included):	\$2580
Single supplement:	\$570

The following services are included:

- Airfare:** Round trip air from Washington Dulles to Nice, returning from London. One way air from Nice to Paris. All airport taxes and customs charges included.
- Hotels:** 8 nights accommodation in superior tourist class hotels. All hotel taxes and service charges included.
- Coaching:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
- Meals:** Breakfast daily, 3 dinners.
- Guides:** Fully qualified Discover Europe tour guide throughout. Local guides for half-days in Paris & Versailles.
- Trains:** Eurostar tickets from Paris to London.
- Entrances:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.
- Insurance:** Complete travel insurance incl. cancellation coverage.





Friday, May 18th. Evening departure from Washington, Dulles Airport aboard British Airways' overnight service to London. **Overnight: Flight**

Saturday, May 19th. Morning arrival at London Heathrow where you connect with British Airways' onward service to Nice. Your arrival in Nice will be met for the transfer to your city center hotel. After checking in there will be time to unpack, relax and begin exploring the neighborhood. Dinner is included this evening. **(D)** **Overnight: Nice**

Sunday, May 20th. Brilliant Mediterranean sun strikes the sparkling city of Nice, its palm-lined Promenade des Anglais, and the lovely old Belle Epoque architecture, superbly set on the Bay of Angels. The lively Old City is suffused in rich tones of ochre and sienna, its pedestrian zone a tantalizing mix of local shops, glorious foods, and designer clothing. Our morning driving tour takes us past the fabulous, green-domed Negresco; the Excelsior Regina; the exotic garden of Cimiez; and the Franciscan monastery. Choose a local café for lunch, spend the afternoon on the beach, or wander at leisure for the rest of the day through the city's winding thoroughfares. **(B)** **Overnight: Nice**

Monday, May 21st. This morning we depart for the enchanting, unspoiled medieval village of Eze, perched over the Mediterranean and crowned with the ruins of a 12th-century fortified castle. Continuing on to Monte-Carlo, we take a walking tour of Monaco, including a visit to the Prince's palace. The afternoon is free to explore the heart of Monte-Carlo; you can visit Jaques Cousteau's aquarium, the 1863 Casino, and the Hotel de Paris. We'll return to Nice late in the afternoon; those who wish to remain at the Casino can easily return by train. **(B)** **Overnight: Nice**

Tuesday, May 22nd. This morning we transfer back to Nice Airport for the short flight to Paris, where we'll be met by a local guide who'll show us one of the most beautiful cities in the western world. From the meandering Seine, to the gothic splendor of Notre-Dame, to the delicate filigree of the Eiffel Tower, Paris comes to life in a swirl of superlatives. We'll explore the celestial heights of Sacré-Coeur, the wide boulevards of the Champs-Élysées, and the giddy majesty of the Arc de Triomphe. Our tour ends at the Louvre, where our guide introduces us to the masterpieces within. Tonight we'll sample one of the city's many superb restaurants. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Paris**



The "perched" village of Eze

Wednesday, May 23rd. Our morning begins with a short drive out of the city, and back in time, to the 17th century and the glory days of King Louis XIV. Versailles, the ultimate royal residence, occupied the talents of some of the great artists of the day, and it is a masterpiece of extravagance. We'll visit the royal apartments with a local guide, and then continue our exploration with a tour of Andre Le Notre's superb gardens, occupying some 247 acres, and the Queen's hamlet, where Marie Antoinette and her court play-acted at rural life. In the afternoon we'll return to the city where the rest of the day is free. **(B)** **Overnight: Paris**

Thursday, May 24th. A free day in Paris. Begin your day with a morning walk along the Seine, heading toward Place St. Michel near the Pont Neuf. You may wish to explore the Ile de la Cite, the beautiful island that houses Notre Dame, explore the narrow, winding walking streets in the vicinity, or stroll onto the Isle St. Louis where posh shops line the central street of this tiny jewel (home to the irresistible ice cream at Bertillon!). Check out the Musée d'Orsay, the medieval Cluny, or Rodin's museum. From superb museums to upscale shopping to café sampling, your day in Paris will fly by. **(B)** **Overnight: Paris**

Friday, May 25th. This morning we transfer to the Gare du Nord, where we board to high-speed Eurostar train that whisks us to London through the Channel Tunnel in under 3 hours. Our arrival at London St. Pancras station will be met for a panoramic tour of the city. We'll start in the City of Westminster where our guide introduces us to 1,000 years of English history. Continuing on, we'll view many of London's major monuments, from the Albert Memorial to St. Paul's Cathedral to Trafalgar Square, touring the city from Chelsea to Bloomsbury. This evening you're free to make your own plans: sample one of London's great restaurants or sip a quiet pint in a neighborhood pub, or perhaps an evening at the theater. **(B)** **Overnight: London**



Hampton Court Palace

Saturday, May 26th. We'll spend the morning at Hampton Court today, repository of 500 years of royal history, where 60 acres of spectacular riverside gardens include the world-famous Maze. After free time for lunch, we'll return to central London in the mid-afternoon, where you'll have time for some last-minute shopping before we meet up for a farewell dinner at the hotel. **(B, D)** **Overnight: London**

Sunday, May 27th. Morning transport to Heathrow Airport for your returning British Airways flight to Washington Dulles. **(B)**

Key to included meals: B - breakfast, L - lunch, D - dinner

