



## Paris, Provence and the Languedoc

June 4th - 15th, 2003

Come and visit a country that has everything! Stunning countryside full of contrasts, the finest food and wine, beautiful cities, and a cultural heritage that stretches from the prehistoric to the avant-garde. Whether you're a first-time traveler to France, or have visited many times before, this trip will offer you something new. In addition to the well-loved sights of Paris and the beauty of Provence, we'll travel to the Languedoc in south-western France, a region whose history and natural beauties have long been a well-kept secret.

We begin in Paris and give ourselves a chance to get reacquainted with its splendors on our city sightseeing tour and, for those who wish, a jaunt out to see the Sun King's palace at Versailles. From our four-star hotel tucked in behind the Madeleine, we'll explore the city before our journey by high-speed rail to the vineyards and lavender fields of the south.

The citadel of Carcassonne is our base for discovering the Languedoc, the region the Romans first settled when they came to Gaul over 2000 years ago. In the Middle Ages it was a separate place, with its own language and troubadour traditions that owed nothing to Paris and the French court. It was also a hotbed of heresy, as the ruins of Cathar castles dotted around the region still attest. As well as these, and the vineyards that stretch for miles all around, we'll visit the medieval towns of Albi and Pezenas with their strong artistic associations.

Next we turn to Provence, a magnet for painters from Van Gogh to Matisse, a region that never loses its power to enliven and invigorate the traveler with its fragrant lavender fields and its clear, bright light. Avignon will be our base; we'll explore the Roman city of Arles with its superb Roman amphitheatre, the colossal aqueduct, the Pont du Gard, and the sophisticated city of Aix-en-Provence.

And then down to the sea, for a final couple of nights on the shores of the Mediterranean at Nice. The British and Russian aristocracy made this their winter playground in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and Nice still exudes an air of elegance.

Join Chris Hoodith, and perhaps other familiar faces, in France this June and discover this country's rich culture on an unforgettable journey.



The Eiffel Tower



Avignon

The cost of this itinerary, per person, double occupancy is: **\$3220**

Land only (no airfare included): **\$2570**  
The single supplement is **\$550**

This includes the following services:

- i) Round trip airfare on British Airways from Boston, New York or Newark, to Paris and from Nice, via London, inc. all airport taxes and customs fees.
- ii) 10 nights' accommodation in first-class hotels, double occupancy, all rooms with private facilities.
- iii) 10 continental or buffet breakfasts.
- iv) 7 table d'hote dinners, 3 courses + coffee.
- v) 1 lunch at Le Train Bleu, set menu.
- vi) All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- vii) 1st class train tickets from Paris to Montpellier
- viii) All entrance fees to sites featured in the itinerary.
- ix) Services of *Discover Europe* tour leader Chris Hoodith.
- x) Portage of one suitcase per person.
- xi) Fully-comprehensive travel insurance, inc. cancellation coverage.
- xii) All hotel taxes & service charges.

*Please note:* Airfares are available from many other US departure cities, please enquire for details.

This itinerary is based upon using the following hotels:

<b>Paris</b>	Hotel Bedford
<b>Carcassonne</b>	Hotel le Donjon
<b>Avignon</b>	Hotel Cloitre Saint-Louis
<b>Nice</b>	Hotel Boscolo Park

*Discover Europe reserves the right to substitute hotels of equal or superior standard should the above prove unavailable at time of booking.*



**Day 01, Wednesday 4th June.** Depart US for Paris.

**Overnight: Plane**

**Day 02, Thursday 5th June.** You will be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel in central Paris, just around the corner from the Madeleine. After an early afternoon walk around the neighbourhood, the afternoon is free to rest or explore before our welcome dinner party. **(D)**

**Overnight: Paris**

**Day 03, Friday 6th June.** This morning our panoramic tour will take in all of Paris' most famous sights in the company of a local guide: the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Notre Dame and the many lovely bridges across the Seine. The afternoon and evening are free: come with Chris to the Musee D'Orsay, revisit the Louvre or climb Montmartre to see the Basilica of Sacre Coeur and the whole of Paris spread out below you. For dinner, Paris can offer tiny local bistros, 3-starred Michelin restaurants and everything in between. **(B)**

**Overnight: Paris**

**Day 04, Saturday 7th June.** We will pack up and set off for a morning visit to Versailles, Louis XIV's palace and court, a short drive from Paris. After touring

the stunning array of Royal apartments, we'll take a stroll in the beautiful, fountain-filled gardens. Our coach will drop us at the Gare de Lyon where we'll lunch in Le Train Bleu, the station's buffet and the last word in elegant, Belle Epoque design. Then we board our TGV express train south to Beziers, from where our local coach will drive us to the medieval city of Carcassonne, our home for the next few days. Dinner at our hotel this evening. **(B, L, D)**

**Overnight: Carcassonne**

**Day 05, Sunday 8th June.** This morning we will visit the Cathedral town of Albi on the River Tarn. We'll take in the magnificent 13<sup>th</sup> Century Cathedrale-de-Ste-Cecile which dwarfs the town before visiting the Musee Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec; the artist was born here, and the museum houses the most complete collection of his work, and well as canvasses by Matisse and Dufy. After free time for lunch in Albi, we'll return to Carcassonne via Minervois and taste some of the wines for which the Languedoc-Roussillon region is renowned. This evening, dinner at a local restaurant. **(B, D)**

**Overnight: Carcassonne**

**Day 06, Monday 9th June.** We'll give ourselves time this morning to explore some of the narrow streets and alleyways of Carcassonne, with its Medieval fortress and superb Gothic/Romanesque church before setting off for Narbonne, where we will explore the Horreum – a warren of granaries and underground storehouses dating from the city's Roman era. After a stroll round the elegant shops of its medieval quarter, we'll leave Narbonne, calling at the serene cloisters of the ruined Cistercian Abbey of Fontfroide en route back to Carcassonne for a free evening. **(B)**

**Overnight: Carcassonne**

**Day 07, Tuesday 10th June.** This morning we turn east to Provence; we'll pause at Pezenas, a town set in a sea of vines, once the local seat of government in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, where Moliere performed his comedies before taking them to court. After lunch and a chance to browse the local craft shops, we'll continue to Avignon, just across the Rhone. **(B, D)**

**Overnight: Avignon**

**Day 08, Wednesday 11th June.** We'll get to know Avignon well this morning, with a gentle walking tour of this fine, walled city: we will visit the massive Palais des Papes – a rival Papal Court to Rome's in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century – with its wonderful Medieval art collection, the Cathedrale de Notre Dame, the Place d'Horloge and, of course, Avignon's famous bridge, the Pont St-Benezet. Down time this afternoon – sit in a café and watch Avignon society stroll by, or take in some 20<sup>th</sup> Century French art at the Musee Calvet. A free evening to sample one of the town's many restaurants. **(B)**

**Overnight: Avignon**

**Day 09, Thursday 12th June.** This morning, we will visit the 2000-year-old Pont du Gard, the aqueduct the Romans built to bring water from Uzès to Nîmes, and the highest bridge they built anywhere. Three tiers of arches span the river Gard with breathtaking elegance; for the bold, the views from the top are even more impressive. Then we'll head to Arles to visit its wonderfully preserved Roman arena (we might even catch a bullfight!) and admire the ochre-coloured buildings Van Gogh painted. We return to Avignon for dinner at a local restaurant. **(B, D)**

**Overnight: Avignon**

**Day 10, Friday 13th June.** We leave Provence this morning, driving south and east to the Cote d'Azur; en route we'll pause at Aix en Provence, the "city of a thousand fountains" where we'll visit the Atelier Paul Cezanne – the studio kept just as it was when he died in 1906. Then on to the elegance and sophistication of Nice, the Cote d'Azur's principal resort and a playground for Europe's aristocracy since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Tonight we'll dine at our hotel. **(B, D)**

**Overnight: Nice**

**Day 11, Saturday 14th June.** To start the day, we'll visit the Musee Matisse – the artist spent a number of years here and the museum has many celebrated paintings. After that we're on our own to explore the Italianate Old Town, the Musee Chagall, the exotic Russian Orthodox church, or just to sip a Kir on the promenade des Anglais and watch the world go by. Provençal specialities at a local restaurant tonight will bring our French adventure to a close. **(B, D)**

**Overnight: Nice**

**Day 12, Sunday 15th June.**

Transfers to Nice Airport this morning to make connections to Paris and the United States – unless you'd like to linger, that is, in which case we'd be happy to make arrangements for you to stay. **(B)**

**Overnight: Home**

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

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