

U.S Office
504 West Mission Avenue, Suite
204
Escondido, California 92025
Toll free: (800) 227-1393
Phone: (760) 735-6770
Fax: (760) 735-6495



U.K. Office
311 Fulham Palace Road
London, SW6 6TQ
Tel: 020-7736-6211

Ireland Office
Donegal Airport, Carrickfinn
Kincasslagh, Co Donegal
Tel: 07495-48891

IN QUEST OF... The Da Vinci Code

A suggested travel program for groups, small groups or individuals who are enthralled by the popular book and the movie, "The Da Vinci Code."

DAY ONE: PARIS. When we arrive at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris, we will be met and taken to our hotel, on the Left Bank. (Three, four or five star versions for groups or individuals – hotels will vary.) We check in here for a 3-night stay. This evening we will have a panoramic tour of the City of Lights by motor coach including a drive along the Champs Elysee and by boat cruise along the Seine. After the tour, if you like, you can make your way to the world famous Ritz Hotel where Robert Langdon stayed, and enjoy an atmospheric nightcap.

DAY TWO: PARIS. It all starts at the Louvre, and that is precisely where we are headed this morning for a guided tour. Unlike Langdon and Sophie, we won't discover a body, but we will tour the Devon Wing and other areas of this world famous museum to see the works of Leonardo Da Vinci and other artists as well. We will be sure to see the *Mona Lisa*, the androgynous *St-John the Baptist* and the *Virgin of the Rocks*.

This afternoon we will have a guided tour of other Da Vinci Code sites. We will travel past the Gare Saint-Lazare, and through the Bois de Boulogne as Neveu and Langdon did, to Roland Garros Stadium, home of the French Open. It is near here that the fictional Bank of Zurich was supposedly located. Then we will visit the Church of Saint-Sulpice, just as Silas did in his search for the key to the Holy Grail.

DAY THREE: PARIS. This morning we leave Paris for a visit to Chateau Villette where Sir Leigh Teabing was in residence. (*Available for groups only. Garden tour may be available for individuals. A trip to Versailles can be included for groups and individuals*) Located just eight miles outside the city, the Chateau is available for private rentals. One of the most significant historical chateaux in France, Villette is both simple and sumptuous, with a great octagonal salon in white and blue, an elegant dining room with the original 17th Century carved stone buffet, and a limestone entry hall in the classicism of the 17th Century.

The 185+ acres of garden was designed by Le Notre and spreads out behind the chateau in the central axis, with two rectangular lakes filled with swans, ducks, birds and fish. The spectacular cascade and fountain resembles the one at Louis XIV's Chateau Marly.

Remainder of the day at leisure to continue sightseeing in the city.

DAY FOUR: PARIS/LONDON. We won't be able to go by Sir Teabing's private jet; instead we will travel to Gare du Nord this morning after breakfast to board the Eurostar train, popularly known as "The Chunnel". The high-speed train will take us under the English Channel to London. The trip takes only two hours and forty minutes at speeds up to 130 miles per hour! When we reach London, we will be met at Waterloo Station and taken on a panoramic tour of the city before checking in to our hotel for three nights.

Evening at leisure to enjoy the city.

DAY FIVE: LONDON. A full day's tour devoted to Da Vinci Code sites. We start with a trip down Fleet Street to the Knights of the Templar fortress. The Temple Church was built by the Knights in the 12th century. By the 14th century, having grown wealthy with royal gifts, they were then charged with heresy, blasphemy and sodomy. They were stripped of their wealth and sent to the Tower of London to die. The church is most famous for its circular nave, "The Round". This is where the hunt for the Holy Grail really begins. Next we visit St. James Park, a beautiful green park bordered by the Palace of Westminster, Houses of Parliament, St. James's Palace and Buckingham Palace. Here we will witness the colorful Horse Guards' Parade.

We pass by King's College, where Brown described an octagonal chamber with an enormous round table suitable for King Arthur and his knights, and home of the Research Institute in Systematic Theology. The actual Department of Theology and Religious Studies is in the King's College School of Humanities. Here Langdon and Neveu look for the meaning of the clue "In London lies a knight and a pope interred". We continue on for a visit to Westminster Abbey, burial place of Sir Issac Newton. This is where the identity of "the teacher" was revealed. We will see the tombs of many of England's monarchs who are buried here. We will also see the Cloisters, the Chapter House, a stunning octagonal room, and the Poets' Corner.

DAY SIX: LONDON. A day at leisure to continue sightseeing in London. Perhaps a visit to the Sherlock Holmes museum on Baker Street, or any one of the many fine major museums in the city, including the Victoria and Albert, the Tate or the British Museum. A cruise along the Thames is always nice, and a visit to the Tower of London, where the Beefeater Guards spin their tales and the Crown Jewels are on display, is almost a must. The offices of Opus Dei, of course, are not open to the public. They are located on the northwest corner of Kensington Gardens should you want a peek outside.

DAY SEVEN: EDINBURGH. We are transferred to King's Cross station to board our first class train to Edinburgh. The trip will take about five hours. When we arrive we will be met and taken for a drive along the Royal Mile and stop for a visit of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the Queen's official city residence in Scotland and the former home of Mary, Queen of Scots.

After our visit we will check in to our hotel for two nights.

DAY EIGHT: EDINBURGH. This morning we begin with a visit to Rosslyn Chapel in the little village of Roslin just outside Edinburgh. Rosslyn Chapel is Scotland's most famous Templar Temple and the place where many believe the Holy Grail is buried. Brown wrote of a subterranean structure beneath the chapel with no apparent entrance or exit that the Rosslyn Trust designated as a sacred site in which excavation is forbidden.

We spend the remainder of the day visiting other sites in Edinburgh including a visit to the famous castle.

DAY NINE: DEPARTURE. A private transfer to the airport in time for our flight home. If you are not yet ready to return home, consider an extension to Italy with a stop in Milan to see "The Last Supper" and a stay in Rome to visit the Vatican and other sites in Dan Brown's *Angel's and Demon's* book. Customized extensions to Italy available on request from IQOTC.

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