

A Custom Designed Itinerary to

France

By

IN QUEST OF THE CLASSICS

Ref: 505252

DAY 1: PARIS. Upon arrival at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport, you are met and privately transferred to your hotel, the **Raphael Hotel**, where 3 nights are reserved. The Raphael is located in one of the most elegant districts in Paris only meters from the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs Elysees. The hotel combines opulence with discretion and is world renowned for its service.



DAY 2 & DAY 3: PARIS. Two full days at leisure to enjoy Paris and its many sights. Paris offers a wide variety of things to do. We suggest one or two highlight tours to acquaint



yourself with the major sites: Notre Dame Cathedral, the Champs Elysées, the Arc de Triomphe, Invalides where you'll see Napoleon's Tomb, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre and Sacré Coeur where you'll see artists at work in nearby Place du Tertre. After your highlight tour (which can be included) you can easily return by metro and spend more time at places that interest you. The Musée d'Orsay, housing the Impressionist collection and the Louvre are the most famous museums in Paris, but there are many others. A ride on the Bateaux Mouches on

the Seine River, with or without dinner, is popular. You can also take a canal ride through lesser-known parts of Paris. Departures are from the Bastille, along the Canal St Martin to La Villette (must be reserved - ask your hotel for information).

From here you can take another short ride to Canal de l'Ourcq, where you can visit the newest museum at Cite de la Musique, featuring 4500 musical instruments! Parc de la Villette also hosts the interactive science museum at Cite des Sciences and the Geode, a 180-degree cinema. Museum Jacquemart-Andre, home of banker and art collectors Edouard-Francois Andre and his wife Nelly Jacquemart, features their extensive art collection and has been wonderfully renovated.



DAY 4: PARIS/CAMBREMER. Today you will collect your car rental at the Europcar office located at 2 Avenue de la Porte de Saint Cloud (short cab ride from your hotel) where you will collect your rental car. This location is near the highway that goes to Normandy. Please ask for directions at the rental desk. As you arrive in the small town of Cambremer, check into

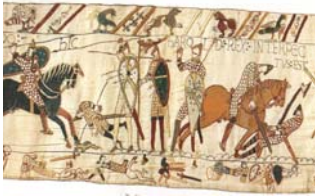
Chateau Les Bruyeres, a delightful 19th century castle, in the heart of the Normandy countryside, which once inspired the famous writer Marcel Proust. Two nights are reserved here.



DAY 5: LOCAL TOURING. A full day to explore the local sights. Normandy appears as a small province but it actually has four distinct regions: the Cotentin Peninsula in the northwest; the Bessin, which is the area between Bayeux and the coast; the Pays d'Auge, a rich farmland south of Caen; and the Pays de Caux, a triangle formed by Dieppe, Rouen and Le Havre. You will not have time to see it all, but here are a few suggestions:

- Visit the famous Landing Beaches, including Omaha Beach and its very moving American cemetery.

- Bayeux, with its old town (the only one close to the coast not scarred by the war), its Cathedral and mostly its Tapestry, depicting the Norman Conquest of England.



- Cheese tasting in the farms of Pays d'Auge (this is where Camembert and Pont L'Eveque cheese are made and they truly are at their best before traveling).

- Lunch in Trouville, the oldest resort on this coast, and still a fishing town.

As lively as Deauville and much more genuine. Visit the Peace Memorial Museum in Caen.

DAY 6: CAMBREMER/ST SYMPHORIEN LE CHATEAU. We suggest spending more time exploring Normandy this morning before traveling southeast towards Chartres, and the village of St Symphorien le Chateau, where you will check into **Chateau d'Esclimont** for two nights. Built in 1543 for the Archeveque of Tours, it still stands today as the epitome of a French chateau, surrounded by its moats and ponds.

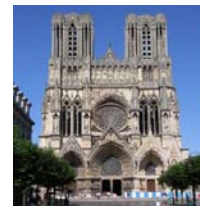


DAY 7: CHARTRES. Today we suggest spending the day visiting the magnificent cathedral of Chartres and its old town, as well as enjoying the grounds of your own chateau, weather allowing.

DAY 8: CHARTRES/REIMS. Continue traveling east and north into the Champagne area. You may want to stop in the artist village of Barbizon for lunch. Or travel straight to Epernay, in order to have more time to do some Champagne cellar visits. From Epernay, drive to Reims and check into **Boyer Les Crayeres** for two nights. Boyer Les Crayeres is a deluxe traditional hotel set in a turn of the century residence, where you'll find comfort and refinement. Boyer les Crayeres also features a gourmet restaurant, one of the best in France and we have reserved a table for you tonight.



DAY 9: REIMS. A full day to visit Reims, with its gothic style cathedral, begun in 1211, and one of the most important in France. It is the place where the French kings were crowned. It was almost totally destroyed during the war and has been skillfully restored with most of the cost being underwritten by the Rockefeller Foundation. You can visit some champagne cellars here. One can also visit the Surrender Room, which was General Dwight Eisenhower's war room and where Germany officially capitulated on May 7, 1945. It is today a museum, open to the public.



DAY 10: REIMS/VOUGEOT. This morning you depart Reims and travel south into Burgundy. You may want to stop in Dijon to visit the old town and the Duke's Palace. Arrive in Vougeot and check into **Chateau de Gilly** for two nights. the Chateau de Gilly is a deluxe hotel set in a converted Cistercian Abbey, surrounded by some of the most famous vineyards in the world.



DAY 11: LOCAL TOURING. A full day to visit Burgundy vineyards and the lovely town of Beaune. You must visit the Hotel Dieu in Beaune with its splendid courtyard. Formerly a medieval hospital, it was used as such until 1971. The medieval decorations and furnishings are on display in the original infirmary and in the museum where you can see "The Last Judgment" by Roger Van der Weyden, a medieval Flemish painter. If you're interested in the history of wine making in Burgundy, visit The Museum of Wine, set in the Mansion of the Dukes of Burgundy. This afternoon, drive along the Cote de Beaune region, one of the most valuable tracts of land in the world! Stop at Savigny-les-Baune to visit the Chateau with its cellar, stables and unusual motorcycle museum! For great wine tasting, stop in at the 14th century cellars of the Chateau Pommard.



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DAY 12: VOUGEOT/BAGNOLS. Today you will travel the short distance into the Maconnais and Beaujolais region. Check in for two nights at the spectacular **Chateau de Bagnols**, a deluxe hotel in a medieval castle dating from 1300. It is lavishly decorated with medieval, Renaissance and 18th century interiors, reflecting the chateau's three great historic periods. It features meticulously restored wood and stone surfaces, matching antiques, beautiful period marble baths and a warm and wonderful atmosphere. A truly superb and memorable hotel!



DAY 13: LOCAL TOURING. The Beaujolais region features such famous wines as Saint-Amour, Julienas, Moulin-a-Vent and Brouilly. In the Macon region, the most famous wine is Pouilly-Fuisse, a rich, full-bodied white wine. In Ige itself, you can visit the former Romanesque church, which was transformed into a cellar and wine museum. At the "cave cooperative", where English is spoken, you can taste the local production of Burgundy and Macon wines. The museum is only open for visits on Saturday afternoon and Sundays (please double check before going!). This could also be done on your way down to Chateau Bagnols on Saturday. You may want to drive to Lyon today, visit the Old Town and enjoy lunch at one of the famous "bouchons" (local bistros).

DAY 14: BAGNOLS/AVIGNON. Travel into Provence and the lovely town of Avignon. Here you will check into **Hotel de la Mirande**, for 2 nights. Avignon, known primarily for its Palace of the Popes, is also a town full of cafes, restaurants, shops, boutiques and entertainers. After visiting the Palace, take a stroll through this delightful town. Another well-known Avignon site is the St. Benezet Bridge, made famous by the children's song. Nearby you'll see Pont du Gard, a perfectly preserved Roman aqueduct that is an architectural marvel.



DAY 15: LOCAL TOURING. A full day to enjoy some of the Provence sights. You will only have time to do some of this, but here are some suggestions:

- **Arles** was one of Julius Caesar's favorite towns and is still today a very lively authentic southern town. Here you'll want to see the Arenas (still in use 20 centuries later!) and the Roman Theatre as well as the St Trophime Church, a great example of Provençal Roman architecture. A special ticket can be purchased to visit all museums and sites, at great savings. During the summer, bullfights are held at the Arenas with bulls raised in nearby Camargue, a land of natural beauty. In late June and early July, the Arles Festival features traditional parades and folklore.



- **Les Baux de Provence**, a breathtaking site with a ruined castle on top of a hill, overlooking olive groves and the Alpilles Mountains. The medieval village is still very alive with many shops and restaurants. Make sure to wear comfortable shoes. However during the height of the summer and during any holiday season it is extremely crowded.

- **L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue**, a Provencal Venice on the Sorgue River, known as the antique center of Provence. A large antique market is held on Sunday, but there are also a number of permanent shops in town.

- **Chateauneuf-du-Pape**, a very attractive village that gave the famous wine its name. Here guests could enjoy a wine tasting in one of the ancient cellars.

DAY 16: AVIGNON/ ST TROPEZ. Today you will travel to St. Tropez. You may want to make a stop in Aix-en-Provence on the way. Aix-en-Provence, once a Roman spa it is better known today as the most sophisticated town around. Its elegant architecture, many fountains and romantic streets make it another delightful walking town. Walk along the lovely tree-lined Cours Mirabeau, a famous boulevard with many cafes, amongst them "Les Deux Garçons", a local institution. Here you may visit the studio of native son Paul Cezanne, which still looks the way it did when he was alive. Upon arrival in St Tropez, check into **Residence de la Pinede**, a deluxe hotel with its own private beach, overlooking the Citadel and the St Tropez Peninsula, for two nights.



DAY 17 & DAY 18: AT LEISURE. Two full days to relax.

DAY 19: DEPART. Return your car rental at the Nice airport in time for your flight home.

Note: This is a sample itinerary.

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