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From
$13,014 USD

Single Room
$16,553 USD

Twin Room
$13,014 USD

Prices valid until
30th December 2024

24 days
Duration

France
Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

La Belle France small group escorted history tours for seniors

Apr 01 2024 to Apr 24 2024

A tour of France

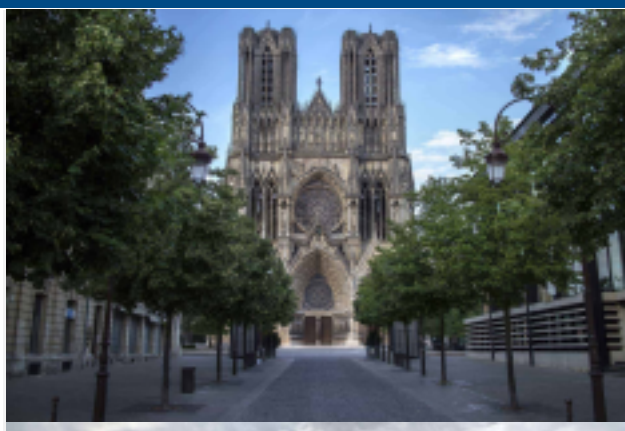
Odyssey offers easy, convenient, and relaxed escorted small group tours across Western Europe and beyond. We explore France's fairy-tale natural beauty, its ancient Roman, and Imperial heritage, its World Heritage Sites, and world famous cities, all with some truly spectacular scenery along the way. This and more is all waiting to be explored on one of Odyssey's small group tours of France, designed for the senior

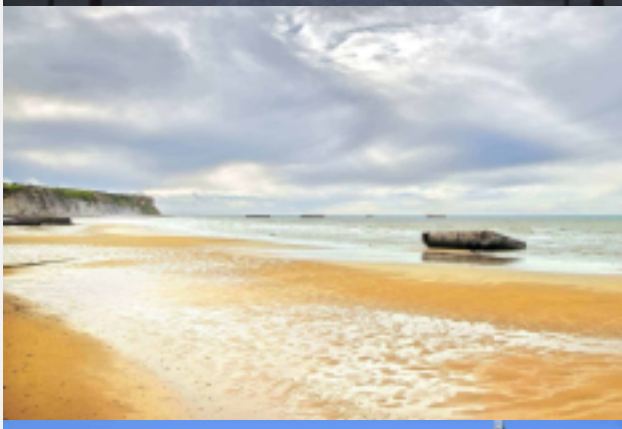


traveller, and led by experienced, and enthusiastic like minded people.

La Belle France is a small group escorted history tours for mature and senior travellers. The tour explores some of the greatest regions with beautiful scenery and iconic landmarks of this country. From the Loire Valley, to Provence, Southern France to Normandy & Brittany with its standing stones and magical coast.

This 23-day small group tour of France travels east to west around the country. It caters for the mature couple or solo traveller. This small group tour visits nine key cities and towns where we stay for between 1 and 3 nights. We explore each region, learning from our expert local guides about the history and contemporary society. We also enjoy breaking bread in some great cafes and restaurants as we explore the regional cuisine.







La Belle France Small Group Tour

France is the largest country in Western Europe. It is bigger than Spain, Germany or Sweden. It lies on the western edge of the continent of Europe and shares borders with six adjacent countries: Belgium and Luxembourg to the north, Germany and Switzerland to the east, Italy to the southeast, and Spain to the southwest. This geographical position gives France several notable advantages. It is the crossroads of the European Union. It is also Europe's farm.

A large part of French life is lived outdoors, especially in towns and villages. On this small group tour, we experience the pavement life of French cities. You will see locals congregate in the village square to play petanque, drink wine or just chat as the evening approaches, instead of retreating inside their homes.

France Tour; Itinerary Highlights

Our fully escorted educational tour includes several culturally significant and extraordinarily picturesque regions and landscapes, including Provence and Chateuneuf du Pape. Our tour also takes in the

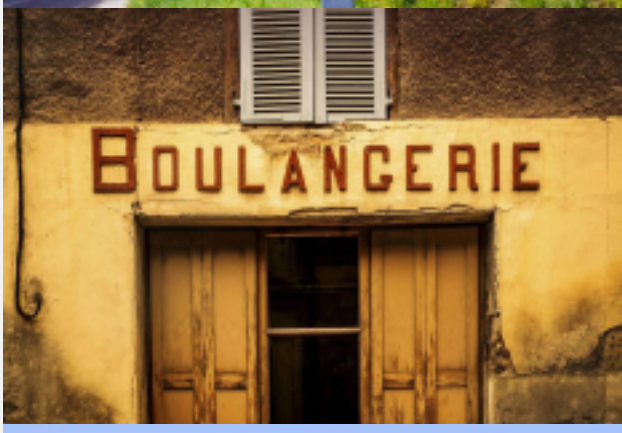
Champagne, Burgundy, and Bordeaux regions, where we sample wine and learn more about the tradition of wine-making.

Other highlights include a walking tour of La Rochelle, France's best preserved seaside town. We also visit the Loire Valley to see its many castles. Finally this small group tour of France heads to Bayeux where we spend 3 nights. Whilst here in Normandy we visit Mont St Michel and spend time up on the Normandy landing beaches with local guides.

This small group tour of France is one of some 12 programs offered as a learning program to study France and its cultural heritage.

If you're researching a trip to France, check out Odyssey's list of essential French places to visit!







Articles about France published by Odyssey Traveller

The following list of articles, represents some of the articles published by Odyssey Traveller for mature aged and senior travellers to maximise their knowledge and enjoyment of France when visiting;

- Exploring France by rail some tips.
- Ten of the best travel books on France
- Ten things to do in France when you visit
- Designing Paris
- Paris; leaders and landmarks
- Guillamot prevents the collapse of Paris
- The elegant arcades of Paris.
- Questions about France
- Studying Gargoyles and grotesques
- Around the world in six coffees

- Ten of the best French cookery books.
- Ten of the Best art galleries in Europe to visit.
- A guide on France for mature travellers

For all the articles published by Odyssey Traveller, please click through to this link

External articles to assist you plan your visit to France

- A guide to Alsace
- History of Alsace; Britannica.com
- Burgundy's climat; a UNSECO world heritage listing
- Avignon, the palace of Popes
- History of Avignon 15-18th century
- Exploring Chatres cathedral
- War of religion; France
- Published articles on French history.

Other Odyssey Tours

The small group tour La Belle France, is only one of many of the small group tours offered by Odyssey Traveller to France, you can view all the tours to France via this link.

To view the entire collection of tours to Europe click here offered to mature aged and Senior travellers each year.

For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book,







simply fill in the form on the right-hand side of this page.



Odyssey Traveller regularly offers tours designed for the active senior or mature traveller to enjoy in a small group holiday and learning environment. We also publish articles to provide more information to our loyal and prospective participants.

Alternatively, please call or send an email.

Tour Notes

- Itineraries may change if flight schedules, site availability, and other inclusions have to be amended prior to departure.

Highlights

1. Visit the Loire Valley and its castles.
2. Explore La Rochelle, France’s most preserved seaside town.
3. Experience the Normandy Landing Beaches.
4. Explore the Champagne, Burgundy, and Bordeaux regions.
5. Visit Provence and Chateuneuf du Pape.

Itinerary



Day 1

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Upon arrival in Paris we will come to the hotel individually. Tour begins with our welcome dinner.

(D)

Accommodation:

1 night at Relais Monceau or similar.

Day 2

Locations: Reims

Overview:

Today we board our coach for the Champagne Region and visit one of the local champagne cellars in Épernay. After free time for lunch, we travel to the city of Reims.

Dinner tonight will be in a local restaurant.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

2 nights at BW Hotel de la Paix or similar.

Day 3

Locations: Reims

Overview:

Reims, the centre of the Champagne Region, was the site of the coronation of the majority of the French kings. This morning we meet our local guide for a walking tour of the city, including a visit to the

magnificent Cathedral and the Surrender Museum.

After a free afternoon to explore the city, we attend a special champagne dinner.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

BW Hotel de la Paix or similar.

Day 4

Locations: Beaune

Overview:

En route to Beaune we will make 2 stops. The first, at Troyes, offers the opportunity to explore a delightful town with many well-preserved, half-timbered houses and 10 churches all remarkable for their stained-glass windows and exquisite sculptures. We continue with an afternoon visit to the hilltop town of Vézelay and its Basilica of St. Mary Magdalene – one of the largest Romanesque churches in France and only just shorter than Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. The Basilica is said to guard the remains of the “Sinner Saint” and was one of the departure points for the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Dinner tonight will be in the hotel.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

4 nights at Hotel Henry II or similar.

Day 5

Locations: Beaune

Overview:

After breakfast today we travel through the picturesque countryside to the village of Châteauneuf-en-Auxois. A guided tour of the castle will be followed by a regional lunch in a local restaurant.

In the afternoon we explore one of the great canals of France aboard a modern canal boat. The Burgundy Canal, opened in 1833, was the first navigable connection between Burgundy and the Paris basin. It leads

from St. Jean de Losne on the river Saône, past the city of Dijon to Migennes on the river Yonne and then on to the Seine. Our cruise will take us from Vandenesse to Pouilly, through several locks and the summit pound tunnel. Dinner tonight will be at own arrangements.

The grape plays an important role in this city and the surrounding regions. In fact, the annual wine auction at the Hospices de Beaune (Hôtel-Dieu) is considered by many wine experts to be the primary wine auction in France. The town is surrounded by an incredible collection of celebrated wine villages.

Burgundy is noted as the home of some classic dishes of the French cuisine such as coq au vin, oeufs meurette (eggs poached in red wine), and boeuf bourgignon. It is also famous for its escargots (snails).

(B,L)

Accommodation:

Hotel Henry II or similar.

Day 6

Locations: Beaune

Overview:

This morning our local guide will take us on a walking tour of Beaune including a visit to the magnificent Hôtel Dieu with its multi-coloured tiled roofs. The afternoon is free for our own exploration of the town.

Historically Beaune is intimately connected with the Dukes of Burgundy who endowed the city with many treasures. On a plain near the hills of the Côte d'Or, Beaune is a walled city, with about half the original battlements, with ramparts and moat still in excellent state of preservation.

Dinner will be in a local restaurant.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Henry II or similar.

Day 7

Locations: Beaune

Overview:

The city of Dijon is famed for mustard and gingerbread. The conundrum is that the gingerbread has no ginger. It is known as pain d'épice, or spice bread!

On our guided walking tour of Dijon, we will have the chance to taste both these products and to explore the historical monuments of the city. Lunch will be in a local restaurant and will feature some of the local popular dishes.

During the afternoon we will drive through some of the prestigious wine-producing villages and will enjoy a tutored wine-tasting experience. Dinner will be at own arrangements tonight.

(B,L)

Accommodation:

Hotel Henry II or similar.

Day 8

Locations: Beaune to Avignon

Overview:

Our drive south takes us via the Saône and Rhône Valleys to Avignon. On arrival we will have a guided walking tour of the city including a visit to the Palais des Papes. Our hotel, inside the city walls, will be the venue for our dinner tonight.

Avignon is considered amongst the greatest of Europe's walled cities. Always powerful, it reached its zenith during the time of the Babylonian captivity of the Popes (1309-1377).

(B,D)

Accommodation:

3 nights at Hotel Cloître St Louis or similar.

Day 9

Locations: Avignon

Overview:

During our next 2 days we have all-day excursions in Provence – a region where there are some of the best-preserved Roman remains in Europe.

On our first day our guide will take us to Orange to visit the 1st-century Triumphal Arch and Roman Theatre. Regarded as one of the finest and best-preserved in the entire Roman world, the theatre is the only one to have preserved a statue of the Emperor Augustus. We continue with a guided walk in the excavated town of Vaison-la-Romaine. A visit to one of the most famous vine cellars Chateauneuf-du-Pape for tasting French wine will complete our day. Dinner will be at the hotel tonight.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Cloître St Louis or similar.

Day 10

Locations: Avignon

Overview:

On Day 10 we continue our Roman theme with another all-day excursion – this time to Arles, the city situated on a low hill at the point where the Rhône River branches into 2. Here the famous Roman sites such as the Arena and the Amphitheatre are the focus for us. We will also see the famous Cathedral of St. Trophime with its magnificently carved 12th century doorway. Arles also has associations with Vincent Van Gogh, who spent about 15 months here during 1888-89. We continue the Van Gogh theme with an afternoon visit to St Rémy de Provence, where he was to paint some of his last works. We also visit

the ancient site of Glanum.

Dinner will be at our hotel with more regional dishes.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Cloître St Louis or similar.

Day 11

Locations: Avignon to Carcassonne

Overview:

En route to Carcassonne, we will make a stop at Beziers and Narbonne. The famed, fairy-tale city of Carcassonne is a spectacular walled town – in fact the largest in Europe with such intact walls. Its amazing collection of towers, drawbridges, and winding medieval cobbled streets ensures that it is regularly used as a film location.

Once we have checked in to our hotel in the city, there will be time to explore. Dinner tonight will be in a local restaurant.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

1 night at Hotel le Donjon or similar.

Day 12

Locations: Carcassonne to Bordeaux

Overview:

The day will begin with a morning guided walking tour of Carcassonne and its battlements, including the castle – an enormous structure surrounded by a dry moat and protected by a barbican. There will be free time in the city for lunch, after which we will rejoin our coach to travel to the elegant city of Bordeaux – centre of the famous wine region of that name. Dinner tonight will be at our hotel.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

3 nights at Quality Hotel Sainte Catherine or similar.

Day 13

Locations: Bordeaux

Overview:

A morning's guided walking tour of Bordeaux will include a visit to the Cathedral of Saint André. Here, in 1137, 15-year-old Eleanor of Aquitaine married the future Louis VII just a few months before she was to become Queen. After a free afternoon to explore the city, we will meet for a special dinner, out of the city in one of the famous wine châteaux.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Quality Hotel Sainte Catherine or similar.

Day 14

Locations: Bordeaux

Overview:

Today we travel to St. Emilion- one of the principal red wine areas of the Bordeaux Region. The town was named after an 8th-century monk who settled here, creating a hermitage carved into the rock of the town. As other monks arrived to join him and to make wine, the town became the centre of commercial wine production – a status it retains to this day. The UNESCO organisation has recognised the terroir of St. Emilion and given the town World Heritage status. St. Emilion wines are considered the most robust of those of the Bordeaux Region – they are described as being "generous, very coloured and reaching maturity more quickly than other red Bordeaux."

We will have time to explore the town including a visit to the great Underground Church. Lunch at own arrangements will be followed by a visit/tasting at one of the local châteaux.

We return to Bordeaux for dinner at a local restaurant in the city.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Quality hotel Sainte Catherine or similar.

Day 15

Locations: Bordeaux to La Rochelle

Overview:

This morning we leave Bordeaux to travel to La Rochelle via Cognac.

Cognac is the medieval town which bears the name of the region. Here, where the fabled nectar has been created since the 17th century, it is said that the very air one breathes is permeated by the heavy scent evaporating from oak casks held in storage – the “angels’ share!”

Our destination here is the world-famous Hennessey Cognac House where we will have a tour and tasting. Dinner tonight will be at a local restaurant in La Rochelle.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

3 nights at Novotel Centre or similar.

Day 16

Locations: La Rochelle

Overview:

La Rochelle is considered one of the most preserved towns in France. Its historic 17th and 18th century centre and waterfront were plucked from the clutches of developers in recent times and its streets freed of traffic for the benefit of pedestrians. The city was the principal port for trade with the French colonies in the Caribbean Antilles and Canada and many of the settlers to Canada came from these parts.

We begin our time here with a morning guided walking tour of the city to discover its heritage and sometimes turbulent history.

A free afternoon gives the chance for further exploration on our own. Dinner tonight will be at our hotel.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Novotel Centre or similar.

Day 17

Locations: La Rochelle

Overview:

After breakfast we set out on a day-long excursion to the Île de Ré, one of the islands which guard the entrance to the harbour of La Rochelle. Reached from the mainland by a 2.9km bridge, this magic place is an island of fishermen's villages and fine sandy beaches. Famed for its Mediterranean climate and its shellfish, it has been likened to a Greek island that has somehow drifted into the Atlantic. Lunch today is, of course, a restaurant seafood meal. Dinner tonight will be at own arrangements.

(B,L)

Accommodation:

Novotel Centre or similar.

Day 18

Locations: La Rochelle to Tours

Overview:

We leave La Rochelle in the morning and travel to the Loire Region.

Our first visit is to the exquisite Château des Dames (Castle of the Ladies) and its delightful gardens at Chenonceau. Built in 1513 by Katharine Briçonnet and successively embellished by Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Medici, Chenonceau has a rare collection of Flanders Tapestries from the 16th century as well as a glorious collection of paintings.

A short distance away, in Amboise, is the manor house of Clos Lucé – the last home of Leonardo da Vinci. During his time fighting in Italy, King François I became intrigued by the "New Art of Renaissance" and invited da Vinci to bring these ideas and to live near him in France. The Master was given the "Manoir du Clous" (Clos Lucé) near the Royal Castle of Amboise, as well as a generous pension. The king asked for nothing in return save the pleasure of listening to da Vinci converse.

We have the opportunity to visit the house and gardens of the great master and to see drawings and working models of some of his

creations. After our visit we continue to the city of Tours where we will spend the night and enjoy dinner in the hotel.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

1 night at Grand Hotel Univers or similar.

Day 19

Locations: Tours to St. Malo

Overview:

This morning we will have a walking tour of the city of Tours, including the St. Gatien Cathedral and the Musée du Compagnonnage (Museum of the Guilds).

Located between 2 rivers (the Loire and Cher), Tours is often referred to as “The Garden of France.” It is famous for its medieval district with delightful well-preserved, half-timbered buildings.

After free time for lunch we continue north to S.t Malo where we will check in to our hotel and then have dinner in a local restaurant.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel du Louvre or similar

Day 20

Locations: Bayeux

Overview:

This morning we leave St.Malo for Mont Saint Michel, where we meet our guide for a morning tour. We see the historic Abbey, and afterwards head continue to Bayeux. Needless to say, we enjoy a visit to the Bayeux Tapestry – actually an embroidery rather than a tapestry. The extraordinary object tells the story of the Conquest of England by William the Conqueror from the Norman point of view and gives an amazing insight into life in Norman France during the 11th century. We also see the local town Cathedral, Notre Dame de Bayeux. Later on, we

have dinner in a local restaurant.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Churchill Hotel or similar.

Day 21

Locations: Bayeux

Overview:

Today is dedicated to WWII and the Liberation of France by the Allies in 1944.

We tour the Landing Beaches, visit the Memorial Cemeteries of Bayeux (the final resting place of a number of Australians and New Zealanders), La Cambe (the German Cemetery), the special D-Day Museum, and the remains of the Mulberry Harbour at Arromanches.

A visit to Normandy would not be complete without a tasting of the local specialty of Calvados, which we will enjoy at one of the local orchards. Dinner tonight will again be at a local restaurant with more local dishes.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Churchill Hotel or similar.

Day 22

Locations: Bayeau to Paris

Overview:

En route today we will make a stop at the city of Rouen.

It has been said of Rouen that the city has enough venerable buildings of all description to quench even the greatest historical thirst. We pause here for a brief time to explore.

You may like to visit the “Monet Cathedral” – the subject of so many of his paintings – and the modern, striking Joan of Arc Church in the old

market square.

Our arrival in Paris will be in the late afternoon and our farewell dinner will be in a local restaurant.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

1 night at Relais Monceau or similar.

Day 23

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Our tour ends after breakfast.

(B)

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 22 nights of hotel accommodation.
- 22 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 19 dinners.
- Transport in comfortable and modern coaches.
- All excursions, entrance fees, and local guides.
- Gratuities and necessary tips.
- Services of Odyssey Program Leader for the duration of tour.
- Detailed information booklet.

What's not included in our Tour

- International airfares and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls and laundry.
- Porterage.

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.