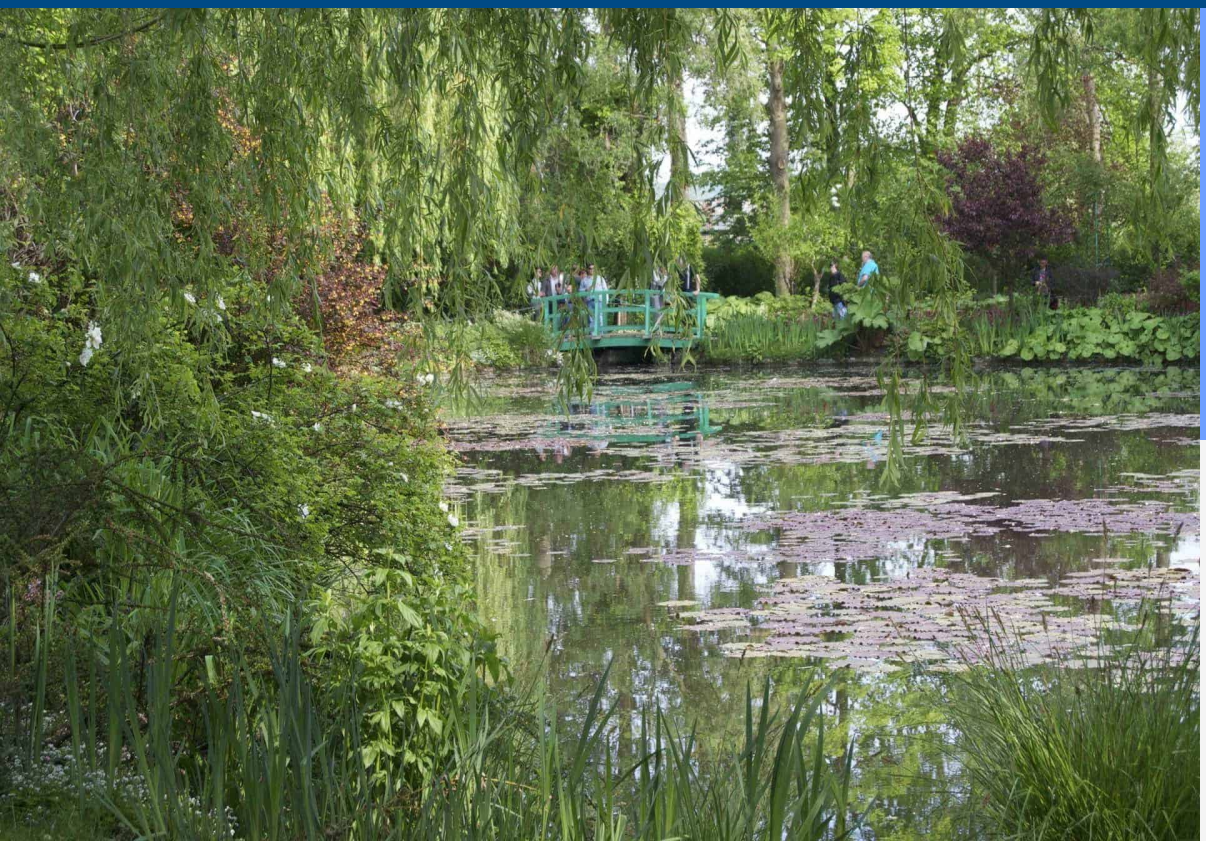
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25 days
Duration

France, Italy
Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

# Italy and France, history of gardens small group escorted tour

May 20 2024 to Jun 13 2024



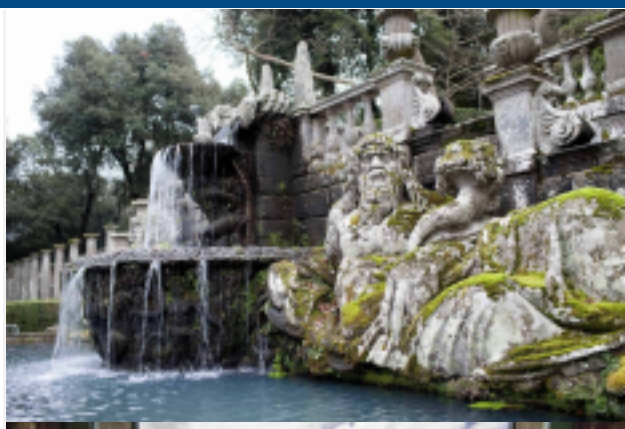

## History of Italian and French gardens

Odyssey offers easy, convenient, and relaxed escorted small group tours across Western Europe and beyond including France and Italy. We explore both Italy and 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

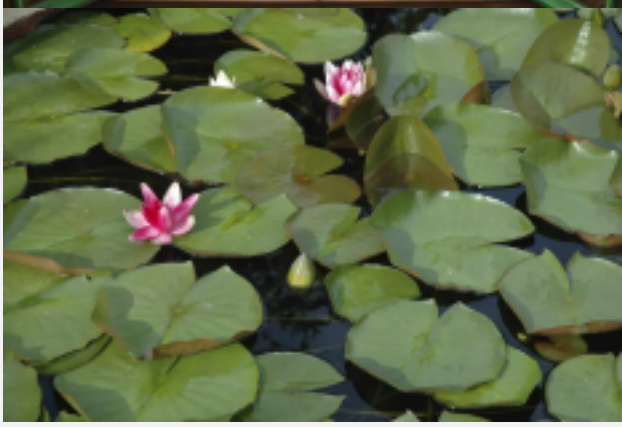
group tours of Italy and France, designed for the senior traveller, and led by experienced, and enthusiastic like minded people.

Our Italy and France, history of gardens tour is designed especially for senior travellers. **The 25 day escorted tour** explores classic gardens within Italy and France. During the tour, participants will learn about the changing fashions and modes of garden designs throughout the ages. With the support of an experienced leader and local guides, we travel through many heritage gardens, discovering more about the history and culture of these places and regions in the process.

The Italian and French garden history tour takes in a diverse collection of gardens. From private to public, formal to informal, and large versus small, from the Vatican Gardens to the lavender fields of Valensole in Provence, we compare these gardens for insights into Italy and France. In what ways do their gardens differ? Are there features that they share? Additionally, the tour considers the significant historical influences on garden design. Along the way, the Program Leader of Italian and French gardens small group tour will provide insightful commentary. Thus, our experiences will be meaningful and educational, and we'll return with a greater understanding of this enduring art form.







## A closer look at European gardens

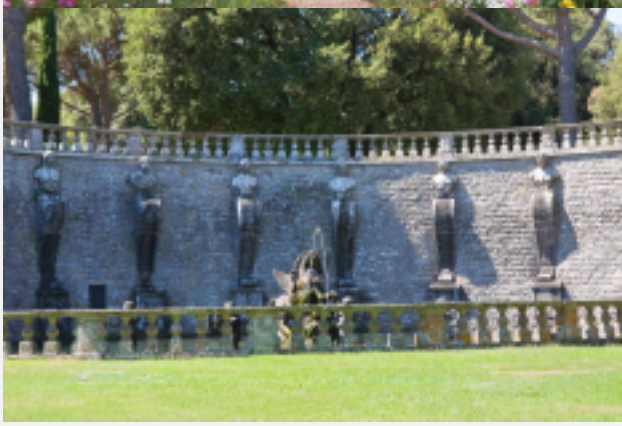
Because this 25 day program stays in just six destinations, we will have time to unpack, explore and enjoy each location at a reasonable pace, rather than being hurried through. The Italian and French gardens small group tour is designed for senior or mature people with inquiring minds, and we welcome both couples and solo travellers. This tour is just one of some 250 tours Odyssey offers each year, including around twenty to France or Italy. The garden tour is part of a series of Europe tours focusing on gardens across the continent, offering a unique travel experience. These include the Dutch Tulip small group tour of the Netherlands, and British garden design.

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.







## Highlights

1. Tread in the footsteps of French aristocracy to the chateaux of the Loire Valley, and then to Paris for a floral finale.
2. Visit the magnificent gardens of a villa once owned by Toscanini at Lake Maggiore, in the shadow of the Swiss Alps.
3. Explore lush gardens in the Vatican City and exclusive villas of Rome to uncover a floral extravaganza.
4. Marvel at magnificent Renaissance and Baroque garden designs in Tuscany, influenced by family dynasties such as the Medicis.
5. Experience the opulence of the Cote d'Azur in Monte Carlo and see the birthplace of perfume fragrances in Grasse.

## Itinerary

**Day 1**

**Locations:** Rome

**Overview:**

Upon arrival in Rome, we will come individually to the hotel. This evening we will enjoy our welcome dinner at a restaurant nearby.

Founded by the Etruscans, Rome became the centre of Europe’s greatest Empire and one of the world’s great religions. It still offers an astonishing array of outstanding sights from the Roman Forum and Coliseum to the great Vatican Basilica of St. Peter, many of which are UNESCO world heritage sites. The traveler is awestruck by the richness of the city’s churches, monuments, and museums. Rome is a city in which a phenomenal concentration of history, legend, and icons co-exist with the hustle and bustle of its 4 million inhabitants. The city also allows us to examine the development of gardens from the Ancient Roman

through medieval to modern times.

**Accommodation:**

4 nights at Donna Laura Palace or similar.

**Day 2**

**Locations:** Rome

**Overview:**

After breakfast we commence our exploration of the city with our local tour guide. In Rome we will learn about the history and people of Italy, as well as the principles of classic garden design. We will have an introduction to ancient Roman gardens and their modification in the medieval gardens of the powerful Cardinals.

The afternoon is at leisure to enjoy the city individually.

**Accommodation:**

Donna Laura Palace or similar.

**Day 3**

**Locations:** Rome

**Overview:**

Today we continue our tour exploring Rome with our local guide using the local transport system. We visit the Vatican Gardens and learn about the villas of ancient Rome as we are introduced to the Villa of Livia and its impressive garden frescoes at the National Museum.

**Accommodation:**

Donna Laura Palace or similar.

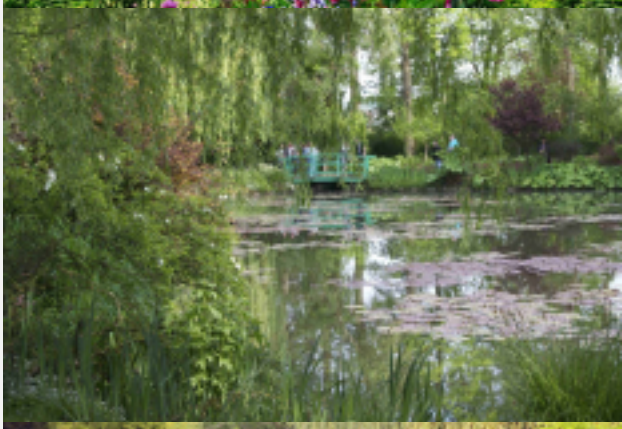
**Day 4**

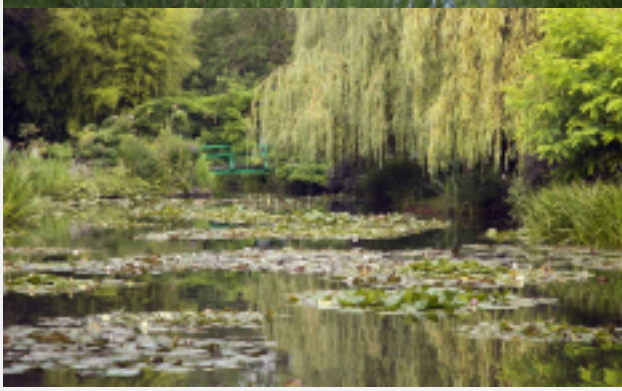
**Locations:** Rome

**Overview:**

Today's full day field trip introduces us to 2 of the region's most influential gardens as we experience the ancient Hadrian's Villa as well







as the extravagantly Baroque Villa d'Este at Tivoli.

**Accommodation:**

Donna Laura Palace or similar.

**Day 5**

**Locations:** Radda in Chianti

**Overview:**

Today we head north to Tuscany, pausing to experience the gardens of Villa Cetinale near Sienna and the hilltop town of San Gimignano before arriving at our hotel in Radda in Chianti for dinner.

Renowned for its history and evocative landscape, Tuscany is a region where the past and present merge in pleasant harmony. Hill-towns gaze across the countryside from on high, many circled by Etruscan walls and slender cypress trees, olive groves, or vineyards. Glorious palaces and gardens testify to the region's wealth and rich heritage. The area is famed for its classic Renaissance and Baroque garden designs strongly influenced by the family dynasties, such as The Medici.

**Accommodation:**

5 nights at Palazzo San Nicolo or similar.

**Day 6**

**Locations:** Radda in Chianti

**Overview:**

We experience the great city of Florence as our guided walking tour takes us to the city's Cathedral and Ponte Vecchio. We also explore the Boboli Gardens, followed by some free time to explore before we return to our hotel.

**Accommodation:**

Palazzo San Nicolo or similar.

**Day 7**

**Locations:** Radda in Chianti

**Overview:**

Today's field trip takes us to 2 great gardens of the region: Villa Medicea di Castello, country garden of the Medici, and Villa Gamberaia at Settignan, the perfect reconstruction of a Tuscan garden.

**Accommodation:**

Palazzo San Nicolo or similar.

**Day 8**

**Locations:** Radda in Chianti

**Overview:**

This morning we experience the Carla Fisneschi Rose Garden at Cavriglia before continuing to Arezzo with its 13th century church of San Francisco, where we view one of Italy's greatest fresco cycles.

**Accommodation:**

Palazzo San Nicolo or similar.

**Day 9**

**Locations:** Radda in Chianti

**Overview:**

Today we have a field trip to the former port city of Pisa with its fine baptistery and infamous leaning tower. Here we visit the city's botanical garden, one of the oldest in Europe, before some free time to explore the city. We will return to our hotel in Radda in Chianti for dinner.

**Accommodation:**

Palazzo San Nicolo or similar.

**Day 10**

**Locations:** Cannobio

**Overview:**

After breakfast we depart and travel north with a pause in Parma, home of Parma ham and cheese, where we have a tasting session. We then continue our journey to Cannobio on the shores of Lake Maggiore.

Maggiore, Italy's second largest lake, nestles against the mountainous scenery of the Swiss Alps. However, it owes much of its charm to the villas and gardens scattered around the lake and the cluster of small Borromean Islands which boast 17th century palaces, splendid landscaped gardens, and a villa which once belonged to Toscanini.

**Accommodation:**

3 nights at Hotel Antica Stallera or similar.

**Day 11**

**Locations:** Cannobio

**Overview:**

Today we enjoy a full day trip on Lake Maggiore with a visit to Borromean Islands of Isola Bella and Isola Madre, followed by some free time in Stresa. We learn about the history and design of the manicured and landscaped gardens.

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Antica Stallera or similar.

**Day 12**

**Locations:** Cannobio

**Overview:**

Today we visit some of the best known botanical gardens of the region. Our first visit is the Scottish influenced garden of Villa Taranto, then we

have a private visit to Villa Cicogna Mozzoni.

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Antica Stallera or similar.

**Day 13**

**Locations:** Nice

**Overview:**

En route to the French Riviera, we pause at Turin where we experience the gardens of the Palazzo Reale, designed by the Frenchman Le Notre for the Dukes of Savoy. Dinner will be at our hotel this evening.

Bordered by the Rhône in the west, the Mediterranean in the south, olive groves to the north, and the Alps to the east, the Côte d'Azur has been for centuries a popular summer destination for Europeans seeking coastal warmth. The warm climate of this area is suited to the growing of exotic and tropical flora.

**Accommodation:**

4 nights at Mercure Nice Marche aux Fleurs or similar.

**Day 14**

**Locations:** Nice

**Overview:**

Today's journey takes us past typical villages of the Cote d'Azur as we drive along the renowned Corniche to Monaco with its Royal Palace, casino of Monte Carlo, and exotic garden.

We will have some free time in Monaco this afternoon, and dinner will be at a local restaurant.

**Accommodation:**

Mercure Nice Marche aux Fleurs or similar.

**Day 15**

**Locations:** Nice

**Overview:**

After breakfast we depart for a full day field trip to the hinterland of Provance as we learn about perfume manufacturing in the town of Grasse. We then drive through the mimosa forest in La Napoule and view the fields of lavender in Valensole.

We will arrive back in time for dinner at our hotel.

**Accommodation:**

Mercure Nice Marche aux Fleurs or similar.

**Day 16**

**Locations:** Nice

**Overview:**

This morning we explore Nice with its old town and flower market, followed by an afternoon trip to the exotic Jardin Thuret at Antibes. We then continue on to Frejus to visit the Jardin la Pomme d'Ambre.

**Accommodation:**

Mercure Nice Marche aux Fleurs or similar.

**Day 17**

**Locations:** Tours

**Overview:**

Today we depart Nice and cross the country by TGV train to Tours. Dinner will be at our hotel this evening.

The Loire Valley has long been the hunting region and playground of the French aristocracy with many fine châteaux and gardens along the River Loire and its tributaries.

**Accommodation:**

3 nights at Ibis Styles City or similar.

**Day 18**

**Locations:** Tours

**Overview:**

Today's full day field trip takes us to the famous gardens of the Chateau of Villandry and to the French Renaissance Chateau of Chenenceau, spanning the River Cher with Catherine de Medici's garden. We also explore the medieval city of Tours.

**Accommodation:**

Ibis Styles City or similar.

**Day 19**

**Locations:** Tours

**Overview:**

Today we take a trip to Maisonnais to visit the Prieure Notre Dame D'Orsan garden, a recreation of a medieval monastic garden.

**Accommodation:**

Ibis Styles City or similar.

**Day 20**

**Locations:** Paris

**Overview:**

Today we travel to Paris, with a stop in Giverny to visit Monet's house and gardens. Dinner will be at a local restaurant this evening.

Paris's monumental architecture reflects the city's diverse and interesting history together with its political and cultural status. Among the most important medieval buildings are the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame, begun in 1163; the nearby Sainte-Chapelle, a magnificent 13th century Gothic structure; and the Louvre, once a royal palace. During the mid 19th century Paris was redesigned by Baron Georges Haussmann, and several grandiose projects were undertaken to emphasise the city's significance. The Arc de Triomphe, the Opéra, the Place de l'Opéra, the Place de l'Étoile (now Place Charles de Gaulle), and many of the broad

avenues with their imposing perspectives date from this time. Modern day Parisians are still proud of their city's grandeur reflected by the integration of modern constructions such as the Tour Eiffel, the Pompidou Centre, the Louvre Pyramid, and the Arche de la Défense with the great architecture of the past. Within and around Paris there are many fine examples of French horticultural design including the Botanical Gardens, the Jardins du Luxembourg, and Versailles.

**Accommodation:**

5 nights at Relais Monceau Hotel or similar.

**Day 21**

**Locations:** Paris

**Overview:**

Today we enjoy a full day guided city tour of Paris. Using the metro to get around, we will enjoy visits to the Botanical Gardens and Jardins de Luxembourg, as well as view the city's main sights.

Dinner will be at a local restaurant this evening.

**Accommodation:**

Relais Monceau Hotel or similar.

**Day 22**

**Locations:** Paris

**Overview:**

Today we take the metro to Versailles where we visit the palace and gardens of the Sun King. Dinner will be at a local restaurant this evening.

**Accommodation:**

Relais Monceau Hotel or similar.

**Day 23**

**Locations:** Paris

**Overview:**

Today we go on another metro excursion and travel to Bourg la Reine to experience the famous Roseraie de l'Hay and the outstanding gardens of Chateau de Sceaux.

Dinner will be at a local restaurant this evening.

**Accommodation:**

Relais Monceau Hotel or similar.

**Day 24**

**Locations:** Paris

**Overview:**

Today we enjoy our last day together as a group, travelling by metro to visit the Bois du Boulogne gardens and its Chateau de Bagatelle.

The afternoon is free to explore this amazing city on your own. In the evening our farewell dinner will be at a local restaurant.

**Accommodation:**

Relais Monceau Hotel or similar.

**Day 25**

**Locations:** Paris

**Overview:**

Our tour concludes today after breakfast.

## Inclusions / Exclusions

**What's included in our Tour**

- 24 nights of hotel accommodation in en-suite share twin rooms.
- 24 breakfasts and 12 dinners.

- Transport and field trips as indicated.
- Gratuities and necessary tips.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.
- Services of a specialist Tour Leader for the duration of the tour.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

**What's not included in our Tour**

- International airfares.
- Comprehensive International Travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature like laundry, phone calls and meals not listed in the itinerary.

**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.