



From
£7,664 GBP

Single Room

£8,443 GBP

Twin Room

£7,664 GBP

Prices valid until
30th December 2024

22 days

Duration

France

Destination

Level 2 - Moderate

Activity

Paris-Bordeaux-Provence By Train

Oct 01 2024 to Oct 22 2024

Paris-Bordeaux-Provence By Train

Join Odyssey Traveller as we take a leisurely tour of the French countryside, travelling by train from Paris to Bordeaux to Provence and back, over the course of 20 days.

We will have our feel of France's unique regional cuisines, historical sights, and breathtaking scenery. There are high-speed trains that travel from Paris deeper into the heart of France, but on this tour we will choose to have an unhurried but comfortable journey on regional trains (



Paris-Bordeaux-Provence By Train

<https://www.odysseytraveller.com>

18-Apr-2024

Transport Express Régional, or TER) and steam locomotives in order to better enjoy the view. On this journey, we will travel on the railway and see vineyards, lavender fields, pine forests, gorges, and the breathtaking Mediterranean coast. We will take the roads (and rails) less travelled and visit France's regional cities, as well as its small towns that may not be visited by other commercial tours. This tour is designed for senior or mature travellers, and both couples and solo travellers are welcome who are looking for a unique travel experience.

Highlights of this Paris-Bordeaux-Provence By Train Tour

On this Paris-Bordeaux-Provence By Train tour, we will visit the chateaux of the Loire Valley, including the largest chateau in the valley, Chateau de Chambord; Chateau de Cheverney, which inspired Hergé's Marlinspike Hall in *The Adventures of Tintin*; and Chateau De Clos Luce, a summer house of the kings of France and which served as the residence of the Italian master Leonardo da Vinci during the Renaissance. The year 2019 marks Da Vinci's 500th death anniversary, and the chateau has a special cultural programme to celebrate his life and work.

We will also see the colourful murals of Angoulême, French capital of the comic strip, and enjoy the wine and main sights of Bordeaux and Medoc. We will explore Montauban, birthplace of French Neoclassical painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, and the small town of Sète which hosts the proud tradition of water jousting (*joutes nautiques*). We will enjoy a day trip in La Ciotat, a charming resort town bordered by Europe's largest suburban park, promising beautiful scenery that is off the beaten track. It is also here where the Lumière brothers screened their 45-second-long recording called *Arrivée d'un train (à la Ciotat)* (Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat), sending the audience members, believing that an actual train was approaching, running from their seats.

We will stroll through the streets of Marseille and Nice, and enjoy views of the Rhône River in Valence. We will visit the small towns of Digne-les-Bains, famous for its lavender festivals, and Tain-l'Hermitage, home



of chocolate manufacturer Valrhona.

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.

Other Railway Journeys by Odyssey Traveller

Odyssey Traveller has several railway tours that may also be of interest. All of these tours are especially designed for the active senior traveller. Just click through to see the itinerary and sign up!

- Odyssey Traveller's Helsinki to Irkutsk tour on the Trans-Siberian Railway runs for 21 days and spends multiple nights in Helsinki, St Petersburg, Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Krasnoyarsk, and Irkutsk, with stops at Russia's oldest national nature reserve, Stolby Nature Sanctuary, and Lake Baikal.
- The Vladivostok to Krasnoyarsk tour moves westward from Vladivostok, where in 1891 tsar-to-be Nicholas first laid the stone that would be the foundation of the railway, to the old town of Krasnoyarsk in the heart of Siberia.
- The 30-day Trans-Mongolia and Russia tour takes you on the Trans-Siberian and the Trans-Mongolian Railway lines. The tour begins in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, and concludes with a cruise on the waterways between Moscow and St Petersburg.
- For a different pace and cultural experience, you may want to explore Japan History by Rail tour which journeys through Japan on the *shinkansen* (high-speed train), and French History by Rail tour which goes through Paris and the other cities of France; we have a 21-day tour and a shorter 11-day tour



Articles published by Odyssey on Southern France

We also regularly publish articles on history and travel. The following articles will help you get ready for your Paris-Bordeaux-Provence By Train tour:

- [South West France](#)
- [Historic Loire Valley](#)

Articles from external sites about Southern France

The following external articles are expected to also be of interest to you in planning your visit to the regions of Bordeaux and Provence.

- [Bordeaux Art Galleries](#)
- [Tour of Modern Architecture in Bordeaux](#)
- [Former Submarine base, now a gallery in Bordeaux](#)
- [Bordeaux History – French Monuments](#)
- [Learn the Complete Bordeaux Wine History and Description of ...](#)
- [What to do in Provence ? – France.fr](#)
- [10 Must-See Ancient Sites in Provence – Ancient History ...](#)
- [Living in France as an Expat – Curious Provence](#)

Odyssey also has more information about [France](#). For more information on Odyssey Traveller and our educational small group tours, [visit and explore our website](#), and remember to visit these pages in particular:

- [Terms and conditions applicable for booking an Odyssey Traveller tour.](#)
- [FAQ's about Odyssey Traveller](#)

Alternatively, [please call](#) or [send an email](#).

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Highlights

1. Visit the beautiful chateaux of the Loire Valley, including the largest chateau in the valley, Chateau de Chambord, and Chateau De Clos Luce, which served as the residence of the Italian master Leonardo da Vinci.
2. See the colourful murals of Angouleme, French capital of the comic strip.
3. Enjoy the wine and historical buildings of Bordeaux, an important cultural and commercial hub through the centuries.
4. Take a day trip to La Ciotat, a shipbuilding centre turned charming resort where the Lumiere brothers first screened their films.
5. Take the road (and rails) less travelled to the small towns of Digne-les-Bains, famous for its lavender festivals, and Tain-l'Hermitage, home of chocolate manufacturer Valrhona.



Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Upon arrival in Paris, we make our own way to our hotel. The Odyssey Program Leader will greet the group and the rest of the day is free until we meet again in the evening for our welcome dinner.

Day 2

Locations: Paris - Blois - Amboise

Overview:

Today we will be travelling by railway from Paris to Blois.

Important note: *To assist you in getting on and off the trains, we recommend that you take only a small wheelie bag ideally **no more***

than 10 kilograms. *The rest of your luggage can be left in the Paris accommodation. Odyssey Traveller has made arrangements for individual laundry washes in Bordeaux on Day 6 and again in Marseille on Day 12.*

Blois is a city and the capital of Loir-et-Cher *département* in central France, located on the lower banks of the Loire River. (A *département* is an administrative division in France.) It is a great base from which we start our visits to the chateaux and towns of the Loire Valley. Blois was once the seat of the Blois counts from whom the Capetian kings of France were descended. It was from here that Joan of Arc set out in 1429 to cut through English forces and break the siege of Orleans during the Hundred Years' War.

We will learn more from our local guide as we transfer to a coach and take a tour of the city.

Later in the day we will take a tour of Chateau de Chambord and Chateau de Cheverny. Chateau de Chambord was commissioned by Francois I of France but he only lived there for fifty days. The largest chateau in the Loire Valley, the Chateau de Chambord was envisioned more as a symbol of power than a place of residence. It has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1940 and houses thousands of art objects on display.

Chateau de Cheverny is the family seat of the Marquis de Vibraye, a 17th century title still held by the Hurault family. The Huraults bought the chateau in the late 14th century and opened it to the public in 1922, one of the first private homes in the Valley to open its doors. The chateau is still owned and inhabited by the descendants of the Hurault family, now using the De Vibraye surname. The chateau inspired Hergé's Marlinspike Hall in *The Adventures of Tintin*.

We take a coach to Amboise, a town in the central Loire Valley, where we will enjoy a group dinner and stay overnight.

Day 3

Locations: Amboise

Overview:

In Amboise, we will explore Chateau De Clos Luce and Chateau D' Amboise on foot. Both chateaux have connections to Leonardo da Vinci.

The 15th century saw the beginning of the French Renaissance, as France invaded Italy and came into contact with the region's art and architecture. In 1516, Francois I invited the great Italian painter and inventor Leonardo da Vinci to the Loire Valley, providing him with the Chateau De Clos Luce, a summer house of the kings of France. Da Vinci worked on numerous projects in his new residence, which is also where he passed away in 1519. The year 2019 marks Da Vinci's 500th death anniversary, and the chateau has a cultural programme celebrating the master.

The Chateau D' Amboise was a royal chateau that served as residence of the French monarchs in the 15th and 16th centuries. Leonardo da Vinci's tomb is preserved here.

We will stay overnight in Amboise.

Day 4

Locations: Amboise - Angouleme

Overview:

Today we will be departing Amboise and travel for three hours by train to Angouleme.

Angouleme is capital of Charente *département* in southwestern France. We will have a sightseeing tour of the city in the afternoon and enjoy a group dinner.

Day 5

Locations: Angouleme - Bordeaux

Overview:

Angouleme is known internationally as the French capital of the comic strip. Today we will continue our exploration of the city in the National

Comic Strip and Image Centre, a museum dedicated to the art form. We will also follow the trail of 20 walls with colourful mural paintings by members of the art association Cité de Creation.

In the afternoon, we will leave Angoulême to travel by train to Bordeaux. After a group dinner, we will rest for the night.

Day 6

Locations: Bordeaux

Overview:

The port city of Bordeaux is the capital of France's largest *département*, Gironde, and famous for its wine. An important cultural and commercial hub through the centuries, its historic centre is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Bordeaux was part of Eleanor of Aquitaine's dowry, and came under English rule when she married Henri Plantagenet, later Henry II of England. It was united with France in the 15th century. Today we will be exploring Bordeaux with a guide, who will give us more information about its history and main sights, which includes Bordeaux's Museum of Fine Arts, the Cathédrale St-André, and La Cité du Vin (The City of Wine), a museum and exhibition space shaped like a wine decanter.

Please note that Day 6 is also our laundry day.

Day 7

Locations: Bordeaux - Medoc - Bordeaux

Overview:

Today we will be enjoying a day trip to the wine-growing district of Medoc, where we will have lunch and taste great French wine at a vineyard.

Day 8

Locations: Bordeaux

Overview:

After a week of sightseeing, we will have a free day to spend at our leisure. Take this time to relax and make preparations for the next leg of our railway tour.

Day 9

Locations: Bordeaux - Montauban

Overview:

We will depart Bordeaux to take the train to Montauban, roughly a two-to three-hour journey. Montauban (from the Latin “Mons Albanus”) was established in the 12th century by Count Alphonse Jourdain of Toulouse. It was a Protestant town that resisted France's Catholic King. Montauban is also known as the birthplace of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, a proponent of French Neoclassical art. An episcopal palace was converted to the Musée Ingres, housing his drawings and paintings. We will explore the museum as well as other sights.

In our group dinner, we will try some of the regional French cuisine specialities: duckling, cassoulet, and slow-cooked lamb with lemon confit and olives.

Day 10

Locations: Montauban - Sète

Overview:

From Montauban, we will push on to Sète, taking a 100% Eco train. The four hours will give us a chance to unplug completely (no Wi-Fi or plug sockets on-board) and enjoy the views of the Carcassonne and Narbonne.

Sète is a small town on the French Mediterranean coast dominated by a lone hill, Mont St-Clair. Behind it is the saltwater Thau Lagoon teeming with oysters and mussels. Sète hosts the proud tradition of water jousting (*joutes nautiques*); the tournament dates back to the 17th century. Its International Museum of Modest Arts (Musée International

des Arts Modestes) is housed in an old waterside warehouse and celebrates all sorts of man-made objects, from toys to gadgets to all sorts of charming curios.

After our tour we will sit down for a group dinner, enjoying the best seafood Sète has to offer.

Day 11

Locations: Sète - Marseille

Overview:

We will depart Sète and continue our journey to Marseille, capital of Bouches-du-Rhône *département* in southern France and among the oldest of France's cities. Marseille was founded as the Greek colony of Massalia in 600 BC. It sided with the Roman Empire during the Punic Wars and later became part of the kingdom of France in 1481. Its long history and its importance as a trading port makes it a vibrant city to visit. Among the places to see is the Vieux Port (old port) and the Basilique Notre Dame de la Garde, a 19th century basilica with Byzantine-style mosaics built on top of Marseille's highest point.

We will explore the city in the afternoon with a guide, and enjoy dinner with the group.

Day 12

Locations: Marseille

Overview:

We will continue our exploration of Marseille in the morning.

Day 12 is also our group laundry day.

Day 13

Locations: Marseille - La Ciotat - Marseille

Overview:

Today we will have a day trip to La Ciotat, a shipbuilding centre turned charming resort located between Marseille and Toulon. It is bordered by Europe's largest suburban park, the Calanques National Park, and

promises amazing scenery that are off the beaten track. It is also here where the Lumiere brothers screened their 45-second-long recording called *Arrivée d'un train (à la Ciotat)* (Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat), sending the audience members, believing that an actual train was approaching, running from their seats. Its Eden cinema is the world's oldest working picture house.

Day 14

Locations: Marseille - Nice

Overview:

From Marseille we will travel to Nice, where we will have an afternoon guided tour of this seaport city. Nice was founded by the Greek mariners in Marseille and held by the Italian counts of Savoy for many centuries. Nice only joined France in 1860, creating a city with influences from both Italy and France. As capital of the French Riviera, Nice has inspired numerous artists, such as Picasso, Renoir, and Matisse, who even made Nice his home for more than three decades. We will enjoy a stroll through the city and experience the palpable Italian influence in its architecture and cuisine.

Day 15

Locations: Nice - Digne-les-Bains

Overview:

Today we will take the Train des Pignes to Digne-les-Bains. The Train des Pignes is one of France's last surviving one-metre-gauge lines, and we will enjoy a relaxing three-hour journey into the heart of Provence, with views of viaducts, gorges, fields of lavender, and the pine forests from which the train takes its name.

We will alight at Digne-les-Bains, famous for its lavender festivals and thermal baths, for a guided tour.

Day 16

Locations: Digne-les-Bains - Marseille

Overview:

After our overnight stay in Digne-les-Bains, we will begin our loop back to where we started. On this day we will head back to Marseille, and enjoy a free afternoon in the city.

Day 17

Locations: Marseille - Valence

Overview:

After our days of leisurely travel by train, for a change of pace we will be taking a fast train (TGV) to Valence.

Valence in southeastern France in the middle of the Rhône River valley is also called *La Porte du Midi de la France* (the gateway to the south of France). Its proximity to the river has made it an important commercial centre, particularly for the fruits and vegetables produced in the valley. Points of interest include the 11th century Cathedral of Saint-Apollinaire and the Parc Jouvet, a public park right next to the river which offers a view of the Rhône.

After our guided tour, we will sit down for a group dinner to sample the local cuisine. With its fabulous location in the lower Alps and near the Rhône plain and vineyards, Valence is also an excellent gastronomic destination in France.

Day 18

Locations: Valence - Tain-I Hermitage - Valence

Overview:

Today we will catch a local train for a day trip to vineyard-surrounded Tain-I Hermitage, a small town (population as of 2015: 6,100) on the banks of the Rhône to the north of Valence. The steam locomotive will take us through the gorges of the Ardeche commune. The famous chocolate manufacturer Valrhona is based in Tain-I Hermitage, as well as a number of wineries. We will return to Valence for the night after

having our fill.

Day 19

Locations: Valence - Paris

Overview:

From Valence, we will return to our departure point, Paris, where we will retrieve our luggage and enjoy the rest of our day.

In the evening we dine together at a local restaurant.

Day 20

Locations: Paris

Overview:

The end of breakfast also marks the end of the tour and our services.

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 20 nights of hotel accommodation.
- 20 breakfasts and 10 dinners.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.
- Touring by comfortable and modern coach and rail services.
- Field trips as indicated.
- Gratuities and necessary tips.
- Services of an Odyssey program leader.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

What's not included in our Tour

- Return international airfare and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.

- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls and laundry.
- Meals not specified 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.