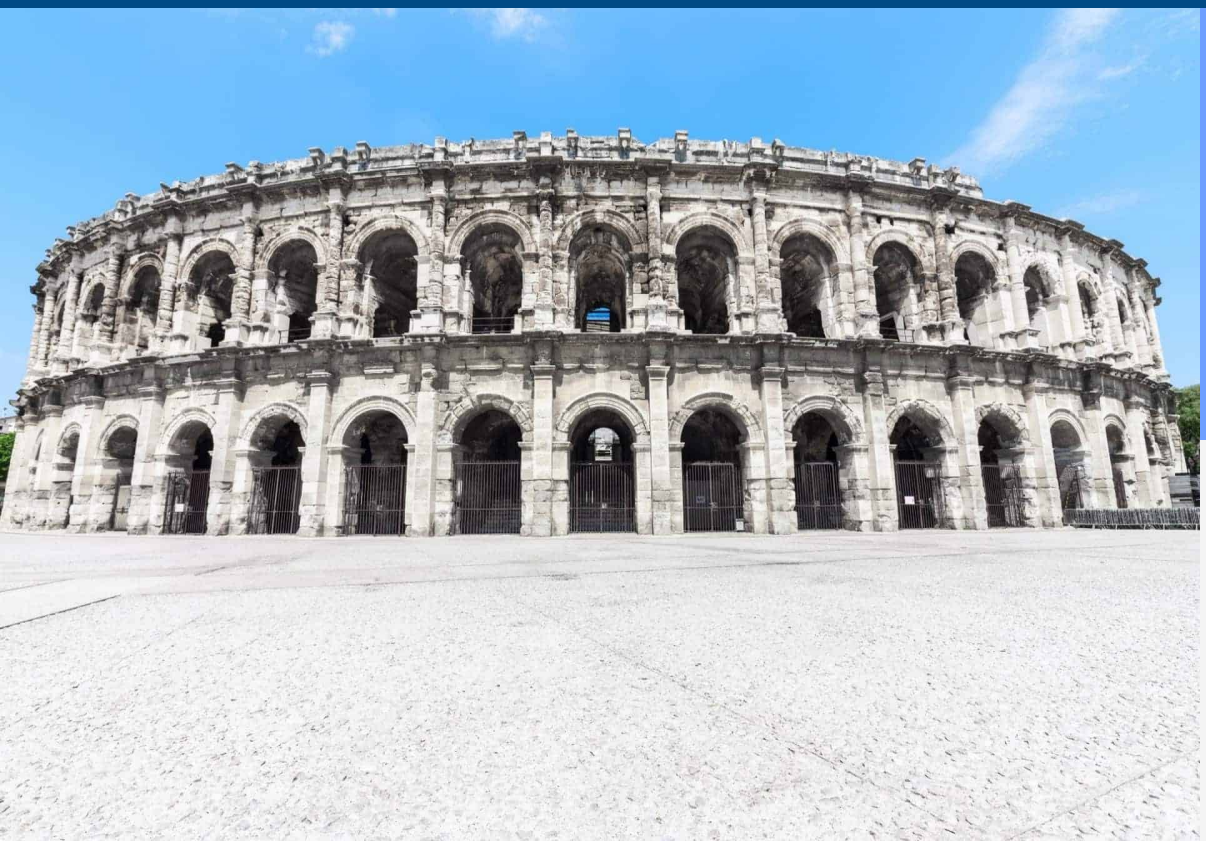
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20 days
Duration

France, Switzerland
Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

Romans in France small group specialist history tours for seniors

Aug 19 2024 to Sep 07 2024

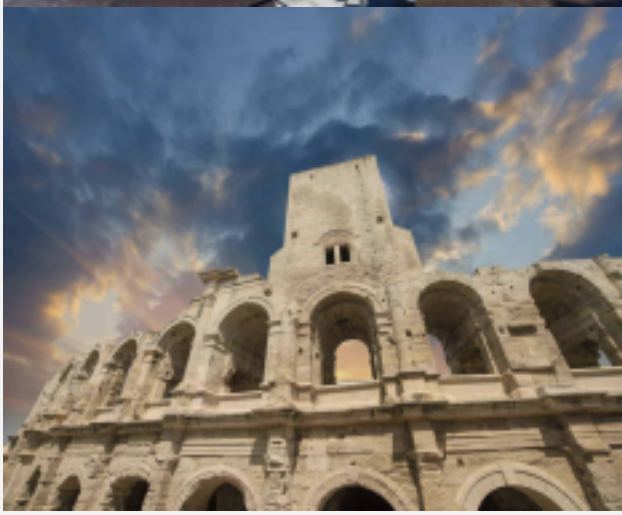


Romans in France small group history tour for seniors

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 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.





This escorted small group tour is designed for senior or mature travellers who like to learn and everyone who is keen to delve into history are welcome, be in couples or a solo traveller. The Romans in France tour explores some of the major remains of the Roman occupation between the 1st century BC and the 4th century AD through beautiful landscapes. Roman Gaul occupied an area that includes modern European countries such as France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany southwest of the Rhine. To this area the Romans brought roads, bridges, education, and cities. Perhaps, above all, they brought the Pax Romana or Peace of Rome. It was the resulting freedom from pirates, roving bandits, and other invaders which allowed the area to grow prosperous. During their occupation they built magnificent villas, aqueducts, amphitheatres, theatres, temples, and whole cities. The remains of these structures are visible today, 2,000 years later.

Roman Emperor Augustus completed the conquest of Gaul between 27 and 12 BC. For the next 200 years the “Roman Peace” was maintained with the exception of a few local revolts and occasional civil strife.

Romans in France Small Group Tour Itinerary & Highlights

During this specialist history tour we will visit quaint villages, explore many hidden gems and amazing scenery, and gain a deep understanding of the Roman era in France with the help of local guides. Toulouse is our departure point and after an initial night there, our educational tour begins in Carcassone. One of our first stops is to explore the Gallo-Roman villa at Montmaurin. This once-palatial villa was one of the most luxurious in all of Gaul with some 200 rooms. The picturesque ruins include the remains of a temple, baths, mosaics, and extensive gardens. The Romans fortified the hilltop on which the old city now stands, around 100 BC. Parts of the lower courses of the Northern Ramparts date back to the Gallo-Roman period, though most of the city

is medieval, restored in 1853.

In Arles, we take an escorted walking tour of the city. Aigues-Mortes (dead waters) rises from the marshes of the Camargue. It is considered to be the purest example of 13th-century military architecture in France. It looks much as it did in the medieval period with its neatly rectilinear streets and crenelated walls with their 5 towers and 10 fortified gates. Roman ruins, dating back to around 102 BC, have been discovered beneath the ancient Abbey.

From Aigues-Mortes we travel on to Arles for a half-day tour with a local guide. Roman Arles had a population roughly twice the size that it does today and was an important trading centre on the route between Italy and Spain. Arles is now famous mostly for its Roman arena and its association with Vincent Van Gogh. There will be time to visit the arena and the main square where we can stop to view “Van Gogh’s café.

This Romans in France small group tour also includes a stop in Nimes, the jewel in the Roman crown. Here we visit temples, towers, and theatres to understand the importance of the city. We also visit the 200-room Gallo-Roman villa at Montmaurin, along with the Roman Legion camp of Vindonissa in Switzerland.

You can learn more about France with our country profile where all the other tour departures are listed as well. For more details about this tour, please 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.



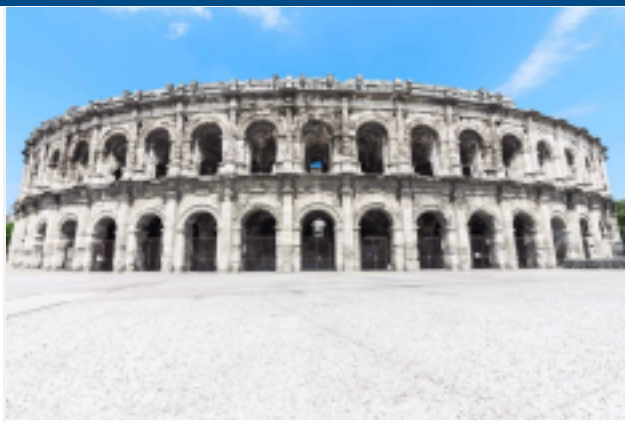




Highlights

1. Visit the Roman Legion camp of Vindonissa in Switzerland, a 100 year excavation.

2. Understand the importance of Pont de Gard, transporting water for 50kms
3. In Nimes, the jewel in the Roman crown, visit temples, towers and theatres to understand the importance of the city.
4. Visit the 200 room Gallo-Roman villa at Montmaurin
5. Explore and understand the importance of Arles for the Romans



Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Toulouse

Overview:

Make your own way to your hotel in Toulouse in time for a welcome meeting with your tour leader followed by dinner in the hotel.

Accommodation:

01 night at Mercure Toulouse Saint Georges or similar.



Day 1

Locations: Carcassonne

Overview:

After breakfast depart by coach for Carcassonne via the Gallo-Roman villa at Montmaurin for a guided tour. This once palatial villa was one of the most luxurious in all of Gaul with some 200 rooms. The picturesque ruins include the remains of a temple, baths, mosaics and extensive gardens.

Lunch will be provided at a nearby restaurant to sample the famous French cuisine before we continue on to the world heritage walled city of Carcassonne. The Romans fortified the hilltop on which the old city now stands around 100 BC and parts of the lower courses of the Northern Ramparts date back to the Gallo-Roman period though most of the city



is Medieval, restored in 1853.

Accommodation:

02 nights at Mercure Carcassonne or similar.



Day 2

Locations: Carcasonne & Narbonne

Overview:

After breakfast a local guide will take us on a tour of the old city including entry into the Chateau Comtal, the medieval castle within the walls.
After lunch (at own expense) the coach will transport the group to Narbonne for a half day city tour. Narbonne was established on the Via Domitia, the first Roman road in Gaul, in 118 BC. The Via Domitia connects Italy and Spain and as such was an important trade route. Our city tour will include entrance to the Roman Horreum, a former granary and the only building to survive from the Roman period, and into the Musee Lapidaire, a museum dedicated primarily to Roman grave monuments.
Return to our hotel in Carcassonne for the night.

Accommodation:

Mercure Carcassonne or similar.

Day 3

Locations: Nimes

Overview:

Today is a big day as we travel to Nimes via the medieval walled city of Aigues-Mortes and the city of Arles.
Aigues-Mortes (dead waters) rises from the marshes of the Camargue and is considered to be the purest example of 13th century military architecture in France. It looks much as it did in the medieval period with its neatly rectilinear streets and crenelated walls with their five towers and ten fortified gates. Roman ruins, dating back to around 102 BC have been discovered beneath the ancient Abbey. Get away from the

main square and explore the side streets for lunch.

From Aigues-Mortes we travel on to Arles for a half day tour with a local guide. Roman Arles had a population roughly twice the size that it does today and was an important trading centre on the route between Italy and Spain. Arles is now famous mostly for its Roman arena and its association with Vincent Van Gogh. There will be time to visit the arena and the main square where we can stop to view “Van Gogh’s café”.

Accommodation:

04 nights at Novotel Atria Nimes Centre or similar.

Day 5

Locations: Nimes

Overview:

Nimes, originally known as Nemausus, had an estimated population of 60,000 in the Augustan period and was known to be a jewel in the Roman crown. This morning, however, we travel first to Marseille with our local guide for a tour of the city and entry into the Roman Docks Museum.
In the afternoon we travel back to Nimes for a city tour which includes the main Roman sites. We have entrance to the Maison Carre, an exceptionally fine Roman temple, the Roman Theatre and the Tour Magne, or Great Tower, the only remnant of the Augustan fortifications. The 2000 year old amphitheatre is the best preserved in France. It is elliptical in shape and, with its two stacked rows of arcades, it could once hold 24,000.

Accommodation:

Novotel Atria Nimes Centre or similar.

Day 6

Locations: Nimes

Overview:

After breakfast we take the coach the 25 k to Beaucaire where we visit the Mas des Tourelles Roman vineyard for a tour and wine tasting. The vineyard occupies the site of a wine producing Roman villa. Here wine is

currently produced using techniques from 2000 years ago in a full scale reconstruction of a Gallo-Roman wine cellar.
From Beaucaire we travel back to Arles with tickets for the Arelate Festival, a mixture of carnival and Roman history lesson with performances and re-enactments.
In the evening we transfer back to our Nimes hotel.

Accommodation:

Novotel Atria Nimes Centre or similar.

Day 7

Locations: Nimes

Overview:

After breakfast we travel from Nimes to St-Remy-de-Provence for a guided tour of the Glanum site. This ancient Roman town was buried for seventeen centuries before being excavated in 1921. It is thought to have been a religious centre with a number of temples to various Roman gods. The triumphal arch and mausoleum were all that could be seen above ground before the excavations.
From here we stop to visit the spectacular Pont du Gard on our way to Avignon. The Pont du Gard, constructed between AD 19 and 50, was part of a grand undertaking to carry water by aqueduct for 50 k across hills and valleys to the city of Nimes. This amazing feat of engineering still astounds the visitor today.
In Avignon we have a city tour with a local guide including entrance to the Palais des Papes, the home of the 14th century popes who made their home in Avignon.
We return to our hotel in Nimes for the night.

Accommodation:

Novotel Atria Nimes Centre or similar.

Day 8

Locations: Aix-en-Provence - Frejus - Nice

Overview:

Today we drive via Aix-en-Provence and Frejus to our hotel in Nice where we spend the next three nights.
We have free time to explore Aix-en-Provence which was founded in 123 BC by the Roman Consul Sextus Calvinus. In Roman times this was a spa town with natural hot springs. Today it is probably equally famous for its associations with the artist, Cezanne.
In Frejus we have a city tour with a local guide. Frejus was a Roman military port and city founded by Julius Caesar in 49 BC. It has the remains of the largest amphitheatre from Gallo-Roman times, a theatre and the remains of an aqueduct. We also visit the archaeological museum.

Accommodation:

03 nights at Mercure Promenade des Anglais or similar.

Day 9

Locations: Nice

Overview:

This morning we have a city coach tour which includes a visit to the local markets and a stop at the Parc du Mont Boron for stunning views across the city.
In the afternoon we visit the Nice-Cimiez archaeological park. Set in a beautiful park the museum offers a wealth of information on the Roman settlement in the area.
The remainder of the day is free to stroll around in the beautiful city of Nice or, perhaps, pay a visit to one of its many art museums.
Overnight in our Nice hotel.

Accommodation:

Mercure Promenade des Anglais or similar.

Day 10

Locations: Nice - La Turbie - Monaco - Nice

Overview:

This morning we drive to La Turbie to visit the Tropaeum Alpium (or Trophy of Augustus). This Roman monument, dedicated to Augustus, was built around 6 BC to commemorate his victories over the local tribes. Only a part of the monument survives.
We then carry on to Monaco for a city tour and some free time in the tiny principality famous for its royal family, its casinos and its Grand Prix.
We travel back to Nice for the remainder of the afternoon and evening.

Accommodation:

Mercure Promenade des Anglais or similar.

Day 11

Locations: Orange

Overview:

Today we leave Nice and journey on to Orange via Fontaine-de-Vaucluse. This medieval village, set in a secluded valley, is best known for an impressive spring flowing out of a 300 m cliff. Here we will have time for lunch before continuing to Orange.

Orange, founded in 35 BC by veterans of the Second Legion, was a miniature Rome with many of the facilities familiar to a citizen of the capital but on a smaller scale. We have a local guide for a half day tour with entrance to the Roman Theatre and the Museum of Antiquity.

Orange is best known for its Roman monuments including the ancient theatre and the Triumphal Arch. Both have been well preserved over the centuries. The Arch has a height of about 22 m and a width of 21 m. Its three arches feature ornate carvings relating to the history of the conquests of Augustus. The Roman theatre, also built in the Augustan period, has almost perfect acoustics and is one of the best preserved of the ancient world.

Accommodation:

02 nights at Hotel Lou Cigaion or similar.

Day 12

Locations: Orange

Overview:

Today we have a local guide for the day. We travel first to Vaison-la-Romaine, one of the richest cities in the region under Roman rule. Archaeological digs have revealed immense, luxurious Roman homes with fine mosaics. There is also a small theatre. This city was another jewel of Roman Provence. We have entry to the archaeological park and museum. From there we carry on to Alba-la-Romaine which was founded by the Romans on the remains of an earlier city. Here there is a lovely historical centre and we'll have time to tour the main Medieval and Roman sites.

We return to Orange and have the rest of the day free.

Accommodation:

Hotel Lou Cigaion or similar.

Day 13

Locations: Lyon

Overview:

This morning we leave Orange for Lyon.
Lyon is a large modern city with a long history. Originally known as Lugdunum, it was founded by the Romans and by 129 AD had a population of between 50,000 and 80,000.
Lugdunum was one of the first Christian centres in the Roman Empire and the first Christian martyrdoms took place here in the amphitheatre.
The end of the Roman settlement came quite suddenly in the 4th century when the Romans could no longer reliably maintain law and order and the water stopped flowing along the aqueducts because all the lead piping had been stolen!
We have a city tour in Lyon with entrance to the Cathedral and the excellent local history museum, the Musee Gadagne.
The remainder of the day is free.

Accommodation:

02 nights at Hilton Lyon or similar.

Day 14

Locations: Lyon

Overview:

Today we have a local guide for the whole day so that we can continue our exploration of Roman history connected with the city and the local area. We visit the Gallo-Roman Museum in Lyon as well as the theatre.

In the afternoon we drive out to Saint-Romaine-en-Gal to visit the extensive archaeological museum which uses both archaeological finds and full scale reproductions to reproduce the atmosphere of a Roman city 2000 years ago.

Accommodation:

Hilton Lyon or similar.

Day 15

Locations: Beaune

Overview:

After breakfast today we leave Lyon heading towards the walled city of Beaune.
On the way we stop off at Vienne for a tour of the city with a local guide. Vienne was transformed into a Roman colony in 47 BC during the time of Julius Caesar. Vienne is across the river Rhone from the archaeological museum visited on the previous day but it still retains a number of important Roman remains in the midst of the modern city including the unusual Plan de l'Aiguille, a truncated pyramid resting on a portico with four arches.
We will have entry to the Theatre Antique de Vienne, the temple dedicated to Augustus and Livia by the Emperor Claudius, and to the Salle de Patrimoine museum.
In the afternoon we will reach Beaune, the wine capital of Burgundy. There will be free time to explore the city. Try not to miss the famous Hotel-Dieu des Hospices de Beaune with its colourful tiled roof and fabulous altar piece by Flemish artist Rogier Van der Weyden. The hospice was established as a charity hospital for the needy in 1442 and

was still in use up until the mid-20th century!

Accommodation:

02 nights at Beaune Hotel Henry II or similar.

Day 16

Locations: Beaune - Autun - Beaune

Overview:

After breakfast we drive to Autun for a half day city tour. Autun was founded during the reign of Augustus and known as Augustodunum. Here we will see the remains of the Roman walls, gates, theatre and the temple of Janus. We also have entry to the Musee Rolin with its fascinating display of religious artefacts from Roman times until the Renaissance.
We return to Beaune for more free time in the city. Perhaps you would like to walk the medieval walls, visit a winery or even find out more about mustard than you ever wanted to know at the Mustard museum.
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Accommodation:

Hotel Henry II or similar.

Day 17

Locations: Dijon - Basel

Overview:

Travel to Basel in Switzerland via Dijon. In Dijon meet your local guide for a half day tour of the city's archaeological sites including entry to the Gallo-Roman site of l'Ecartelot.

Basel, on the banks of the river Rhine, is Switzerland's third largest city, and shares its borders with France and Germany. It is a modern city with a long history and a medieval centre. During the time of the Roman Empire the settlement of Augusta Raurica was founded 10-20 kilometre upstream from present day Basel.

Accommodation:

03 nights atHotel Spalentor or similar.

Day 18

Locations: Basel

Overview:

This morning we have a tour of the main sights of the city including a visit to the Rathaus (or Town Hall), built in 1580, with its Renaissance statue of the Roman Plancus, an officer under Julius Caesar. Plancus founded the settlement of Augusta Raurica around 44 BC but is also claimed as the founder of Basel.
We visit Augusta Raurica, including entry to the museum and Roman house.
The remainder of the day is free back in Basel.

Accommodation:

Hotel Spalentor or similar.

Day 19

Locations: Basel

Overview:

This morning our coach takes us to Windisch, situated at the site of the Roman Legion camp of Vindonissa where we have a tour with a local guide. Excavations have been carried out here for the past 100 years and the Roman camp buildings have been faithfully reconstructed. The monastery of Konigsfelden is located in the middle of the ruins. We will stop to view the Southern Gate before visiting the Vindonissa Museum. In the afternoon we will return to Basel. That evening, there is a farewell group dinner.

Accommodation:

Overnight in the Hotel Spalentor or similar.

Day 20

Locations: Basel

Overview:

The tour, Romans in Gaul, concludes after Breakfast.

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 19 nights accommodation including breakfast.
- 8 dinners and 1 lunch.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides
- Transport in comfortable and modern coach.
- Gratuities and necessary tips.
- Services of Tour Leader for the duration of tour.
- Detailed Preparatory Information.

What's not included in our Tour

- International airfares.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary.
- Items of a personal nature, such as telephone calls and laundry.

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.