# The Rivieras: France, Italy & the Isles

**SMALL SHIP CRUISE TOUR** 

Plus optional extensions in

Aix en Provence, France; Torino & Lake Maggiore, Italy; Bologna, Italy

FRV/IRV/FTM/FXX/IRB 2013

## Grand Circle Cruise Line The Rivieras: France, Italy & the Isles

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#### INTRODUCTION

#### ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

We've gathered some introductory information that may prove helpful for this Grand Circle Cruise Line itinerary. For detailed and timely information, it's wise to visit appropriate websites and confirm luggage regulations, weather conditions and other variable elements of your trip. If you expect to embark on personal exploration, or wish to discover more about the countries you visit, we suggest that you consult your choice of the many in-depth travel guidebooks devoted to your destinations. Refer to our additional resources section (at the end of the handbook) for other sources of insight.

#### ABOUT GRAND CIRCLE TRAVEL

Grand Circle Travel, founded in 1958 to serve the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), is the leader in international travel, adventure and discovery for Americans aged 50 and over. Grand Circle vacations have been recommended by *The New York Times*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Travel+Leisure*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel*, among other publications. But our most impressive reviews come from the more than one million people who have traveled with us and from readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* who placed Grand Circle Cruise Lines, the cruise branch of Grand Circle, in the Top 10 of the World's Best Cruise Lines for eight years — in 2012 ranking Grand Circle Cruise Lines the #1 World's Best River Cruise Line. Grand Circle has earned a spot on the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List for seven consecutive years as well. For 2011 *Condé Nast Traveler* named seven Grand Circle Cruise Line river ships among the 20 best river ships in the world; for 2012 the Grand Circle Cruise Lines was named to their Platinum Circle of top cruise lines.

#### YOUR GCCL PROGRAM DIRECTOR

During your Grand Circle Cruise Line Small Ship Cruise Tour, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Director. Your Program Director is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. Along the way, your Program Director is supported by local tour guides who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle Cruise Line, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing tips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of the Program Director throughout your Small Ship Cruise Tour, and on the optional *Bologna* extension (should you choose it.) The *Aix en Provence* and *Turin & Lake Maggiore* optional extensions on this itinerary feature Hospitality Representatives who guide your included tours and are available to assist you with your planning and offer helpful insight for your personal explorations.

## 1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS



U.S. citizens need a valid passport for this itinerary.

#### Note

#### Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary:

- It should be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- It should have the recommended number of blank pages (see below for details).
- The blank pages must be labeled "Visas" at the top. Pages labeled "Amendments and Endorsements" are not acceptable.

#### **Recommended number of blank pages:**

This recommendation is based on a "worst case" scenario. On this trip you might use fewer pages depending on the whims of the Immigration officials you meet. Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we take a *better safe than sorry* stance, and we recommend these guidelines:

• Main trip and extensions: 1 blank "Visa" page.

Please take moment to ensure that your passport meets *all* of these requirements. If not, you could be refused entry into a country and you might be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, which would be at your own expense.

#### If you need to renew your passport or get extra pages:

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit their website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You can renew your passport by mail if it is not damaged, you obtained it within the last fifteen years, and it's in the name you want on your new passport. Many local post offices carry forms for renewing by mail or obtaining extra pages. Allow several weeks for processing your passport. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at 1-800-556-9990 for help with your passport.

NOTE: When updating your passport, it is worthwhile to check the prices on all the different services that might apply to you. For example, it might be less expensive to renew your passport than to have pages added, depending on the number of pages you need.

## Visas not required for Italy or France

• Italy and France—no visa needed: U.S. citizens do not need visas for stays of less than 90 days.

If you are staying longer in either of these countries, you should check with the appropriate embassy for the applicable regulations.

#### No U.S. Passport?

**Non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. passport holders**: If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or if you possess a passport from a country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate or embassy about possible visa requirements. Or, you may contact PVS International directly, who can also assist non-U.S. citizens.

#### **PVS International**

Passport & Visa Services 1700 N Moore Street Rosslyn Center, suite 310 Arlington, VA 22209 Telephone: 1-800-556-9990

#### **Backup Photocopies**

The smartest and easiest security precaution you can take is to carry photocopies of the personal information pages of your passport, your air ticket, traveler's check serial numbers (if you're carrying these checks), and your credit cards. Store them separate from the originals. Bring along extra passport-sized photos. Add phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, for your travel protection plan company if you have purchased one and for your medical emergency network. This can save you immeasurable time, money, and bother if your documents are lost or stolen during your trip. In addition, you can scan these photocopies and email them to your personal email address so that a replacement can be printed out if needed (if/when Internet service is available.)

## **Your Flight Itineraries**

You will receive a preliminary flight itinerary approximately 75 days prior to your departure. Please examine it carefully to ensure that your first and last names appear exactly as they do on your passport. (We do not need middle names). You will receive your finalized flight itinerary in your final documents package approximately 14 days prior to your departure. If the airlines make a change in your flight times, we'll adjust your reservation accordingly. If time permits, we'll send you an updated flight itinerary. If the change is made close to your departure, you'll be advised by way of the finalized flight itinerary. You may also view your most up-to-date flight arrangements through the My Account feature of our web page, www.gct.com.

#### All flight arrangements are subject to change at any time for reasons beyond GCCL's control.

Depending on your airlines, you will most likely receive electronic tickets (E-tickets) for your flights. But occasionally, specific airlines or specific flights may require paper tickets instead. If needed, paper tickets will be sent as part of your final documents package. If you receive paper tickets, please guard them the way you would guard cash, as they cannot easily be reissued. Plus a reissue always entails a fee from the airlines that you would be responsible for.

During the course of your trip you may have regional flights within the destination. Due to international ticketing regulations, some of these flights must be ticketed within the country they originate from. If so, these flights may not be listed in your air itinerary, but your Program Director will advise you of these flight schedules during the trip. To see if your tour includes regional flights, please refer to your brochure.

**Please note:** If you've made your own international air arrangements, transfers are *not* included. You are responsible for your transfers to and from the airport. Please refer to the enclosed hotel contact sheet for hotel information. The option to purchase your tour without international air is not available on all tours and may depend on the extensions you have chosen.

**Round-trip airport transfers are available** for purchase on this Cruise Tour. To take advantage of this offer, you simply need to arrive and depart on the same day and from the same airport as our air-inclusive travelers. Round-trip transfers will cost \$100 per person, and are available for purchase up to 30 days prior to your departure. For more details, please visit our webpage at: www.gct.com/AirportTransfers. Or to purchase a transfer today, please call our Traveler Support Team at 1-800-321-2835.

### 2. YOUR HEALTH



## **Keep Your Abilities In Mind**

We've worked closely with our local Program Directors and regional associates to identify the aspects of this adventure that you should be aware of, from physical requirements to cultural factors. **Please carefully review the information below prior to departing on this adventure.** 

We reserve the right for our Program Directors to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

**Physical requirements:** This adventure is suitable for GCCL travelers who live an active lifestyle, enjoy good health and mobility, and are comfortable participating in 6-8 hours of daily physical activities and sightseeing. You should be able to walk 3 miles unassisted over the course of each day. **This adventure** is not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs or other mobility aids. Agility is required to board a small boat for a shore excursion.

**Terrain**: We'll walk on city streets, uneven cobblestone paths, many flights of steps, and rocky slopes. Sturdy walking shoes and a hiking pole are recommended. You must be in good health and physical condition.

**Transportation:** We drive overland in an air-conditioned coach, and we cruise the Riviera coastline in a private small ship. Anytime you cruise on open water your ship is subject to the state of the weather and seas. You can expect to encounter pitching, rolling and possibly rough seas. If you suffer motion sickness, have preventive measures available. We'll board a small boat for a shore excursion, and a small train for your Cinque Terre excursion—agility is required for both of these. Please note also that seating on the Cinque Terre train is not guaranteed (it's operated on a first come, first served basis – no reservations).

**Accommodations**: Amenities may not be what you expect from a hotel in the U.S., but we strive to provide lodgings that give you a sense of the local culture, good service, and a good location.

**Group size & leadership**: 25 maximum. We share our ship with one other group of 25 GCCL travelers. Each group has its own Program Director.

**Cultural insight**: For the adventurous soul, the challenges of traveling in France and Italy—in addition to the countries' beauty and cultural richness—make these uniquely rewarding destinations.

## **Health Check and Inoculations**

If you have any ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date. Your trip will take you into remote areas, with no nearby medical facilities. Please notify us in writing about any medical condition that may require special attention. (If your report is normal, you don't need to send it to us.) If you do send us a medical report, we don't use it to determine if you should take this trip, or if you are likely to enjoy it. Those decisions are up to you and your doctor. Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your international itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling. You may want to have a dental exam before your trip.

If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition. If you take medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip, as obtaining refills of your medication can be difficult during your trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

#### **Vaccinations:**

**Check with the CDC:** To ensure you receive any needed vaccinations we suggest that you check the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for your destination. You can contact them at:

**On-line** — if you have access to the Internet, we suggest you visit the CDC's Web site at **www.cdc.gov/travel**, where you will find comprehensive information about preventing illness while traveling.

**By phone**—at the CDC's Hotline toll-free at **1-800-232-4636** 24 hours a day. Please note that automated information may be arranged topically by disease, rather than by country or region.

**Consult your doctor:** After checking the CDC's recommendations we strongly suggest that you consult your family physician (at least 6 weeks prior to departure) concerning any vaccinations or medications that you may need on this trip. At the time of print there were no specific vaccinations required for entry into any of the countries on your itinerary (but the CDC and your doctor may have health recommendations specific to you, so please check).

#### **Prescription Medications**

If you take prescription medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

Also, when you visit your doctor, get a prescription for an antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness. In addition, you should ask your doctor for a prescription for a pain medication, such as Tylenol with codeine. You might need this in the unlikely event of an injury in a location where medical attention would be delayed. Our Program Director does not carry prescription medications.

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## **Jet Lag Relief**

You will feel better on the first days of your trip if, shortly before you leave home, you start to adjust to the different time zone of your destination. Since you will cross several time zones to reach your destination, you may lose many hours of regular sleep. On arrival, your body then will have to suddenly adjust to new sleeping and eating patterns. The result is jet lag. Its symptoms are fatigue—often compounded by insomnia and general restlessness—irritability, and vague disorientation. You cannot totally avoid jet lag; but you can minimize it. Here's how:

- Start your trip well rested. Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave.
- Switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane. Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Try to sleep on overnight flights.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying.
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane, and make an effort to get up and walk about the cabin a few times to keep your blood circulation normal.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

### **Staying Healthy on Your Trip**

#### Safe Food

We've carefully chosen the restaurants for your group meals. Be very careful with food sold from vendors on the street, and with uncooked fruit and other foods. Fruit that you peel yourself is usually safe—avoid lettuce and other unpeeled produce.

#### **General Health Tips**

Wash your hands frequently: before meals, before snacks, when brushing your teeth, after visiting the bathroom. Carry your own handkerchief to dry your hands thoroughly each time. For times when running water is not handy when you want it, you can bring moist towelettes or anti-bacterial "water-free" hand cleanser. Avoid touching your face, biting your nails, and putting things in your mouth out of habit. Don't share your water bottle with others.

#### 3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS



## Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

It may seem early to discuss luggage and packing, but if you know current industry standards for international flights you can start to plan what type of luggage you'll use, how much clothing to bring, etc. The following information can help you in your trip preparations. We'll remind you to confirm your U.S./international luggage limits (and update regional limits, if applicable) in your final documents (arriving about two weeks before your departure).

In addition to the international flights, you will also take domestic flights within the region on your main trip. The luggage limits on these flights are <u>less</u> than the average allowance for international flights. This means that even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions, as indicated in the following chart.

	MAIN TRIP LIMITS				
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person				
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current <b>standard</b> is <b>50 lbs for checked bags</b> and <b>17 lbs for carry-on bags</b> .				
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches ( <i>length+width+depth</i> ). Generally, <b>62 linear inches is the checked bag limit</b> ; carry-on limit is <b>45 linear inches</b> .				
Luggage Type  A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zipper recommended.					
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS					

The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.

#### **REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS**

One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights.

**Note**: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: *Do I feel lucky?* And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.

#### Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my U.S./international airline(s) before departure?

Absolutely, confirm current restrictions about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit then the average international flight or not, because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowances. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the FAQ section.

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines charge to check luggage, sometimes even on international flights. Others will charge a fee if you bring a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. These fees are not included in your trip price; they are payable directly to the airlines. If you are making a connecting flight, you should also confirm if your luggage can be checked through to your final destination. For more information about air travel, see the "Air Travel" section of your Important Information booklet.

#### **Airport Security/TSA**

**Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change**. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public.

**Liquids and your carry on:** Follow the **TSA's 3-1-1 rule**: Liquids must be in a 3.4 ounce or less (100ml) bottle (by volume); all bottles must be in a 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3.4 ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure.

Note that this rule is used increasingly in Europe.

#### For flights that originate in the U.S:

To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, do not lock your bags when checking in for flights originating in the U.S. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is responsible for screening all checked luggage at commercial airports throughout the U.S. TSA baggage-handling agents may need access to your luggage and will break locks if required. TSA "accepted and recognized" locks are widely available: screeners can open and re-lock bags using these locks if a physical inspection is required.

#### For flights originating outside the U.S.:

On all flights outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend you lock your luggage. This is not a legal requirement but merely a precaution against theft. Have the keys handy, as you may need to open your luggage for a security screening or for customs in the U.S. or Europe.

#### 4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

### **GCCL Air Travelers**

U.S. Departure: If you are among a group of ten or more GCCL travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a GCCL Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time and at the gate one hour before your departure time (security permitting).

Please note that if you are arriving at your international gateway city via a connecting domestic flight, the Grand Circle Cruise Line Representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

**Europe Arrival:** If you made air arrangements through Grand Circle Cruise Line, a GCCL representative or a transfer driver will meet you outside the Customs area in the arrival hall of the airport to assist you with your transfer to the hotel. (GCCL staff and porters are not allowed in the Customs area.) Please wear your Grand Circle Cruise Line nametag so our staff can identify you; GCCL staff will be holding a GCCL sign for identification. Lost luggage must be reported before you exit the luggage hall area because you will not be allowed back in after you leave customs. If you cannot locate our staff in the arrival hall, go to the Information Desk and ask them to assist you by calling the local GCCL office (the contact number will be in your Final Documents booklet, which you will receive roughly two weeks before departure.)

Important note: Airport porters are NOT allowed in the customs hall area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart (in Italian airports you'll need a one or two--euro coin for the cart), which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your motor coach. Your motor coach driver will load your luggage onto your motor coach.

**U.S. Return:** At the end of your base trip or optional post-trip extension, you'll be transferred by motor coach to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCCL travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCT Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our GCCL Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

In the unfortunate circumstance that your flight is delayed or changed, please try to reach GCCL local contact in order to arrange new arrangements for your transfer. Airline regulations do not allow our staff to take personal information with careers if your reservation has been protected because of an internal rerouting. In this case our airport representative shouldn't be aware of your new arrival time. In this case you will need to arrange your transfer by taxi to your hotel.

Name Tags: Please remember to wear your Grand Circle Cruise Line nametag when you exit Customs, upon arrival and when you return to the U.S., so that you are readily identifiable as a GCCL traveler.

#### 5. MONEY MATTERS



## **How to Carry Your Money**

Generally speaking carrying a mix of different payment methods is the best option—some cash for exchange, a couple of credit/or debit cards, and *maybe* a few traveler's checks as a last resort—so that you'll be prepared for any situation. In this section, we offer some tips on each type of payment method.

#### Cash or Traveler's Checks?

Cash has an advantage over traveler's checks. Cash is more readily exchanged and accepted than traveler's checks, and sometimes commands a better exchange rate. Cash is also a better choice for rural or undeveloped areas where ATMs and credit card machines are scarce.

Bringing cash is a good idea—does that mean U.S. dollars or local currency? There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip. You can change money when you arrive — at banks, most hotels, and money exchange offices. Please note that torn, dirty, or taped U.S. bills may not be accepted for exchange. In some countries you do not even need to exchange money at all—U.S. dollars are sometimes fine. For more information on what type of currency can be used on this trip, see the "Currency" section.

**U.S. dollars** have an advantage. Current bank regulations are very restrictive, and most banks will only change currency for regular clients. The best way to get local currency is to withdraw from a local ATM (*Bancomat* in Italy). Cities like Rome, Florence, and Venice offer currency exchanges via a local box office with favorable rates. Some hotels may not change dollars, or if they do they will apply higher rates to cover the commission they must pay to their banks. If you are arriving on a weekend we suggest you get Euros from your U.S. bank prior to leaving to cover initial expenses.

**Traveler's checks are** *not* **recommended.** We urge you not to rely on traveler's checks for your personal expenses. They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. Although most banks or exchange offices will cash them as long as you carry your passport with you, the exchange rate may be worse than exchanging cash. It's more practical to view any traveler's checks you might bring as a last resort in the event of a special situation. American Express Traveler's checks are rarely accepted in shops and restaurants.

#### ATMs

When traveling, typically PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are available throughout large cities and small towns. Always notify your bank before you leave home that you are going abroad so that they may remove any blocks on your account and also ask them about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad. For cash withdrawals, don't forget to memorize the actual *digits* of your card's 4-digit PIN (Personal Identification Number). Many keypads at foreign ATMs only display digits and do not include letters on their keypads.

TIP: Many banks charge a fee ranging from \$1 to \$5 for every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. Others will charge you a percentage of what you withdraw. Check with your bank on what fees they charge before you leave the country. That way you can decide if it is better for you to take out one or two large sums, or make smaller but more frequent withdrawals. Your Program Director can advise you on ATM locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.

#### **Credit Cards (and Debit Cards)**

Even if you do not plan on using it, having a credit or debit card as a "backup" is helpful in an emergency. Though major American credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express) and debit cards with a credit card logo are accepted abroad, not every shop will take every card. So it is best to ask if your type of card is accepted before deciding on your purchase, and having a couple different cards can be useful. Note that the Discover credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S.

**IMPORTANT NOTE** - **Credit card use in Europe:** Please note that many European credit cards are moving to a new technology called "smartcards" or "chip-and-pin". These cards have an embedded computer chip instead of a magnetized strip, and the card owner authorizes a purchase by entering a PIN (personal identification number) instead of signing a slip.

This new technology is not common in the U.S., so occasionally there are machines in Europe that can't read U.S. cards. Or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. This doesn't happen often, and when it does happen, you can usually resolve the situation by using another form of payment. For example, a debit card can sometimes be useful in place of a credit card because debit cards use PINs.

TIP: Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company or bank that you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure.

You should also double-check what phone number you should call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1-800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. *Discover* credit card has begun to operate outside the U.S., but it is not widely accepted. Keep your receipts in case you have questions about the conversion or exchange rate. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

## **Optional Tour Payments & Shipboard Expenses**

During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Program Director. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card, or American Express credit cards only. (We also accept debit cards with the logo of one of these credit card companies, but it must be a card that allows you to sign for purchases.)

In order to process these charges, there can be a delay of 2-3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2-3 months following your return. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "**OPT Boston**" (depending on your credit card company).

**Shipboard Expenses:** Credit card payments (as above) are accepted for shipboard expenses. Debit cards, including debit cards with credit card functionality (i.e. those with a Visa, MasterCard, etc. logo) cannot be used for payment onboard ship.

## **Currency By Destination**

For current exchange rates, please refer to our website, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

The euro is the official currency of both France and Italy. Euro banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500

Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents; 1 and 2 euros

**France: Banking Hours:** Banking hours are usually from 10.00am to 5.00pm, Monday through Friday. Throughout the rest of France, banks are usually open from 10am to 1pm, and 3pm to 5pm, Tuesday through Saturday. Banks often close earlier the day before a public holiday. Note that banks do not exchange currency.

Italy: Banking Hours: Bank hours are usually Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 1:30 pm, and 3 pm to 4 pm; banks are closed on Saturday and Sunday. To exchange cash and Traveler's Checks you will need to have your passport with you. In banks there often is a special counter reserved for exchanging money. Many banks exchange money only in the morning; many do not exchange money at all or limit changes to bills of \$20 or more. In Italy, money can be changed not only at banks, but also at CAMBIOs (Exchange Offices), General Post Offices, and some travel agencies and hotels. Exchange rates will be most favorable at banks, although banks always charge a commission for the service.

Currency exchange rates fluctuate daily. Your Program Director will advise you of the exchange rate upon your arrival. For current exchange rates, please refer to our website, or the financial section of your newspaper. On our website select the region and then click on the country you'll be visiting. A link to the currency converter is included in the menu on the page of each individual country.



## Shopping

It is Grand Circle Cruise Line's goal to identify and provide you with shopping opportunities that highlight unique, locally produced products with good value from reliable vendors. For this reason there may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. Grand Circle Cruise Line cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price.

## **By Destination**

Value-Added Tax: The French value-added tax (VAT) is typically 19.6% and can be as high as 33.33% on luxury articles. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask your Program Director for details, or ask the shopkeeper or salesperson at the time of purchase. Be sure to save all receipts for Customs.

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price.

**Shop hours:** Stores are generally open from 10am to 7pm Monday through Saturday. Shops in France are usually closed on Sundays.

#### In France

Shopping for both designer names and common brands is a popular pastime on the French Riviera. The plethora of shops range in atmosphere and price from very chic and expensive to down-to-earth and quite affordable. There is also a strong local emphasis, with plenty of products from the area available for sale, especially at the colorful open-air markets.

Monte Carlo and Cannes are world-renowned for their exclusive boutiques selling upscale fashion pieces, pricey jewelry, and all types of accessories. In Antibes and Juan les Pins, you can find everything from trinkets to high fashion.

#### In Italy

Whether it refers to high fashion or Maserati automobiles, "Made in Italy" has become synonymous with style and quality craftsmanship. Among the most popular buys are leather goods, silk ties, knitwear, gold jewelry, ceramics, straw goods and other handicrafts, small cabinets, and jewelry boxes. Each region in Italy has its specialties:

Among the favorite buys from Italy you'll find ceramics from Bologna, fashion and leather from Florence, ceramics the craftspeople of Albisola Superiore, ship models, handicrafts, and pesto from the Italian Riviera, and in general industrial design, shoes and glass.

Bargaining is **not** common in Italy. Prices in all shops are fixed and include taxes. Shops are generally open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 9 am to 1 pm; they close for lunch and re-open 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Individual stores might vary these hours. Some shops are closed on Sundays and Monday mornings during the winter months, while they are closed Saturday afternoons and Sundays during the summer months.

In some city you will find street sellers offering prestigious brands. These are fake products, and Italian laws make it illegal to buy from these peddlers. A fine of up to 2000 euro may be assessed if the police catch you buying one of these products.

Your purchase decisions are very personal. If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping abroad. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price, and ultimately, you must use your best judgment when deciding whether an item is worth the price being asked.

#### **Bargaining**

Some shops have fixed prices. In other places, merchants enjoy negotiating over prices. If this is your first experience at bargaining, don't worry—you'll quickly find your own style. Your opening offer should be well under the asking price. The only rule is that, if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. And remember, whatever price you pay is okay, as long as the item is worth that price to you.

## U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

#### **Exemption Amounts**

Articles totaling \$800, at fair retail value where they were acquired, may be imported free of charge if you bring them with you. A flat rate of duty—usually a percentage—will be applied to the next \$1,000 worth (fair retail value) of merchandise. The U.S. Customs Inspector determines the value of your items when you enter, and is not bound by your bill of sale. In almost every case, however, a genuine bill of sale will be honored.

#### **Fees on Items Shipped Home**

Items shipped home are *always* subject to duty when received in the U.S. There will also be charges for shipping. Although some shops abroad may offer to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the customs facility closest to you and payment of the *export* duties (the fee to remove an item from its country of origin) not door-to-door shipping or *import* duties (the fee the U.S. government charges to bring an item into the U.S.). All additional duties or shipping charges would be the responsibility of the purchaser—you.

Therefore unless the item is small enough to mail or to be sent by a global parcel service (like FedEx) you should be prepared to pay customs duties and for shipping or pick-up from the nearest customs facility. This is why the U.S. Customs & Border Protection service states: "The most cost-effective thing to do is to take your purchases with you if at all possible."

#### **Illegal Items**

It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins. For more information on what you may or may not bring back into the United States, you can obtain the publication "Know Before You Go" from the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection by phone, mail or from their website:

U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20229 Tel. 1-877-227-5511 www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/

#### **Problem with a Purchase?**

The best way to address a problem with a purchase is to not have one in the first place! So don't forget to examine merchandise before paying for it, check contracts or agreements before signing, and review your receipt before leaving the shop. For major purchases, don't hesitate to ask in advance about the return policy—local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up.

But what if you do discover an issue with an item later on? In that case, your best recourse is to contact the vendor directly. For this reason we recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. due to delays in communication, the complexities of international shipping/customs duties, and even cultural differences in how business is conducted.

## To Tip or Not to Tip

Sometimes *that* is the question. The good news is twofold: we're fresh out of Shakespearean soliloquies, so no thesauri will get hurt here; and the answer the question "to tip or not to tip (and how much to tip if you so choose)" is *always* a personal decision. Tipping is a common practice both at home and abroad and we offer these guidelines to answer requests for appropriate tipping amounts. It can be useful to have this information on site – when the question *must* be answered – and ahead of time for travel budgeting purposes. Tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should *never* be used for tips).

**GCCL Program Director:** It is customary to express a personal "thank you" to your GCCL Program Director at the end your trip, especially if he or she has provided you with individual assistance. As a guideline, many travelers give \$7-\$10 per person, per day.

Included Meals: Your Program Director will tip waiters for included meals.

**Shipboard:** Shipboard gratuities to the cruise personnel are not included in the cost of your cruise. The ships' tipping guidelines recommend a flat tip of \$10-\$12 U.S. per person, per day, which will be pooled among all cruise staff. For your convenience tips for the crew can be paid by credit card, in U.S. cash or in local currency.

**Drivers**: \$3-\$4 per person, per day

**Local guides**: \$3-\$4 per person, per day

Housekeeping staff at hotels: \$1-2 per room, per night

**TIP**: We recommend you carry small-denomination banknotes (totaling about \$75-\$100 U.S., per person) in either local currency or U.S. dollars to facilitate tipping.

#### In Italy:

**Public Restrooms:** Some public restrooms require small fee (.30 to 1 euro); some are manned by local staff that takes care of cleaning and supplies. It is customary to leave a small tip for the staff—about .50 euro per person. Coffee shop restrooms are usually free – but it's expected you'll purchase something and you may be turned away if you try to use the restroom without a purchase.

**Time at Leisure:** During the times that you explore independently, you may dine in a local restaurant, take a taxi, or avail yourself of some other service where tipping is customary. In Italy, restaurant checks sometimes include a service charge (*coperto*). This is *not* a tip, it is meant to cover the use of the table, table cloth, napkins, etc. Waiters don't *expect* tips, but will be happy to get them. A tip of 5% to 10%, depending on the quality of the service, is customary. Taxi drivers don't expect tips, either – but a 10% tip for helping you with heavy luggage is appreciated. If the doorman calls a cab for you, no tip is expected; if he helps you with your bags on arrival or departure, a few euros per bag will be appreciated.

#### In France:

Most of the public toilets are pay toilets. Prices range from EUR .50 to EUR2.00 per single use. Many restaurants and shops offer only pay-toilets as your only option.

#### 6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP



#### In General

**Travel light: PACKING FOR TRAVEL:** Just as no two people are the same, your packing needs aren't like anyone else's. The trick of packing is to bring only what you need to be comfortable – and only you can determine what answers that need. We've

compiled some *suggestions* from our local Trip Leaders and from past travelers to help you refine your packing – and to ensure that nothing critical is forgotten.

Our travelers' top three comments about packing are "I wish I had brought less," "I should have double-checked the weather," and "You said I'd need (insert something you don't need here) and I didn't." These suggestions are springboards, not requirements – take them with a grain of salt. Finally, remember the Golden Rule of Packing Light: whatever you think you need at first—take half the clothes and twice the money.

Pack casual clothes: Comfortable, informal apparel is perfectly acceptable at each of your destinations. Basic pants, shirts, sportswear, everyday dresses/skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes that are relatively easy to care for are recommended. Our list suggests several layers of clothing, so you can adjust to warmer and cooler conditions. Most of your clothing can be cotton or cotton-synthetic blends. If you like to hand-wash your clothes, bring socks, underwear, and even shirts and pants made of synthetics or cotton/synthetic blends that will dry overnight. You can also buy clothing specially designed for travel.

#### **Functional Tips**

As you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions, our list suggests several layers of clothing. Most of your clothing can be made of cotton or cotton-synthetic blends. If you like to hand-wash your clothes, bring socks and underwear, and even shirts and pants, made of silk, synthetics, or a cotton-synthetic blend that will dry out overnight. You can buy clothing designed especially for travel. Look for clothes that offer adequate sun protection.

Plan to dress in layers on shore excursions. Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions: warm days with sun, chilly temperatures with showers, and evenings that could dip into the 40s or 50s, for the "shoulder" season. Onboard ship, as you cruise, it can be cooler than on shore. In November, evenings may even fall into the 30s. For warmer conditions, a mixture of cotton sweaters, sweatshirts, long-sleeved shirts, summery tops, pants, skirts, and walking shorts is recommended. Evenings call for a warm outfit and a heavy sweater or jacket. A sturdy windproof shell over a heavy sweatshirt, sweater, or fleece top is ideal for being out on deck at night. On land excursions, dress in layers. You can then easily adjust to any temperature shifts by removing or adding a layer. For possible showers, take a folding travel umbrella and/or rain hat. A waterproof jacket with a hood is ideal. Please note that the south of France can often be very hot in July and August, with average temperatures in the 90F range.

**Comfortable, supportive walking shoes are essential:** You'll be on your feet and walking a lot, sometimes over rough and slippery surfaces, so choose your footwear carefully. The soles of your shoes should offer good traction. You can find especially supportive or light hiking shoes designed for walking.

**Light rain gear is recommended:** Regardless of when you travel, rainfall is a possibility. While it may not rain on your trip, we suggest you bring a waterproof shell or coat, preferably with a hood. This is usually a better choice than a folding umbrella, which is less effective in wind.

## **Clothing Options**

We've included information below on the weather you can expect for the regions you'll be visiting on your travels. Taking into account the climate you'll encounter and the general suggestions we offer above will enable you to create a flexible wardrobe that's light enough for sophisticated travel and will guarantee comfort in all the conditions you can expect to encounter. The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, easy to care for and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

#### **Luggage Suggestions**

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It will do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the storage space of foreign motorcoaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a local street market.

**Inner bags**: Packing is easier if you use inner bags to help organize your gear. Use plastic bags, nylon stuff sacks, or packing cubes to organize inside your suitcase. Isolate liquids, store camera gear and important papers in heavy-duty Ziploc style bags.

**Tip:** Bring a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you're traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.

## **Packing Your Carry-On**

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions.

<u>NOTE</u>: Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage change frequently. To avoid inadvertently packing any restricted items in your carry-on luggage, we strongly suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website, at <u>www.tsa.gov</u> which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.

## **Travel Gear Suggestions**

Though it's fun to do things the locals do, it can be frustrating when daily necessities or conveniences from home aren't available. To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a transfer motorcoach, a small ship or a daylong trek on a camel. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through airport hallways and security checkpoints. Consult the following items to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions over borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

Our hotels/ships provide basics like soap and shampoo, but if you are sensitive to fragrances or new products, you may wish to bring your preferred brands. Most hotels do *not* provide a washcloth, so you may wish to pack one.

What not to pack: do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave at home checkbooks and any credit cards not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

**Don't Forget:** Emergency photocopies of your passport, air itinerary, and prescriptions, a list of your credit card numbers and phone number to reach the credit card company or bank to report loss or theft.

## Clothing

8	
Shirts: short and long-sleeved in a breathable fabric, (cotton or blend.) Polo	Pants/jeans: Comfortable and loose fitting is best for comfort and movement
shirts are more versatile than T-shirts; sleeveless tops are optional.	Walking shorts: long cut for modesty
Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood	Cotton sweater or sweatshirt for the air- conditioned bus
Shoes and socks: comfortable walking, running shoes, or light hikers	Wide-brim sun hat or visor (seasonal)
Consider casual good-traction shoes, or sport sandals	Swimsuit, for hotel pools Underwear and sleepwear
For cooler months (October-March): sweaters, fleece, warm jacket	

Consider	
Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.	Pocket-size tissues  Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial "waterless" hand cleanser
□ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription □ Sunglasses and a neck strap □ Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger. □ Insect repellent with DEET □ Compact umbrella □ Washcloth (not always supplied)	<ul> <li>☐ Flashlight, extra batteries/bulb</li> <li>☐ Passport, air ticket, credit card photocopies</li> <li>☐ Extra passport-sized photos</li> <li>☐ Moisturizer, lip balm</li> <li>☐ Travel money purse, worn under your shirt or jacket; money belt</li> </ul>
Medicines  ☐ Your own prescription medicines ☐ Vitamins ☐ Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan ☐ Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin ☐ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax ☐ Antihistamine: Benadryl	☐ Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta ☐ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium ☐ Band-Aids ☐ Moleskin foot pads ☐ Antibiotic: Neosporin/Bacitracin ☐ Motion sickness medicine
Optional Gear  ☐ Travel alarm or watch with alarm ☐ Compact binoculars ☐ Hanging toiletry bag with pockets ☐ Washcloth, handkerchiefs ☐ Basic sewing kit ☐ Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper	□ Electrical transformer & plug adapters—see "Regional Electricity" below □ Travel journal/note pad/reading material □ Home address book □ Photos, small gift for home-hosted visit □ Phrase book □ Collapsible walking staff □ Pocket calculator for exchange rates

## 7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict the weather you'll have on your travels – our local weathermen are lucky to get tomorrow right! So, as your departure nears, it's a great idea to visit the *My Account* feature of **www.gct.com** for a current 10-day forecast of temperatures and conditions at your destinations. Or check Internet weather sites (www.wunderground.com is very comprehensive) for those forecasts and tweak your wardrobe accordingly. You'll find historical averages and general information on local climates below – but, given recent weather extremes, it's even more important to consult up-to-the-minute resources.

**The Italian Riviera:** Protected from the cold north winds by the Maritime Alps and the Ligurian Apennines, the climate of the Italian Riviera has exceptionally mild winters and bright, hot summers, and lots of sunshine for most of the year. It rains rarely -- about 60 days a year, and even more rarely snows on the coast. Fall offers the high potential for stormy weather. As you'll be cruising, you also need to take weather on the water into account: it's often cooler and windier aboard ship, and island weather may vary from what you experience onshore.

**Aix-En-Provence (optional extension):** As a rule, the Provence and Riviera regions have much more sunshine, higher temperatures, and longer spells of consistent weather than areas farther north. The towns situated on the Cote d'Azur follow the old geography lesson precept about the Mediterranean: hot dry summers, warm wet winters—except that the winters can also be chilly at night and in the early morning. The middle of the day is often clear and brilliant. The rain, when it comes, generally goes away again quite soon. But it can also rain buckets, seemingly all of a sudden. Another local weather feature is wind. Some breezes are gentle and soothing, but there are a variety of fiercer winds as well. The most famous is the *mistral*, which comes tearing down from the north out a clear sky and generally blows for several days at a time, especially during spring.

#### Climate Charts

The following charts reflect the average *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. As your departure approaches you may wish to monitor current weather conditions online. Here is the official data from the weather observation stations closest to our destinations.

Here are the data from the weather observation stations at or closest to our destinations:

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity, & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	FL	ORENCE, Ital (main trip)	ly	CANNES, France (main trip)			
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Avg. Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Avg Monthly Rainfall (inches)	
JAN	49-35	76	1.9	55-40	75-58		
FEB	53-36	75	2.1	54-40	76-58		
MAR	60-40	72	2.7	58-44	76-60		
APR	68-46	72	2.9	61-49	78-64	_	
MAY	75-53	72	3	68-56	78-67	_	
JUN	84-58	71	2.7	74-62	79-66	_	
JUL	89-63	64	1.5	80-67	75-65		
AUG	88-62	66	1.9	81-67	76-64	_	
SEP	81-58	71	3.3	76-61	80-63	_	
OCT	69-51	76	4	68-55	82-65	_	
NOV	58-42	81	3.9	61-47	81-63	_	
DEC	50-37	81	2.8	56-42	78-59		

MONTH	TORINO, Italy (optional extension)			BOLOGNA, Italy (optional extension)			
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Avg. Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Avg. Monthly Rainfall	
JAN	43-28	88-66	1.6	41-29	85	_	
FEB	47-31	88-62	.6	48-31	80	_	
MAR	55-37	84-54	2.6	58-39	74	_	
APR	61-43	87-56	3.8	68-46	72		
MAY	69-51	90-61	4.6	82-54	72	_	
JUN	76-58	86-57	3.6	82-60	65		
JUL	82-63	86-55	2.3	87-64	65		
AUG	80-62	88-57	2.6	86-64	67	_	
SEP	74-56	91-60	2.8	80-60	73	_	
OCT	63-47	92-65	3.4	65-50	85		
NOV	51-35	91-67	2.9	53-41	87	_	
DEC	45-29	89-68	1.9	44-33	90	_	

MONTH	AIX EN PROVENCE, France						
	(optional extension)						
	Temp.	Avg.					
	High-Low	Relative	Monthly				
		Humidity	Rainfall				
		(am-pm)	(inches)				
JAN	51-37	82-64	1.9				
FEB	53-38	81-60	1.6				
MAR	58-42	79-55	1.8				
APR	63-47	76-53	1.8				
MAY	70-54	75-52	1.8				
JUN	78-61	73-51	1.0				
JUL	84-66	70-46	.6				
AUG	83-65	74-47	1.0				
SEP	77-60	79-54	2.5				
OCT	68-52	83-61	3.7				
NOV	58-44	81-65	3.0				
DEC	53-38	83-67	2.3				

**Please note:** The data cited here reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. A 60 degree *average* high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it's most likely you'll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range.

#### 8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY



#### In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or

smartphone) you can store multiple country guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (*Tip: you can download this document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.*)

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

To use these devices you should first consider the services available at your destinations. You'll encounter a range of electrical standards, varied plug configurations to access the local current, erratic availability (electricity and internet access), and differing technological standards.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual *before* you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.



## **Regional Electricity**

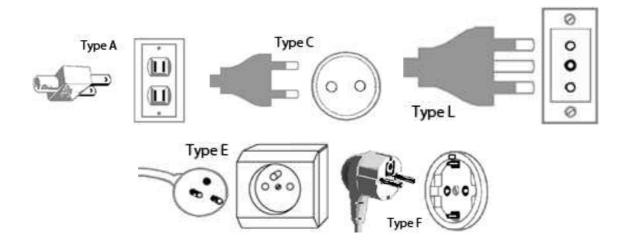
The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The rest of the world overwhelmingly uses 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple receptacles, while others won't. Europe is largely standardized to the Type C "Europlug."

Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. We suggest that you choose *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or a shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) as well as plug adapters. Regional transformer/adapter kits can be found at hardware or online stores. However, transformers can be unreliable and a broken one will leave you lugging a useless 110V appliance. Battery-operated alternatives are an option, but will need a supply of batteries.

On board our small ship, you will find both American outlets (plug Type A; running 110 volt electricity) and Western European outlets (plug Type C; running 220 volts). A hair dryer is provided in the cabin.

France uses the Type C "Europlug" and Type E plugs and receptacles that accommodate them, and uses 230 V and 50 Hz current. The electric current in Italy is 220 V AC, 50 Hz. Italy uses Type C, L and F plugs and receptacles that fit them, so bring a variety of adapters and a transformer for the 220V current in order to operate any small appliances you bring.



If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, MP3 player, etc. – it's handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressors and USB port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without carrying device-specific plugs.

### Can you hear me now?

Just picking up the phone or getting a paper can be a new experience in a foreign country. To ensure you are available during your trip to friends and relatives at home, you will receive two copies of your hotel list, including phone numbers, with your final documents package. One copy is for you to bring, and one to leave behind with friends or relatives in case they need to contact you during the trip.

When calling overseas from the US, dial 011 for international exchange, then the country's code, then and the number. The country code, which is indicated by a plus sign (+), is +33 for France and +39 for Italy. Phone numbers abroad may not have the same number of digits as US numbers; even numbers within a country can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone. When calling from the US, you may need to drop the first digit of the area code.

When calling the US from abroad, generally you dial 00 for international exchange, then the US country code +1, and then the number with area code.

## **Smartphones**

It will require some effort to get the most out of your smartphone when you travel. Even with an international roaming plan, costs can add up quickly – those handy apps often pile up download fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of your phone via any available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn international roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at added cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

App quality, availability and costs vary – as do platforms (iPhone, Android, Blackberry ...), so again you'll need to do some legwork. Apps come in all forms: packing lists, currency converters, language translators, maps, journals, Wi-Fi hotspot finders ... one problem is going to be searching through the vast array of available apps to uncover what works best and what you're likely to use most. Smartphones have a lot to offer, but their small size can be a drawback for some uses (maps, extended reading, etc.)

#### **Cell Phones**

If you want to use a standard cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check with your service provider (www.verizon.com, www.t-mobile.com etc.) to see if your phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you're better off renting an international phone. The websites www.travelcell.com and www.globalcellularrental.com have good information on rentals. Or, consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

#### **Phone Calling Cards**

If you don't carry a phone, you can use a prepaid calling card to call the U.S. with minimal additional charges. Besides the prepaid long distance charges, you might have a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at a hotel. Check with the reception desk prior to using it to avoid unexpected charges.

Calling cards purchased locally are usually less expensive than those purchased in the U.S. and are more likely to work with the local system. Note that dialing a U.S. 1-800 number outside the continental United States will incur costly long distance fees, since 1-800 does not work outside the U.S.

## **Photo Gear**

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures and are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some countries you might be charged for photography at specific sites, or banned from taking any photographs at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's wise to have spares. Be sure your charger will work with the local electrical system, and bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard or impossible to find. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects and are often weak in dim light. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens (18-200mm) coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are *not* permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim or bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

## 9. GRAND CIRCLE CRUISE LINE'S SMALL SHIPS

M/V Arethusa

Owned, operated, and staffed by Grand Circle Cruise Line, this ship was designed exclusively for two small groups of just 25 Grand Circle Cruise Line travelers, each with its own Program Director. On the main deck, you'll find our reception area and the ship's library. For relaxation, the lounge/bar features inviting leather couches and soft chairs. Topside, a sun deck has classic wooden deck chairs for admiring the scenery. When it's time for meals, our large dining area at the stern features a single seating policy. While cruising, we'll enjoy daily breakfast and lunch buffets; sit-down dinners feature international and local specialties paired with regional wines.

#### Included features of the M/V Arethusa:

#### The Ship:

- Restaurant with single open seating
- Open Sun Deck for prime viewing
- Shipboard activities
- Smoke-free environment
- All shipboard announcements made in English

#### **All Cabins:**

- All outside cabins
- Layout of 150-163 square feet (24 doubles) and 120-135 square feet (2 singles)
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer
- Color TV with movies, and a bow camera for ship-front views
- Ample closet and dresser space
- Direct-dial telephone

**An important word:** While our ship features larger-than-usual cabins, please keep in mind that this ship is a coastal vessel, not a large ocean cruise ship. Coastal cabins, in comparison, are relatively small, and ship amenities, in general, are comfortable but not lavish.

#### **Shore Excursions**

Included during your cruise are many sightseeing tours. Other optional tours are available for purchase. Your Program Director will provide information on these optional excursions on your arrival. Please note that optional tours can only be purchased with a credit card.

## **Onboard Activities**

During your cruise you'll enjoy exclusive Discovery Series events, including group activities that relate to the region, theme dinners, organized discussions, and talks on upcoming ports of call. (All fees and prices onboard are in US dollars.)

Dining

You'll enjoy fine cuisine and excellent views in your ship's dining room, featuring a warm decor of dark woods, rich carpeting, floor-to-ceiling windows, and white-linen and china table settings. Your ship's daily service includes breakfast and lunch buffets, and a more formal dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus for you that feature regional specialties. Included with dinner are two complimentary drinks (choose from house wine, draft beer, or soft drink)

per guest, per dinner. In addition, a selection of other fine wines and beer is available for purchase. Travelers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately \$5 per bottle, charged to your shipboard account.

Please note that if you bring your own alcohol aboard, it can only be consumed in the dining room as described above, or in your cabin. Consumption of alcohol purchased outside the ship is not permitted in the lounge or public areas. We also offer complimentary coffee and tea throughout the day, available in the lounge.

**Open-table, single seating for all meals:** Each meal is open seating—reservations of any kind are not accepted. Dinner has only one designated time for its open seating, announced each day aboard ship.

**Dining times:** Dining times for all meals may vary depending on the day's sightseeing and sailing schedule, but in general, meal times are as follows:

Early riser breakfast: 7:00 -7:30 am

**Breakfast:** 7:30-8:30 am **Lunch:** 1:00-2:00 pm **Dinner:** 7:00 pm

**Special diets & celebrations:** Special diets, such as low-cholesterol or vegetarian, can be accommodated, as well as the recognition of an anniversary or birthday. Please call Grand Circle Cruise Line to submit your request no later than 45 days prior to departure. Religious dietary regimens, such as kosher or halal meals, cannot be prepared aboard ship.

**Dress code:** The dining-room dress code is casual, though most travelers dress nicely for the Captain's Welcome Reception and Farewell Dinner.

**Non-smoking policy:** The entire dining room is non-smoking at all times.

## **Embarkation/Disembarkation**

On the day of disembarkation, your cabin will no longer be available after breakfast. You may sit in the ship's lounge or on the Sun Deck until disembarkation.

#### **Onboard Facilities**



#### **Headsets**

During the cruise portion of your trip, complimentary headsets will be provided on all of your included and optional tours, so that you can better hear your Program Director or local guide.



## For your Relaxation

These include a sun deck with lounge, library, and lounge with bar.

#### Wi-Fi Access

Free Wi-Fi access is available onboard. Your Hotel Manager will provide your personal code. You will need to sign a responsibility declaration for the websites you visit. The service is based on local mobile providers: usage may be restricted by volume. If you want to use the Wi-Fi connection you'll need to bring your own device (laptop/tablet/netbook) — ships do **not** rent or loan

these devices. Shipboard access is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume on board will affect connectivity and speed. The ship's Internet connection demands a strong 3G cell phone signal, which is unavailable in many of the areas we visit. You can expect disruptions of both long and short duration.



#### Laundry Service

Laundry service is available for a fee (currently it costs about \$5 per shirt). Please note that neither self-service laundry facilities nor dry cleaning services are available.



#### **Linen Service**

There will be one change of bed linens during your cruise. Towels are changed daily.



#### Lounge/Bar

The bar is open all day, with soft drinks, beer, wine, and liquors for sale.



Our entire fleet adheres to stringent European safety standards. Ships feature fully staffed reception desks for most of the day (from 7:00 AM to 10 PM) and each cabin is equipped with an emergency call button available to alert the Captain.



**Drinking Water**Tap water aboard ship is safe for drinking. Bottled water is also available for purchase. There is one ice machine onboard.

## **Telephone Services**

To make telephone calls from the ship, you will be charged on your shipboard account on the last day of the cruise. Phone calls are directly from your cabin and through satellite, and are charged per minute without regard to whether or not it is a local, international or Calling Card based call. We advise you to use it only for an emergency, as this is a satellite connection and a very expensive service (for example, calls will cost about \$10.00 per minute).

#### **Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy**

All cabins are non-smoking. Smoking is permitted only outside on the sun deck. Smoking is not allowed anywhere else on the ships.

## **Ship Specifications**

The ships are of Malta registry with international crews and feature the following specifications:

	Entered service	Length	Width	Passenger capacity		Decks	Cabins	Elevator	Chairlift
M/V Arethu		100	2.5	<b>~</b> 0	22	2	2.5		
	2008	193	35	50	23	3	26	no	no

#### 10. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Small Ship Cruise Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an Internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Director or Hospitality Desk Representative will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

## Cruising the Italian and French Rivieras

As any sailor will tell you: you don't command the sea – it commands you. Most of the time things go along without complications, but all cruising is subject to the vagaries of winds, tides, and water, and flexibility of mind is vital to ensure a relaxed and full experience during your cruise. Port calls, particularly in high season, occur at the pleasure of the local port authority and marine traffic and conditions can create delays that might result in some re-scheduling. More frequently visited ports are very traveler-friendly. At less frequented islands you may discover that local restaurants don't accept credit cards.

#### Florence in Brief

## **City Layout and Details**

Sitting astride the Arno River, Florence is a small city, best seen on foot. Most sights are within a brief walk, with about a half hour stroll separating those furthest apart. Restaurants are plentiful in the compact *centro storico* (historic center), a tangle of medieval streets and squares. The bulk of Florence, including the most popular sights are north of the Arno, with Oltrarno, an old artisans neighborhood, on the south side.

In Florence (in the center and older sections of town only) private homes, some offices, and hotels are numbered in black (or blue), while businesses, shops, and restaurants are numbered independently in red. Numbers are sequential, but you'll need to pay attention to the colors as well, since 1(red) can be right after 6(black) and vice-versa. Newer sections of the city use the international system.

Created by tearing down the medieval city walls, the Viale is a traffic ring of wide boulevards that circle the city center. Roughly in the center is the Piazza del Duomo, and the Duomo itself. To the south you'll find the Piazza Santa Maria Novella, the train station, and by following the Via dei Calzaiuoli, the Piazza della Signoria near the river, where you'll find the Palazzo Vecchio and the Uffizi Galleries.

Or take the Via Roma, through cafe-lined Piazza della Repubblica, and continue down Via Calimala and Via Por Santa Maria to the Ponte Vecchio, the Arno's oldest bridge. To the east of Piazza della Repubblica you'll find Florence's main shopping street, the Via de' Tornabuoni.

North from the Duomo, Via dei Servi leads to the pretty Piazza Santissima Annunziata, while the Via Ricasoli leads to the Piazza san Marco, passing the Accademia Gallery (with Michelangelo's David) on the way.

Cross the Arno via the Ponte Vecchio, and continue along the shop-lined Via Guicciardini runs toward Piazza dei Pitti and its museum-filled Pitti Palace.



Traditional Italian meals used to be very hearty, consisting of a first course (*primo piatto*), usually a pasta dish or soup; a second course (*secondo piatto*), meat, fish, or chicken; a vegetable side dish to go with the main course (*contorno*); and dessert (*dolce*). Over time this has changed in some places, and lighter fare is often on the menu.

Pasta, of course, is the national specialty and regional differences are distinguishable mostly by the type of sauce and choice of ingredients used with a particular pasta, which comes in all shapes. After tomato, the most common sauce in the north of Italy is called *panna* and has a cream base. Since Italy has so much coastal area, its restaurants offer a lot of fresh fish. Fresh vegetables, too, are often the base for antipasto, or are served as a separate first course. Seasonal vegetables include yellow, red, and green sweet peppers; eggplant; mushrooms; green and broad beans; zucchini; asparagus; and artichokes. After a meal, Italians typically have fruit for dessert, or a sweet confection, such as *montebianco* (a rich chestnut puree) or *gelato* (ice cream).

Tuscan cuisine is known for its "noble simplicity." A quick look into any neighborhood trattoria at mealtime, as they serve fresh, hearty fare to the locals, will prove that statement.

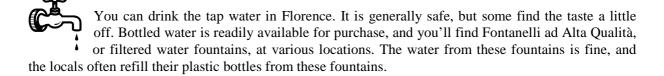
Much of the simplicity of Tuscan cuisine was born of necessity: the emphasis on fresh, local ingredients was a response to life's necessities for the common man. Wild herbs and greens were used in simple soups and no part of an animal went to waste. Tuscan bread, a rustic sourdough, did without expensive salt. As a result it went stale quickly— and *ribollita* the vegetable soup that is thickened with bread, was born. *Panzanella* is a summer salad made from stale bread cubes (similar to French croutons), fresh tomatoes, basil and olive oil. Tuscans created dishes like *castagnaccio*, a cake made with chestnut flour (to avoid using pricy wheat flour), raisins, pine nuts, orange zest and olive oil.

Hardier stock was found in the hills around Florence: game, including wild boar (used in locally-made salamis and air-dried hams), duck and rabbit served grilled, roasted or in a rich pasta sauce, and fish from the lakes as well as seafood from the coast were staples in their season. Porcini, wild mushrooms, are another favorite, served in the fall after foragers have combed the woods around the city. You should not fail to add a glass of the local Chianti to any meal – it originated in those hills, as well.

Some of Florence's best-known dishes include:

Bistecca alla fiorentina: a large steak from the Chianina region or Maremmana cattle. Grilled quickly over a hot, wood fire, it is served rare with a drizzle of Tuscan olive oil.

*Porchetta:* suckling pig, stuffed with garlic and herbs, and brushed with a rosemary branch as it roasts. *Trippa all fiorentina*: tripe cooked in wine, tomatoes and herbs. Find it in the city's central market, called *lampredotto* and garnished with Parmigiano cheese.





#### **Laundry Service**

Self-service laundromats are available in Florence. Your Program Director can advise you as to where these can be found.

### **Local Transportation**



#### Walking

You can leisurely stroll between the two top sights, the Duomo and the Uffizi, in about 10 minutes. The hike from the most northerly sights, San Marco with its Fra' Angelico frescoes and the Accademia with Michelangelo's David, to the most southerly, the Pitti Palace across

the Arno, should take no more than 30 to 45 minutes. From Santa Maria Novella across town to Santa Croce is an easy 20- to 30-minute walk.

Most of the streets, however, were designed to handle the moderate pedestrian traffic and occasional horse-drawn cart of a medieval city. Much of the historic center is closed to traffic, but taxis, residents with parking permits, and Vespas are exempt and crowd the streets. In July and August the cars, pollution, pedestrian traffic and heat can be difficult. Note also that the streets are mainly cobbled or flagstone, as are the few sidewalks, and they can be rough on soles, feet, and joints after a while. Florence may be a city of high fashion shoes, but a sensible pair of quality walking shoes or sneakers is highly recommended.

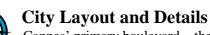
#### Bus

Florence's efficient bus system is readily accessible, but within the city center it isn't of much use. If you're interested in the suburbs it's a viable option, but for the central city walking is the best option. Tickets are 1.20€ (about \$1.70) and are good for an hour, and a 24-hour pass is 4.50€ (about \$6.00). Buses make runs on principal streets only in the historic center.

#### **Taxi**

Taxis are expensive, and the city's one-way system forces drivers to use convoluted routes – making this the least economical way to get about town. The standard rate is  $.80 \in$  per kilometer (a bit more than a half-mile; for a mile expect about \$2.00), with a whopping minimum fare of  $2.40 \in$  (\$3.00) to start the meter (and nearly double that at night and on Sun), plus a baggage fee of about \$.75 per bag.

# **Cannes in Brief**



Cannes' primary boulevard – the place to see and be seen – is the Croisette, a promenade that curves along the blue Mediterranean in a gentle arc. It faces the old yacht harbor, the Palais des Festivals et des Congres (home of the Cannes Film Festival), as well as the famed beaches. The Croisette is lined with expensive shops, boutiques, and restaurants, and overlooks the iconic city beaches. In the northwest part of town you'll find Le Suquet, the old town, and the 16th century Notre-Dame de l'Esperance church and its clock tower. Climb the tower for views out over the city, the Lerins Islands, the harbor and the Palas des Festivals (assuming the weather obliges – as it usually does.) Just a few blocks north you can visit the Forville market for some earthy retail therapy: fish, flowers, and seasonal vegetables are the dominant commodities here. Drop to the south from this market and you'll be overlooking the old harbor with its array of expensive sail and motor yachts and the people who live aboard them. Follow the Croisette as it gently curves to the southeast and you'll quickly come to the Palais des Festivals et des Congres (and the Allee des Etoiles – the Star's Walk), and then the beaches to the right, and stores to the left. Splitting the city, the Rue d'Antibes roughly parallels the Croisette, with a block in between the two. You can simply walk back and forth on the side streets to discover the city behind the glitter.

#### **Activities**

In addition to a lovely climate and beaches, Cannes is of course famous for the international film festival that makes its home here each May. Feature film openings are almost always by invitation only, but seats for less well-known films are often available. And there's always the possibility of a star sighting. But beware: it's busy and crowded. In July and August the city plays host to the Festival d'Art Pyrotechnic. Seats for this are available all along the Croisette, and at any restaurant or café with outdoor tables. The Petit Train rolls through both the new and old cities on a daily basis (except in November), and is a fun way to see Cannes. It features a choice of two itineraries, each lasting about a half an hour (more or less, depending on the traffic), or a consolidated ticket that allows you to take both tours.

#### **Cuisine**

This is an expensive city, and most of its restaurants are expensive. Moving back from the Croisette – to the Rue d'Antibes or to Le Suquet – can help, but it also reduces the glamorous halo that makes the city famous. In almost any restaurant, however, you'll be treated well: that's part of the Cannes experience. And the food is nearly always excellent – though the value may vary. As you would expect, the variety of fare is wide ranging – from local Provencal to cuisines from around the world. (For the characteristic Provence cuisine see the Aix En Provence section, below.)

### **Laundry Service**

Self-service laundromats are available in Cannes. Your Program Director can advise you as to where these can be found.

# **Local Transportation**

In the heart of Cannes walking is the only sensible way to get around—and you'll enjoy the city best that way. For longer distances, the only public transportation in Cannes is the bus system. Most buses run every 15 minutes and tickets are available on the bus or at a bus station at about 1.50€ each (around \$2), ten for 8.30€ (about \$11.25, or a weekly pass for 9.20€ (about \$12). Local trains offer the chance to visit interesting destinations that are outside the city but nearby. Taxis and car rentals are also available.

# **Torino in Brief**—(for the **Torino & Lake Maggiore**) **Optional Extension**

# **City Layout and Details**

The arcaded Via Roma, lined with shops and cafes, starts in front of the 19th-century Stazione di Porta Nuova station through a series of piazzas toward the Piazza Castello and the center of the city, about a 15-minute walk. The Via Roma roughly bisects the rectangle that comprises central Torino. Walking from the train station, you'll find the circular Piazza Carlo Felice—built around a garden surrounded by inviting outdoor cafes. Further along you'll find the Piazza San Carlo and the twin churches of San Carlo and Santa Christina. At the end of Via Roma, the Piazza Castello is dominated by the Palazzo Madama. Just off the piazza is the Palazzo Reale, and the gardens of the Savoys. Walk east from here and toward the river along Via Po and you'll find Torino's university district as well as one of Italy's largest squares, the Piazza Vittorio Veneto and, at the end of that square the Po River. Modern Torino, home to Fiat, is a dynamic town that is home to textile factories, metal, engineering and chemical companies.

#### Cuisine

The Piedmont (literally "at the foot of the mountains") region consists mostly of the extensive Po Plain, sitting between the Alps and the Apennines. It's a very fertile area that supports grasslands, cereals and rice. A popular dish is *fonduta* is a popular dish, a melted cheese dip of milk, eggs and white truffles. Chards are prepared *alla bagna cauda*. Bagna cauda is a hot sauce used for dipping. It usually contains oil or butter, anchovies, garlic and truffles and is often served with a glass of red wine. The name translates as "hot bath," because raw vegetables – such as celery, peppers, and artichokes – can be dipped into it to add an explosion of flavor. The region is famed for Gorgonzola cheese, as are many delicious wines, including Barolo, Barbaresco, Grignolino, and white Asti – still or sparkling. Chocolate is also popular – Torino was making chocolate even before Switzerland. The Piedmont is home to the white Alba truffle—perhaps the most sought-after truffle in the world. Thinly sliced raw truffle adds a rich flavor that enhances even the simplest dish. Robiola di Roccaverano is a creamy cheese available in limited quantities from a small number of artisanal cheese makers. Both scarcity and quality make it a true delicacy.

# **Laundry Service**

Self-service laundromats are available in Torino. Your Program Director can advise you as to where these can be found.

### **Local Transportation**

Central Torino is easily managed on foot. There's also a network of GTT trams and buses—with tickets for public transportation available at newsstands for 1€ (valid for about an hour minutes). Or purchase the Torino+Piemonte Card to access the city's public transportation for 48 hours.

# Stresa in Brief—(for the Torino & Lake Maggiore) Optional Extension

#### Cuisine

Cuisine in Stresa is based on lake fish like perch, pike, lake trout, and whitefish (*Lavarello*.)

The local cheeses, like the celebrated *Bettelmatt* or the tasty *Ossolano d'Alpe*, are particularly delicious when eaten with the high quality honey produced in the area.

Speciality cured meats include the *mortadella* of the Ossola (listed in the Slow Food Organisation's *Ark of Taste* as a prized local food), the raw ham and *violini di capra* (cured goat's leg) of the Vigezzo Valley. Locally produced wines complement these hams and salamis perfectly: full-bodied reds like *Ghemme Docg* and *Nebbiolo* from the Novara hills, *Prunent* and *Neuv Bruschett* from the Ossola valleys, or the wines of the Angera area.

Finally, the area surrounding Lake Maggiore offers an equally diversified range of local specialty cakes and biscuits, such as the Fugascine of Mergozzo and the Margheritine of Stresa.

# **Drinking Water**

Water in Stresa tastes good and is perfectly fine for drinking. In larger Italian cities, however, we recommend you drink bottled water. To be sure you have convenient access to good water on your walking trips, we suggest you carry a bottle of water with you.

### **Newspapers & Magazines**

The *International Herald Tribune*, printed in Rome, is available at most newsstands; it often lists major events in Italy in its Saturday "Weekend" section. Issues are usually one day behind the *Tribune's* original publication date. *La Repubblica, Corriere della Sera*, and *Il Messaggero* are daily newspapers that list regional events on weekends. You may find some English periodicals and/or newspapers for sale at local kiosks; your Program Director can direct you to the nearest stand.

# **Aix-en-Provence in Brief—Optional Extension**

# **City Layout and Details**

**Aix-en-Provence:** Located about 20 miles north of coastal Marseille, Aix-en-Provence, the former capital of Provence, is blessed with a lush landscape flecked with ancient ruins and beautifully preserved architecture. A university town since 1409, Aix-en-Provence retains the youthful enthusiasm of its student population, as well as the dedication to enjoyment and relaxation found at its cosmopolitan restaurants, warm cafes, and small but robust museums.

The most striking thoroughfare in town is the Cours Mirabeau, whose construction was undertaken in the 17th century—a lush, tree-arched boulevard lined with mansions and accented with 18th century fountains. It seems to have leapt right off a postcard. On the street's north side is an irresistible series of shops, cafes, and pastry shops. The tarts are exceptional here—made with fresh, local almonds, fruits, and honeys—as are the candied fruits. The south side hosts the splendid hotels, once the vaunted residences of marquises and duchesses. You'll spot the town's first Gothic church, now the Musee Granet, which features eight Cezannes and the wonderful personal collection of the local painter Francois Granet.

The old quarter lies to the north of the Cours Mirabeau. It's home to a 16th-century clock tower, a Tapestry Museum that was once a bishop's palace, and the imposing 17th-centrury Hotel de Ville. The ancient Roman baths are just beyond the old quarter, as are the town's famous 18th-century spas.

#### Cuisine

A southern mix of olive oil, garlic and fresh tomatoes, onions and anchovies, and black olives characterizes the cuisine of the Provence region. These ingredients constitute the base for many of the local fish and meat specialties. The key cooking-style words are *Provencal* and *Nicois*. Many dishes feature fragrant herbs like fennel, thyme, rosemary, and bay leaf; others are centered around garlic, tomatoes, and olives. In fact, olives of every conceivable size and color, cured with herbs or salt or flavored oil, feature prominently in the cuisine. Also typically Mediterranean is the extensive use of seafood (clams, cockles, crabs, mussels, sea anemones, sea urchins) and fish (bass, red mullet, sardines), either grilled or combined in chunky, spicy soups.

Locally produced artichokes and asparagus are much favored along the Cote d'Azur. *Ratatouille*, an olive oil based stew of aubergines and tomatoes, is also very popular; it is perhaps the most famous of all vegetable dishes. Another Mediterranean "claim to fame" is *salade nicoise*—tuna, tomatoes, black olives, capers, potatoes, string beans, and hard-boiled eggs—first created in Nice. Its sandwich form, *pan bagnat*, is available at every local snack bar.

The celebrated aperitif along the Riviera is *pastis* (essence of aniseed), which is high in alcohol and usually served diluted with ice water. The local wines are uncomplicated but go well with seasoned food

that calls for a refreshing, fruity wine—and Cotes de Provence, mostly dry roses, are just that. Or try a glass of bandol rouge (red), blanc de Provence (white), or bellet (red or white).



### **Laundry Service**

Self-service laundromats are available in Aix-en-Provence. Your Program Director can advise you as to where these can be found.

# **Local Transportation**

The lovely Cours Mirabeau bisects the town from east to west and is a useful landmark for ambling. The neighborhood south of Cours Mirabeau is arranged in a standard grid pattern of perpendicular streets, while the neighborhood to the north—the old town—is, not surprisingly, a warren of narrow, curling streets, open squares, and cobbled lanes. But with new, charming views at every turn, the panoply of byways is an essential part of the attraction of Aix-en-Provence.

The busy bus station is on Rue Lapierre, and buses run regularly to Marseille, Avignon, Cannes, Nice, and Arles, among other destinations. Taxis are easy to spot on Cours Mirabeau.

# **Bologna in Brief—Optional Extension**

# City Layout and Details

As with Florence, the historical center of Bologna is a traffic restricted zone from 7:00am to 8:00pm daily when only authorized vehicles are allowed. Looking at a city map the best way to orient yourself is to find the Due Torri landmark in the center. The Due Torri are easily seen from the two main squares — the Piazza Re Enzo and the Piazza Maggiore. The two main streets of Bologna make a *T* shaped figure leading from Piazza Maggiore to the railway station, both lined up with porticos. The northeast section of the map is the university district. The two southern quadrants of the map are residential sections of the city. However, outside and south of the city center you'll find hills and the Giardini Margherita, the largest park of the city. The center of the city is surrounded by the *Viali*, an easily recognizable circular road that surrounds the historical streets and sights of the city.

#### Cuisine

Bologna is renowned for its culinary tradition—some say it has Italy's best food. It has given its name to the well-known Bolognese sauce, a meat based pasta sauce called in Italy ragù alla bolognese but in the city itself just ragù as in Tagliatelle al ragù. Dishes here depend heavily on meats and cheeses. As in all of Emilia-Romagna region, cured pork meats such as prosciutto, mortadella and salami are a big part of the local food industry. Local dishes include lasagne, tortellini served in broth, and mortadella, the original Bologna sausage.



### **Laundry Service**

Self-service laundromats are available in Bologna. Your Program Director can advise you as to where these can be found.

# **Local Transportation**

The center of Bologna is easy to cover on foot; most of the major sights are in and around Piazza Maggiore. However, if you don't want to walk, city buses leave for most points from Piazza Nettuno or Piazza Maggiore. Free maps are available at the storefront office of the

ATC; and tickets are available at any of the many booths and tobacconists in Bologna. Tickets cost 1€ (about \$1.45) and are valid 60 minutes. A citypass -- a booklet of 10 tickets, each valid for 1 hour -- costs 8.50€ (about \$12). There is also a 1-day ticket, valid for 24 hours that costs 3€ (about \$4.35). Once on board, remember to have your ticket validated: fines can be as high as 150€ (\$218).

# 11. DEMOGRAPHICS, HISTORY AND CULTURE

We encourage you to learn about the regions of the world you will soon be exploring before your departure. The ancient and contemporary cultures of this area are rich and complex. Even a small amount of background reading can help you make sense of the kaleidoscope of facts and impressions that will come your way. Having some knowledge in advance can complement and enrich what you can learn from your expert Program Director.

### Italy

Area: 116,305 square miles

Capital: Rome

Languages: In addition to Italian, many of Italy's natives speak French and English. In the Southern

Tyrol region (Alps) German is common.

**Location:** Italy lies in southern Europe, bordering France in the northwest, the Ligurian Sea and the Tyrrhenian Sea in the west, the Ionian Sea in the south, the Adriatic Sea in the east, Slovenia in the northeast, and Austria and Switzerland in the north. The country includes the Mediterranean islands of Sicily and Sardinia and several other small islands.

**Geography:** From the mountains in the north to the island of Sicily, the geography of Italy varies widely – as does the climate, scenery and culture.

#### **Tuscany:** (Florence)

From the Etruscans to the Romans to the Renaissance, Tuscany is possibly the world's greatest repository of art, ranging from extraordinary paintings and sculpture to frescoes and architectural masterpieces. The region is a blend of rugged hills, fertile valleys, and long stretches of sandy beaches that arc along the west coast of central Italy and fringe the pine-forested coastal plain of the Maremma. Visitors come in search of fine art, to explore the extraordinary countryside, to savor the simple yet tasty cuisine and wine, or enjoy the seacoast and islands. The cities and towns of Tuscany house a centuries-old heritage of culture and art that produced magnificent medieval cathedrals and the marvels of the Renaissance period. Florence is the most popular city, but many other cities are popular as well: Siena, Pisa, Arezzo, Cortona, San Gimignano and Lucca, and Volterra come immediately to mind.

#### Liguria: (Genoa) The Italian Riviera

Bordered by France to the west, Piedmont to the north, and Tuscany in the east, Liguria sits between the Ligurian Sea, the Alps and the Apennine Mountains. This 200-mile coast is a thin ribbon of steep descents from the mountain tops to the deeps of the Ligurian Sea. It features an enviable climate, but limited access to the sea due to its precipitous geography. Liguria boasts several UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including Genoa, a major port and multi-faceted city that combines the ancient with the modern. It tells the story of its part in Italy's Maritime Republics through its culture, places, food and buildings, and you can absorb that ancient atmosphere as you walk among the *carruggi*, the narrow alleys of the old town. With Porto Venere and the islands, the Cinque Terre is a second UNESCO Site. The five seaside towns of Manarola, Riomaggiore, Corniglia, Vernazza and Monterosso are a compact paradise: rocky cliffs drop into a limpid sea while the colors and earthy scents mix compatibly with buildings that hug the coast for myriad charming scenes. Porto Venere, the ancient fishing town whose colorful buildings resemble standing crayons and mix their iridescent colors with the deep blue of the sea, is equally enchanting.

**Piedmont:** (Torino) *Torino & Lake Maggiore*, Pre and Post extensions.

Piedmont comes from Medieval Latin and means "at the foot of the mountains", and indeed Piedmont is surrounded on three sides by the Alps, including Monviso, where the river Po rises, and Monte Rosa. It has borders with France, Switzerland and the Italian regions of Lombardy, Liguria, Aosta Valley and it just nudges Emilia Romagna. The landscape is varied, ranging from the rugged peaks of the massifs of Monte Rosa and Gran Paradiso to the rice paddies of Vercelli and Novara, to the gentle hillsides of the

Langhe (famed for its wines and white truffles) and Montferrat as well as gently rolling plains. Piedmont contains major industrial cities, Turin, home of FIAT, primary among them.

#### Emilia-Romagna: (Bologna) Bologna, Pre and Post extensions.

Emilia-Romagna is an administrative Region in Northern Italy, with about 4.4 million inhabitants. Nearly half of the region's 8,700 square mile area consists of plains while 27% is hilly and 25% mountainous. To the north and southeast the mountains stretch for nearly 200 miles but there are only three peaks above 6, 500 feet. It's one of Europe's richest, most developed areas, and has Italy's third highest GDP per capita. Bologna, its capital, has one of Italy's highest quality of life, offers advanced social services and is home to one of the first universities in the world — the University of Bologna. As a cultural centre, the region is home to Romanesque and Renaissance cities (Modena, Parma and Ferrara, etc); and is home to some of the world's most exotic auto companies (Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati, and Ducati). and having lively coastal resorts such as Rimini and Riccione. Another important city is Ravenna, the capital city of the Western Roman Empire from 402 until that empire collapsed in 476 – which boasts eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

# **Population (2011 estimate):** 60,600,000 **Religion:** Roman Catholic 98%, Other 2%

**Time zone:** All of Italy is on Central European Time, one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (six hours ahead of Eastern Time). Summer hours operate from the last weekend in March until the last weekend in September.

#### **Holidays:**

01/01	New Year's Day
01/06	Epiphany
03/31	Easter Day
04/01	Easter Monday
04/25	Liberation Day
05/01	Labor Day
06/02	Founding of the Republic
08/15	Assumption Day
11/01	All Saints
12/08	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

ITALY HAS A LONG AND COMPLICATED HISTORY. Its earliest recorded civilization dates back to around 2000 B.C., when the peninsula was settled by fair-complexioned Ligurians, ancestors of the Latins. Sometime near the 9th century B.C., boatloads of Greeks landed on Italian shores, and Italy became the site for the myth of Ulysses and other famous legends. The Greeks inhabited southern Italy and Sicily during the 8th century B.C., forming colonies of city-states called Magna Graecia. The Greek civilization prospered in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C., but waned in the 4th century B.C. While the Greeks were busy settling the south, the Etruscans, a highly artistic populace from Asia Minor, built strong communities in central Italy.

The Etruscans ruled until the Roman revolt around 510 B.C. By 250 B.C., the Romans had conquered Italy and established Rome as the seat of their empire. Julius Caesar reigned throughout the 1st century B.C., and his defeat of France made Rome the ruler of the entire Mediterranean world. Under Caesar, Roman culture flourished. Its unprecedented splendor was further enriched by Greek architectural and artistic influences. Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C. and succeeded by his nephew Octavian, later known as Augustus, who instituted the Pax Romana, two centuries of peace during which the Roman Empire was as mighty as it would ever be. At the end of the 2nd century A.D., the Roman bishop was

made head of the new Christian religion—a position that granted him enormous power in the political

Rome's glory during the 200-year-long Pax Romana began to decline in the 3rd century A.D., when a succession of inept and corrupt emperors weakened the city. By the 4th century A.D., Rome had become very divided politically, and new administrative capitals were founded in such cities as Milan and Trier, Germany. In A.D. 395, Constantine moved the Roman capital to Constantinople (Istanbul), which left the city of Rome very vulnerable. During the 400s, it was repeatedly attacked by barbarians and in 475 completely fell to a barbarian chief, who soon after opened regions of Italy to Teutonic settlement.

Italy was briefly reunited in 800, when Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Holy Roman Emperor. But over the next century, the country disintegrated into contentious kingdoms at constant battle for control of provincial lands. Italy's turmoil continued for an astounding length of time, as different city-states waged war after war up to the early 19th century, when Napoleon took over Italy.

Despite this internal dissension and strife, Italian society and culture reached its peak during the Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries. The independent city-states formed a delicate balance of power, and affluent patrons such as the Medici family of Florence greatly supported the arts. This golden age of human endeavor and artistic creation spawned some of the greatest painters, sculptors, and inventors of Western civilization—Leonardo da Vinci, a genius in many vocations, the epitome of the Renaissance man (1452-1519); Michelangelo (1475-1564); Raphael (1483-1564); and the architect Brunelleschi (1377-1466).

After Napoleon's series of invasions, the Italian people sought to squelch foreign domination, which gave birth to the movement for political unity in Italy, known as the *Risorgimento* (Resurrection). Italian nationalism gathered broad support under the popular leader Giuseppe Garibaldi, and Italy was finally united under King Victor Emmanuel II in 1870.

The country was ruled as a monarchy and joined the Allies in World War I. Benito Mussolini rose to power during the early 1920s and ushered in one of the darkest periods in Italy's history. Mussolini ("Il Duce") organized discontented Italians into the Fascist Party to "rescue Italy from Bolshevism"—but what he actually delivered was a totalitarian state controlled by the militia. Mussolini formed an alliance with Hitler and fought against the Allies during World War II. The Italian Resistance Movement fought Mussolini and the Nazis, but their reprisals took a heavy toll: 400,000 people were killed, hundreds of thousands were left homeless, and the economy was sharply disrupted. In 1945, Mussolini was captured in Milan by Partisans and executed.

Italy was declared a republic in 1946, but during the postwar era it was seriously divided by extreme political differences. Dozens of governments rose and fell. The leading parties were the diametrically opposed Centrist Christian Democrats and the Italian Communist Party. In the 1970s, a prolonged outbreak of terrorist acts by the left-wing Red Brigades threatened domestic stability, but by the early 1980s, the terrorist groups had been suppressed.

In the early 1990s, public discontent with the government intensified due to a soaring inflation rate and disillusioning scandals that involved the Mafia and many government leaders. In 1996, Italians elected a new government dominated by a center-left coalition for the first time since the proclamation of the Italian Republic. Italy adopted the euro as its currency in January 1999. The new bills and coins started circulating in 2002.

#### **France**

Area: 211,208 square miles

Capital: Paris
Language: French

**Location:** France is a large country, two and a half times as big as Great Britain, extending for some 600 miles from north to south and from east to west. It has coastlines on both the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Its southern land border is Spain; to the north are Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany; to the east are Switzerland and Italy.

**Geography:** Except for extreme northern France, which is part of the Flanders plain, the country may be described as four river basins and a plateau. Three of the streams flow west—the Seine into the English Channel, the Loire into the Atlantic, and the Garonne into the Bay of Biscay. The Rhône flows south into the Mediterranean. For about 100 miles, the Rhine is France's eastern border. In the Alps, near the Italian and Swiss borders, is Europe's highest point—Mont Blanc, at 15,781 feet.

**Population (2007 estimate):** 64,057,790

**Religion:** Roman Catholic (85%), Muslim (7%), Protestant (2%), Jewish (1%), unaffiliated (5%)

**Time Zone:** France is ahead of U.S. Eastern Time by six hours, Central Time by seven hours, Mountain Time by eight hours, and Pacific Time by nine hours. The French use the 24-hour clock (they do not use the am and pm system): after midday, just continue counting 13, 14, and so on to provide the 24-hour clock time. For example, 1 pm = 13:00.

Holidays (nationally recognized; does not include religious, local or culturally based events):

- 01/01 New Year's Day
- 03/29 Good Friday
- 04/01 Easter Monday
- 05/01 Labor Day / May Day
- 05/08 WWII Victory Day
- 05/09 Ascension Day
- 05/20 Whit Monday
- 07/14 Bastille Day
- 08/15 Assumption of Mary
- 11/01 All Saints
- 11/11 Armistice Day
- 12/25 Christmas Day

FRANCE HAS BEEN INHABITED SINCE PREHISTORIC TIMES, evidenced by the Lascaux cave paintings in the Dordogne that date back about 25,000 years. By 10,000 B.C., human communities had migrated across the whole of France. After the ice cap receded, the climate became warmer and wetter, and by about 7000 B.C., farming and pastoral communities were springing up. By 2000 B.C., copper made its debut, and by 1800 B.C., the Bronze Age had arrived in the southeast of the country. Trade links with Spain, central, Europe, and Wessex in Britain were soon established.

When the Celts journeyed to the land they called Gaul sometime before the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C., it was occupied by Iberians and Ligurians. Greeks colonized the area around Marseille—which they called Massilia—founding the oldest city in France. And Julius Caesar conquered Gaul for Rome in 57-52 B.C. Lutecia, later to become Paris, was built by the Gallo-Romans in 52 B.C., and the great Roman Amphitheater at Arles was built in 46 B.C. During the 5th century A.D., Germanic tribes invaded, especially the Franks, who converted to Christianity under Clovis I and established the kingdom that became known as France.

On Christmas Day, 800, Charlemagne, king of the Franks, was crowned by the pope in Rome as Holy Roman Emperor, inspiring a unified national spirit across all of France. Although Charlemagne's empire was not long-lasting, it left an indelible imprint upon the French consciousness, even though the vulnerability of successive rulers allowed regional princes, such as the dukes of Burgundy and Normandy, to amass tremendous power. In 987, however, the French nobility elected Hugh Capet king of France, and from this point, French national history is generally agreed to begin. Capet helped to centralize the monarchy, led the Crusades and wars with England, and instituted the Capetian dynasty. During the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, trade prospered, craft guilds were founded, and new towns cropped up. Paris grew in importance as the royal city and as the intellectual mecca of Europe; the newly established Sorbonne (1257) drew such teachers, lecturers, and philosophers as Abelard, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas.

Unfortunately, this era of accomplishment and peace was followed by the destruction and bloodshed of the Hundred Years War of 1337-1453. At its core, the war was essentially a dynastic struggle with England, whose Norman kings held vast feudal estates in France. The series of wars ultimately benefited France, by forcing out the English and intensifying the strength of the French monarchy. Once again, as in the days of Charlemagne, the French throne exuded a powerful, almost mystic aura, this time with the aid of Joan of Arc, whose divine voices urged her to lead the French to victory at Orleans in 1429 and to champion Charles VII as king of France.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Valois and Bourbon kings continued to fortify the royal authority, moving the country toward absolute monarchy. The ironclad rule of Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin (1624-61) set the stage for their splendid successor, Louis XIV, whose reign was probably unequaled in the history of Europe for its elaborate and magnificent style. He established the Baroque power base of Versailles and introduced Europe to a gloriously gilded France—so resplendent that it earned him the title of the Sun King. His was an age of brilliant achievements in art and literature, making France indisputably the intellectual capital of Europe. French became the international language for more than a century afterward.

Ironically, the very splendor of the French monarchy helped precipitate its downfall, for it was expensive to maintain and someone had to pay. The major cause of the French Revolution was the system of special privileges that exempted nobles and clergy from the taxes paid by the peasants and the middle class. In 1789, these latter groups rebelled against the monarchy, guillotined both the king and his queen, Marie Antoinette, and established the short-lived First Republic. The chaos that followed the revolution resulted in the rise of Napoleon, who proclaimed himself emperor in 1804 and, though a dictator, undertook to spread the ideal of liberty to the world through his conquests. After his fall in 1814, the monarchy was restored.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, France alternated between democracy and dictatorship and was characterized by the steady growth of a new French Empire. A revolution in 1848 established a Second Republic, which was superseded by the dictatorship of Napoleon III, nephew of the emperor. Finally, a Third Republic was founded in 1870, during which the Impressionist school of painting emerged, as well as the Modernist movement of music and poetry, heralded by composers Ravel and Debussy and poets Mallarme and Verlaine.

From 1914-18, France fought with the Allies in World War I. Afterwards, with the Treaty of Versailles (1919), France regained the areas of Alsace and Lorraine. Between wars, France nourished major artistic and philosophical movements: Constructivism, Dadaism, Surrealism, and Existentialism.

At the beginning of World War II, France sided with the Allies until it was invaded and defeated by Germany in 1940. The French government, under Marshal Philippe Petain, a World War I hero, established a puppet government in the Vichy. On D-Day—June 6, 1944—the Allies landed on the beaches of Normandy and successfully invaded France. Additional Allied forces landed in Provence. Paris was liberated in August 1944, and France immediately declared full allegiance to the Allies. A provisional government then took power under General de Gaulle.

After World War II, the Fourth Republic was created; it collapsed in 1958 under the pressure of a revolution in Algeria. A Fifth Republic, engineered by Charles de Gaulle, was formed, and under a new constitution, De Gaulle became the first president. He resigned in 1969, after widespread disturbances were begun by student riots in Paris. In 1981, Francois Mitterrand was elected the first Socialist president of France since World War II. He was reelected to a second term in 1988. In 1995, Jacques Chirac, mayor of Paris, was elected president.

France made international headlines on the technological front in 1990, when its new TGV (*Train à Grande Vitesse*) clocked a world record of 322 mph on a practice run. Today, the TGV operates daily service between a number of destinations. In 1997, the world's largest library, the Bibliotheque Nationale Francois Mitterrand, was inaugurated in Paris, and in 1998, France hosted and won the Soccer World Cup, amid enthusiastic crowds the likes of which had not been seen since the end of the war. In 1999, France launched the euro—the single European currency—on prices in shops and restaurants (the actual euro bills and coins were introduced in January, 2002).

Despite its many modern advances, however, visitors can, for the most part, still see the country's past. The French preserve their old buildings well, whether it's the royal chateaux of Blois and Chambord in the Loire Valley or the splendid cathedrals of Chartres and Reims. The landscapes of France are captivating, from the rugged Pyrenees mountains of southern France, and the snow-covered Alps farther north, to the luxuriant vegetation and posh villas of the sun-kissed Riviera on the Mediterranean coast, to the stark, chalk cliffs of Normandy's beaches.

Two of the most appealing areas in France, Provence and the Riviera, are adjacent to one another. Sunny Provence includes towns unmatched anywhere for their charm and beauty; they are set in the craggy mountains from Avignon southeast to Aix-en-Provence. Just south and west is the Riviera, stretching along the coast from Menton to St. Tropez. This is a region beloved by modern painters like Picasso and Matisse for its dramatic cliffs overlooking the clear blue Mediterranean waters, its quaint bays and fishing villages, and its elegant villas and stylish beaches.

## Safety & Security

#### **Common Sense and Awareness**

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people. Carry a one-day supply of cash in your pocket. Carry most of your money, and your passport, in a travel pouch or money belt under your shirt. Replenish your pocket supply when you are in a safe and quiet place, or in our vehicle. You don't need to carry your passport every day; a photocopy, along with your driver's license, is sufficient.

Do not leave valuable items unattended in your room. Almost all of our hotels offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set a personal pin number). Please utilize them.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your money belt. Trains within the Cinque Terre villages are a high target for pickpockets -- you need just to be careful and carry only what's necessary for the day. Pickpockets usually get into action during train stops by exit-entrance. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful. Con artists sometimes target travelers.

### 12. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

# **Books, Maps, and Movies**

If your local store or library doesn't stock the books or movies below, the Internet offers a wide variety of options for finding older or rare stock – try AbeBooks (abebooks.com), Alibris (albris.com), Amazon (amazon.com) or Barnes & Noble (bn.com) — or any of the

smaller websites. Of course, this selection is not meant to be comprehensive, and is offered as a starting point for your research.

#### <u>Italy</u>

### The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall by Christopher Hibbert (History)

Portrays the Medici's personal lives and political squabbles, and captures the workings of Renaissance city-state politics.

#### The Italians by Luigi Barzini (Culture)

Barzini's classic book offers readers a refreshingly frank discussion of the history and culture of his homeland, past and present.

#### *Italian Backgrounds* by Edith Wharton (Travel Account)

Originally published in 1906, Wharton's travel diary still rings true in its depiction of the Italian people and culture.

#### Italian Hours by Henry James (Travel Account)

Travel essays by the famous 19th-century American novelist who absolutely adored Italy.

#### France:

#### A Year in Provence and Toujours Provence by Peter Mayle (Memoir)

Several years ago, Peter Mayle, an advertising executive, and his wife, a tax inspector, left England and moved to a farmhouse in France's Luberon Valley. In these two best-selling books, he recounts his humorous attempts to blend into the Provençal lifestyle, as well as maintain his 200-year-old "new" home.

#### **Running in Place: Scenes from the South of France** by Nicholas Delbanco (Culture)

"In this stunning evocation of Provençal culture and history, the critically lauded novelist and essayist Nicholas Delbanco captures both the immediacy of this changing region and the time-honored traditions of its past." –Amazon.com Editorial Reviews

### The Magic of Provence: Pleasures of Southern France by Yvone Lenard (Memoir/Travel Essays)

"When Lenard returned to her native France and purchased a house in a Provençal village, an enchanted world of food, wine, and unusual adventures opened up before her. This is her account of the spell cast on her by Provence...as well as tales of others who have been drawn to the region, including Vincent van Gogh, Brigitte Bardot, and Princess Caroline of Monaco. [Features] recipes for food and drinks and tips for entertaining in the Provençal style." -Amazon.com Editorial Reviews

#### A Traveller's History of France by Robert Cole (History)

Written for the general reader, this 256-page volume begins with the first conquests of ancient Gaul and continues through the Renaissance, the French Revolution, and on through the events of 20<sup>th</sup>-century French history. Includes maps and an A-Z gazetteer.

#### Blood Sisters: The French Revolution in Women's Memory by Marilyn Talom (History)

During the French Revolution, scores of female "aristocrats and bourgeoisies, royalists and republicans, as well as servants and peasants, left accounts of the turbulence they witnessed. This collection of the best of these women's chronicles...ranges from the political to the personal and eloquently attests to the human costs of radical social change." -Book News

#### *The French* by Theodore Zeldin (Culture)

A witty survey of the country of France, its people, and all things French. The author draws on comments from French men, women, children, and seniors to answer the questions foreign visitors ask most.

## **Guidebooks:**

Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.

**DK Eyewitness** – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.

*Fodor's* – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.

Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.

*Insight* – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.

Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.

*National Geographic* – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.

Rough Guides -For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

#### Maps:

Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure. This can be especially useful in a country that doesn't use the Roman alphabet as the hotel maps may only be printed in the local language.

Some recommended map series include: Rand McNally international maps (especially the *StreetWise* series), Insight's *FlexiMaps*, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

# **Suggested Movies**

Here are few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be harder to find, but they are usually available online.

#### **Italy:**

La Strada (Federico Fellini, 1954) starring Guilietta Masina, Anthony Quinn

Masina was tiny and had an almost clown-like face, like a female Charlie Chaplin. The plot is about a pair of circus performers who travel all over Italy, juggling in the street. Quinn's character is oblivious to the importance of his partner — in both life and work – until too late. One of great tragic love stories it's a lovely film that seems to define the magic of cinema.

La Dolce Vita, "The Sweet Life" (Federico Fellini, 1961) Starring: Marcello Mastroianni, Anita Ekberg

An engrossing social commentary, and one of Federico Fellini's masterpieces (though the competition is keen). It's a detailed panorama of Rome's modern decadence and sophisticated immorality, held tightly in focus by the detached, wandering protagonist through whom we see it all. (Other important Fellini films include *City of Women* and 8 ½.)

The Bicycle Thief (Vittorio De Sica, 1949) Starring: Lamberto Maggiorani, Enzo Staiola

As it follows a man desperate to retrieve the stolen bicycle that is crucial to his family's survival, De Sica's film subtly examines the human condition, society, family, justice, and anguish in the poverty of post World War II Italy. It won an Honorary Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film in 1949. (De Sica's other important films include *Umberto D.*, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, and *Two Women*.)

1900 (Bernado Bertolucci, 1977) Starring Robert de Niro, Gerard Depardieu

Bernardo Bertolucci's epic history follows the lives of two friends (one a peasant, the other a land owner) born on the same day in Italy. Their lives unfold with vivid cinematography and lush imagery of the beautiful countryside. The movie jumps forward, to the end of World War 1, and follows their story until 1945. At 5 ½ hours longs, it rewards patience.

Ossessione (Luchino Visconti, 1943) Starring Clara Calamai, Massimo Girotti

The first film based on the book *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. Set in rural Italy, it is an earthy exploration of human desire. The plot is the tale of a wandering tramp who has an affair with the wife of a restaurant owner. The two then conspire to murder her husband and attempt to live happily ever after. Often considered one of the first films of the Neo-Realism movement.

Pane, amore e fantasia (Luigi Comencini, 1953) Starring Gina Lollobrigida, Vittorio De Sica

A wonderfully innocent, sexy comedy set in central Italy in a backward and rural village. The plot is simple: a young woman is courted by a lot of admirers, including a local police chief, but the movie embodies the resilient Italian spirit, and plays to the clichés — spaghetti, sun, the cult of love, and feisty women — as it suggests the honest basis for those truisms.

Life Is Beautiful (Roberto Benigni, 1997) Starring Roberto Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi

The Jewish country boy Guido, a romantic in Mussolini's Italy raises a son in the shadow of fascism. He is determined to shelter his son from the evils around them, maintaining a ruse with comic ingenuity, even as the horrors escalate. Despite being a over the top in many instances, this is a moving and poignant tale of a father's sacrifice to save not just his young son's life but his innocence in the face of evil acts.

Tea with Mussolini (Franco Zeffirelli, 1999) Starring Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Cher

A semi-autobiographical account of Zeffirelli's life in World War II Italy. Luca, Zeffirelli's character, is raised in Florence by his absent father's secretary among a group of British and American women, who must deal with the rise of fascism, the dangers of resistance, and weather dictatorial custody and betrayal.

#### **France:**

*Paris Je T'aime* (2006, color) An unusual project that strings together 20 short films with only one thing in common—they all take place in Paris. There's some big names involved, both starring (Steve Buscemi, Juliette Binoche, Nick Nolte, Natalie Portman, Gena Rowlands) and directing (the Coen brothers, Wes Craven, Gerard Depardieu, Gurinder Chadha). Some of the films are in English and some in French with subtitles.

Amelie starring Audrey Tautou and Mathieu Kassovitz (2001, color) A romantic comedy about a girl named Amélie Poulain and her magical journey to help others and find true love of her own. This 2001 gem tells the heartwarming story of a shy waitress in Paris who decides to change the lives of those around her for the better, while struggling with her own isolation. The award-winning film from director Jean-Pierre Jeunet is a whimsical depiction of contemporary Parisian life, sure to capture the hearts of its viewers time and time again.

*Charade* starring Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant (1963, color) Newly widowed and broke, Regina Lambert (played by Hepburn) tries to find the fortune her late husband stole—before his partners in crime find it. But can she trust the mysterious man who says he's trying to help her (Grant)? It's two great stars, at their best, in Paris.

Julie & Julia starring Meryl Streep and Amy Adams (2009, color) Two stories intertwine: "Julia" focuses on Julia Child's first forays into French cooking while "Julie" is about a modern-day writer's attempt to make every recipe in Childs' first cookbook. Although only partly set in France, French cooking plays a key role in almost every scene.

**To Catch a Thief** starring Grace Kelly and Cary Grant (1955, color) A retired jewel thief tries to clear his name after a rash of burglaries on the French Rivera. Not only a good story, but also notable as the last film Grace Kelly made with Alfred Hitchcock before starting a new career as Princess of Monaco.

*The Longest Day* starring John Wayne, Henry Fonda, Robert Mitchum (1963, B&W) An epic re-telling of D-Day from the American, English, French, and German points of view. The filmmakers tried to be as authentic as possible, with actors speaking the correct native language (English, French, or German) and battle scenes that were recreated with the help of military advisors who were at D-Day themselves.

*La Vie En Rose* starring Marion Cotillard (2007, color) In an Oscar-winning performance, Cotillard transforms herself into the famous French singer Edith Paif for this biopic told as a series of non-linear flashbacks. In French with subtitles.

A Very Long Engagement starring Audrey Tautou and Gaspard Ulliel (2004, color) At the end of WWI, five French soldiers are thrown into the no-man's land between the French and German trenches. All five are declared dead, but Mathilde, the tenacious fiancée of the youngest victim, is convinced that at least one soldier is still alive. Is it her soldier? The film does a good job at balancing the sadness of WWI with humor, sweetness, and romance. In French with subtitles.

*Au revoir, les enfants* A 1987 film from director Louis Malle, about an 11-year-old boy's experience at a Catholic boarding school during the Nazi occupation of France. Rivals at first, the two students Julien and Jean Bonnet form a bond and eventually become best of friends. Julien learns that Jean is Jewish and the priests at their school are hiding him from the Nazis. On one cold morning in January 1944, the boy's friendship is cut short by a traumatic moment in history that will never be forgotten.

*Jules and Jim* This 1962 film from Director François Truffaut, is about three people in love and how their relationship evolves over the years. Set in Paris before World War I, two friends, Jules and Jim, fall in love with the same women, Catherine. This French cinematic masterpiece has it all—a dissection of the uniquely French concept: *ménage a trois*, thoughtful insights on friendship, love, and war, and an oddly endearing connection between the three.



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www.travlang.com/languages

#### Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.

www.travelite.org

#### Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe

www.cybercafes.com

#### U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel

**Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency that screens luggage in U.S.** www.tsa.gov/public

National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information

www.travel.state.gov

# **Tourist Board Addresses**

Tourist offices offer free brochures, maps, and pamphlets with information that pertains to many of your destinations. If these materials would enhance your vacation planning, you can write or call the following tourist board offices:

#### The French Government Tourist Office

444 Madison Avenue, Floor 16 New York, NY 10022 Telephone: 1-212-838-7800

#### **Italian National Tourist Office**

630 Fifth Avenue Suite 1565 New York, NY 10111

Telephone: 1-212-245-4822 or 1-212-245-5618

#### **Italian National Tourist Office**

401 N. Michigan Ave. Suite 3030 Chicago, IL 60611

Telephone: 1-312-644-0990 or -0996

#### **Italian National Tourist Office**

12400 Wilshire Blvd.

Suite 550

Los Angeles, CA 90025 Telephone: 1-310-820-0098