
**Cruising Burgundy &
Provence
to the Côte d'Azur**

RIVER CRUISE TOUR

Plus optional extensions in:

Paris, France

Nice, France

The Italian Riviera & the Cinque Terre

2015

Cruising Burgundy & Provence to the Côte d'Azur

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1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

U.S. citizens need a passport for this itinerary. Please take a 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.**

Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary:

- It should be in good condition
- 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 only:** You will need 2 blank “Visa” pages in your passport.
- **Pre- and/or post-trip extension:** No additional blank pages are needed for any of the extensions.

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 may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

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 U.S. citizens, a visa is not required for entry into France or Italy. If you are staying longer than 90 days in any of these countries, you should check with their embassy or consulate for the applicable regulations.

Onboard Ship

For your convenience your passport will be held by the hotel manager after embarkation and returned to you on disembarkation day. This is standard ship's procedure when crossing borders and during potential controls in our ports of call.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about possible visa requirements. For your convenience, we recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at 1-800-556-9990 or www.pvsinternational.org.

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, 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.)

Optional Tour—Early Purchase Required

Versailles

To reserve the Versailles optional tour you must call Traveler Support at 1-800-321-2835 by 30 days prior to departure. This tour cannot be reserved onsite.

Embark on an optional half-day excursion to the Palace of Versailles—the former home of 3,000 princes, ministers, and servants. Your guided tour will take you through the palace’s Grand Chambers, the Hall of Mirrors (where the Treaty of Versailles, ending World War I, was signed in 1919), and the Royal Chapel. You’ll take in the luminous decor in marble, chased bronze, and gold leaf, as well as Rococo-style woodwork and Italian-style painted ceilings. As you explore, you’ll discover how much the palace has been expanded and embellished since Louis XIII first built a modest hunting lodge at Versailles in 1623. You’ll also enjoy time to visit the French gardens at your leisure. The cost of this optional tour is about \$85 per person.

***Please note:** Versailles is the most visited site in France. A good deal of walking is involved—from room to room, up and down stairs, and on the uneven cobblestones of the courtyard. This tour is **not** wheelchair accessible. Visitor circulation inside the palace is carefully monitored by the staff and they may impose time limits for individual rooms. The building is not air-conditioned. Even with a reserved ticket you may encounter waiting lines at the entrance.*



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 trip.**

Pacing

- 13 days, with 7 nights aboard the *M/S Provence* or *M/S Chardonnay*, and 2 hotel stays, including a single 1-night stay

Physical Requirements

- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them throughout the trip
- You must be able to walk 1-3 miles unassisted and participate in 2-3 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 50-90°F during cruising season
- June-August are the warmest months
- March and November weather can be unpredictable and change quickly within a short period of time

Terrain

- Travel over uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones, which can be slippery in wet or colder conditions

Transportation

- Travel by 45-passenger coach and 46-passenger river ship

River Cruising

- Throughout the River Cruise season, weather conditions and tides affect European river depths; water levels may require adjustments to your itinerary

Cuisine

- Meals will be a mix of local specialties and familiar American standards
- Meals onboard feature a variety of entrée options, including vegetarian

We reserve the right for our Program Directors to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home if their limitations are impacting the group's experience.

Health Check

Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential if you want to fully enjoy your trip abroad. If you have 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.

- Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your international itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. (You can use the “Keep Your Abilities in Mind” on the previous page as a guideline to discuss with him or her.)
- You may want to have a dental exam before your trip. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling.
- 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.

Vaccinations

At time of writing, there were no required vaccinations for France or Italy. (That is, neither of those countries require proof a specific vaccination in order to enter.) However, your doctor might feel that there are some basic vaccinations that you should have updated before you travel. Or there may be vaccinations that he or she recommends for you because of your personal medical history. We suggest you consult with your own physician at least 6 weeks prior to departure, and ask about vaccinations at that time.

If you'd like to know more about possible vaccinations for this trip—or just about health in general while traveling—the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a great resource. You can contact them online or by phone.

- Online:** We suggest you visit the CDC's website at wwwnc.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.

But please keep in mind that the CDC's suggestions may not apply to you! For example, you might already have some of the vaccinations they routinely recommend. So be sure to ask your own doctor.

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.



3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS & AIR TRAVEL

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags .
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (<i>length+width+depth</i>). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches .
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
<p>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.</p> <p>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: <i>Do I feel lucky?</i> And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.</p>	

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 than 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, even on international flights. Others may 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.

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.

***TIP:** 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.*

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, which keeps a current list of restricted items.

Follow the TSA’s 3-1-1 rule for liquids: 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 throughout the world.

Locking your luggage: To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, *either* do not lock your bags when checking in for flights that originate in the U.S. *or* use TSA-approved locks. (These are locks that TSA screeners can open and relock with a special tool, avoiding damage to your luggage or lock if a physical inspection is required. Look for the words “TSA” or “TSA-approved” on the lock’s packaging.) Outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend that you lock your luggage as a preventative measure against theft.

Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with Grand Circle Cruise Line, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **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. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.
- **Overseas Arrival:** Once you arrive overseas, you'll need to collect your luggage and clear customs. A Grand Circle representative will meet you outside of customs and assist you with your transfer to the hotel or ship. **Important note on porters:** *Airport porters are NOT allowed in the baggage claim area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart, which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your transfer vehicle. Your driver will load your luggage into the transfer vehicle.*
- **U.S. Return:** If you are among a group of ten or more GCCL travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCCL 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.
- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.

Airport Transfers

If you have purchased international air with Grand Circle Cruise Line and have not customized your dates of travel, then airport transfers are included in your program price.

If you will be booking your own international flights or will be customizing your travel dates with our air department, then airport transfers will NOT be included in your program price. Transfers must be purchased separately, as an optional add-on, and are subject to availability. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Traveler Support team at **1-800-321-2835**. You can also find more information online at www.gct.com/airporttransfers. **Please note:** *You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as Grand Circle travelers who purchased included airfare, and transfers are only available the same day that the group arrives or departs.*



4. MONEY MATTERS

How to Carry Your Money

Traveler's checks—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. Most banks, post offices, or exchange offices will want to see your passport at the time of exchange. It's more practical to view any traveler's checks you might bring as a last resort in the event of a special situation.

U.S. dollars not accepted for payment: You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars in France or Italy; you will need euros instead. While there is no need to obtain euros before your trip, many travelers do exchange \$50 to \$100 or so before they arrive. This can smooth your arrival should you run into closed banks/exchange offices or broken ATMs. Once you are on the trip, you can withdraw euros from an ATM. You can also exchange money at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices. To exchange money, you'll usually need your passport, bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty); new bills (post 2004) are best. You can also exchange a small amount of money onboard your river cruise ship; see the "Onboard Ship" section of this chapter for details.

Carry a mix of local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card: You'll be well prepared if you plan on this combination for payments on your trip.

Local Currency

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.

France and Italy

The euro is the official currency of 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 euro

Banking Hours

Many banks in Europe won't exchange money unless you have an account with them, but some still provide this service for everyone. If you can't find a bank, then a post office, hotel, or exchange office (bureau de change) is a good bet.

- **France:** Banking hours in Paris are usually from 10 am to 5 pm, 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 in France usually do NOT exchange currency.**
- **Italy:** 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.

ATMs

Generally, the best, quickest, and safest way to get local currency is to use your ATM card. There are ATM machines in almost every place you will visit ashore.

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), as many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their numeric keys, they only display digits.

Note on ATM use: Many banks have begun imposing a fee ranging from \$1 to \$5 every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. You may want to limit the number of withdrawals that you make. Your Program Director/Hospitality Desk Representative can advise you on locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.

Debit Cards

Debit cards are very popular in Europe, and are widely accepted, but will *almost always* require a PIN. Many U.S. banks offer a combined ATM and debit card. Check your ATM card, and if it has a Visa or a MasterCard logo, ask your bank if can used as a debit card in Europe. (If there's no logo, then you probably can't use it as a debit card, but your bank will know for certain). If it can be used as a debit card, all you'll need is the same PIN you use at the ATM.

Credit Cards

Though major American credit cards (American Express, Visa, and MasterCard) are accepted abroad, always inquire if your type of credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase. It is also wise to notify your credit card company that you will be using your cards abroad so that they may remove any security block. When using a major credit card you may receive a different exchange rate than if you pay with cash; inquire about the rate first. Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in some restaurants or stores. Note that the Discover credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S. 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.

***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.!

Chip-and-PIN Cards

Many European countries have been phasing in a new type of credit card technology, called a “smartcard” or a “chip-and-PIN” card. These cards have an embedded computer chip instead of a magnetized strip, and the card owner authorizes a purchase by entering a four digit numerical PIN (Personal Identification Number) instead of signing a slip. Some businesses in Europe have already switched to the new system completely; some can process both smartcards and regular cards; and some haven't switched at all.

This new technology is not common in the U.S., so occasionally there may be machines that can't read U.S. cards. Or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. Although it is not common for U.S. credit cards to have PINs (and some providers will not even be able to provide one at all), requesting one prior to your departure is recommended. In some shops you will still be able to sign a slip as usual if you inform the vendor at the point of sale. And if the shop in question requires a smartcard, you can always try a different form of payment, like a debit card or cash. (U.S. debit cards usually have a PIN, so sometimes they work when credit cards don't.) Since there is no way to predict in advance what each shop will do, we recommend that you bring more than one type of payment when you go shopping. For example, a mix of a couple different credit cards, a debit or ATM card, and some cash is ideal—you'll be prepared for anything.

Onboard Ship

Two separate bills will be issued

- **Shipboard account:** This bill is for onboard purchases (drinks at the bar, gift shop purchases, laundry, etc.) and is calculated in Euros. You may pay for your shipboard account via credit/debit cards (American Express, MasterCard, and Visa are accepted,) **or** via cash. If you use cash, either Euros or U.S. dollars are accepted

Note: If you pay with a credit or debit card, you will need to sign a receipt and/or supply a PIN number, depending on the card account requirements (onboard sales terminals accept both.) *Personal checks or Discover card are **NOT** accepted.*

- **Optional tour account:** This bill is for optional tours taken during the trip; it is calculated in U.S. dollars. You may only pay for your optional tour account using credit/debit cards (American Express, MasterCard, and Visa are accepted.)

Note: Debit cards with MasterCard or Visa logos are accepted for optional tour payments, however the card must allow you to sign for purchases—you will not be able to enter a PIN. You will need to sign an optional tour form as proof of payment. *Cash, Personal checks, PIN-only debit cards, or Discover card are **NOT** accepted.*

Please note: Shipboard and optional tour account payments made by credit card may take up to 3 months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, you will not need a PIN for this payment, but the charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "**OPT Boston**" (depending on your credit card company).

Exchange Services Onboard

Onboard ship we will break down or change larger U.S. bills into smaller ones (for example, one U.S. \$50 bill into U.S. \$20, \$10, \$5, and \$1 bills), and change U.S. currency into Euros (for example U.S. \$20 into Euro €XX — depending on exchange rate). This service is available only for the Euro & U.S. dollar currencies. The daily exchange is **limited to a maximum of U.S. \$50 per person**. You can exchange larger amounts at local exchange offices in port towns. Withdrawals from your credit card cannot be made aboard ship. When ashore, the exchange rate is often very high at tourist locations and, since the adoption of the euro, smaller banks usually will not change foreign currencies.

Shopping

There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during stops at local shops and markets, 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.**

France

Perfumes, fashion, jewelry, art, glass, china, and wine—these are just a few of the many goods for which France is famous. Each region has its own specialties, many of which make their way to Paris, the shopping capital.

Paris: The big department stores in Paris are excellent places to get an idea of what's available—or to spend an afternoon if your shopping time is limited. The biggest—and best—are *Galeries Lafayette* and *Printemps*, both on the Boulevard Haussmann, near the Opera and the Madeleine. The *Prisunic* and *Monoprix* chains have lower price and are more for everyday shopping (sort of like the French version of Target).

Or, if you're looking for something in particular, you can head straight to one of the specialized shopping areas. *Haute couture* can be found in the streets around the Champs Elysées: Av. George V, Av. Montaigne, Rue Francois I, and Rue de Faubourg St. Honore. The Rue de Paradis is lined with crystal and china shops, and St. Germain des Pres has more than its share of art galleries. The best and most expensive antiques dealers are along the Faubourg St. Honore on the Right Bank. For great flea markets, head to the Marche d'Aligre (at the Place d'Aligre) or the Puces de St. Ouen (near the Porte de Clignancourt)—but keep in mind that most flea markets are open limited hours or on the weekends only, so check the hours first. While bargaining is not common in France, it is acceptable at flea markets or occasionally at produce markets.

Provence: A large selection of local products come from the region's abundant fields: fragrant lavender, which is used in sachets, beauty products, and even in food; olives for olive oil and tapenade (a type of spread similar to humus); grapes for the locally-produced rosé wines; and *herbes de provence*. The region is also known for its rustic pottery, which usually (but not always) has Provençal designs or symbols on a yellow or tan background. Anything with cicadas is popular, as their buzzing noise is so stereotypical of Provence that they have become its unofficial mascot. And don't forget the table linens, sheets, and handbags in brightly-colored printed fabrics known as *indienne* patterns—the most sought-after (and expensive) are by Souleiado.

Nice & the Cote d'Azur: 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 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. In Nice, street market shopping in La Vieille Ville is the least expensive and perhaps the most fun. Rue Massena, Place Magenta, and Rue Paradis are the pedestrian zone of shops and cafés, with Rue Paradis noted for its elegant shops.

There's also a flea market on Quai Lunel, Tuesdays through Saturdays. The avenue Jean Medecin is a prosperous high street with department stores and a pair of shopping malls—the Galeries Lafayette and the Nice Etoile. A street well worth inclusion on any round of the shops is the rue St. Francois de Paule.

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.

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 the shopkeeper or salesperson at the time of purchase. Be sure to save all receipts for Customs. (Generally, you have to spend over 175€ at the same shop, on the same day, and have filled out a special form for this process.) Note that our ships do *not* have VAT forms.

Store Hours: French stores are generally open from 10am to 7pm Monday through Saturday, and are usually closed on Sundays. In smaller cities shop close at lunch time from 12:30 to 2pm.

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.

Just like France, each region in Italy has its specialties. Liguria is known for ceramics from the craftspeople of Albisola Superiore, ship models, handicrafts, and, of course, pesto. Local street markets and stores commonly have a wealth of offerings. Bargaining is *not* common in Italy. Prices in all shops are fixed and include taxes.

Marble: Since this area is not too far from the quarries in Carrara, you may find items made from marble, which make decorative and durable souvenirs. If you’d like to purchase marble, we have one word of warning: Occasionally travelers have had their marble souvenirs confiscated by airport security in Italy. (They claim it could be used as a weapon.) So when you return to the States, pack anything made of marble in your checked luggage instead of your carry-on. That way you won’t lose your marbles at security.

Counterfeits: In some cities 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.

Store Hours: 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.

U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, www.cbp.gov has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the *export* duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the *import* duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- 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.

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.

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines. To make it easy for you to budget, we have quoted the amounts in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars.

- **GCCL Program Director:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your GCCL Program Director at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$4-\$6 per traveler for each day their Program Director is with them. *Please note that tips for your Program Director can only be in the form of cash, and local currency is appreciated. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Program Director during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard Crew:** We recommend a flat tip of \$10-\$12 U.S. per traveler, per day. You’ll give this tip once—at the end of your cruise—and it will be pooled among the entire crew. For your convenience tips for the crew can be paid with a credit card.
- **Housekeeping Staff at Hotels:** We recommend \$1 per traveler, per day. (This is for hotels only; on the ship Housekeeping are part of crew, so you don’t need to tip them separately.)
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

Time at Leisure

When you are exploring on your own, it’s useful to know when to tip and how much, because local customs often differ from the U.S. Here are a few helpful guidelines for the most common services a traveler might use:

- **Taxis:** Tipping is not customary, but many locals will round up the fare and let the driver keep the change. If the driver helps you with heavy luggage, then 10% is a nice gesture.
- **Restaurants, cafes, and bars:** Throughout Europe, the tip for the waiter or bartender is usually included in the prices or added on as a service fee. Look for a statement on the menu like *service compris* or *servizio incluso* which means “service is included”, or for a service charge on the bill. If you would like to leave a tip on top of the service fee (or in the rare case when the service is not included) then 10% would be considered generous. In Italy, you may also see the word *coperto* on your bill. This is not a tip, but more of a cover charge for the use of the table, table cloth, napkins, etc.
- **Public Restrooms:** Most public restrooms in Europe have attendants that take care of cleaning and supplies. It is customary to leave a small tip for them—usually half of whatever currency is in use in that country (i.e. half a euro)—so hold on to those coins! Some restrooms are pay-toilets; you pay the staff at the entrance to the restroom or drop the appropriate coin into the slot on the stall door. Many restaurants, cafes, and shops offer only pay-toilets or reserve their restrooms for patrons only.



5. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

In General

Travel light. A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated pants and shirts, skirts and blouses, or pantsuits that can be mixed to create different outfits.

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 online or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

Pack casual clothes. Comfortable, low-key apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations and aboard ship. Basic pants, shirts, walking shorts, sportswear, everyday dresses and skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes are recommended. At dinner, you will not need to wear "dressy" clothing; men do not need a tie or jacket. You may want one or two "smart casual" outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you. If you plan to enjoy a special dinner out in Paris or on the Côte d'Azur, a blazer or a sports jacket, trousers, and tie will get a man into finer restaurants; for women, a pretty dress or pantsuit will suffice. Côte d'Azur casinos, which you may choose to visit if you take our Nice extension, do not allow jeans or tennis shoes, but a "smart casual" outfit is acceptable. A cover charge may apply. Cameras are *not* allowed in the casinos.

For This Trip

Plan to dress in layers on shore excursions. 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 Paris and the south of France can often be very hot in July and August, with average temperatures in the 90F range.

Check the weather before you depart, but also 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. 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.

Good walking shoes are critical. This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. Supportive, waterproof sports shoes are ideal for daytime shore excursions. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. Bring five to seven pairs of socks. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes. Aboard ship, you'll want non-slip shoes with rubber soles.

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.

Travel Gear Suggestions

To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical limits of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a motorcoach, or a river ship. You'll have to distinguish between what you must have, what you'd like to have—the question isn't "Can I close my suitcase?" but "Can I carry all of this through an airport?" 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 and may even charge to check one suitcase.

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

Cabin amenities include: shower gel, hand soap, hairdryer, shower cap, nail file, washcloth, and towels. We have still mentioned some of these items in the checklists below, in case you have preferred brands you want to bring with you on your cruise.

***TIP:** Most hotels in France do not provide washcloths. You may want to bring your own.*

Consider ...

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, body soap, moisturizer, lip balm, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lens and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Sun hat or visor
- Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- Insect repellent (summer departures only)
- Travel money bag or money belt
- Pocket-size tissues
- Compact umbrella
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards (as well as the originals)
- Extra passport-sized photos
- Electrical transformer & plug adapter—see "Regional Electricity" section

Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

Other Gear

- Travel alarm
- Compact binoculars
- Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial "water-free" hand cleanser
- Hand-wash laundry soap, and *maybe* clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Washcloth
- Reading materials
- Travel journal/note pad
- Swimsuit: More useful in summer, but even at other times of year your hotel may have a pool.
- Home address book
- Phrase book
- Collapsible walking staff
- Pocket-size calculator for exchange rates



6. 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.

Paris: The City of Light has about the same weather as our Middle Atlantic States, though it's usually not warmer than 75° F, or colder than 30° F. The main characteristic of the city's weather is its changeability. Bright skies can abruptly turn cloudy and a chilly drizzle ensue; then just as quickly as the rain began, it can end, and the sun shines again.

Another volatile aspect of Parisian weather is the blasts of rapidly moving air—probably the result of a wind tunnel effect caused by the city's long boulevards being bordered by buildings of uniform height. But other than the occasional winds and rain (which add an undeniable drama to many of the city's panoramas), Paris offers among the most pleasant weather conditions of any capital in Europe, with a highly tolerable average temperature of 53°.

The early spring can still be on the cool side, but later on in the season, temperatures are usually comfortable, often reaching into the low 60s. Summers are rarely overly warm—the upper 70s is the norm—though a spell of hot weather can settle in for a few days, or even a week or two. Early autumn is slightly cooler, with temperatures edging toward the 50s. By November, it may dip into the 40s. Rain is a common occurrence year-round.

Côte d'Azur: 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 Côte 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 is a variety of fiercer winds as well. The most famous is the *mistral*, which comes tearing down from the north out of a clear sky and generally blows for several days at a time, especially during spring. *Note on summer weather: Temperatures can be rather hot in the summer, so if you are traveling in this season, be sure to take clothes that will breathe.*

Santa Marherita Ligure, Cinque Terre: The Italian Riviera is protected from cold northern winds by two mountain ranges, the Maritime Alps and Ligurian Apennines. The region has quite mild winters and bright, hot summers, and lots of sunshine all year. It has an average of 60 rainy days per year, and it rarely snows. Beaches, alas, are relatively rare.

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:

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

MONTH	PARIS, FRANCE			LYON, FRANCE		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of days with rain	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of days with rain
JAN	45-37	89-79	20	42-33	88-76	10
FEB	47-37	87-71	16	46-34	88-69	8
MAR	54-42	87-65	18	53-38	86-58	10
APR	60-45	86-58	17	58-42	84-55	12
MAY	67-52	86-57	16	67-50	85-56	10
JUN	73-57	86-58	14	73-57	83-54	9
JUL	77-60	85-54	13	80-61	81-47	7
AUG	77-60	87-51	12	79-60	85-50	8
SEP	70-55	91-59	14	72-54	90-56	8
OCT	61-49	92-69	17	61-47	91-68	11
NOV	51-42	91-76	17	50-39	90-75	12
DEC	46-38	89-81	19	44-35	88-78	11

MONTH	NICE, FRANCE			SANTA MARGHERITA, ITALY (optional extension)		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of days with rain	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)*	Average # of days with rain
JAN	56-42	67-65	8	52-39	--	4
FEB	56-43	69-63	6	54-39	--	4
MAR	59-46	70-66	7	59-44	--	4
APR	63-50	75-69	11	62-48	--	4
MAY	69-57	76-71	9	73-56	--	4
JUN	76-64	74-70	6	78-62	--	3
JUL	81-69	72-70	4	84-66	--	2
AUG	82-69	72-70	6	84-66	--	3
SEP	76-63	76-70	8	76-59	--	3
OCT	70-57	76-69	10	68-54	--	5
NOV	62-49	72-6	10	58-46	--	6
DEC	57-43	68-65	9	52-41	--	5

*data not available

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.

Weather Conditions and River Depths: Throughout the river cruise season, weather conditions affect river depths, and water levels may require adjustments to your itinerary. When river depths rise or fall during your River Cruise, Grand Circle Cruise Line will be required to adjust your itinerary for your safety and to adhere to the current governmental and nautical requirements. Navigation may also be disrupted on Bank Holidays due to closed locks. Though we strive to adhere to our planned itinerary, we may not always be able to follow it exactly as planned. Therefore the sequence of ports visited and the days on which included features and optional tours occur may vary.



7. 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.

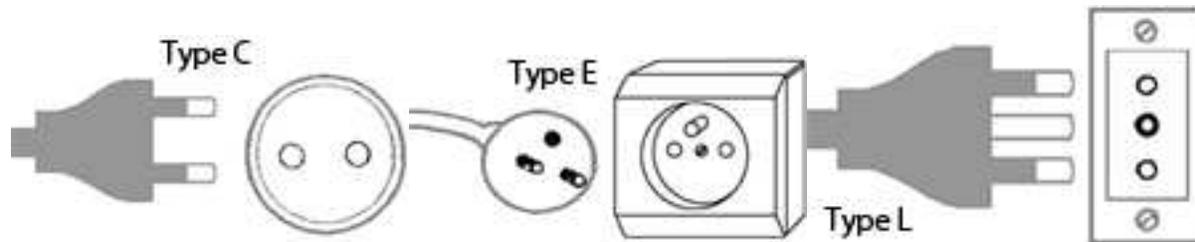
Regional Electricity

The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The overwhelming choice for the rest of the world is 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 bring *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances are inexpensive and need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) in addition to plug adapters. Regional transformer/adaptor kits can often be found at hardware or online stores but transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave those larger items at home.

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.



Electricity Onboard

On board the *M/S Chardonnay* and *M/S Provence* cabins have 220 volts, with European-style outlets.

On all ships, a *limited* number of transformers and adapter plugs are available at the ship's reception desk for occasional use. If you need these items for the duration of the cruise, we recommend you bring your own.

Because you'll need various plug types on this trip, it may be a good idea to invest in a versatile and lightweight all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, and MP3 player for instance – it's also handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressor and USB-style port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without the use of device-specific plugs.

Phones and Calling

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 the apps via 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 some cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

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 are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some places you may be charged for photography at specific sites, or restricted from any photography 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 good 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. 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 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.

8. GRAND CIRCLE CRUISE LINE'S EUROPEAN RIVER CRUISES



M/S Chardonnay and M/S Provence

The picturesque villages and vineyards along the Rhône and Saône rivers are best appreciated aboard a river ship that's as charming and welcoming as the region itself. That's why we couldn't resist the opportunity to add the *M/S Chardonnay* and the *M/S Provence* to our fleet. Carrying a maximum of just 46 passengers each, these ships provide our most intimate cruising experience yet. The *M/S Chardonnay* and *M/S Provence* were designed especially for cruising the waterways of France. The traditional décor evokes the warmth of Provence, with hand painted wooden furniture and colorful printed fabrics. In the dining room, savor true Provençal cuisine. As you cruise, you'll have ample opportunity to relax and take in the scenery, either from the Sun Deck or the lounge, with its panoramic floor-to-ceiling windows. And in the evenings, retire to your comfortable cabin, where you'll enjoy a generous 205-210 square feet of space on the *M/S Provence* or 190-210 square feet on the *M/S Chardonnay*. Best of all, because we own both ships, you're guaranteed the same high standards of comfort and service that you've come to expect aboard any Grand Circle Cruise Line river ship. We can also assure you that you'll be sharing this unique travel experience with only like-minded Grand Circle Cruise Line travelers. And when you cruise with only 46 passengers, you'll enjoy a level of camaraderie with your fellow travelers that's unsurpassed. You'll experience how this classic river cruise adventure just got even better.

Included features of the *M/S Chardonnay* & *M/S Provence*:

The River Ship:

- Restaurant with single open seating
- Open Sun Deck for prime viewing
- Bar and lounge with panoramic floor-to-ceiling windows
- Shipboard entertainment
- Smoke-free environment
- All shipboard announcements made in English

All Cabins:

- All outside cabins
- Layout of 205-210 square feet on the *M/S Provence*, 190-210 square feet on the *M/S Chardonnay*
- Twin beds and seating area
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer
- Color TV with CNN, movies, and a bow camera for ship-front views
- Ample closet and dresser space
- Direct-dial telephone

An important word: While our fleet features larger-than-usual riverboat cabins, please keep in mind that these ships are river vessels, not large ocean cruise ships. Riverboat cabins, in comparison, are relatively small, and ship amenities, in general, are comfortable but not lavish.

Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Account at www.gct.com/myaccount. However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive onboard the ship. (This is normal procedure for ships in many parts of the world, including Europe.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

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 tablecloths and china table settings. Your ship's daily service includes a breakfast buffet, lunch, and a more formal dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus for you that feature regional specialties, international cuisine, and American standards. Included with dinner are two complimentary drinks (choose from house wine, draft beer, or soft drink) per traveler, 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 €10 (Euro) 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 at meals and from the machine in the reception area.

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: 7:30-9:00 am

Lunch: 1:00-2:30 pm

Dinner: 7:00-9:00 pm

Special diets & celebrations: Special diets, such as low-cholesterol or vegetarian, can be accommodated, as well as the recognition of a 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.

Dock and Landing Etiquette

River waterways are simply not big enough to support large landing docks such as those built on ocean shorelines. It is common for river ships to tie up alongside each other at some piers—particularly in ports where docking area is restricted. While we try to arrange the most convenient mooring available in each port of call, outboard boats may occasionally obstruct views, and you may have to step across other ships when you want to go ashore.

Drinking Water

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

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.

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. Feel free to bring your own headphones or earbuds if they use the standard 3mm miniplug (used on iPods, smartphones, MP3 players etc.)

Laundry and Linen Service

Laundry service is available for a fee (currently it costs about €2 per shirt). Please note that neither self-service laundry facilities nor dry cleaning services are available. There will be one change of bed linens during your cruise. Towels are changed daily.

Medical Care

Our entire fleet adheres to stringent European safety standards. Ships feature fully-staffed reception desks for most of the day (from 6:30 AM to 10 PM) and each cabin is equipped with an emergency call button.

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.

Recreational Facilities

These include a sun deck with lounge, library, and lounge with bar. The bar is open from 10 am to 2 pm, and from 4 pm to 11 pm, with soft drinks, beer, wine, and liquors for sale. Prices are in Euros.

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.

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.

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 very expensive service (for example, a call to New York City would cost about \$3.75 per minute).

Wi-Fi Access

Limited Wi-Fi service is available for free in the lounge, library, reception and bar areas on board these Grand Circle Cruise Line ships: *Concerto*, *Harmony*, *Melody*, *Rhapsody*, *Adagio*, *Aria*, *Chardonnay*, *Provence* and the *Bizet*. Wi-Fi service is not available in individual cabins, restaurants or other common areas. 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. To use the Wi-Fi service, please visit Reception after you board for access information. 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.

Ship Specifications

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

<i>Entered service</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Passenger capacity</i>	<i>Crew members</i>	<i>Decks</i>	<i>Cabins</i>	<i>Elevator</i>	<i>Chairlift</i>
M/S Chardonnay 1999	260	28	46	14	3	27	no	no
M/S Provence 2000	292	31	46	14	3	27	no	no

Your GCCL Program Director

During your exclusive Grand Circle 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. He or she is supported along the way 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 trips, 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 a Program Director throughout your Cruise Tour (and during the optional Paris, Nice, The Italian Riviera and the Cinque Terre land extensions if you take them).



9. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your River 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.

Drinking Water

The tap water in France is safe to drink, but it is processed differently than tap water in the U.S., so some travelers find the taste a little off. Bottled water—especially French brands like Evian and Perrier—is readily available for purchase, and comes in gazeuse (“gaz-ewes”, meaning sparkling) or plat (flat; also can appear as non-gazeuse). In restaurants, if you want tap water and not bottled water, ask for carafe d'eau (“care-af doh”).

Internet Access and Email

Internet cafés are not always available, and access prices may vary. Some public places – restaurants, cafes – may provide free internet access for customers. While sailing Internet access may be unavailable, depending on locks, bridges, and regional remoteness. Internet access should be most consistently available when the ship is docked in larger cities.

Laundry Service

Laundry service and dry cleaning are available through your hotel for an additional fee.

Paris in Brief

City Layout and Details

Paris occupies 432 square miles (six more than San Francisco). In central Paris, the *Rive Droite* (Right Bank)—the shore to the right as you face downriver—is north of the Seine, while the *Rive Gauche* (Left Bank) is south of the river. Streets that are more or less parallel to the Seine are numbered from east to west, in the direction in which the river flows. On streets that are perpendicular to the river (or approximately so), the numbering starts at the river; building numbers get higher the farther away from the Seine you go. Thirty-two bridges link the Right and Left banks, some providing access to the two small islands at the heart of the city. This city center, called *Ile de la Cité*, is the birthplace of Paris and includes the sites of Notre Dame and Ile St. Louis, a moat-guarded isle with 17th-century mansions.

Between 1860 and 1870 Baron Haussmann forever changed the look of Paris by creating the legendary boulevards: boulevards St. Michel, St. Germain, Haussmann, Malesherbes, Sebastopol, Magenta, Voltaire, and Strasbourg. The "main street" on the Right Bank is, of course, the Champs-Élysées, beginning at the Arc de Triomphe and running to the Place de la Concorde. Haussmann also created Avenue de l'Opéra (as well as the Opéra), and the twelve avenues that radiate star-like from the Arc de

Triomphe, giving it its original name of Place de l'Etoile (renamed Place Charles de Gaulle following the general's death). Today it is often referred to as Place Charles de Gaulle Etoile.

Haussmann also cleared *Ile de la Cité* of its medieval buildings, transforming it into a showcase for Notre Dame. Finally, he laid out the two elegant parks on the western and southeastern fringes of the city: Bois de Boulogne and Bois de Vincennes.

Paris has been divided since 1860 into 20 *arrondissements* (districts), which spiral out from the center of the city like a clockwise snail. Each district has its own city hall, police station, and main post office. All addresses include the *arrondissement* number (written in Roman or Arabic numerals and followed by "e" or "er").

Cuisine

Paris is one of the culinary capitals of the world. Whether you opt for just a croissant and café au lait or splurge on an epicurean feast, this is the city in which to indulge all your gastronomic dreams. Remember, too, that there is no such thing as "Parisian" food; rather, Paris is the city in which you can try regional delights from Provence, Alsace, Normandy, Brittany, and many other places. Not to mention the vast array of international restaurants that are available, which enable you to choose from virtually every type of cuisine—from superb pasta and Asian stir-fry to exquisite Middle Eastern couscous and Indian curries.

Regardless of the cuisine you select, a meal without wine is like a day without the sun, say the French, who are the greatest producers and the greatest consumers of wine. The general subtlety and quality of French wines cannot be equaled elsewhere. The best-known wines come from Burgundy, Bordeaux, and the Rhône Valley. A very popular and inexpensive red wine, excellent with red meat and most cheeses, is Beaujolais. For a reasonable dry white wine, good with seafood and white meats, try Muscadet or Chablis.

Important Note: Dining out in Paris can be expensive, even at moderate restaurants. Bistros feature a la carte menus and are less expensive. The ubiquitous baguette sandwich is even cheaper still! Your Grand Circle Program Director can advise you on eating establishments that offer good food at the best price, or if you feel like a splurge, on gourmet restaurants that feature fine French cuisine.

Laundry Service

Self-service laundromats are available in Paris. The cost is approximately \$10 U.S. to wash and dry one load of clothes. Your hotel also provides laundry services, but the fees are very high. It's much less expensive to launder your clothes yourself.

Local Transportation

The underground Metro operates from 5:30 am to 1:15 am. It is clean, quiet, and easy to use. The different lines are identified by numbers and the names of their terminals at either end. Every station has clear directional maps, some with push-button devices that light up the proper route after a destination button is pushed. Keep your ticket (you may need it to exit the station; and you will need it when you exit the RER – the rapid transit network – station). A ten-ticket book (*carnet*) is available at a reduced rate and is valid for Metro, RER and buses.

Taxis can be found at stands at main intersections, outside railway stations, and in the streets. Fares increase at night. The green light on the roof signifies availability.

Nice in Brief—Optional Extension

City Layout and Details

The city is one big easy-to-scan color postcard: the lapis lazuli of the Bay of Angels (Baie des Anges), the activity of the Vieux Port, and the timelessness of the towering Castle (Chateau)—the name given to the hill, with ruins of an old fortress, that looms over the harbor. Along the bay runs the fabled promenade des Anglais, a broad seafront avenue that resembles a mile-long outdoor café. At one end of the promenade is the popular Place Masséna—semitropical gardens set against crimson buildings and graceful arcades. Avenue Jean Medecin is the main Street; it bisects the city with a straight line from Place Masséna to the railroad station.

The old city, La Vieille Ville, is a little piano-shaped quarter—all narrow and cobbled—that huddles in the shadow of the Chateau. La Vieille Ville's boundaries are the quai des Etats Unis and the boulevard Jean Jaurés beside the Paillon River, which is covered in parts by esplanades and divides the old town from modern Nice to the west.

Cuisine

The cuisine of Nice and the Côte d'Azur is characterized by that delicious southern mix of olive oil, garlic and fresh tomatoes, onions and anchovies, and black olives. These ingredients constitute the base for many of the local fish and meat specialties. The key cooking-style words are Provençal and Niçois. 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 shellfish (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 Côte 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 niçoise*—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 iced 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 rosés) are just that. Or try a glass of Bandol rouge (red), blanc de Provence (white), or Bellet (red or white).

Local Transportation

The town center is compact and easily accessible by foot. Many areas have become pedestrian zones, such as Rue Masséna and some of its cross streets, as well as numerous streets in La Vieille Ville. You can hop on a bus for outlying districts, such as Cimiez, at the Place Masséna. The central station for the urban bus network is at 10 Avenue Felix-Faure (Traverse Flandres Dunkerque). Nearby, the main station for regional buses is the *Gare Routiere* (Bd. Jean Jaurés and Promenade Paillon). Boats operate from Nice to Marseille, from St-Tropez to the charming Hyeres Islands, and from Antibes, Cannes, and Juan-les-Pins to the Lerins Islands. The operator is SNCM (*Societe National Maritime Corse-Mediterranee*)

The Italian Riviera & the Cinque Terre in Brief—Optional Extension

City Layout and Details

More relaxed and casual than other nearby destinations, Santa Margherita Ligure is an ideal base for day trips in the Italian Riviera. The town offers everything a Riviera playground should: palm trees lining the harbor, cafés that spill out into the seaside squares, local shops and a marina packed with yachts. The city sparkles with a blend of architectural styles, colorful buildings (some with typical *trompe l'oeil* frescoes,) olive groves and a 16th century castle built to protect the town against African pirates.

Located between Rapallo and La Spezia, the Cinque Terre is a rugged portion of coast on the Italian Riviera. "The Five Lands" area is composed of five villages spread along the litoral: Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola, and Riomaggiore. The coastline, villages, and surrounding hillsides (as well as three small islands) are all part of the Cinque Terre National Park, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The area is largely inaccessible to cars, and was historically visited mainly by sea, until the Genoa-La Spezia railway—connecting the villages via local walking paths—was built in the 1870s.

Stacked high on the rugged cliffs, houses were built in terraces over the centuries, creating small towns that slip colorfully down to the sea in a jumble of tilted, multi-story abodes. Each town has its own particular flavor, but all share a charming, lambent glow as they preside over the sea below. Their isolation and lack of modern day clutter and “improvements” have made them particularly popular with visitors.

Cuisine

The ancient Romans were the originators of the first fully developed cuisine of the Western world. Drawing on an abundance of fine, natural ingredients from the fertile Roman countryside and influenced by Greece and Asia Minor, they evolved a gastronomic tradition still felt in kitchens the world over.

Traditional Italian cooking is quite like the Italian people themselves—robust and hearty. Popular ingredients include any combination of tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, onions, celery, parsley, seafood, parmesan cheese, mozzarella cheese, chicken, and, of course, every type of pasta, from spaghetti and fettuccine to penne and ravioli. Seasonal vegetables include yellow, red, and green sweet peppers; eggplant; mushrooms; green and broad beans; zucchini; asparagus; and artichokes.

While pesto is perhaps the best known regional specialty, Liguria’s cuisine is varied, with an emphasis on fish—appropriate for a region that stretches along the coast from the French border east and south to La Spezia along the Ligurian Sea. You’ll also find local dishes from the mountains that protect the coastal region from the chilly north winds.

Locally, *trenette* (a thin ribbon style pasta) is the traditional pasta served with *pesto alla genovese*. The dish is called *trenette al pesto*, and can include potatoes and green beans. Trenette can also be served with clams, mussels, and a host of other seafood options. Pesto might simply be spread on a slice of bread, and is used as a garnish on Genoese minestrone soup.

Popular local seafood includes anchovies, mussels from La Spezia, tuna and less frequently crab, octopus and lobster. *Capon Magro*, once a staple food of fishermen is made from salted rock fish between ‘sailors’ bread (hard bread, soaked in vinegar) and topped with vegetables.

As everywhere in Italy, olive oil is essential to many local dishes, and the terraced slopes of the Ligurian hills produce high quality oil. One Ligurian pasta is known as *trofie*. It's a short, pencil sized curly pasta twisted like a unicorn's horn and pointed at both ends, made from a paste of flour, water, salt and chestnuts. *Croxetti*, another pasta variant, are round pasta discs, like medallions, stamped with decorative patterns.

Away from the coast chestnuts, ground into flour or dried for stews, were long a traditional ingredient. Meats, like wild boar and veal, are also available in the hills.

Local Transportation

Trains service most of the coastal towns around the Gulf of Tigullio, and buses are even more convenient. Taxis are available as well. From April through September there is a ferry service between the towns of Portofino and Cinque Terre with stops in other small maritime villages along the Gulf of Tigullio as well. Rental cars are also available--you don't need an international driver's license in Italy, but you must be over 21.

In the villages of the Cinque Terre you'll have to rely on your feet for transportation – trains stop at paths that lead to coast, but there are no cars or buses to get you there. The walk is usually less than a mile or so.

Drinking Water

Water in Italy is generally safe, but as an added precaution against stomach upset, we recommend you drink bottled water as often as possible. Pure mineral water is sold everywhere in 33 centiliter and 1½-liter clear-plastic bottles. Another choice for water is mineral soda (carbonated mineral water). If you're out of bottled water, hotel tap water is okay to drink, but it may taste unpleasant due to heavy chlorination.

Hotel Courtesy

Italian hotels do not allow food and beverages to be taken from their breakfast rooms, nor is it courteous to eat or drink food or beverages purchased elsewhere in hotel common rooms. In conformity with municipal laws to promote urban decorum, hotels do not allow hanging laundry on room balconies. Travel clotheslines, used in your bathroom, are a more private and effective solution.

Laundry Service

Your Program Director or concierge can assist you with making arrangements for these services.

10. DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

France

Area: 248,573 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: 66,259,012

Religion: Roman Catholic (83-88%), Muslim (5-10%), Protestant (2%), Jewish (1%), unaffiliated (4%)

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.

National Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
04/03	Good Friday
04/05	Easter Sunday
04/06	Easter Monday
05/01	Labor Day / May Day
05/08	WWII Victory Day
07/14	Bastille Day
08/15	Assumption of Mary
11/01	All Saints
11/11	Armistice Day
12/24	Christmas Eve
12/25	Christmas Day

Historical Overview

France has been inhabited since prehistoric times, as is 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 7th 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 12th and 13th 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 16th and 17th 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 unequalled 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 19th 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 Mallarmé 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 Pétain, 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, François 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 Bibliothèque Nationale François 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 châteaux 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.

Italy

Area: 116,345 square miles

Capital: Rome

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

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: Campania (the region of Naples, Sorrento, and the Amalfi coast) has 220 miles of coastline and is on the southwestern side of the Italian peninsula. Its two famous gulfs, the Bay of Naples and Gulf of Salerno, are enclosed by picturesque promontories, including the Sorrento Peninsula. The town of Sorrento, about 32 miles south of Naples, spreads out along the crest of its fabled cliffs, which offer spectacular views of the Bay of Naples.

The region of Tuscany is a blend of rugged hills, fertile valleys, and long stretches of sandy beaches that curve along the west coast of central Italy and fringe the pine-forested coastal plain of the Maremma. The cities and towns of Tuscany house the centuries-old heritage of culture and art that produced magnificent medieval cathedrals and the marvels of the Renaissance.

Population: 61,680,122

Religion: Christian 80% (overwhelmingly Roman Catholic with very small groups of Jehovah's Witnesses and Protestants); Muslim (about 800,000 to 1 million), Atheist, and Agnostic 20%

Time Zone: Italy is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Rome. Daylight Saving Time begins the last weekend in March and ends the last weekend in October.

National Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
01/06	Epiphany
04/03	Good Friday*
04/05	Easter Day
04/06	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

**NOTE: Good Friday is technically not a national holiday. But given the large number of Catholics in Italy, it is widely observed.*

Historical Overview

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 arena.

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. The political scandals, coupled with widespread institutional changes radically altered Italian politics. Some political parties dissolved completely, while brand new parties formed; new alliances were also forged. One such alliance led to the election of media mogul Silvio Berlusconi as Prime Minister in 1994. But within a year of his taking office, Berlusconi was forced to resign when one of the allied parties withdrew its support. He ran again in 2001 and was reelected, setting up a pattern that was to dominate Italian politics for decades: elect Berlusconi, have him resign, reelect him. In total, Berlusconi has been Prime Minister three times (1994-1995, 2001-2006, and 2008-2011) and came within 1% of winning a general election in 2013.

During this time Italy also made changes to its currency, adopting the euro in January, 1999. The new bills and coins started circulating in 2002. Recent years have also seen the country take on many peacekeeping missions for the U.N., including sending troops to Somalia, Mozambique, East Timor, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Albania; Italian soldiers also joined U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

11. 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 (alibris.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.

France:

Paris to the Moon by Adam Gopnik (Travel Essays)

A self-described “comic-sentimental essayist,” Gopnik spent the years from 1995 to 2000 in Paris writing the “Paris Journals” for the New Yorker. Collected here are his most charming, insightful, heartfelt, and humorous dispatches on the Parisian people, culture, food, economy, and lifestyle.

Paris in the Fifties by Stanley Karnow (Memoir)

The passions, the jazz, the wine, and the personalities of postwar Paris come to life in this vibrant portrait from a Pulitzer Prize-winning author who was there.

A Moveable Feast by Ernest Hemingway (Memoir)

Personal reminiscences and sketches of Paris, which Hemingway created during his time there between 1921 and 1926.

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 20th-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.

My Life in France by Julia Child with Alex Prud'homme (Memoir)

Memoir of the famous chef's first, formative stay in France in 1949. Child describes herself as a "rather loud and unserious Californian," without a word of French. She enrolled at the Cordon Bleu and toiled with increasing zeal and competence. With the bestselling *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (1961), she revolutionized the American idea of cooking. This memoir recalls gorgeous meals in bygone Parisian restaurants, and reveals the personality and some of the secret arts of a culinary genius.

Italy

Desiring Italy edited by Susan Neunzig Cahill (Travel Account)

A collection of writings penned by 31 renowned women authors, each inspired by her experiences in Italy. Edith Wharton writes on Rome, George Eliot on Florence, Shirley Hazzard on Naples.

History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Edward Gibbon (History)

A landmark scholarly work ever since it was written in the 18th century. Coverage extends from the 2nd century A.D. to the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

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.

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.

A Short History of Italy by H. Hearder (History)

A concise chronology of Italian history from the Ice Age to the present.

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.

Italian Hours by Henry James (Travel Account)

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

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 U.S. may be hard to find, but they are usually available online. Lists are highly subjective – and choosing the best of French films in under fifty pages is a fool's errand. If your favorites are missing, start a chat with fellow travelers and you'll likely find even more treasured movies to share.

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.

Midnight in Paris. (2011, color) A romantic comedy/fantasy written and directed by Woody Allen. The film follows Gil Pender, a screenwriter, who is confronts the shortcomings of his relationship with his materialistic fiancée. Their divergent goals, become increasingly exaggerated as he travels back in time each night at midnight. The movie explores themes of nostalgia and modernism.

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 Riviera. 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 Piaf 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 à trois*, thoughtful insights on friendship, love, and war, and an oddly endearing connection between the three.

The Intouchables A 2011 film directed by Olivier Nakache and Eric Toledano, starring François Cluzet and Omar Sy. Sy, as Driss, a Senegalese man living in a slum outside Paris gets a job as caretaker to Philippe – a quadriplegic. Blending comedy and poignancy the film conveys both Philippe's desire not to be pitied and Driss' guileless honesty. The subject does not suggest a comedic masterpiece, but audiences in France and everywhere else have loved its gentle touch.

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 1/2*.)

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 (Bernardo 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 I, and follows their story until 1945. At 5 1/2 hours long, 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.

The Great Beauty (Paolo Sorrentino, 2013) Starring Toni Servillo, Carlo Verdone, Sabrina Ferilli

Author, journalist, socialite, and wit—Jep Gambardella has been them all. But after his 65th birthday he ends up wandering the streets of Rome, taking stock of his life and his extravagances. Known in Italian as *La Grande Bellezza*, this film won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 2014.

Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer a wealth of information:

Visit the Grand Circle Community website for a world of travel news and information:

www.gct.com/community

Government websites:

International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.

www.tsa.gov/public

National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information

www.travel.state.gov

General travel information websites:

Travel books

www.amazon.com

www.barnesandnoble.com

World weather

www.intellicast.com

www.weather.com

Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages

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

Electric current and plug types

www.kropla.com/electric2.htm

Foreign exchange rates

www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM locators

www.mastercard.com/atm for **Cirrus ATMs**

www.visa.com/pd/atm for **PLUS ATMs**

Country information:

visiteurope.com/ **Links to countries**

www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html

Tourist information: France

www.franceguide.com

www.francetourism.com

www.franceway.com

www.francekeys.com

Tourist information: Paris

www.paris.org

www.paris-touristoffice.com

www.smartweb.fr/paris

Tourist information: Burgundy/Rhone

www.lyon-france.com

www.burgundy-tourism.com

Tourist information: French Riviera & Provence

www.avignon-et-provence.com

www.cannes-on-line.com

www.provence.guideweb.com

Tourist information: Nice

www.nicetourism.com

Tourist information: Italy

www.italiantourism.com **Italy**

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.

www.tsa.gov/public

National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport and visa information

www.travel.state.gov