

Grand Circle Cruise Line[®]

THE LEADER IN VALUE AND WORLDWIDE DISCOVERY SINCE 1958

Your Grand Circle Travel Planning Guide



The Seine: Paris to Normandy 2025

Grand Circle Cruise Line®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with Grand Circle Cruise Line. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

When you cruise with us, you can expect an award-winning experience aboard our privately owned river ship. In addition to the convenience of unpacking just once, you will also enjoy the warm hospitality provided by our friendly, English-speaking crew, coupled with camaraderie of your fellow American travelers.

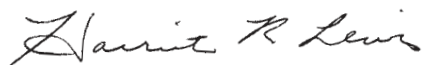
In addition, up to four **expert, local Program Directors** will accompany you from the beginning of your trip to the end. Assigned to a group of 38 travelers on average, these passionate leaders are ready and eager to share their homeland and insights as only a local can. Whether it is recommending their favorite restaurant, connecting travelers with people and culture, or providing the best ways to enhance your leisure time, your Program Director will be available to take care of all the details and ensure that you have a fun and carefree travel experience. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Throughout your journey, you will experience Exclusive Discovery Series events designed to connect you with local people and culture. From sharing traditional fare and lively conversation during Home-Hosted Visits, to discussing Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, you will gain an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our low-cost Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the **87% of our travelers who personalize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-2610**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis
Chair
Grand Circle Cruise Line

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M/S Bizet river ship, Seine River

The Seine: Paris to Normandy

France: Paris, Conflans, Vernon, Giverny, Les Andelys, Rouen, Honfleur, Normandy beaches

13 days starting from \$3,995

including airfare

Single Supplement: **\$995**

For departure dates & prices, visit

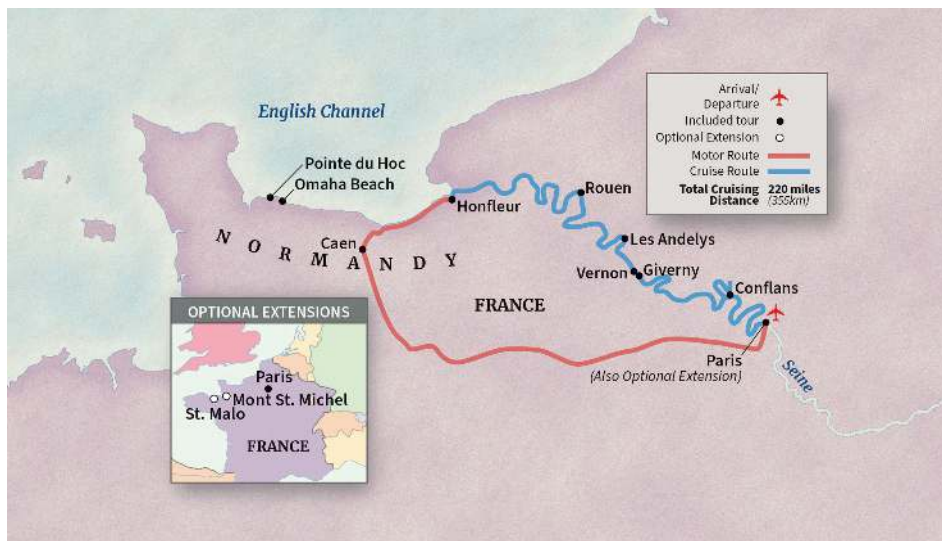
www.gct.com/sen2025pricing

Embark on a Seine River Cruise from Paris to the heartland of France, sailing for **10 nights aboard the privately owned 120-passenger M/S Bizet**. Witness the iconic sites of Paris, visit the lovely landscapes of Giverny, and experience a full day of D-Day discoveries.

IT'S INCLUDED

- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges, unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- **Accommodations** for 10 nights aboard the M/S Bizet
- **30 meals:** 11 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 10 dinners—including 1 meal in a local restaurant—plus all onboard house beer, wine, and soft drinks
- **8 included tours** with personal headsets and **5 Exclusive Discovery Series events**—French language lesson • Impressionists conversation • Home-Hosted Visit • Cooking demonstration • French cheese tasting
- **Local Program Directors, a Grand Circle Cruise Line exclusive:** Our dedicated experts are with you and your group of 38-45 travelers from beginning to end to provide an insider's knowledge and perspective
- **Gratuities** for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- **All port charges**
- **Baggage handling** for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- **5% Frequent Traveler Credit** toward your next trip

Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.



ITINERARY SUMMARY

1 • Depart U.S.

2-4 • Paris, France

Embark ship
Port Paris

5-6 • Conflans • Vernon

Ports Conflans • Vernon

7-9 • Les Andelys • Rouen

Ports Les Andelys • Rouen

10-11 • Honfleur

Port Honfleur

12 • Honfleur • Roissy

Disembark ship

13 • Return to U.S.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 2 3 4 5 Easy

Group Size

- This trip has a group size of 35-42 travelers with our local Program Director exclusive to Grand Circle

Pacing

- 12 days, with 10 nights aboard the M/S *Bizet*, and a 1 single-night hotel stay

Physical Requirements

- Walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 2-3 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs
- 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
- We reserve the right for Program Directors to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send

travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

Terrain & Transportation

- Unpaved roads, hilly terrain, and uneven walking surfaces, including slippery cobblestones, stairs, and sand
- Travel by 120-passenger river ship, and 49-seat coach
- Changes in water-level depths may require adjustments to your itinerary

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 50-80°F during cruising season
- July-August are the warmest months
- March and November weather can be unpredictable and change quickly

MAXIMIZE YOUR DISCOVERIES & VALUE

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

all with FREE Single Supplements

Paris, France

PRE-TRIP: 3 nights from **\$1,095**

Brittany & Mont St. Michel, France

POST-TRIP: 4 nights from **\$1,095**

The Seine: Paris to Normandy

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR TRIP WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

3 nights in *Paris, France*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Paris, France

Day 3 Paris • French Cabaret Dinner & Show optional tour

Day 4 Paris • Optional Champagne region tour

Day 5 Paris • Join main trip

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart today on your flight to Paris, France. Please refer to your individual air itinerary for exact departure and arrival times.

Day 2 Arrive in Paris, France • Embark ship

- Destination: Paris
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *Bizet*

Activity Note: Our ship may be docked inside or outside of greater Paris, and changes to docking location may occur last minute. Please reach out to your Program Director before departure for details.

Morning/Afternoon: Arrive in Paris this morning or in the early afternoon. A Grand Circle representative will meet you at the airport and assist with your transfer to your ship. If you began your discoveries early with our optional pre-trip extension to *Paris, France*, you will join your main group today.

Upon arrival, unpack, settle in, and explore your ship. You have the balance of the day to do as you wish. Your Program Director can lead an optional orientation walk of the area this afternoon upon request. Afterwards, return to the ship for a Welcome Briefing.

Before dinner, gather for a Welcome Drink onboard in the lounge and your first Port Talk—a nightly feature of your River Cruise Tour, designed as an opportunity for your Program Directors to prepare you for the following day's discoveries.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge.

Day 3 Explore Paris • Captain's Welcome Dinner

- Destination: Paris
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *Bizet*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Spend the morning exploring Paris—discovering both the city's classic highlights and more intimate neighborhoods. First, you'll depart for panoramic bus tour, witnessing the Eiffel Tower, among other iconic sights, from different perspectives. Then, disembark and get a sense of daily life in Paris during a walking tour of one of the city's residential neighborhoods.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations. Perhaps you will take a taxi back to the Eiffel Tower to enjoy yet another perspective of the iconic structure—standing at its base.

Before dinner, gather in the ship's lounge for a Welcome Drink to celebrate the beginning of your journey. Then settle in for a Port Talk with your Program Director.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: Your evening onboard is at your leisure.

Day 4 Paris • Montmartre • French language lesson

- Destination: Paris
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *Bizet*

Activity Note: All sailing times will depend on the tide and will vary by departure.

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Set off to explore Montmartre this morning, one of the most famous and lively of the city's 20 *arrondissements* (districts). Our drive there will take us along the famed Champs-Elysees, where you'll witness the Arc de Triomphe (commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 and completed in 1836), which stands at the end of the Champs-Elysees at a large central roundabout where twelve elegant, tree-lined avenues converge. Connecting these iconic landmarks are the banks of the Seine River—Paris's only UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Upon arrival, you'll arrive in Montmartre and begin a walking tour with your Program Director and a local guide. Afterwards, spend some free time strolling the charming streets of this romantic neighborhood, and witness the famed Sacre Coeur Basilica, with its dramatic perch on the top of the Montmartre hill. Delight in the views of Paris below, and watch the street artists at work or browse the local shops for a special keepsake to bring home.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: The afternoon is free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations. You may wish to experience Paris like a local and sip coffee at an outdoor café as you watch the bustle of everyday life all around.

Later, gather in the ship's lounge for our nightly Port Talk.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: After dinner, prepare yourself for the local connections you'll make on your journey along the Seine during an **Exclusive Discovery Series** French lesson. The remainder of your evening is at leisure as our ship begins sailing towards the charming port town of Conflans.

Day 5 Conflans • Optional *Path of Van Gogh* tour • Impressionists conversation • Vernon

- Destination: Conflans
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *Bizet*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Disembark your ship and enjoy a short walking tour of Conflans with your Program Director. Afterwards, the rest of the morning and afternoon are free for your own discoveries.

Long known as the capital of France's inland waterways, Conflans is also called the "capital of barges." Its picturesque harbor is lined with an array of barges—most serving as private houseboats—among which you can find the fascinating chapel boat, *Je Sers*, and a floating chocolate shop—both of which you may choose to visit. Take a leisurely stroll along the river or a more invigorating walk up to the ruins of the medieval castle that looks over the town, depending on how active you'd like to be today. You may also choose to take one of the ship's bikes and explore like a local.

Or, you may instead opt to join our optional *Path of Van Gogh* tour, departing after breakfast. Begin your travels driving through the landscapes that inspired Vincent van Gogh. The Seine, the Epte, and the Oise—three French waterways referred to as the "Rivers of Light"—neighbor each other in this region, and it was here that Van Gogh created many of the works that have become recognizable worldwide. Upon arrival, you'll meet a local guide who will take you to see the location of his final resting place in the simple and quaint town that inspired much of his work. After our visit, you'll drive back to the ship, arriving time for lunch.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: At leisure for an afternoon of scenic cruising. Later, gather in the lounge and take part in an **Exclusive Discovery Series** event, an onboard conversation about Monet, providing historical context for tomorrow's tour of Giverny.

Before dinner, take part in our nightly Port Talk in the ship's lounge.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: Tonight, enjoy onboard musical entertainment in the lounge.

Day 6 Vernon • Giverny • Optional Châteaux de Villarceaux tour

- Destination: Vernon
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *Bizet*

Activity Note: The tour of Monet's home and gardens is not available on March or November departures. We will offer a walking tour of Vernon and a cider tasting in Giverny instead. Travelers on select July departures will experience an alternate itinerary, sailing instead to Les Andelys for a discovery walk instead of the features listed below.

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: This morning, disembark for an excursion into the countryside to see the lovely landscapes that inspired Claude Monet. He first witnessed the village of Giverny while looking out a train window in 1883, and the unique light of the Seine Valley kept him in residence for 43 years. He stayed here until his death in 1926, and you'll find his grave in the family vault at the town's Romanesque church.

Explore the artist's home and gardens, left by his son Michel to the Academie des Beaux-Arts in 1966 and now a museum dedicated to the great painter. The house is furnished as it was

when the leader of the Impressionist School lived here, including his precious collection of Japanese engravings.

The gardens have been replanted, and as you stroll through them, you'll see with your own eyes the landscapes that have graced countless Monet paintings. You'll spot the familiar Japanese bridge and water garden shaded by weeping willows, its pond still full of the water lilies that so permeated his work. "I want to paint like the birds sing," Monet said. Perhaps you'll agree that the idyllic setting in Giverny would lend itself to his dream.

After your visit, we'll drive back to the ship.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: After lunch, take a discovery walk of Vernon, led by your Program Director.

Later, enjoy a free afternoon, or join us for an optional tour of Villarceaux, a sprawling, historic estate set amidst the lush environs on the edge of the town of Chaussy. The domaine consists of two châteaux, and a resplendent water garden, featuring fountains, waterfalls, and lakes as well as a variety of colorful flowers and plants.

Explore the estate on a guided tour, which will include opportunities to interact and share some light refreshment with some of the locals who make their living here.

As the optional tour concludes, you'll drive back to the ship in time for dinner.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll relax in the lounge and listen to your Program Director share traditional French fairy tales.

Day 7 Vernon • Les Andelys • Rouen

- Destination: Les Andelys
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S Bizet

Activity Note: Travelers on select July departures will experience an alternate itinerary, featuring a full day of discoveries in Rouen, including a Home-Hosted meal.

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Your ship will depart Vernon for Les Andelys this morning. Upon arrival, set off for a walking tour of this quintessential French village on the banks of the Seine and take in views of Chateau Gaillard. Then enjoy free time for independent exploration.

Then, return to the ship for an onboard Nautical Talk in the lounge with your Captain.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure. Before dinner, gather for our daily Port Talk aboard the ship.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: Enjoy a nightcap onboard as the ship's lounge is transformed into a French *guinguette*, a traditional French bar and oftentimes dance hall.

Day 8 Rouen • Home-hosted Visit

- Destination: Rouen
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S Bizet

Activity Note: The order of activities on Day 8 in Rouen and Day 9 in Honfleur may vary depending on the tide. Travelers on select July departures will experience an alternate itinerary instead of the activities below, sailing to Honfleur and enjoying a discovery walk with your Program Director.

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Set out with your Program Director and a local guide for a walking tour of Rouen, the capital of Normandy. This important French commercial center brimming with half-timbered houses has a distinguished history dating to pre-Roman times. But it is more infamously known as the city where Joan of Arc was imprisoned, tried for heresy, and burned at the stake in 1431. Here you'll see the 14th-century abbey where she was sentenced to death, and visit the Market Square where her execution took place. During your free time after your tour, you may want to delve deeper into the tragic life of France's sainted martyr and heroine of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) with a visit to the Joan of Arc Museum.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: This afternoon, depart for an **Exclusive Discovery Series** Home-Hosted Visit in Rouen. You'll break into smaller groups and join a local family for *goûter*—an after-school treat enjoyed by French children. This also serves as an opportunity to learn more about life in rural France.

Afterwards, you'll return to the ship. Our daily Port Talk will be held onboard before dinner.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge.

Day 9 Rouen • Cooking demonstration • Honfleur

- Destination: Rouen
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *Bizet*

Activity Note: Travelers on select July departures will experience an alternate itinerary with different features than those described below, and will instead have a full day of discovery in Honfleur.

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: This morning you can choose to join your Program Director on a discovery walk where you'll delve further into the Rouen's culture. If the town's market is open today, we might pay a visit to get a sense of the hustle and bustle of the flow of commerce, and to see how many treasures we can find among the stalls.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: Enjoy a relaxing afternoon of river cruising during which you can partake in two **Exclusive Discovery Series** events. First, learn how to prepare a few of France's culinary delights as your ship's chef demonstrates cooking techniques. Then, savor local delicacies and regional wines during a gourmet tasting experience.

Spend the rest of the day at leisure onboard as you sail to Honfleur, your final port of call. Our daily Port Talk will take place in the lounge.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: Head to the lounge after dinner to enjoy a special performance by your crew.

Day 10 Honfleur • Normandy beaches

- Destination: Honfleur
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S Bizet

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: This morning, set out for a full-day tour of D-Day discoveries. The D-Day landings, code-named “Operation Overlord,” were the largest military campaigns in recorded history with the beaches of Normandy bearing the brunt of the invasion. Beginning at 6:30am on June 6, 1944, nearly 7,000 landing craft hit the highly-fortified coastline. Those vessels carried tens of thousands of soldiers from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and many other Allied nations, all of whom arrived determined to carry out General Eisenhower’s order, “Full victory—nothing else.”

During the day, you’ll also visit Pointe du Hoc—a site all Normandy veterans know well—where Allied forces scaled 328-foot cliffs as they sought to silence German artillery. Then, walk down to Omaha Beach for an up-close look at where the first Allied footing was achieved in German-occupied France. When they arrived on shore, the Allies were met with a deafening barrage of German gunfire. As Nazis soldiers shot from secure concrete pillboxes built high above the open sand, Allied fighters were mowed down while exiting the Higgins boats and wading to shore. In time, some doggedly made it to the ridge overlooking the beach, finding shelter from the hail of enemy bullets. More than a thousand Allied troops died on Omaha Beach alone.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: After lunch, continue to the American Military Cemetery. You’ll see a monument honoring the fallen, witness a

memorial ceremony, and visit the cemetery of Colleville sur Mer, where 9,386 American soldiers were laid to rest.

Afterwards, we’ll drive back to the ship. Later on, gather in the ship’s lounge for our daily Port Talk.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: The remainder of the evening is at leisure.

Day 11 Honfleur • Optional Cliffs of Étretat tour • Captain’s Farewell Dinner

- Destination: Honfleur
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S Bizet

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Take part in a walking tour of the well-preserved port town of Honfleur, founded in the eleventh century, with your Program Director. Situated on a Seine estuary opposite Le Havre, the town was once one of the most important ports in France. Many voyages of discovery were launched from here, including the journey of native son Samuel de Champlain—who went on to found Port Royal in Nova Scotia and the settlement of Quebec in Canada. The port changed hands frequently between France and England during the Hundred Years’ War and was finally won back by France in 1450. In the 1800s, Le Havre displaced Honfleur as a major port.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: You’ll have time to continue exploring the coastal charms of Honfleur on your own for the rest of the day.

Or, you may choose to join a half-day optional excursion to the beautiful cliffs on the Normandy coast at Étretat. The White Bird Monument was erected on top of the cliffs to

mark the last place the “White Bird” airplane was seen. In 1927, a pair of French WWI heroes attempted to make the first non-stop flight from Paris to New York City, but the plane mysteriously disappeared somewhere over the Atlantic, never to be seen again. After exploring the monument, you’ll descend the cliffs to enjoy a discovery walk to the beach with your Program Director and during free time, or you may want to take the Petit Train to the top of one of the cliffs on your own. Or, your Program Director will take interested travelers on a walk to the top of a nearby cliff. Later, enjoy a walking tour of the town.

Afterwards, all travelers will meet in the ship’s lounge for a Farewell Drink, followed by our final Port Talk.

Dinner: Enjoy a Captain’s Farewell Dinner onboard the ship.

Evening: Spend the rest of your evening as you wish. You may want to gather with your new friends in the lounge to share memories and toast to your enriching Seine River Cruise Tour.

Day 12 Honfleur • Disembark ship • Caen Peace Memorial Museum • Roissy

- Destination: Roissy
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Oceania Paris Roissy CDG or similar

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Disembark your ship today and transfer to the Peace Memorial Museum in Caen, a state-of-the-art facility that vividly presents the events of World War II, including D-Day. It’s an excellent way to put into context what you saw at the Normandy beaches.

Lunch: On your own at the memorial—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Afternoon: Continue explorations of the museum on your own. Then, drive to the hotel near Charles de Gaulle Airport for a final night in France before your return flight. Take some time to settle in before joining your Program Director for a vicinity walk.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 13 Paris • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: Included at the hotel this morning.

Morning: After breakfast, transfer via motorcoach to the airport for your flight home. Or further your discoveries with our *Brittany & Mont St. Michel, France* post-trip extension.

END YOUR TRIP WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

4 nights in *Brittany & Mont St. Michel, France*

Day 1 Honfleur • St. Malo

Day 2 St. Malo • Optional Dinan tour

Day 3 St. Malo • Mont St. Michel

Day 4 St. Malo • Roissy

Day 5 Paris • Return to U.S.

OPTIONAL TOURS

During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with us. We will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form and swiping your credit card at the ship's front desk. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept MasterCard and Visa on all trips, and Discover on all trips except river cruises in France. We also accept Visa and MasterCard debit cards, but it must be a debit card that allows you to sign for purchases.

In order to correctly process these charges, there can be a delay of 2–3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2–3 months following your return.

Please note: Optional tour prices are listed in U.S. dollar estimates determined at the time of publication and are subject to change. Optional tours may vary.

Château de Malmaison

(Day 4 \$95 per person)

This optional tour visits the Château de Malmaison, private residence of Napoleon Bonaparte and Joséphine from 1799 to 1814. Located about a half-hour outside Paris, Napoleon's "place in the country" was also used as one of the seats of the French government from 1800 to 1802. Malmaison remained a private home renowned for the beauty of its gardens filled with rare plant species, until the death of Joséphine in 1814. A museum was opened at the estate in 1905. You'll enjoy a guided tour of Malmaison before returning to our ship in time for dinner.

Please note: This optional tour must be purchased in advance of your departure, and is not available on July departures.

If this optional excursion is not available, travelers will instead visit the Château de Champs-sur-Marne, an 18th century estate once home to such famous residents as the Marquise de Pompadour.

Path of Van Gogh

(Day 5 \$75 per person)

Led by a local guide on this optional walking tour of Auvers-sur-Oise, you'll see the final resting place of Vincent van Gogh in the quaint town that inspired much of his work. Along the way, discover the various places that inspired the famed Dutch post-impressionist who moved to the south of France in 1888, such as the Auvers Church and the artist's residence.

Châteaux de Villarceaux

(Day 6 \$95 per person)

Discover Villarceaux, a sprawling, historic estate set amidst the lush environs on the edge of the town of Chaussy. The domaine consists of two châteaux, and a resplendent water garden, featuring fountains, waterfalls, and lakes as well as a variety of colorful flowers and plants. Explore the estate on a guided tour, which will include opportunities to interact and share some light refreshment with some of the locals who make their living here.

The Cliffs of Étretat

(Day 11 \$80 per person)

Explore the picturesque cliffs of Étretat this afternoon. First, you'll discover the White Bird Monument, erected on top of the cliffs to mark the last place the "White Bird" airplane was seen. In 1927, a pair of French World War I heroes attempted to make the first non-stop flight from Paris to New York City, but the plane mysteriously disappeared somewhere over the Atlantic, never to be seen again. After exploring the monument, you'll descend the cliffs to explore the sandy beaches. Later this afternoon, enjoy a walking tour of the town.

PRE-TRIP

Paris, France

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » Accommodations for 3 nights
- » 3 breakfasts
- » 2-day Metro pass
- » Dedicated services of a local Program Director
- » Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » All transfers

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Often referred to as the “City of Lights,” the French capital is one of Europe’s most stunning and influential metropolitan centers, featuring renowned landmarks and world-famous art museums—combined with romance, style, and a certain je ne sais quoi that make it one of the world’s leading travel destinations.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart today on your flight to Paris. Please refer to your individual air itinerary for exact departure and arrival times.

Day 2 Paris, France

- Destination: Paris
- Accommodations: Hôtel Rochechouart or similar

Morning/Afternoon: A Grand Circle representative will meet you at the airport and assist with your transfer to your hotel. The balance of the day is yours to relax after your overseas flight.

You might choose to join your Program Director for an orientation walk (available on request) to get better acquainted with the area around your hotel. Then, celebrate your arrival in France with a Welcome Drink and briefing.

Dinner: On your own. Your Program Director can suggest places to dine this evening in the “City of Light.” Be sure to order a cheese plate after your meal—France is famous for their wide variety of delectable cheeses and sampling them after your main course is quintessentially French.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 3 Paris • French Cabaret Dinner & Show optional tour

- Destination: Paris
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hôtel Rochechouart or similar

Activity Note: The traditional cabaret performance is intended for an adult audience, and includes some nudity. This optional tour is

not available in August. The cabaret is closed on Tuesdays; this optional tour may be featured on an alternate day.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Begin the day with a discovery walk of Paris with your Program Director. Then, you're free to use your included Metro pass to discover all this culture-rich city has to offer. Perhaps you'll trace Paris' past at the ornate Renaissance-style Hotel de Ville, built in the 14th century when Paris moved its location from two islands on the Seine to the mainland.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations. Maybe you'll opt for a cozy bistro and sit down to a hearty meal of steak-frites.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations. You might choose to explore the Place des Vosges, one of the city's oldest squares.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Or, join us for an optional outing to a lively French Cabaret Dinner & Show.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of the evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 4 Paris • Optional Champagne region tour

- Destination: Paris
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hôtel Rochechouart or similar

Breakfast: Included at the hotel.

Morning: Begin a full day on your own to explore Paris in depth. Stroll along the celebrated Champs Elysees or perhaps view the famed Arc de Triomphe.

Or, you may choose to join us for an optional full-day tour of the Champagne region.

Lunch: On your own. Or, for those who choose the optional tour, you'll savor lunch at a local restaurant—a typical French brasserie.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of the evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 5 Paris • Join main trip

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy some free time this morning, preparing yourself for the next part of your journey. Then transfer to your river ship and begin your *Seine: Paris to Normandy River Cruise Tour*.

OPTIONAL TOURS

French Cabaret Dinner & Show

(Day 3 \$235 per person)

During your evening outing to the Latin Quarter, delight in a Parisian cabaret performance that features the famed Cancan dance, and find out why this kind of theater has been celebrated for so many years—in France and throughout the world. Your excursion includes dinner at the theater.

Please note: *This traditional cabaret performance is intended for an adult audience, and includes some nudity. This optional tour is not available in August. The cabaret is closed on Tuesdays; this optional tour may be featured on an alternate day.*

The Champagne region

(Day 4 \$220 per person)

This morning, join us for an optional full-day tour of the Champagne region. First, you'll arrive in Reims, where you'll savor lunch at a typical French brasserie. You'll then see Reims' magnificent cathedral. Reims is one of France's most important centers of champagne production, and the tour ends with a visit and tasting at a well-known cellar.

POST-TRIP

Brittany & Mont St. Michel, France

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » Accommodations for 4 nights
- » 6 meals: 4 breakfasts and 2 dinners
- » Included tours with personal headsets: St. Malo • Mont St. Michel • Chartres Cathedral
- » Dedicated services of a local Program Director
- » Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » All transfers

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Off the coast of France, surrounded by swirling seas, a magnificent cathedral rises from the rock: Mont St. Michel. Discover this ancient abbey—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—as well as the idyllic village of the same name, plus Brittany’s verdant landscapes and unique blend of Celtic and French cultures.

Day 1 Honfleur • St. Malo

- Destination: St. Malo
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel de Courtoisville or similar

Activity Note: The first day of this extension will overlap with the Day 12 of the main trip.

Afternoon: After visiting the Caen Memorial on Day 12 of *The Seine: Paris to Normandy*, you’ll transfer to the beautiful, Celtic-flavored region of Brittany. Nestled between the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay, the peninsula known as Brittany was once its own kingdom. Brittany has long inspired painters and poets, with its pink granite coast, and lush countryside studded with manors, chateaux, and fortified villages.

Arrive and check in to your hotel in the historic port town of St. Malo. As early as the Middle Ages, St. Malo controlled the flow of boat traffic in both directions: from the sea to the River Rance and vice versa. Holding such power went

to the heads of its rulers, who for three years declared St. Malo its own country—not subject to France, nor even Brittany.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations. St. Malo’s restaurant options are plentiful and many offer fresh seafood options such as *moules mariniere*.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 2 St. Malo • Optional Dinan tour

- Destination: St. Malo
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel de Courtoisville or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Head to the city center today and embark upon a walking tour with a local guide to discover all that St. Malo has to offer within its ancient walls. A highlight of your discoveries will be a visit to the home of a *corsair*. The *corsairs* attacked the vessels of other nations, often plundering some or all of their bounty, but the *corsairs* weren't officially pirates because they had letters of authorization from the King of France himself. Building elaborate mansions (including one the size of a city block) to display their wealth, the *corsairs* were truly a class unto themselves, as you'll discover during your visit.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Or, if you've elected to take our optional tour, enjoy lunch at a local crêperie.

Afternoon: The remainder of the day is yours for discovery at your own pace. Perhaps you'll choose to stroll through the grey granite arch of Porte St. Vincent into the Old Town at Place Chateaubriand, where shops and cafes line the streets facing the castle. Or, join our optional tour to visit medieval Dinan.

Dinner: Included at a local restaurant.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 3 St. Malo • Mont St. Michel

- Destination: Mont St. Michel
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel de Courtoisville or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Head to the tiny town of Mont St. Michel, connected by causeway to the mainland and home to only a few dozen

full-time residents. Upon arrival, enjoy an included guided tour of the medieval town and its eleventh-century Romanesque Abbey, world-famous for its dramatic clifftop perch, as well as its rich history. Breton legend has it that the archangel Michael appeared to Aubert, the local bishop, in AD 708 and demanded that a church be built on this stony promontory, but Aubert—somehow unfazed by the appearance of a celestial visitor—said no. Aubert changed his mind, so the story goes, when Michael burned a hole into the bishop's skull with one finger. The first structure was built soon after, and was then expanded dramatically in the eleventh century, taking the striking form we see today. You may decide for yourself whether the finished Abbey resembles a mostly closed fist with the spire as one extended angelic finger.

Lunch: Enjoy lunch on your own in St. Michel. Try local favorites, such as an omelette Mont St. Michel or fresh salmon.

Afternoon: After lunch, continue to the quaint fishing port of Cancale. Whether you stroll along the rocky jetty or peruse the crates of dripping wet, fresh mollusks set up streetside by local vendors, there's no escaping the rich bounty of the sea.

You'll return to St. Malo and arrive back at the hotel. Once there, enjoy a Farewell Drink at the hotel with your fellow travelers.

Dinner: On your own. Your Program Director can provide suggestions.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 4 St. Malo • Roissy

- Destination: Paris
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Oceania Paris Roissy CDG or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy a visit en route to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Chartres Cathedral today. Take part in a brief orientation walk of the area with your Program Director before lunch.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations. Perhaps you'll try a local dish such as *Poule au Pot*, chicken boiled with broth and vegetables.

Afternoon: Take part in a guided visit of Chartres Cathedral. Since the majority of its construction in the late twelfth century, the cathedral has remained largely unscathed by the ravages of time, nature, and even the French Revolution. When you explore it today, and soak in its elegant flying buttresses or its

150 stained glass windows, you will witness much the same view that greeted pilgrims 800 years ago. Be sure to note the striking labyrinth pattern on the cathedral floor; though some theorize that it was once used for ritual purposes, the labyrinth's true origins remain mysterious to this day.

Continue to Roissy, arriving late this afternoon to check into your hotel.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 5 Paris • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Dinan

(Day 2 \$85 per person)

Stop by a local creperie in St. Malo for a glass of cider and a classic Breton crepe. Then, visit medieval Dinan and embark on a guided tour of the town, featuring its ramparts and towers. You'll learn about Dinan's history, including its strategic location on the Rance River.

YOUR SEINE RIVER SHIP

Sail aboard our privately owned 120-passenger M/S *Bizet*

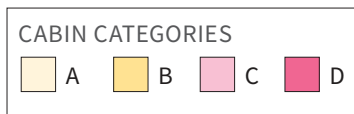
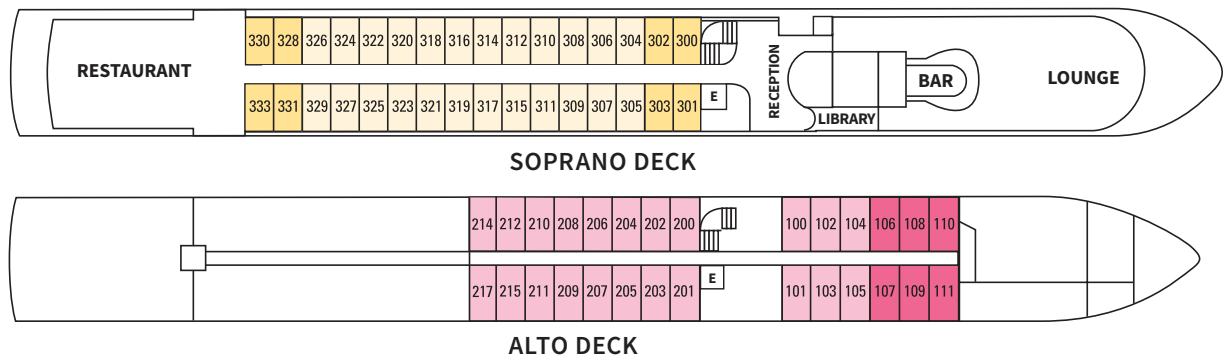
Designed specifically for traversing the Seine River, the M/S *Bizet* provides a relaxing and comfortable cruising experience between Paris and Honfleur. This ship carries three groups of up to 38–45 American travelers, each accompanied by a dedicated local Program Director.



SHIPBOARD FEATURES

- **Dining room with single, open seating:** Enjoy fine cuisine in your ship's dining room.
- **Bar & lounge:** Relax with friends old and new.
- **Complimentary beverages:** Enjoy house beer and house wine—as well as soft drinks—at any time of day while onboard.
- **Complimentary wireless Internet access:** Connect online in cabins and common areas. Please note: Wireless Internet access may be limited at certain points throughout your River Cruise.
- **Sun Deck:** Sit outside and enjoy the view as your ship navigates the Seine's gently winding waters.
- **English-speaking crew:** Our staff is dedicated to your comfort, and all shipboard announcements are made in English.
- **Smoking/non-smoking:** Smoking is not permitted indoors, but is permitted on the Sun Deck.
- **Shipboard security:** Shipboard radar ensures safe navigation and night and in low visibility; safe docking space; onboard security staff; state-of-the-art fire safety system; and secured entryway doors.

M/S BIZET



Registry: Malta

Width: 38 ft

Length: 366 ft

Passenger capacity: 120

International crew: 33

Decks: 3

Number of cabins: 60—all outside

Elevator: Yes

CABIN FEATURES

- Outside cabins with a river view
- Cabin sizes are approximately 160-sq.-ft. Soprano Deck cabins include a private 16-sq.-ft. balcony with table and chairs
- Two stationary twin beds converted to sofas each day, and back to beds each evening
- All cabins have a wardrobe and a drawer, and luggage storage space under the beds
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer, shampoo, and soap
- Individual heating & air conditioning controls
- Flat-screen color TV & radio, including CNN, movies, and a “view from the bow” camera looking from the front of your ship



Admire the scenery along the Seine from your comfortable cabin.

- Direct-dial telephone; emergency call buttons
- In-room safe
- All non-smoking cabins

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

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

Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this vacation.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 2 blank passport pages.
- **Optional extensions to Paris or Brittany:** No additional blank pages needed.

Visa Required

We’ll be sending you information with detailed instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure. In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This info is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Europe (France):** Starting in 2025, U.S. citizens will be required to fill out an online European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) visa-waiver to enter countries in the European Union. There is no confirmed start date for the ETIAS at the time of printing. The ETIAS will be valid for 3 years.

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 visa requirements. 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**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities in Mind

Please review the information below prior to departing on this vacation. *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.*

GROUP SIZE

- This trip has a group size of 35-42 travelers with our local Program Director exclusive to Grand Circle

PACING

- 12 days, with 10 nights aboard the M/S Bizet, and a 1 single-night hotel stay

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 2-3 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs
- 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
- We reserve the right for Program Directors to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Unpaved roads, hilly terrain, and uneven walking surfaces, including slippery cobblestones, stairs, and sand
- Travel by 120-passenger river ship, and 49-seat coach
- Changes in water-level depths may require adjustments to your itinerary

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 50-80°F during cruising season
- July-August are the warmest months
- March and November weather can be unpredictable and change quickly

Health Check

Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential 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 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.

No Vaccines Required

Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: travel.state.gov (Select “Find International Travel Information” then select “Country Information”; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Your Health Abroad” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.

- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-321-2835**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Water

Unless you know that your stomach is particularly sensitive to changes in diet/water, tap water in France and on board your ship is perfectly fine to drink.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler's checks are not recommended.** They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's more practical to view them as a last resort in the event of a special situation.
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need euros instead

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

Euro Countries: European Euro (€)

How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

On your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2004) are best.

Please note that many banks in Europe will only exchange money for their own customers. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1-\$5 each time you use a foreign ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

Credit & Debit Cards

Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although the Discover card is accepted in some countries outside the U.S., it is not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

France: Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in France. For small purchases or markets, you may need cash instead.

Using Your Credit Card in Europe

Most of us are used to credit cards with the embedded computer chip (the ones you insert instead of swiping). In Europe—where they've had this type of card longer than us—these credit cards usually require a PIN (personal identification number) to make a purchase. And in contrast, most U.S. credit cards either do not require a PIN or don't have one. So what do you do if you want make a purchase with your credit card in Europe?

Don't worry. 90% of the time you won't need to do anything special. You'll insert your card and the purchase will go through as normal. Often you won't even be asked to sign anything.

But bring more than one form of payment with you. For those rare cases when your credit card doesn't work, the best plan is to already have a backup form of payment with you. Debit cards are a good alternative as they have a PIN. And there's always cash.

Consider asking your credit card company. You can try contacting your credit card company before you leave to see if they will issue you a PIN. Many won't—but at least you'll know. You could also try looking at their website to see if they have guidance about getting a PIN.

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

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

You should also double-check what phone number you could 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.!

Onboard Ship

Two Separate Bills Will be Issued

- **Shipboard account:** This bill is for any on board purchases (drinks, souvenirs, etc.) and is calculated in euros. This bill is payable at the front desk by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept euros. For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, Discover, and American Express, are not accepted.
- **Optional tour account:** This bill is for any optional tours taken during the trip and is calculated in U.S. dollars. This bill is paid with your Program Director (they will have you fill out a form) by credit/debit card only; other forms of payments such as cash and checks are not accepted. For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.
- *Please note: Due to limitations with Discover Card in France, we cannot accept it as payment for onboard purchases or for optional tours on river cruises in France.*

Payments made by credit card may take up to three 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, the charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as “OPT Boston” (depending on your credit card company).

Exchange Services: Policy Update

Due to international banking laws, we are no longer able to exchange money onboard the ship. If you need to obtain local currency, please see the “How to Exchange Money” section for helpful tips and information.

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. For those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines. All tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (this is usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars. Do not use personal or traveler’s check for tips.

- **GCCL Program Director:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Grand Circle Program Director at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$7–\$10 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person 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. 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. **Policy Update:** *Due to international banking laws, we are no longer able to process crew tips on a credit card; crew tips can only be in the form of cash.*

- **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:** 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* 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 1-2 euros would be considered generous.
- **Public Restrooms:** Most public restrooms in Europe have attendants that clean and stock the 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, half a pound)—so hold on to those coins! Some restrooms are pay-toilets; you pay the staff at the entrance or drop the appropriate coin into the slot on the stall door. Many restaurants, cafes, and shops offer pay-toilets only or reserve their restrooms for patrons only.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Personalized Air:** You booked international air with us, and have customized it in some way. If you have customized your trip's dates to arrive early, stay longer, or stop on your own in a connecting city, airport transfers will NOT be included. You must also arrange your own accommodations for any additional nights. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at www.gct.com/myplanner under "My Reservations".

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.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45–30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as GCCL travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-321-2835**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: **www.rome2rio.com**

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your vacation by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved onsite can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard and Visa on all trips, and Discover on all trips except river cruises in France. We can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.) We do not take Amex, cash, or checks for optional tours.

- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as “OPT Boston”.
- We will give you details on the optional tours while you’re on the trip. But if you’d like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.gct.com/myplanner).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone is “unlocked”, meaning it can accept a local SIM card. If your cell is “unlocked” then you will be able to purchase a local SIM for it and then buy minutes with “Pay as You Go” cards, so that you have a local contact number for your friends and family.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype or FaceTime. These services are usually less expensive than making a traditional call, but you’ll need a Wi-Fi connection and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards & 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.). One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

Internet Access and Email

Some public places—restaurants, cafes, hotel lobbies—provide complimentary wireless Internet access (WiFi) 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.

Receiving Calls from Home

To ensure you are available during your trip to friends and relatives at home, you will receive two copies of your hotel list, including phone numbers, with your Final Documents. One copy is for you to bring, and one is to leave behind with friends or relatives in case they need to contact you during the trip.

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

France: +33

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

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 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags.
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). 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	
Same 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>Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>	

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.

- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.
- The luggage limits above are based on your regional flights, which may be less than your international flights. Even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions.

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, 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.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light:** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.
- **Pack casual clothes:** Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. At dinner, you will not need to wear “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you.
- **Consider clothing designed for travel, sports, or camping:** With modern fabrics, lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy.
- **Plan to dress in layers on shore excursions.** Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions: warm days with sun, chilly temperatures with showers, and evenings that could dip into the 40s or 50s, depending on your travel season.
- **Bring rain gear:** Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.

- **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. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. 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.

What to Bring

We have included suggestions from former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. We recommend using www.weather.com and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

Your cabin already has: Shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer, soap, body lotion, shower cap, and towels. **And don't forget a reusable water bottle**—you'll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

Recommended Clothing

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- ☐ Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- ☐ Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Socks and undergarments
- ☐ A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year

Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, skin care products, etc.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ☐ Sunglasses with a neck strap
- ☐ Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- ☐ Travel money bag or money belt
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor

- ☐ Pocket-size tissues
- ☐ Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial hand lotion
- ☐ Light folding umbrella
- ☐ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- ☐ Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards
- ☐ Electrical transformer and 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
- ☐ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- ☐ Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- ☐ Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

Electricity

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

Voltage

Aboard the ship, cabins are equipped with 220-volt outlets. In your bathroom you will find a 110-volt outlet; this outlet is only for low-voltage appliances, like electric shavers. (Your bathroom also comes equipped with a hair dryer).

Electricity in France and the United Kingdom is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Plugs

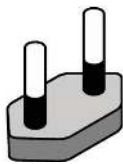
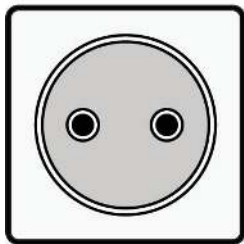
The shape of plugs will vary from country to country. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B; standard European plugs are Type C, E, and F. **Of the three, a Type C adapter is the most useful as it fits into Type E and F sockets.** Type C is usually what is sold in stores as a European adapter.

Aboard ship, the plugs in your cabin bedroom are Type C.

For your reference, here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

France: C and E

Type C



CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Paris, France: 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 begins it will end.

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 in the 90s can settle in for a few days, or even a week or two in July and August. 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.

Saint Malo, France (Brittany): Situated in the northwest of the France on the Atlantic coast, Brittany is exposed to a variable climate. Average temperatures from mid-May to mid-September are in the high 60s to low 70s. Off season, spring and autumn temperatures average in the high 50s to low 60s. For this coastal climate it's advisable to dress in layers and keep rain gear handy—even in summer months.

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. Though we strive to adhere to our planned itinerary, we may not always be able to follow it exactly as planned. The sequence of ports visited and the days on which included features and optional tours occur may vary.

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **www.weather.com** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

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

MONTH	PARIS, FRANCE			ROUEN, FRANCE		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High- Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	45 to 37	89 to 79	20	44 to 34	93 to 84	17
FEB	47 to 37	87 to 71	16	45 to 34	91 to 77	14
MAR	54 to 42	87 to 65	18	51 to 38	92 to 70	15
APR	60 to 45	86 to 58	17	57 to 41	91 to 64	13
MAY	67 to 52	86 to 57	16	63 to 47	92 to 66	13
JUN	73 to 57	86 to 58	17	69 to 51	93 to 67	13
JUL	77 to 60	85 to 54	13	73 to 55	93 to 63	13
AUG	77 to 60	87 to 51	12	73 to 55	94 to 62	13
SEP	70 to 55	91 to 59	14	67 to 51	96 to 69	16
OCT	61 to 49	92 to 69	17	59 to 46	96 to 78	16
NOV	51 to 42	91 to 76	17	50 to 39	95 to 84	17
DEC	46 to 38	89 to 81	19	44 to 35	93 to 87	16

MONTH	HONFLEUR, FRANCE			SAINT MALO, FRANCE		
	Temp. High- Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	45 to 40	--	27	46 to 32	--	19
FEB	53 to 42	--	12	49 to 32	--	16
MAR	54 to 44	--	25	56 to 35	--	17
APR	58 to 44	--	18	60 to 38	--	18
MAY	62 to 51	--	9	69 to 46	--	17
JUN	66 to 56	--	10	75 to 52	--	16
JUL	72 to 61	--	16	79 to 55	--	15
AUG	70 to 60	--	10	79 to 54	--	16
SEP	67 to 55	--	10	71 to 47	--	17
OCT	63 to 51	--	16	63 to 44	--	19
NOV	52 to 44	--	18	51 to 36	--	20
DEC	50 to 45	--	24	46 to 33	--	19

ABOARD YOUR SHIP: CABIN FEATURES, DINING & SERVICES ON BOARD

M/S Bizet

The Bizet's design incorporates suggestions from Grand Circle Cruise Line travelers—and it offers a host of amenities to make you feel right at home. Designed to carry no more than 120 passengers, the ship's size ensures the ease of maneuverability that's so important when entering small river ports. Amenities include a restaurant with panoramic windows, sun deck with lounge chairs, a library, bar, lounge, dance floor, and small souvenir shop.

Included features of all Grand Circle Cruise Line European river ship cabins:

- A layout of at least 150 square feet
- All outside cabins
- Individual climate control (heat and air conditioning)
- Twin beds that ship staff convert into a daytime couch
- Storage space under beds of 57 inches x 22.8 inches x 11.8 inches (length + width + height)
- Sufficient closet and dresser space
- Color TV, including CNN programming and a bow camera for ship-front views
- Direct-dial international telephone
- Hair dryer
- Desk
- Private bath with shower

Cabins on the Soprano deck have small balconies with sliding door; those on the Alto deck have two picture windows. For safety reasons, cabin windows do not open.

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, and white-linen 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. Complimentary house wine, house beer, and a selection of soft drinks are included. In addition, a selection of other fine wines and beer is available for purchase, starting at approximately \$23-40 per bottle (prices vary according to vintage). 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 per bottle, charged to your cabin 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: 6:30-7:30 am
- Breakfast: 7:00-9:00 am
- Lunch: 12:30-2:00 pm
- Dinner: 7:00-8:30 pm

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

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

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

Embarkation/Disembarkation

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

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.

Headsets

During your trip, complimentary headsets, or Whispers receivers, are provided on our guided tours through the cities we visit. These receivers and headsets allow you to hear your Program Director and our local guides better. If use a hearing aid or have strong preferences for headphones, we highly encourage you to bring your own headsets/ear buds with you. The plug size is usually the same as that used by iPods, computer jacks, etc.

Wireless Internet Access

Limited Wireless Internet service is available for free in the cabins and common areas on board your Grand Circle Cruise Line ship. If you want to use the Wireless Internet connection you'll need to bring your own device (laptop/tablet/netbook) — ships do not rent or loan these devices. To use the Wireless Internet 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.

Laundry & Linen Service

Laundry service is available for a fee (currently it costs about 2 euros 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. In addition to an emergency call button in all cabins, ships also feature fully staffed reception desks, 24 hours a day.

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, library, and lounge with bar and dance floor. The bar is open from 9 am to 11 pm, and features both complimentary drinks (soft drinks, house beer, house wine, and non-alcoholic cocktails/beer) and drinks for purchase (spirits, alcoholic cocktails, bottled beers, and a selection of wines). Prices are in Euros.

Bicycles

We're pleased to offer complimentary bicycle rentals onboard your ship for use during free time, including all of the necessary safety gear, such as a helmet, brightly-colored safety vest, and a lock. Because there is a limited supply of bicycles available, they will be offered on a first-come first-served basis. For more information or if you are interested in using one of the bicycles, please speak to the Front Desk staff or Hotel Manager onboard your ship.

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. 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). (Phone Calling Cards cannot be used over the ship's phone system.)

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

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

Elevator/Chairlift

The ship has an elevator, which runs between the Alto and Soprano Decks. A chairlift operates from the Soprano Deck to the sun deck (or you can use the staircase to the sun deck, which has one flight of 10-12 steps). The chairlift is a single-seat transport that slides up the staircase banister.

Shore Excursions

Many sightseeing tours are included on your cruise. 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.

Lost & Found

Any lost or forgotten items found on board the ship will be held for 90 days from disembarkation. After 90 days, all unclaimed items will be discarded or donated.

Ship Specifications

M/S Bizet

- **History:** Built in 2002
- **Size:** 366x38 ft
- **Capacity:** 120 passengers, 34 crew members
- **Layout:** 60 cabins, 3 decks; Elevator–yes

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

Your Program Director

Grand Circle Cruise Line is committed to showing you a destination through the perspective of those who live, work, and play there. How better to do that than to have a resident with you every step of the way? We are proud to be the only cruise line to provide you the dedicated services of an expert Program Director, a resident or native of the country who is delighted to share their in-depth knowledge of local history, culture, and hidden gems.

Fluent in English and skilled in fostering camaraderie among travelers, our Program Directors are constantly cited by our travelers as the main reason they continue to travel with us. During your cruise, you'll enjoy multiple Program Directors aboard your ship, who will each be with you and your group of 25–47 travelers throughout your journey—both on ship and on land. And with personal headsets on every included and optional tour, you'll be able to enjoy their perspective and enthusiasm as you explore at a level deeper than most Americans go.

French Culture

It would be hard to find someone who was not familiar with at least some aspects of French culture. Few nations have surpassed France's legacy when it comes to exporting art, literature, fashion, cuisine, film, and entire schools of intellectual thought. But that doesn't mean that French culture has not been misunderstood.

For example, the French are justly proud of their cultural heritage, and that pride is often embodied in the nation's unofficial symbol, the Gallic rooster. But the flip side of Gallic pride is the stereotype of French snobbery. The French very much believe in their national motto of *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity). But in their daily interactions, the French are rather formal with people outside their social circle, and they follow a strict set of manners to avoid social missteps (*faux pas*). That mannerly approach, combined with the extreme directness of their language, makes many visitors jump to the conclusion that the French are cold or arrogant. *Au contraire*, when you get to know a French person, that sense of decorum generally takes a back seat to affectionate and loyal friendships.

When you get to that stage, you'll have to master the art of the French air kiss or *faire la bise*. This is how French people greet acquaintances, by leaning in and gently brushing their right, then left cheeks together while making a subtle kissing sound with their lips. If someone wishes you hello or goodbye with *la bise*, consider it a compliment!

Most people in France share a strong appreciation for the arts and intellectual discourse. A lot of that is going on whenever you walk into a café, where people will be engaged in lively conversations for what seems like hours. There's an historical precedent for this, for during the 18th century, France was the epicenter of the Enlightenment. It was an era that gave us radical new philosophies, science and art based on the sovereignty of reason, and empiricism. The French openness to new ideas is evident in their embrace of innovative artistry— from the Impressionists to Dadaism to Abstract Expressionism and beyond. The French brothers Louis and

Auguste Lumière are generally considered the inventors of modern cinema, and their legacy has been expanded by a host of acclaimed filmmakers from Abel Gance to Jean Renoir to Jean-Luc Godard to Francois Truffaut and too many others to list.

When it comes to gastronomy, it goes without saying that the French have elevated their cuisine to an art form. The French have always considered dining as something worthy of one's time as opposed to being a necessity or even a sinful indulgence. They appreciate every morsel of their meal on a sensory level, for the technique of the chef, and for what that dish may represent in terms of national, regional or just family history. They are particular about all these things, and especially, about the freshness and quality of ingredients. But because they also see chefs as artists, they delight in innovative culinary interpretations of classic dishes. So when you sit down to dine in France, you are not just consuming a meal, you are tapping into the French spirit.

Religion and Religious Observance

It is estimated that 63–66% of French people identify as Catholics, with another 7–9% identifying as Muslims. The second largest group are those who claim to be unaffiliated with any religion (23–28%), followed by small numbers of Jews, Buddhists, and others. That does not mean that religion has not impacted everyday customs. For example, people do have church weddings, baptisms and religious funeral rites. But most French people consider belief to be a private matter, and do not attend church regularly.

All these figures are estimates because the government has not officially collected any data on religious preferences since 1972. This all has to do with a very important aspect of French culture called *laïcité*. You could translate it as secularism, but it goes deeper than that. *Laïcité* is the complete separation of religious spheres from public spheres. Its underlying aim is to ensure religious freedom for all, and it is constitutionally enshrined. But *laïcité* is not without controversy. The concept has come under fire as France has become less homogeneously Christian. Some critics say it actually impedes religious freedom, and they cite the 2004 ban that made it illegal to display conspicuous religious symbols in public schools or civil workplaces. In addition to banning the wearing of crucifixes, the ruling forbade the wearing of the hijab, the traditional head covering worn by observant Muslim women.

Language

The official language spoken throughout France is French. Even in places where people occasionally speak a regional dialect, all official communications are in French. The most widely spoken regional languages in France are the German dialects along the border (such as Alsacien); Megreb (an Arabic-French mix from North Africa); and Occitan, a Gallo-Romance language spoken in some southern areas such as Languedoc, Gascony, and parts of Provence. In Normandy, the Norman language is sometimes used, as are Basque and Catalan in some parts of France that border the Pyrenees. Though some regional words have filtered into common usage, the vast majority of people speak French as a first language.

English is the most common foreign language, spoken by more than 39% of people. You may have heard the stereotype that the French will refuse to speak English with you, even if they understand it. This is not true. However, it is true that the French are very proud of their language

(it was once the language of international diplomacy) and they are mindful about preserving it. So if you make even the slightest effort to speak a few words in French, your hosts will be very appreciative.

Beyond the basic French you may have learned in school, there are many colorful contemporary idioms. You may be interested to know about *verlan*. It's a popular French linguistic trend that creates slang words by spelling them (loosely) backwards. It's been popular with young people for some time, but now even their parents are catching on and many *verlan* words have been entered into the dictionary. So in *verlan*, *fou* (crazy) becomes *ouf*. *Louche* (strange or shady) becomes *chelou*. Another very common *verlan* term is *vénère*. It comes from the word *énervé*, which means “annoyed” or “irritated.”

Laundry Service

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

Strikes

In France strikes are an accepted part of the political dialogue. As a result, they seem to happen more often here than in the U.S. And while they are nothing to be afraid of—they are generally peaceful and orderly—they can be a nuisance as they may disrupt transport or may force us to make adjustments to our itinerary. If there are any such adjustments needed while you are in France, your Program Director will keep you up to date.

Did you know? The French for “on strike” is “en grève”—which comes from *Place de Grève*, the old name of the large square in front of Paris's city hall. (Today it has been renamed as *Place de l'Hotel de Ville*, or City Hall Square.)

French Cuisine

It would be an understatement to say the French have an appreciation for fine food. They have a reverence for it, and it shows in the quality of French cuisine, which was designated by UNESCO as part of the World's Intangible Cultural Heritage. You certainly don't need to dine at a Michelin-starred restaurant to experience the best of French cuisine. A visit to just about any local *marché* (open-air market), *pâtisserie* (pastry shop), *boulangerie* (bakery), *café*, *bistro*, or *brasserie* may well be as memorable an outing as visiting the famed monuments and museums.

Classical French dishes formed the basis of what we once called *haute cuisine*. But some of these dishes were regional in origin. Fortunately, because there is such widespread regard for gastronomy, regional dishes may appear on menus far from home, especially in large cities. Some of these dishes include:

- **Soupe à l'oignon:** a sweet and savory broth of caramelized onions, beef stock, and sherry with a crust of grilled Comté or Gruyère cheese.
- **Coq au vin:** a specialty of Burgundy, made with chicken braised with red Burgundy wine, lardons, mushrooms, and garlic.

- **Entrecôte à la Bordelaise:** A traditional dish in Bordeaux. It is a rib eye steak cooked in a red wine sauce with bone marrow.
- **Bouillabaisse:** A seafood soup made from fish and shellfish cooked in a broth of onions, tomatoes, saffron, and herbs.
- **Coq au Riesling:** A flavorful dish of chicken braised in white Riesling wine, accented with lardons of bacon and button mushrooms, and enriched with a silky touch of crème fraîche
- **Flammekueche** (or in French, *tarte flambée*): A chewy flatbread smothered with *fromage blanc* (a tangy fresh cheese), *crème fraîche* or sour cream, slivered onions, and crispy *lardons* of bacon.

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’Opera (as well as the Opera), 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 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”).

Laundry Service

Self-service laundromats are available in Paris. The cost is approximately 7 euros 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.

Check Hours for Weekday Closures (Versailles, Louvre, etc.)

Many major sights in and around Paris close one day a week, usually on a weekday. For example Versailles Palace and the Orsay Museum are closed on Mondays; the Louvre is closed Tuesdays. But on the bright side, the same museums usually offer extended evening hours (*les nocturnes*) one day a week. If a particular museum is important to you, we strongly recommend that you check their hours online or in a guidebook before you make any plans.

Eiffel Tower Tickets

Many attractions allow you to purchase tickets online and in advance. More specifically, Eiffel Tower tickets can be purchased online at <http://www.toureiffel.paris/en.html>. Purchasing a ticket may be beneficial in the long run; however it must be purchased for a specific date and time. Tickets that are past their assigned day and time stamp cannot be transferred or refunded. With that being said, the Eiffel Tower is a very popular destination in Paris and the lines for tickets can be a long wait.

Be aware that a certain number of tickets are held back from online sales, and are sold at the tower itself for same day admission. If the date you wanted was not available online—or you don't wish to purchase a ticket in advance—you can buy one of these tickets from the booth at the foot of the tower. Same-day tickets can go fast, so we suggest getting there early in the day.

Shopping Areas

The French department stores Galeries Lafayette and Printemps both have flagship stores on the Boulevard Haussmann, near the Opera. Haute couture can be found in the streets around the Rue du 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. For great flea markets, head to the Puces de St. Ouen (near the Porte de Clignancourt)—but keep in mind that most vendors are open on the weekends only, so check the hours first. Please be aware that this area is known for its pickpockets. While bargaining is not common in France, it is acceptable at flea markets or occasionally at produce markets.

Local Transportation

The underground Metro operates from 5:30 am to 1:15 am. It is 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.

Tips for Dining Out in France

- Keep in mind that when you go to a restaurant or a café in France, the service may be slower than what you are used to and you will need to ask your server for the bill when you are ready to pay. The French consider it rude to rush their patrons or to present the bill without being asked.
- Tipping is not expected because a service charge is usually included in your bill, though you may consider leaving 1–2 Euros.
- In general, lunch is the main meal of the day, so you may find that some shops, banks, and offices close in the middle of the afternoon for an hour or two.

Getting Around in France

Public transit: Metro (subway), buses, and trams—almost every city in France has reliable and inexpensive public transit. Often you must buy your ticket and then “validate” it by punching it in a machine or running it past a sensor.

Taxi: Taxis are widely available throughout Paris, Lyon, and Marseilles. In smaller cities, it is sometimes difficult to get one when needed.

Trains: France prides itself on its nationalized railway system, run by the SNCF, and even small towns often have daily train service for commuters. For longer trips, look for a TGV, or *train à grande vitesse* (high-speed train), which can take you cross-country in a matter of hours.

Brittany and Saint Malo in Brief

City Layout and Details

Brittany occupies a large peninsula in the northwest of France, between the English Channel to the north and the Bay of Biscay to the south. One of France’s most rugged regions, it’s a fascinating mix of impressive coastline, ancient towns, intriguing islands and atmospheric woodlands. It is perhaps best known for its Neolithic monuments, including ancient burial chambers – some of which significantly predate the Egyptian pyramids, and its countless Neolithic menhirs, standing stones that were planted into landscape. You’ll also find walled cities, Gothic cathedrals, and a charming populace still very much attached to their distinctive culture. In the centuries before the Roman conquest of the region, it was occupied by Celtic cultures. In the Dark Ages immigrants from Ireland, Wales and southern England stamped their indelible presence into a land that became known as Brittany, or Little Britain. First as a kingdom and then as a duchy, the region weathered Viking raids and civil war to finally lose its independence to the French crown in 1532.

St Malo is a fortified port city situated on the English Channel and the gulf of St Malo. Largely destroyed in WW II, the walled city has been extensively rebuilt along its historic lines. As early as the Middle Ages St Malo was a major European port and for a time was independent of both France and Brittany—becoming an extremely wealthy city as a result. Wealth and location made St. Malo a popular homeport for corsairs (pirates) who set out to waylay both local and distant maritime traffic—and brought more wealth home. The walled city extends out from the town's château and the Cathédrale St-Vincent, both of which lie near the peninsula's tip. Surrounded by beaches, it's historic charms are coupled with a more modern beach resort aura, and it is a popular vacation spot for British tourists. Local sites to visit include the Fort du Petit Bé – Promenade des Bés, a XII century fort and Fort National, on the beach, which was built in 1689 to ensure the security of St Malo. Also, on the quai Duguay Trouin you'll find the L'Etoile du Roy, a replica of the type of corsair frigate that sailed from the port in 1754.

Dating back to the 8th century Mont St. Michel, the famously picturesque monastery sitting on top of a rocky island in the gulf of St. Malo, is an hour's drive away.

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your vacation. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. Grand Circle is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, 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 or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

France

Popular French souvenirs include fashion, art, antiques, perfume, food, and wine. Each region has its own specialties, but you can often find them for sale in other parts of the country. If time is short, try checking out a big department store, like Galeries Lafayette or Printemps. Or look for Monoprix chains, which have lower prices and are more for everyday shopping (sort of like the French version of Target).

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.)

U.S. Customs Regulations & 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.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

France

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **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:** 68,042,591 (Estimate)
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic 48%, None 34%, Islam 4%, Protestant 3%, Buddhist 2%, Jewish 1%, Other 2%
- **Time Zone:** France is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Paris. Daylight Saving Time begins the last weekend in March and ends the last weekend in October.

National Holidays: France

In addition to the holidays listed below, France celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Whit Monday. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

05/01 Labor Day

05/08 World War II Victory Day

07/14 Bastille Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

11/11 Armistice Day

12/25 Christmas Day

France: A Brief History

That the French do things with flair has been borne out by history. Even their most famous prehistoric treasure, the 17,000-year old cave paintings of Lascaux, are a dazzling work of art. The rest of French history is just as dazzling, colored by events and ideas that have impacted all of humanity, far beyond the borders of this hexagon-shaped crucible of culture.

When the Celts arrived in Gaul in the 5th century BC, it was already occupied by Iberians, Ligurians, and Greeks, who established the oldest city in France, Massilia (Marseille). It was a major port with temples, theaters, an agora, and a flourishing wine trade. The city had forged an alliance with Rome by the time Julius Caesar conquered Gaul in 57–52 B.C. Julius often gets credit for founding Lutetia (Paris), but the Gallic Parisii tribe had already established a settlement there on the banks of the Seine. The Romans erected their own magnificent cities whose ruins still stand in Arles, Nimes, Vienne, Lyon, and beyond.

During the 5th century AD, the Franks invaded and converted to Christianity under Clovis I. A national spirit emerged when Charlemagne, King of the Franks, was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800 AD. Though his reign left an indelible imprint, French national history is considered to begin in 987, when Hugh Capet centralized the monarchy. During the 12th and 13th centuries, trade prospered, guilds were founded, and cathedrals were built. But the 14th century brought the Hundred Years War with England (1337–1453), whose Norman kings held vast estates in France. The English were expelled and as in the days of Charlemagne, the throne held a powerful mystique, this time with the aid of Joan of Arc, whose divine voices urged her to lead France to victory at Orleans in 1429 and to champion Charles VII as king.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, France moved closer towards absolute monarchy, best exemplified by Louis XIV, whose reign was unequalled for its autocracy—and magnificent style. From Versailles, he presided over a gloriously gilded France—so resplendent that it earned him the title of “the Sun King.” Ironically, the very splendor of the French monarchy precipitated its downfall, for it was exorbitant to maintain. That burden fell to the peasants and middle class, as nobles and the clergy were exempt from the taxes. That ended with the French Revolution in 1789. King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were guillotined, the monarchy was abolished, and the new (but short-lived) First Republic was established.

The ensuing chaos led to the rise of Napoleon, who became emperor in 1804 and built an empire across nearly all of Europe. Though Napoleon was a dictator, his Napoleonic codes brought unprecedented legal rights and civil liberties to his domains, in many places ending feudalism. With his fall in 1814, the monarchy was restored. France's Third Republic was founded in 1870, during which the groundbreaking Impressionist school of painting emerged, as well as the Modernist movement. From 1914–18, France fought with the Allies in World War I, prevailing but suffering devastating losses. Between wars, France nourished major intellectual movements: Constructivism, Dadaism, Surrealism, and Existentialism.

In 1940, France was invaded by Germany who set up a puppet government in Vichy under Marshal Philippe Petain. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, the Allies landed in Normandy and went on to liberate Paris in August. A provisional government was set up under General Charles de Gaulle. He remained France's most influential statesman of the 20th (or perhaps any other) century, becoming president in 1958 until his resignation in 1969. Post-war France saw the break-up of its remaining colonial outposts. The country was one of the leaders in the founding of the European Union (1993) and the Eurozone (1999).

More recently France, like its European neighbors, had to contend with the fallout of the 2008 global economic crisis. Unemployment, immigration, structuring the post-Brexit EU, and climate change are some of the issues France must address with its historic resourcefulness—and characteristic flair.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Western France

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr (2014, Fiction) This Pulitzer Prize winning, World War II novel traces the lives of a blind French girl and a German orphan, until they intersect in the besieged coastal city of St. Malo. The narrative is driven forward by a puzzle box of a mystery, with some passages so beautifully written they will bring tears to your eyes.

The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah (2015, Fiction) Two sisters in a Loire Valley village take different paths to survival when the Nazi occupation begins. A page-turner about the women of the French Resistance, their resilience, and the choices that define a life.

France

The Seine: The River That Made Paris by Elaine Sciolino (2020, Nonfiction) Sciolino traces the history, route, and impact of the Seine River through the stories of its people—a riverbank bookseller, the Seine police, a houseboat owner, fishermen, and film directors, to name a few. She also includes a touching chapter on the 2019 Notre Dame fire, which was put out with water pumped from the river.

A Brief History of France by Cecil Jenkins (2017, History) Exactly what the title promises: A compact overview of the history of France. Look for the 2017 edition, which was updated to include more recent events.

The Miracle of Dunkirk: The True Story of Operation Dynamo by Walter Lord (2017, History) A well-written and comprehensive account of the British evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940 with the help of the French. The author has been praised for his ability to weave the personal stories of the survivors—who he interviewed in great depth—into the overall narrative of how events unfolded.

My Life in France by Julia Child with Alex Prud'homme (2007, 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*, 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.

Paris to the Moon by Adam Gopnik (2001, 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.

Suggested Films & Videos

France

Loving Vincent (2017, Biography) Van Gogh's paintings come to life in this remarkable, animated film created by 125 artists, who hand-painted each of the film's 65,000 frames in the style of Vincent Van Gogh. The plot follows the efforts of a postmaster's son to solve the mystery of van Gogh's life and death in Auvers-sur-Oise.

Midnight in Paris (2011, Comedy) Screenwriter Gil Pender (Owen Wilson) escapes his romantic troubles by roaming the streets of Paris at night, where he is miraculously (and hilariously) transported back to 1920s Paris, where Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, Salvador Dali, F. Scott Fitzgerald and the entire "Lost Generation" await him.

Amelie (2001, Romantic Comedy) This quirky 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 is a whimsical depiction of everyday life, sure to capture the hearts of its viewers time and time again.

Chocolat (2000, Drama/Comedy) In this warm and beautifully filmed romance, a lovely chocolatier (Juliet Binoche) falls in love with a handsome gypsy (Johnny Depp), disrupting life in a prim riverside village. Many scenes were filmed in the Dordogne region.

Saving Private Ryan (1998, Drama). Probably the best (and most riveting) depiction of the Normandy D-Day landings and their aftermath. It won Steven Spielberg an Oscar for Best Director.

Useful Websites

Grand Circle Forum (tips from previous travelers)

www.gct.com/forum

Grand Circle Frequently Asked Questions

www.gct.com/faq

**International Health Information/CDC
(Centers for Disease Control)**

www.cdc.gov/travel

Electricity & Plugs

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/
plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security

Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

Useful Apps

Flight Stats

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

LoungeBuddy

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

Timeshifter

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

GoogleMaps

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

Triposo

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

Rome2rio

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

Flush or Sit or Squat

Find a clean toilet anywhere

Uber

Ride sharing around the world

Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus

ATM locations

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

TunnelBear

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

What's App, Skype, or Signal

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

Duolingo, FLuentU, or Babbel

Learn dozens of foreign languages

Google Translate

Fast and simple translations

XE

Currency conversions

SizeGuide

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

Best Units Converter

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

Happy Cow

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

Eatwith

Dine with locals all over the world

Meetup

Connects you with locals who share your interests

Skyview

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

Travello

Find travel friends on the road

TripWhistle

Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

GeoSure

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

Tourlina

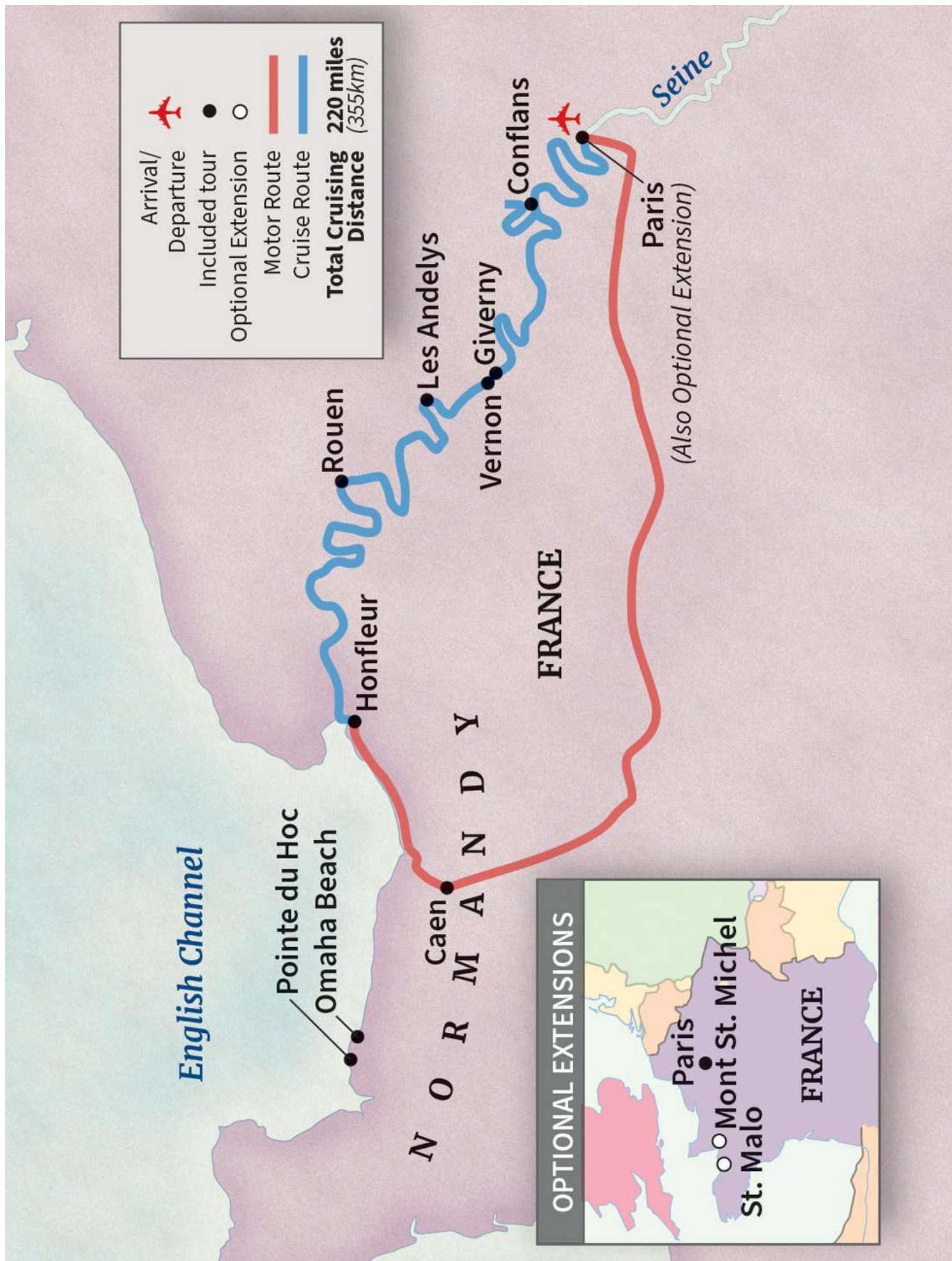
For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

ALIX for One

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

Chirpey

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more



SHARE YOUR TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

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Submitted by Fran Geisler, 8-time traveler
from Edisto Island, SC



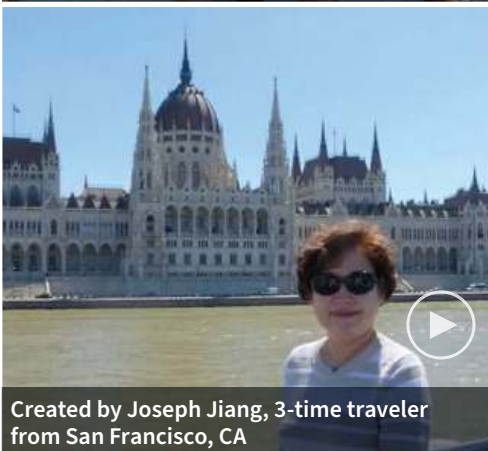
Submitted by Milly Champeau, 6-time
traveler from Clinton, TN



Submitted by Elinor Graham, first-time
traveler from Ocala, FL



Created by Sarah Brown, first-time traveler
from Providence, RI



Created by Joseph Jiang, 3-time traveler
from San Francisco, CA



Created by Sheila Knox, 20-time traveler
from Modesto, CA



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