

Grand Circle Cruise Line[®]

THE LEADER IN VALUE AND WORLDWIDE DISCOVERY SINCE 1958

Your Grand Circle Travel Planning Guide



Cruising Burgundy & Provence to the Cote d'Azur
2026

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.

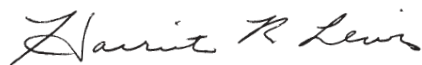
In addition, up to four **expert, local Program Directors** will accompany you from the beginning of your trip to the end. Assigned to a group of 38 travelers on average, these passionate leaders are ready and eager to share their homeland and insights as only a local can. Whether it is recommending 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 customize 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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Lyon, France

Enhanced! Cruising the Rhône: Lyon to Provence & the South of France

France: Lyon, Vienne, Tain l'Hermitage, Viviers, Nîmes, Avignon, Arles, Toulouse

14 days starting from \$5,495

including airfare

Single Supplement: **\$995**

For departure dates & prices, visit

www.gct.com/ron2026pricing

Cruise through gently sloping hills and vineyards for **10 nights aboard the 90-passenger M/S River Chanson**. Along the way, witness the lovely landscapes and enchanting villages that inspired the great artists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Get close to ancient history in Arles—a city known for its impressive Roman amphitheater—and witness ornate papal palaces, Gothic cathedrals, and medieval fortifications.

IT'S INCLUDED

- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges, unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- **Accommodations** 10 nights aboard the M/S *River Chanson* with wireless Internet access in all common areas and cabins, and 2 nights in Toulouse
- **33 meals:** 12 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 11 dinners—plus all onboard house beer, wine, and soft drinks
- **8 included tours** with personal headsets and **4 Exclusive Discovery Series events**—Home-Hosted Visit • French language lesson • French history discussion • Bull farm visit
- **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.

Cruising the Rhône: Lyon to Provence & the South of France



ITINERARY SUMMARY

1 • Depart U.S.

2-3 • Paris, France

4-6 • Lyon
Embark ship
Port Lyon

7-8 • Tain • Avignon
Ports Tain • Avignon

9-10 • Avignon • Arles
Ports Avignon • Arles

11-12 • Toulouse
Disembark ship
Port Toulouse

13 • Return to U.S.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 2 3 4 5 Easy

Group Size

- This trip has 2 groups of 38-45 travelers, each with a dedicated local Program Director exclusive to Grand Circle

Pacing

- 14 days, with 10 nights aboard the M/S *River Chanson*, and 2 nights in a hotel in Toulouse

Physical Requirements

- Walk 1-3 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

- Uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones, which can be slippery in wet or colder conditions. Our docking location in Lyon requires traversal of a 30-step stairway with no hand rail
- Travel by 86-passenger river ship and 49-seat coach. One day of this itinerary involves a 3- to 4-hour motorcoach transfer
- Changes in water-level depths may require adjustments to your itinerary

Climate

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

MAXIMIZE YOUR DISCOVERIES & VALUE

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

all with FREE Single Supplements

Paris, France
PRE-TRIP: 4 nights from **\$1,695**

**New! The French & Italian
Rivieras**
POST-TRIP: 6 nights from **\$1,895**

Cruising the Rhône: Lyon to Provence & the South of France

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR TRIP WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

4 nights in *Paris, France*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Arrive Paris, France

Day 3 Explore Paris • Optional French Cabaret Dinner & Show

Day 4 Paris • Optional Giverny tour

Day 5 Explore Montmartre

Day 6 Paris • Begin main trip

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Afternoon/Evening: Depart the U.S. on an overnight flight to Paris, France.

Day 2 Arrive Lyon, France • Embark ship

- Destination: Lyon
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *River Chanson*

Morning/Afternoon: Arrive in Lyon today, where you'll be met at the airport and transferred to your ship.

Upon arrival, you can choose to join your Program Director for a leisurely orientation walk to get acquainted with the area. Afterwards, enjoy some free time to discover Lyon.

Later, gather with your Program Director and traveling companions back onboard, including those from the *Paris, France* pre-trip extension, for a Welcome Drink.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. After your international flight, perhaps you'll choose to retire to your room, or enjoy a scenic stroll of Lyon lit up at night.

Day 3 Explore Lyon • French market experience • Welcome Dinner

- Destination: Lyon
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *River Chanson*

Activity Note: This morning's walking tour of Lyon will be approximately 3.5 hours long and around 2.5 miles in total with stops along the way and no options to sit down during the tour.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: This morning, disembark for a discovery walk of historic Vieux Lyon (Old Lyon), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, alongside your Program Director. Once the

capital of Gaul under the Romans, Lyon flourished as a Renaissance trading center based on its extensive silk industry, and the first automatic loom able to weave complex patterns was invented here in the 1800s. In a country known for its fine cuisine, Lyon is said to be the gastronomic capital.

Next, enjoy an **Exclusive Discovery Series** French market experience in which you'll explore a local market in Lyon, followed by an opportunity to learn more about the various delicacies of the Monts du Lyonnais, and how French select their lunch and groceries.

After your tour, explore Lyon's delights on your own, from its modern restaurants to its medieval streets.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: The remainder of the afternoon is yours to continue exploring Lyon at your own pace. Return to the ship for a safety briefing and Port Talk.

Dinner: This evening, enjoy a Captain's Welcome Dinner onboard.

Evening: Relax and enjoy the ship's amenities this evening. Or, discover Lyon's night life as we dock here overnight.

Day 4 Lyon • Funicular ride to Fourvière Hill • Home-Hosted Visit

- Destination: Lyon
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *River Chanson*

Activity Note: Due to French national regulations, it is not possible to offer a full Home-Hosted Lunch or Dinner on this trip; instead, you will join a local family for a traditional mid-afternoon snack known as *gôûter*.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: After breakfast, take part in a discussion about Lyon's part in the resistance during World War II during an **Exclusive Discovery Series** event.

Then you'll begin your day's explorations with a funicular ride up Fourvière Hill—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—with your Program Director. As you climb to the top, enjoy sweeping views of the city.

After your visit, ride the funicular back down and enjoy free time in Lyon.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll set off for a **Home-Hosted Visit**. Here, you'll get to spend some time with a local family, learn about everyday life in Lyon, and enjoy *gouter*, an afternoon snack.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Feel free to relax in the ship's common areas and settle into your comfortable cabin.

Day 5 Explore Vienne • Côte-Rôtie vineyard visit • Cruise to Tournon

- Destination: Vienne
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *River Chanson*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Get to know the ancient city of Vienne this morning with a local guide—famous for its impressive array of Roman ruins care of Julius Caesar, who founded a colony here in 47 BC due to its strategic position along the Rhône River.

Next, you'll transfer to a nearby vineyard in the Rhône wine region. Known for its steeply sloping vineyards, this region is also renown for its production of Côte-Rôtie wines.

Lunch: You'll return to your ship for lunch, served in the dining room.

Afternoon: Set sail this afternoon for our next destination: Tournon. As you cruise, enjoy an **Exclusive Discovery Series** French lesson in the ship's lounge.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: On your own. Perhaps you will enjoy a cocktail in the ship's lounge.

Day 6 Explore Tournon • Visit local chocolate shop

- Destination: Tournon
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *River Chanson*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Dock in the picturesque town of Tournon. Located on the right bank of the Rhône River, Tournon is known for its rolling landscapes, fertile vineyards, and world-famous Valrhona chocolate. We'll explore the town on a discovery walk, followed by a visit to one of the town's prized chocolate shops. Here, we'll learn how this delicacy is prepared and even have a taste for ourselves.

After, enjoy free time in Tournon.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: After lunch, set sail for Viviers. As you sail, you'll have the opportunity to learn some French cooking tips and techniques from our ship's chef. Later, join your Program Director for an **Exclusive Discovery Series** discussion about the history of the Rhône.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Enjoy a live piano performance this evening in the ship's lounge.

Day 7 Explore Viviers • Scenic sailing

- Destination: Viviers
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *River Chanson*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Disembark to explore the charming town of Viviers this morning during a walking tour with your Program Director. You'll also have ample time to discover more of Vivier independently. You may wish to follow the town's heritage discovery trail, which features sites such as the 16th-century Maison des Chevaliers (Knights' House) and the Cathedral of St. Vincent, which boasts both Romanesque and Gothic styles popular in the 18th century.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: This afternoon, settle in as your ship sails through a stretch of the Ardèche region, an area of ancient villages and spa towns set against the backdrop of a rugged, natural landscape. Along the way, the ship will pass through Bollène Lock, the deepest lock in France.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Enjoy live entertainment in the ship's lounge after dinner this evening.

Day 8 Explore Nîmes

- Destination: Châteauneuf-du-pape
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *River Chanson*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Transfer by bus to uncover Nîmes—the "French Rome"—on an included walking tour. Home to some of Europe's most impressive Roman ruins, Nîmes boasts at its heart a Roman Amphitheatre reminiscent of Rome's Colosseum, which you will visit and get

a first-hand look at its massive size. You'll also witness the Maison Carrée in Nîmes, one of the best preserved Roman temples in the world. After your tour, enjoy some free time in Nîmes.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Drive back to your ship this afternoon, as we sail to Avignon.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Head to the ship's lounge for live entertainment tonight.

Day 9 Explore Avignon • Optional Pont du Gard tour

- Destination: Avignon
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *River Chanson*

Activity Note: A full exploration of the Palace of the Popes requires climbing a total of more than 200 steps over the course of your visit. Our walking tour will include cobblestones, narrow streets, and no options to sit down during the tour.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Marvel at Avignon, known as the "City of Popes," on a morning walking tour with a local guide. For most of the 14th century, the popes left the turmoil of Rome and installed themselves in the Catholic Church. Beginning with Clement V (who was born here), these religious leaders built residences, chateaux, a number of fortified palaces, and churches in Avignon. You'll have guided exploration of the impressive Palace of the Popes during your tour.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: The latter part of the day is yours to make your own discoveries in Avignon. Wend the winding streets of some of the city's

ancient neighborhoods, or relax at an outdoor café. Or, join an optional Pont du Gard tour to visit the ancient Roman aqueduct bridge and the museum.

Dinner: Gather with your fellow travelers for a Provencal-themed dinner and musical entertainment onboard.

Evening: Enjoy an evening at leisure aboard the ship.

Day 10 Avignon • Optional *A Morning in Provence* tour

- Destination: Avignon
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *River Chanson*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Today, start off with a discovery walk led by your Program Director to one of Avignon's many interesting neighborhoods. After, you'll have free time to explore.

Or, join an optional tour, *A Morning in Provence*, to visit the Provencal village of Les Baux-de-Provence and the Carrieres de Lumieres, where artwork is displayed on the walls of carved limestone chambers.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Enjoy an afternoon at leisure onboard as we cruise on to Arles—known as "Little Roma" for its impressive Roman Amphitheater and thermal baths.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Relax and enjoy the ship's amenities, or perhaps enjoy a cocktail in the lounge.

Day 11 Explore Arles • Bull farm visit

- Destination: Arles
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/S *River Chanson* or similar

Activity Note: Today's walking tour in Arles will be approximately 2 hours long and will include stairs, cobblestones, narrow streets, crowds, and no options to sit down during the tour. Some groups may enjoy a walking tour in the morning and visit the bull farm in the afternoon.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: After breakfast and, alongside a local guide, set off on a walking tour of Arles—the town beloved by Vincent van Gogh—and find signs indicating places rendered in his works. Visit the hospital where he stayed and painted *Hospital in Arles* and infamously cut off his ear. See the Café l'Alcazar, the still-standing establishment that inspired the painting *Café Terrace at Night*. During his stay, he also used the café's manager, Madame Ginoux, as his model for his painting *l'Arlesienne*.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll enjoy an **Exclusive Discovery Series** excursion to a bull farm. The keepers of this land are its *gardians*, akin to our cowboys. They live here with their families, often several generations together, carving out lifestyles in sync with the land, following the rhythms of nature and the needs of the livestock they tend. During your visit to a locally-owned *gardian's* bull farm, you'll experience traditional daily life while taking in their down-to-earth hospitality. You'll also climb aboard a farm truck to see the bulls in their natural environment.

After returning to the ship, you'll be invited to the lounge for your disembarkation briefing, during which you'll receive information about settling any onboard balances. Your Program Director will deliver their Port Talk, which will include specifics about preparing for your excursions tomorrow.

Dinner: We'll gather for a Provence-themed Farwell Dinner onboard the ship.

Evening: Enjoy an evening at leisure.

Day 12 Disembark ship • Farm visit • Toulouse

- Destination: Toulouse
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Mercure Wilson Hotel or similar

Activity Note: Today's walking tour in Toulouse will include cobblestones, narrow streets, and no options to sit down during the tour.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Conclude the River Cruise portion of your trip this morning, disembarking after breakfast to travel through southern France's idyllic scenery to Toulouse.

Stop en route this morning to visit a local family-owned farm, where you'll enjoy a tasting of its fresh products.

Lunch: Included at the farm.

Afternoon: Continue on to Toulouse. Upon arrival, you'll check into your hotel. The rest of the day is yours to settle in, relax, and get to know the area. You may also wish to take a vicinity walk with your Program Director.

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

Evening: Continue your exploration of Toulouse or return to your hotel to rest.

Day 13 Explore Toulouse

- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Mercure Wilson Hotel

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Set out to explore Toulouse, a cultural hub renowned for its historic Théâtre du Capitole ballet and opera house. Known as La Ville Rose for the pale-red brickwork common in its traditional buildings, Toulouse offers elegant reminders of the past stretching all the way back to the medieval era, as well as glimpses of the future, with its three major universities. The city is also the headquarters of the plane maker Airbus and other aerospace companies.

In the company of a local guide, you'll take in the city on foot during a walking tour. Highlights of your tour will include a visit to the historic Victor Hugo Market, where you'll peruse the local goods for sale among more than 100 stalls. You'll also visit Basilica of Saint-Sernin, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and national monument that dates back to the twelfth century.

Lunch: Enjoy lunch on your own. Your Program Director would be happy to offer suggestions.

Afternoon: Your afternoon is free to explore more of Toulouse on your own. The city is home to a large university and is known for its friendly, laidback feel, so you are sure to encounter welcoming locals wherever you go.

Then early this evening, gather with your fellow travelers for a Farewell Drink.

Dinner: Tonight, gather with your fellow travelers for a Farewell Dinner at an authentic French restaurant.

Evening: You may use this evening to continue exploring Toulouse or get ready for your journey home.

Day 14 Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport for your flight home. Or continue your discoveries with our *The French & Italian Riviera* post-trip extension.

END YOUR TRIP WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

6 nights in *The French & Italian Riviera*

Day 1 Fly to Nice

Day 2 Nice • Antibes & Cannes

Day 3 Nice • Santa Margherita Ligure, Italy

Day 4 Santa Margherita Ligure • Portofino

Day 5 Santa Margherita Ligure • Cinque Terre National Park

Day 6 Santa Margherita Ligure • Optional Genoa tour

Day 7 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.*

Pont du Gard

(Day 9 \$85 per person)

One of the most impressive Roman Aqueducts in the world, Pont du Gard stands almost 160 feet high and is on three levels—the longest measuring 300 yards. Spanning the Gard River Valley, Pont du Gard was built shortly before the Christian era and was part of the almost 30-mile long aqueduct bringing water from Uzès to Nîmes.

Two thousand years after its construction, the ancient edifice is still a veritable masterpiece, as much for the technical aspect, as for its simple beauty, luring more than two million visitors a year to this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

You'll enjoy an included visit to the superb museum dedicated to the history of the Pont du Gard aqueduct before returning to your ship.

inspired writers and artists from F. Scott Fitzgerald to Van Gogh and Picasso. The fragrant countryside, with its wild herbs and olive tree groves, is dotted with historic hilltowns. Explore Les Baux, a remarkable mix of quaint winding streets, romantic fortress ruins, and lovely vistas over the countryside. Then, visit the Carrieres de Lumieres, an ancient quarry that has been transformed into a display of art and music.

A Morning in Provence

(Day 10 \$110 per person)

See why Provence stirs the imagination and stimulates the senses, with its soft light and vivid landscape of pastel colors that have

PRE-TRIP

Paris, France

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » **Accommodations** for 4 nights
- » 4 breakfasts
- » **Guided tour** with personal headsets: Montmartre
- » 3-day Paris 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 Light,” 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 makes it one of the world’s leading travel destinations.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart today on your overnight flight to Paris, France.

Day 2 Arrive Paris, France

- Destination: Paris
- Accommodations: Hotel Crowne Plaza Republique or similar

Morning/Afternoon: Arrive today in Paris. After checking in, you can join your Program Director for a vicinity walk of the neighborhood around your hotel. They will also explain how to use your included 2-day Paris Metro pass, which can take you all over the city.

Before dinner, join your fellow travelers this evening for a Welcome Drink and briefing.

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 3 Explore Paris • Optional French Cabaret Dinner & Show

- Destination: Paris
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Crowne Plaza Republique or similar

Activity Note: If this day falls on a Monday, the Musée d’Orsay will be closed. Your Program Director will provide additional options for you during your free time.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: This morning, discover Paris on an included panoramic tour, featuring many of its iconic sites, followed by a walking tour.

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

Afternoon: The rest of your day is at leisure to do as you please. You may want to visit the Musee d'Orsay, known as much for the building in which it is housed as for its superb collection of Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and Art Nouveau artists. It was classified as a Historical Monument in 1976 and inaugurated as a museum in 1986.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations. Or, perhaps you'll take our optional Cabaret Dinner & Show tour.

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

Day 4 Paris • Optional Giverny tour

- Destination: Paris
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Crowne Plaza Republique or similar

Activity Note: The optional tour is offered on April through October departures only. When Giverny is closed, an optional tour of the Louvre will be offered.

Breakfast: Included at your hotel this morning.

Morning/Afternoon: The day is yours to explore Paris on your own, perhaps strolling the *Champs Elysées*.

Or spend the morning in Giverny on an optional tour to the countryside to see the lovely landscapes that inspired 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.

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

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 Explore Montmartre

- Destination: Paris
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Crowne Plaza Republique or similar

Breakfast: Included at your hotel this morning.

Morning: This morning, experience one of Paris' most famous and lively districts, Montmartre, arriving via the city's Metro. Join your Program Director on a discovery walk to explore the charming streets of this romantic neighborhood, and view the famed Sacre Coeur Basilica, with its dramatic perch on the top of the Montmartre hill. After your walk, you'll have time to continue exploring independently.

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

Afternoon: Free to continue to explore Paris at your own pace.

Dinner: Enjoy a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish.

Day 6 Paris • Begin main trip

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: Included at your hotel this morning.

Morning/Afternoon: Enjoy another day to discover Paris at your own pace. Perhaps you'll explore the Place de la Concorde, or take advantage of the fine shopping to be had in Paris's fashionable shops and boutiques.

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

Evening: You'll meet your fellow travelers and begin your *Cruising the Rhône: Lyon to Provence & the South of France 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. The cabaret will be closed during some August departures.*

landscapes that have graced countless Monet paintings. Here are his familiar Japanese bridge and water garden shaded by weeping willows, with its pond still full of the water lilies that so inspired his work.

This optional tour is offered on April through October departures only. When Giverny is closed, an optional tour of the Louvre will be offered.

Giverny

(Day 4 \$120 per person)

The unique light of the area's Seine Valley in Normandy kept Monet in residence for 43 years after he "discovered" the village of Giverny while looking out of a train window in 1883. He stayed here until his death in 1926, and his grave is in the family vault at the town's Romanesque church. Travel to Monet's beloved village of Giverny, and explore the artist's home and gardens, 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

POST-TRIP

The French & Italian Rivas

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » **Accommodations** for 6 nights
- » **8 meals:** 6 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner
- » **5 guided tours** with personal headsets
- » Dedicated services of a local Program Director
- » **Gratuities** for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » All transfers

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Extend your discoveries in the French and Italian Rivas. Begin in Nice: Elegant hotels, fashionable seaside promenades, an opulent casino, and famous sunny beaches—Nice more than merits her title as the grande dame of the Cote d’Azur. Next, head to Italy’s Santa Margherita Ligure. This lovely resort town is home to several medieval relics, like the Abbazia della Cervara (Abbey of Cervara), which was erected in the late 1300s, and features an expansive garden overlooking the sea. You’ll also pop over to two other seaside gems: pretty Portofino and Cinque Terre.

Day 1 Fly to Nice

- Destination: Nice
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Nice Riviera or similar

Morning: Depart Toulouse this morning and fly to Nice.

Lunch: On your own, en route. You may wish to buy something at the airport to enjoy on your flight.

Afternoon: Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel and check in. After some time to settle in, your Program Director will lead an orientation walk of the surrounding area. The remainder of the afternoon is free to explore this delightful seaside town at your own pace. Perhaps you’ll stroll the *Promenade des Anglais* and admire the ocean on one side of you and Nice’s finest

hotels, restaurants, and shops on the other. Or you might visit one of the city’s many museums, including the Marc Chagall Museum, featuring work from the great artist’s long and storied career.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: On your own in Nice. Ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 2 Nice • Antibes & Cannes

- Destination: Nice
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Nice Riviera or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Spend the day exploring the Provencal countryside. We'll begin with a visit to a local producer of Provence specialties. Here you'll learn how regional delicacies are created and have the chance to taste locally produced olives, oil, or tapenade.

Then, head into Antibes, lined with pristine Mediterranean beaches and an old town encircled in 16th-century ramparts. Enjoy time on your own here to soak in the atmosphere.

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

Afternoon: Continue to seaside Cannes. Famous for its film festival, Cannes has also earned the reputation as a destination for the rich and famous. Stroll La Croisette, the waterfront boulevard known for its picturesque beaches, restaurants, cafes, and boutiques. Then return to Nice.

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 3 Nice • Santa Margherita Ligure, Italy

- Destination: Santa Margherita Ligure
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel Jolanda or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today, depart Nice and transfer to Santa Margherita Ligure, Italy. Along the way, we'll stop in the medieval Italian village of Borgomaro.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Borgomaro.

Afternoon: After lunch, resume your drive to Santa Margherita Ligure. After checking into your hotel and getting settled, your Program

Director will lead a discovery walk of Santa Margherita Ligure. Afterwards, enjoy some additional time to continue exploring on your own.

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.

Day 4 Santa Margherita Ligure • Portofino

- Destination: Portofino
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Jolanda or similar

Activity Note: Boat ride depends on weather conditions, and is not available from mid-October through November, as well as in March. In these instances, the boat will be replaced by a bus ride.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Take a walking tour of Santa Margherita Ligure with your Program Director before embarking on a boat ride to Portofino, one of the gems of the Italian Riviera. Following your discovery walk of Portofino, you'll have free time to explore further.

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

Afternoon: Return by boat back to Santa Margherita Ligure in the afternoon. The latter part of the day is yours to pursue your own interests.

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.

Day 5 Santa Margherita Ligure • Cinque Terre National Park

- Destination: Cinque Terre
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Jolanda or similar

Activity Note: Depending on seasonality and weather conditions, we'll travel by boat to Cinque Terre. Otherwise, we'll take the train. Seats on public trains in Italy are available on a first-come first-served basis. Overcrowded passenger cars may require travelers to stand throughout the duration of their hour and fifteen-minute journey. Departure and arrival delays are common. For boarding and exiting the train, riders must climb and descend three steep steps.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Depart for an included tour of Cinque Terre National Park, where clusters of terraces are fastened to cliffs that drop dramatically into the sea. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is comprised of five captivating villages, most of which are solely connected by pathways and train stations, making them delightfully free of car traffic. We'll explore by local train and on foot today.

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

Afternoon: After lunch, you'll have some free time to keep discovering this unique area. Later, take the train back to Santa Margherita Ligure, arriving in the late afternoon.

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.

Day 6 Santa Margherita Ligure • Optional Genoa tour

- Destination: Santa Margherita Ligure
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Jolanda or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning/Afternoon: Take advantage of a full day to savor the delights of the Italian Riviera according to your own interests. Perhaps you will visit the *Abbazia della Cervara* (Abbey of Cervara), or the cerulean bay of Paraggi, which is a little over a mile away and accessible by boat or bus.

Or, join us today for an optional tour of Genoa, the capital of the Italian Riviera. A short drive along the coast takes us to this grand maritime city that was once a rival to Venice, Pisa, and Amalfi for control of the Mediterranean. Genoa is also known as the hometown of explorer Christopher Columbus.

After a panoramic drive, we'll begin our walking tour, accompanied by an expert local guide, of the monumental Strada Nuova. This 400-year-old street is lined with elegant mansions that have been celebrated by Rubens in pictures, as well as by Lord Byron and Mark Twain in words. We'll continue our walking tour by exploring the Caruggi, an intricate maze of the picturesque streets that connect the town center with the port docks—where, until the 1960s, giant transatlantic liners departed for the U.S. with Italian emigrants seeking new opportunities.

Lunch: Travelers who choose the optional tour will enjoy lunch in a local *trattoria*. Otherwise, lunch is on your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Dinner: Join your fellow travelers for a Farewell Drink before free time to discover one of the area's charming locally-owned restaurants independently. Ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish.

Day 7 Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport in Genoa, Italy for your return flight home.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Genoa

(Day 6 \$115 per person)

Join us for an excursion to Genoa, the capital of the Italian Riviera. The city once rivaled other grand maritime cities such as Pisa, Venice, and Amalfi. Genoa offers magnificent palaces, museums, and of course is famous as the hometown of Christopher Columbus. Along our ride there, we'll stop to take in panoramic views of the picturesque coastline. Enjoy a walking tour of the city, narrated by an expert local guide—you'll stroll down the famous Strada Nuova, admiring the elegant architecture and exploring the network of side streets which connect the town center with its ancient port. We'll enjoy lunch in a local *trattoria* before returning to our hotel.

YOUR RHONE RIVER SHIP

Sail aboard our recently refurbished, privately owned 86-passenger M/S *River Chanson*

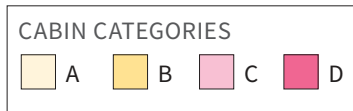
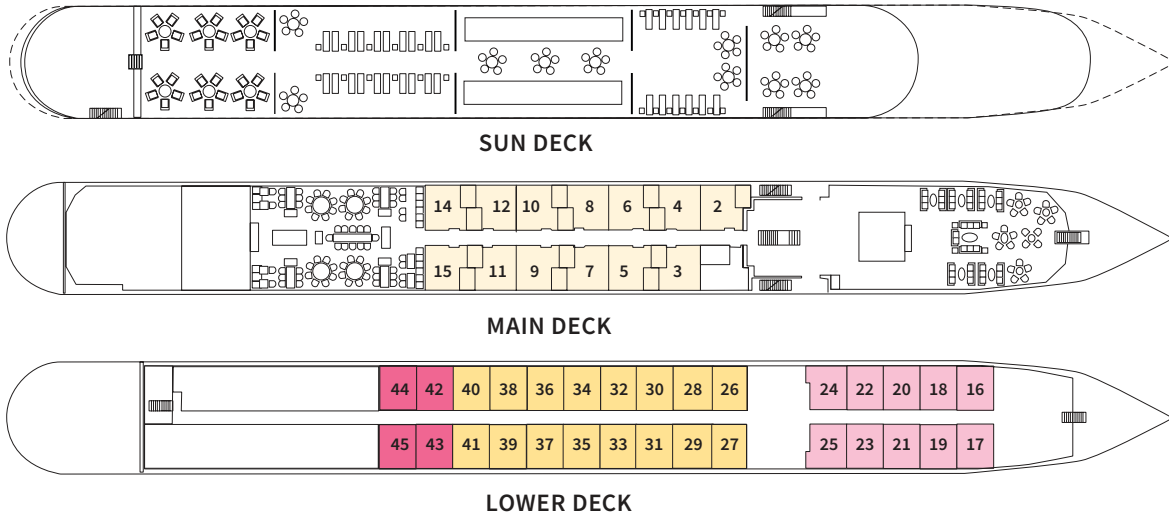
The M/S *River Chanson* provides an intimate cruising experience for two groups of no more than 38–45 travelers. Connect with your fellow travelers in the comfortable common areas, and enjoy striking panoramic vistas of villages and vineyards from the teak-covered Sun Deck or your outside-facing cabin. All the while, our gracious, English-speaking ship crew will ensure that you enjoy a welcoming onboard experience.



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: Connectivity may be limited at certain points throughout your River Cruise Tour.*
- **Sun Deck:** Sit outside and enjoy the view as your ship glides past the French countryside.
- **English-speaking crew:** Our crew is dedicated to your comfort, and all shipboard announcements are made in English.
- **Shipboard security:** State-of-the-art, shipboard radar ensures safe navigation at night and in low visibility; safe docking space; onboard security staff; up-to-date fire safety system; and secured entryway doors.
- **Complimentary bicycles:** Explore like a local on one of our complimentary electric or standard bicycles.

M/S RIVER CHANSON



Registry: France
Width: 32 ft.
Length: 338 ft.
Passenger capacity: 86
International crew: 24
Decks: 3
Number of cabins: 43 cabins—all outside
Elevator: No

CABIN FEATURES

- Outside cabins with a river view
- Cabin sizes are approximately 120– to 150-sq.-ft.
- Main Deck cabins 2–15 feature double beds that cannot be separated; upper-deck views; and closer proximity to the ship’s bar, restaurant, lounge, and library
- All cabins have a wardrobe and a drawer, and luggage storage space under the beds
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer, shampoo, and soap
- Flat-screen color TV & radio, including CNN, movies, and a “view from the bow” camera looking out the front of your ship



Relax in your comfortable outside 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.
- **Pre- and/or post-trip extension:** No additional blank pages are needed for any of the extensions.

No Visas Required

Travelers with a U.S. passport do not need any visas for this vacation, including the optional trip extensions.

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.

Onboard Ship

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

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).

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 2 groups of 38–45 travelers, each with a dedicated local Program Director exclusive to Grand Circle

PACING

- 14 days, with 10 nights aboard the M/S *River Chanson*, and 2 nights in a hotel in Toulouse

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 2–3 miles unassisted and participate in 2–3 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs, hills, and cobblestones
- Walking tours will feature stops along the way for learning and discovery, and some will not have options to sit down during the tour
- 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

- Uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones, which can be slippery in wet or colder conditions. Our docking location in Lyon requires traversal of a 30-step stairway with no hand rail
- Travel by 86-passenger river ship and 49-seat coach. One day of this itinerary involves a 3- to 4-hour motorcoach transfer
- Changes in water-level depths may require adjustments to your itinerary

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 50–100°F during cruising season
- June–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, Italy, 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 will charge a set fee or a percentage fee each time you use a foreign ATM. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart. 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.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM. If you are visiting a country that has different expectation for ATMs, they will be listed below.

Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. We suggest that you bring one or two, 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, as not all are accepted around the world.. If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

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

Italy: Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in Italy. Occasionally a small “Mom and Pop” restaurant will be cash only, and street vendors or taxis usually are cash only, but most other businesses will take cards.

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

Due to international banking laws, we are not 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, or added on as a service fee. Look for a statement on the menu like *service compris* or *servizio incluso* (“service included”), or for a service charge on the bill. If you would like to leave a tip on top of the service fee (or in the rare case when the service is not included) then 10% would be considered generous. In Italy, you may also see the word *coperto* on your bill. This is not a tip, but more of a cover charge.
- **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 a euro—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 & Customized 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).
- **Customized 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.

- **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.
- **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

Italy: +39

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.

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. For more packing and luggage tips, you might want to visit www.travelite.org.
- **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.

Electricity in France and Italy 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.

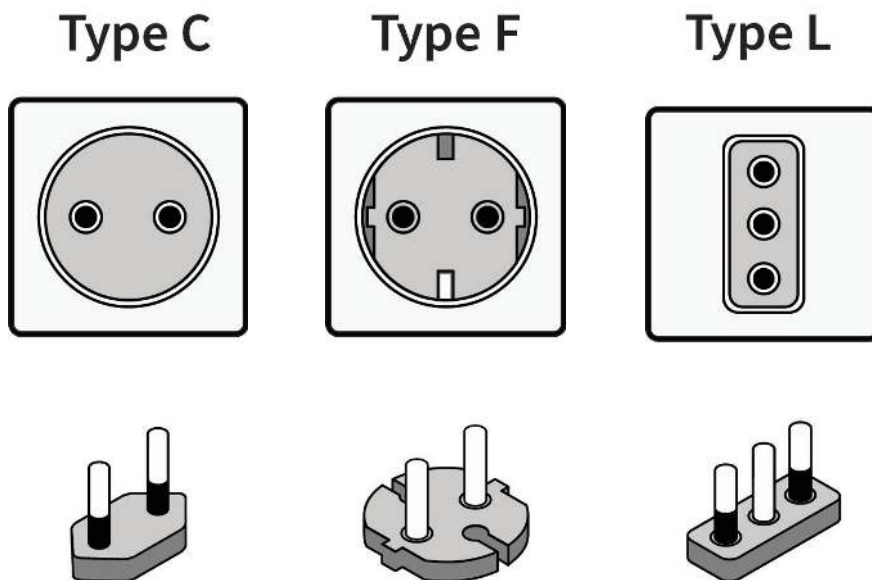
Aboard ship, the plugs in your cabin bedroom are Type C.

Note that if you are taking the extension in Italy, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

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

France: C and E

Italy: C, L, or F



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.

Lyon, France (Rhône region): Lyon has a moderate climate, with at least a few rainy days every month. Spring temperatures are usually in the 40s to 60s range, although nights can be chilly in April. Summer usually brings highs in the 80s, with occasional heat waves getting up into the 100s. The days start to cool off in September and October, and can start to dip below the 40s in late November. Winter usually doesn't bring much snow—only 3 or 4 days a month, with little accumulation—but temperatures do get below freezing, especially at night.

Nice, France (Côte d'Azur): As a rule, the Provence and Riviera regions of France have much more sunshine, higher temperatures, and longer spells of consistent weather than the north. The towns situated on the Côte d'Azur have a Mediterranean climate: hot dry summers, warm wet winters—except that the winters can also be chilly at night and in the early morning. The middle of the day is often clear and brilliant. The rain, when it comes, generally goes away again quite soon. But it can also rain buckets, seemingly all of a sudden. Another local weather feature is wind. Some breezes are gentle and soothing, but there is a variety of fiercer winds as well. The most famous is the *mistral*, which comes tearing down from the north out of a clear sky and generally blows for several days at a time, especially during spring. Note on summer weather: Temperatures can be rather hot in the summer, so if you are traveling in this season, be sure to take clothes that will breathe.

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

Weather Conditions and River Depths

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

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			LYON, 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	42 to 33	88 to 76	10
FEB	47 to 37	87 to 71	16	46 to 34	88 to 69	8
MAR	54 to 42	87 to 65	18	53 to 38	86 to 58	10
APR	60 to 45	86 to 58	17	58 to 42	84 to 55	12
MAY	67 to 52	86 to 57	16	67 to 50	85 to 56	10
JUN	73 to 57	86 to 58	17	73 to 57	83 to 54	9
JUL	77 to 60	85 to 54	13	80 to 61	81 to 47	7
AUG	77 to 60	87 to 51	12	79 to 60	85 to 50	8
SEP	70 to 55	91 to 59	14	72 to 54	90 to 56	8
OCT	61 to 49	92 to 69	17	61 to 47	91 to 68	11
NOV	51 to 42	91 to 76	17	50 to 39	90 to 75	12
DEC	46 to 38	89 to 81	19	44 to 35	88 to 78	11

MONTH	NICE, FRANCE			SANTA MARGHERITA, ITALY		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	56 to 42	67 to 65	8	57 to 48	--	4
FEB	56 to 43	69 to 63	6	59 to 48	--	4
MAR	59 to 46	70 to 66	7	59 to 50	--	4
APR	63 to 50	75 to 69	11	64 to 51	--	4
MAY	69 to 57	76 to 71	9	71 to 57	--	4
JUN	76 to 64	74 to 70	6	78 to 64	--	3
JUL	81 to 69	72 to 70	4	84 to 69	--	2
AUG	82 to 69	72 to 70	6	86 to 69	--	3
SEP	76 to 63	76 to 70	8	80 to 68	--	3
OCT	70 to 57	76 to 69	10	73 to 60	--	5
NOV	62 to 49	72 to 66	10	66 to 55	--	6
DEC	57 to 43	68 to 65	9	60 to 50	--	5

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

M/S River Chanson

The *M/S River Chanson* offers a host of amenities to make you feel right at home. Designed to carry no more than 75 passengers, the ship's size ensures the ease of maneuverability that's so important when entering small river ports. The latest river ship added to our privately owned fleet, the *M/S River Chanson* provides an intimate cruising experience and all outside cabins. Connect with your fellow travelers in the comfortable common areas, and enjoy striking panoramic vistas of the Bordeaux region from the teak-covered Sun Deck. All the while, our gracious, English-speaking ship staff will ensure that you enjoy a welcoming onboard experience.

Included features of the M/S River Chanson

The Ship:

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

All Cabins:

- All outside cabins
- Layout of at least 118 square feet. **Please note:** *This ship features unique cabin configurations, and Main Deck cabins feature a queen bed that cannot be separated into two twin beds.*
- Ample closet and dresser space
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer
- Color TV
- Direct-dial telephone

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

Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Planner at www.gct.com/myplanner. However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive onboard the ship. (This is normal procedure for many small ships.) 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 light woods, rich carpeting, floor-to-ceiling windows, and white-linen and china table settings. Your ship's daily service includes breakfast and lunch buffets, and a more formal dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus for you that feature regional specialties. Complimentary house wine, draft beer, and a selection of soft drinks are included with both lunch and dinner. 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: 7:00-7:30 am
- Breakfast: 7:30-9:00 am
- Lunch: 12:00-1:30 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 a birthday. Please call Grand Circle Cruise Line to submit your request no later than 45 days prior to departure. Religious dietary regimens, such as kosher or halal meals, cannot be prepared aboard ship.

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

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

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 (WiFi) is available for free in the 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 WiFi, 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 and Linen Service

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

Medical Care

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

Onboard Activities

During your cruise you'll enjoy exclusive Discovery Series events, including group activities that relate to the region, theme dinners, organized discussions, and talks on upcoming ports of call.

Recreational Facilities

Our ship features a library, a lounge with a bar, a dining room, and a sun deck. The bar is open from about 11 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, and are charged per minute no matter if it is a local, international or Calling Card based call. We advise you to use it only for an emergency, as this is a very expensive service (for example, a call to New York City would cost about \$3.75 per minute).

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

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

Shore Excursions

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

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 River Chanson

- **History:** Built in 2001; purchased by Grand Circle in 2014

- **Size:** 338x32 ft
- **Capacity:** 78 passengers, 24 crew members
- **Layout:** 44 cabins, 3 decks
- **Elevator:** No

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.)

Hotel Courtesy in Italy

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

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.

Italian Cuisine

Italy may have been unified as a nation in 1861, but its cuisine is another story—and a glorious one at that. Here, gastronomy has always been a matter of regionalism and seasonality. The country is divided up into 20 distinct regions, each with its own specialties. The good news is that there is certainly culinary overlap, and since Italians are famously passionate about food, you can enjoy many beloved regional dishes all over Italy.

The structure of a typical Italian meal is designed to stimulate your appetite, and promote moderation—along with variety. So it will begin with dishes like the following:

- **Apertivo:** A glass of sparkling prosecco or spumante white wine or Spritz.
- **Antipasto all'Italiana:** Raw vegetables served with various cheeses salami and Speck
- **Crostini** Fried polenta squares topped with sauces or pâtés,
- **Bagna Cauda:** A hot dish made with garlic and anchovies, dipping sauce for vegetables typical of Piedmont

The first course, called Primo, comes next. Here is where you may enjoy your carbohydrates as a small dish such as:

- **Polenta:** A dense cornmeal porridge can be served with various toppings, like tomato meat sauce or a “white” sauce of sausage and mushrooms.

- **Canederli:** A large gnocchi dish made with stale bread soaked in milk, eggs, and smoked bacon, flavored with butter and cheese.
- **Risotto alla Milanese:** A simple and creamy risotto with the perfect combination of simple ingredients like butter, white wine, parmesan, and saffron
- **Pizzoccheri:** Long noodles, made from a dough of wheat and buckwheat, is served with potatoes, butter, Casera cheese and stewed savoy cabbage from Lombardy

The main course is called Il secondo. This is usually a small, simply prepared dish of chicken, meat, or fish including:

- **Cotoletta alla Milanese:** A tender veal cutlet coated in crunchy breadcrumbs fried in butter
- **Osso Buco:** Braised veal shanks crusted with a citrus zest mixture called gremolata.
- **Vitello Tonnato:** A dish of cold, sliced tuna

Your meal will conclude with a Dolce (sweet) such as:

- **Tiramisu:** A layered confection of sponge cake, mascarpone cheese, coffee and liqueur.
- **Sbrisolona:** A crumbly almond cake from Lombardy.
- **Strudel di Mele:** Similar to the German apple strudel, this is a flaky pastry stuffed with apples.
- **Castagnaccio:** A gluten-free cake, baked with chestnut flour mixed with olive oil, walnuts, pine nuts, raisins, and rosemary for a slightly savory taste

Dolci may be served with coffee or an alcoholic digestivo such as herbal amaro or limoncello. It is meant to aid your digestion of a memorable meal, one that will certainly have been toast-worthy

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. It is recommended to purchase tickets at least three months in advance. 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).

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 a grande vitesse* (high-speed train), which can take you cross-country in a matter of hours.

Nice in Brief

City Layout and Details

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

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

Shopping Areas

In Nice, street market shopping in the Old Town is the least expensive and perhaps the most fun. Rue Massena, Place Magenta, and Rue Paradis are the pedestrian zone of shops and cafés. There's also a flea market on Quai Lunel, open Tuesdays through Saturdays. Meanwhile, nearby Monte Carlo and Cannes are world-renowned for their exclusive boutiques selling upscale fashion pieces, pricey jewelry, and all types of accessories.

Local Transportation

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

Cuisine

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

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

The celebrated aperitif along the Riviera is *pastis* (essence of aniseed), which is high in alcohol and usually served diluted with iced water. The local wines are uncomplicated but go well with seasoned food that calls for a refreshing, fruity wine—and Cotes de Provence (mostly dry rosés) are just that. Or try a glass of Bandol rouge (red), blanc de Provence (white), or Bellet (red or white).

The Italian Riviera & the Cinque Terre in Brief

City Layout and Details

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

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

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

Local Transportation

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

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

Cuisine

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

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

Popular local seafood includes anchovies, mussels from La Spezia, tuna and less frequently crab, octopus and lobster. Capon Magro, once a staple food of fishermen is made from salted rock fish between 'sailors' bread (hard bread, soaked in vinegar) and topped with vegetables. As everywhere in Italy, olive oil is essential to many local dishes, and the terraced slopes of the Ligurian hills produce high quality oil. One Ligurian pasta is known as trofie. It's a short, pencil sized curly pasta twisted like a unicorn's horn and pointed at both ends, made from a paste of flour, water, salt and chestnuts. Croxetti, another pasta variant, are round pasta discs, like medallions, stamped with decorative patterns.

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

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 20% 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.)

Italy

Popular souvenirs include leather goods, silk ties, knitwear, gold jewelry, ceramics, straw goods and other handicrafts, small cabinets, and jewelry boxes. Each region in Italy has its specialties. You'll also see many different items made from olive wood or Carrara marble; just remember that any marble items you purchase should be put into your checked luggage for the flight home. (If you put them in your carry-on, they may be confiscated by security as "weapons".) In Italy, a Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals, and ranges from 4% to 22%. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods in specially marked Tax Free Shopping stores, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper, salesperson, or our local staff for details. Be sure to save all receipts and the special Global Tax Refund forms for Customs, as receipts alone are not enough.

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:** 68,606,000 (Estimate)
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic 29%, None 51%, Islam 10%, Other Christian 9%, Buddhist 1%, Jewish 1%, Other 1%
- **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, climate change, and post-pandemic life are some of the issues France must address with its historic resourcefulness—and characteristic flair.

Italy

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 116,348 square miles
- **Capital:** Rome
- **Languages:** Italian is the official language; German, French, and Slovene are also spoken in towns near the borders of Austria, France, and Slovenia.
- **Ethnicity:** Italian, with small clusters of German-, French-, and Slovene-Italians in the north and Albanian- and Greek-Italians in the south
- **Location:** Italy is bordered by France, Slovenia, Austria, Switzerland, the Ligurian Sea, the Tyrrhenian Sea, the Ionian Sea, the Adriatic Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Geography:** Italy lies in southern Europe and includes the Mediterranean islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and several other small islands. The region of Tuscany is a blend of rugged hills, fertile valleys, and long stretches of sandy beaches that curve along the west coast of central Italy and fringe the pine-forested coastal plain of the Maremma. Sicily enjoys mountains in the north and east, a vast central plateau, and a fertile coastline dotted with sea-level resort towns.
- **Population:** 58,990,000 (estimate)

- **Religions:** Christian 80% (overwhelming Roman Catholic), Atheists and Agnostics 20%, Muslims estimated at less than 2%
- **Time Zone:** Italy is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Rome. Daylight Saving Time begins the last weekend in March and ends the last weekend in October.

National Holidays: Italy

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

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

04/25 Liberation Day

05/01 Labor Day

06/02 Republic Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

12/08 Feast of the Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 St. Stephen's Day

Italy: A Brief History

Italy proudly wears the mantle of Rome, the polity from which so much of Italy's historical, cultural, and religious heritage has derived. But even though the Romans were the first to unify the peninsula, they were not the first to dominate it. That honor goes to the Etruscans, whose empire, Etruria, reached its zenith in the 7th century BC. It was centered between the Arno and Tiber rivers, mostly in Tuscany. The Etruscans were farmers, miners, seafarers and warriors, but they were riven by factionalism and in 509 BC, their last king was tossed out by Ligurian-Latin nobles in the small town of Rome. Tired of monarchs, they created the first Roman Republic.

Etruscan culture disappeared by the 2nd century AD, but the Romans were quick to appropriate many aspects of the Greek culture that had taken root in southern Italy and Sicily, where there were Hellenic colonies called "Magna Graecia." As the colonies were absorbed, so were Greek religion, architecture, and the basic tenets of democracy. During the 1st century BC, Julius Caesar defeated Gaul, making Rome the ruler of the entire Mediterranean world. After Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C., his nephew Octavian, later called Augustus, became Rome's first official emperor. The capital became an architectural showcase, and new territories stretched across Europe into Asia Minor, existing under a "Pax Romana" that brought prosperity and stability.

Pax Romana declined in the 3rd century A.D. thanks to inept and corrupt emperors, and attacks by outside barbarians. Rome eventually embraced Christianity in 313 under Constantine I, who established an eastern capital in Constantinople. But splitting the Rome into western (Roman) and eastern (Byzantine) halves did not halt the empire's demise. The eastern Roman empire fell in 476, and though the Byzantine half survived, it never regained the full might of Rome. In 800, Italy was briefly reunited under Charlemagne, but soon disintegrated into squabbling kingdoms.

Italian culture peaked during the 15th and 16th-century Renaissance. The independent city-states formed a delicate balance of power, with ruling families (such as the Sforzas, Borgias, and the Medicis) funding a golden age of art, invention, and intellectual activity that produced some of the greatest figures of Western civilization—Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Dante Alighieri, Brunelleschi, Galileo, and others. It did not, however, stop the rival families from fighting.

By the 19th century, many Italians believed that they could function as a single nation, a belief spearheaded by the general Giuseppe Garibaldi. Independence was declared in 1861, and by 1870, the nation was consolidated under King Victor Emmanuel II. Italy was ruled as a monarchy and joined the Allies in World War I. But the 1920s ushered in a dark era as Benito Mussolini organized discontented Italians into the Fascist Party to “rescue Italy from Bolshevism.” What he delivered was a totalitarian state. Mussolini joined with Hitler and fought the Allies during World War II, during which 400,000 people were killed, hundreds of thousands were left homeless, and the economy was ruined. In 1945, Mussolini was captured and killed by partisans.

Italy was again declared a republic in 1946, but remained seriously divided during the postwar era by political extremes. Governments rose and fell, and in the 1970s, a series of terrorist acts by the left-wing Red Brigades threatened stability. By the early 1980s, the terrorists had been suppressed, but public discontent spilled into the 1990s as inflation and ongoing scandals involving public officials and the Mafia altered Italian politics. Parties dissolved, new ones formed, and new alliances emerged. This led to the election of media mogul Silvio Berlusconi as Prime Minister in 1994. But within a year, Berlusconi was forced to resign. He ran again in 2001 and was reelected, setting up a pattern that repeated for more than a decade: Berlusconi has been Prime Minister three separate times between 1994–2011, and continues to remain a political force despite having been convicted of tax fraud.

The previous Prime Minister, independent Giuseppe Conte, was elected in 2018 and heads up a populist coalition. Among his accomplishments have been the introduction of a national guaranteed minimum income, the nationalization of several companies, stricter immigration policies, and the western world’s first national lockdown in response to COVID-19. The current Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Italy’s first female Prime Minister, was sworn in on October 22nd, 2022. Meloni is a member of the right-wing, national-conservative party, Brothers of Italy, a party that is considered to be the most right-wing party in power in Italy since World War II.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Provence & The Riviera

Villa America by Liza Klaussmann (2015, Historical Fiction) A story of love, betrayal, glamor, and living the high life on under the Riviera sun. The novel is based on a real-life American couple Gerald and Sara Murphy, who were also the inspirations for F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*.

A Year in Provence and ***Toujours Provence*** by Peter Mayle (1991 and 1996, Memoir) Follow Peter Mayle, an advertising executive, and his wife, a tax inspector, as they leave England and move to a farmhouse in France's Luberon Valley. In these two best-selling books, he recounts his humorous attempts to blend into the Provencal lifestyle, as well as maintain his 200-year-old "new" home. Although these books are a few decades old, they still capture the dream—and reality—of chucking it all in and moving to France.

Madame, Will You Talk? by Mary Stewart (2015, Fiction) Romance, travel, and suspense combine in this novel by best-selling author Mary Stewart about two friends on a driving holiday in 1950s south of France who get swept up in a mystery surrounding a 13-year-old boy.

The Debt to Pleasure by John Lanchester (1996, Fiction) This wickedly funny book follows an erudite (and sinister) food critic as he travels through France to his house in Provence. Along the way, we get witty observations on French life, regional recipes, and clues about a shocking mystery that is about to unravel.

The Avignon Quintet by Lawrence Durrell (2012, Fiction) Five books, each loosely centered on the race to find treasure from the Knights Templar just before, during, or just after World War II. They can be read alone or as a series. We recommend starting with the first volume, *Monsieur*.

Total Chaos by Jean-Claude Izzo (2013, Mystery) Follow Fabio Montale, a disillusioned tough-guy cop, as he investigates the murders of his boyhood friends, Ugo and Manu. This is the first installment in a series of hard-boiled mysteries set in the author's hometown of Marseilles—great if you're a fan of Raymond Chandler or Robert Parker.

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.

Italy

Princes of the Renaissance by Mary Hollingsworth (2021, History) An exploration of the lives and times of the aristocratic elite whose patronage sparked the art and architecture of the Renaissance in fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy.

Absolute Monarchs: A History of the Papacy by John Julius Norwich (2011, History) A deeper look into the most significant popes in history and what they meant politically, culturally, and socially to Rome and the rest of the world.

La Bella Figura: A Field Guide to the Italian Mind by Beppe Severgnini (2007, Nonfiction/Humor) An Italian columnist and best-selling author journeys through his homeland while providing hilarious observations at the beautiful face Italy shows to the world, and the chaotic, garrulous, and often contradictory impulses that lie behind it.

The Monster of Florence by Douglas Preston and Mario Spezi (2008, Non Fiction) A remarkable true story by best-selling author Douglas Preston who, with Italian investigative journalist Mario Spezi, try to track down the identity of a serial killer known as the Monster of Florence.

History by Elsa Morante (1974, Fiction) A half-Jewish, Roman mother tries to survive in WWII Rome with her two sons. Though the main characters are fictional, each chapter opens with an factual account of real events that happened when the action takes place.

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.

Italy

The Life Ahead (2020, Drama) At 86, Sophia Loren makes her first screen appearance in ten years in this Netflix original, filmed in Puglia. And it’s a stunner. She plays Madame Rosa, a Holocaust survivor who takes in the children of local sex workers. A neighbor asks her to care for Momo, a Senegalese refugee whose delinquency may be too much for Rosa, whose own tormented past is catching up to her.

The Tourist (2010, Thriller) Beautiful Elise (Angelina Jolie) has a mysterious off-screen lover, Pearce, who has fled England and is wanted by both Scotland Yard and the mob. He tells Elise to entrap an unwitting tourist (Johnny Depp), who will be mistaken for Pearce (who is rumored to have altered his appearance), and arrested in his place. This convoluted caper plays out beautifully in Venice’s mysterious alleys, romantic canals, and opulent palaces.

Rome (2005–07, Television Series) This multiple Emmy-winner from HBO deftly weaves the stories of fictional and real characters (Julius Caesar, Octavian, Marc Antony, Cleopatra, etc.) during Rome’s 1st century BC transition from a republic to an empire. Outstanding production values and a stellar cast.

The Merchant of Venice (2004, Drama) Al Pacino gives us one of the most masterful portrayals on stage or screen of Shakespeare’s tragic moneylender, Shylock. He receives strong support from Jeremy Irons and Joseph Fiennes, and Venice itself, where much of the production was filmed. The city looks so enticing, it’s a wonder that Pacino did not chew up the scenery.

Life Is Beautiful (1997) Roberto Benigni is the lead actor and director of this heart-wrenching comedy/drama about a Jewish Italian bookshop owner in Mussolini’s Italy who tries to shield his son from the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp. Italian with English subtitles.

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 or Maps.me

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 or Bolt or Grab

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 or 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

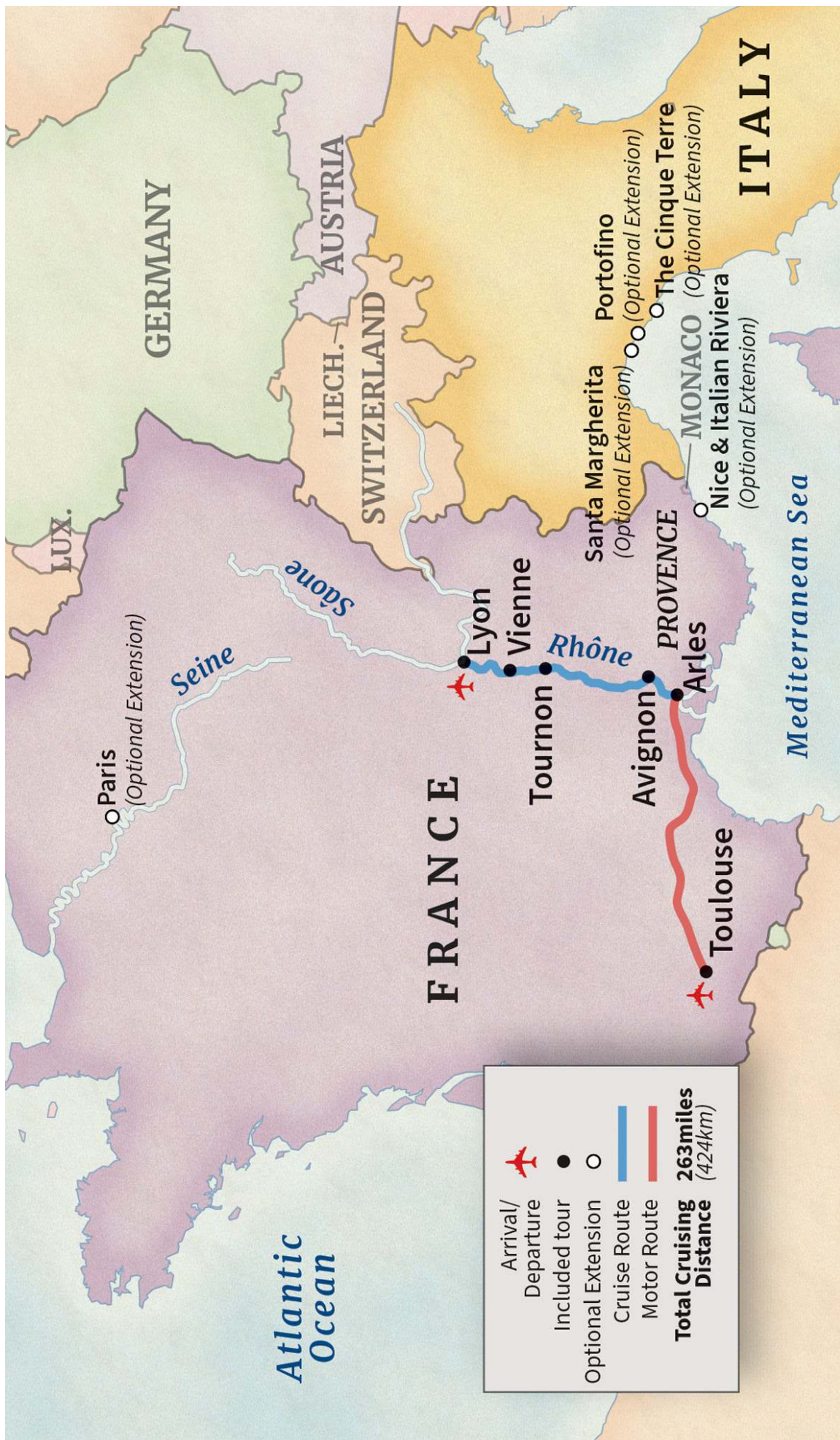
For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

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



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



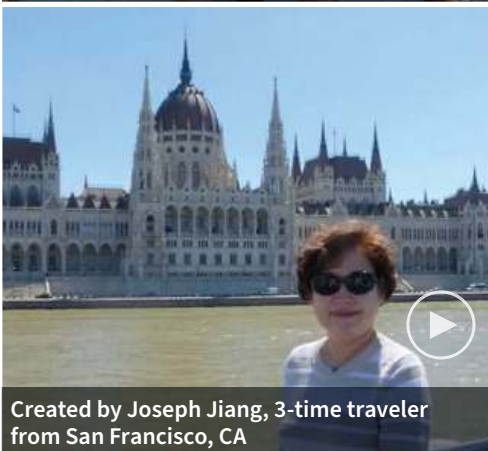
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from Providence, RI



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