



Nice and Provence

October 8 - 17, 2009

Exploring the South of France

Unspoiled medieval villages, sparkling Mediterranean cities, and glorious Roman ruins are scattered across a countryside made famous by the paintings of Van Gogh and Cezanne. As you soak up the rich colors of Provence and the Cote d'Azur, our tour transports you through a landscape of cypress and palms into a world of elegance that extends from the brilliant beauty of Nice to the charms of Arles and Avignon.

Your days will offer a wonderful balance of leisure time to explore and experience the Provençal way of life as well as an opportunity to enjoy the knowledgeable expertise of our guides. Beginning with a gorgeous stretch of the Cote d'Azur, we come to know the best of Nice—its architecture, lively and colorful markets, and sun-soaked vistas from along the seaside Promenade des Anglais. By way of contrast we'll also experience the simple medieval beauty of Eze, perched high above the Mediterranean, and a collection of the finest, most perfectly preserved Roman ruins in all of France.

Some of our favorite Provençal cities—Avignon and Arles—will invite you to stop, linger, and enjoy the unfolding day from the relaxing vantage point of a café table. Or stroll gracious, tree-lined boulevards, shop in the environs of the Palais des Papes, and unravel the narrow lanes in Vieil Arles, marveling at the elegant architecture. Your journey into the heart of Provence will ensure one thing—you'll leave a piece of your heart behind in this vibrant land of color and light.



Avignon - the Palais des Papes



The View from Eze Village

The cost of this itinerary, per person, double occupancy is:

Land only (no airfare included):	\$3590
Single supplement:	\$ 680

Airfares are available from many U.S. departure cities. Please call for details.

The following services are included:

- Hotels:** 8 nights accommodation in first-class hotels. All hotel taxes and service charges included.
- Coaching:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
- Meals:** Continental breakfast daily, 4 table d'hote dinners.
- Guides:** Discover Europe tour director throughout. Local guide in Avignon.
- Expenses:** Portage of one large suitcase per person at all hotels.
- Entrances:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.
- Insurance:** Complete travel insurance including cancellation coverage.





Thursday, October 8. Evening departure from U.S.

Friday, October 9. Arrival in Nice, where you will be met at the airport for the transfer to your hotel. There will be ample time to rest and unpack before we gather for a relaxing dinner at a nearby restaurant. **(D)** **Overnight: Nice**

Saturday, October 10. Brilliant Mediterranean sun strikes the sparkling city of Nice, its palm-lined Promenade des Anglais, and the lovely old Belle Epoque architecture, superbly set on the Bay of Angels. Memorialized by F. Scott Fitzgerald, the lively Old City is suffused in rich tones of ochre and sienna, its pedestrian zone a tantalizing mix of local shops, glorious foods, and designer clothing. Our morning driving tour takes you past the fabulous, green-domed Negresco; the Excelsior Regina; the exotic garden of Cimiez; and the Franciscan monastery. Choose a local café for lunch, and wander at leisure for the rest of the day through the city's winding thoroughfares. The evening is also free. **(B)** **Overnight: Nice**

Sunday, October 11. We depart for the enchanting, unspoiled medieval village of Eze, perched over the Mediterranean and crowned with the ruins of a 12th-century fortified castle. Continuing on to Monte-Carlo, our guide leads us on a walking tour of Monaco, including a visit to the Prince's palace. The afternoon is free to explore the heart of Monte-Carlo; you can visit Jacques Cousteau's aquarium, the 1863 Casino, and the Hotel de Paris. We'll return to Nice late in the afternoon; those who wish to remain at the Casino can easily make their way back by train. **(B)** **Overnight: Nice**

Monday, October 12. A free day to savor Nice at your leisure, wandering streets that glow with the saturated colors of the Mediterranean. Head over to the Promenade des Anglais, the wide, palm-lined boulevard that runs along the waterfront, and step into the lobby of the ornate Negresco—don't miss the *salon royal*, lit by a Baccarat chandelier made for the Czar. Or check out the Beau Rivage in Vieux Nice, where Matisse and Chekhov stayed, stop by the Matisse and Chagall Museums, and explore the lively market in the old center—the Cours Saleya with its wonderful array of crystallized fruit. In the evening, we'll sample one of the city's many fine restaurants. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Nice**



Roussillon

Tuesday, October 13. Leaving Nice this morning we wind our way up into the mountains to visit the charming artist's villages of Vence and St. Paul. We continue on to Grasse, the center of the perfume industry, where we'll stop for lunch. This afternoon's panorama of fantastic mountain scenery takes us through the Grand Canyon du Verdon, stopping in the village of Moustieres-Ste-Marie, before descending the Provencal Alps to Aix-en-Provence. We'll arrive at our hotel with time to relax and begin exploring this timelessly elegant city before dinner. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Arles**

Wednesday, October 14. The ancient Roman city of Arles was once the capital of Gaul, Britain and Spain and today is home to one of the best preserved Roman arenas in Europe. We'll have a gentle walking orientation of the city this morning, including a visit to the Cathedral, where St Augustine was consecrated bishop of the English in 597, and the monumental Roman amphitheatre. The afternoon and evening are free to pursue individual interests **(B)** **Overnight: Arles**

Thursday, October 15. Our first stop today will be to see the magnificent Pont du Gard, a Roman aqueduct that is wonderfully preserved, before we continue on to the city of Avignon. Here our walking tour encompasses the famous half-bridge (Pont St-Benezet) of the song, the Palais des Papes, and the Place de l'Horloge, site of the old Roman forum, with its antique carousel spinning gaily in the lively city center. In the afternoon you're free to explore the maze of busy shopping streets before we return to Arles for a free evening. **(B)** **Overnight: Arles**

Friday, October 16. After a drive through the Vaucluse Region of Provence, we'll have a walking tour of Aix-en-Provence, the elegant and honey-hued former capital with "the most satisfying street in France." The Cours Mirabeau, canopied by soaring plane trees and decked with fountains, is lined with an abundance of cafes and patisseries. Our tour leads us through the mansions of the Mazarin district, past the famous dolphin fountain, the church of Ste-Marie-Madeleine with its controversial Triptych of the Annunciation, and the Gothic cathedral of Saint-Sauveur. We'll visit the Atelier Paul Cezanne – the studio kept just as it was when he died in 1906. The narrow lanes in Vieil Aix feature some of Provence's finest architecture and most delightful shopping, and the afternoon is free before we continue to our hotel for a farewell dinner. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Nice Area**



The Pont du Gard

Saturday, October 17. Morning transfer to Nice Airport for return flights to the U.S.

Key to included meals: **B** - breakfast, **D** - dinner