

American Celebration of Music in France

Tour #5 (8 nights / 10 days)

Day 1

Departure via scheduled airline service to Marseille, France

Day 2

Marseille / Arles

(D)

Arrive in Marseille

Meet your MCI Tour Manager, who will assist the group to awaiting chartered motorcoach for a transfer to Arles

Late afternoon hotel check-in

Evening Welcome Dinner and overnight

The ancient town of Arles is an important center of Provençal life, proud of its traditions and famed for both its Roman and its early-medieval heritage. It lies on the Rhône south of the point where the river divides into two arms - the Grand Rhône to the east and the Petit Rhône to the west. Though the painter van Gogh resided here in 1888-89; the famous "Bridge of Arles" in his picture no longer exists, and Arles possesses none of his works

Day 3

Arles

(B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel

Take a half-day sightseeing tour of Arles, focusing on the old Roman portion. Visit the Théâtre Antique, a Roman theater that was once a fortress. Its stones were later used for other buildings; its remaining columns are called the "two widows." Also visit the Arènes, the Roman Amphitheater that is one of the best-preserved monuments of Roman Provence. Each arch is supported by Doric and Corinthian columns. In summer there are bullfighting contests in the 20,000-seat arena. The top tier provides a panoramic view of Arles. Lastly visit the 12th century Église St-Trophime and its cloisters

Lunch, on own

Performance as part of the American Celebration of Music in France

Evening dinner and overnight

Day 4

Arles / Avignon

(B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel

Excursion to Avignon. Enjoy a guided tour of Avignon, including entrance to the Palais des Papes, the site of the Papal Court during much of the 1300's. Seven "official" popes reigned here, followed by three "anti-popes." Also visit the famous Pont St-Bénézet (best known from the children's round "Sur le pont d'Avignon"), built in 1177, and for centuries the only stone bridge over the Rhône

Lunch, on own

Afternoon at leisure for sightseeing, shopping or other activities

Return to Arles for dinner and overnight



Day 5 **Arles / Isle-sur-la-Sorgue / Gordes / Roussillon** **(B,D)**

Breakfast at the hotel

Excursion to the northeast of Arles

Travel first to the charming town of Isle-sur-la-Sorgue. One of “the most beautiful country towns of Provence,” the village rests on the banks of the river Sorgue and is filled with shops, cafes and museum-quality antique stores

Lunch, on own

Then we will take a scenic journey through the beautiful countryside, viewing fields of lavender, sunflowers and poppies. Next visit Gordes, a spectacularly sited village whose buildings rise in sun-soaked tiers up rocky slopes

Then it is off to the enchanting town of Roussillon

Performance as part of the American Celebration of Music in France

Return to Arles for dinner and overnight



Day 6 **Arles / Nimes** **(B,D)**

Breakfast at the hotel

Full-day excursion to Nimes. First visit Pont du Gard, the 2000 year-old bridge that is a major feat of Roman engineering. See the bridge and take a walk on the 157-foot high waterway. Continue to Uzès, source of the springs that traveled over the Pont du Gard. This charming town has an arcaded marketplace and several fine medieval towers

Lunch, on own

In Nimes, visit the world-famous Arènes (amphitheater) and the Maison Carrée, the purest and best-preserved of all Roman temples

Performance as part of the American Celebration of Music in France

Evening dinner and overnight



Day 7 **Arles / Aix-en-Provence** **(B,D)**

Breakfast at the hotel

Morning visit to the towns of Les Alpilles. Visit the deserted citadel of Les Baux-de-Provence. Enjoy time to explore the Val d'Enfer (Infernal Valley) Continue to St-Remy, where Vincent Van Gogh created 150 of his works. It was also the birthplace of Nostradamus in 1503

Lunch, on own

Visit the Roman ruins of Glanum. In 1921, St-Remy found new fame when archaeologists uncovered the fascinating Roman ruins

Continue to Aix for dinner and overnight



Day 8 **Aix-en-Provence** **(B,D)**

Breakfast at the hotel

A guided tour of Aix includes entrance to the 13th century Cathédrale de St-Sauveur, noted for its 16th century walnut doors, Merovingian baptistery and Romanesque cloisters. Also tour the Atelier de Cézanne, the perfectly preserved studio of Paul Cézanne, Aix's most famous son, and the Cours Mirabeau, one of the most pleasant boulevards in all of France, with its overarching trees, rows of old mansions and numerous street cafes

Lunch, on own

Performance as part of the American Celebration of Music in France

Evening dinner and overnight



Day 9 **Aix-en-Provence / St-Tropez / Cannes** **(B,D)**

Breakfast at the hotel
Day excursion to various famous beach resorts of St-Tropez, Cannes and others
Lunch, on own
Return to Aix for Farewell Dinner and overnight

Day 10 **Depart for home** **(B)**

Breakfast at the hotel
Transfer to Marseille's airport for return flight

***This is a very flexible itinerary.** Except for confirmed appointments and performances, the places of interest and the sequence of sightseeing might be changed if necessary or desirable. In the event of an unavoidable conflict in the performance and the sightseeing schedule, the concert schedule will prevail, and it may be necessary to exclude some sightseeing activities.*

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