

Abercrombie & Kent



## FRENCH GARDENS: PARIS & THE LOIRE - A MARCO POLO JOURNEY (2024)

Celebrate the stunning gardens and châteaux of France, from Paris to Versailles, in exuberant style, with an entire day at the International Garden Festival at Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire.

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Small Group Journeys, Marco Polo Small Group Journeys



Europe, France



9 days from AU\$22,300 pp



18 Guests

## Journey Overview

Celebrate the stunning gardens and châteaux of France, from Paris to Versailles, in exuberant style. Devote an entire day to the International Garden Festival at Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, explore magnificent châteaux and sample vintages at an organic winery on a journey for flower lovers that includes two nights in Paris.

### Journey Highlights

- Take in the botanical pageantry at the International Garden Festival at Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire during a full day on site
- Sit down to an intimate picnic on the grounds of Versailles, and then explore the palace itself
- Explore a variety of châteaux in the Loire Valley, both large and small, including a special visit to family-owned Château Beauregard
- Stroll the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, once a royal medical garden and now France's most important botanical garden
- Join an award-winning florist for a master class in the art of regal floral arrangements at the Château de Chenonceau
- Learn the secrets of Chantilly cream at the château where it originated



## Itinerary

### **Day 1: Arrive Paris, France**

Arrive in Paris, the City of Light, where you are met and transferred to your luxury hotel set amid gardens. Tonight, gather for a welcome dinner.

***Le Grand Mazarin | Meals: D***

### **Day 2: Paris | French Cuisine & Sparkling Varietals**

Start your day with a walking foodie excursion that introduces you to some of Paris' best-loved treats and the vendors who supply them. Then, stroll by the Cuvier Fountain as your guide begins to explain the history of wine in Paris. Continue through the Jardin des Plantes to visit the ecological garden. Pass the Halle aux Vins, the world's largest wine storage facility, and proceed to Les Arènes de Lutèce (Paris' Roman Arena). Conclude this special experience by sampling sparkling wines, putting your powers to distinguish between varietals to a pleasing test.

***Le Grand Mazarin | Meals: B***

### **Day 3: Loire Valley | Private Garden Tour**

Ride Like a Local on the TGV high-speed train to Tours in the heart of the Loire Valley — a UNESCO World Heritage Site filled with historic towns, landscapes and châteaux. Upon arrival, privately tour the magnificent gardens of the Château de Villandry, followed by lunch on the grounds. Then, transfer to your hotel in the former royal town of Blois.

***Fleur de Loire | Meals: BLD***

### **Day 4: Loire Valley | Gardens Whimsical & Practical**

Begin your day with a private tour of Château Beauregard and its fascinating "Portrait Gallery" garden, followed by a sommelier-led tasting of historic wines and lunch. Afterwards, visit the organic kitchen gardens at the majestic Château de Chambord.

***Fleur de Loire | Meals: BL***

### **Day 5: Chenonceau | Special Before-Hours Access**

Journey east along the Loire River, then up its tributary, the Cher, to beautiful Château de Chenonceau, which arches elegantly over the river's flowing waters. Enjoy this remarkable castle — once home to Catherine de Medici — without the crowds, thanks to before-hours access arranged by A&K. Take part in a floral master class led by the château's celebrated chief florist, a winner of the prestigious Meilleur Ouvrier de France. Then, proceed to a nearby winery to explore its carved stone cellars and savour a lunch paired with their organic wines. Return to your hotel to cap off your day with an refreshing Scenic Sundowner.

***Fleur de Loire | Meals: BLD***

### **Day 6: Chaumont | The International Garden Festival**

Today, experience the International Garden Festival, which each year brings together leading garden designers from around the world to create themed installations at the Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire. Tour the château and its historic stables, and then Ride Like a Local by traditional flatboat as you cruise along the Loire, enjoying lunch on board. Return to Chaumont for an afternoon exploring the fascinating garden creations and botanical wonders of the festival. Continue to Château de Troussay for a private tour and apéritif with a selection of local cheeses and petit fours. Tonight, dine at your hotel.

***Fleur de Loire | Meals: BLD***

### **Day 7: Versailles | Dazzling Legacy of Louis XIV**

Drive to the magnificent Palace of Versailles, set in 2,000 acres of beautiful park and gardens principally designed by André Le Nôtre. Indulge in a picnic created with ingredients from local markets amid the splendour of the palace grounds. Then, explore the astounding palace itself, a masterpiece built out to its full glory by Louis XIV. Proceed to your hotel at Chantilly.

***Auberge du Jeu de Paume | Meals: BL***

### **Day 8: Chantilly | A Dish Fit for a King**

Explore the grand Château de Chantilly, home to one of the country's best art collections. After lunch in one of its historic buildings, partake in a Chef's Table workshop that reveals the secrets behind authentic Chantilly cream, which was first served at this castle during a lavish party held for Louis XIV. Return to the hotel for time at leisure. Tonight, enjoy a farewell dinner.

***Auberge du Jeu de Paume | Meals: BLD***

## Day 9: Depart Paris

After breakfast, transfer to Charles de Gaulle airport for your departing flight.

**Meals: B**

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## Journey Details

Minimum age is 10 years.

First group event: welcome briefing at 6:00 p.m. on Day 1.

Last group event: farewell dinner at 7:00 p.m. on Day 8.

Departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 2 guests.

**Program Note:** Combine the first departure of this journey with **English Gardens & the Chelsea Flower Show** to create one grand garden show adventure.

Included with every Marco Polo Journey

- English-Speaking Resident Tour Director and Local Guides
- Hand-Selected Luxury Accommodations (Where Available)
- Airport Meet and Greet with Private Transfers
- Travelling Bell Boy Luggage Handling
- Breakfast in Bed on Select Days
- Full Breakfast Daily; Select Lunches and Dinners
- Traveller's Valet Laundry Service
- Internet Access (Where Available)
- Entrance Fees, Taxes and All Gratuities Except Resident Tour Director
- 24/7 A&K On-Call Support
- Guaranteed Departures with Just Two Guests

## Customise this Journey

**Talk to one of our expert Journey Designers** or your travel agent about booking this tour as a private journey for your own small group with family or friends. Or, if you would prefer to travel privately, find out more about creating the perfect bespoke Tailor-Made Journey based on this itinerary.

# Map



## Dates & Pricing

Prices are in AUD, per person, based on double occupancy

**Jul 13, 2024 - Jul 21, 2024**

Price	Single Supplement	Internal Air (From)	Availability
<b>AU\$22,300 pp</b>	AU\$7,685	AU\$0	Call for Availability

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