



EPICUREAN JOURNEY: PARIS TO BORDEAUX

This indulgent journey takes you from the treasure-lined galleries of the Louvre in Paris and the glittering Hall of Mirrors in Versailles, to some of the oldest and most celebrated wine regions in France that are abundant in magnificent architecture.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries



Europe, France



10 days from AU\$18,405 pp



Private

Journey Overview

This indulgent journey takes you from the treasure-lined galleries of the Louvre in Paris and the glittering Hall of Mirrors in Versailles, to some of the oldest and most celebrated wine regions in France that are abundant in magnificent architecture, breathtaking landscapes, and of course world-class wineries. In addition to enjoying a wide variety of local cuisine from the classic to the contemporary, and superb wines such as Champagne, Cabernet and Bordeaux, you'll have ample opportunity to go behind the scenes and gain insights into wine production, as well as participate in the creation of French culinary delights.

Journey Highlights

- Lay eyes on some of the world's iconic art pieces in the world-famous Louvre Museum
- Learn about French cheeses, charcuterie and patisserie on a foodie tour of Paris
- Raise a toast in Reims, renowned for its impressive cathedral and champagne production
- Walk in the footsteps of Louis XIV as you stroll the incomparable Palace of Versailles
- Explore a variety of châteaux in the magnificent Loire Valley and sample vintages at an organic winery
- See the beautiful UNESCO World Heritage-listed Cathedral of St. André
- Discover the wonders of St. Émilion, including its Monolithic Church and the Proserpina Grotto of its Hermitage
- Explore Bordeaux's Old Town, seeing the "Grosse Cloche", former belfry of the medieval town hall, as well as the Cailhau Gate and Parliament Square
- Sip the world-class wines of the Bordeaux region during tastings at premium local vineyards



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Paris

Meet your A&K Guardian Angel on arrival for a private transfer to your city hotel.

Paris is renowned worldwide for its exceptional art galleries, museums, gastronomy, fashion, iconic landmarks and cosmopolitan chic. Some of the most famous attractions include the Louvre, the Musée d'Orsay, and the iconic Eiffel Tower. The Arc de Triomphe stands proudly at the Place de l'Etoile, honouring the Unknown Soldier, while the Champs Elysees, stretching elegantly before it, complete the city's cultural richness.

Madame Reve

Day 2: Paris

Unearth the many treasures of the Louvre, the world's most famous museum. Formerly the residence of French kings, this instantly recognisable building harbours some of the most canonical pieces of Western art including the enigmatic Mona Lisa, the exquisite 'Venus de Milo', as well as priceless antiquities from all over the globe. With their in-depth knowledge and passion for the arts, our expert guides will also unveil lesser-known yet equally remarkable artworks.

After lunch (payable locally), there's an option (additional cost) to board a private boat for a breathtaking cruise along the Seine. Toast the city of light with a glass champagne or soft drink, and enjoy canapes as you cruise from the Eiffel Tower to the upstream point of Île Saint Louis.

Madame Reve / Meals: B

Day 3: Paris

Embark on a gastronomic exploration of Paris today, led by an expert food enthusiast. Learn about the different families of French cheeses and the best way to navigate any patisserie in this thriving metropolis. Indulge in the spoils of your foodie adventure with a picnic-style lunch, where you can ruminate further about French cuisine and culture over a glass of wine.

In the afternoon, you have the choice of viewing the beautiful mansions, fashionable boutiques and formal gardens of the upscale Marais district with a guide.

Alternatively, roll your sleeves up and make pastry! Unlock the secrets to baking the perfect croissant, éclair or macaron at an exclusive workshop with a skilled chef.

Madame Reve / Meals: B

Day 4: Paris - Loire Valley

Discover the ancient city of Reims – founded by the Gauls and later, occupied by the Romans – commencing at its glorious Gothic cathedral. After lunch (payable locally), head out to an esteemed champagne cellar to see how this sparkling wine is produced.

At the extravagant palace built by Louis XIV in Versailles, wander the opulent Grand Apartments, each named after a Roman god, and walk the mesmerising Hall of Mirrors, a vast gallery with 17 bay windows running down one side and mirrors along the other.

A stroll beyond the manicured formal gardens reveals the enormous Grand Canal, whose banks once hosted legendary parties, and hectares of greenery untouched by modern development.

Les Sources de Cheverny / Meals: B

Day 5: Loire Valley

Recline in your first-class seat aboard the train to St. Pierre des Corps. You are met on arrival and transferred to your hotel in the idyllic Loire Valley. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Loire Valley is famed for its picturesque vineyards, magnificent chateaux, and captivating castles. The region boasts architectural wonders spanning from medieval to Renaissance and classical styles, whilst fertile soil yield abundant produce, including grapes for world-renowned red and white wines.

If you wish to enhance your journey with a visit to the magnificent Chartres Cathedral en route, a private road transfer can be arranged instead (at additional cost). The tour includes a visit to Loire Valley the beautiful Chartres, known for its stunning cathedral with remarkable stained-glass windows before continuing to Onzain, arriving in the mid-afternoon.

Les Sources de Cheverny / Meals: B

Day 6: Loire Valley

Discover the finest châteaux of the Loire Valley, starting with the Château de Chenonceau, an exceptional example of 16th century construction that spans the Cher River.

Take in the imposing Château Royal d'Amboise – a favourite residence of French kings in the 15th and 16th centuries - perched high above the Loire River. A mere 500m away lies Clos Lucé, an attractive summer home where artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci spent his final days. Admire his drawings and full-scale models of his inventions, displayed in the pretty surrounding gardens.

Should you prefer your châteaux with Cabernet, opt for a full day Loire Valley wine tour, which kicks off with a tasting at the Pierre et Bertrand Couly estate in Chinon, a region renowned for reds. Next stop: the Château de Minière, an organic vineyard with a long tradition of female owners and grapevines up to a century old. Sip fruity Bourgueil wines and savour a picnic lunch prepared with seasonal ingredients. Cap off the day with a glass of Vouvray in the atmospheric troglodyte cellars of Domaine Brédif, which produces top quality white wines from Chenin Blanc grapes.

Les Sources de Cheverny / Meals: B

Day 7: Loire Valley - Bordeaux and Aquitaine

It's a full day's drive to Bordeaux, stopping in the city of Poitiers en route, to admire the Church of Notre-Dame la Grande, a remarkable example of Romanesque architecture and the oldest of its kind in Europe.

There's also the opportunity (additional cost) to drop into a distillery in Cognac – such as Hennessy or Otard – for a behind-the-scenes look at brandy production.

Hub of the famed wine-growing region, Bordeaux abounds with fine wines and prestigious appellations. With its exquisite architecture ranging from the medieval to 17th century fortresses and numerous chateaux, sleepy villages and temperate climate, this UNESCO World Heritage-listed city offers a true taste of quintessential France at its full bodied best.

InterContinental Bordeaux - Le Grand Hotel / Meals: B

Day 8: Bordeaux and Aquitaine

Explore the photogenic little town of St. Émilion, said to have been founded by a Breton monk who sought refuge in a cave here sometime in the 8th century. His followers planted the first grapevines, and today, St. Émilion is one of the principal red wine producing areas of Bordeaux. Of course, there will be many chances to try the wide range of local drops as you hop from one vineyard to the next.

There's the option to enhance your wine experience with private tour of Château Ambe Tour Pourret and its surrounding vineyard (additional cost). Gain insight into a traditional organic winery and enjoy a wine tasting before heading to the kitchen for a private three-hour cooking class. Your enthusiastic host will guide you in preparing sumptuous local dishes after which you will savour your creations accompanied by wine from the chateau's vineyard.

InterContinental Bordeaux - Le Grand Hotel / Meals: B

Day 9: Bordeaux and Aquitaine

Discover the lovely city of Bordeaux on foot, beginning at Place Pey-Berland, the lively main square. This is where you'll find the 13th century St. Andrew's Cathedral, a Gothic masterpiece, and the neoclassical Palais Rohan, a former archbishop's residence that now serves as City Hall.

Other highlights on your walking tour might include the elegant Pont de Pierre bridge which straddles the broad Garonne River, the commanding Cailhau Gate built to commemorate a medieval battle, and the spectacular Water Mirror which reflects the gorgeous 18th century buildings that line the Place de la Bourse.

If you arrive on a weekend, this walking tour can be tailored to take in the culinary delights of Bordeaux, starting in the Capucin, the city's largest market. With everything from cheese to charcuterie, fresh seafood, olives and wine, this destination is a veritable feast for the senses.

InterContinental Bordeaux - Le Grand Hotel | Meals: B

Day 10: Depart Bordeaux and Aquitaine

Your gourmet getaway concludes with a transfer to Bordeaux airport to board your onward flight.

Meals: B

Map



Accommodation

Hotel Madame Reve, Paris



Located in the heart of Paris, the Hôtel Madame Rêve is nestled in the iconic Poste du Louvre building, offering unobstructed views of the Eiffel Tower and Montmartre. A discreet entrance opens onto a lobby adorned with mosaics, murals and antiques. The glittering mosaic on the floor pays homage to the post office, bearing its opening date of 1888.

Collaborations with 70 artists, a secret garden and even a working post office have made this hotel truly one to write home about. There are 82 rooms, including 19 suites, all spread over one floor and arranged by street direction to orient guests. They are spacious, timeless and elegant with a subtle blend of precious woods, honeyed marble and golden fabrics — a third with terraces too.

The hotel has an eco-friendly footprint, with 400 solar panels on the rooftop, 70 rooftop trees and plants, plus an interior hanging garden — not to mention a bar and a 360-degree panorama. Two fine culinary experiences await: a restaurant with Mediterranean flavours Madame Rêve Café, and a panoramic restaurant with Japanese influences.

Les Sources de Cheverny



Tucked away in its own private estate, Les Sources de Cheverny is the quintessential French château – an elegant sanctuary in the heart of the Loire Valley. Exuding 18th-century class, this striking hotel balances bygone grandeur with a homely charm. Soft light from tall, gothic windows creates a restful space, and an open fire welcomes guests into the lobby.

Inside each of the 49 rooms and suites beats a subtle bohemian heart. Beyond the twists and turrets of the building, sprawling lawns and gardens are waiting to be explored. And further still, the hotel's vineyards stretch to the horizon, boughs laden with fruit soaking in the afternoon sun.

Wine lovers will be able to discover all the richness of the Loire vineyards and its winegrowers committed to promoting the region throughout the world. History lovers will have plenty to feed their curiosity, as they set off to discover the Sources de Cheverny, the Châteaux of Cheverny, Chambord or even Chenonceau. Athletes and nature lovers will enjoy walks in the forest, exploring the Loire by bike or the Loire vineyards.

InterContinental Bordeaux - Le Grand Hotel



InterContinental Bordeaux - Le Grand Hotel benefitted from an authentic restoration in 2007, reviving it to its former prestige and 18th century grandeur. Blessed with a stunning location opposite the Opera House, InterContinental Bordeaux - Le Grand Hotel is an ideal base from which to explore the region, located on the famous Golden Triangle, known as the 'quartier des Grands Hommes'.

Inside, no two rooms are the same, with 127 spacious rooms and suites to choose from including the fabulous Royal Suite, which has its own private terrace and Jacuzzi. Decorated in the baroque style, each room offers its own unique personality through opulent furnishings, chandeliers and rich fabrics.

After a busy day of sightseeing you can grab a bit to eat in The Orangeries' winter garden before unwinding at Les Bains de Léa Spa, which has a panoramic Jacuzzi terrace overlooking the city.

Warm summer's evenings were made for hotel's rooftop bar, where you can retreat for cocktails and canapés as the fiery French sunset illuminates the sky at dusk.

Why we like it

- Luxury hotel in the heart of the Golden Triangle, close to all the major sights.
- Located opposite the Grand Théâtre; both buildings were designed by architect Victor Louis in 1776.
- Plush rouge fabrics, vintage furnishings, Bordeaux stone and original floral creations define Jacques Garcia's lavish interior.
- Home to Michelin-starred restaurant, Le Pressoir d'Argent.

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