

Paris, Provence, French Riviera and the Alps

The Itinerary

Upon landing, we will head south to Marseille aboard a TGV high speed train where the children will experience high speed at its best. From there, we will drive in minivans to the city of Nice.

THE FRENCH RIVIERA (LA CÔTE D'AZUR)

Our home base in that region will be Nice where we will take the time to discover the old Nice medieval town and stroll on the "Promenade des Anglais". On a day excursion, we will visit Eze, the beautiful perched village with its medieval walls and cobbled street, we will then continue on to La Turbie, where stands the "Trophée des Alpes", a monument that celebrates the victory of Augustus, the roman emperor, over the people of the Alps in the year 14 BC. A guide will describe the monument and the view that it affords us over Monaco. Continue on to explore Monaco, its luxurious yachts and visit the Royal palace of the Grimaldi in Monaco. We will also stop at the "Jardins Exotiques et La Grotte" where we will take a tour underground. Our next day trip will take us to Cannes, where we will take in the "allée des Stars" where more than 200 stars have left their handprints and visit the city with the "petit train". We will then continue on to Saint-Paul de Vence, another typical perched medieval town with a breathtaking view of the valley. We will also make a half day trip to the canyon des Loups where the children will experience "canyoning" in breathtaking scenery.

PROVENCE

In Provence, we will stay in the Arles region, the roman city founded by Jules César in 46 BC. Discover what inspired van Gogh, (this is where he painted more than 200 paintings); attend a "Course Carmaguaise"

which is the French version of the Spanish corrida where man faces bull, a local tradition more than 500 years old where in a free run, men attempt to remove objects tied to the bull's horn all in an ancient roman arena. In these spectacles, the bull is the star and is never put to death.

In Provence, we will also stop at the small fishing village of Cassis. That is where we will embark on a boat cruise to visit the breathtaking Calanques where we will explore the creeks and beaches snuggled between the jagged, white cliffs that make this area famous. We will also stop at the Château des Baux de Provence, one of the most spectacular historic medieval ruins of the France perched atop a rocky outcrop with a stunning view of the vineyards and olive groves below. The children will be able to experience first hand the catapults: 5 gigantic siege machines built to actual size and try their hand at medieval archery.

From there we will also head to the nearby Camargue region where we will visit a local Manade and experience the daily life of the Camarguaise people, land of wild bulls, herds of wild white horses. We witness the work of the guardians as they herd and separate the bulls to ready them for the shows and see up close these beautiful animals. There, we will also be treated to a meal of local fares including bull stew and the famous local rice. Afterwards, we will be treated to a 2 hours horseback riding expedition in the natural regional protected land surrounding the Vaccarès lagoon on white camarguaises horses with expert guides that will lead us to discover the local flora and fauna including many local wild pink flamingos. We will also experience a half day at the famous white sand beaches of Saintes- Maries-de-la-Mer.

THE FRENCH ALPS

Our destination is the Mont-Blanc, Chamonix, host of the very first winter Olympics in 1924, where the landscape is majestic. Take the "Téléphérique" to the "Aiguille du Midi" at 3,842 metres, stand at the junction of Switzerland, Italy and France with a local guide; take the

old train up to the "Montenvers" where we will be witness to the "Mer des glaces" with an experienced guide; visit a St-Bernard kennel where you will learn about the famous rescue dogs; hike in the "Parc des Merlets" to come face-to-face with 7 different local horns and antlers animals before enjoying a local traditional "fondue".

PARIS

Imagine racing up the Eiffel tower with your friends, coming face to face with the gargoyles at the top of the Notre-Dame cathedral, taking a picture of Mona Lisa at the Louvres. We will explore the ancient quarters of Le Marais where we are staying in the MIJE in one of their 3 former aristocratic residences dating back to the 17th century. From that base, we will visit the catacombs, find the best crêpes in Paris, sample the world famous "glaces Berthillion", the Rodin museum and much more

We will conclude our trip on the 14th at night with fireworks at the Champs de Mars for the "Jour de la Bastille".