

American Celebration of Music in France

Standard Tour #6 (8 nights / 10 days)

Day 1

Departure via scheduled airline service to Marseille, France

Day 2

Arles

(D)

Arrive in Marseille

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

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

Performance as part of the American Celebration of Music in France

Day 4

Arles / Avignon

(B,D)

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

Afternoon at leisure

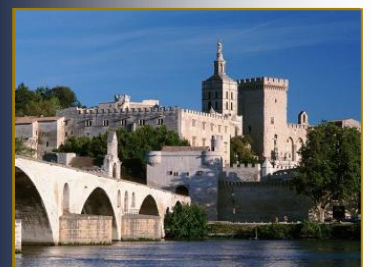
Return to Arles for dinner and overnight

Day 5

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

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. Then we will take a scenic journey through the beautiful countryside, viewing fields of lavender, sunflowers and poppies, stopping at the famed and picturesque Abbaye de Sénanque, a characteristic Cistercian abbey in a remote site



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Next visit Gordes, a spectacularly sited village whose buildings rise in sun-soaked tiers up rocky slopes
Finally we will proceed to the enchanting town of Roussillon for an *evening concert as part of the American Celebration of Music in France*
Return to Arles for overnight

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

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

In Nîmes, 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

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

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

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

Continue to Aix for overnight

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

A guided tour of Aix includes entrance to the 13th century Cathédrale de St-Sauveur, noted for its 16th century walnut doors, Merovingian baptistry 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

Performance as part of the American Celebration of Music in France

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

Day excursion to various famous beach resorts of St-Topez, Cannes and others

Return to Aix for Farewell Dinner and overnight

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

Transfer to Marseille's International Airport for return flight

Arrive home in the evening of the same day

***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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