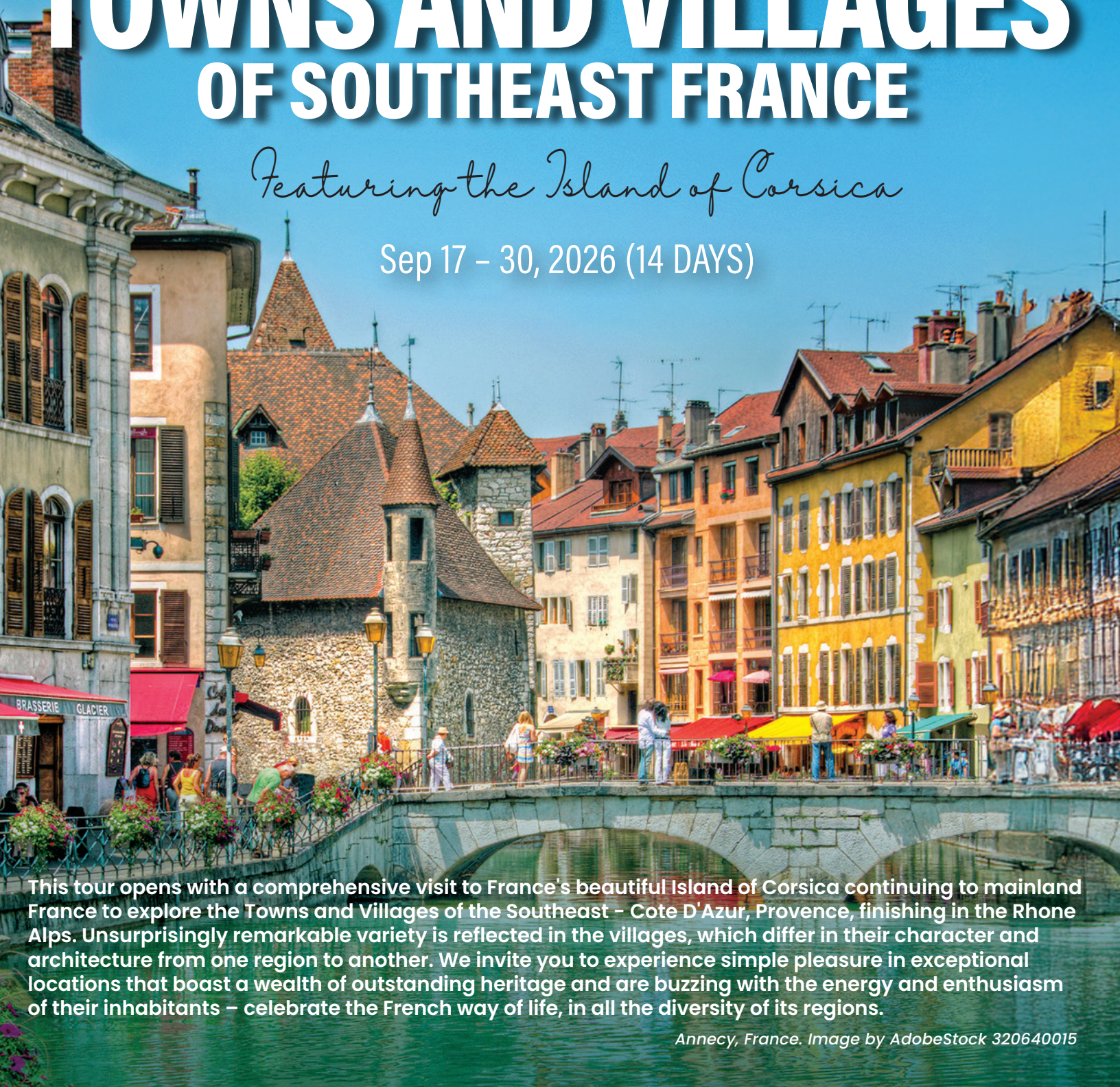




THE MOST BEAUTIFUL TOWNS AND VILLAGES OF SOUTHEAST FRANCE

Featuring the Island of Corsica

Sep 17 – 30, 2026 (14 DAYS)



This tour opens with a comprehensive visit to France's beautiful Island of Corsica continuing to mainland France to explore the Towns and Villages of the Southeast - Cote D'Azur, Provence, finishing in the Rhone Alps. Unsurprisingly remarkable variety is reflected in the villages, which differ in their character and architecture from one region to another. We invite you to experience simple pleasure in exceptional locations that boast a wealth of outstanding heritage and are buzzing with the energy and enthusiasm of their inhabitants – celebrate the French way of life, in all the diversity of its regions.

Annecy, France. Image by AdobeStock 320640015

TOUR MAP



ITINERARY

DAY 1 / THURSDAY, SEPT 17

DEPART CANADA

Depart for your flight with Air France to Paris.

Transportation: Air France

Flight schedule: AF 355 / Toronto – Paris Charles de Gaulle / depart 6:15pm / arrive 7:40am (next day)

DAY 2 / FRIDAY, SEPT 18

ARRIVE AJACCIO, CORSICA (D)

Upon arrival in Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, we meet our coach and guide, and transfer to Paris Orpvy Airport for our flight to Corsica.

Transportation: Air Corsica

Flight schedule: XK 773 / Paris Orly – Ajaccio / depart 1:30pm / arrive 3:05pm

Ajaccio, the capital city of Corsica. A port city on the rugged isle's western coast, it was the birthplace of French Emperor Napoléon Bonaparte in 1769.

Corsica is a popular holiday destination among tourists, best known around the world for its warm climate, dramatic mountain peaks and stunning coastlines.

Situated southeast of France's Mediterranean coast, the island attracts a steady stream of visitors each year.

Besides being every beach-lovers dream, Corsica boasts a rich history that spans centuries of traditions, with ancient buildings on every corner, winding cobbled streets, delectable cuisine and a thriving art and music scene.

Upon arrival, meet your local guide and coach and transfer to your hotel. Welcome dinner tonight at the hotel.

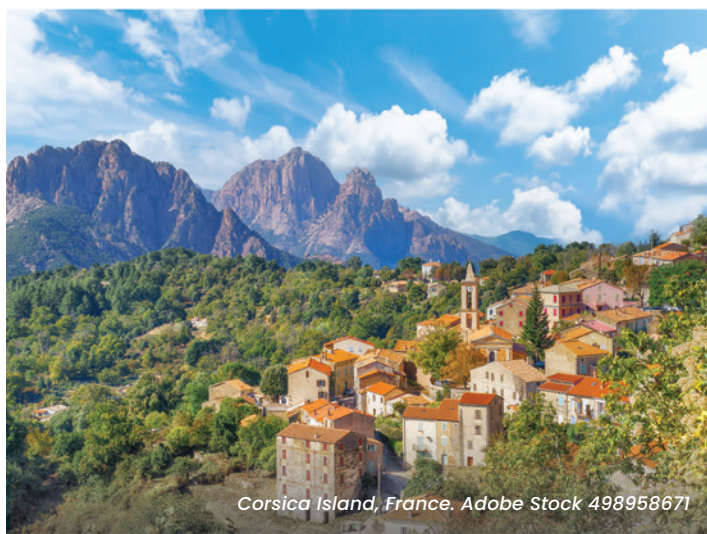
Accommodation: Best Western plus Ajaccio Amiraute or similar (3 nights)



Napoleon, Ajaccio. Image by Adobe Stock 23515670



Calanque de Piana, Corsica. Image by Adobe Stock 471350317



Corsica Island, France. Adobe Stock 498958671

DAY 3 / SATURDAY, SEPT 19

PIANA VILLAGE AND CALANCHES (B, L)

We are off on a tour of the west coast of Corsica travelling to Piana and Porto.

At the entrance to the magnificent Calanques de Piana which is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, stands Piana, looking down on the Gulf of Porto. Piana is one of the "Most Beautiful villages of France". Enjoy walking in the heart of the village and discovering its steep streets lined with pretty flowered houses! We travel on to Porto for lunch. While quite a remote location, it is the centre of some of the most scenic highlights of Corsica.

After lunch we drive this coastal road where we discover an almost surreal world of weather-carved pink granite and strangely shaped red figures, often plunging dramatically into the turquoise sea below. The drive through the Calanches de Piana follows the D81 south-east from Porto. It is one of the great drives of Europe and not to be missed if you are visiting this region of Corsica! There are various places where you can stop to admire the views and the rock formations. Some of the rocks form interesting shapes such as this heart shaped hole in the rocks.

We return to Ajaccio by coach, dinner on your own tonight.

DAY 4 / SUNDAY, SEPT 20

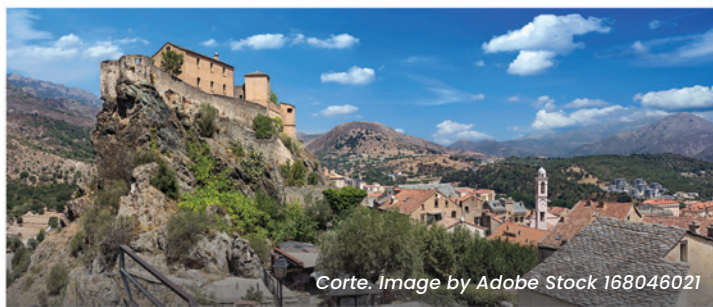
TRAIN RIDE TO CORTE (B, L)

This wild and beautiful French island lies between the Ligurian Sea, which laps at the white sandy shores of the west coast, and the Tyrrhenian Sea, which has sparkling blue waters that wrap around the east. As the most mountainous island in the Mediterranean, the best way to explore Corsica's stunning landscape is by train. This train ride is one of Corsica's "must do" attractions. This route is ranked as one of most scenic rail journeys in the world, crossing the Vecchio viaduct engineered by Gustav Eiffel, of tower fame, before passing through the Vizzavona Forest.

As you arrive in Corte it is the dramatic citadel sitting on top of a rocky outcrop above the town and the Tavignano valley that first grabs your attention. Our coach and guide will meet us at the train station and help us see the highlights of Corte. On our tour we visit the viewing platform which provides excellent views not just of the citadel and the town but also of the surrounding mountains in which Corte is set.

One of the liveliest parts of town is the area by the Fontaine des Quatre Canons and the wide steps, the Rampe Sainte Croix runs up from here with several restaurants and bars along the way. At the top is the church of Santa Croix which has a very pretty interior. We enjoy lunch in Corte.

We return to Ajaccio by coach, dinner on your own tonight.



DAY 5 / MONDAY, SEPT 21

CRUISE TO SANGUINAIRES ISLANDS, FLIGHT TO NICE (B, D)

A boat cruise this morning to the Iles Sanguinaires, also known as the Blood Islands. Their name intrigues, their history fascinates and their beauty fills with wonder all that travel here. They are located at the entry of the Gulf of Ajaccio and their appearance is a dark red giving them their emblematic name.

Another remarkable feature of the site is the Iles Sanguinaires' lighthouse, dating back to 1870 and built on the highest point of the Grande Île (Large Island), at 80 metres above sea level. An old semaphore can be found further south, it marks out the south-western coast of Corsica and the entry to the gulf of Ajaccio. Here you can see wild goats and small Corsican horses roaming wild.

Enjoy a free afternoon in Ajaccio. There are many statues and streets named after Napoléon Bonaparte, who was born here in 1769, along with the National Bonaparte Museum. You can stroll around the squares and promenades, admire the fabled cathedral, or relax in one of the many pavement cafés and watch the world go by.

Transfer to the airport for flight back to Nice.

Transportation: Air Corsica

Flight schedule: XK 104 / Ajaccio – Nice / depart 3:35pm / arrive 4:25pm

Transfer to our Nice hotel, included is our dinner at hotel this evening.

Accommodation: Hotel Mercure Nice Promenade des Anglais or similar (3 nights)



DAY 6 / TUESDAY, SEPT 22

NICE (B, L)

Nice city tour.

Nice, capital of the Alpes-Maritimes department on the French Riviera, sits on the pebbly shores of the Baie des Anges. Founded by the Greeks and later a retreat for 19th-century European elite, the city has also long attracted artists. Former resident Henri Matisse is honored with a career-spanning collection of paintings at Musée Matisse. Musée Marc Chagall features some of its namesake's major religious works. Nice is just as well known for its fantastic climate, fabulous beaches and beautiful coastline with mesmerizing views. Lunch included at local restaurant. Return to hotel, dinner on your own tonight.

DAY 7 / WEDNESDAY, SEPT 23

EZE, COARAZE (B, L)

Today we head high into the mountains to Eze, with views over the luxuriant sparkling coastline extending along wooded bays towards Monaco and Italy. The crowds of the coast disappear in the hinterland north-east of Eze. This medieval village is entered by a 14th century gate, has narrow, car-free streets which ascend steeply to the crowning ruins of the village's citadel. Here we will see a sensational "exotic garden" planted in the 1950's with cacti and rare plants.

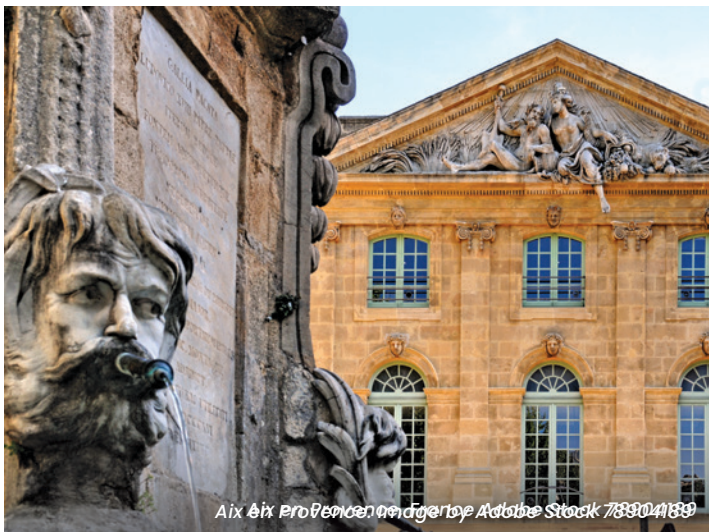
Then on to Coaraze, best known as the sunshine village, where we have lunch at local restaurant. In the middle of the olive trees, the cobblestone lanes of Coaraze lead to the Chappelle Saint Sebastien and the Blue Chapel. It was decorated in frescoes in different shades of blue by Angel Ponce de Leon in 1962. All this stands beside the old mule track that linked the village to Nice. It is just glorious with its steep, narrow streets, its houses with pink-tiled roofs, roughcast walls and pastel shutters, fountains and square. We have a tour of the Olive groves to finish our visit. Back to Nice for a free evening and dinner on your own.

DAY 8 / THURSDAY, SEPT 24

NICE – AIX EN PROVENCE – AVIGNON (B, D)

We leave Nice behind and travel to Aix-en-Provence, a graceful, lively city known in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region of southern France, the birthplace of Post-Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne. A walking trail links sites including his childhood home, Jas de Bouffan, and his former studio, Atelier Cézanne. The white limestone mountain Sainte-Victoire overlooking the city as well as the surrounding countryside were frequent subjects of his works. Cézanne's colours are all around you: more than just an experience, you'll actually feel like you're meeting the painter amongst the places and landscapes which marked his life. Free time for lunch on your own. We continue onto Avignon for our hotel stay. Dinner included this evening.

Accommodation: Hôtel Mercure Avignon Centre Palais des Papes or similar (2 nights)



Aix en Provence. Image by Adobe Stock 78904189



Avignon, France Adobe Stock 298695453



Les Baux de Provence. Image by Adobe Stock 214889929

DAY 9 / FRIDAY, SEPT 25

AVIGNON, LES BAUX-DE-PROVENCE, CARRIERES DE LUMIERES (B, D)

They say if you are coming to visit Provence, don't stop in Avignon as you will not want to leave! You can spend days wandering the neighbourhoods within the city walls and never get bored. To get us started, this morning we have a walking tour of Avignon's historic city center including a visit to the formidable Pope's Palace. As its name implies, the Pope's Palace is a city inspiring monument and an emblem showing the importance of Avignon to the Christian world of the Middle Ages. Built in the 1300s, mainly by two popes – the austere Benedict XII and his successor, the much less ascetic Clement VI, – the palace would become the biggest gothic edifice in all of Europe. We also see the episcopal buildings and the Saint Bénézet Bridge all listed as world heritage sites by UNESCO.

We then travel to the village of Les-Baux-de-Provence, one of the most visited villages in France. Built on top of a gaunt dramatic escarpment, this village is set against the limestone range of Les Alpines, split here by a valley said to have inspired a passage in Dante's Inferno. Seen from a distance, Les Baux appears as some fantastic apparition thrown up in a parched landscape of white rock and olive trees. There are only 22 residents in the upper part of the town and 436 in all. As one of the Most Beautiful Villages of France, it welcomes more than 1.5 million tourists annually. Time to visit the village and enjoy the "Carrieres de Lumieres", a multimedia show projected onto giant natural backdrops. Rest of the day is at leisure back in Avignon. Dinner included tonight.



Chateauneuf du Pape, Image by Adobe Stock 1246315883

DAY 10 / SATURDAY, SEPT 26

AVIGNON – CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE, WINE TASTING, ST. ANTOINE L'ABBAYE – GRENOBLE (B, L)

Breakfast at the hotel with late morning departure from hotel, as we travel to Grenoble today. Our first stop is Chateauneuf-du-Pape where the first vines were planted by the ancient Romans. The village takes its name from the time when the Pope moved to Avignon in 1309. Eight different Popes served in Avignon as the Papacy remained in Chateauneuf du Pape until 1378. Chateauneuf du Pape is one of the most versatile wine regions for wine and food pairing. It is an exciting wine region making great character red wines that age and evolve and the wines still sell for fair prices making it perfect for the dinner table. Here you will learn how the various rocks and stones play an integral part in the development of the grape. The various stones reflect light to the vine, leaves and grapes. They also absorb heat during the day and radiate that heat to the vine during the cooler evenings. We have a visit to a local winery with wine tasting and lunch included today. We continue north to St. Antoine l'Abbaye where the abbey watches over a village of the same name. A stop on the Santiago de Compostela pilgrim route (Way of St James) and one of France's Most Beautiful Villages, Saint-Antoine-l'Abbaye will delight you with its half-timbered old houses, medieval market hall and abbey founded in 1297 by the Order of St Anthony to house the relics of St Anthony of Egypt. This Gothic building is a listed Historic Monument and possesses a magnificent carved portal. The interior holds much interest for visitors, including frescoes, walnut choir stalls, Aubusson tapestries, a monumental high altar and an organ dating from the 17th century. Not to be missed is the treasure house of the Hospital Brothers of St Anthony in the church sacristies, it contains reliquaries, liturgical garments, surgical instruments and a Christ in ivory. Arrive at hotel in Grenoble, rest of the day at leisure, dinner on your own.

Accommodation: Le Grand Hotel Grenoble or similar (2 nights)

DAY 11 / SUNDAY, SEPT 27

LA GRAVE, BONNEVAL SUR ARCE (B, D)

Two villages welcome us today. First is La Grave. Teetering on a rock outcrop, La Grave packs its stone houses tightly along narrow streets called trabucs, which climb to the top of the village. The legendary summit of the Massif des Ecrins has made La Grave a mecca for mountaineers: laid to rest in the cemetery next to the church with simple wooden crosses. You can reach the surrounding glaciers by cable car if you wish. Of interest here is the Eglise Notre Dame and the hamlet itself. Specialties here include goat cheese and honey as well as fabric designers, and creators of decorative objects.

Then on to Bonneval Sur Arc, lying between the Vanoise National Park of France and the Grand Paradis National Park of Italy. The village is isolated by its position in the mountains but they have developed their own breed of tourism that respects their remarkable environment and the ancient traditional of shepherds and artisans. They feature an interesting Snow and mountain museum. We return to Grenoble for the night. Dinner included this evening.



Annecy, France Image by Adobe Stock 534300469



Grenoble, France Image by Adobe Stock 123016305

DAY 12 / SUN. SEPT 28, 2026

GRENOBLE – TALLOIRES – ANNECY (B, D)

We checkout of the hotel and enjoy a panoramic tour of Grenoble. The Isere River divides the city into two unequal parts, the oldest part of the city cramped between the river and the mountains, and a major part of the city spreading out into the plain on the left bank. Our tour shows us the highlights of the city that offers many churches, museums and a very steep funicular. Of particular interest is the Archeological Museum with beautiful treasures and lots and lots of history. Grenoble is also best known as a leading scientific research centre and home of a series of laboratories in both the public and private sector. We then depart for Talloires, just one of the beautiful villages dotted around this stunning lake next to Annecy. We will get a walking tour map to assist you enjoy the route through the village. Many celebrities have come to Talloires and chosen the Pere Bise Hotel or the Abbaye de Talloires for their stay. These include the Queen Mother of England, Mark Twain, Paul Cézanne, and Bruce Willis, just to name a few. Free time for lunch on your own here. We move on to Annecy, a lovely city named the second-best French city in which to live. It's been called the Venice of the Alps, a French fairy tale and one of the most remarkable landscapes in the French Alps. The city has its beauty but what truly raises it out of the ordinary is the setting, the rippling lake and towering mountains that fringe it. We check in to our hotel, dinner included this evening.

Accommodation: Best Western Plus Carlton Annecy or similar (2 nights)

DAY 13 / TUESDAY, SEPT 29

CHAMONIX, AGUILLE DU MIDI, SIXT-FER-A-CHEVAL (B, D)

Chamonix has a long history as a winter sports hub. Rediscovered as a tourist destination by Brits William Windham and Richard Pococke in 1741, Chamonix hosted the first ever Winter Olympics in 1924. Mountains loom large almost everywhere you look in Chamonix. Skiers and sightseers have been launched by cable cars to heights of 3,842 metres on Mont Blanc for more than 50 years. The most famous and one of the highest aiguilles de Chamonix is an essential world attraction. From the centre of Chamonix, a 20-minute ride in the Aiguille du Midi cable car takes you to the gateway of the high Alps at a height of 3,842 metres. From its height of 3,777 metres, the Aiguille du Midi and its laid-out terraces offer a 360° view of all the French, Swiss and Italian Alps. A lift brings you to the summit terrace at 3,842 metres, where you will have a clear view of Mont Blanc. Lunch on your own at the top. Then we head to Sixt-Fer-a-Cheval, located at the foot of the mountains of Savoie. This village has a rich natural religious and architectural heritage. You will experience the magnificent scenery here in the Fer-a-Cheval cirque, the Cascade du Rouget waterfall and the Gorges des Tines. Lying at the eastern end of the Giffre Valley, the cirque forms an immense amphitheatre almost 5 km across and bounded by 500- to 700-m high limestone cliffs. In June, dozens of waterfalls cascade down these huge walls. The Fer à Cheval is the largest mountain cirque in the Alps. You may also enjoy a visit to the 12th century Abbey and a guided tour around the village. Farewell dinner this evening at our hotel.



Chamonix. Image by Adobe Stock 379009008



Sixt-Fer-a-Cheval, France. Image by Adobe Stock 888225686



Chamonix, France. Image by Adobe Stock 331822506



Yvoire. Image by Adobe Stock 57407620

DAY 14 / WEDNESDAY, SEPT 30

ANNECY – YVOIRE – GENEVA, FLIGHT HOME (B)

We checkout of the hotel and head to Yvoire, where the pleasure of a lakeside village combines with its strategic position between the Petit Lac and the Grand Lac. The castle, ramparts, gates, ditches and medieval houses have miraculously survived an extremely stormy past. The dazzling setting with its dramatic backdrop of mountains and lakes, the bustle of fishing boats, yachts and steam on the water, make it easy to know why Yvoire is known as the "the Pearl of Lake Geneva". Truly a day to see towns that are "off the beaten track" and waiting to be discovered. Our tour comes to an end as we transfer to Geneva airport for our flight home.

Transportation: Air France

Flight schedule: AF 1443 / Geneva – Paris Charles de Gaulle / depart 2:40pm / arrive 3:55pm

AF 386 / Paris Charles de Gaulle – Toronto / depart 6:30pm / arrive 8:45pm

*****END OF TOUR*****

B – breakfast, BL – boxed lunch, L – lunch, D – dinner

For operational and safety reasons, the itinerary can be modified at any time.

PRICING & TERMS

PACKAGE RATE (CAD\$, per person):

CAD\$8,790 per person, based on double occupancy

CAD\$2,090 per person for single supplement

PACKAGE INCLUSIONS:

- Roundtrip international flights from Toronto to Paris, and Geneva to Toronto, on Air France
- Domestic flights from Paris to Ajaccio, and Ajaccio to Nice
- Home – Airport – Home transfer to Pearson International Airport (within GTA)
- Tours and transfers with English speaking local guides as per itinerary
- 13 nights hotel accommodation with daily breakfast as per itinerary
- Meals included as per itinerary
- Porterage at hotels wherever available
- Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and included meals
- Escorted by an experience Tour Design staff

EXCLUSIONS:

- Airport departure taxes and fuel surcharges, currently \$890 per person, subject to change until time of final payment
- Meals not included in the itinerary
- Optional travel insurance

SPECIAL NOTE:

- Names provided at time of booking MUST match exactly your passport
- You must have a passport valid for at least 6 months after your return date
- If you wish to purchase optional travel insurance with us, it MUST be purchase prior to final payment date. Please contact us for quotation.

DEPOSIT AND PAYMENT:

At time of booking: \$1,000 per person

Final payment: Remaining Balance per person due June 04, 2026

CANCELLATION TERMS:

Between time of booking & Jun 03, 2026: \$1,000 per person

Between Jun 04, 2026 & date of departure: 100% of total cost

AIR OPTION:

OPTION 1: book with group air.

- Group airfare of \$750 per person is already included in your package rate, airport taxes and fuel surcharges of \$890 per person (listed under exclusions, and subject to change) will be collected at final payment. That's a total of \$1,640 per person for the cost of group air.
- **Advance seat selection for flights on our group air is NOT PERMITTED, as per the conditions of our contract with airlines.**
- **No option to pay extra to purchase seat selection for group air.**
- **Air tickets for passengers who require advanced seat selection for their flight should choose OPTION 2, book air separately on individual basis. Price will be quoted at time of booking, subject to airline terms and conditions at time of booking.**

OPTION 2: book air separately on individual basis

- You will receive an air credit of \$750 per person deducted from the package rate, and the air taxes and fuel surcharges of \$890 will not be applicable. That's a total of \$1,640 per person reduction for not taking OPTION 1.
- Total cost for individual air is quoted at time of booking, subject to airline terms and conditions at time of booking.
- Full cost of the air must be paid at time of booking, immediate payment for the full cost of air is required to issue tickets right away.
- **Advanced seat selection for flights is permitted at additional cost.**
- Airline cancellation penalty will apply after air ticketed.

OPTION 3: book premium economy, business class, or deviated air

- Air can be booked within group space OR booked separately on individual basis
- You will receive an air credit of \$750 per person deducted from the package rate, and the air taxes and fuel surcharges of \$890 will not be applicable. That's a total of \$1,640 per person reduction for not taking OPTION 1.
- Total cost for individual air is quoted at time of booking, subject to airline terms and conditions at time of booking.
- Full cost of the air must be paid at time of booking, immediate payment for the full cost of air is required to issue tickets right away.
- **Advanced seat selection for flights is permitted.**
- Airline cancellation penalty will apply after air ticketing



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