

# La Belle France

9 days from \$3,600



**DAYS 1/2:** A dream comes true as your wide-bodied jet thunders off the airstrip, bound for Paris, France.

A snack, movie and a nap later you'll experience the joy of a jet stream sunrise, and shortly thereafter be on the ground, in the company of your

**passports** courier.

You've arrived in Paris, the "City of Light." Get settled in your centrally-located hotel; try out your French on the friendly *conciierge* downstairs.

**DAY 3: PARIS, VERSAILLES.** Your local guide will explain that the River Seine cuts Paris in two. On the right bank you'll see the Champs-Élysées, the *Arc de Triomphe*, and the *Opéra*; on the left bank, the Eiffel Tower, the Sorbonne, and the cafés of the Boulevard St. Michel. At the heart of it all is the breathtaking Notre-Dame Cathedral.

Afternoon excursion to King Louis XIV's opulent Palace of Versailles.

**DAY 4: PARIS.** Free time today. Take the colorful Parisian subway (*Métro*) to the Luxembourg Gardens, and walk along its white pebble paths. Or, take a bus ride to the *Bastille* and back. *Remember the Fourteenth of July!* "Let them eat cake!" You'll see it all again tonight on a coach tour of the illuminated city, and from the River Seine on *les Bateaux-Mouches*.

**DAY 5: D-DAY BEACHES, BAYEUX, ST. MALO.** Proceed west through Rouen to Second World War country: sobering cemeteries, bunkers, and barbed wire. D-Day dawned here. See the Bayeux Tapestry, which chronicle another invasion, that of England by the Normans, almost a thousand years earlier.

Late afternoon arrival in the fabled pirates' den of St. Malo, ringed by walls and ramparts, and looking towards England.

**DAY 6: MONT ST. MICHEL-ST. MALO.** The all-time great fairy tale castle Mont St. Michel appears out of the morning mists, perched upon a mountain of granite. You'll walk its cobblestone streets, and hear tales of pilgrimages to this place, and of wretched prisoners-of-state who were once restrained from leaving it. This rock rings with history.

Stop at a vineyard as you travel south along the colorful road to Tours. You'll arrive in plenty of time for dinner, a dramatic Sound & Light performance, and overnight.

**DAY 7: CHÂTEAUX OF THE LOIRE-TOURS.** Visit the country homes of French royalty, including the *châteaux* of Azay-le-Rideau, Amboise, Chenonceaux, which spans the River Cher, and gigantic Chambord, home of François I.

Return to Tours for a free evening and overnight, tucked away on the banks of the magical River Loire.



**DAY 8: CHARTRES, PARIS.** See Chartres today. The stained glass windows of the Chartres Cathedral are perhaps the most beautiful in the world. The cathedral itself *defines* Gothic architecture, and the concept of the flying buttress.

Continue to Paris for some last minute shopping and exploration. There's an optional Eiffel Tower dinner available tonight as a final farewell to this great, flamboyant capital!

**DAY 9: *A la prochaine fois!*** Charles de Gaulle Airport disappears behind you as you fly west, gaining nearly an hour in watch time for every hour in the air. You arrive home not much later in the day than you left France.

