



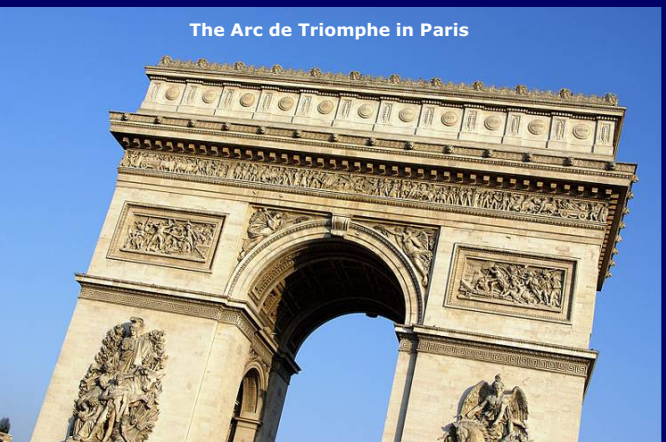
# Paris & Normandy



Though Paris is in flux culturally and socially, it lures travelers for the same reasons it always has. You'll still find classic sights like the Tour Eiffel, Notre-Dame, the Arc de Triomphe, Sacré-Coeur, and all those atmospheric cafes, as well as daring new projects like the Grande Arche de La Défense, the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, the Cité de la Musique, and the Bibliothèque François-Mitterrand. And don't forget the parks, gardens, and squares; the Champs-Élysées and other grand boulevards; the river Seine and its quays. Paris's beauty is still overwhelming, especially at night, when it truly is the City of Light.

The port of St-Malo is one of the most popular tourist destinations on the Emerald Coast. It is famed for its walled city, accessible beaches and one of the highest tidal ranges in the world. However, it is not the region's only gem; the Coast is studded with small towns that tempt their own share of eager visitors.

The Loire Valley was the playground of French nobility, who used the nation's wealth to transform the area with many earnestly extravagant chateaux. The largest and most lavish is the Château de Chambord (1519). It was built by King François I, a rapacious lunatic who was fanatically dishonest with his subjects' money.



# 9 Days

# Paris & Normandy



The Impressive Eiffel Tower in Paris



The Châteaux de Chenonceau in the Loire Valley

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Champs Elysees
- Arc De Triomphe
- Eiffel Tower
- Versailles Palace
- Seine River Cruise
- Notre Dame Cathedral
- D-Day Beaches
- American Cemetery
- Arromanches Museum
- Chambord Chateau
- Chenonceau Chateau

## INCLUDED

- Return Flights
- Tour Director
- Football Coordinator
- City sightseeing tours
- Licensed local guides
- Hotel accommodation
- Breakfast & dinner daily
- Private motor coach
- Entrance fees
- 2 Rugby games
- 1 Rugby practice
- Awards dinner

### Day 1 > Overnight Flight

### Day 2 > Paris Sightseeing

What's that huge white arch at the end of the Champs-Élysées? The Arc de Triomphe, commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 after his victory at Austerlitz. A licensed local guide will give the goods on this, and other, Parisian landmarks. Spot chic locals (and tons of tourists) strolling the Champs-Élysées. Look up at the iron girders of the Eiffel Tower, built for the 1889 World's Fair to commemorate the centenary of the French Revolution. See Les Invalides (a refuge for war wounded), the École Militaire (Napoleon's alma mater), and the Conciergerie (the prison where Marie Antoinette was kept during the French Revolution). Then head to the Île de la Cité -- a small island in the Seine -- to see Notre Dame Cathedral. Look up at the great gray spires, grotesque gargoyles, and huge, round stained-glass windows (even more impressive than in the Disney version of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame").

### Day 3 > Palace of Versailles

The ultimate palace, Versailles was built by Louis XIV, and housed the royal family and its groveling court from 1682, when the Sun King moved in, to the French Revolution. Everything in Versailles is worth a look, from the 250-foot-long Hall of Mirrors, with themed salons--"war" and "peace"--on either side, to Marie Antoinette's faux country hamlet. When being a queen became too much to bear, she would pretend to be a commoner, tending her sheep and wearing peasant clothes. (Please note Versailles is closed on Mondays.)

### INTERNATIONAL RUGBY GAME ONE

### Day 4 > Normandy Region

We drive through a region of natural beauty towards the Normandy coast whose excellent light inspired a great many artists such as Monet. Tonight we relax in the Normandy countryside.

### Day 5 > D-Day Landing Beaches & Museum

See the D-Day beaches where on June 6, 1944, thousands of Allied troops landed in an effort to recapture the coast from Germany. All along the beaches, deserted German bunkers have been turned into memorials and the stark white crosses and stars that mark the cemeteries are grim reminders of the war. Caen's Mémorial, a contemporary museum for peace, tells a complete story of D-Day in interactive displays. Visit Omaha Beach, the site of the landing of the American 1st division and walk through the American cemetery commemorating their sacrifice.

### RUGBY PRACTICE

### Day 6 > Chateaux of the Loire Valley

France's aristocrats began building defensive castles in the Loire Valley in the 11th century. A few hundred years later, their descendants created pleasure palaces among the lush green forests and wandering waterways. Today, sumptuous Renaissance castles stud the banks of the silvery Loire River, the longest in France. But few castles can compete with Château de Chenonceau. Built on a series of arches over the Cher River, Chenonceau was designed by a woman in the 16th century. It was once inhabited by Catherine de Medici, who commissioned the delicate spirals and of the formal gardens, and had the bridge covered by a two-story stone gallery. You'll also visit Château Chambord, the largest and most lavish of the Loire châteaux (and that's saying a lot). It took 1800 workers over a decade to complete the palace for King Francois I, who once suggested that the river be diverted to make a moat (a smaller river was later diverted). The palace has 440 rooms, and in many of them you can see Francois' salamander emblem--reported to have been an appropriately slimy symbol for the king.

### Day 7 > Game Day & Post-Game Party

Enjoy a game second against French competition and relax afterwards and make new friends.

### INTERNATIONAL RUGBY GAME TWO

### Day 8 > Seine River Cruise & Awards Dinner

See the city from the water on an hour-long cruise along the River Seine. The Seine cuts right through Paris, dividing the city in half. See the Eiffel tower rising up on the Left Bank, the walls of the Louvre on the Right Bank. A guide will point out other monuments and architectural marvels as you pass, many of which are illuminated by clear white light at night.

Enjoy unparalleled views from the Eiffel Tower this evening and reminisce on your adventure in Europe at this evening's gala awards dinner.

### Day 9 > Flight Home