



Provence

14 days – Nice to Paris
17 to 30 April 2009

Twin Share per person \$17,990

Single Supplement \$1,700

Delight in the contrasts of the French Riviera's lively resort towns of Nice, Cannes and St Tropez before relaxing into the gentle, picturesque villages of Aix-en-Provence and Avignon. Be inspired by the magic of the Henri Matisse Museum in Nice and Paul Cezanne's studio in Aix-en-Provence. Discover the Count of Monte Cristo's Chateau d'If and the hidden bays and inlets of the Calanques in Marseille. From the towering Roman ruins at Pont du Gard to the wines and gardens in Pertuis, we enjoy a journey of art and age old legends, of fine cuisine and the glorious scenery that is Classic Provence.

French Riviera (Cote D'Azur)

The Cote D'Azur has been a visitor's favourite for centuries. This Mediterranean coastline with its radiant light and bold colours has been an inspiration for artists including Renoir, Picasso, Chagall and Matisse. Today the glistening blue seashore is still a favoured destination for the jet-set and artists alike. Charming seaside towns, dotted with fashionable restaurants and glittering palaces, mix with tangled cobblestoned streets, major museums and colourful market places that exude the softness of its Provençal heritage.

Provence

The heart of Provence is in the hills that bind the sea to the Alps. It is the sloping vineyards and cultivated lands; a colourful palette of red poppies and yellow sunflowers, pink flamingos and purple lavender. This is the scenery that inspired and charmed Gauguin, Cezanne and Van Gogh. World renowned for its cuisine, Provence stirs the appetite with earthy black truffles, lavender honey and crisp rosé wines. The natural hues and fragrances are accentuated by the soft singing voices of the local people. Provence's historic villages and picturesque farmlands have a way of stirring the visitor's soul.

Hotel Palais Du Méditerranée Nice

Well placed on the Promenade d'Anglais, Nice's wonderful sea front on the Bay of Angels, the Hotel Palais du Mediterranee is the ideal starting point for your walking exploration of Nice. Enjoy its revitalized Art Deco design and refined interiors, together with Michelin Class fine dining, cosy bars, indoor/outdoor pool, spa, and luxurious seaview rooms.

Grand Hotel Mercure Roi Rene Aix-En-Provence

Located in the heart of Aix-en-Provence, the Grand Hotel Mercure Roi Rene is a mere stroll from the famous Cours Mirabeau and its fountains. Set amongst green surroundings, the hotel features a restaurant with terrace area, swimming pool, bar and 134 stylish rooms boasting luxurious comfort.

Hotel D'Europe Avignon

The prestigious Hotel d'Europe offers exclusive luxury accommodation in Provence's historic capital, Avignon. A deluxe property since 1799 and in the Michelin guide since 1900, Hotel d'Europe has charmed many generations of visitors. The restaurant, expertly run by Chef Bruno d'Angelis, has received excellent published reviews for many years.



Itinerary



Day 1 – Friday 17 April – Arrive Nice

Our J&H Tours escorted Emirates flight ex Sydney arrives at Nice International Airport early afternoon. Our private coach meets us on arrival and transfers us to the Hotel Palais du Méditerranée, situated on the famous Promenade des Anglais, overlooking the Bay of Angels. After lunch, we enjoy a leisurely paced walking tour of the old town of Nice. We return to our hotel with time to relax before we meet for our welcome dinner at our hotel.

Day 2 – Saturday 18 April – Nice

Today we explore glamorous Nice and its stunning 19th century architecture by private coach. Our tour features interesting landmarks and sites including the fascinating Henri Matisse Museum and the stunning gardens of the Villa Ephrussi-Rothschild in St Jean Cap Ferrat. We lunch in the gardens and dine tonight in Nice's elegant Michelin one star restaurant, Christian Plumail.

Day 3 – Sunday 19 April – Antibes & Cannes

This morning we travel to the pretty cobblestoned port of Antibes to visit the 12th century Chateau Grimaldi that houses the Picasso Museum and it's collection of 245 of the artist's paintings, drawings and ceramics. Following lunch in Antibes, we continue to Cannes for a short tour and free time to explore this famous resort town, now synonymous with the glittering Film Festival. We return to Nice where the remainder of the afternoon is yours at leisure before our meal this evening at Brasserie Flo.

Day 4 – Monday 20 April – Vence & Saint Paul De Vence

We depart Nice this morning on a full day tour to the medieval hilltop villages of Saint Paul de Vence and Vence. In Saint Paul de Vence, we take a walking tour along the village's cobblestone streets, including a visit to renowned Center of Contemporary Art, the Foundation Maeght and its exceptional collection of 20th Century art. Nearby we visit the Henri Matisse masterpiece 'La Chapelle du Rosaire' and enjoy lunch at the Mas de Vence. Our day ends with a visit to the small but significant hilltop town of Grasse where over 40 perfumeries create fragrant essences from the surrounding fields of lavender, jasmine, roses, mimosa and orange blossom. We visit a perfumery for an olfactory treat prior to our return to Nice for dinner at our hotel tonight.

Day 5 – Tuesday 21 April – French Riviera to Provence

Today we leave the French Riviera for Provence, with a final view of the Mediterranean during our short guided walking tour and lunch in the renowned port of St Tropez. We arrive in the chic town of Aix-en-Provence mid-afternoon and check into our Hotel Roi Rene. Take a stroll along the tree-shaded boulevards or enjoy an afternoon coffee in one of the elegant cafes before dinner tonight in our hotel.

Day 6 – Wednesday 22 April – Aix-En-Provence & Montagne Sainte-Victoire

This morning we enjoy the beautiful architecture of Aix-en-Provence on our guided walking tour, including the huge fountain, 'La Rontaine'. We wander the colourful food and flower market and visit local artist Paul Cezanne's last studio, preserved as it was at the time of his death. Lunch is at your leisure in a café of your choice prior to returning to our hotel to board our private coach to Montagne Sainte-Victoire, one of Cezanne's favourite places and source of inspiration. Our afternoon ends with a wine tasting at the Mas de Cadenet. We return to Aix to dine at Le Formal this evening.

Day 7 – Thursday 23 April – Marseille

Today we journey to Marseille, the Mediterranean's gateway to Africa and France's oldest and largest city after Paris. Marseille is a fusion of Southern European and North African cultures. Provençal markets mix with Moroccan souks. Our tour takes in the picturesque Notre Dame de la Garde where fantastic views of the city and its terracotta roof tops await guests from this beautiful scenic site. Following lunch in the local restaurant, L'Epuisette, we take a boat ride on the busy Marseille harbour and visit the famous Chateau d'If as well as the spectacular Calanques, or small inlets, that dot the rocky coastline. We return to Aix-en-Provence for dinner at renowned restaurant, 'Aux Deux Garcons'.

Itinerary

Day 8 – Friday 24 April – The Luberon

We spend our day in the beautiful hills of the Luberon. Stretching from Cavillon to Manosque, much of the range is within the boundaries of Parc Naturel Regional du Luberon. We visit some pretty hilltop villages made famous by Peter Mayle's bestseller 'A Year in Provence' – Bonnieux, Lacoste, Menerbes and Roussillon. Our excursion also includes a visit to the exquisite winery and garden of Chateau Val Joanis for lunch and a wine tasting. Tonight we enjoy our second dining experience in Aix-en-Provence at L'Aixquis.

Day 9 – Saturday 25 April – Aix-En-Provence & Eygalieres

Enjoy the colours and flavours of Market day this morning in Aix-en-Provence. Sample olives, goat's cheese, fruit and other local produce before we visit the fascinating Alchemist Garden in Eygalieres. We return to Aix-en-Provence for an afternoon at leisure and dinner at our hotel.

Day 10 – Sunday 26 April – Aix-En-Provence to Avignon

We depart Aix-en-Provence by private coach this morning for Avignon, with our first stop en route at Fontaine-de-Vaucluse. We have lunch in this charming village and visit its mysterious 'vallis clausa' (closed valley), the spring of the Sorgue river. We then continue to Ile-sur-la Sorgue to explore its famous Sunday antiques market, one of the most important in France. We arrive at the prestigious Hotel d'Europe in Avignon late afternoon and dine on the hotel's creative and innovative cuisine tonight.

Day 11 – Monday 27 April – Avignon & Nimes

Our morning walking tour of Avignon begins with a visit to the famous Pont d'Avignon (built in 1185) and the Palace of the Popes, the largest Gothic palace in the world. After lunch at your leisure in Avignon, we travel by private coach to the Languedoc-Roussillon region to visit the Pont du Gard (Gard Bridge), a UNESCO World Heritage Site built approximately 2,000 years ago by the Romans yet remaining almost intact. We return to Avignon for tonight's dinner at Hiély-Lucullus.

Day 12 – Tuesday 28 April – Arles & Saint-Remy de Provence

Today we journey to Arles to visit some significant Roman sites and to pay tribute to the great Vincent van Gogh who spent a year in Arles. Following lunch we continue to Saint-Remy de Provence, a town of painters and artists. We visit the Saint Paul de Mausole hospital where van Gogh was voluntarily taken in May 1889 for 12 months. It was also in Saint-Remy that van Gogh painted the famous 'The Irises', 'Starry Night' and 'La Siesta'. We return to Avignon tonight for dinner in one of the town's fine restaurants, La Fourchette.

Day 13 – Wednesday 29 April – Les Olivades & Les Baux De Provence

Olives are the theme for this morning's excursion. We visit 'Les Olivades' Provençal fabrics, plants in Saint Etienne du Gres, and an olive oil mill in Mausanne les Alpilles. We lunch and have time to explore Les Baux de Provence, one of the most spectacular sites in Provence. Enjoy your final afternoon at leisure in Avignon then join your fellow guests for a gastronomic farewell dinner at our hotel.

Day 14 – Thursday 30 April – Avignon to Paris

Following a leisurely morning and lunch in Avignon, we transfer to the station for our early afternoon departure to Paris. Relax in comfort as we travel through the French countryside onboard our first class TGV train. We arrive at Charles de Gaulle Airport in the early evening where the land content of our tour ends. Guests travelling on our J&H Tours escorted Emirates flight from Paris depart tonight, arriving in Sydney two days later in the early morning on Saturday 2 May.



CLASSIC CRUISE CONNECTION

Enhance your J&H Tour by connecting with a 16 day Silversea cruise from Dubai to Athens.

Tour and Cruise - 36 days
28 March to 2 May 2009

CONTACT J&H TOURS FOR FULL DETAILS