

CIRCA



TOURS

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The Japanese Bridge and Lily Pond - Giverny

Photos by Circa Tours

Impressionist Paris and the Wine Country

Paris - Giverny - Auvers sur Oise - Champagne - Burgundy - Loire Valley
(9 days - 7 nights)

Circa Tours - 30919 Brassie Lane - Temecula - CA - 92591
Tel: 951-676-6117 - Fax: 951-676-6118 - www.circatours.com - CST 2081474-40
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SAMPLE ITINERARY

This is an example of a possible itinerary. It can be resized, reorganized and customized to fit your interests, budget and schedule. It can also be combined with other tours.

HIGHLIGHTS (9 days - 7 nights)

| DAY | ACTIVITIES | NIGHT |
|-----|--|-------|
| 1 | Leave the U.S. | |
| 2 | Arrive in Paris . Private airport transfer. At leisure | Paris |
| 3 | Full-day Paris panoramic tour with lunch at the Eiffel Tower | Paris |
| 4 | Guided tour of three Impressionist museums: Orsay, Orangerie and Marmottan | Paris |
| 5 | Day trip to Giverny and Auvers sur Oise | Paris |
| 6 | Wine tour to Champagne | Paris |
| 7 | Wine tour to Burgundy (Chablis) | Paris |
| 8 | Wine tour to the Loire Valley (Bourgueuil, Chinon, Vouvray and Montlouis) | Paris |
| 9 | Private airport transfer. Return to U.S. | |

ITINERARY (for more options, see our “France Highlights”)

Day 1: Leave the U.S.

Day 2: Arrive in Paris. After your private chauffeur picks you up at the airport, settle down in your hotel. Relax after your international flight or start exploring the city on your own.

Day 3: Start your discovery of **Paris** with a full-day tour of the city. This excursion will take you to major monuments and sites: Notre Dame Cathedral, Marais district, Louvre museum, Opera Garnier, Vendôme, Place de la Concorde, Champs-Élysées, Arc de Triomphe and Invalides. Lunch will be served at the new restaurant “Le 58 Tour Eiffel” located on the 1st floor of the Eiffel Tower with beautiful views over the city. After lunch, free time to visit part of the Tower, then enjoy a one-hour boat cruise along the Seine River from where you can admire the famous Paris monuments from a different angle. Later on, you will have some free time at Montmartre to discover the Sacré-Coeur Basilica and the artist square, Place du Tertre.

Day 4: Paris has no equal when it comes to Impressionist art. So, expert-guided tours of three major museums are on the schedule today:



The **Orsay Museum** boasts the largest Impressionist collection in the world. This two-hour guided tour explores the beginnings of the Impressionist art movement with works by Camille Corot, the Barbizon School, Edgar Degas and Edouard Manet. Then on to other major Impressionists and post-Impressionists: Claude Monet, Paul Cezanne, Paul Gauguin, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Vincent van Gogh, and Henry de Toulouse-Lautrec. This tour is designed to give an overview of Impressionism, as well as a more in-depth knowledge of key masterpieces in the museum.

The Musée de l'**Orangerie** is famous for Monet's *Waterlilies*. These breathtaking six-foot tall paintings are on display in two oval galleries sometimes referred to as the “Sistine Chapel of Impressionism.” But Monet is not the only artist represented in this wonderful museum. L'Orangerie is also home to major works by Renoir, Rousseau, Cézanne, Picasso, Modigliani, Derain, Utrillo and Matisse. This tour is a delightful way to spend an hour and a half in the company of an expert guide.





The Musee Marmottan is located in the 16th district, near the Bois de Boulogne. Although small, it offers the largest collection of Monet paintings anywhere. The display includes *Impression, Soleil Levant*, the painting from which the name “Impressionism” was coined, and several of the artist’s famous paintings of the Japanese bridge over the lily pond in the Giverny garden. This hour and a half tour also covers some world-class works by Berthe Morisot, as well as a small collection of Napoleonic art, plus medieval sculptures and illuminated manuscripts.

Day 5: No art tour of Paris would be complete without a “pilgrimage” to Claude Monet’s house, an easy day trip from the capital. So, today, enjoy a visit of the artist’s residence and gardens in **Giverny**. On this tour, you will discover the famous Japanese bridge, the lily pond and the colorful world of the master of Impressionism. The “Musée des Impressionnismes” nearby is not to be missed.

Then on to **Auvers sur Oise** for a guided tour of the village where **Vincent Van Gogh** lived the last hundred days of his life and where he painted some of his most famous paintings. Visit of Auberge Ravoux, where you will see the bedroom where he died.



Day 6: After two days of art immersion, how about “immersing” yourself in wine? A day trip to **Reims and Champagne** is a good way to start. This tour includes a stop at the cathedral in Reims for a guided tour of this magnificent Gothic masterpiece, for centuries the site of the coronation of French kings. Next, attend a presentation on growing grapes before visiting a winery near **Epernay**. There, you will see the tools and techniques used in the making of sparkling wine a press, vats, the storage of bottles - and the key stages of making champagne will be explained. This visit will be followed by a tasting session. Traditional lunch in Epernay, including two glasses of wine. In the afternoon, visit the world-famous **Moët & Chandon** wine cellars. Champagne tasting included. Return to Paris via the Marne River valley.

Day 7: Burgundy is next. In addition to world-class wine making, this prosperous region offers a rich political, religious and artistic history. It is the home of Cistercian abbeys and the departure point of crusades to the Holy Land, as well as a destination for religious pilgrimages. **Chablis**, in the Serein River valley, is a quaint village surrounded by lush vineyards. Visit the Michel Laroche cellar and taste one of the world's best white wines. Lunch in the "Bistrot des Grands Crus". Then, visit **Vezelay**, known as the "the eternal hill", a World Heritage Site. Guided tour of the (mostly) Romanesque basilica dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene and the crypt which holds relics of the saint. Before returning to Paris, enjoy some free time to stroll around the charming village.

Day 8: Compared to places like Bordeaux, Burgundy or Champagne, the **Loire Valley** may not be known as a premier wine region - but it should be. Vouvray is certainly a major name, but there are others: Sancerre, Bourgueil, Chinon and Muscadet (closer to the Atlantic coast), just to name a few. Today, enjoy a custom private tour of the Loire Valley that will combine ornate Renaissance architecture in places such as Amboise, Chenonceau and Chambord and expert wine tasting in local wineries. If you like good food, you may also want to indulge in a gourmet lunch at a Michelin-starred restaurant (there are quite a few in the area).



Day 9: This tantalizing art and wine tour concludes with a private transfer to the airport.

Hello, my name is **Pierre Mainguéné**. I personally handcrafted this itinerary.



I am the co-founder and president of Circa Tours. I was born and raised in Brittany, France so, as a native European, I love everything about the “old country” especially France, Spain and Portugal, the three countries we specialize in. I love their history (and there is lots of it), their art (same thing), their cuisine (especially in France, Catalonia and the Basque Country), their wine (everywhere), their lifestyle and the endless diversity of the local cultures.

In dozens of trips I have taken to Europe, I have traveled to nearly every corner of those countries, and I continue my journey of discovery every year. I am a Travel-Institute certified France and Spain Specialist, and I am also recognized by the Tourist Office of Portugal as a certified Portugal Specialist.

My goal is to create the best possible trip for you. I am always ready to listen to your wishes (however creative) and feedback, and I will always enjoy sharing my experiences with you.

That’s me, by the way, in front of a Joaquin Sorolla painting in Madrid. And, the following are some comments made by a few of our clients:

- “Our trip was fantastic! We had such a wonderful time! All went well including getting our train tickets to Seville changed the day of the strike. Our guides were nothing less than phenomenal! We can't thank you and your staff enough for putting together a trip that was worthy of our 30th anniversary celebration!” M.B., Massachusetts
- “Pierre. Thank you for your services. I really enjoyed dealing with you. You are so knowledgeable, pleasant and professional. I certainly will recommend you to friends.” J.L., Colorado
- “It was not a good trip - it was a GREAT trip! Truly everything was fabulous, ran smoothly, and worked well. The guides were excellent, the itinerary perfect. We enjoyed Spain very much and will ask you for assistance on our next journey to southern Europe!” J.K., California
- “Circa Tours did a good job. They worked very closely with us in putting the program together. We were very pleased with how efficient everything ran. The information we received from Circa Tours was done up very well, which allowed us to just pull the appropriate paperwork and be on our way. The tours were very well done. The guides we had with the local travel providers did a very good job of explaining the areas we toured. Pierre at Circa Tours made sure we saw a bit of everything.” D.T., Florida
- “We are all home, safe and sound - very tired, but in a hazy daze of love for France. Thank you and Carolyn SO much for arranging such an amazing trip for all of us. Throughout the trip, my sisters, mom and myself could be heard saying such things as, “THANK YOU, PIERRE”...or, “thank goodness for Pierre!!!” Martine was an excellent guide, by the way...very good, nice, thorough and professional. We wouldn't have been able to do HALF of what we did (and certainly not with nearly as much carefree enjoyment) with out her. Thank you and Carolyn for all of you expertise and care in helping us and doing all of the hard work for us! Thank you! Thank you!!!” K.B., Iowa