

CIRCA



TOURS

A division of Circa Terras, Inc.



Palais de Justice and Conciergerie - Paris

Photos by Circa Tours

Paris and Normandy

Paris - Rouen - Honfleur - Deauville - Chartres - Vaux le Vicomte
(10 days - 8 nights)

Circa Tours - 30919 Brassie Lane - Temecula - CA - 92591
Tel: 951-676-6117 - Fax: 951-676-6118 - www.circatours.com - CST 2081474-40
© Copyright Circa Tours and Circa Terras, Inc. All rights reserved

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 (10 days - 8 nights)

DAYS	ACTIVITIES	NIGHT
1	Leave U.S.	
2	Arrival in Paris. Private airport transfer	Paris
3	Half-day panoramic tour of Paris . Afternoon at leisure. Dinner cruise	Paris
4	Day trip to Normandy (D-Day beaches OR Rouen, Honfleur, Trouville and Deauville)	Paris
5	Half-day gourmet food tour. Afternoon at leisure	Paris
6	Full-day art tour in Ile de France	Paris
7	Half-day trip to Chartres . Afternoon at leisure	Paris
8	Morning cooking class . Afternoon at leisure. Dinner at Vaux le Vicomte castle	Paris
9	Guided shopping tour	Paris
10	Airport transfer - Return to U.S.	

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

Day 1: Leave U.S.

Day 2: Arrival in Paris: Private airport transfer. Relax on your own the rest of the day. You may want to start exploring the Avenue des Champs Elysees, the Arc de Triomphe or the Grand and Petit Palais near your hotel.

Day 3: As an introduction to the City of Light, embark on an exhilarating panoramic drive to see all the main sites and neighborhoods of **Paris**. From ancient Lutetia to medieval Paris (Ile de la Cité and Notre-Dame cathedral); from classical Paris (Place Vendôme, Invalides and Place de la Concorde) to the great works of Baron Haussmann (Opera-Garnier and the Grands Boulevards); from the 19th century (Eiffel tower, Orsay Museum and the Sacré-Cœur Basilica in Montmartre) to the modern city (Pompidou Center and the glass pyramid in front of the Louvre), accompanied by your own private guide, you will travel in comfort through two thousand years of history and architecture, all in one morning. Explore the city or visit some of the many Paris museums at your own pace this afternoon.

A totally memorable trip to Paris calls for a romantic and festive **river cruise** with illuminated views of famous Paris sites. Two and a half hours of magic will include live music and dancing and a dinner of French cuisine freshly prepared on board. Premier service: A hostess will greet you and offer priority boarding to your reserved table where you will enjoy a four-course dinner with choice of aperitif, a glass of wine, liqueur, mineral water and coffee. Depart from the

Eiffel Tower, cruise along the left bank to the Ministry of Finance at Bercy and return along the right bank with a turn around at the Statue of Liberty. (Yes, there is another one in Paris)



Day 4: Two possibilities are available for today's activities:

Option 1: a pilgrimage to a not-too-distant painful past - the **D-Day landing beaches** in Normandy. The sandy beaches glow in the sun and the horizon is calm now, but one can imagine the tragedy that took place there just over half a century ago.

The end of World War II started when Allied forces (some 175,000 troops in an armada





of over 5,000 boats) landed on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944. The Battle of Normandy resulted in over 400,000 casualties on both sides during two and a half months of bloody fighting.

The 75-mile stretch of coastline just north of Caen and Bayeux is dotted with many memorials, reminding us of the events that changed the course of history. Arronanches is the start of this pilgrimage tracing the horrific events of D-Day. The deadliest fighting took place at Omaha Beach. It is commemorated by the American Cemetery near Colleville-sur-Mer, with 9,387 graves marked by white crosses and Stars of David. Another reminder is the Musee Omaha, where weapons and vehicles left on the beach are on display.

Farther west, Pointe du Hoc is the site where U.S. Army Rangers scaled the cliffs under devastating enemy fire to capture a German stronghold. Continuing west is Utah Beach with the Landing Museum. And inland, a 30-minute drive from the beaches, is Ste. Mere l'Eglise - made famous in the movie "The Longest Day" - where paratroopers landed off target (two of them getting caught on the church steeple). Ste. Mere was the first village to be liberated by the Allies.

Option 2: medieval **Rouen** in the heart of Normandy. Enjoy a leisurely visit of the old town with its Gothic churches, half-timbered houses and the old market square where Joan of Arc was burned at the stake. Then, on to **Honfleur**, the "cradle of Impressionism". Located on the estuary of the Seine, this place has fascinated many artists over the years: Turner, Jongkind, Courbet, Monet, Baudelaire and Satie among others. It is the birthplace of painter Eugène Boudin, a pioneer in plein-air (outdoor) painting and Impressionist techniques. Afternoon visit of the historic center and stroll around the charming, picture-postcard port and marina. On the way back to Paris, drive along the coast for a panoramic view of the posh seaside resorts of **Trouville** and **Deauville**, the home of many wealthy Parisians. (Because of this the area is sometimes referred to as the 21st district of Paris).

Day 5: Today, indulge yourself in the best gourmet food in France. This half-day tour will take your taste buds on an unforgettable visit of Paris! Follow beautiful hidden winding streets and quaint neighborhoods to visit specialty shops and sample products along the way. This culinary adventure stops at:

- A master baker's tiny shop known all over Paris for his crispy, light, melt-in-your-mouth exceptional baguette. His croissant - a plump, golden, heavenly wonder - is one of the best in town. And his patisserie is divine!
- Food for the soul - an incredible store that sells the unique products made by abbeys and churches all over France.
- An authentic épicerie for the most heavenly jams, mustards, oils and vinegars of France.
- A foie gras expert, who'll introduce you to the art of the delicacy. We're sure you won't resist buying a couple of his unique and affordable patés.
- A cheese craftsman who supplies the best restaurants in Paris.
- A chocolate designer who, like fashion designers, creates four delicious collections a year



Day 6: The Louvre is awesome, no doubt, and the Orsay Museum is fantastic, but Paris and its immediate vicinity offer many more opportunities to experience world-class art. This full-day "Art Destinations in Ile de France" private tour takes you to places around St Germain en Laye (some 15 miles northwest of Paris) where famous artists lived and worked. This unique art route includes:



André Derain's house in Chambourcy. With Henry Matisse and Maurice de Vlaminck, Derain (1880 - 1954) was one of the creators of an art movement known as "Fauvism" (known for their use of strong and bright colors). His studio remains as it was during his lifetime, inside a handsome 17th-century mansion.

Alexandre Dumas' castle of Monte Cristo in Port Marly. Dumas (1802 -



1870) lived and worked in this beautiful Renaissance-style castle, which he built in 1846. The building stands in the middle of a charming English garden with grottoes and waterfalls. The interior boasts a delightful Moorish living room handcrafted by workers from North Africa.

Maison Fournaise is a restaurant/museum located on the Ile des Impressionnistes in the middle of the River Seine near Chatou. This place was a favorite of Pierre-Auguste Renoir, who painted scenes of the restaurant, including the world-famous *Luncheon of the Boating Party*.

Le Prieuré, where Maurice Denis (1870 - 1943) lived for 30 years. Denis' 17th-century house in Saint-Germain en Laye (now a "garden-museum") is home to works by "symbolist" and "Nabis" artists, as well as post-Impressionists and members of the Pont Aven group - the precursors to fauvism, cubism and abstract art. Paintings by Paul Gauguin, Paul Sérusier, Odilon Redon, Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard and many more are on display there.

Musée Utrillo-Valladon in Sannois, near Argenteuil. Maurice Utrillo (1883 - 1955) is a French painter famous for his cityscapes. He is one of the few painters of Montmartre scenes who were actually born in that Paris neighborhood. The entire museum is devoted to works by the artist.

Day 7: Today's schedule includes a visit to one of France's best known landmark: Notre-Dame de **Chartres**. This elegant and magnificent cathedral (a World Heritage Site) is widely considered the "prototype Gothic building." The creativity and skill shown here by medieval church builders and architects is breathtaking. This 13th-century structure inspires superlatives. With its soaring aisles, delicate carvings, flamboyant spires, complex flying buttresses, high pointed arches and the vivid colors of its stained glass windows (152 of which have survived the centuries), it is the finest example of the "high Gothic" style of architecture. After the visit, stroll through the old town where beautiful homes line the cobblestone streets or take a leisurely walk along the scenic Eure River.



Day 8: Maybe you always wanted to cook like Julia Child? Today is your chance to follow in her footsteps. Learn how to make a chocolate macaroon with hazelnut, a soufflé or a quiche, and enjoy the fruits of your labor afterwards. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner at Vaux le Vicomte.

Vaux le Vicomte could, in some ways, be called the "dress rehearsal" for the Palace of Versailles (they both had the same architect). The building and the gardens are in the same style as the grandiose and extravagant residence of Louis XIV but the overall size is smaller, friendlier and less imposing. Tonight, you're in for a very special experience. This exquisite 17th-century castle welcomes you to dinner. The evening begins with a visit of the carriage museum, retracing horse-drawn transportation from Roman times to the beginning of the 20th century. Then, enjoy dinner at the "Ecuireuil" restaurant in the converted stable building next door. A sample menu: Pressé de foie gras, volaille fermière farcie with seasonal mushrooms, smoked mashed potatoes Robuchon style and profiteroles au chocolat. At sunset, visit the chateau and gardens illuminated by 2,000 candles, while classical music is played in the garden to recreate the atmosphere of lavish kingly feasts. (Saturdays, from May to September)



Day 9: Shopping is a must before leaving Paris, and you might consider having someone help you navigate the many fashionable stores, shops and boutiques around the city. How about a personal shopper to tell you where to find great buys for glamorous designer attire or exclusive collections of fabulous handmade accessories: Hermès silk scarves, Vuitton signature belts, Prada handbags, Gucci shoes, etc.? Such an expert can also advise you on beauty products, interior decorating, antiques, art or even fashion for men. Paris is the fashion capital of the world, and it has so much to offer. Some sound professional guidance may not be a luxury.

Day 10: This morning, it's "au revoir" Paris with an airport transfer for your return flight to the U.S.

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