



SUMMER IN PROVENCE 2020

July 10 – 20, 2020

11 days / 10 nights

\$6299pp (shared room) / Add \$1420 for your own room

(min 6 / max 7 guests)



Thursday - Depart New Jersey, Overnight flight to Paris, then domestic flight to Nice

Early Arrival in Nice If you wish to arrive early in Nice and enjoy more time to unwind and explore, Paige can organize your accommodation at Hotel Suisse or any other Nice hotel.

DAY 1: Friday July 10 - Arrive in Paris, fly to Nice, sleep in Nice (2 nights)

Meals included: Dinner

Make your own way to **Nice** and to your hotel for 2 nights. The deep blue waters of the Cote d'Azur are the dramatic backdrop for this elegant southern city. Breathe in the fresh Mediterranean air as you stroll the waterfront promenade, explore the **Flower Market** (Marché Aux Fleurs Cours Saleya) or take in the city view from atop Castle Hill. The pedestrian-only Place Rossetti is the heart of the city, with a grand fountain, vibrant buildings, and the beautiful Sainte-Réparate cathedral giving it a provincial French feel. Across the road from pebble beaches and palm trees on Promenade des Anglais and around the corner from the old port, is **Hôtel Suisse**, with one of the best locations in Nice. You will fall in love with the view from your room! On a cliff above the hotel, you'll find the gardens and waterfall of Castle Hill. The Flower Market is a five-minute walk. Spend the afternoon exploring and relaxing into the Cote D'Azur lifestyle! Later it's dinner together at a local restaurant.

✚ Check into [Hotel Suisse](#) , a 4* hotel on the waterfront. Your 'Privilege' room has a sea view & balcony.



DAY 2: Saturday July 11 - Eze, Monaco, Saint Jean de Cap Ferrat

Meals included: Breakfast



Today we are joined by our local guide for a day exploring the Riviera! We take the corniche road (cliff road) from Nice to **Eze**, the medieval village perched high on the cliff with amazing views over the Mediterranean Sea and an equally extraordinary garden. Located above the village, [Le Jardin Exotique](#) offers one of the most spectacular views of the French Riviera extending all the way to the Esterel Mountains and the Golf of Saint Tropez. Filled with enormous succulents & cacti, fragrant citrus and other Mediterranean plants, this garden is a stunning feat of determination as everything was

hauled up the hill and created by hand! Spend time exploring the garden and taking in the views, then meander your way back down through Eze village along cobblestoned streets lined with bougainvillea-wrapped houses. Our next stop is nearby the **Fragonard Perfume Factory**. The region is famous for the many flowers that grow there, and here at the parfumerie, we take a tour and learn about the making of fragrances.

Then it's onto our lunch destination - **Monte Carlo**! Take in this famous principality and see the Prince's Palace, the old Casino, the Hôtel de Paris and Café de Paris. There are beautiful gardens and deluxe boutiques to explore. Enjoy lunch and free time to soak in these luxurious surroundings. On the way back to Nice, we stop at **Villa Euphrassi**, the Rothschild's Villa & Gardens. Finish the day with an afternoon aperitif and some old style Riviera glamor on **Saint Jean Cap Ferrat**.

✚ Sleep at Hotel Suisse

DAY 3: Sunday July 12 - Lavender Fields, Picnic, Sleep in Aix-en-Provence (2 nights)

Meals included: Breakfast & picnic lunch

Lavender has been described as the 'soul of Provence' and today you experience the amazing scenery of Provençal lavender fields in full summer bloom! The fields of **Plateau de Valensole** are some of the best in Provence and it is here, between the valley of Durance and the Gorges of Verdon, we head by coach with our local guide for an insider's tour of the fields. We stop to enjoy a picnic lunch by the picturesque Sainte Croix du Verdon Lake. Cool down with a swim in the lake's turquoise waters! Continue our scenic drive through Central Provence and cross the **Verdon canyon**, the deepest gorge in France. The canyon is one of Europe's most beautiful river canyons and a must-see natural wonder.

Arrive this afternoon in **Aix-en-Provence** where you spend the next 2 nights. "Aix" (pronounced 'ex') to the locals, is a



feast for the senses. The birthplace of artist Paul Cézanne, this university town is filled with art, light & Provençal buzz! At the heart of Aix is Cours Mirabeau, a beautiful tree-lined avenue, with one side lined with wonderful terrace cafés and bookshops. If you sit at only one French sidewalk café outside of Paris, it should be here, where the air is warm, the light sublime and the sidewalk very alive. Large plane trees overhang the length of the avenue, giving day-long shade on the hot summer days of our visit. Some of the more famous cafés are: Le Grillon

Les Deux Garçons – a favorite of Paul Cézanne, La Belle Epoque and Le Café du Cours.

This afternoon and evening is free to soak up the ambiance of Aix.

✚ Check into [Aquabella Hotel](#), a 4*hotel & spa located in the heart of Aix with a magnificent Mediterranean garden & outdoor pool. Your 'Privilege' room has a balcony with beautiful view over the old city.



DAY 4: Monday July 13 – Aix-en-Provence – walking tour & free afternoon

Meals included: Breakfast

Today is spent exploring Aix. Start the morning with a **walking tour of Aix**. Our local guide will share his passion for Aix, offering the perfect dose of history combined with an appreciation for architecture and art. The rest of the day is free. Perhaps follow the artist's route and discover more about Cézanne, visit the markets or head to Vieille Ville, the Old Town and find a café for a long leisurely lunch. Simply relax and enjoy!

✚ Sleep in Aix

DAY 5: Tuesday July 14 (Bastille Day) – Aix to Bonnieux, Rousillon, Gordes, sleep in St. Rémy (3 nights)

Meals included: Breakfast

Spend Bastille Day touring an iconic area of France. The Luberon region is quintessential Provence with an idyllic landscape of medieval 'perched' hilltop villages, vineyards and orchards. It's a place where time seems to stand still. Today you will experience firsthand the allure of this picturesque area. Visit **Bonnieux**, one of the leading villages of the



Luberon, with stunning views across the valley & charming houses. But for us, this visit is made more special with a visit to a private garden. Nicole Louve Vésian, a designer for the iconic French brand Hermès, created this spectacular garden filled with rosemary, germander, lavender, boxwood and all kinds of shrubs that somehow thrive in its stony landscape. Here we meet the owners for a private tour of the gardens.

Next we head to nearby **Roussillon** for lunch. You will be immediately struck by the red cliffs - Roussillon is located in the very heart of the biggest **ochre deposits** in the world, and is distinguished by an astonishing palette of flamboyant colors. Enjoy a relaxing lunch at one of the many cafes then there's time to explore, shop – Roussillon has excellent art shops! – or even take an easy hike through the ochre quarries. We continue winding our way through the mountains making a stop at the village of **Gordes** and at the stunning [Abbaye Notre de Senaue](#). The abbey founded in the 12th century and is a unique example of a Cistercian abbey and still an active monastery. In summer, the Abbey is surrounded by lavender making for exceptional photos.

Our day ends in the ancient town of **St. Rémy de Provence** where we spend the next 3-nights at the beautiful [Hotel de L'Image](#). The hotel is home to the former cinema of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence created by the French director Jean-Luc Godard in the 70's. The decoration revolves around the themes of photography, cinema and design. A 2-hectare green park, created by Jean-Louis Schreyer, surrounds the hotel. Perfectly located in the heart of St. Rémy, you literally step out the door into the heart of the village. In St. Rémy, you'll find excellent regional pottery and outstanding food places - a favorite is Joel Durand's chocolate shop! St. Rémy is steeped in Gallic-Roman history and is home to the asylum of Saint-Paul-de-Mausole, where **Vincent van Gogh** went to recuperate. Its here he created over 150 works, including Starry Night.



✚ Check into Hotel de l'image, a 4* hotel and your Horizon Terrace room with views over the garden.

DAY 6: Wednesday July 15 – Market Day in St. Rémy - Free Day

Meals included: Breakfast



The St. Rémy Market is considered one of Provence's best markets. There is so much going on that we have dedicated this entire day for you to explore and enjoy the market in your own way. The food at the stalls is exceptional: you'll find gorgeous gifts, there are musicians playing in the streets - everything about the market says "I am in Provence" and you'll enjoy every moment!

✚ Sleep at Hotel de l'image

DAY 7: Thursday July 16 – Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Les Baux

Meals included: Breakfast & lunch

What better way to start the day then with a yoga session on the grounds of the hotel! Later that morning, we are joined by our guide to visit the famous wine region of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the holy grail of red wine regions. The fame of Châteauneuf-du-Pape was spread far and wide in the 14th century, when the papal seat was moved from Rome to the city of Avignon, about 19 kilometers to the south. The popes were big fans of the wines produced in the commune and neighboring villages, and granted them the title "vins du papes," or wines of the popes. This



morning we explore the area, visit a vineyard and enjoy a wine tasting and lunch al fresco with incredible views!



After lunch is a very special & fun treat - a visit to [Carrières de Lumières](#) in Les Baux. Located in a former quarry, Carrières de Lumières is an extraordinary immersion of art & music that is unique in the world. 70 video projectors, 3D audio projectors project famous images onto all surfaces of the rock walls – even the ground is completely covered, becoming a vast carpet of images. In 2020 we will be seeing 2 exhibitions - Van Gogh, Starry Night plus Dreamed Japan, Images of a Floating World.

✚ Sleep at Hotel de l'image

DAY 8: Friday July 17– Pont Du Gard, sleep in Avignon (2 nights)

Meals included: Breakfast



Today we head to Avignon via the masterpiece of ancient Roman architecture, the Pont du Gard aqueduct. A World Heritage Site, the **Pont du Gard** remains one of humankind's great masterpieces. A marvel of antiquity and a true technical feat, it is one of the most beautiful Roman constructions in the region. The Pont du Gard is part of the Nîmes aqueduct, a 31 mile long system built in

the 1st century AD to carry water from a spring in Uzes to the Roman colony of Nîmes. Built with three tiers of archways the Pont du Gard is the highest of all elevated Roman aqueducts, and one of the best preserved. Our guide will share the history and insights into this remarkable construction. This afternoon we arrive in **Avignon** where we spend the next 2 nights.

✚ Check into [Hotel de l'Horloge](#) a 4* hotel set in a lovely 19th-century building overlooking the picturesque Place de L'Horloge, in the center of Avignon.



Day 9: Saturday July 18 – Free Day in Avignon

Meals included: Breakfast



Designated city of art and culture, Avignon stands at the center of Provence. Rising majestically above the River Rhône are fine old houses, exquisite churches, and towering above them all is the majestic Pope's Palace. [Le Palais des Papes](#) is a must visit for architecture & history buffs. For much of the 14th century, the Roman Catholic popes ruled from Avignon. Overlooking the Rhone city, the World Heritage Listed Popes' Palace was built in 1335 and is the largest Gothic palace in the western world.

During our visit Avignon's famous international theatre festival - [The Festival d'Avignon](#) is in full swing! One of the best cultural festivals in Europe, this is a great chance to see contemporary theatre in a very different space! Avignon has so much to see and do and the day is free for you to spend as you wish. Perhaps hire a bike, stroll along the Rhône, visit the iconic Pont d'Avignon or while away time at a sidewalk café.

There is the option for an early morning **hot air balloon ride over the Pont du Gard Aqueduct!**

✚ Sleep in Hotel de l'Horloge

Day 10: Sunday July 19 – TGV to Paris for 1 night

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner

Today we bid farewell to Provence and take the fast train – the TGV – to Paris! Travelling from Avignon to Paris in less than 3 hours, France's flagship TGV trains reach speeds of up to 320 km/h. A super convenient and comfortable trip, we arrive in Paris with time to enjoy a free afternoon of exploration. Your Paris hotel is perfectly located and



beautifully boutique. Dating from the early 1800s, [Hotel Brighton](#) is in the historic 1st arr. of Paris across the street from Jardin des Tuileries, and an 8-minute walk from Musée du Louvre. Hotel Brighton is a perfect place to end our French summer adventure!

Spend the afternoon exploring Paris then meet up that evening for our farewell dinner.

✚ Check into Hotel Brighton

Day 11: Monday July 20 – Depart

Meals included: Breakfast

Au revoir Paris & bonjour New Jersey!

See Monet's Garden & Versailles? If you wish to stay on in Paris for 2 additional nights to visit Monet's Garden at Giverny and Versailles with a private guide, please let me know. I have a Paris tour extension program available.

Stay late in Paris and do your own thing? If you'd like to stay in Paris after the tour to do your own thing and would like assistance with accommodation, please let me know. Paige can arrange accommodation and any tours and activities for you.

Tour Inclusions

- ✚ Accompanied by Kirsty Dougherty for entire trip
- ✚ 10 nights accommodation at 4* hotels
- ✚ Porterage at hotels
- ✚ 14 meals (10 breakfasts at hotels; 2 lunches – picnic at Saint Croix Lake & in Châteauneuf-du-Pape; 2 dinners – Nice & Paris)
- ✚ Private English speaking guide/driver for 5 days
- ✚ Entrance fees to Jardin Exotique, Fragonard Parfumerie, Villa Euphrassi, Carrières de Lumières, Pont du Gard
- ✚ Private tours of the Cote D'Azur, Monaco, Plateau Valensole lavender fields, Verdon Gorge, villages of the Luberon, Châteauneuf-du-Pape
- ✚ Private garden tour in Bonnieux
- ✚ Private tour in Aix-en-Provence
- ✚ Market day in St Rémy de Provence
- ✚ Private tour in Avignon
- ✚ Wine tasting in Châteauneuf-du-Pape
- ✚ Walk across Pont du Gard
- ✚ Free time in Aix-en-Provence, St Rémy de Provence & Avignon
- ✚ TGV tickets to Paris – First Class
- ✚ TGV transfers in Avignon & Paris

Not included: Airfares & all related fees; Transfers from airport to hotel; Transfers or transport costs made outside of the group arrangements; Emergency medical & trip cancellation insurance; Excess baggage charges; Tips for guides; Meals not listed as included; Personal expenses at hotels; Alcoholic beverages at group meals; Activities listed as optional on the itinerary.