

# Overseas Adventure Travel<sup>®</sup>

THE LEADER IN PERSONALIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide<sup>®</sup>



French & Italian Rivieras: Avignon,  
Corsica, Elba & Rome

2025

# Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

When you join us, you will enjoy the thrill of off-the-beaten-path discovery coupled with the convenience of unpacking just once. Aboard our privately owned small ship, you will visit lesser-known ports that larger vessels cannot access—and enjoy intimate interactions with local people in your small group of no more than 25 travelers. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation.

But your personal connections are not limited to your time on land—while onboard, you will enjoy the warm hospitality provided by our friendly, English-speaking crew, as well as the camaraderie of your fellow American travelers. Whether you travel with a partner, sister, friend, or independently, you will feel welcomed and included throughout your journey. And if you do choose to travel solo, you will enjoy an unmatched value, with our FREE or low-cost Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the, like the **87% of our travelers who personalize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis  
Chair  
Overseas Adventure Travel

# CONTENTS

---

## **FRENCH & ITALIAN RIVIERAS: MARSEILLE, CORSICA, ELBA & ROME**

Your Adventure at a Glance:	
Where You're Going, What it Costs, and What's Included .....	<b>4</b>
Your Detailed Day-To-Day Itinerary .....	<b>6</b>
Pre-Trip Extension .....	<b>17</b>
Post-Trip Extension .....	<b>20</b>
Deck Plans .....	<b>25</b>

## **ESSENTIAL TRAVEL INFORMATION**

Travel Documents & Entry Requirements. . .	<b>27</b>
Rigors, Vaccines & General Health .....	<b>29</b>
Money Matters: Local Currency & Tipping Guidelines. ....	<b>33</b>
Air, Optional Tours & Staying in Touch .....	<b>37</b>
Packing: What to Bring & Luggage Limits . . .	<b>40</b>
Climate & Average Temperatures .....	<b>45</b>
Aboard Your Ship: Cabin Features, Dining & Services on Board .....	<b>49</b>

## **ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE**

Cultures of the Riviera .....	<b>54</b>
Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More .....	<b>65</b>

## **DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY**

France .....	<b>67</b>
Italy .....	<b>69</b>

## **RESOURCES**

Suggested Reading .....	<b>72</b>
Suggested Films & Videos .....	<b>73</b>
Useful Websites .....	<b>75</b>
Useful Apps .....	<b>76</b>



Nice, France

## French & Italian Rivas: Avignon, Corsica, Elba & Rome Small Ship Adventure

**France:** Avignon, Nice, Corsica | **Italy:** Portovenere, Cinque Terre, Elba, Giglio, Rome

Small groups of no more than 25 travelers, guaranteed

**17 days starting from \$8,795**

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE** or \$1,495

For departure dates & prices, visit [www.oattravel.com/fmr2025pricing](http://www.oattravel.com/fmr2025pricing)

Sun-soaked shorelines ... shimmering azure waters ... craggy coves revealing hidden, white-sand beaches ... the Riviera is all this—and more. Journey along the Mediterranean coasts of France and Italy to discover southern European sophistication and warm-weather wonderlands. Because of the size of our privately-owned small ship, the **50-passenger M/V Artemis or M/V Athena**, you'll stop in intimate ports like Bastia, Imperia, and Porto Santo Stefano before capping off your discoveries in Rome.

### IT'S INCLUDED

- 15 nights accommodation, including 10 nights aboard the privately owned 50-passenger M/V *Athena* or M/V *Artemis*
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges, unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- 39 meals: 15 breakfasts, 12 lunches, 12 dinners—including 1 Home-Hosted Lunch—plus all onboard house beer, wine, and soft drinks
- 14 guided tours and cultural experiences
- Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- All port charges
- Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next trip

*Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.*

**French & Italian Rivas: Avignon, Corsica, Elba & Rome**



## ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Fly to U.S.
2-5	Marseille, France • Embark ship
6-7	Nice
8	San Remo, Italy
9	Cinque Terre
10-11	Viareggio • Lucca
12	Bastia, Corsica, France
13	Portoferraio, Elba, Italy
14	Porto Santo Stefano • Giglio Island
15-16	Disembark ship • Rome
17	Return to U.S.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderately Easy

**Pacing:** 16 days, with 10 nights aboard our 50-passenger small ship, M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*, one 3-night hotel stay, and one 2-night hotel stay

**Physical Requirements:** Walk 3-5 miles unassisted and participate in 3-5 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs and days of possible rough seas requiring good agility, balance, and strength.

**Flight time:** Travel time will be 6-18 hours and most likely won't have connections

View all physical requirements at [www.oattravel.com/fmr](http://www.oattravel.com/fmr)

## THE FRENCH & ITALIAN RIVIERAS: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

**Unbeatable Value:** Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

**People-to-People Experiences:** Experience *A Day in the Life* of a farming family in Imperia. Dominated by the Maritime Alps and sheltered from the winter winds afforded by the mountains, Imperia is well known for growing a vast variety of flowers, olive trees, and vegetables. Plus, experience the warmth of an Italian welcome during a **Home-Hosted Lunch** with a family on the Italian island of Elba.

**O.A.T. Exclusives:** Aboard our privately owned 50-passenger ship the M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*, drop anchor in ports inaccessible to larger vessels—like Giglio, the small island off the coast of Tuscany that's home to Italy's best snorkeling.

## PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

### OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

**Southwest France: Toulouse & Carcassonne's Medieval Marvels**  
PRE-TRIP: 5 nights from **\$1,895**

**Central Italy: Hilltop Villages of the Apennine Mountains**  
POST-TRIP: 6 nights from **\$1,795**

### ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Toulouse** before your Toulouse & Carcassonne pre-trip extension from **\$290** per room, per night
- Arrive early in **Avignon** before your main adventure from **\$300** per room, per night

# French & Italian Rivieras: Avignon, Corsica, Elba & Rome

## YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

### BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

#### 5 nights in *Southwest France: Toulouse & Carcassonne's Medieval Marvels*

**Day 1** Depart U.S.

**Day 2** Arrive Toulouse, France

**Day 3** Explore Toulouse

**Day 4** Overland to Carcassonne

**Day 5** Explore Carcassonne • Wine domaine and tasting

**Day 6** Visit Mirepoix village

**Day 7** Visit Montpellier • Begin main adventure

#### **Day 1** Depart U.S.

**Evening:** Fly to Marseille, France on an overnight flight from the U.S.

#### **Day 2** Arrive Marseille, France • Transfer to Avignon

- Destination: Avignon
- Accommodations: Novotel Avignon Centre

**Morning/Afternoon** *Bienvenue!* Arrive in Marseille, France this morning or afternoon. An O.A.T. representative will greet you at the airport and assist with your transfer to Avignon, where you'll check in to the hotel.

After checking in, you may join an orientation walk led by your Trip Experience Leader, and meet your fellow travelers, including those who took our optional pre-trip extension to *Southwest France: Toulouse & Carcassonne's Medieval Marvels*.

**Dinner:** On your own this evening—ask your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

**Evening:** Free to do as you'd like. Perhaps you'd like to take a stroll along the harbor, ice cream cone in hand.

#### **Day 3** Explore Avignon

- Destination: Avignon
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Novotel Avignon Centre

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Join your Trip Experience Leader and fellow travelers for a Welcome Briefing. This is a great opportunity to ask any questions you may have about your upcoming Small Ship Adventure.

Then, you will set out on a half-day tour of this bustling port city. Nestled on the banks of the Rhône River, Avignon is best known for its extraordinary papal history, which saw it

serve as the seat of the Roman Catholic Church during the 14th century, a period during which it gained the moniker “City of Popes.” This historical significance is vividly reflected in the city’s architecture, particularly the imposing *Palais des Papes* (Palace of the Popes), a UNESCO World Heritage site. Avignon also boasts a vibrant arts scene, with its renowned theater festival, the Festival d’Avignon, drawing artists and enthusiasts from around the world. The city’s charming streets, vibrant markets, and pleasant climate further add to its appeal. In the company of a local guide, you’ll explore the essence of Provence and immerse yourself in the beauty of southern France during a guided tour of Palais des Papes.

Following our tour, you are free to make your own discoveries in Avignon.

**Lunch:** On your own. Perhaps you’ll seek out a bowl of *bouillabaisse*, the hearty fish stew for which the city is known.

**Afternoon:** Free to do as you’d like. Perhaps you might like to visit Jardin des Doms—a picturesque garden perched on a rocky outcrop in the heart of Avignon. The public garden and park is not only a haven for nature lovers but also provides panoramic views of the Rhône River and the iconic Palais des Papes. Adorned with a charming collection of flora, including colorful flowers, fragrant herbs, and majestic trees, it’s a tranquil oasis that invites visitors to wander through its paths, relax on shady benches, and feel the chill of the Mistral wind. With its historical significance and captivating vistas, Jardin des Doms stands as an essential stop to experience the timeless allure of Avignon.

Later, raise a glass with your fellow travelers during a Welcome Drink.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a Welcome Dinner at a traditional restaurant within walking distance of our hotel.

**Evening:** Free to do as you’d like. As your Trip Experience Leader for ideas.

#### **Day 4 Arles • Local farm visit • Embark ship**

- Destination: Marseille
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Our small group will board a bus and transfer to Marseille, stopping along the way in Arles for a walking tour with a local guide. Set along the tranquil banks of the Rhône River, Arles is steeped in history and artistic heritage. We’ll stroll its enchanting streets and discover the city that played a significant role for legendary artist Vincent van Gogh.

After, you have some time to explore on your own. Then, we’ll drive to visit a local farm.

**Lunch:** At the farm.

**Afternoon:** We’ll board our bus and continue to Marseille, where we’ll embark our ship. Your Captain will conduct a safety briefing.

Then, your Trip Experience Leader will deliver the first in a series of nightly Port Talks. These informative discussions will give you an overview of the following day’s itinerary, and prepare you for the destination ahead.

**Dinner:** You and your fellow travelers will be invited to the ship’s dining room for a Welcome Dinner.

**Evening:** You are free to relax in the lounge, or return to your cabin to finish settling in.

## Day 5 Explore Nice

- Destination: Nice
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** Our ship docks in Nice, considered the jewel of the French Riviera and known for its glamorous ambiance and sparkling beaches, this coastal town also boasts an extensive history, dating back to 350 B.C. when it was founded by the Greeks. We'll hop on a bus for a tour of the city with a local guide, then enjoy a walking tour with your Trip Experience Leader.

From there, you'll discover the Marché Aux Fleurs Cours Saleya—an open-air marketplace that features flowers, French delicacies, produce and live fowl directly from the neighboring farms—with your Trip Experience Leader.

**Lunch:** On board the ship. French and American options will be available.

**Afternoon:** You'll have some time to rest in your cabin before a Port Talk in the early evening about what to expect while on your cruise.

**Dinner:** On board in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** The evening is free. Perhaps, you'll enjoy a drink with fellow travelers in the lounge or retire to your rooms for the night.

## Day 6 Nice • Optional Monaco & Monte-Carlo tour

- Destination: Nice
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*

**Activity Note:** Your Trip Experience Leader will inform travelers taking the Monaco optional tour of the dress code requirements for entering the Casino de Monte-Carlo.

**Breakfast:** Enjoy breakfast on the ship.

**Morning:** You have the freedom to explore Nice on your own, or join our optional tour to Monaco and Monte-Carlo. During the tour, you'll visit renowned landmarks such as the Grimaldi Palace and the Casino de Monte-Carlo. Our first stop is the Grimaldi Palace and Cathedral that features the burial of Hollywood actress Grace Kelly who lived in the palace after her marriage to Prince Rainier III.

After visiting the Grimaldi Palace, you'll have some free time to explore the area before lunch.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant, or on board the ship for travelers not participating in the optional tour.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll depart for our visit to the Casino de Monte-Carlo. We'll spend some time here before taking a motorcoach back to the ship. You'll have some free time on board to freshen up before a Port Talk about what to expect while on your cruise.

**Dinner:** On board the ship.

**Evening:** The rest of the evening is free.

## Day 7 *A Day in the Life* of Imperia

- Destination: Imperia
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*

**Exclusive O.A.T. Activity:** Today features our *A Day in the Life* with a local family on their farm. Roll up your sleeves and help with daily chores, as you experience rural life firsthand. Then, sit down for lunch all together before heading back to the ship.

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** Upon arrival in the charming old town of Imperia, enjoy a panoramic view of the city as your ship docks this morning. Then, we'll depart for our *A Day in the Life* experience to a local family farm where you'll have the chance to experience the typical day-to-day life of local farmers. Dominated by the Maritime Alps and sheltered from the winter winds afforded by the mountains, Imperia is well known for growing a vast variety of flowers, olive trees, and vegetables. During your visit to the farm, you may be asked to help harvest crops, tour the vineyard, produce olive oil, or assist with daily chores. Then, you'll enjoy a farm-fresh lunch with the family. Perhaps, you'll sample some farm-fresh olive oil and fresh figs, paired with a glass of local wine to wash it down.

**Lunch:** Enjoy a farm-fresh lunch with the family.

**Afternoon:** Depart by motorcoach to head back to the ship, or make the most of your explorations on an off-the-beaten path experience. You have the option to rest and relax on board, or to visit the Olive Oil Museum, a very interesting exhibition space divided into thematic paths to learn about

the millenary history of olive trees and the production of the nectar that comes from the extract.

For those returning to the ship, you'll join your fellow travelers and Trip Experience Leader for today's Port Talk.

**Dinner:** On board the ship.

**Evening:** You are free to relax in the lounge after dinner, or return to your cabin to finish settling in.

## Day 8 *Explore Cinque Terre*

- Destination: Portovenere
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** Five picture-postcard Italian villages clinging to rocky cliffs along the Italian Riviera have earned UNESCO World Heritage designation for their scenic beauty and historic ambiance. Known as Cinque Terre, or "Five Lands," they offer beautifully preserved pastel architecture, narrow alleyways, and close ties with the sea.

We'll transfer to the Portovenere harbor by small tender crafts, and then set out to explore two Cinque Terre villages on included tours today. Both feature centuries-old architecture, including charming churches, and are famous for wine and olive-oil production. We'll begin our discoveries with panoramic boat ride to Vernazza as we make our way through northwest Italy's rugged Ligurian coast. Upon arriving, you'll embark on a Discovery Walk with your Trip Experience Leader to get more acquainted with our surrounding area. People-to-people experiences with O.A.T. gives you the unique opportunity to mingle with the locals.

You'll have time to venture away from the group as you make your own discoveries before departing by boat to Monterosso, where you'll partake in breaking bread paired with Sciacchetra -- the typical liquor of Cinque Terra. It is a sweet, white passito wine produced around eastern Liguria's coastline.

**Lunch:** Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant in Monterosso.

**Afternoon:** You'll have some free time to explore Monterosso. Perhaps you'll step into the past with a visit to the Church of San Lorenzo, the 13th-century church built in the Ligurian Gothic style. Or you may like to climb up to the Punto Bonfiglio, a rocky viewpoint perched above town, for sweeping views of the sea and coast.

We'll return to Portovenere by late afternoon, and transfer to our ship by small tenders. Later, we'll meet on the ship's deck for today's Port Talk.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a BBQ dinner on the Sun Deck (weather permitting).

**Evening:** Perhaps you'll relax in the lounge or gaze at the night sky from the Sun Deck as we set sail for Marina di Carrara.

## **Day 9 Marina di Carrara • Conversation about marble quarrying • Optional Pisa tour**

- Destination: Marina di Carrara
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** We'll dock this morning in Marina di Carrara, a coastal port city in Tuscany, surrounded by marble-capped mountain peaks. Our discoveries here begin at the

Carrara marble quarries, the world's largest marble excavation and manufacturing site. Spread among three main valleys, Colonnata, Fantiscritti, and Torano, these marble quarries are considered the world's largest marble bedding. And, remarkably, Carrara marble has been used for over 2,000 years. The ancient Romans rebuilt Rome with this marble, and Italy's most iconic museums, like the Vatican Museums, Rome Archaeological Museum, Uffizi, Accademia, and many others are full of Carrara marble works made by masters like Donatello, Michelangelo, and Bernini.

Situated along the Carrione River, Carrara was originally built by the ancient Romans to house workers in the nearby quarries. Upon arrival, we'll enjoy one of two revealing local interactions at the site. We might stop at a local marble workshop to meet with the owner and workers to see how blocks of Carrara marble are worked into a variety of shapes for industrial or artistic use. Or, we'll discover another use of the local marble during a visit to a producer of "Lardo di Colonnata." Here, we'll meet a maker of this local delicacy and discover how the pig-back fat is cured in tubs of Carrara marble.

Then, we'll board 4-wheel-drive vehicles and head up the winding mountain slopes of the Apuan Alps for an adventurous visit to the famous Carrara marble quarries, where the block of white marble used by Michelangelo to sculpt his *David* came from. Some 15,000 tons of marble are still extracted daily from the mountains.

While here, we'll walk to a nearby shelter that is adjacent to the quarries.

**Lunch:** On board the ship.

**Afternoon:** You'll have some free time to explore independently. Your Trip Experience Leader can offer suggestions and instruct you on how to make the most of your time in this

coastal city. Or, join an optional tour and train ride to the Pisa, starting at the San Rossore railway station, where we'll also embark on a guided walking tour at the Piazza Dei Miracoli. Formally known as the Piazza del Duomo, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is home to a striking Romanesque cathedral, the largest baptistry in Italy, and one of the most iconic monuments in Europe—the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Here, we'll explore the grounds and discover medieval art and architecture with a local guide.

**Dinner:** Travelers on the optional tour will enjoy an included dinner. Those not on the optional tour can enjoy dinner onboard.

**Evening:** On your own as we set sail for Corsica.

### Day 10 Bastia, Corsica

- Destination: Bastia
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** We'll be on French soil today as we set out on a scenic drive to the wine region of Patrimonio, followed by a stop in Saint Florent, a charming fishing port. Here, we'll explore the quaint harbor and centuries-old fort before returning to Bastia, the bustling cardinal port of Corsica.

**Lunch:** Onboard the ship.

**Afternoon:** Then, we'll head into the heart of Bastia. Formed through volcanic explosions, two-thirds of the island is comprised of mountains, and during World War II it was nicknamed "USS Corsica," as the U.S. military established several airfields here. (Pilot Joseph Heller later wove his war experiences here into his novel, *Catch-22*.)

You have the freedom to explore and make your own discoveries in Bastia's Old Town. Perhaps you'll stroll along the shore to reach the Tower of Erbalunga, a 16th-century defensive tower. Or view the lavish frescoes at the Eglise Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Bastia.

Later, we'll return to the ship for tonight's Port Talk to find out more about tomorrow's activities.

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** Free to do as you'd like as our ship sets sail for Portoferraio.

### Day 11 Explore Portoferraio, Elba, Italy • Home-Hosted Lunch

- Destination: Elba
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*

**Exclusive O.A.T. Activity:** This afternoon we'll venture into the home of a local family on Elba, where we'll enjoy a **Home-Hosted Lunch**. This is a special opportunity afforded to us by our small group size and made possible by the regional connections of our local Trip Experience Leaders. During our shared meal, you'll learn more about island life from these residents, and take part in the customs and culinary traditions of the region. Read more about this experience below.

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** We'll disembark the ship to explore Elba on a discovery walk with your Trip Experience Leader. At 14 miles long and six miles wide, this UNESCO-protected island was once part of a larger stretch of land that connected Italy to Corsica. It is now the largest island of the Tuscan Archipelago and has long

been rich in iron deposits, which explains why the port we'll dock in, Portoferraio, translates to "Iron Port."

You'll then have about an hour to pursue your own interests in Portoferraio. Perhaps you'll see what it was like to live as an exiled emperor at the Palazzina dei Mulini—once Napoleon's residence and now a national museum.

**Lunch:** We will break into smaller groups and venture to the home of a local family for a **Home-Hosted Lunch**, during which we'll experience a warm Italian welcome and feast on authentic regional cuisine. Elba is a thriving, natural paradise home to about 30,000 inhabitants—many of whom purely summer here to enjoy the turquoise waters, unspoiled landscapes, and abundant flora and fauna. The island boasts an extensive colonial history, having been invaded by both the Etruscans and Romans, and we may recognize vestiges of these groups in local culture. Portoferraio is the oldest town in the region, once home to Greek, Ligurian, and Etruscan populations before turning into a Roman colony.

Upon arrival, we'll enter either a private villa or apartment and join the family at their dinner table to see how they go about their daily lives—where they live, what they cook, how they eat, and how they feel about their homeland. Your host family might hail from a variety of different backgrounds, from farmer, to fisher, to teacher. Take this time to ask them any questions about life in Elba, what customs they practice, and more. While we converse, we'll indulge in traditional, home-cooked fare that might consist of *lasagne al pesto* (lasagna with pesto), *pasta al pomodoro* (pasta with tomato sauce), *ricotta slata* (salted ricotta cheese), *cacciucco all'elbana* (fish soup), *schiccia briaco* (dessert made with dried fruits), and end with a bright, citrusy glass of *limoncello*. We're afforded this special

privilege by our small group size; by dining in groups of no more than 5, we're given the chance to enter local homes and connect on a one-to-one level, and to even share a little with our hosts about who we are and what has brought us to Italy. *Buon appetito!*

**Afternoon:** Enjoy some personal time back on board the ship. Later, you're invited to a party hosted on the ship. Then, your Trip Experience Leader will give a Port Talk to prepare you for tomorrow's activities.

**Dinner:** Onboard the ship.

**Evening:** Free onboard. Relax in the ship's lounge with a good book, or share a drink with your fellow travelers.

## Day 12 Elba

- Destination: Elba
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*

**Breakfast:** Onboard the ship.

**Morning:** We'll disembark the ship for a panoramic bus ride of Elba Island, a captivating gem in the Mediterranean. At 14 miles long and six miles wide, Elba was once part of a larger stretch of land that connected Italy to Corsica. It is now the largest island of the Tuscan Archipelago, and it has long been rich in iron deposits. Learn more about the island's scenery and history—including its infamous role as a prison for Napoleon Bonaparte—on this morning's panoramic tour.

**Lunch:** Onboard the ship.

**Afternoon:** You have a couple hours free to explore Elba Island on your own, or relax in your room.

After free time concludes, head to the ship's deck for tonight's Port Talk.

**Dinner:** Onboard the ship.

**Evening:** Enjoy musical entertainment onboard as we set sail for Porto Santo Stefano.

### Day 13 Explore Giglio Island

- Destination: Giglio Island
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Artemis* or M/V *Athena*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** We'll catch a brief ferry, admiring the colorful seaside homes retreating in the distance, on our way to Giglio Island, another UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Giglio is one of the seven islands that make up the Archipelago Toscano National Park, or Tuscan Archipelago National Park. Encircled by startlingly clear emerald waters, Giglio is known as one of the best snorkeling and scuba diving spots in Italy. In your free time today, perhaps you'll enjoy Giglio's underwater wonderland during a snorkeling expedition (weather dependent): Keep your eyes peeled for octopus, schools of tuna, barracudas, and—if you're lucky—perhaps even a seahorse.

Later this morning, we'll embark on a gentle discovery walk along Giglio's walking paths, many of which were previously mule tracks used for transporting goods around the island. As one of Italy's smaller and less-developed Mediterranean islands, Giglio retains an unspoiled landscape, with wildflowers blossoming in spring, abundant shrubs of *macchia* throughout the summer, and rocky promontories from which to admire the coastal views all year round. When our walk concludes, we'll depart by van to Castello--the still

lived-in village situated on top of the island, overlooking the archipelago--a picture perfect opportunity to capture the breathtaking views.

Once back at Giglio port, you'll have some more free time to make your own discoveries.

**Lunch:** At a local *trattoria* on Giglio. Surrounded as we are by the sea, you might like to dine on a dish of fresh Italian seafood.

**Afternoon:** After some free time to make any final discoveries on Giglio, a return ferry will take us back to Porto Santo Stefano. The rest of the day is yours to do as you'd like. Consider heading to Piazza Rioni, Santo Stefano's lively main square that's lined with shops, *gelaterie*, and plenty of cafés at which to grab a coffee or *aperitivo*. Or, return to ship to relax on the Sun Deck (weather permitting).

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** Relax onboard as our ship sets sail for Gaeta.

### Day 14 Disembark ship • Visit Sicily-Rome American Cemetery in Nettuno • Rome

- Destination: Rome
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel Delle Nazioni or similar

**Activity Note:** Today's visit to the American Cemetery may be emotional for some travelers.

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** We'll disembark our small ship and drive to Gaeta for our transfer to Rome. Along the way, we'll gain a better understanding of the sacrifices that paved the way for the Allied victory in Europe during World War II when we stop in the seaside town of Nettuno. Here, we'll visit the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial. Covering 77 acres, the cemetery is home to the remains of 7,860 American

soldiers who fell in several key battles in the liberation of Sicily and the northward march to Rome, including the decisive landings at the beachheads of Anzio and Nettuno in early 1944.

**Lunch:** At a local *trattoria*.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our transfer to Rome, arriving in the mid-afternoon. After checking in to the hotel, the remainder of the day is free for you to explore "The Eternal City."

**Dinner:** On your own. You might like to tuck into a bowl of *cacio e pepe*, a simple yet classic Roman pasta dish made with cheese and pepper.

**Evening:** Free to do as you'd like. Perhaps you'll grab a *gelato* and go for an evening stroll to see the ancient Roman ruins lit up.

## Day 15 Explore Rome

- Destination: Rome
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel Delle Nazioni or similar

**Activity Note:** 2025 will be a Holy Year in Rome, as the city celebrates the 2025 Jubilee from December 24, 2024, through January 6, 2026. This event, which occurs only once every 25 years, draws millions of pilgrims to this holy city. While this affords travelers a rare opportunity to witness a special celebration, you should also be prepared for larger than usual crowds that may affect your included activities. We also strongly recommend that you reserve any independent visits to museums or attractions in advance.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** In the company of a local guide, we'll set off to discover the "Eternal City" and the myriad treasures it has amassed over more

than two and a half millennia. At varying points throughout its history, Rome has served as the heart of kingdoms, empires, and nations; a religious and cultural touchpoint; an Olympic city; and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Today it remains a vibrant metropolis of historical and cultural significance—a can't-miss experience for travelers from around the world.

Your morning walking tour will introduce you to many of the city's history-spanning highlights, including the resplendent Spanish Steps, designed in the 18th century by architects Francesco de Sanctis and Alessandro Specchi. You'll also see the many layers of history on display: Today one of the most iconic fountains in the world, the Trevi Fountain was built in 1762 upon the site of an ancient Roman aqueduct.

**Lunch:** At a local café for an *aperitivo*, a traditional dining experience made up of different appetizers and drinks.

**Afternoon:** Yours to continue discovering Rome as you'd like. Perhaps you'll embark on a spirited walk to Piazza Navona, home to the Obelisk of Domitian, the Fountain of Neptune, and more. Or, if you'd prefer, you can relax in an open-air café and indulge in an espresso as you watch Rome's well-heeled residents travel past.

**Dinner:** On your own.

**Evening:** If you're not quite ready to leave Rome, considering paying another visit to the Trevi Fountain—legend has it that those who throw a coin into the fountain are guaranteed to return to Rome. It's also beautifully lit up (and much less crowded) at night.

## Day 16 Rome • Optional pasta & tiramisu making lesson

- Destination: Rome
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Delle Nazioni or similar

**Activity Note:** Today’s optional tour must be purchased at least 30 days in advance.

**Breakfast:** Enjoy breakfast at the hotel.

**Morning:** You have the day free to explore on your own. Or, you can join an optional tour for an introduction to two iconic Italian dishes—pasta and tiramisu. Learn to make fresh pasta from scratch as an expert chef walks you through the process of mixing and kneading the dough from flour and eggs, and shaping it into delectable noodles. Plus, indulge your sweet tooth as you work with your fellow travelers to craft a creamy tiramisu dessert from fresh ingredients that will be provided to you.

**Lunch:** Travelers on today’s optional tour will share the meal they’ve created together over an included glass of wine (or a choice of

non-alcoholic beverages). Otherwise, lunch is on your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a restaurant.

**Afternoon:** The afternoon is yours to explore.

**Dinner:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can offer restaurant recommendations.

**Evening:** The rest of the evening is free. Perhaps you’ll settle in early, or make any last minute Roman discoveries before heading out tomorrow.

## Day 17 Rome • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** As our journey comes to an end, it’s time to say “*Arrivederci*.” Check out of your hotel and board a bus for the airport, where you’ll catch your flight home. Travelers joining our *Central Italy: Hilltop Villages of the Apennine Mountains* post-trip extension will travel by motorcoach to reach Abruzzo.

## END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION 6 nights in *Central Italy: Hilltop Villages of the Apennine Mountains*

**Day 1** Transfer to Ascoli Piceno • Wine tasting & vineyard experience

**Day 2** Explore Ascoli Piceno • Cooking demonstration

**Day 3** Visit ceramic workshop • Santo Stefano di Sessanio

**Day 4** Visit Rocca Calascio & Campo Imperatore

**Day 5** Visit Massa D’Albe

**Day 6** Transfer to Tivoli

**Day 7** Transfer to Rome • Return to U.S.

## OPTIONAL TOURS

---

During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Trip Experience Leader. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit cards only. We also accept debit cards with the logo of one of these credit card companies, but it must be a card that allows you to sign for purchases.

In order to correctly process these charges, there can be a delay of 2–3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2–3 months following your return.

### Monaco & Monte Carlo

(Day 6 \$195 per person)

On our optional tour of Monaco and Monte Carlo, you'll first take a panoramic drive to Monaco, a self-governing, independent state full of glamor, style, and wealth, where, according to legend, Hercules opened its roads. You'll stop by Old Monaco's Grimaldi Palace, where ruler Prince Albert II now lives, and where, every day, the changing of the guard takes place. You'll also pass through the *Cattedrale dell'Immacolata Concezione* (Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception) where Albert's famous parents are buried: Prince Rainer III and Grace Kelly, America's darling movie star.

Then, after lunch at a local restaurant in Monaco, you'll visit lively Monte Carlo—home of the famed Monte Carlo Casino.

### Pisa

(Day 9 \$135 per person)

Explore the scenic city of Pisa on this half-day optional tour. Your journey begins with a guided exploration of San Rossore Railway Station, to learn more about its heritage and unique features, including ornate architecture and stained glass windows. Afterward, you'll

head to the iconic Piazza dei Miracoli, home to the Leaning Tower, Baptistery, and Cathedral, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Your Trip Experience Leader will offer insights, and you'll savor an included dinner at a nearby restaurant before returning to your ship.

### Pasta & tiramisu making lesson

(Day 16 \$150 per person)

Join an expert chef for an introduction to two iconic Italian dishes—pasta and tiramisu. Learn to make fresh pasta from scratch as a local culinarian walks you through the process of mixing and kneading the dough from flour and eggs, and shaping it into delectable noodles. Plus, indulge your sweet tooth as you work with your fellow travelers to craft a creamy tiramisu dessert from fresh ingredients that will be provided to you. At the conclusion of your lesson, sit down for a shared meal and savor the fruits of your labors over an included glass of wine (or a choice of non-alcoholic beverages).

**Please note:** *This optional tour must be purchased at least 30 days prior to your departure date.*

## PRE-TRIP

# Southwest France: Toulouse & Carcassonne's Medieval Marvels

## INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

---

- » Accommodations for 2 nights in Toulouse, and 3 nights in Carcassonne
- » 9 meals: 5 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 1 dinner
- » Guided tours & cultural activities
- » Services of our local Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » All transfers

## PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

---

Heed the siren call of southern France and discover what makes this region a perennial favorite with savvy travelers. On this extension you'll explore two southern cities, each with their own distinct take on the culture. Travel inland to Toulouse, where sophistication and style are bywords for the historic university town. And in Carcassonne, step back in time as you stroll the ramparts and drawbridges of the city's famed citadel. Throughout it all, you'll immerse yourself in the unparalleled culture and delectable cuisine of France's sunny southern shores.

### Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. on an overnight flight to Toulouse, France.

### Day 2 Arrive Toulouse, France

- Destination: Toulouse
- Accommodations: Hotel Mercure Toulouse Centre Wilson Capitole or similar

**Afternoon/Evening:** You will arrive in Toulouse sometime in the late afternoon or evening, depending on your individual flight arrangements. An O.A.T. representative will greet you at the airport and escort you via minibus to your centrally-located hotel, where you'll have time to settle in and relax after your overnight flight.

**Dinner:** On your own. Travelers arriving late might like to dine in the hotel's on-site restaurant.

### Day 3 Explore Toulouse

- Destination: Toulouse
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Mercure Toulouse Centre Wilson Capitole or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** After a Welcome Briefing led by your Trip Experience leader, we'll set out to explore Toulouse, a cultural hub renowned for its grandiose main square, Place du Capitole. Known as La Ville Rose for the pale-red brickwork common in its traditional buildings, Toulouse offers elegant reminders of the past stretching all the way back to the medieval era, as well as glimpses of the future, with its

three major universities. The city is also the headquarters of the plane maker Airbus and other aerospace companies.

In the company of a local guide, we'll take in the city on foot during a walking tour. Highlights of our tour will include a visit to the Cathédrale Saint-Étienne de Toulouse, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and national monument that is believed to be at least 1,000 years old; and a stroll through Vieux Quartier, or the Old Quarter, which is known for its tangle of streets and coral-colored buildings.

**Lunch:** On your own. Consider trying the traditional Toulouse dish *cassoulet*, a rich and hearty stew of duck *confit*, haricot beans, and pork.

**Afternoon:** Free to explore Toulouse independently. You might choose to visit Cité de l'Espace, an innovative museum and scientific discovery center with interactive displays about outer space.

**Dinner:** Our small group will reconvene for a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant, featuring authentic cuisine of the region. We'll raise a glass to toast to the discoveries ahead.

**Evening:** Free to do as you'd like. Perhaps you'll enjoy a glass of local *vin* in a nearby bar.

#### Day 4 Overland to Carcassonne

- Destination: Carcassonne
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel les Chevaliers or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll check out of our hotel in Toulouse and transfer overland to Carcassonne. Along the way, we'll enjoy a brief boat tour along the Canal du Midi.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant in Carcassonne, featuring typical French fare.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll check in to our hotel, and the remainder of the day is free for you to begin getting acquainted with Carcassonne on your own.

**Dinner:** On your own; check with your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions. You might like to try foie gras, the iconic—if controversial—southern French dish.

**Evening:** Free for you to make your own discoveries. You may choose to join your fellow travelers for a nightcap in the hotel bar.

#### Day 5 Explore Carcassonne • Wine domaine and tasting

- Destination: Carcassonne
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel les Chevaliers or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll get to know historic Carcassonne by setting off on a walking tour with a local guide. The city's famed citadel—the Cité de Carcassonne—is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the stuff of fairytales: Stalwart turrets, double-lined ramparts, and a drawbridge conjure images of dueling medieval knights and courtly romance. It was featured in the film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, and is even rumored to be the inspiration for Walt Disney's *Sleeping Beauty*. We'll stroll La Cité, which overlooks its winding, narrow streets. The Basilique Saint-Nazaire here shows the handwork of the eleventh to 14th centuries, with a Romanesque nave and Gothic choir illuminated by stained glass windows. As we explore, we'll learn about La Cité's long history, which stretches back to the Gauls and Romans.

Admission to the castle is also included, and may be visited this morning or after our winery visit.

After our walking tour concludes, we'll board our bus for a short ride to a nearby wine domaine—a French estate that produces wines from its own vineyards. A tour of the domaine will introduce us to the unique grapes of the Languedoc and we'll also see how they are blended and bottled in the workshop and try several of the fine wines produced at the estate.

**Lunch:** We'll enjoy a light lunch and a wine tasting at the domaine.

**Afternoon:** We'll return to Carcassonne, where the remainder of the day is free for your own discoveries. Perhaps you'd like to glimpse the dark side of the Middle Ages at The Museum of Inquisition; here, you can learn about the prevalence of religious persecution during this period, and observe the tools and methods in which victims were tortured.

**Dinner:** On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

**Evening:** Free to do as you'd like.

## Day 6 Visit Mirepoix village

- Destination: Carcassonne
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel les Chevaliers or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll board our bus and drive to Mirepoix, a quaint village in France's Midi-Pyrénées that is home to about 3,100 permanent residents. Despite its small size, Mirepoix is one of the best examples of a medieval city in the region. Your Trip Experience Leader will take you on a discovery walk of its historic center. As you walk, admire

the Place des Couverts, the old central square surrounded by half-timbered houses; a cathedral built in the Gothic style and featuring a large single nave (an unusual architectural feature); and meandering streets lined with art galleries.

**Lunch:** On your own in Mirepoix. If the day is nice, you might like to enjoy an *al fresco* meal at one of the sidewalk cafes in the main square.

**Afternoon:** We'll return to Carcassonne, where the rest of the day is yours to do as you'd like.

**Dinner:** On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

**Evening:** Free. Perhaps you'll seek out live music at a local bar, or enjoy a nightcap in the hotel lounge.

## Day 7 Visit Montpellier • Begin main adventure

- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** As our pre-trip adventure comes to an end, we'll check out of our Carcassonne hotel and transfer overland to Avignon.

But before we join our main adventure, there is still one more destination for our small group to explore: Montpellier. This stylish university town has an extensive old quarter dating back to the Middle Ages. We'll have a chance to explore it on foot when we set out on a city tour with our Trip Experience Leader.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant in Montpellier.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our drive to Avignon, arriving in the late afternoon. Once there, you'll meet up with fellow travelers to begin Day 2 of your main adventure.

## POST-TRIP

### Central Italy: Hilltop Villages of the Apennine Mountains

#### INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

---

- » Accommodations for 2 nights in Civitella del Tronto, 3 nights in Santo Stefano di Sessanio, and 1 night in Tivoli
- » 12 meals: 6 breakfasts, 4 lunches, and 2 dinners
- » Guided tours and cultural experiences
- » Services of our local Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » All transfers

#### POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

---

*Rugged, mountainous Abruzzo has often been overlooked by travelers ... but after visiting, you'll wonder why. Nestled between the jagged Apennine Mountains and the turquoise waters of the Adriatic, this central Italian region is home to more protected land and more types of flora and fauna than anywhere else on "the boot." As you set off the beaten path, you'll discover charming medieval towns, stunning mountain landscapes—including Italy's own "Little Tibet," ancient Roman ruins, and friendly locals eager to show off their culture and traditions. You'll also delve into Italy's cherished wine-making tradition when you visit a family-owned winery in Tivoli. This is Italy at its most pure—but it won't stay that way for long.*

##### **Day 1 Transfer to Ascoli Piceno • Wine tasting & vineyard experience**

- Destination: Ascoli Piceno
- Included Meals: Lunch
- Accommodations: Palazzo dei Mercanti or similar

**Morning:** After checking out of our Rome hotel, we'll board a motorcoach and begin our transfer to Marche, the rugged, mountainous region to Rome's northeast.

To break up our drive, we'll visit a local Lazian vineyard and winery where we'll immerse ourselves in the time-honored Italian tradition of wine-making. The winery we visit is small (only about 5 hectares in size) and family owned, but it has a reputation throughout Italy for producing first-class vintages. Here,

the vineyard's owner will give us a tour of the groves, the grape-processing cellar, and the ancient caves in which the wines are matured. We'll cap off our morning's discoveries with a special wine tasting featuring wines produced on site.

**Lunch:** A light lunch will accompany your wine tasting.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our drive to Marche, arriving in the town of Ascoli Piceno in the late afternoon.

After checking in and settling into your room, you'll have time to begin getting acquainted with this clifftop town independently.

**Dinner:** On your own. Consider trying a traditional Italian dish like *maccheroni alla chitarra*, a pasta dish often served with lamb or pork ragù.

**Evening:** Free to spend however you choose—retire early to your room or check with your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

## Day 2 Explore Ascoli Piceno • Cooking demonstration

- Destination: Ascoli Piceno
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Palazzo dei Mercanti or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll gather in the hotel lobby with our Trip Experience Leader and meet our local guide who will accompany us on a walking tour of Ascoli Piceno. With a long history that predates even the founding of Rome, Ascoli Piceno has thousands of years of history to uncover, and we'll catch a glimpse of it as we explore iconic sites such as the Palazzo dei Capitani, located on the western edge of the shimmering Piazza del Popolo. Built in the middle ages as a municipal building, the Palazzo grew over the centuries until it was destroyed in a fire in the 16th century, purposely set during a period of civil unrest. The Palazzo was later restored to the state we find it in today, featuring frescoed walls, airy courtyards, and a central chamber featuring a false ceiling composed of a dozen 18th- and 19th-century wooden paintings.

After exploring the Palazzo, we'll cross to the northern edge of the piazza to visit the Church of San Francesco. Built over a period of 300 years, this Gothic church is dedicated to Saint Francis of Assisi, Italy's patron saint, who visited Ascoli Piceno during his life. Inside the church, we'll find a beloved local

relic—a wooden cross that survived the fire in the Palazzo dei Capitani, and is said to have miraculously poured blood on several occasions.

We'll then take a break with a stop at Caffè Meletti, a historic café in the town. Here, we'll enjoy some local snacks and meet the owners to get their perspective on daily life in Ascoli Piceno from their point of view as the proprietors of a beloved culinary establishment.

Our tour concludes with a stroll through the Piazza Arringo, which in medieval times served as a meeting place for public assemblies, and occasionally a tournament grounds for knightly orders. Today, the piazza is flanked by a number of ornate palazzi, and its centerpiece is a white travertine fountain, adorned by a pair of bronze seahorse statues.

**Lunch:** On your own in Ascoli Piceno. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a café or restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll have a free afternoon to explore Ascoli Piceno independently. Later today, gather at the hotel lobby with our Trip Experience Leader to walk to a local home, where we'll be welcomed into the kitchen for a cooking lesson. We'll learn about the importance of fresh ingredients as we prepare local specialties including olive all' ascolana, fried olives stuffed with meat.

**Dinner:** Together, we'll share a meal composed of the dishes that we helped prepare.

**Evening:** We'll return to the hotel after dinner, where the rest of the night is yours to spend as you please.

### Day 3 Visit ceramic workshop • Santo Stefano di Sessanio

- Destination: Santo Stefano di Sessanio
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Residence Il Palazzo or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll check out of hotel and drive south to Santo Stefano di Sessanio, a hilltop town with medieval architecture, winding cobbled streets, and charming arches. To break up our bus drive, we'll stop along the way in the medieval village of Castelli, which is best known for its longstanding tradition of ceramics and majolica, a type of pottery in which a clay earthenware body is painted with glazes and then fired. Castelli rose to prominence as a ceramics hub during the Renaissance, largely thanks to its abundance of clay pits and silica deposits in the surrounding countryside.

While here, we'll have the unique opportunity to learn more about Castelli ceramics when we visit the workshop of a local father and son. We'll begin our visit by watching a demonstration by these master artisans. Then, you'll get the chance to try your hand at making your own ceramics piece, which you can take home with you as a souvenir of your time in Abruzzo.

Following some free time to explore, we'll head to a local restaurant for lunch.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant in Castelli, featuring typical regional dishes.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our drive to Santo Stefano di Sessanio, arriving in the mid-afternoon. After checking in and settling into your room, you'll have time to begin getting acquainted with this cliff-top town independently.

**Dinner:** On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions on where to get a typical Abruzzan meal.

**Evening:** Free to spend however you choose—retire early to your room or check with your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

### Day 4 Visit Rocca Calascio & Campo Imperatore

- Destination: Santo Stefano di Sessanio
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Residence Il Palazzo or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll drive to the nearby village of Rocca Calascio, best known for its commanding *rocca* (or fortress). Originally built in the 10th century as a watchtower, the *rocca* expanded over the centuries to include four corner towers and connecting walls, and was at one time controlled by Florence's powerful Medici family. And at an altitude of 4,790 feet, the Rocca Calascio is the highest fortress in the Apennine Mountains and indeed the highest fortress in all of Italy.

We'll spend some time in the village below, perhaps visiting the local market to meet and interact with the village's artisans. And, of course, we'll have plenty of opportunities to admire the skyline of the *rocca* above—you just might recognize its silhouette from the film *The Name of the Rose*, in which Sean Connery played a crime-solving monk.

Then, we'll drive to our next destination: Campo Imperatore. Known as Italy's "Little Tibet," this is an alpine meadow and nature lover's paradise in Abruzzo's Gran Sasso National Park. The expansive mountain grasslands offer panoramic views in every direction of the mountains and valleys shaped by eons of winds and ancient glacial melt. It's

the perfect spot for an outdoor picnic—which is why we’ll bring ingredients from a local butcher shop with us to the plateau.

**Lunch:** Over an open fire, known in the local dialect as a *fornacella*, you’ll learn to cook *arrosticini*—tender lamb skewers. (Vegetarian options will be available.) You can then enjoy the fruits of your labor while taking in the surrounding mountain views.

**Afternoon:** We’ll descend from the Campo and drive back to Santo Stefano di Sessanio, where the remainder of the day is free for your own discoveries.

**Dinner:** On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant recommendations.

**Evening:** Free to do as you’d like. Perhaps you’ll join your fellow travelers for a glass of *vino* in a local bar.

## Day 5 Visit Massa D’Albe

- Destination: Santo Stefano di Sessanio
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Residence Il Palazzo or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We’ll set out this morning for Massa D’Albe, a small village near the ruins of an ancient Roman town. In the company of a local guide, we’ll explore these ruins, known as Alba Fucens, on foot. We’ll take in the rocky remains of the forum, the commercial district, and the ruins’ crown jewel—the Roman amphitheater, where theater performances and musical events are still held each summer.

You’ll have ample time to stroll through Alba Fucens and imagine what life must have been like here a thousand years ago. Then, we’ll board our bus and return to Celano.

**Lunch:** On your own. Perhaps you’d like to try *pastuccia*, a polenta stew served with sausage, egg, and goat cheese. Whatever you choose, you’re almost guaranteed an authentic meal—as one of the more isolated Italian regions, Abruzzo has shielded its cuisine from outside influence, resulting in a food culture that many describe as “Italian food at its most pure.”

**Afternoon:** You’ll have some free time in Massa d’Albe to continue exploring on your own. Then, we’ll drive back to Santo Stefano di Sessanio, where the rest of your afternoon is yours to do as you’d like. As your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions on how to spend your time.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant, where you’ll dine on regional cuisine as you’re serenaded by a troupe of local musicians.

**Evening:** You might like to keep the theme of the evening going by seeking out live music at one of Santo Stefano di Sessanio’s local bars or cafés.

## Day 6 Transfer to Tivoli

- Destination: Tivoli
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Catillo Hotel

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We’ll say “*ciao!*” to Santo Stefano di Sessanio and make our way by motorcoach to Tivoli.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant in Tivoli.

**Afternoon:** We'll check into our hotel in Tivoli in the mid-afternoon, and the remainder of the day is free for you to make any final explorations. Tivoli, a hilltop town in Lazio near Rome, is known for many things—its lavish gardens, rolling countryside, and regal villas, to name a few. During your free time, perhaps you'd like to visit the nearby Villa d'Este, whose spectacularly landscaped gardens are considered the pinnacle of Italian garden design. Or spend the afternoon at another, equally impressive villa: the UNESCO World Heritage Site Villa Adriana, which was once the retreat of Emperor Hadrian.

**Dinner:** On your own.

**Evening:** Free for you to do as you'd like. Toast to the memories you've made with your fellow travelers in a local bar, or take a nighttime stroll through Tivoli's center with a cone of *gelato*.

## **Day 7 Transfer to Rome • Return to U.S.**

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** As your adventure draws to a close, you will check out of your hotel sometime this morning and transfer via motorcoach to the airport in Rome. From there, you will catch your return flight home.

## YOUR MEDITERRANEAN SMALL SHIP

### Small Ship Adventures aboard our privately owned, award-winning, 50-passenger small ships

---

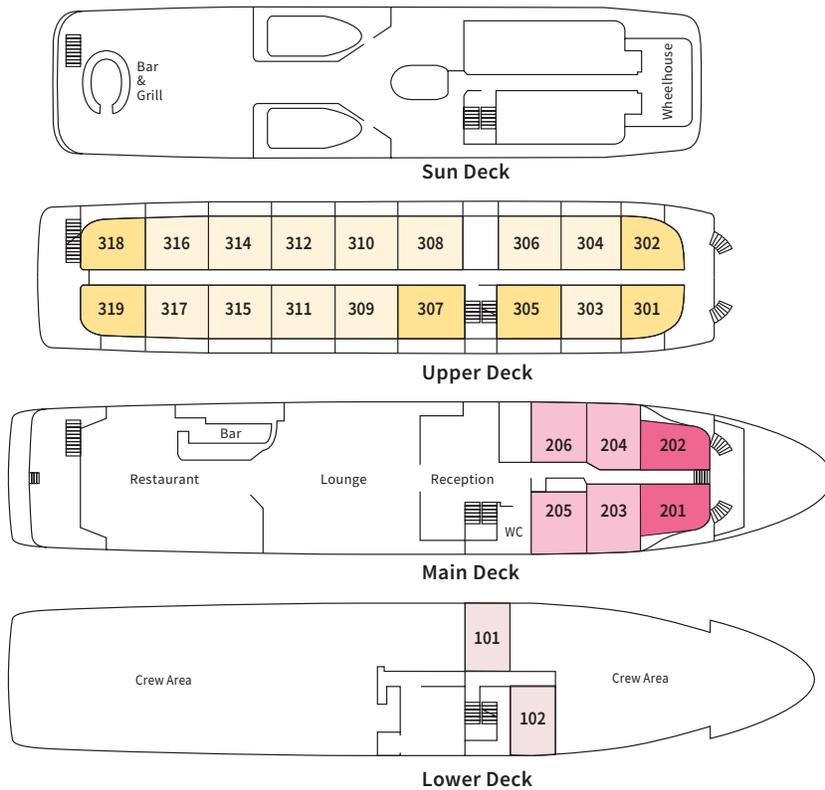
During your travels in the Mediterranean—including the Aegean and Adriatic seas and French and Italian Rivas—you'll be cruising aboard one of our 50-passenger small ships, rated excellent by 96% of travelers. The M/V *Athena*, M/V *Artemis*, and M/V *Arethusa* were designed and built to carry just two groups of 20–25 (average of 22) travelers, each with its own local Trip Experience Leader. These ships are the perfect size to navigate the islands and shores of the Mediterranean—and then slip into the smaller ports and harbors for the night, well away from the larger cruise ships.



#### SHIPBOARD FEATURES

- **Restaurant with single, open seating:** Savor regionally-inspired dishes or American favorites during all meals.
- **Comfortable lounge:** Relax with old friends and new, and participate in onboard discussions and lectures.
- **Complimentary beverages:** Enjoy house beer and house wine—as well as soft drinks—at any time of day while onboard.
- **Wireless Internet access:** Connect online in cabins and common areas. *Please note: Connectivity may be limited at certain points throughout your cruise.*
- **Outdoor common areas:** Relish coastal views from your seat on the Sun Deck—perhaps with a cocktail from the outdoor bar.
- **English-speaking crew:** Enjoy dedicated attention from our international staff throughout your voyage. Plus, all shipboard announcements are made in English for your convenience.

## MEDITERRANEAN SMALL SHIPS



CABIN CATEGORIES	
	<b>A</b> Cabin with private balcony – 150-170 sq. ft.
	<b>B</b> Cabin with private balcony – 150-170 sq. ft.
	<b>C</b> Cabin with portholes – 160 sq. ft.
	<b>D</b> Cabin with portholes – 160 sq. ft.
	<b>S</b> Single cabin with portholes – 140 sq. ft.

**Registry:** Malta

**Length:** 193 ft.

**Beam:** 35 ft.

**Draft:** 10 ft.

**Cabin Size:** 150-170 sq. ft., with 2 single cabins of 140 sq. ft.

**Number of Cabins:** 26

**Passenger Capacity:** 50

**Built:** 2007

**International crew:** 21

**Passenger Decks:** 3

**Group Size:** 25 travelers, maximum, with 1 Trip Experience Leader

**Stairs, no elevator**

*This ship complies with the latest international and U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations and is outfitted with the most current navigational and communications technology. It has retractable fin stabilizers to help reduce discomfort during rough seas.*

## CABIN FEATURES

- 24 double-occupancy cabins from 150–170 sq. ft.; 2 single-occupancy cabins at 140 sq. ft.
- All outside-facing with either portholes or a balcony
- Two single beds (convertible to one full); one single bed in single-occupancy cabins
- Wireless Internet access, closet, bed-side tables with lamps, desk with mirror, flat-screen TV, telephone, safe, mini-refrigerator, individually controlled air-conditioning, and dual electrical outlets
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer, and toiletries



*Cabin on the Upper Deck of the M/V Athena*

# TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

---

## Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

## Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

## Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 2 blank passport pages.
- **Pre-trip extension to France:** No additional blank pages are needed
- **Post-trip extension to Italy:** No additional blank pages are needed

## No Visas Required

Travelers with a U.S. passport do not need any visas for this adventure, including the optional trip extensions.

## Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

## **Traveling With a Minor?**

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

## **Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents**

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

## **Overseas Taxes & Fees**

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

## RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

---

### Is This Adventure Right for You?

**Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure.** We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

#### GROUP SIZE

- This adventure has a maximum group size of 25 travelers with a local Trip Experience Leader exclusive to O.A.T.

#### PACING

- 16 days, with 10 nights aboard our 50-passenger small ship, *M/V Artemis* or *M/V Athena*, one 3-night hotel stay, and one 2-night hotel stay
- Air travel time will be 9-18 hours and will likely have at least one connection

#### PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 3-5 miles unassisted and participate in 3-5 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs
- Good agility, balance, and strength needed for boarding tender and possible rough seas
- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids will not be able to board our 50-passenger small ship
- Our 50-passenger small ship does not have an elevator onboard
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience
- You may encounter animals on this trip. We make every effort to keep these encounters safe, however animals may behave unpredictably or dangerously at times. Please use caution when interacting with animals on this trip: Keep a safe distance, stay alert, and respect the animals

#### TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Uneven walking surfaces, including ruins, unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones
- Travel by 50-passenger small ship, 45-seat coach, train, bus, 50- to 200-passenger public boat, and 12- to 18-passenger ship tender

## CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 55–90°F during cruising season

## Coastal Cruise vs. River Cruise

If you've been on a river cruise before, you might think that the activity level of this itinerary will be similar. But this coastal cruise is more rigorous than a typical river cruise. In order to set the right expectations, we'd like to take a moment to compare the two:

- The pace is faster on this Riviera cruise than on a river cruise, with more emphasis on the ports of call and less on scenic cruising.
- There's more walking—sometimes as much as 5 miles, which means up to two hours on foot. Plus, many of the towns along the Riviera and in Tuscany are hilly, so some of that walking is on an incline.
- There's more stairs in general and the ship does not have an elevator. At a minimum, you must be able to climb 2–3 flights of stairs unassisted in order to move about the ship. (Each flight has roughly 14 stairs.) Then there will be more stairs in town.
- Because you are on the sea, the motion of the ship is more noticeable. Rough seas are a possibility at any time of year, and some travelers may feel queasy or experience passing seasickness.
- We use public transportation in the Cinque Terre and other locations. This can be trains, local buses, or small ferries—the same ones locals use—so they may be crowded with nowhere to sit. Also, you may need to board or disembark quickly.
- The groups are smaller than most river cruises (25 travelers maximum, and only two groups on board the ship) so any “stragglers” will have a bigger impact on the group.

## Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

## No Vaccines Required

### Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

### Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to “Find International Travel Information”, select “Country Information”, then enter the country into the search bar; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Health” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

### Staying Healthy on Your Trip

#### Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don’t push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

### Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

## Water

- Tap water is safe in France and Italy; so is the water on board the ship.
- If you prefer bottled water is widely available for sale. Another option we recommend is for you to bring a reusable water bottle from home and fill up on board the ship.

## Seasickness

Most of the time our seas are calm and seasickness is not an issue. But since this itinerary is a coastal voyage on the Mediterranean Sea, and not a river cruise, seasickness remains a possibility—and one that you should be prepared for. There are a host of remedies available at your local drugstore: from over-the-counter medicines, to preventative medicated patches, and even bracelets that control nausea through pressure points. Do a little research and decide which method is best for you, then bring it with you on the trip. Even if you don't end up feeling seasick it is still worthwhile to have something on hand—better to be prepared and not need it, than to be miserable.

But if you forget your remedy of choice, there is a backup. The ship does have Dramamine available on board free of charge to help any travelers who need it. You can also combat mild seasickness by going to the top deck (the fresh air and seeing the horizon both help) and by eating certain types of foods like apples.

# MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

---

## Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler’s checks are not recommended.** They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It’s more practical to view them as a last resort in the event of a special situation.
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need euros instead.

## Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like [www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter), your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

**Euro Countries:** European Euro (€)

## How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

On your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices. Keep in mind that exchange offices generally charge hefty fees and do not always offer the best exchange rates. To exchange cash, you’ll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2014) are best.

Please note that many banks in Europe will only exchange money for their own customers. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

## ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1-\$10 each time you use a foreign ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM.

## Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although Discover and American Express cards are accepted in some countries outside the U.S., they are not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

**France:** Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in France. For small purchases or markets, you may need cash instead.

**Italy:** Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in Italy. Occasionally a small “Mom and Pop” restaurant will be cash only, and street vendors or taxis usually are cash only, but most other businesses will take cards.

## Chip Cards

Many countries have adopted credit cards that have an embedded computer chip. These cards are inserted into the reader instead of swiped. The card owner then authorizes the purchase using a PIN instead of signing.

Though this technology is common in the U.S., occasionally there are machines in other countries that can't read U.S. cards or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. This doesn't happen often, and is nothing to worry about. You can usually resolve the situation by asking the cashier to let you sign. (If you don't speak the language, just mime signing on your hand.) If you are not able to sign for a purchase, such as at an automated ticket booth, you can use another form of payment, such as a debit card that has a PIN.

## Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

### On Board Ship: Two Separate Bills Will be Issued

- **Shipboard account:** This bill is for any on board purchases (drinks, souvenirs, etc.) and is calculated in Euros. This bill is payable at the front desk by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept only Euros. For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, Discover, and American Express are not accepted.
- **Optional tour account:** This bill is for any optional tours taken during the trip and is calculated in U.S. dollars. This bill is paid with your Trip Experience Leader (they will have you fill out a form) by credit/debit card only; other forms of payments such as cash and checks are not accepted. For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.

***Please note:** Payments made by credit card may take up to three months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, the charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as “OPT Boston” (depending on your credit card company).*

### Exchange Services

Due to international banking laws, we are not able to exchange money onboard the ship. If you need to obtain local currency, please see the “How to Exchange Money” section for helpful tips and information.

### Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard Crew:** We recommend a flat tip of \$16–\$18 U.S. per traveler, per day. You'll give this tip once—at the end of your cruise—and it will be pooled among the entire crew. **Policy Update:** *Due to international banking laws, we are no longer able to process crew tips on a credit card; crew tips can only be in the form of cash.*
- **Housekeeping Staff at Hotels:** We recommend \$1 per traveler, per day. (This is for hotels only; on the ship Housekeeping are part of crew, so you don't need to tip them separately.)

- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

**Time at Leisure:** When you are exploring on your own, it's useful to know when to tip and how much, because local customs often differ from the U.S. Here are a few helpful guidelines for the most common services a traveler might use:

- **Taxis:** Tipping is not customary, but many locals will round up the fare and let the driver keep the change. If the driver helps you with heavy luggage, then 10% is a nice gesture.
- **Restaurants, cafes, and bars:** The tip is usually included or added on as a service fee. Look for a statement on the menu like *service compris* or *servizio incluso* which means “service is included” or for a service charge on the bill. If you would like to leave a tip on top of the service fee (or in the rare case when the service is not included) then 10% would be considered generous. In Italy, you may also see the word *coperto* on your bill. This is not a tip, but more of a cover charge for the use of the table, table cloth, napkins, etc.
- **Public Restrooms:** Most public restrooms in Europe have attendants that take care of cleaning and supplies. It is customary to leave a small tip for them—usually about half a euro—so hold on to those coins! Some restrooms are pay-toilets; you pay the staff at the entrance to the restroom or drop the appropriate coin into the slot on the stall door. Many restaurants, cafes, and shops will only have pay-toilets or reserve their restrooms for patrons only.

*In France and Italy it is becoming increasingly difficult for local people to exchange dollars into Euros as fewer banks are offering exchange services. Therefore we suggest tipping in Euros if/when you can.*

## AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

---

### Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

#### Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Personalization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Personalization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our Personalization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Personalization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner) under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

### Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **U.S. Departure:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have an O.A.T. Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.
- **U.S. Return:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, an O.A.T. Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

### **Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased**

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: [www.rome2rio.com](http://www.rome2rio.com).

### **Optional Tours**

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

### **What You Need to Know**

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)

- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as “OPT Boston”.
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you’re on the trip. But if you’d like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner)).

## Communicating with Home from Abroad

### Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone can accept one.

### Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype, FaceTime, or WhatsApp. We recommend you use WhatsApp to communicate with home while abroad and with your Trip Experience Leader while onsite. You will need a Wi-Fi connection if you do not have international coverage. Other calling options include smartphone apps such as Skype or FaceTime. You will need a Wi-Fi connection for these apps and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

### Calling Cards and 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.).

One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

### How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

**France:** +33

**Italy:** +39

## PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

### Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person.
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is <b>50 lbs for checked bags</b> and <b>15 lbs for carry-on bags</b> .
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.

TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS
Same as the main trip.

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS
<p><b>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person:</b> Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights.</p> <p><b>Luggage rules:</b> Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>

#### Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.

- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.

## Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Look for a sturdy suitcase with heavy fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Portage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

## Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light:** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.
- **Pack casual clothes:** Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. At dinner, you will not need to wear “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you.
- **Consider clothing designed for travel, sports, or camping:** With modern fabrics, lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy.
- **Plan to dress in layers on shore excursions.** Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions: warm days with sun, chilly temperatures with showers, and evenings that could dip into the 40s or 50s, depending on your travel season.
- **Bring rain gear:** Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.
- **Good walking shoes are critical.** This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes. Aboard ship, you'll want non-slip shoes with rubber soles.

## Suggested Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. We recommend using [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

**And don’t forget a reusable water bottle**—you’ll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

## Recommended Clothing

- Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- Sleepwear
- Socks and undergarments
- A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year

## Essential Items

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- Travel money bag or money belt
- Moisturizer, lip balm
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- Pocket-size tissues
- Hand wipes and/or hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer is available onboard, but you may want to bring your own for excursions.

- Light folding umbrella
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards
- Plug adapter—see the “Electricity” section
- Optional: Many hotels will provide hair dryers, but not all. If a hair dryer is essential to you consider a travel-size version. Hair dryers are provided on your ship.
- Optional: Wash cloth

### Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

### Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

#### Voltage

Electricity at hotels in France and Italy is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphone, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Aboard the ship, cabins are equipped with both 110-volt and 220-volt outlets.

## Plugs

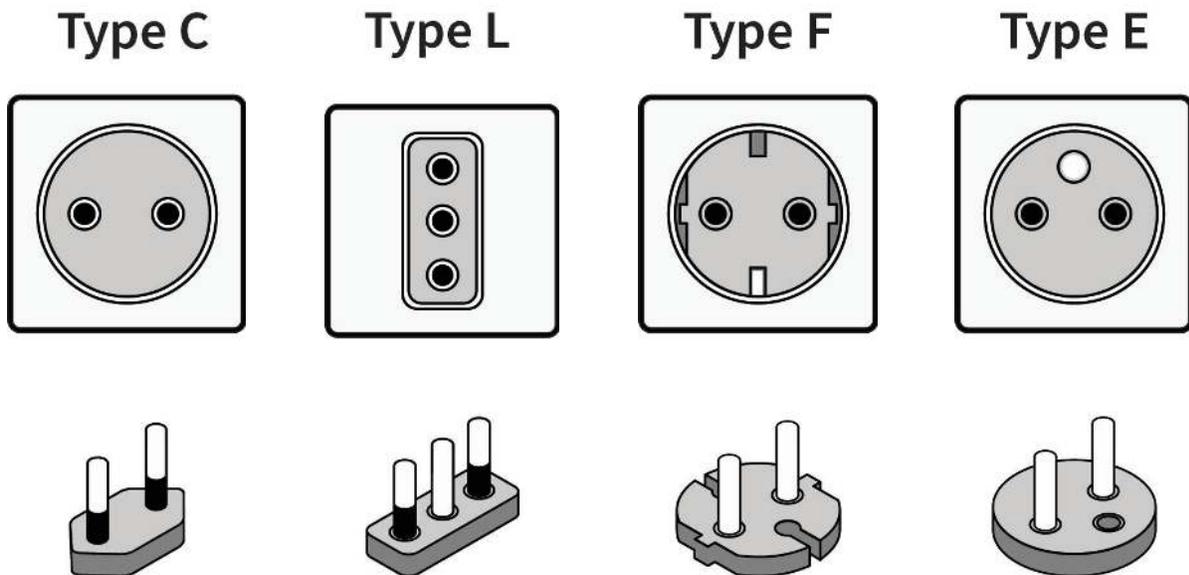
Aboard ship, there are both standard American plugs and Western European Type C plugs.

In hotels, the shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Because you'll be visiting multiple countries on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

**France:** C and E

**Italy:** C, L, or F



## CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

---

**Nice, France (Côte d'Azur):** As a rule, the Provence and Riviera regions of France have much more sunshine, higher temperatures, and longer spells of consistent weather than the north. The towns situated on the Côte d'Azur have a Mediterranean climate: hot dry summers, warm wet winters—except that the winters can also be chilly at night and in the early morning. The middle of the day is often clear and brilliant. The rain, when it comes, generally goes away again quite soon. But it can also rain buckets, seemingly all of a sudden. Another local weather feature is wind. Some breezes are gentle and soothing, but there is a variety of fiercer winds as well. The most famous is the *mistral*, which comes tearing down from the north out of a clear sky and generally blows for several days at a time, especially during spring. Note on summer weather: Temperatures can be rather hot in the summer, so if you are traveling in this season, be sure to take clothes that will breathe.

**The Italian Riviera:** Protected from the cold north winds by the Maritime Alps and the Ligurian Apennines, the climate of the Italian Riviera has exceptionally mild winters and bright, hot summers, and lots of sunshine for most of the year. It rains rarely—about 60 days a year, and even more rarely snows on the coast. Fall offers the high potential for stormy weather. As you'll be cruising, you also need to take weather on the water into account: it's often cooler and windier aboard ship, and island weather may vary from what you experience onshore.

**Rome, Italy:** The city of Rome has a climate similar to that of Tuscany, with temperatures averaging in the 40s and 50s during peak winter months, and the 60s and 70s in spring and autumn. Winter rains can be heavy, but periods of sunshine are also common. Summer can be very hot and humid with average temperatures ranging from 65–85 degrees, but potentially reaching into the 90s, especially during July–August.

**Carcassonne, France (Southwest):** Southern France's climate is similar to Spain's northern coast. It has an oceanic–maritime climate, with temperate weather year-round and rare major temperature fluctuations or extremes. The warmer months tend to be in July and August. The cooler months tend to be in December, January, and February.

**Civitella del Tronto, Italy (Abruzzo):** Abruzzo's average temperatures are affected by its two distinct climate zones—a maritime region along its Adriatic Coast and an interior region in the Apennine Mountains, where we spend most of our time. The one thing to keep in mind is that the weather here can shift suddenly, taking you by surprise. So it is best to pack and wear layers in the winter, spring, and fall. Even in the height of summer—when the average high is in the 80s—a sudden rain shower or heatwave can occur. Generally through Civitella del Tronto is cooler than the coast because of its location in the mountains.

### Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

## Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	NICE, FRANCE			THE ITALIAN RIVIERA		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
<b>JAN</b>	56 to 42	67 to 65	8	57 to 48	--	4
<b>FEB</b>	56 to 43	69 to 63	6	59 to 48	--	4
<b>MAR</b>	59 to 46	70 to 66	7	59 to 50	--	4
<b>APR</b>	63 to 50	75 to 69	11	64 to 51	--	4
<b>MAY</b>	69 to 57	76 to 71	9	71 to 57	--	4
<b>JUN</b>	76 to 64	74 to 70	6	78 to 64	--	3
<b>JUL</b>	81 to 69	72 to 70	4	84 to 69	--	2
<b>AUG</b>	82 to 69	72 to 70	6	86 to 69	--	3
<b>SEP</b>	76 to 63	76 to 70	8	80 to 68	--	3
<b>OCT</b>	70 to 57	76 to 69	10	73 to 60	--	5
<b>NOV</b>	62 to 49	72 to 66	10	66 to 55	--	6
<b>DEC</b>	57 to 43	68 to 65	9	60 to 50	--	5

MONTH	ROME, ITALY			CARCASSONNE, FRANCE		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
<b>JAN</b>	69 to 38	76	7	50 to 38	85	2.7
<b>FEB</b>	73 to 38	72	7	52 to 38	80	2.1
<b>MAR</b>	80 to 43	71	7	58 to 42	75	2.1
<b>APR</b>	86 to 48	70	7	63 to 46	75	2.9
<b>MAY</b>	94 to 55	70	6	70 to 53	75	2.2
<b>JUN</b>	103 to 62	65	3	78 to 59	70	1.8
<b>JUL</b>	104 to 67	63	2	84 to 63	65	1.1
<b>AUG</b>	105 to 68	64	2	83 to 63	65	1.7
<b>SEP</b>	104 to 61	70	6	76 to 57	75	1.7
<b>OCT</b>	90 to 54	74	7	67 to 52	85	2.3
<b>NOV</b>	80 to 47	78	9	56 to 44	85	2.3
<b>DEC</b>	70 to 41	77	9	50 to 39	85	2.5

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>CIVITELLA DEL TRONTO, ITALY</b>		
	<b>Temp. High-Low</b>	<b>% Relative Humidity (avg)</b>	<b>Average # of Days with Rainfall</b>
<b>JAN</b>	52 to 41	--	5
<b>FEB</b>	57 to 44	--	10
<b>MAR</b>	53 to 41	--	20
<b>APR</b>	62 to 48	--	23
<b>MAY</b>	64 to 50	--	29
<b>JUN</b>	83 to 67	--	17
<b>JUL</b>	85 to 68	--	21
<b>AUG</b>	88 to 70	--	18
<b>SEP</b>	75 to 59	--	15
<b>OCT</b>	71 to 53	--	8
<b>NOV</b>	59 to 46	--	25
<b>DEC</b>	52 to 41	--	13



## ABOARD YOUR SHIP: CABIN FEATURES, DINING & SERVICES ON BOARD

---

### **M/V Athena, M/V Artemis & M/V Arethusa**

Owned, operated, and staffed by us, these ships were designed exclusively for our travelers, and each features a similar layout. On the main deck, you'll find our reception area and the ship's library. For relaxation, the lounge/bar features inviting leather couches and soft chairs. Topside, a sun deck has classic wooden deck chairs for admiring the scenery. When it's time for meals, our large dining area at the stern features a single seating policy. While cruising, we'll enjoy daily breakfast and lunch buffets; sit-down dinners feature international and local specialties paired with regional wines.

### **Included features of your Small Ship**

#### **The Ship:**

- Restaurant with single open seating
- Open Sun Deck for prime viewing
- Shipboard activities
- Smoke-free environment
- All shipboard announcements made in English
- Ice machine in the lobby
- Water fountains in the lobby

#### **All Cabins:**

- All outside cabins
- Layout of 150-163 square feet (24 doubles) and 120-135 square feet (2 singles)
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer
- Color TV with movies, and a bow camera for ship-front views
- Ample closet and dresser space
- Direct-dial telephone

**An important word:** While our ship features larger-than-usual cabins, please keep in mind that this ship is a coastal vessel, not large ocean cruise ships. Coastal cabins, in comparison, are relatively small, and ship amenities, in general, are comfortable but not lavish.

## Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner). However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive on board the ship. (This is normal procedure for ships in many parts of the world, including Europe.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

## Dining

You'll enjoy fine cuisine and excellent views in your ship's dining room, featuring a warm decor of dark woods, rich carpeting, and white-linen and china table settings. Your ship's daily service includes breakfast and lunch buffets, and a more formal dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus for you that feature regional specialties. Included with both lunch and dinner are complimentary drinks; you'll be able to choose from house wine, draft beer, or a selection of soft drinks. In addition, a selection of other fine wines and beer is available for purchase, starting at approximately \$20–30 per wine bottle (prices vary according to vintage). Travelers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately \$10 per bottle, charged to your cabin account.

Please note that if you bring your own alcohol aboard, it can only be consumed in the dining room as described above, or in your cabin. Consumption of alcohol purchased outside the ship is not permitted in the lounge or public areas. We also offer complimentary coffee and tea throughout the day, available in the lounge.

**Open-table, single seating for all meals:** Each meal is open seating—reservations of any kind are not accepted. Dinner has only one designated time for its open seating, announced each day aboard ship.

**Dining times:** Dining times for all meals may vary depending on the day's sightseeing and sailing schedule, but in general, meal times are as follows:

- Early riser breakfast: 7:00 –7:30 am
- Breakfast: 7:30–8:30 am
- Lunch: 1:00–2:00 pm
- Dinner: 7:00 pm

**Special diets & celebrations:** Special diets, such as low-cholesterol, vegetarian, or gluten-free, can be accommodated, as well as the recognition of an anniversary or birthday. Please call us to submit your request no later than 45 days prior to departure. Religious dietary regimens, such as kosher or halal meals, cannot be prepared aboard ship.

**Dress code:** The dining-room dress code is casual, though most travelers dress nicely for the Captain's Welcome Reception and Farewell Dinner.

**Non-smoking policy:** The entire dining room is non-smoking at all times.

### **Embarkation/Disembarkation**

On the day of disembarkation, your cabin will no longer be available after breakfast. You may sit in the ship's lounge or on the Sun Deck until disembarkation.

### **Headsets**

During your trip, complimentary headsets (often called "whisper receivers") will be provided on all of your included and optional tours, so that you can hear better over ambient noise. If you use a hearing aid or have a strong preference for a particular type of headphones, we highly encourage you to bring your own headphones/ear buds with you. The plug size is usually the same as that used by smartphones, computer jacks, etc. Headsets will also be available during the pre- and post-trip extensions, but not on the transfer day to/from the main trip.

### **Wireless Internet Access**

Limited complimentary Wireless Internet service is available on board the ship. If you want to use the Wireless Internet connection you'll need to bring your own device (laptop/tablet/netbook) — ships do not rent or loan these devices. Shipboard access is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume on board will affect connectivity and speed. The ship's Internet connection demands a strong cell phone signal, which is unavailable in many of the areas we visit, and connectivity can be limited. You can expect disruptions of both long and short duration. You may be able to take advantage of available shoreside Internet cafes, or hotel access if available.

### **Laundry and Linen Service**

Laundry service is available for a fee. Please note that neither self-service laundry facilities nor dry cleaning services are available. Towels are changed daily, but only at your request. (We use the international signal that most green hotels have adopted — if you want a towel changed, leave it on the floor or in the shower. A towel on the rack or hung up indicates you'll reuse it.) Bed linens are not changed daily. Fresh bed linens are supplied at the start of every cruise, and if the cruise is longer than two weeks they will be changed every 14 days. For cruises less than two weeks long, you'll keep same the same bed linens for the duration.

### **Medical Care**

Our entire fleet adheres to stringent European safety standards. Ships feature fully staffed reception desks for most of the day (from 7:00 AM to 10 PM) and each cabin is equipped with an emergency call button available to alert the Captain.

### **On Board Activities**

During your cruise you'll enjoy exclusive Discovery Series events, including group activities that relate to the region, theme dinners, organized discussions, and talks on upcoming ports of call.

## Recreational Facilities

These include a sun deck, lounge, library, bar and dance floor. The bar is open from 9:30 am to 11 pm, and features both complimentary drinks (soft drinks, house beer, house wine, and non-alcoholic cocktails/beer) and drinks for purchase (spirits, alcoholic cocktails, bottled beers, and a selection of wines). Prices are in Euros.

## Bicycles

We're pleased to offer complimentary bicycle rentals onboard your ship for use during free time, including all of the necessary safety gear, such as a helmet, brightly-colored safety vest, and a lock. Because there is a limited supply of bicycles available, they will be offered on a first-come first-served basis. For more information or if you are interested in using one of the bicycles, please speak to the Front Desk staff or Hotel Manager onboard your ship.

## Telephone Services

To make telephone calls from the ship, you will be charged on your shipboard account on the last day of the cruise. Phone calls are directly from your cabin and through satellite, and are charged per minute without regard to whether or not it is a local, international or Calling Card based call. We advise you to use it only for an emergency, as this is a satellite connection and a very expensive service (for example, calls will cost about \$10.00 per minute).

## Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

All cabins are non-smoking. Smoking is permitted only outside on the sun deck. Smoking is not allowed anywhere else on the ship.

## Shore Excursions

Included during your cruise are many sightseeing tours. Other optional tours are available for purchase. We will provide information on these optional excursions on your arrival. Please note that optional tours can only be purchased with a credit card or a debit card that doesn't require a pin.

## Lost & Found

Any lost or forgotten items found on board the ship will be held for 90 days from disembarkation. After 90 days, all unclaimed items will be discarded or donated.

## Ship Specifications

### *M/V Artemis*

- **History:** Built in 2008
- **Size:** 193x35 ft
- **Capacity:** 50 passengers, 21 crew members

- **Layout:** 26 cabins, 3 decks; Elevator-no

#### ***M/V Athena***

- **History:** Built in 2007
- **Size:** 193x35 ft
- **Capacity:** 50 passengers, 21 crew members
- **Layout:** 26 cabins, 3 decks; Elevator-no

#### ***M/V Arethusa***

- **History:** Built in 2008
- **Size:** 193x35 ft
- **Capacity:** 50 passengers, 21 crew members
- **Layout:** 26 cabins, 3 decks; Elevator-no

## ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

---

### O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

### Cruising the Italian and French Rivas

As any sailor will tell you: you don't command the sea – it commands you. Most of the time things go along without complications, but all cruising is subject to the vagaries of winds, tides, and water, and flexibility of mind is vital to ensure a relaxed and full experience during your cruise. Port calls, particularly in high season, occur at the pleasure of the local port authority and marine traffic and conditions can create delays that might result in some re-scheduling. More frequently visited ports are very traveler-friendly. At less frequented ports you may discover that local restaurants don't accept credit cards.

### Cultures of the Riviera

It would be hard to find someone who was not familiar with at least some aspects of French culture. Few nations have surpassed France's legacy when it comes to exporting art, literature, fashion, cuisine, film, and entire schools of intellectual thought. But that doesn't mean that French culture has not been misunderstood.

For example, the French are justly proud of their cultural heritage, and that pride is often embodied in the nation's unofficial symbol, the Gallic rooster. But the flip side of Gallic pride is the stereotype of French snobbery. The French very much believe in their national motto of *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity). But in their daily interactions, the French are rather formal with people outside their social circle, and they follow a strict set of manners to avoid social missteps (*faux pas*). That mannerly approach, combined with the extreme directness of their language, makes many visitors jump to the conclusion that the French are cold or arrogant. *Au contraire*, when you get to know a French person, that sense of decorum generally takes a back seat to affectionate and loyal friendships.

When you get to that stage, you'll have to master the art of the French air kiss or *faire la bise*. This is how French people greet acquaintances, by leaning in and gently brushing their right, then left cheeks together while making a subtle kissing sound with their lips. If someone wishes you hello or goodbye with *la bise*, consider it a compliment!

Most people in France share a strong appreciation for the arts and intellectual discourse. A lot of that is going on whenever you walk into a café, where people will be engaged in lively conversations for what seems like hours. There's an historical precedent for this, for during the 18th century, France was the epicenter of the Enlightenment. It was an era that gave us radical new philosophies, science and art based on the sovereignty of reason, and empiricism. The French openness to new ideas is evident in their embrace of innovative artistry— from the Impressionists to Dadaism to Abstract Expressionism and beyond. The French brothers Louis and Auguste Lumière are generally considered the inventors of modern cinema, and their legacy has been expanded by a host of acclaimed filmmakers from Abel Gance to Jean Renoir to Jean-Luc Godard to Francois Truffaut and too many others to list.

When it comes to gastronomy, it goes without saying that the French have elevated their cuisine to an art form. The French have always considered dining as something worthy of one's time as opposed to being a necessity or even a sinful indulgence. They appreciate every morsel of their meal on a sensory level, for the technique of the chef, and for what that dish may represent in terms of national, regional or just family history. They are particular about all these things, and especially, about the freshness and quality of ingredients. But because they also see chefs as artists, they delight in innovative culinary interpretations of classic dishes. So when you sit down to dine in France, you are not just consuming a meal, you are tapping into the French spirit.

The culture of Italy has flourished for centuries, from the commanding Roman Empire to the fervent Renaissance. Humans have inhabited this region for more than 200,000 years, and as a result of the Roman Empire's dominance, it was a major player in the development of Western society. Today, its influence is still felt on the world stage. Seen as the epitome of luxury and style, Milan sits at the center of international fashion, while Italian car manufacturers produce some of the most ritzy automobiles in the world—from Fiat and Ferrari to Lamborghini and Maserati.

Italy is home to some of the most iconic structures in the world, including the Colosseum and the Leaning Tower of Pisa. The grandeur of these edifices is a constant source of pride among locals and a reminder that Italy was once the jewel of Europe. With the introduction of classical Roman, Renaissance, Baroque, and Neoclassical, Italy has shaped architectural styles around the globe. Not only has Italy produced some of the greatest architectural gems, but some of the most renowned artists, like Leon Battista Alberti and Leonardo da Vinci. Painted by Michelangelo in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is Italy's most famous piece of art. An appreciation for the arts is so integral to Italian culture, that art can be viewed not only in the museums of Florence, Venice, and Rome, but in most churches and public buildings.

The Italian language shares a close connection with music, and the abundance of vowels and lack of oxytones allowed the language to serve as the origin of Opera. During the Renaissance, a group of intellectuals and artists in Florence, known as the "Camerata de' Bardi," tried to recreate the storytelling of the Greek drama, and the first work to be considered an Opera was born: Jacopo Peri's *Dafne*. The art form continued to flourish, eventually reaching its peak of popularity in the 1800s. Giuseppe Verdi, one of Italy's most famous composers, wrote stories filled with melodrama and heartbreak, including *Aida* and *La Traviata*. Today, these classic works are still performed and widely loved.

Another revered art form is Italian cuisine. For Italians, food isn't just nourishment, it is the heart of life. Gatherings, especially family gatherings, are frequent and often centered around food. While spaghetti and pizza may be the first foods that come to mind when thinking of Italy, each region has its own spin on "Italian food."

## Religion and Religious Observances

It is estimated that 63–66% of French people identify as Catholics, with another 7–9% identifying as Muslims. The second largest group are those who claim to be unaffiliated with any religion (23–28%), followed by small numbers of Jews, Buddhists, and others. That does not mean that religion has not impacted everyday customs. For example, people do have church weddings, baptisms and religious funeral rites. But most French people consider belief to be a private matter, and do not attend church regularly.

All these figures are estimates because the government has not officially collected any data on religious preferences since 1972. This all has to do with a very important aspect of French culture called *laïcité*. You could translate it as secularism, but it goes deeper than that. *Laïcité* is the complete separation of religious spheres from public spheres. Its underlying aim is to ensure religious freedom for all, and it is constitutionally enshrined. But *laïcité* is not without controversy. The concept has come under fire as France has become less homogeneously Christian. Some critics say it actually impedes religious freedom, and they cite the 2004 ban that made it illegal to display conspicuous religious symbols in public schools or civil workplaces. In addition to banning the wearing of crucifixes, the ruling forbade the wearing of the hijab, the traditional head covering worn by observant Muslim women.

In contrast, Italy is a deeply Catholic country which celebrates many religious festivals. But the two biggest are Christmas and Easter. Christmas is celebrated much as in the U.S. but with some key differences. For example, the unofficial start of the Christmas season is the Day of the Immaculate Conception (December 8) and the end is Epiphany (January 6); the focal point of decoration is usually an elaborate nativity scene rather than a Christmas tree; and the festive meal often features fish and seafood rather than a turkey, ham, or other meat. Special foods like panettone cake or certain pastas may also be served at this time of year. Also different from the U.S. is when presents are opened—depending on what part of Italy you are from, it could be on Saint Lucia's Day (December 13), Christmas Day (December 25), or Epiphany, when a good witch called *la befana* brings candy to children—but only if you were good last year.

The other big festival is Easter, which is on a lunar schedule, and thus changes dates each year (although it usually falls in February or March). The kick off for the Easter season is Lent, a six-week period of penitence when practicing Catholics "give up" something they enjoy as a way of showing devotion. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, when many Italians will go to church to receive a cross made of ashes on their forehead, which they will then wear for the rest of the day.

Note that Carnival—which is meant to blow off steam before the seriousness—comes before Lent, but is not considered a religious festival. Instead it usually involves street parties, costumes, music, masks, eating, drinking, and crowds. Lent ends during *Settimana Santa* (Holy Week). This runs the week before Easter, and includes the Monday after. Smaller shops or family-run

restaurants may be closed during this week or on special hours. But larger or famous sites generally stay open as normal except on Easter Sunday or the Monday after. If you have your heart set on a specific attraction, we suggest you check their holiday schedule in advance to avoid disappointment. Religious places of interest, such as historic chapels/churches, will often have special services that you are welcome to attend—even if you are not Catholic.

## Language

The official language spoken throughout France is French. Even in places where people occasionally speak a regional dialect, all official communications are in French. The most widely spoken regional languages in France are the German dialects along the border (such as Alsacien); Megreb (an Arabic-French mix from North Africa); and Occitan, a Gallo-Romance language spoken in some southern areas such as Languedoc, Gascony, and parts of Provence. In Normandy, the Norman language is sometimes used, as are Basque and Catalan in some parts of France that border the Pyrenees. Though some regional words have filtered into common usage, the vast majority of people speak French as a first language.

English is the most common foreign language, spoken by more than 39% of people. You may have heard the stereotype that the French will refuse to speak English with you, even if they understand it. This is not true. However, it is true that the French are very proud of their language (it was once the language of international diplomacy) and they are mindful about preserving it. So if you make even the slightest effort to speak a few words in French, your hosts will be very appreciative.

Beyond the basic French you may have learned in school, there are many colorful contemporary idioms. You may be interested to know about *verlan*. It's a popular French linguistic trend that creates slang words by spelling them (loosely) backwards. It's been popular with young people for some time, but now even their parents are catching on and many *verlan* words have been entered into the dictionary. So in *verlan*, *fou* (crazy) becomes *ouf*. *Louche* (strange or shady) becomes *chelou*. Another very common *verlan* term is *vénère*. It comes from the word *énervé*, which means "annoyed" or "irritated."

Italian is the official language of Italy with about 93% of the population being native Italian speakers. The greatest divergence from standard Italian is found in border areas, in the mountains, and on the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. Around 50% of the population speaks a regional dialect as their mother tongue. While not officially recognized, these dialects are considered separate languages by linguists due to their extensive differences. Some of these dialects include Friulian, Ladin, and Slovene.

## Hotel Courtesy in Italy

Italian hotels do not allow food and beverages to be taken from their breakfast rooms, nor is it courteous to eat or drink food or beverages purchased elsewhere in hotel common rooms. In conformity with municipal laws to promote urban decorum, hotels do not allow hanging laundry on room balconies. Travel clotheslines, used in your bathroom, are a more private and effective solution.

## Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing people in most countries is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph children or older women. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject and try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK.

Please do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

In museums or at archaeological sites, there may be restrictions on using your flash. Please obey any signs or directions by staff; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

## Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people.

Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set your own personal number). Please utilize this.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful.

## French Cuisine

It would be an understatement to say the French have an appreciation for fine food. They have a reverence for it, and it shows in the quality of French cuisine, which was designated by UNESCO as part of the World's Intangible Cultural Heritage. You certainly don't need to dine at a Michelin-starred restaurant to experience the best of French cuisine. A visit to just about any local *marché* (open-air market), *pâtisserie* (pastry shop), *boulangerie* (bakery), café, bistro, or brasserie may well be as memorable an outing as visiting the famed monuments and museums.

Classical French dishes formed the basis of what we once called *haute cuisine*. But some of these dishes were regional in origin. Fortunately, because there is such widespread regard for gastronomy, regional dishes may appear on menus far from home, especially in large cities. Some of these dishes include:

- **Soupe à l'oignon:** a sweet and savory broth of caramelized onions, beef stock, and sherry with a crust of grilled Comté or Gruyère cheese.
- **Coq au vin:** a specialty of Burgundy, made with chicken braised with red Burgundy wine, lardons, mushrooms, and garlic.

- **Entrecôte à la Bordelaise:** A traditional dish in Bordeaux. It is a rib eye steak cooked in a red wine sauce with bone marrow.
- **Bouillabaisse:** A seafood soup made from fish and shellfish cooked in a broth of onions, tomatoes, saffron, and herbs.
- **Coq au Riesling:** A flavorful dish of chicken braised in white Riesling wine, accented with lardons of bacon and button mushrooms, and enriched with a silky touch of crème fraîche
- **Flammekueche** (or in French, *tarte flambée*): A chewy flatbread smothered with *fromage blanc* (a tangy fresh cheese), *crème fraîche* or sour cream, slivered onions, and crispy *lardons* of bacon.

## Italian Cuisine

Italy may have been unified as a nation in 1861, but its cuisine is another story—and a glorious one at that. Here, gastronomy has always been a matter of regionalism and seasonality. The country is divided up in to 20 distinct regions, each with its own specialties. The good news is that there is certainly culinary overlap, and since Italians are famously passionate about food, you can enjoy many beloved regional dishes all over Italy.

The structure of a typical Italian meal is designed to stimulate your appetite, and promote moderation—along with variety. So it will begin with dishes like the following:

- **Aperitivo:** A glass of sparkling prosecco or spumante white wine.
- **Antipasto all’Italiana:** Raw vegetables served with various cheeses and salami
- **Fritto Misto:** A lightly fried seafood mix, usually with calamari, shrimp, and fish such as sardines or anchovies.
- **Crostini:** Chicken liver pate or fresh cut tomatoes served on a thin piece of toasted bread
- **Caprese Salad:** Thick slices of tomato and mozzarella flavored with fresh basil leaves, olive oil.

The first course, called Primo, comes next. Here is where you may enjoy your carbohydrates with a small dish such as:

- **Tagliatelle al Tartufo:** Long ribbons of delicate tagliatelle pasta, swirled with warm melted butter, garlic, and decadently topped with black truffle shavings and parmesan cheese
- **Ribollita:** A bean and kale soup served with toasted bread. On the second day, the soup is cooked again in a pan with olive oil, hence the meaning “boiled twice”.
- **Gnocchi alla Sorrentina:** Potato gnocchi baked in a rich and delicious tomato sauce with bubbling mozzarella cheese and fresh basil.

The main course is called Il secondo. This is usually a small, simply prepared dish of chicken, meat, or fish including:

- **Bistecca alla Fiorentina:** A T-Bone steak from a local breed of cow, the Chianina cattle
- **Lampredotto:** A panino stuffed with the fourth stomach of a cow and soaked in broth, with salsa Verde and black pepper from Florence
- **Polpette:** Savory and seasoned Italian meatballs.

Your meal will conclude with a Dolce (sweet) such as:

- **Tiramisu:** A layered confection of sponge cake, mascarpone cheese, coffee and liqueur.
- **Delizia al Limone:** Sponge cakes filled and coated with lemon custard from Amalfi Coast
- **Buccellato:** A dessert made of a sweet and soft pasty with lots of raisins and aniseed. It can be shaped like a donut or oval, per the original recipe from Lucca

Dolci may be served with coffee or an alcoholic digestivo such as herbal amaro or limoncello. It is meant to aid your digestion of a memorable meal, one that will certainly have been toast-worthy

## Nice in Brief

### City Layout and Details

The city is one big easy-to-scan color postcard: the lapis lazuli of the Bay of Angels (Baie des Anges), the activity of the Vieux Port, and the timelessness of the towering Castle (Chateau)—the name given to the hill, with ruins of an old fortress, that looms over the harbor. Along the bay runs the fabled promenade des Anglais, a broad seafront avenue that resembles a mile-long outdoor café. At one end of the promenade is the popular Place Masséna—semitropical gardens set against crimson buildings and graceful arcades. Avenue Jean Medecin is the main Street; it bisects the city with a straight line from Place Masséna to the railroad station.

The old city, La Vieille Ville, is a little piano-shaped quarter—all narrow and cobbled—that huddles in the shadow of the Chateau. La Vieille Ville's boundaries are the quai des Etats Unis and the boulevard Jean Jaurés beside the Paillon River, which is covered in parts by esplanades and divides the old town from modern Nice to the west.

### Shopping Areas

In Nice, street market shopping in the Old Town is the least expensive and perhaps the most fun. Rue Masséna, Place Magenta, and Rue Paradis are the pedestrian zone of shops and cafés. There's also a flea market on Quai Lunel, open Tuesdays through Saturdays. Meanwhile, nearby Monte Carlo and Cannes are world-renowned for their exclusive boutiques selling upscale fashion pieces, pricey jewelry, and all types of accessories.

### Local Transportation

The town center is compact and easily accessible by foot. Many areas have become pedestrian zones, such as Rue Masséna and some of its cross streets, as well as numerous streets in La Vieille Ville. You can hop on a bus for outlying districts, such as Cimiez, at the Place Masséna. The central

station for the urban bus network is at 10 Avenue Felix-Faure (Traverse Flandres Dunkerque). Nearby, the main station for regional buses is the Gare Routiere (Bd. Jean Jaurés and Promenade Paillon). Boats operate from Nice to Marseille, from St-Tropez to the charming Hyeres Islands, and from Antibes, Cannes, and Juan-les-Pins to the Lerins Islands. The operator is SNCM (Societe National Maritime Corse-Mediterranee)

## Cuisine

The cuisine of Nice and the Côte d'Azur is characterized by that delicious southern mix of olive oil, garlic and fresh tomatoes, onions and anchovies, and black olives. These ingredients constitute the base for many of the local fish and meat specialties. The key cooking-style words are Provençal and Niçois. Many dishes feature fragrant herbs like fennel, thyme, rosemary, and bay leaf; others are centered around garlic, tomatoes, and olives. In fact, olives of every conceivable size and color, cured with herbs or salt or flavored oil, feature prominently in the cuisine. Also typically Mediterranean is the extensive use of shellfish (clams, cockles, crabs, mussels, sea anemones, sea urchins) and fish (bass, red mullet, sardines), either grilled or combined in chunky, spicy soups.

Locally produced artichokes and asparagus are much favored along the Côte d'Azur. Ratatouille, an olive oil-based stew of aubergines and tomatoes, is also very popular; it is perhaps the most famous of all vegetable dishes. Another Mediterranean "claim to fame" is *salade niçoise*—tuna, tomatoes, black olives, capers, potatoes, string beans, and hard-boiled eggs—first created in Nice. Its sandwich form, *pan bagnat*, is available at every local snack bar.

The celebrated aperitif along the Riviera is *pastis* (essence of aniseed), which is high in alcohol and usually served diluted with iced water. The local wines are uncomplicated but go well with seasoned food that calls for a refreshing, fruity wine—and Cotes de Provence (mostly dry rosés) are just that. Or try a glass of Bandol rouge (red), blanc de Provence (white), or Bellet (red or white).

## The Italian Riviera & the Cinque Terre in Brief

### Coastal Layout

Known locally as Liguria, the northern Italian Riviera offers a more relaxed and casual vibe than the French Riviera. The various coastal towns, like San Remo or Savona, are an ideal place to unwind. They offer everything a riviera playground should: Palm trees lining the harbor, cafés that spill out into the seaside squares, local shops and a marina packed with yachts. The largest city in the region is Genoa, a maritime powerhouse with a long and storied history of trade, exploration, and immigration.

South of Genoa, the Cinque Terre is a rugged portion of coast on the Italian Riviera. "The Five Lands" area is composed of five connected villages: Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola, and Riomaggiore. The coastline, villages, and surrounding hillsides (as well as three small islands) are all part of the Cinque Terre National Park, which is now a UNESCO World

Heritage Site. The area is largely inaccessible to cars, and was historically visited mainly by sea, until the Genoa-La Spezia railway—connecting the villages via local walking paths—was built in the 1870s.

Stacked high on the rugged cliffs, houses were built in terraces over the centuries, creating small towns that slip colorfully down to the sea in a jumble of tilted, multi-story abodes. Each town has its own particular flavor, but all share a charming, lambent glow as they preside over the sea below. Their isolation and lack of modern-day “improvements” have made them particularly popular with visitors.

Continuing down the coastline we come to the point where the riviera blends into northern Tuscany. Here, in towns like Viareggio and Lucca the color palette shifts from pastel houses to ochers and yellows, offset by green and white window shutters. This region is also known for its contributions to Italian art—in part because it is the location of the famed Carrara marble quarries.

### Local Transportation

Trains service most of the coastal towns around the Gulf of Tigullio, and buses are even more convenient. Taxis are available as well. From April through September there is a ferry service between the towns of Portofino and Cinque Terre with stops in other small maritime villages along the Gulf of Tigullio as well. Rental cars are also available--you don't need an international driver's license in Italy, but you must be over 21.

In the villages of the Cinque Terre you'll have to rely on your feet for transportation – trains stop at paths that lead to coast, but there are no cars or buses to get you there. The walk is usually less than a mile or so.

### Cuisine

While pesto is perhaps the best known regional specialty, the cuisine in Liguria (the Italian name for the Riviera) is varied, with an emphasis on fish—appropriate for a region that stretches along the coast from the French border east and south to La Spezia along the Ligurian Sea. You'll also find local dishes from the mountains that protect the coastal region from the chilly north winds.

Locally, *trenette* (a thin ribbon style pasta) is the traditional pasta served with *pesto alla genovese*. The dish is called *trenette al pesto*, and can include potatoes and green beans. *Trenette* can also be served with clams, mussels, and a host of other seafood options. Pesto might simply be spread on a slice of bread, and is used as a garnish on Genoese minestrone soup.

Popular local seafood includes anchovies, mussels from La Spezia, tuna and less frequently crab, octopus and lobster. Capon Magro, once a staple food of fishermen is made from salted rock fish between “sailors bread” (hard bread, soaked in vinegar) and topped with vegetables.

As everywhere in Italy, olive oil is essential to many local dishes, and the terraced slopes of the Ligurian hills produce high quality oil. One Ligurian pasta is known as *trofie*. It's a short, pencil sized curly pasta twisted like a unicorn's horn and pointed at both ends, made from a paste of flour, water, salt and chestnuts. *Croxetti*, another pasta variant, are round pasta discs, like medallions, stamped with decorative patterns.

Away from the coast chestnuts, ground into flour or dried for stews, were long a traditional ingredient. Meats, like wild boar and veal, are also available in the hills.

## Rome in Brief

### City Layout and Details

Via del Corso is Rome's principal street. It runs north to south with easy-to-remember landmarks at its end points. At the north is piazza del Popolo, with a central obelisk and trio of churches. East of piazza del Popolo (and north of piazza di Spagna) is Villa Borghese, the city's principal park.

Off of Via del Corso, about two-thirds of the way between piazza del Popolo and piazza Venezia, is Via Condotti, which runs east to piazza di Spagna—the Spanish Steps area. This is the city's chic shopping area. The southern extremity of Via del Corso is piazza Venezia. You cannot miss it because it is dominated by the massive Vittorio Emanuele Monument, referred to by locals as “the wedding cake” or “the typewriter.” Southeast of piazza Venezia are the Roman Forum and the Palatine Hill (the centermost of the seven hills of ancient Rome) and, more distant, the Colosseum.

To the west of piazza Venezia and stretching toward the river lies Old Rome, an area of narrow winding streets, aging buildings and, generally, excellent restaurants and charming cafés. Corso Vittorio Emanuele is the main boulevard in this neighborhood. Across the Tiber (Tevere) River is Vatican City and farther south is the mellow Trastevere district—for many people the most interesting and colorful corner of the city.

### Evening Entertainment

As mentioned before, the International Herald Tribune is now printed in Rome and is available at most newsstands; it often lists major events in Rome, as well as the rest of Italy, in its Saturday “Weekend” section. Issues are usually one day behind the Tribune's original publication date.

In addition, the monthly Carnet di Roma, available at EPT tourist offices, is free and has an exhaustive listing of scheduled events and shows. The bi-weekly pamphlet Un Ospite a Roma, free from your hotel concierge if available, is another source of information, as is Wanted in Rome, available at newsstands.

If you want to go to the opera, ballet, or to a concert, it's best to go online in advance or ask your hotel concierge to get tickets for you. (The concierge is best if tickets are on sale at box offices only.) Here's a brief preview of entertainment possibilities:

**Opera:** The Teatro dell'Opera is on Via del Viminale.

**Film:** There are two English-language movie theaters in Rome. One is the Pasquino (Vicolo del Piede, just off Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere). The other is the Quirinetta (Via M. Minghetti, 4—Centro storico). The daily film program at each theater is listed in Rome’s daily newspapers.

**Concerts:** The new Concert Hall complex opened in 2002. It is called simply New Auditorium—Nuovo Auditorium (Viale Pietro de Coubertin).

**Night Clubs:** The best source for an up-to-date list is the weekly entertainment guide “Trova Roma,” published in the Italian daily La Repubblica.

## Local Transportation

Perhaps the best way to sightsee on your own is to pick a part of the city or a specific sight that you especially want to see, go to it on the bus or Metro, then explore the area on foot. Remember: Many Roman pathways are cobblestone. Before setting out, be sure to don good walking shoes, preferably with thick rubber soles that will cushion your feet. Transportation route maps are sold at newsstands and ATAC information and ticket booths.

**Metro:** Rome’s subway is called the Metropolitana, or Metro for short, and provides the fastest and easiest means of transportation in the city. The Metro begins operating at 5:30 am, and the last train leaves each terminal at 11:30 pm. (Fridays and Saturdays it closes at 1:30 am). A big letter M indicates the entrance to the subway. Tickets, which are good on buses as well, are available from vending machines at all stations. But you can avoid standing in line at stations if you buy single tickets or books of five or ten ahead of time at newsstands and tobacco shops.

The Metro has two underground lines: Line A—distinctive color RED—goes from the Battistini Station to the Anagnina Station. Important stops on this line are the Cipro Station near St. Peter’s and the Vatican Museums, the Spagna Station (the Spanish Steps), the Termini Station, and the San Giovanni Station (the Basilica of St. John the Lateran). Line B—distinctive color BLUE—connects to Laurentina, stopping at piazza Bologna, Stazione Termini, via Cavour, the Colosseum, Circus Maximus, the Pyramid of C. Cestius, St. Paul’s Outside the Walls, and E.U.R. The A Line intersects with the B Line at the Termini Station, which is also Rome’s central train station.

**Bus:** Silver/orange, silver/green ATAC city buses (and several streetcar lines) run from about 6 am to midnight, with intermittent *notturmo* services on main lines throughout the night. Tickets are sold singly or in books of five or ten at tobacco shops and newsstands. When boarding a bus, remember to enter at the rear and exit at the middle.

***Make sure you stamp your bus ticket:*** When you step onto the bus, you must stamp your ticket in the ticket machine. Any passenger whose ticket is not stamped faces a hefty fine!

**Taxis:** As in most cities, this is the most expensive way to get around. You can hire a taxi at a taxi stand or arrange for one over the telephone. The concierge can reserve a taxi for you, however you should be aware that the taxi’s meter will begin running the minute the driver accepts the call. Use only the official white cabs, and be very sure to check the meter. There are supplements for service after 10 pm, and on Sundays and holidays.

## **Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More**

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

### **Returns**

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

### **Crafts & Souvenirs**

#### **France**

Popular French souvenirs include fashion, art, antiques, perfume, food, and wine. Each region has its own specialties, but you can often find them for sale in other parts of the country. If time is short, try checking out a big department store, like Galeries Lafayette or Printemps. Or look for Monoprix chains, which have lower prices and are more for everyday shopping (sort of like the French version of Target).

The French value-added tax (VAT) is typically 19.6% and can be as high as 33.33% on luxury articles. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper or salesperson at the time of purchase. Be sure to save all receipts for Customs. (Generally, you have to spend over 175€ at the same shop, on the same day, and have filled out a special form for this process.)

#### **Italy**

Popular souvenirs include leather goods, silk ties, knitwear, gold jewelry, ceramics, straw goods and other handicrafts, small cabinets, and jewelry boxes. Each region in Italy has its specialties. You'll also see many different items made from olive wood or Carrara marble; just remember that any marble items you purchase should be put into your checked luggage for the flight home. (If you put them in your carry-on, they may be confiscated by security as "weapons".) In Italy, a Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals, and ranges from 4% to 22%. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods in specially marked Tax Free Shopping stores, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper, salesperson, or our local staff for details. Be sure to save all receipts and the special Global Tax Refund forms for Customs, as receipts alone are not enough.

## U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

# DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

---

## France

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 248,573 square miles
- **Capital:** Paris
- **Language:** French
- **Location:** France is a large country, two and a half times as big as Great Britain, extending for some 600 miles from north to south and from east to west. It has coastlines on both the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Its southern land border is Spain; to the north are Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany; to the east are Switzerland and Italy.
- **Geography:** Except for extreme northern France, which is part of the Flanders plain, the country may be described as four river basins and a plateau. Three of the streams flow west—the Seine into the English Channel, the Loire into the Atlantic, and the Garonne into the Bay of Biscay. The Rhône flows south into the Mediterranean. For about 100 miles, the Rhine is France’s eastern border. In the Alps, near the Italian and Swiss borders, is Europe’s highest point—Mont Blanc, at 15,781 feet.
- **Population:** 68,042,591 (Estimate)
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic 48%, None 34%, Islam 4%, Protestant 3%, Buddhist 2%, Jewish 1%, Other 2%
- **Time Zone:** France is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Paris. Daylight Saving Time begins the last weekend in March and ends the last weekend in October.

## National Holidays: France

In addition to the holidays listed below, France celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Whit Monday. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

05/01 Labor Day

05/08 World War II Victory Day

07/14 Bastille Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

11/11 Armistice Day

12/25 Christmas Day

## France: A Brief History

That the French do things with flair has been borne out by history. Even their most famous prehistoric treasure, the 17,000-year old cave paintings of Lascaux, are a dazzling work of art. The rest of French history is just as dazzling, colored by events and ideas that have impacted all of humanity, far beyond the borders of this hexagon-shaped crucible of culture.

When the Celts arrived in Gaul in the 5th century BC, it was already occupied by Iberians, Ligurians, and Greeks, who established the oldest city in France, Massilia (Marseille). It was a major port with temples, theaters, an agora, and a flourishing wine trade. The city had forged an alliance with Rome by the time Julius Caesar conquered Gaul in 57–52 B.C. Julius often gets credit for founding Lutetia (Paris), but the Gallic Parisii tribe had already established a settlement there on the banks of the Seine. The Romans erected their own magnificent cities whose ruins still stand in Arles, Nimes, Vienne, Lyon, and beyond.

During the 5th century AD, the Franks invaded and converted to Christianity under Clovis I. A national spirit emerged when Charlemagne, King of the Franks, was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800 AD. Though his reign left an indelible imprint, French national history is considered to begin in 987, when Hugh Capet centralized the monarchy. During the 12th and 13th centuries, trade prospered, guilds were founded, and cathedrals were built. But the 14th century brought the Hundred Years War with England (1337–1453), whose Norman kings held vast estates in France. The English were expelled and as in the days of Charlemagne, the throne held a powerful mystique, this time with the aid of Joan of Arc, whose divine voices urged her to lead France to victory at Orleans in 1429 and to champion Charles VII as king.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, France moved closer towards absolute monarchy, best exemplified by Louis XIV, whose reign was unequalled for its autocracy—and magnificent style. From Versailles, he presided over a gloriously gilded France—so resplendent that it earned him the title of “the Sun King.” Ironically, the very splendor of the French monarchy precipitated its downfall, for it was exorbitant to maintain. That burden fell to the peasants and middle class, as nobles and the clergy were exempt from the taxes. That ended with the French Revolution in 1789. King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were guillotined, the monarchy was abolished, and the new (but short-lived) First Republic was established.

The ensuing chaos led to the rise of Napoleon, who became emperor in 1804 and built an empire across nearly all of Europe. Though Napoleon was a dictator, his Napoleonic codes brought unprecedented legal rights and civil liberties to his domains, in many places ending feudalism. With his fall in 1814, the monarchy was restored. France's Third Republic was founded in 1870, during which the groundbreaking Impressionist school of painting emerged, as well as the Modernist movement. From 1914-18, France fought with the Allies in World War I, prevailing but suffering devastating losses. Between wars, France nourished major intellectual movements: Constructivism, Dadaism, Surrealism, and Existentialism.

In 1940, France was invaded by Germany who set up a puppet government in Vichy under Marshal Philippe Petain. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, the Allies landed in Normandy and went on to liberate Paris in August. A provisional government was set up under General Charles de Gaulle. He remained France's most influential statesman of the 20th (or perhaps any other) century, becoming president in 1958 until his resignation in 1969. Post-war France saw the break-up of its remaining colonial outposts. The country was one of the leaders in the founding of the European Union (1993) and the Eurozone (1999).

More recently France, like its European neighbors, had to contend with the fallout of the 2008 global economic crisis. Unemployment, immigration, structuring the post-Brexit EU, and climate change are some of the issues France must address with its historic resourcefulness—and characteristic flair.

## Italy

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 116,348 square miles
- **Capital:** Rome
- **Languages:** Italian is the official language; German, French, and Slovene are also spoken in towns near the borders of Austria, France, and Slovenia.
- **Ethnicity:** Italian, with small clusters of German-, French-, and Slovene-Italians in the north and Albanian- and Greek-Italians in the south
- **Location:** Italy is bordered by France, Slovenia, Austria, Switzerland, the Ligurian Sea, the Tyrrhenian Sea, the Ionian Sea, the Adriatic Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Geography:** Italy lies in southern Europe and includes the Mediterranean islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and several other small islands. The region of Tuscany is a blend of rugged hills, fertile valleys, and long stretches of sandy beaches that curve along the west coast of central Italy and fringe the pine-forested coastal plain of the Maremma. Sicily enjoys mountains in the north and east, a vast central plateau, and a fertile coastline dotted with sea-level resort towns.
- **Population:** 58,853,482 (estimate)

- **Religions:** Christian 80% (overwhelming Roman Catholic), Atheists and Agnostics 20%, Muslims estimated at less than 2%
- **Time Zone:** Italy is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Rome. Daylight Saving Time begins the last weekend in March and ends the last weekend in October.

## National Holidays: Italy

In addition to the holidays listed below, Italy celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

04/25 Liberation Day

05/01 Labor Day

06/02 Republic Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

12/08 Feast of the Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 St. Stephen's Day

## Italy: A Brief History

Italy proudly wears the mantle of Rome, the polity from which so much of Italy's historical, cultural, and religious heritage has derived. But even though the Romans were the first to unify the peninsula, they were not the first to dominate it. That honor goes to the Etruscans, whose empire, Etruria, reached its zenith in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. It was centered between the Arno and Tiber rivers, mostly in Tuscany. The Etruscans were farmers, miners, seafarers and warriors, but they were riven by factionalism and in 509 BC, their last king was tossed out by Ligurian-Latin nobles in the small town of Rome. Tired of monarchs, they created the first Roman Republic.

Etruscan culture disappeared by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, but the Romans were quick to appropriate many aspects of the Greek culture that had taken root in southern Italy and Sicily, where there were Hellenic colonies called "Magna Graecia." As the colonies were absorbed, so were Greek religion, architecture, and the basic tenets of democracy. During the 1st century BC, Julius Caesar defeated Gaul, making Rome the ruler of the entire Mediterranean world. After Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C., his nephew Octavian, later called Augustus, became Rome's first official emperor. The capital became an architectural showcase, and new territories stretched across Europe into Asia Minor, existing under a "Pax Romana" that brought prosperity and stability.

Pax Romana declined in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. thanks to inept and corrupt emperors, and attacks by outside barbarians. Rome eventually embraced Christianity in 313 under Constantine I, who established an eastern capital in Constantinople. But splitting the Rome into western (Roman) and eastern (Byzantine) halves did not halt the empire's demise. The eastern Roman empire fell in 476, and though the Byzantine half survived, it never regained the full might of Rome. In 800, Italy was briefly reunited under Charlemagne, but soon disintegrated into squabbling kingdoms.

Italian culture peaked during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>-century Renaissance. The independent city-states formed a delicate balance of power, with ruling families (such as the Sforzas, Borgias, and the Medicis) funding a golden age of art, invention, and intellectual activity that produced some of the greatest figures of Western civilization—Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Dante Alighieri, Brunelleschi, Galileo, and others. It did not, however, stop the rival families from fighting.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many Italians believed that they could function as a single nation, a belief spearheaded by the general Giuseppe Garibaldi. Independence was declared in 1861, and by 1870, the nation was consolidated under King Victor Emmanuel II. Italy was ruled as a monarchy and joined the Allies in World War I. But the 1920s ushered in a dark era as Benito Mussolini organized discontented Italians into the Fascist Party to “rescue Italy from Bolshevism.” What he delivered was a totalitarian state. Mussolini joined with Hitler and fought the Allies during World War II, during which 400,000 people were killed, hundreds of thousands were left homeless, and the economy was ruined. In 1945, Mussolini was captured and killed by partisans.

Italy was again declared a republic in 1946, but remained seriously divided during the postwar era by political extremes. Governments rose and fell, and in the 1970s, a series of terrorist acts by the left-wing Red Brigades threatened stability. By the early 1980s, the terrorists had been suppressed, but public discontent spilled into the 1990s as inflation and ongoing scandals involving public officials and the Mafia altered Italian politics. Parties dissolved, new ones formed, and new alliances emerged. This led to the election of media mogul Silvio Berlusconi as Prime Minister in 1994. But within a year, Berlusconi was forced to resign. He ran again in 2001 and was reelected, setting up a pattern that repeated for more than a decade: Berlusconi has been Prime Minister three separate times between 1994–2011, and continues to remain a political force despite having been convicted of tax fraud.

The previous Prime Minister, independent Giuseppe Conte, was elected in 2018 and heads up a populist coalition. Among his accomplishments have been the introduction of a national guaranteed minimum income, the nationalization of several companies, stricter immigration policies, and the western world’s first national lockdown in response to COVID-19. The current Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Italy’s first female Prime Minister, was sworn in on October 22nd, 2022. Meloni is a member of the right-wing, national-conservative party, Brothers of Italy, a party that is considered to be the most right-wing party in power in Italy since World War II.

## RESOURCES

---

### Suggested Reading

#### Provence & The Riviera

***Villa America*** by Liza Klausmann (2015, Historical Fiction) A story of love, betrayal, glamor, and living the high life on under the Riviera sun. The novel is based on a real-life American couple Gerald and Sara Murphy, who were also the inspirations for F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*.

***Total Chaos*** by Jean-Claude Izzo (2013, Mystery) Follow Fabio Montale, a disillusioned tough-guy cop, as he investigates the murders of his boyhood friends, Ugo and Manu. This is the first installment in a series of hard-boiled mysteries set in the author's hometown of Marseilles—great if you're a fan of Raymond Chandler or Robert Parker.

***The Avignon Quintet*** by Lawrence Durrell (2012, Fiction) Five books, each loosely centered on the race to find treasure from the Knights Templar just before, during, or just after World War II. They can be read alone or as a series. We recommend starting with the first volume, *Monsieur*.

***The Debt to Pleasure*** by John Lanchester (1996, Fiction) This wickedly funny book follows an erudite (and sinister) food critic as he travels through France to his house in Provence. Along the way, we get witty observations on French life, regional recipes, and clues about a shocking mystery that is about to unravel.

***A Year in Provence*** and ***Toujours Provence*** by Peter Mayle (1991 and 1996, Memoir) Follow Peter Mayle, an advertising executive, and his wife, a tax inspector, as they leave England and move to a farmhouse in France's Luberon Valley. In these two best-selling books, he recounts his humorous attempts to blend into the Provencal lifestyle, as well as maintain his 200-year-old "new" home. Although these books are a few decades old, they still capture the dream—and reality—of chucking it all in and moving to France.

#### France

***The Seine: The River That Made Paris*** by Elaine Sciolino (2020, Nonfiction) Sciolino traces the history, route, and impact of the Seine River through the stories of its people—a riverbank bookseller, the Seine police, a houseboat owner, fishermen, and film directors, to name a few. She also includes a touching chapter on the 2019 Notre Dame fire, which was put out with water pumped from the river.

***A Brief History of France*** by Cecil Jenkins (2017, History) Exactly what the title promises: A compact overview of the history of France. Look for the 2017 edition, which was updated to include more recent events.

***The Miracle of Dunkirk: The True Story of Operation Dynamo*** by Walter Lord (2017, History) A well-written and comprehensive account of the British evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940 with the help of the French. The author has been praised for his ability to weave the personal stories of the survivors—who he interviewed in great depth—into the overall narrative of how events unfolded.

***My Life in France*** by Julia Child with Alex Prud'homme (2007, Memoir) Memoir of the famous chef's first, formative stay in France in 1949. Child describes herself as a “rather loud and unserious Californian,” without a word of French. She enrolled at the Cordon Bleu and toiled with increasing zeal and competence. With the bestselling *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, she revolutionized the American idea of cooking. This memoir recalls gorgeous meals in bygone Parisian restaurants, and reveals the personality and some of the secret arts of a culinary genius.

***Paris to the Moon*** by Adam Gopnik (2001, Travel Essays) A self-described “comic-sentimental essayist,” Gopnik spent the years from 1995 to 2000 in Paris writing the “Paris Journals” for the *New Yorker*. Collected here are his most charming, insightful, heartfelt, and humorous dispatches on the Parisian people, culture, food, economy, and lifestyle.

## Italy

***Princes of the Renaissance*** by Mary Hollingsworth (2021, History) An exploration of the lives and times of the aristocratic elite whose patronage sparked the art and architecture of the Renaissance in fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy.

***Absolute Monarchs: A History of the Papacy*** by John Julius Norwich (2011, History) A deeper look into the most significant popes in history and what they meant politically, culturally, and socially to Rome and the rest of the world.

***La Bella Figura: A Field Guide to the Italian Mind*** by Beppe Severgnini (2007, Nonfiction/Humor) An Italian columnist and best-selling author journeys through his homeland while providing hilarious observations at the beautiful face Italy shows to the world, and the chaotic, garrulous, and often contradictory impulses that lie behind it.

***The Monster of Florence*** by Douglas Preston and Mario Spezi (2008, Non Fiction) A remarkable true story by best-selling author Douglas Preston who, with Italian investigative journalist Mario Spezi, try to track down the identity of a serial killer known as the Monster of Florence.

***History*** by Elsa Morante (1974, Fiction) A half-Jewish, Roman mother tries to survive in WWII Rome with her two sons. Though the main characters are fictional, each chapter opens with an factual account of real events that happened when the action takes place.

## Suggested Films & Videos

### France

***Loving Vincent*** (2017, Biography) Van Gogh's paintings come to life in this remarkable, animated film created by 125 artists, who hand-painted each of the film's 65,000 frames in the style of Vincent Van Gogh. The plot follows the efforts of a postmaster's son to solve the mystery of van Gogh's life and death in Auvers-sur-Oise.

***Midnight in Paris*** (2011, Comedy) Screenwriter Gil Pender (Owen Wilson) escapes his romantic troubles by roaming the streets of Paris at night, where he is miraculously (and hilariously) transported back to 1920s Paris, where Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, Salvador Dali, F. Scott Fitzgerald and the entire “Lost Generation” await him.

***Amelie*** (2001, Romantic Comedy) This quirky gem tells the heartwarming story of a shy waitress in Paris who decides to change the lives of those around her for the better, while struggling with her own isolation. The award-winning film is a whimsical depiction of everyday life, sure to capture the hearts of its viewers time and time again.

***Chocolat*** (2000, Drama/Comedy) In this warm and beautifully filmed romance, a lovely chocolatier (Juliet Binoche) falls in love with a handsome gypsy (Johnny Depp), disrupting life in a prim riverside village. Many scenes were filmed in the Dordogne region.

***Saving Private Ryan*** (1998, Drama). Probably the best (and most riveting) depiction of the Normandy D-Day landings and their aftermath. It won Steven Spielberg an Oscar for Best Director.

## Italy

***The Life Ahead*** (2020, Drama) At 86, Sophia Loren makes her first screen appearance in ten years in this Netflix original, filmed in Puglia. And it’s a stunner. She plays Madame Rosa, a Holocaust survivor who takes in the children of local sex workers. A neighbor asks her to care for Momo, a Senegalese refugee whose delinquency may be too much for Rosa, whose own tormented past is catching up to her.

***The Tourist*** (2010, Thriller) Beautiful Elise (Angelina Jolie) has a mysterious off-screen lover, Pearce, who has fled England and is wanted by both Scotland Yard and the mob. He tells Elise to entrap an unwitting tourist (Johnny Depp), who will be mistaken for Pearce (who is rumored to have altered his appearance), and arrested in his place. This convoluted caper plays out beautifully in Venice’s mysterious alleys, romantic canals, and opulent palaces.

***Rome*** (2005-07, Television Series) This multiple Emmy-winner from HBO deftly weaves the stories of fictional and real characters (Julius Caesar, Octavian, Marc Antony, Cleopatra, etc.) during Rome’s 1<sup>st</sup> century BC transition from a republic to an empire. Outstanding production values and a stellar cast.

***The Merchant of Venice*** (2004, Drama) Al Pacino gives us one of the most masterful portrayals on stage or screen of Shakespeare’s tragic moneylender, Shylock. He receives strong support from Jeremy Irons and Joseph Fiennes, and Venice itself, where much of the production was filmed. The city looks so enticing, it’s a wonder that Pacino did not chew up the scenery.

***Life Is Beautiful*** (1997) Roberto Benigni is the lead actor and director of this heart-wrenching comedy/drama about a Jewish Italian bookshop owner in Mussolini’s Italy who tries to shield his son from the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp. Italian with English subtitles.

## Useful Websites

### **Overseas Adventure Travel**

[www.oattravel.com](http://www.oattravel.com)

### **Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions**

[www.oattravel.com/faq](http://www.oattravel.com/faq)

### **International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)**

[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

### **Electricity & Plugs**

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

### **Foreign Exchange Rates**

[www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter)  
[www.oanda.com/converter/classic](http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic)

### **ATM Locators**

[www.mastercard.com/atm](http://www.mastercard.com/atm)  
[www.visa.com/atmlocator](http://www.visa.com/atmlocator)

### **World Weather**

[www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)  
[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)  
[www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### **Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)**

[www.travlang.com/languages](http://www.travlang.com/languages)

### **Packing Tips**

[www.travelite.org](http://www.travelite.org)

### **U.S. Customs & Border Protection**

[www.cbp.gov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/travel)

### **Transportation Security Administration (TSA)**

[www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

### **National Passport Information Center**

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### **Holidays Worldwide**

[www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays)

### **History & Culture**

[en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

## Useful Apps

### **Flight Stats**

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

### **LoungeBuddy**

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

### **Timeshifter**

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

### **GoogleMaps**

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

### **Triposo**

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

### **Rome2rio**

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

### **Flush or Sit or Squat**

Find a clean toilet anywhere

### **Uber**

Ride sharing around the world

### **Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus**

#### **ATM locations**

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

### **TunnelBear**

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

### **What's App, Skype, or Signal**

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

### **Duolingo, FLuentU, or Babbel**

Learn dozens of foreign languages

### **Google Translate**

Fast and simple translations

### **XE**

Currency conversions

### **SizeGuide**

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

### **Best Units Converter**

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

### **Tourlina**

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

### **Happy Cow**

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

### **Eatwith**

Dine with locals all over the world

### **Meetup**

Connects you with locals who share your interests

### **Skyview**

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

### **Travello**

Find travel friends on the road

### **ALIX for One**

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

### **TripWhistle**

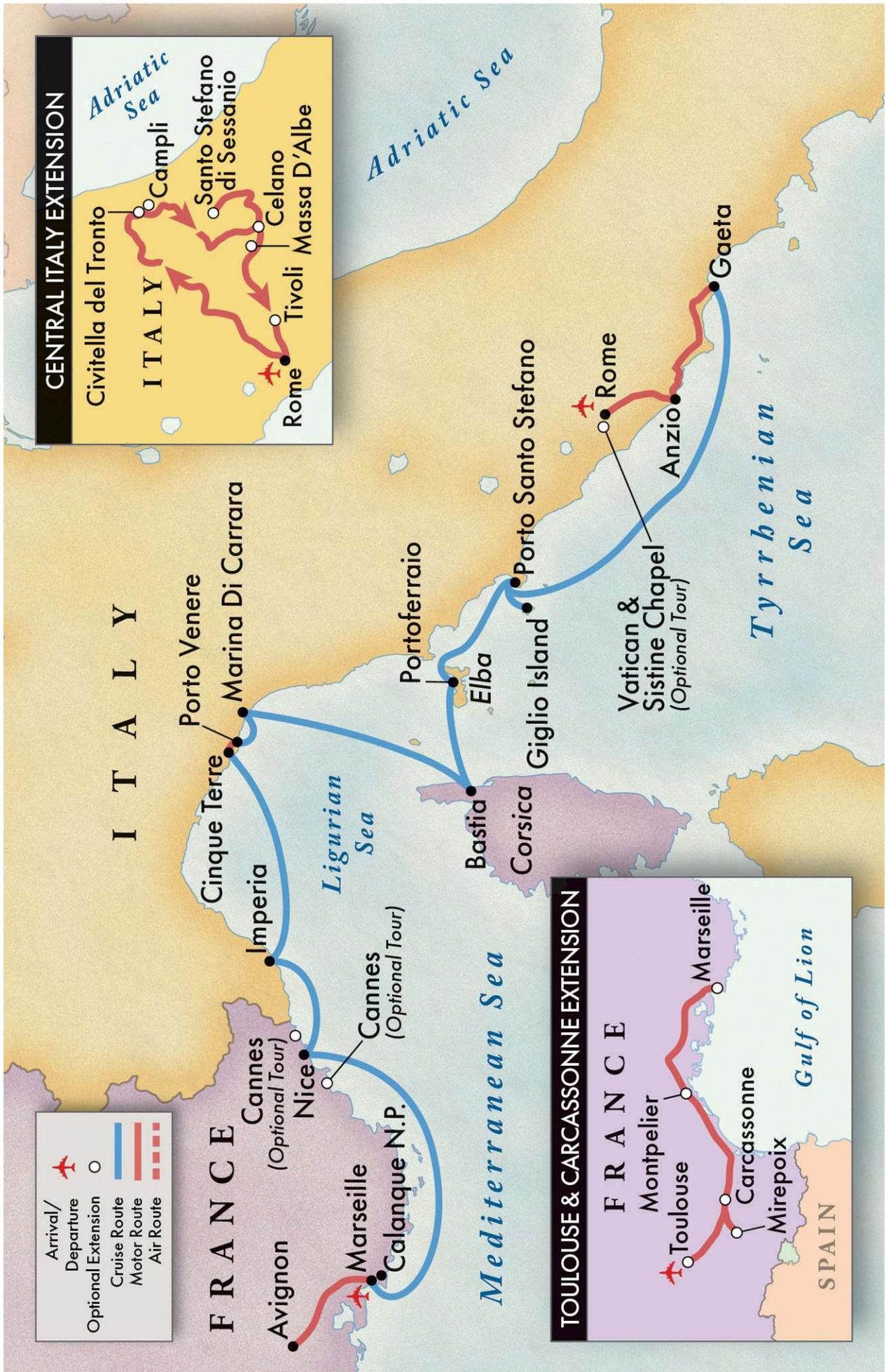
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

### **GeoSure**

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

### **Chirpey**

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more



# SHARE YOUR TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

We invite you to share your videos, slideshows, and photos of your past O.A.T. adventures to help inspire your fellow travelers. Go to [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner) to upload your photos or videos, and they may be featured on our website.

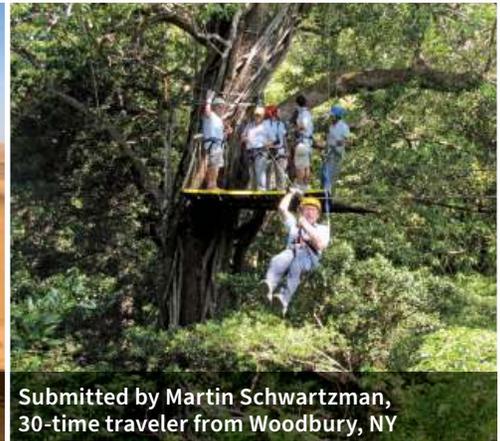
## Most Popular Videos, Slideshows & Photos from our O.A.T. Adventures Created by O.A.T. Travelers



Submitted by Joy and Don Janke,  
8-time travelers from Stevensville, MI



Submitted by Julia Schneider,  
5-time traveler from Pinellas Park, FL



Submitted by Martin Schwartzman,  
30-time traveler from Woodbury, NY



Submitted by Paul Stark, 17-time traveler  
from Edina, MN



Submitted by David Fong, 16-time traveler  
from Foster City, CA



Submitted by Steven dos Remedios,  
23-time traveler from Oakland, CA



1-800-955-1925 | [www.oattravel.com](http://www.oattravel.com)

CONNECT WITH US:  



**World's Best**  
#4 Best Intimate-Ship  
Ocean Cruise Line



**Readers' Choice**  
Named to the Best  
Tour Operators list



**USA Today**  
#6 Best Educational  
Tour Companies



**"Best Tours"**  
Named one of the  
"Best Tours"