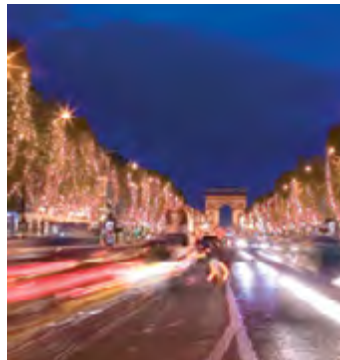


CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND HOLIDAY DELIGHTS

December 5-14, 2024



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND HOLIDAY DELIGHTS

DECEMBER 5 – 14, 2024

The dark evenings of December in Paris sparkle with the spirit of Christmas festivities, as the city's iconic landmarks shimmer with dazzling displays, transforming the streets and main squares into a winter wonderland.

Alsace, nestled in northeastern France, enchants with its storybook villages adorned with twinkling lights and half-timbered houses. The Christmas markets in Alsace, steeped in tradition and community spirit, come alive with the scent of mulled wine and gingerbread, creating a truly enchanting atmosphere.

Explore from well-located boutique hotels in Paris and Strasbourg, and enjoy superlative French service aboard your intimate canal barge.

Savor Parisian flavors and Alsatian holiday traditional treats and plenty of *vin chaud* - mulled wine - to keep warm as you stroll the wintry, cobblestone streets.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Delight in the glittering holiday lights of Paris
- Enjoy exclusive access during a visit of Chateau Vaux-le-Vicomte, festooned for the holidays
- Explore the Queen of Alsace – Strasbourg – and the historic Hospices Wine Celler, housing the oldest barrel of wine in the world
- Discover the stunning 12th century Château du Haut-Kœnigsbourg, situated on a high hill overlooking the Alsace plain
- Stroll charming Alsatian Christmas markets in Strasbourg, picturesque Little Venice in Colmar, colorful Riquewihr and historic Kaysersberg
- View French masterpieces from the Renaissance to Impressionism at the Marmottan and Unterlinden Museums
- Enjoy expert guiding throughout the journey with your Conservancy Travel Trip Leader, and licensed professional guides.

ITINERARY SUMMARY

- Paris, 2 nights at Les Jardins du Marais
- Strasbourg, 2 nights at Hotel de l'Europe or similar
- Canal Barge MS *Madeleine*, 3 nights
- Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport, 1 night Oceania Roissy CDG

**Choice of 1 or 2 Additional Nights in Paris,
Available Pre-tour**



DETAILED ITINERARY

Thursday, December 5

Independent Departures from the USA

DAY 1 PARIS

Friday, December 6

Independent Arrivals in Paris. Note: Hotel check-in is available from 3:00 p.m.

5:30 p.m. Meet your Conservancy Travel Trip Leader for a welcome and orientation meeting, then walk to a nearby restaurant for a traditional French dinner including limited choice of appetizer, entrée and dessert; a glass of wine, water and a choice of tea or coffee. *Les Jardins du Marais Meals: D*

DAY 2 PARIS

Saturday, December 7

After breakfast, depart the hotel on foot and take the Paris Métro (subway) to the Île de la Cité to visit the newly reconstructed Notre Dame Cathedral. Construction on the cathedral began in 1163 and was not finally completed until 1345. Damaged and restored several times, it remains one of the largest and finest examples of Gothic architecture anywhere. Continue to La Sainte Chapelle, begun in 1239, the stained-glass windows and soaring pinnacle spires are one of the glories of Gothic architecture.

We'll have lunch in a local restaurant.

In the late afternoon, we depart Paris by private motorcoach for a special visit of Chateau Vaux-le-Vicomte, decorated for the holidays with candlelight, tables laden with gourmet delicacies and twinkling Christmas decorations. Returning to Paris, we'll have a panoramic drive through City of Light at night, to take in the



spectacular holiday light displays and the specially decorated showcase windows of the Parisian “Grands Magasins” – department stores. Dinner on own. *Les Jardins du Marais Meals: B, L*

DAY 3 PARIS – STRASBOURG

Sunday, December 8

After breakfast, check out of the hotel and load luggage on our motorcoach. Depart to the Marmottan Museum, where we'll learn about the masterpieces by Claude Monet and his friends, including Monet's “Impression at Sunrise” which gave the Impressionist movement its name. Enjoy traditional cuisine for lunch in a local restaurant.

Mid-afternoon, take the high-speed train from Paris to Strasbourg. Check in at the hotel, then we'll stroll through the Christmas Market around the main square and walk to dinner in a nearby restaurant. *Strasbourg Hotel TBD Meals: B, L, D*

DAY 4 STRASBOURG

Monday, December 9

This morning, set out on foot for a guided tour of the Alsatian capital that will take you through the beautifully preserved district of “Petite France.” Then, visit the cathedral, famed for its beauty.

For lunch, enjoy regional cuisine in a typical Alsatian restaurant.

This afternoon, visit the Hospices de Strasbourg that house secret wine cellars. Wines gifted by patients to pay for their medical care used to be kept there. Today, about twenty winemakers keep their most prestigious wines to age in the reputed cellars of the Hospices. The latter also house the oldest wine barrel dating from 1472. Your visit of the cellars will be followed by a tasting of some of the wines.

Afterwards, we'll enjoy the magical atmosphere of the numerous Christmas Markets located in several squares across the city. Dinner on your own. *Strasbourg Hotel TBD Meals: B, L*



**DAY 5 STRASBOURG – COLMAR /
EMBARK CANAL BARGE**

Tuesday, December 10

After breakfast, check out of our hotel, and depart south along the Alsace wine route. We drive through picturesque villages and vineyards and visit the Château du Haut-Kœnigsbourg, a stunning medieval 12th century castle perched on a strategic hill in the Vosges mountains, overlooking the Alsace plain. The castle is an architectural marvel, featuring a mix of medieval and Renaissance styles.

We'll have an included lunch featuring local wine.

We arrive in Colmar and walk through the historic Old Town. Stop in at the Bartholdi Museum to explore the history and works of the French sculptor who designed the Statue of Liberty.

At 6:00 p.m. we embark the canal barge. We'll enjoy a welcome cocktail then dinner on board. Our lunches and dinners on board feature refined French cuisine and include a choice of a 1/4-liter carafe of wine or a bottle of mineral water, and an espresso coffee. *Canal Barge MS Madeleine Meals: B, L, D*



DAY 6 CANAL CRUISING COLMAR - KUNHEIM

Wednesday, December 11

We'll spend the morning cruising along the canal from Colmar to Kunheim, passing through fields and forest, and enjoy an Alsatian gingerbread tasting. Lunch on board. This afternoon, we'll visit Kaysersberg to view its Christmas display: Each year, the entire village is festooned with creatively designed Alsatian Christmas decorations. Next stop is Riquewihr, a charming medieval village nestled among the vineyards, with a traditional Christmas market. The brightly decorated, half-timbered homes add to the postcard-like setting of traditional Alsace. Wander the cobblestone streets and admire the marvelous decorations covering the facades and village monuments. Back on board the ship, we'll enjoy an evening of Christmas tales and music.

Canal Barge MS Madeleine Meals: B, L, D



DAY 7 CANAL CRUISING KUNHEIM - COLMAR

Thursday, December 12

Relax on board as we cruise to Colmar this morning. Lunch on board.

This afternoon, we'll explore the center of Colmar, beginning in Little Venice, where the Lauch River canals wind their way through the city, dotted with colorful, half-timbered homes. During the holidays, everything is decorated to the hilt. In the

center of the holiday activity, we stop in at the Choco-Story chocolate museum, to warm up with a cup of delightful hot chocolate. Afterwards, spend some time strolling through the Christmas market enjoying the traditional wooden market stalls filled with Christmas decorations, artisan crafts and culinary specialties whose tempting, spicy notes waft through the market. Back on board the ship, we enjoy a festive gala dinner. *Canal Barge MS Madeleine Meals: B, L, D*



DAY 8 UNTERLINDEN MUSEUM - RETURN TO PARIS-CDG

Friday, December 13

Early breakfast and disembarkation at 9:00 a.m.

Before departing Colmar, we visit the exquisite Unterlinden Museum, celebrated for its extensive collection. A highlight is the 16th century Isenheim Altarpiece, renowned for its emotional depth and intricate craftsmanship within the context of Renaissance art. The museum's impressive array of medieval and Renaissance art, encompassing paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts, offers a captivating journey through the evolution of artistic styles. Among its treasures is the Colmar Retable, an Altarpiece of the Virgin, an intricately carved and vividly painted work from the early 16th century, depicting scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary. The museum's diverse exhibits, set in a former Dominican convent with a peaceful cloister and gardens, include the works of major 20th century artists such as Monet, de Staël, Picasso and Dubuffet showcased in the contemporary wing.



ACCOMMODATIONS

A cruise aboard a canal barge is an authentic discovery of *La douce France* – the simple pleasures of slow-paced French living – while experiencing all that the countryside and small villages along its canals can offer.

The MS Madeleine is an elegant, intimate premium canal barge, measuring 126.32 feet long and 16.63 feet wide. Located on the upper deck are the restaurant, the lounge bar and an outdoor terrace with a Jacuzzi. The barge accommodates a total of 22 passengers in 11 cabins. Cabins are 97 square feet, with picture window, two single beds.

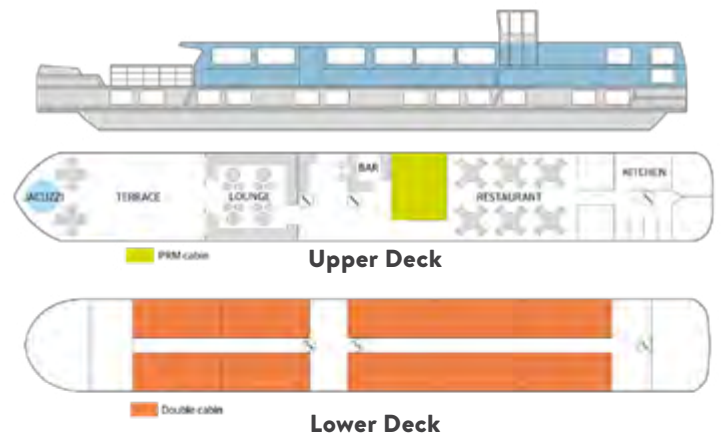
Each cabin has a TV, telephone for internal ship calls, private bathroom with shower and toilet, in-room safe, individually controlled thermostat. The electrical outlets are French and the electrical current is 220V. Free Wi-Fi on board. Please note that there is no elevator and no laundry service on board the ship. Six crew members guarantee a personalized service.

PARIS

Les Jardins du Marais, 74 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris
www.lesjardinsdumarais.com

The Four-Star hotel is situated in the historic Marais district, known for its charming streets, historic architecture, and vibrant cultural scene. This central location provides easy access to many of Paris's popular attractions, with nearby Metro stations on Lines 1, 8. The hotel is built around a tranquil inner courtyard, that in December, features its own Christmas chalet.

Included accommodations are in Executive Rooms (Double Occupancy, one double bed or two twin beds) and Superior Rooms (Single Occupancy, one double bed). Suite Upgrades: based on availability at the time of booking.



We'll enjoy a celebratory Farewell Lunch. Late afternoon, transfer to Strasbourg by motorcoach and travel to Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport by highspeed train then check-in at the hotel for overnight. *Oceania Roissy CDG Hotel Meals: B, L*

END OF TOUR PROGRAM

DAY 9 INDEPENDENT DEPARTURES

Saturday, December 14

Independent departures from Paris. The hotel has a complimentary airport shuttle. *Meals: B*

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Walking up to 2 miles per day on pavement and cobblestones. Using the Metro in Paris involves some unavoidable stairs. The centers of European cities are often pedestrian-only, and access for motorcoaches is strictly limited. Travel by motorcoach, train and aboard a river barge. You must be able to manage your baggage independently while boarding and disembarking the train Paris – Strasbourg and Strasbourg – CDG.



TWO-NIGHT PRE-TOUR PARIS EXTENSION

Included: Two additional nights (December 4 & 5) at the Hotel Les Jardins du Marais with breakfast; Private Airport Meet & Greet with transfer to the hotel; 1 carnet of Paris Metro tickets (10 tickets); Welcome Packet with free time suggestions.

\$398 per person sharing a double room
Optional: 2-day Paris Museums Pass \$60

ONE-NIGHT PRE-TOUR PARIS EXTENSION

Included: One additional night (December 5) at the Hotel Les Jardins du Marais with breakfast; Private Airport Meet & Greet with transfer to the hotel; 5 Paris Metro tickets. Welcome Packet with free time suggestions.

\$237 per person sharing a double room

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\$4,984 per person in a double room

Deposit: \$1,000 per person

Balance Due: August 5, 2024

Please note: Balance due payment by credit card incurs an additional \$140 service fee

Register online at

conservancytravel.org/ChristmasParis2024.CCC



INCLUSIONS:

- ✓ Arrival Meet & Greet with Airport Transfer from Paris-CDG airport to the hotel
- ✓ Conservancy Travel Trip Leader
- ✓ Guiding by certified, French National Guide(s) throughout the journey
- ✓ Enhanced breakfast in French hotels
- ✓ Porterage for one suitcase per person where available (hotels, motorcoaches, ship)
- ✓ Transportation for all included activities by Paris Metro/ High Speed Train / Private Motorcoach
- ✓ Meals: (8B, 7L, 5D)
- ✓ Gratuities for included meals
- ✓ Gratuities for local guides, drivers
- ✓ Gratuity for Conservancy Travel Trip Leader
- ✓ Gratuities for ship's crew aboard *La Madeleine*

EXCLUSIONS:

- International airfare and baggage fees
- Passport fees / European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) fee
- Travel Insurance
- Trip Cancellation/Interruption/Emergency medical
- Items of a personal nature, laundry, phone calls, internet access, beverages not included with meals
- Specific items described as Not Included or Optional

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Conservancy Travel

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REGISTER ONLINE:

www.conservancytravel.org/ChristmasParis2024.CCC

