

15 Day Cruise | Grand France with Uniworld

Arles - Avignon - Viviers - Macon - Lyon - Paris - Versailles - Rouen - Caudebec-en-Caux - La Roche-Guyon - Vernon - Giverny

From **\$13,499** pp twin share



14 Nights across two of Uniworld's most luxurious ships

Experience amazing French Culture and visits to key Historical Sites

Visit Four UNESCO World Heritage sites

ALL INCLUSIVE with Meals, Drinks and WIFI Included!

Description

A meticulously planned itinerary tailor-made for culturally curious travelers. Book and Pay in FULL by 31st October 2023 to secure this deal!

For Francophiles in love with the culture, history, cuisine and romance of France, this grand voyage is a dream come true. Soak up the joie de vivre that makes France one of the most adored countries in the world.

Experience France from north to south, sailing three rivers and embarking upon in-depth shore excursions. Walk through Monet's beloved Giverny, seeing the enchanting grounds that he made famous; travel back in time and enjoy a Village day in charming Viviers; visit Lyon's famous secret passageways, the Traboules; and have a chance to golf high above the cliffs of Étretat—one of the most spectacular courses in France.

From the beaches of Normandy and the verve and romance of Paris to the sun-drenched vistas of Burgundy and Provence, this itinerary in France is truly sans pareil!

Grand France is a combination of Paris & Normandy and Burgundy & Provence.



Itinerary

Day 1

Arles

Arrive at the Marseille Airport. If your cruise package includes a group arrival transfer or if you have purchased a private arrival transfer, you will be greeted by a Uniworld representative and transferred to the ship docked in Arles.

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Catherine

Day 2

Arles

Explore a sun-drenched Provençal town today with an allure all its own. Known for its remarkable Roman ruins, Arles so inspired Van Gogh that he painted some 200 paintings there. Arles has existed since the sixth century BC, when the ancient Greeks founded it and named it Theline. It was here that the Romans built their first bridge across the Rhône River, creating a vital overland route between Italy and Spain.

Featured Excursion- Arles Walking Tour

Van Gogh paid tribute to Arles' atmospheric beauty in some 200 paintings, including *Starry Night Over the Rhône*. It's an ancient city boasting a remarkable collection of Roman ruins; among them are a theater where the famous *Venus of Arles*—on display in the Louvre—was discovered in 1651 and an amphitheater that is still used for sporting events. Join a local expert for a stroll through this district, where medieval houses crowd in among the ancient structures and the city gates date to the 13th century. Pause before the town hall, built with stone quarried from the Roman theater, and the Romanesque St. Trophime Church, which was erected in the 12th century. It replaced the church where St. Augustine, the man who converted the inhabitants of England to Christianity, was consecrated by the first archbishop of Canterbury. Walk in Van Gogh's footsteps past the cheery yellow *Café de Nuit*—still open and still the same shade of yellow it was when he painted it—and across Forum Square before visiting the town's bountiful farmers' market, which displays seasonal fruits and vegetables, medicinal herbs and many more specialties of Southern France.

During your free time after the tour, you can peruse the local shops, go olive tasting or delve further into Arles' stunning collection of architectural treasures.

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Catherine

Day 3

Avignon

The walled city of Avignon is one of the most fascinating towns in southern France, with a host of historic gems to explore—including the fortress residence of rebellious popes who broke from Rome and once lived and ruled here. You'll see the Palace of the Popes and much more today, and also have a chance to kayak under a 2,000-year-old Roman aqueduct.

A special Captain's Welcome Reception and Dinner will be prepared for you this evening.

Today you will have a choice of one of the following activities:

- *Avignon Walking Tour with Palace of the Popes*
- *Pont du Gard Roman Aqueduct Visit*

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Catherine

Day 4

Viviers

An enchanting village where time seems to have stopped centuries ago, Viviers has a long and storied past that goes back more than 1,600 years—and a splendid architectural heritage to match. At one time, Viviers was divided along religious lines—the clergy lived in the upper part of the town, the laity in the lower part. Your exploration of the town will take you through both parts, as you begin at the crest and make your way to the riverbank.

Featured Excursion- Village Day: Ardeches

Sycamores line some of Viviers' stone-paved streets (planted, so they say, to provide shade for Napoleon's soldiers), and houses here bear the watermarks of floods over the years. A local expert will show you the fountain squares in the Old Town, which combines Roman and medieval influences, and cobblestone lanes so narrow you can stand in the middle and touch the medieval houses on either side. Viviers climbs a hill crowned by 12th-century St. Vincent's Cathedral. View the smallest cathedral in France before you meet some of the local residents. You might choose to learn how a local potter makes the attractive wares sold at Poterie; step into a villager's home; take a dance class; or sample the wares at a popular bar. Don't feel that you must opt for the bar if you'd like a little refreshment; all visits include an aperitif. On your way back to the ship, stop to try your hand at a game of pétanque, which is akin to horseshoes, only it's played with steel balls.

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Catherine

Day 5

Tain-L'hermitage (Tournon)

If you love fine wine, you'll love the twin villages of Tournon and Tain-l'Hermitage. Tournon may be a small town, but stirring events took place here: A castle was raised on the hilltop in the 10th century to protect the region, and new fortifications were added over the centuries, including two "new" towers built to defend against Protestant attacks in the 16th century. You'll see the handsome houses constructed by wealthy merchants and garrison officers when you walk through the Rue de Doux area, and you'll pass the 14th-century church and the oldest secondary school in France.

Today you will have a choice of one of the following activities:

- *Tournon and Tain-l'Hermitage Twin Villages Stroll with Wine Tasting*
- *Let's Go: Hermitage Terrace Vineyards Hike with Wine Tasting*

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Catherine

Day 6

Lyon

As the epicenter of French gastronomy, Lyon is a city of tantalizing contrasts. There's much to explore here, from the work of culinary visionaries to silk weavers' secret passageways. After your choice of excursions, embrace the locals' favorite mode of transportation with a bike ride—a great way to see the sights.

A special Captain's Farewell Reception and Dinner will be prepared for you this evening.

Today you will have a choice of one of the following activities:

- *Lyon Panoramic Tour with Traboules Visit*
- *Silk Weavers Walking Tour*
- *Let's Go: Lyon Peninsula Bike Tour*

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Catherine

Day 7

Mâcon (Beaune)

The pace of life is decidedly more relaxed in Burgundy, where endless rows of grapes hang heavy on the vine. The capital of the region's wine trade, Beaune is renowned for its history, beauty and highly prized wine, as well as its medieval-era hospital—the Hospices de Beaune.

Featured Excursion- Burgundy Landscapes, Beaune and the Hospices

Beaune may not be a large town, but it brims with history, a wealth of splendid regional architecture and incredible food. Nestled inside medieval ramparts, Beaune was the seat of the warlike dukes of Burgundy until the 16th century. It is best known for two magnificent sights: the Hospices de Beaune and the open-air market.

You'll recognize the Hospices de Beaune (also known as Hôtel-Dieu) immediately by its fabulous multicolored-tile roof—it's a symbol of Burgundy. Founded as a charitable institution by the duke's chancellor in 1443, the hospital became a model for charitable giving in southern France, one with a unique fundraising tradition that continues to this day. Over the centuries, the hospice monks were given wine and vineyards, and they began selling the wine at auction in order to support their charitable work. The wine auction is now world-famous, and the institution remains a working hospital for the poor, with modern facilities standing alongside the historic Hôtel-Dieu. After seeing Hôtel-Dieu, check out the farmers' market, which spills from street to street in the Old Town. Cheeses, fruits, vegetables, local sausages, breads—all are on colorful display here. Browse and assemble your own picnic lunch or take advantage of one of the many delightful sidewalk cafés for lunch.

Note: The open-air farmers' market visit will take place in Arles on the reverse direction cruise (Lyon to Arles). Today's lunch will be on your own.

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Catherine

Day 8

Lyon Paris

Disembark the striking S.S. Catherine and transfer to Paris via high-speed TGV train. Your next ship, the magical S.S. Joie de Vivre, waits to carry you along the Seine on the next leg of your adventure.

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Joie de Vivre

Day 9

La Roche-Guyon - Vernon - Giverny

Today is a celebration of northern France's natural beauty, with an excursion to a splendid château and gardens situated in an equally grand setting, plus a chance to immerse yourself in the very landscapes that inspired Impressionist master Claude Monet. In the morning, choose between a scenic hike or a visit to the hilltop Château de La Roche-Guyon, which is surrounded by beautiful gardens and offers sweeping views over the Seine. Later, explore the beautiful gardens of Monet. You'll have the opportunity to take in the French countryside on your way there with an invigorating bike ride, or opt to arrive by coach instead.

This evening, a special Captain's Welcome Reception and Dinner will be prepared for you.

Today you will have a choice of one of the following activities:

- *Let's Go: Hike on the Crests Trail*
- *Château de La Roche-Guyon*
- *Let's Go: Bike Ride from Vernon to Giverny*
- *Monet's Gardens at Giverny*

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Joie de Vivre

Day 10

Rouen

Walk in the footsteps of greatness in Normandy's medieval capital, a city with a historic quarter that remains amazingly intact. From the cathedral Monet painted dozens of times to the cross marking the spot where Joan of Arc was martyred, Rouen is a treasure trove for the culturally curious. The roll call of famous people who lived or died in Rouen is long and varied—Richard the Lionheart, Joan of Arc, Gustave Flaubert and Claude Monet are among them.

Featured Excursion- Nights Out: Private Concert at the Rouen Cathedral

Tonight, walk through the streets of Rouen with your Cruise Manager to see this charming medieval city in a different light. You'll arrive at the famous cathedral to enjoy a private concert. This is a wonderful way to appreciate the long musical heritage of the cathedral, whose choir and grand organ date back several hundred years. As you take in the sounds of traditional European music, look around to appreciate the mix of Gothic, Renaissance and other architectural styles that comprise this building.

Please note: we advise that you layer, as there is no heating in this historic cathedral.

Today you will have a choice of one of the following activities:

- *Rouen Walking Tour, the Dukes of Normandy's Capital*
- *Camembert Cheese Farm*

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Joie de Vivre

Day 11

Caudebec-en-Caux (Honfleur or Étretat)

Caudebec-en-Caux, a lovely little town on the right bank of the Seine Estuary, is your base for one of two very different excursions. You could drive through the beautiful Calvados countryside to Honfleur, a delightful seaside harbor and city of painters, or head to the windy cliffs of Étretat for a game of golf.

Today you will have a choice of one of the following activities:

- *Honfleur Walking Tour*
- *Let's Go: Golfing in Étretat*

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Joie de Vivre

Day 12

Rouen (Normandy Beaches)

There are moments when we travel that move us on an otherworldly level—experiences that stir a profound emotional connection. The Normandy beaches certainly have that effect. On your full-day outing, you'll visit Normandy's beaches, including Utah Beach and Ste-Mère-Église, with a choice to venture to either the American, British and Commonwealth, or Canadian beaches. After, you'll partake in a private ceremony at the Omaha Beach Memorial—a sentimental remembrance of Operation Overlord.

Today you will have a choice of one of the following activities:

- *Normandy Beaches: Highlights of Canadian Sites*
- *Normandy Beaches: Highlights of American Sites*
- *Normandy Beaches: Highlights of British & Commonwealth Sites*

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Joie de Vivre

Day 13

Mantes-La-Jolie (Versailles)

How did France's rulers live over the centuries? Step into the private rooms of the Palace of Versailles, the lavish palace built by the Sun King, to find out.

A special Captain's Farewell Reception and Dinner will be prepared for you this evening.

Featured Excursion- Versailles Palace Secret Apartments

It was the official residence of the country's kings and queens from 1682 until the revolution, and though the monarchy possessed other palaces, Versailles stood alone in magnificence. Tour the royal apartments, which still look much as they did when Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette fled in 1789. In these rooms, you'll find lush silk draperies, exquisite marquetry tables, gilded beds, Aubusson carpets and porcelain ornaments that reveal the elegance of the 18th-century royalty's lifestyle, as well as the extravagance that helped fuel the rage leading to the revolution. Climb the great staircase and enter the jaw-dropping Hall of Mirrors, where the absolute ruler of France held court for the ambassadors of Siam, Persia and the Ottoman Empire, along with all the great seigneurs of France. Ladies intrigued behind their fans, plots were hatched, and careers were made and destroyed beneath the sparkling chandeliers here.

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Joie de Vivre

Day 14

Paris

Whether you're a first-time visitor to the "City of Light" or you've been here many times before, there's something for everyone today in Paris. Enjoy a panoramic overview of the city, join a local expert for a walk through two much-loved neighborhoods, or pedal your way along the Left Bank, a fresh and fun way to take in the sights.

Today you will have a choice of one of the following activities:

- *Let's Go: Seine Riverbanks Bike Ride*
- *Paris City Tour*
- *Paris Walking Tour of the Latin Quarter*

Meals: All Meals Onboard

Accommodation: S.S. Joie de Vivre

Day 15

Paris

Disembark the ship. If your cruise package includes a group departure transfer or if you have purchased a private departure transfer, you will be transferred to Charles de Gaulle Airport for your flight home.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions

- 14-night cruise in a classic riverview stateroom
- All meals onboard, prepared using the finest and freshest ingredients
- 14 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 14 dinners
- 2 Captain's Welcome and 2 Farewell Receptions
- 2 Welcome and 2 Farewell Gala Dinners
- Unlimited beverages onboard, including fine wine, beer, spirits, specialty coffee and tea, soft drinks and mineral water
- 12 days of excursions, including "Choice Is Yours" options, all fully hosted by English-speaking local experts
- Guided "Let's Go", "Do as the Locals Do" and "Village Day" programs
- State-of-the-art Quietvox portable audio-headset system on all excursions
- Use of Bicycles and Nordic walking sticks
- Free Internet and Wi-Fi access
- Services of an experienced Uniworld Cruise Manager
- Group Transfers are included on arrival and departure days
- Gratuities for onboard personnel (ship staff, crew, Cruise/Tour Manager) are included during the cruise/tour
- TGV train between Paris and Lyon
- Captivating onboard local entertainment

About the S.S. Joie de Vivre:

S.S. Joie de Vivre brings the "joy of living" to the rivers of France. Step aboard your floating pied-à-terre in France, featuring handcrafted furniture and fine antiques, original artwork, and signature accents inspired by 20th-century Parisian design from the Golden Twenties to the free-spirited Sixties, all blending seamlessly with modern conveniences.

The S.S. Joie de Vivre, our brightly colored, chic and sophisticated "super yacht" on the Seine, will completely immerse you in all things French before you ever set foot onshore. Ooh la la!

Exclusions

- International Flights
- Visas
- Travel Insurance (Highly recommended for this program)
- Any meals or drinks not listed
- Any activities not listed

About your cabin: The price is based on the "Classic Riverview stateroom". Upgrades to other categories are subject to availability and price fluctuations. Please speak with our Customer Service team for a quote!

Travelling solo: Contact us for a quote!

Group Size: Uniworld's elegant ships feature an average capacity of 128 guests and one of the highest staff-to-guest ratios in the river cruise industry.

Travel Insurance: We recommend Covermore travel insurance. To quote and book, please click [HERE](#).

Travelling on your own? Why not join the [Traveldream Solo Travellers Facebook group](#) where you can interact with other travellers.

About the S.S. Catherine:

Uniworld is committed to building a fleet of ships that represents the absolute best in luxury river cruising, combining quality craftsmanship with high-tech innovations and custom-designed interiors. Our second Super Ship, S.S. Catherine, continues this proud tradition of excellence with sumptuous materials and meticulous attention to detail.

The vessel's opulent interiors include a two-story lobby with a specially commissioned Murano glass chandelier and a whimsical life-size glass horse.