

GARDENS OF FRANCE

MAY 2010

Day 1
30 Apr *Chicago - Paris - Nice.*

Depart	Chicago	AF 667	05.15PM
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Day 2
01 May *Arrive Nice*

Arrive	Paris		08.35AM
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Depart	Paris	AF 7702	10:25AM
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Arrive	Nice		12:35PM
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We will clear customs in Paris, although our bags will be tagged to Nice

After collecting our luggage we will meet our coach and transfer to the hotel.

Protected to the north by the Alpes Maritimes and facing the Mediterranean, Nice enjoys a warm, gentle microclimate which encouraged early twentieth-century plant collectors to create beautiful gardens in the hills, amongst terraces of olive groves and citrus trees. Well planted with species brought for acclimatisation from many parts of the world.

You will have some time at leisure to walk to the old town.

We depart hotel early afternoon for Fontvieille in Monaco.

The Princess Grace Rose Garden, Fontvieille is one of the popular tourist attractions in Fontvieille and is the source of amusement to people of all ages. The total land area covered by the Fontvieille Park and Princess Grace Rose Garden, Fontvieille, is about four hectares. Various plant species can be seen in this park. The selection of shrubs collected from all over the world is also the source of a breathtaking experience.

The Rose Garden is a unique spot of sightseeing in Fontvieille. Walking through the alleys intersecting the network of the beautifully displayed

extraordinary rose collection is no doubt, the best things to do in Fontvieille. It is a paradise for rose lovers and can only be compared with the Garden of Heaven.

You will find roses in this garden throughout the year as there is no season for roses here. The gardeners keep the roses blossoming round the year. There is a statue of Princess at the center of the garden and it is circled by the most delicate blooms.

Welcome dinner with wine in Nice

Hotel: Hotel Suisse

Day 3
02 May

Nice

Breakfast at the hotel

Morning visit to Lawrence Johnston's garden Serre de la Madone on the outskirts of Menton. On a hillside away from the sea, exotic plants mingle with ancient olive trees, while pools and statues give an air of peace and beauty. The gardener will give a guided tour. Afternoon visit to the nearby gardens of Villa Val Rahmeh developed in the 1950s by Maybud Campbell for plants collected on botanising tours of Italy.

You are free tonight to explore the local restaurants of Nice

Hotel: Hotel Suisse

Day 4
03 May

Nice

Breakfast at the hotel

Our first stop will be the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild. The Riviera in general and Cap Ferat in particular have long been famous for an exotic lifestyle. The garden was designed by the French partner of Harold Peto, an English architect and garden designer who worked in an Italian version of the Arts and Crafts style (his garden at Iford Manor in England is open to the public). Beatrix de Rothschild, who commissioned Aaron Messiah, admired Peto's approach and described her villa as a 'palazzino'. The garden has a formal terrace which projects into picturesque park, ornamented with small temples and other garden buildings. The planting is lush and exotic.

A stop will be made for lunch

Our next stop will be the Laboratory Factory of Fragonard where we will see how perfumes and soaps are made. Since 1926 Fragonard has been creating perfumes by combining traditional craft methods with the most modern production techniques. We will then continue to the unique village of Eze.

Eze is a medieval village perched like an eagle's nest on a narrow rocky peak overlooking the Mediterranean sea. The ancient fortified village is still crowned with the ruins of its 12th-century fortified castle (torn down in 1706), sitting on a narrow rocky peak. The castle grounds host the well-known Jardin Exotique, and from the top (429 m) you'll have a good view of the coast.



The village forms a circular pattern around the base of the castle. The old buildings and narrow streets are very well restored, with high stone walls and narrow roadways of red-brick centered stone. The narrow roads wend their way upward to the well sign-posted Jardin Exotique Panorama. When you finally arrive at the top, you'll find the way to the Jardin, and the panoramic view.

Dinner at leisure

Hotel: Hotel Suisse

Day 5
04 May

Nice - Arles

Breakfast at the Hotel

A day to visit Provence We stop at the small town of Aix en Provence Aix is the city of art, and a city of light and activity. Cours Mirabeau is the center of the center, and the heart of Aix. The Cours Mirabeau is a beautiful tree-lined avenue, with one side lined with wonderful terrace cafés and bookshops. If you sit at only one French sidewalk café outside of Paris, it should be here, where the air is warm, the light sublime and the sidewalk alive. Large plane trees overhang the length of the avenue, giving day-long shade on hot summer days.

Today will be fun as we will have a cooking demonstration with lunch.
Marc Heracle Provence Cooking School

Dinner is included at the hotel,

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Day 6 *Arles*
05 May

Breakfast at the hotel

Its Wednesday- market day in Arles – Explore the colorful French markets.

We then continue on to Avignon where we have time to wander this lovely town of past Popes and have lunch. Named the City of the Popes or Altera Roma, Avignon retains the indelible mark of the Popes' stay in the city, which was for a while the capital of the Medieval western world. The era of the Popes somewhat eclipses other events in what is a long and tumultuous history. At the crossroads of the big trade and migratory routes between northern and southern Europe and between Italy and Spain, the city played a major role in European history. A Phoenician trading post during the High Antiquity, Avignon then became a flourishing Roman town. It suffered greatly from the barbarian invasions, followed by those of the Moors and the Franks in the High Middle Ages. With the expansion of trade, and benefiting from its strategic position and its bridge over the Rhône, it had the status of a free town, strong and arrogant enough to defy the King of France. The presence of the Popes made Avignon the capital of the Medieval western world in the 15th century. A papal territory up until the French Revolution, the city actually benefited little from the first Industrial Revolution. It entered into relative anonymity in the 19th century only to come back as a cultural capital in the 20th century.

Dinner at leisure in Arles

Hotel: Le Calendal

Day 7
06 May

Arles - Avignon - Paris - Loire

Breakfast at the hotel – Early departure from the hotel.

TGV to Paris Gare Lyon

We then join our coach for our trip to the Loire Valle

Dinner is included this evening.

Hotel: Hotel Le Vinci - Amboise

Day 08
07 May

Loire Valley

Breakfast at the hotel

Our first stop is Chateau Chenonceaux

During the Middle Ages, French castles were often built in lakes or surrounded by moats. Chenonceaux's planners obtained a comparable effect by placing a chateau in the River Cher. In peaceful times, the river could be used for mock naval battles and other entertainments. In dangerous times, it gave security to the inhabitants. The garden plan is an example of the cinquecento Italian renaissance style, adapted to French conditions. Diane de Poitiers, Henri II's mistress, made a rectangular garden which is protected from floods and intruders by a moat and

ramparts. Philibert de l'Orme, an inventive designer who could blend medieval craftsmanship with classical forms, had the brilliant idea of linking this garden, via the Chateau and a long gallery, to a new garden on the south side of the river. After Henri II's death, his jealous wife (Catherine de Medici) expelled his mistress and took possession of the garden. Catherine extended the chateau to bridge the river. Alterations were made during the nineteenth century and the garden on the far bank has been abandoned. Today, the



parterres are named after the rivals for Henri II's affection: Diane and Catherine.

Lunch at leisure

We then visit the gardens of Chateau Villandry

An imaginative twentieth century re-creation of a renaissance castle garden. The moated Chateau dates from c1536 and had a formal garden in the eighteenth century. The present garden dates from the years after 1906 when it was bought by a Spaniard, Dr Joachim Carvallo. Inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, he wished the garden to have a sixteenth century character. Great horticultural skill was deployed, especially in the use of vegetables. An arbour of grape vines leads to a great parterre, conceived as a Garden of Music. On the other side of the canal is a Garden of Love. Symbolising the moods of love, it looks rectangular from the chateau but is actually trapezoid. The aesthetically designed vegetable garden is based on an illustration from Du Cerceau's *Les plus excellents bastiments de France* (1576). Despite its origins, Villandry is the work of a twentieth century imagination.

Dinner at leisure in Amboise

Hotel: Hotel Le Vinci - Amboise

Day 9 *Loire Valley - Giverny - Paris*
08 May

Breakfast at the hotel .

We depart for Giverny with a short stop en route. On arrival into Giverny there will be time for lunch before we have a tour of Monet's masterpiece.



An atmospheric country garden planted and painted by the leading spirit of French impressionism, Claude Monet. The artist moved from Paris to Giverny in 1883, believing that all painting of nature should be finished 'on the spot', not in a comfortable studio. In the same spirit, Repton had argued that landscapes should be designed 'on the spot', not in a drawing office. Giverny has two parts. Near the house is a traditional Normandy clos, a Walled Garden for vegetables and fruit. Monet placed arches over the paths and intermixed flowers with the fruit trees. In the nineteenth century manner, he favored brightly colored annuals, herbaceous perennials and shrubs. He planted Japanese cherries, tulips, irises, oriental poppies, gladioli, phlox, delphiniums, lupins, roses and pelargoniums. Trailing nasturtiums grow across the gravel paths. Exotic plants were grown in the greenhouses. The garden, on the other side of the road and railway, has a pond and a Japanese bridge.

After our tour of Giverny and some time at leisure we continue on to Paris.

Dinner at leisure

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Day 10
09 May *Paris*

Breakfast at the hotel

Morning city tour Main Monuments with visit to Luxembourg Gardens Located in the Luxembourg garden, the Luxembourg palace was built in the 17th century by Marie de Medicis, a French queen, on the model of Palazzo Pitti in her native Florence.



A real Parisian favorite, the Jardin du Luxembourg is a magnificent harmonious 25 hectare green oasis on Paris' Left Bank. The formal gardens are populated with many statues included Saint Genevieve, Patron Saint of Paris. There are flowers and beautiful fountains. In one corner there is an orchard where in spring, several hundred species of pear and apple trees blossom each spring.

Afternoon visit to Chateau Chantilly

Few gardens make such spectacular use of tranquil water as Chantilly. A castle was built on a rock in a marshy forest, with the lake serving as a moat. A renaissance garden was made (c 1550) and transformed into the present high baroque garden by Andre le Nôtre in 1663. Water remains the dramatic and all-pervasive element. The chateau is moated. There are fountains, cascades, a water parterre and basins. The River Nonette becomes a garden canal during its passage through the site. There are ponds in the jardin Anglais, designed by Victor Dubois c1817. Chantilly has been prominent in the history of France, though the present chateau was designed in 1875. Anne duc de Montmorency was born here in 1493; it was the Grand Condé who commissioned le Nôtre; General Joffre, hating the sight of blood, had his headquarters here during the First World War. Like clockwork, Joffre would lunch at noon, walk in Chantilly's woods, issue orders, perhaps for a general advance on the western front, dine at 7 pm and retire to bed leaving instructions not to be disturbed on any account. The gardens have élan and something of the war memorial about them

We return to Paris where the rest of the afternoon is at leisure
Dinner at leisure.

Hotel: Hotel La Tour Notre Dame

Day 11
10 May
Paris

Breakfast at the hotel

Full Day at leisure in Paris

Farewell Dinner this evening

Hotel: Hotel La Tour Notre
Dame



Day 12 Paris - Chicago
11 May

Breakfast at the hotel

We return to the airport this morning

Depart	Paris	AF664	10:30AM
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Arrive	Chicago		12:35PM
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HAPPY MEMORIES

<i>LAND ONLY TOUR PRICE -</i>	<i>\$3549.00</i>
<i>GROUP AIR</i>	<i>\$889.50</i>
<i>SINGLE ROOM SUPPLEMENT</i>	<i>\$800.00</i>

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