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FRENCH TOAST

Barging The Oise Valley

[ITINERARY](#)

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Date	Price	Duration	Availability	BOOK NOW
Sept 17-24, 2024 Paris Ext. to 27th	\$5,000 \$3,200	8 DAYS 3 DAYS	Open Open	

About This Tour

Ah, gay Pareé! One visits this city and gets happily lost in the endless variety of activities and sights, thinking it is indeed the essence of French life. This beautiful land and its people, however, cannot truly be appreciated until one ventures into the pastoral countryside. There is no better way to experience the tranquil essence of France than during our six-day cruise through the Oise Valley, an incontestably captivating region of France.

The Oise River meanders through a wooded countryside it has carved meticulously throughout history. This cruise includes a multitude of historic sites and guarantees an in-depth look into France's colorful culture. Enjoy the works of pre- and post-Impressionists at the Pissarro Museum in Pontoise. In Auvers-sur-Oise, follow the footsteps of Van Gogh to the Musée de l'Absinthe and learn about the café atmosphere influencing the artists at the time. The Château de Chantilly gives you a good idea of what the French consider their *art de vivre*. Pay your respects to those who sacrificed their lives over a hundred years ago at the Armistice Memorial in Compiègne. Of course, our cruise will be filled with French cuisine delights, including a masterclass on making crème chantilly by a member of the Confrérie des Chevaliers Fouetteurs. Our floating residence through this idyllic land will be the 11-cabin, 22-passenger hotel barge, MS Raymonde.

Mornings begin with the enticing aroma of hot brewing coffee and freshly baked croissants that will accompany our sumptuous buffet breakfast. Luncheon is a three-course meal served aboard the barge. As the sun sets, enjoy an aperitif on deck before the evening's four-course dinner prepared by our expert chef. The fine wines, delicious food, historic châteaux and tableaux are the true image of France. Whet your appetite for a taste of the very best of France.

COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

Tour Highlights

- Welcome reception and dinner in Paris
- Panoramic overview tour of Paris
- Montmartre and Sacré-Cœur Basilica
- Welcome cocktail boarding the barge
- Night-time cruise through Paris, the City of Lights
- Guided tour of the Château de Malmaison in Bougival
- Guided tour of Pontoise and the Pissarro Museum
- Guided tour of Auvers-sur-Oise and the Musée de l'Absinthe
- Cooking class for those who would like to learn how to prepare France's legendary Crème Chantilly
- Guided tour of the magnificent Château de Chantilly.
- Guided tour of Compiègne and the Armistice Memorial.
- Visit to Noyon and its Cathedral
- Festive Gala Dinner at conclusion of the cruise

All plans for this tour are made considering the COVID procedures in effect at the time of publication. Entry requirements and vaccination requirements are subject to change at any time without notice. Please be sure you comply with the latest French entry requirements at the time of departure. For the safety of our groups, we encourage our tour participants to be fully vaccinated, and current with their covid vaccines (including any recommended boosters) by one month prior to departure. We ask our travelers to tell us about their vaccination status four weeks prior to departure.



Tour Map - Click to explore

Extension Highlights

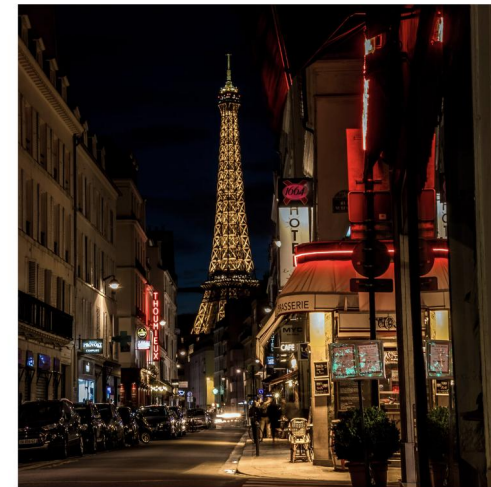
- Saint-Germain-des-Pres artisan district
- The Latin Quarter
- Champagne at Montparnasse Tower
- Dinner at “Le Train Bleu”
- Guided tour of the Louvre Museum
- Notre Dame Cathedral (exterior view only)
- Sainte-Chapelle
- Le Marais District
- Place de Vosges
- Optional “Moulin Rouge” dinner and show
- Guided tour of the Musée d’Orsay
- Arc de Triomphe
- Fondation Louis Vuitton
- Farewell dinner at the Eiffel Tower

ITINERARY

Day 1 – Tuesday, September 17, 2024

Arrive in Paris

Plan your international flights to arrive in Paris by mid-afternoon today. It is easy to catch a taxi from the airport to our hotel, or to book a private transfer (we'll provide some options prior to departure). Explore the amenities of the hotel and the surrounding neighborhood until time for our welcome cocktail in the hotel's bar. Afterwards we walk to a nearby restaurant for our Welcome Dinner. Please let us know on your reservation form if you would like to arrive one day early (the 16th) to rest up from jet lag. ***(Welcome Dinner included)***



Paris at night

Day 2 – Wednesday, September 18, 2024

Paris Orientation / Montmartre / Paris at Night

After breakfast and check-out, commence a brief orientation tour of Paris from the coach. We enjoy lunch at a typical French Brasserie and then continue to Montmartre, a bohemian neighborhood renowned for its artistic heritage. Climb up to the dramatic Sacré-Cœur Basilica for stunning panoramic views over the city. As the sun sets, we make our way to our hotel barge, MS Raymonde, docked on the Seine. We are welcome to begin boarding at 6pm. We meet the crew at a welcome cocktail reception before dinner on board. This evening we enjoy a dazzling night-time cruise on the Seine through Paris, the City of Lights.

(All Meals)



Sacre-Coeur Basilica atop Montmartre



Night Cruise through Paris

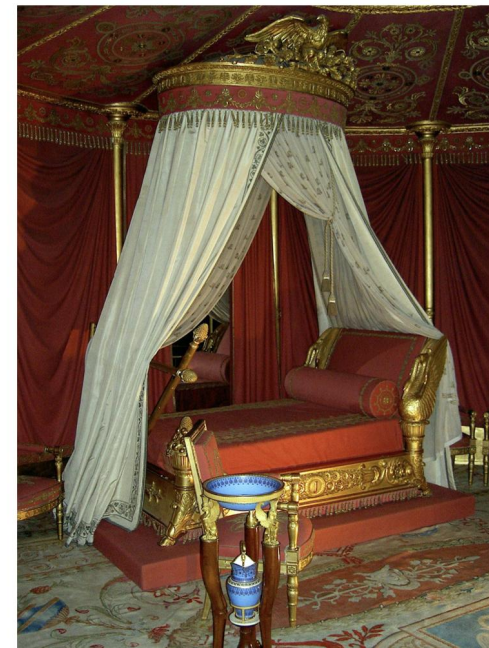
Day 3 – Thursday, September 19, 2024

Paris - Bougival

We navigate out of Paris and spend the morning cruising to Bougival. We have an included excursion this afternoon: ***Guided tour of the Château de Malmaison***. Built in the 17th century, Joséphine de Beauharnais acquired this castle in 1779. In 1800, it became the headquarters of the government and a conference room. The library restores the industrious atmosphere by which Bonaparte enjoyed to be surrounded. The council room is shaped like a military tent where receptions, dances and country-style games took place. The musical lounge offers Josephine's "troubadour" paintings and her well-known harp for visitors to admire. Here, many paintings from these times are on display. After her divorce in 1809, Joséphine continued to live in her house, where she died in 1814. The Napoleonic Museum was inaugurated in 1906; it is furnished, decorated and adorned with the paintings that Joséphine bought and loved. The charm and authenticity that have been preserved in this castle will certainly delight you. After our excursion, we return on board the ship which will remain in port overnight. ***(All Meals)***



Chateau de Malmaison



Joséphine's Bedroom

Day 4 – Friday, September 20, 2024

Bougival – Pontoise

We spend the morning cruising to Pontoise. This afternoon's included excursion is: ***Pontoise and the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire Pissarro***. Learn about Pontoise's monuments and celebrities as you stroll along its picturesque streets at your own pace. The city's superb cathedral dates as far back as the 12th century and includes a Flamboyant-style tower and central portal, as well as Renaissance additions added a few centuries later. We continue our tour at the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire Pissarro. It contains more than 3,000 works from several great masters, including sketches by Henri Matisse; watercolors by Freundlich, Jimenez, and Thornley; and etchings by Camille Pissarro. There are also works not only by the museum's namesake, but also by his sons (Lucien, Ludovic-Rodo, Georges, and Félix) and contemporaries such as Paul Signac, Ludovic Piette, Federico Zandomenighi, Edouard Béliard, and Louis Hayet. The collection is rounded out by canvases from pre- and post-Impressionists who worked in the Oise Valley, most notably Charles-François Daubigny, Luis Jimenez, and Octave Linet. Thanks to this prestigious compilation, the museum presents fascinating exhibits throughout the year. We finish our excursion with a taste of goat cheese and honey at the Tourist Information Office, and then return to our ship for dinner and overnight in port. ***(All Meals)***



View of Pontoise and its Cathedral



Pissarro Museum in Pontoise

Day 5 – Saturday, September 21, 2024

Pontoise - Auvers-sur-Oise – Saint-Leu-d'Esserent

This morning we cruise towards Auvers-sur-Oise which stretches almost four miles along the banks of the Oise River. Auvers-sur-Oise was Vincent Van Gogh's last home and is his final resting place. Our included excursion today is: ***Auvers-sur-Oise and the Musée de l'Absinthe***. We'll stroll through the picturesque village streets and along the Artists' Pathway, where works by famous Impressionists compare the current landscapes and architecture. Our next stop will be the Musée de l'Absinthe and its reproduction of the ambiance found in cafés during the Belle Époque, when the "green fairy" was the preferred drink of poets and artists. The museum's collection gives us great insight into 19th-century culture in France. We return to the ship in Auvers-sur-Oise for lunch, and then spend the afternoon cruising to Saint-Leu-d'Esserent.

Calling all dessert lovers! If you would like to learn how to prepare France's legendary crème chantilly, a member of the Confrérie des Chevaliers Fouetteurs will join us on board this afternoon to talk about this traditional culinary delight. Learn how to whip up delicious, authentic whipped cream by hand!

After dinner, take some time on your own to explore Saint-Leu-d'Esserent. The more adventurous can head to the impressive abbatial church to catch some great views of the surrounding valley. We remain in port overnight. ***(All Meals)***



Vincent Van Gogh's last home



Crème Chantilly

Day 6 – Sunday, September 22, 2024

Saint-Leu-d'Esserent - Pont-Sainte-Maxence - Compiègne

We set off from our barge this morning to enjoy today's included excursion: ***Château de Chantilly***. Chantilly, the town, is home to one of the most beautiful castles in France. The château is the work of an exceptional figure, Henri d'Orléans, Duke of Aumale, son of the last French king, Louis-Phillipe. The duke is considered to have owned one of the finest art collections of his time, making Chantilly a showcase for his many masterpieces and priceless manuscripts. The castle has remained at a virtual standstill since the Duke of Aumale bequeathed it to the Institut de France, so we take advantage of this moment to jump back in time and step into his princely domain. We visit the art galleries, where paintings have hung undisturbed since the 19th century; the large, opulent suites once used as reception rooms; and the reading room, one of the most extensive libraries in the country. After our tour, we return for lunch to our barge, which has moved in our absence to Pont-Sainte-Maxence. This afternoon, our ship continues cruising to Compiègne, where we remain in port overnight for dinner and a free evening.



Chateau de Chantilly



Chantilly Interior

Day 7 – Monday, September 23, 2024

Compiègne - Pont-l'Évêque

We set off this morning for our first included excursion today: ***Compiègne, the Armistice Memorial, and the Château de Compiègne***. On this guided tour we enjoy the picturesque streets of this significant city and see the lovely 16th-century town hall with its intricately sculptured late-Gothic facade containing several historical figures, such as Louis XII on his horse. The town hall tower holds one of the oldest municipal bells in France, dating back to 1303. Further along the route, we come across some lovely medieval homes. The oldest, La Vieille Cassine, was built in the 15th century. Enjoy a tasting of regional delicacies before we continue to the Armistice Memorial. Part of the museum's collection includes the emblematic train car used in the signing of the 1918 Armistice, later vindictively recommissioned by Hitler for the 1940 surrender of France during World War II; a Marne Taxi requisitioned by the French government to transport troops during its namesake battle; and 800 stereoscopic images from the time of World War I. The memorial is dedicated to all the soldiers who have fought since 1870, including Augustin Trébuchon—the last French soldier killed on the front during World War I. Before we return to our ship, we visit the Château de Compiègne. The outstanding beauty, gorgeous decor, and fine furnishings of the largest neoclassical palace in France add up to an impressive ensemble. Versailles, Fontainebleau, and Compiègne form a trifecta of the largest imperial residences in France. We return on board for lunch and our ship cruises to Pont-l'Évêque, arriving mid-afternoon. Arriving at our final dock, we enjoy a second included excursion today: ***Noyon and its Cathedral***. Discover Noyon and its 2,000 years of history during this exclusive tour. Two thousand years of heritage and funky street art dot this eclectic city's streets. A festival of lights and colors awaits you within the Notre Dame Cathedral, the first example of Gothic architecture in northern France during the second half of the 12th century. We return to our homey barge for one final night aboard. Tonight is our festive gala evening where we thank the crew and wish them a fond farewell.



Town Hall in Compiègne



Armistice Memorial

for one final night aboard. Tonight is our festive gala evening where we thank the crew and wish them a fond farewell.



Château de Compiègne

Day 8 – Tuesday, September 24, 2024

Depart – or - Commence Paris Extension

Enjoy breakfast on board this morning before disembarking at 8:00am to begin our motorcoach transfer back to Paris. The Charles de Gaulle (CDG) airport is right on the way, so we will drop those who are not continuing on the tour extension at the airport around 9:15am this morning. Please do not arrange your departing flights today to take off before noon. If you are planning to remain in Paris after the cruise without joining our extension, you can continue with us into the city and be dropped at our original Paris hotel, saying farewell to the rest of the group at that time. *Bon Voyage* and safe travels! **(Breakfast)**



Farewell to Our Floating Home

PARIS TOUR EXTENSION

September 24 – 27, 2024

Paris Tour Extension

We have now returned to one of the most of the most romantic and beautiful cities in the world. It would be a shame to leave it without experiencing more of its delights. Toto Tours has curated a selection of the best experiences in this historic City of Lights. We hope you will elect to stay on with us for three more unforgettable days in gay Pareé!

Day 8 - Tuesday, September 24, 2024

Triumphal Return to Paris

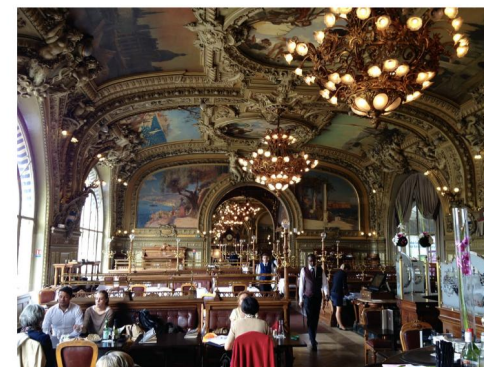
After disembarking from our barge this morning and returning to our original hotel (via the airport to drop off group members who are not joining this extension), we meet our Paris guide and re-board our motorcoach to commence an exciting tour extension in Paris. We begin the day in Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Explore the artistic and intellectual ambiance of the place and see the iconic cafes, like Café de Flore and Les Deux Magots, once frequented by famous writers and artists.

Then we make our way to the Latin Quarter, known for its vibrant student life and numerous bistros. Enjoy a leisurely lunch in this lively neighborhood (not included). Visit Montparnasse Tower and enjoy a glass of champagne as we take in the amazing views.

After checking in at our hotel we have the pleasure of dining at the historic “**Le Train Bleu**” restaurant in the Gare de Lyon. It is sure to be a tour highlight! We return to our hotel for overnight. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Saint-Germain-des-Prés



Dining Room at Le Train Bleu

Day 9 - Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Louvre Museum / Paris Sightseeing

After enjoying breakfast at our hotel, join our guide for a full day of sightseeing in Paris, starting with one of the world's largest and most renowned art museums – The Louvre. Spend the morning admiring iconic masterpieces like the Mona Lisa, Venus de Milo and so many more.

Our next stop is the Île de la Cité, where we wander through the enchanting streets of one of the two natural islands in the Seine River and discover charming cafes and boutiques. We take time here for lunch (not included).

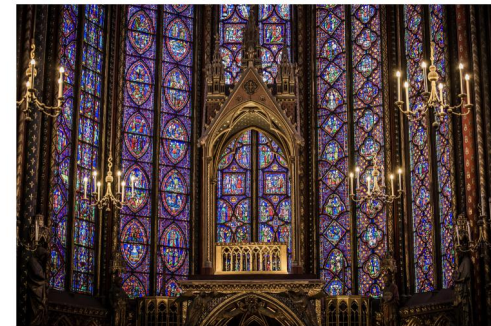
After its terrible fire in 2019, Notre Dame Cathedrale is now being restored to its former glory. This Gothic masterpiece is set to reopen for inside visits in December 2024, but we will stop for photos of the exterior. A short walk from Notre Dame is the glorious Sainte-Chapelle, another masterpiece of Gothic architecture. We stop inside to marvel at its exquisite stained-glass windows.

Leaving the island, we head to Le Marais, a trendy neighborhood filled with history, boutiques, and delicious eateries. In this neighborhood we'll take a stroll to Place des Vosges, the oldest planned square in Paris. Relax in the beautifully landscaped gardens or explore the nearby art galleries.

We return to our hotel for a free evening and dinner on our own. For those who would like to revel in one of the most camp productions anywhere, Toto Tours will organize a special excursion this evening to Montmartre to attend a colorful and exciting dinner & show at the world-famous "Moulin Rouge". Prices



Grand Entrance to the Louvre Museum



Dazzling Stained Glass at Sainte-Chapelle

Montmartre to attend a colorful and exciting dinner & show at the world-famous “Moulin Rouge”. Prices are \$275 or \$325, depending on the menu selected. Prices do not include transportation to the theatre. A \$25 booking fee has been added to each price. Please indicate your intention to join and your menu choice when you submit your reservation. You can [see the menus here](#). *(Breakfast)*



World Famous Moulin Rouge

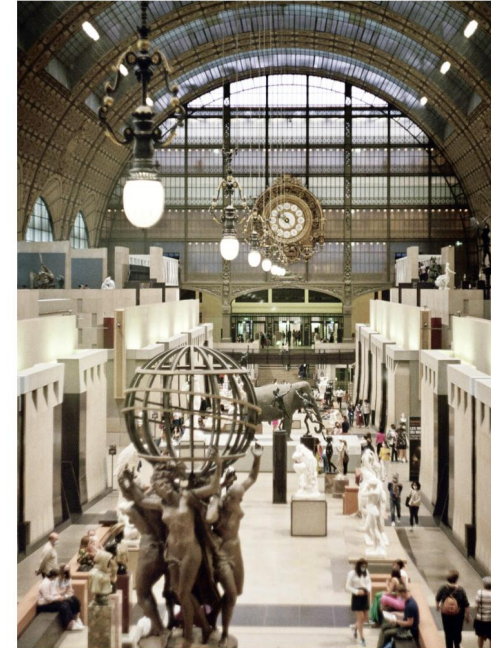
Day 10 – Thursday, September 26, 2024

Orsay Museum / Paris Sightseeing

After enjoying breakfast at our hotel, join our guide for another full day of sightseeing in Paris, starting at the stunning Musée d'Orsay. Housed in the former Gare d'Orsay, a Beaux-Arts railway station built between 1898 and 1900, it houses the largest collection of impressionist masterpieces in the world!

After a break for lunch (not included) we drive along the Champs Elysees and past the famous Arc de Triomphe. Next, we visit Fondation Louis Vuitton, a stunning art museum and cultural center. The building and its surrounding gardens are considered an architectural wonder.

We return to our hotel with some free time for last-minute shopping or packing for tomorrow's departure. Tonight we fete the successful conclusion of our "French Toast" tour with a cocktail at our hotel, after which we ascend to the first level of the Eiffel Tower for our Farewell Dinner at the elegant Madame Brasserie restaurant. Splendid views, excellent food and beverages accompanied by a shared sense of *joie de vivre* will be enjoyed by all. **(Breakfast / Dinner)**



Breathtaking Musee d'Orsay

Day 11 – Friday, September 27, 2024

Au Revoir Pareé

The tour extension concludes with your check-out from our hotel this morning. We have not included airport transfers since we are not all departing on the same flight. It is easy to organize a taxi transfer with the hotel's concierge. Please let us know if you wish to extend your stay an additional night at our Paris hotel. Our rate is only valid for one additional night.



Farewell to Paris

TOUR PREPARATION

Entry Requirements — Starting in 2024, the EU will require visitors from around 60 visa-exempt countries – including the U.S. – to apply for travel authorization through the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS). This is a quick online application that comes with a fee of \$7.75. In most cases, applicants can expect to get approval within minutes. We will inform tour participants about how to do this after this new requirement is implemented. Your passport needs to be valid for at least three months beyond the date of your departure from the region and must have at least one blank page for stamps.

Immunizations & Health — No vaccinations are required, but we encourage you to review the **recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control**. We ask that you have all your routine vaccinations and your Covid boosters current. Please check with your health professional or a local travel clinic and follow recommended protections. Is your tetanus booster current?

Exit Requirements — There is currently no separate departure tax required of visitors leaving France other than that included with the cost of your airline ticket.

Making Travel Arrangements to Paris

On this tour, international airfare is NOT included. You will need to get your round-trip international air to Paris, France (airport code CDG) and back to the U.S.A. You need to arrive in Paris by 2:00pm on Tuesday, September 17, 2024. Depart after noon on Tuesday, September 24 (or anytime Friday, September 27 if you are joining the Paris extension).

We encourage you to work with Steven Goldberg at Frosch Travel in Chicago, who can help you find the best flights to meet your needs.

Steven Goldberg / Frosch Travel

Toll-Free in USA: 1-800-323-1276

International guests, please call +1-312-371-9686

Email: steven.goldberg@frosch.com

When calling, please identify yourself as a Toto Tours participant. If you leave a message on Steven's voice mail, he will return your call promptly. He will be happy to discuss your travel plans and help you decide when to purchase your ticket for the best rate.

NOTE: The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible we often must turn away last minute registrants because we relinquish hotel space and air reservations 8 – 12 weeks prior to departure! Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.

WHAT TO BRING

Temperatures in the areas of France we will be visiting are generally pleasant in September, with lows in the 50's and highs in the 70's. Please be prepared for everything so you can adjust to conditions as they present themselves. Pack light and bring mix-and-match clothes that can be layered for warmth or taken off to cool down. Bring one dressy outfit for our gala farewell aboard our barge, and the extension dinner in the Eiffel Tower. Pack medications in a carry-on just in case your bags don't arrive when you do. We suggest leaving expensive jewelry at home.

Suggested Packing List:

- Proof of citizenship. Passport required and electronic travel authorization.
- Comfortable walking shoes with good treads for city sightseeing.
- Long pants and collared shirts for dinners and evenings out on the town.
- Shorts (in case we experience hot days).
- Short- and long-sleeved T-shirts for layering and sun protection.
- Casual long-sleeved shirts.
- Sweater and jacket for cool evenings.
- Raincoat / compact umbrella for possible rainy days.
- Socks and underwear for a week (laundry service is not available aboard the barge).
- Swimsuit (for the jacuzzi aboard the barge).
- Daypack for excursions.
- Sunscreen / lip balm / sunglasses / sun hat.
- Personal toiletries, and insect repellent
- Ziploc Bags (gallon size for wet items or toiletries).
- Electrical Adapter. In France the power plugs and sockets are of type E. The standard voltage is 230 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz. [Click here](#) to see the adapter needed for France.
- A good book for your flights and leisure time aboard the barge.

MONEY MATTERS

The monetary unit in France is the Euro. The exchange rate as of October 7, 2023 is about \$1.06 per euro. [Click here](#) for the most current exchange rate.

ATMs are widely available throughout France. It is wise to carry some cash with you, however, in case you get caught in a situation where an ATM is not available.

Tipping Guidelines In restaurants menu prices often reflect an added service charge, and tipping is a matter of personal choice. Most people leave some small change if they're satisfied and 5% is usually plenty. It's common to leave small change at tables in bars and cafés. Here is a [helpful article](#) about tipping in France. Tips for our guides and drivers are not included in the tour price. We will send a recommended group tipping budget prior to departure.

THE TOTO SPIRIT

Toto Tours provides Adventure Travel Experiences as differentiated from tours in the traditional sense. Adventure Travel allows (even encourages) you to be an active participant. Adventurers can be identified by certain traits. They are:

- fun-loving optimists who have a sense of humor and accentuate the positive;
- good natured realists who are willing to accept situations as they exist;
- undaunted by the unexpected, like occasional delays or bad weather;
- willing to forego some of the amenities we normally take for granted;
- eager to try new things & test limits;
- punctual;
- not whiners!

Indulge yourself aboard our canal barge tour of the Oise Valley with all the best that France has to offer – fine wines, extraordinary cuisine, stunning scenery and magnificent historical and magnificent historical monuments. If you have any questions, please email us at: tototours@gmail.com.

Travel Insurance

We recommend you purchase travel insurance with Travel Guard to cover for unforeseen events prior to and during your trip. Please follow the link below or call us for more information.

Travel Guard®

[LEARN MORE](#)

Cover your trip with a Travel Guard
travel insurance plan.



MAIN TOUR PRICING

(prices are per person)

Price: \$5,000 in double occupancy hotel and barge accommodations.

Private Room: \$1,900 additional, for a total tour price of \$6,900.

Deposit: \$1,000

(Due at time of registration for the tour. May be paid with a credit card.)

Remaining Balance (main tour): \$4,000 double / \$5,900 single

Remaining Balance Due: June 29, 2024 (80 days prior to departure)

(Full payment required with reservation form if enrolling after this date.)

Note: The tour price does not include bank service charges for processing credit card payments and assumes that the balance of the tour price will be paid by check. If you would like to pay the final balance with a credit card, a 4% service charge will be applied. Let us know if you wish to pay by credit card, and we will adjust your invoice accordingly.

Included: One night hotel and Welcome Cocktail and Dinner in Paris, transfer to the barge, including lunch and sightseeing *enroute*, barge cruise with all meals from dinner the first evening to breakfast on the final day, all onboard beverages (not including the "Special" list), accommodations in a double-occupancy, climate-controlled cabin with shower in private bathroom, welcome cocktail onboard, assistance from our steward, gala evening, guided excursions and visits mentioned in the program, emergency/repatriation insurance, all port fees, one airport drop at CDG *enroute* back to Paris at the end of the cruise.

Not Included: Arrival transfer from airport to our Paris hotel, Paris city hotel tax to be paid at check-out, drinks and wines from the barge's "Special" list or drinks ordered during excursions or transfers, cancellation and baggage insurance, personal expenses, departure transfers other than the drop at CDG returning to Paris from the barge. Tips to the barge staff, guides and drivers are not included. We will organize a group tipping fund prior to departure.

PARIS EXTENSION PRICING

(prices are per person)

Price: \$3,200 in double occupancy hotel accommodations.

Private Room: \$700 additional, for a total extension price of \$3,900.

Deposit: \$500 (in addition to the main tour deposit of \$1,000)

(Due at time of registration for the tour. May be paid with a credit card.)

Remaining Balance After Deposits (main tour + extension): \$6,700 double / \$9,300 single

Remaining Balance Due: June 29, 2024 (80 days prior to departure)

(Full payment required with reservation form if enrolling after this date.)

Paris Extension Price Includes: Three nights hotel accommodations, daily breakfasts at the hotel, Welcome and Farewell Dinners, air-conditioned motorcoach for sightseeing, services of a local English-speaking guide, excursions and visits mentioned in the program, use of a “whispers” system for guided tours inside museums.

Paris Extension Price Excludes: Departure transfer from our Paris hotel to the airport, Paris city hotel tax to be paid at check-out, special drinks ordered beyond what is on the menu for our included dinners, insurance, personal expenses. Tips to the guide and driver are not included.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Click hotel name to read description

- Paris (main tour and extension): **Best Western Opera Faubourg**
- Barge: **MS Raymond**