



## Sample Itinerary

### Day 1 FLY

Overnight flight from USA.

### Day 2 Lourdes Arrive Toulouse, France. Drive Lourdes

This morning we arrive in Toulouse airport where we are met and transferred to our hotel in Lourdes. Evening meal at hotel.

### Day 3 Lourdes Full day Lourdes tour: Sanctuaries Notre Dame du Lourdes

Over 70,000 sick and handicapped come to Lourdes each year. To the left of the Grotto are taps where pilgrims drink, wash and fill their bottles with Lourdes spring water. "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me. Let the one come and drink who believes in me." (John 7:37). For millions of men and women, Lourdes is a special place; the grotto where, more than a hundred years ago, the Virgin appeared to Bernadette, under whose fingers welled up the miraculous spring. In the heart of the Pyrenees, with a picturesque castle and spectacular mountain peaks, Lourdes has adapted itself to its mission of welcome, answering the demand of an ever-increasing number of visitors. 'The whole world comes to Lourdes...' We visit the large religious complex known Sanctuaries Notre Dame du Lourdes, which houses the most significant sites relating to the miraculous appearances witnessed by St. Bernadette. The Rock of Massabielle acts as the foundation for the Basilica of Lourdes. The Grotto is located directly below the Sanctuary of the Upper Basilica. The Grotto was a simple hole in the rock, where pigs used to come to shelter. On 11<sup>th</sup> February 1858 Mary appeared to Bernadette in an alcove in the rock. Bernadette saw a young and small girl dressed in white, with a blue cincture, a yellow rose on each foot, and carrying a Rosary on her arm. The statue you see today marks the place where Our Lady stood during the Apparitions, and was made from white marble in 1864 by the Sculptor Fabisch. "It is like that and yet it is not like that", Bernadette said when shown the statue. The spring at the back of the Grotto was discovered by Bernadette on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, 1858. Over time, the sanctuaries of Lourdes have adapted themselves to welcome pilgrims. To the humble Crypt of the beginnings (which saw Bernadette before her departure for Nevers), has been added the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, completed in 1872, followed by the Basilica of the Rosary (1889) framed by its ramps and the Basilica of St Pius X, solemnly consecrated by Cardinal Roncalli (later Pope John XXIII). The Domain of the Grotto includes a diorama of the life of St Bernadette, several exposition halls in the Missionary Pavilion and in the Notre-Dame Pavilion (the Message of Lourdes and the souvenirs of Bernadette, the Gemmail Expositions - the meaning of the Sacred, temporary exposition halls). There are a considerable number of important sites to visit in Lourdes, but to walk amongst the cosmopolitan horde of international pilgrims, all intent on one dramatic purpose, is perhaps the most moving aspect of a visit to Lourdes. Evening meal at hotel.

### Day 4 Lourdes Musee Grevin, Moulin de Boly, Cachot, Maison Paternelle Chateau

Today we first visit the *Musee Grevin*, where we gain an overview of the historical events that led to Lourdes' fame. Following this visit we tour the main sites of significance in St. Bernadette's life. These include *Moulin de Boly*, *Cachot*, *Bernadette's School*, and *Maison Paternelle de Sainte Bernadette*. After free time for travelers to purchase their own lunch, we visit the *Lourdes Chateau*. From a rocky perch, *Lourdes Chateau* overlooks the valley of the Gave River and the sanctuaries. The castle first comes into legend while under the hands of the Moors. Lourdes was supposedly besieged by Charlemagne in 778. It historically reappears in 1085 as the resident home of the counts of Bigorre remaining so until the end of the XIIIth century. After the treaty of Bretigny, it passes to the English, and is entrusted to Pierre Arnaud and Jean de Bearn, of the 'Companions of Lourdes', a company of mercenaries. A first class military post, the building suffers numerous sieges until the end of Europe's wars of religion. Captured and recaptured by Huguenots and Catholics it is restored in 1580 by order of the King of Navarre, the future Henri IV who, in 1605, joins the county of Bigorre to the crown. The castle becomes a prison from the end of the XVII century to the time of Napoléon I. The castle was purchased in 1894 by the municipality of Lourdes, and in 1920 the *Pyrenean Museum* was added with the intention of presenting a synthesis of popular arts and traditions of the Pyrénées. The old castle chapel contains the XVIII century altars and the ornaments taken from the old parish church of Lourdes. Following our visit we return to the hotel. Evening meal at the hotel.

#### **Day 5 Lourdes** *Walk the Chemin de la Croix*

This morning we walk the *Chemin de la Croix*, also known as *Chemin du Calvary* (The Way of the Cross), is a 1.5 kl (0.9 Mile) path along which life size bronze stations of the cross have been constructed. Bernadette said: "*I am happy on my bed of pain with my crucifix more than a queen on her throne*". The stations allow pilgrims to personally simulate the painful journey Christ made to Calvary, 2,000 years ago. The Way of the Cross consists of 15 large stations depicted in life size bronze statues, and winds approximately 1600 meters up the Mount of Espelugues (also known as Mount Calvary). One cannot make the stations without noticing the beauty of the site. Returning to the hotel around lunchtime, the remainder of the day is free for personal exploration.

#### **Day 6 Lourdes**

Today is entirely free for personal exploration of Lourdes

#### **Day 7 Rome** *Fly Rome (flight costs quoted separately)*

Transfer to Toulouse Airport. On arrival in Rome we are meet and transferred to our hotel. The remainder of the day is at leisure. Evening meal.

#### **Day 8 Rome** *St. Peters, The Vatican Museum, Sistine Chapel, Coliseum*

This morning, after breakfast, we explore the fabulous sites of the *Eternal City*. With the new ordinance that all tourist coaches are banned from central Rome, along with all other groups visiting Rome we must use the excellent public transport system to visit our intended Rome sights. With a history of truly classical proportions, *Rome's* achievements in the political, architectural, religious and military fields have dramatically influenced the development of Western society, and for over two thousand years western societies have looked to Rome to find their roots. Today we visit the *Vatican*, the *Vatican Museum* and the *Sistine Chapel*. We also visit the *Coliseum*. Perhaps the best-known monument of ancient Rome, the Coliseum was built by the Flavian emperors (Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian) on the site of the lake of Nero's Domus Aurea between AD 70 and 80, and was originally

called the Flavian Amphitheater. Situated just east of the Roman Forum, the Coliseum is a freestanding structure of stone, brick, and marble some 620 feet (190 m) in diameter, holding about 50,000 spectators in three tiers of stands. There were 80 entrance arches on the ground floor. An interesting fact – the source for the word ‘arena’ in the English language is that arena is the Roman word for ‘sand’, which was used to cover the floor of the coliseum. Taking lunch en route, in the early afternoon we return to the hotel. In the late afternoon / early evening we return to our accommodation. Evening meal included.

**Day 9 Rome** *Full day tour Etruscan Tarquina, & Ostia Antica Tiber cruise*

After breakfast we take local transport into Rome and visit *Tarquina*, the *Etruscan* area. Little is known about the Etruscans, except that they were great artisans, and that the afterworld appears more important to them than life on this earth. They built magnificent tombs decorated with exquisite wall paintings and copious household goods for the after-life. We visit the famous ‘*Etruscan*’, a reconstructed ancient Etruscan city, featuring unforgettable wall paintings and material dating mostly from the 6th to 3rd century BCE and depicting mythological or social scenes. It is scenes such as these that constitute the basis for almost all we know about the Etruscans. This afternoon we catch a boat up the Tiber River to the ruins at *Ostia Antica*. One of the best ways to imagine what daily life was really like in ancient Rome is to visit *Ostia Antica*, an ancient seaport about twenty miles from the Forum. Located in the meadows between the Tiber River and the Tyrrhenian Sea, *Ostia Antica* was founded in the 4th century BCE as a military colony guarding the river mouth against invasion. As Rome grew in importance, almost all imports reached the Capital via the Tiber, and *Ostia* became a prominent and wealthy city. In the 2nd century ACE *Ostia* was a flourishing commercial center of 100,000 people. Much of the buildings of this period are still in tact. The ruins cover over 10,000 acres, the main street runs for over a mile, and the deep ruts left by ‘*carrucas*’ - the four-wheeled carts used to ferry merchandise to Rome, remain intact. The preservation is truly remarkable. We visit many of the public buildings of this unforgettable site. Transfer back to our hotel in the late afternoon. Evening meal.

**Day 10 Rome** *Excursion to Assisi. Piazza del Comune & St. Francis Basilica*

This morning after breakfast we drive to *Assisi*, stopping en route for photo opportunities. On arrival at *Assisi*, a town immortalized for its association with St. Francis (of *Assisi*), we visit the *Piazza del Comune*, the *St. Francis Basilica*, which includes visits to the *Lower Church* and *Tesoreria*, and the *Convento di San Damiano*, built on the site where the crucifix spoke to St. Francis and where he wrote *Canticle of the Creatures*. Above us stands the mighty *Rocca Maggiore* (a massive 14<sup>th</sup> century hill fortress). After free time for lunch in a local restaurant we have some free time to explore the town before returning to Rome. Farewell evening meal at the hotel is included.

**Day 11 Rome** *Day Excursion to Pompeii & Mt. Vesuvius*

Today we take a day trip to visit the spectacular ruins at *Pompeii*, a World Heritage site. Excavation of *Pompeii* began in 1748, and as the preserved ruins of this bustling Roman town were uncovered the modern world gained a unique and detailed insight into the everyday life of the ancient Romans. *Pompeii* is the source for most of our knowledge of Roman wall paintings, and of our understanding of how commercial and domestic establishments functioned. Commercial structures, private dwellings, frescoed walls, marble and terra-cotta furnishings, household items, and even impressions (preserved as plaster casts) of people and animals at the moment of their death from the volcanic eruption of

Mt. Vesuvius have been uncovered. 1,266 buildings have been uncovered, and yet a third of the area is yet to be excavated. So there are many more objects and insights still to be discovered. Returning to Rome, we have included a farewell evening meal at the hotel.

## **DAY 12 FLY**

This morning after breakfast we transfer to the airport for our international flights. Tour ends

## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION (ITALY)**

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### **SEASONAL CLIMATE**

In Rome the climate is temperate, uniformly hot in the summer. To the south the summers are extremely hot and dry, and in the northern mountains cooler. Winter in the northern coastal region, and the Po valley, can be severe, with considerable snow in the mountains. The best time to visit Italy is in the off season, April to June and September to October, when the weather is good, prices are lower, and you have avoid the European tourist season.

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### **VISA REQUIREMENTS**

Entry visas for Italy are not required for US, CAN, AUS, & NZ citizens. On arrival these nationalities will automatically have their passports stamped with a three-month stay tourist visa. It is impossible to extend this visa in Italy, and if staying longer, you must leave Italy then return, even if this means crossing a border for a single day, then returning. (Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate or travel agent).

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**VACCINATIONS & PROTECTION** Nothing is compulsory. We recommend you consult a doctor prior to departure.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

### **HEALTH**

EEC Nationalities receive free medical care in Italy if a E111 form is obtained prior to trip departure.

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### **LUGGAGE / BAGGAGE**

You are expected to carry your own luggage on the tour so don't overload. One suitcase and one-day bag are advised. European flights are governed by the normal international luggage weight limit of 44lb /20kg per person. (US regulations are unique in that they allow travelers a much large allowance). Please be aware of this if you intend to travel in Europe or further after the tour. (Please consult the Extraordinary Places office).

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### **PERSONAL EXPENSES**

You'll need some extra money to cover meals not included in the tour price, optional tours, other sightseeing, airport taxes, souvenirs etc., and items of personal nature (laundry etc.).

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### **TIPPING**

In Italy tipping in restaurants is not expected, but most locals leave a small amount as a gesture of appreciation. If there is no included service charge on the bill, a 10% tip is acceptable, but by no means obligatory. In bars etc., small change is the norm. All tour guides expect to be tipped. To avoid embarrassment or misunderstanding, consult your tour manager.

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### **INCLUDED MEAL PLAN**

**Local food and drink;** Meals other than those included in the itinerary are paid for separately by the traveler. Some examples of approximate comparative costs are given below.

ITEM	USA	ITALY
Tea	\$0.50	940.00 Lira
Soft Drink	0.75	2,520.00
Beer	3.00	5,640.00
2 Course Meal*	5.00	9,400.00
3 Course Meal**	15.00	2,820.00

\* Cheap local fare in small cafe/restaurant  
 \*\*Typical food in mid-range restaurant.

## PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

### Clothing.

**Pack for temperate to warm conditions.** Modest shorts, short sleeve T-shirts, cotton shirts and slacks etc. The evenings can be cool, so a light jacket and / or sweatshirt are appropriate in late summer and spring.

**Footwear** Sandals and comfortable walking shoes are advised.

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### OTHER USEFUL ITEMS TO BRING WITH YOU

- \* Medical Kit
- \* Sewing Kit
- \* Sunglasses
- \* Flashlight
- \* Sunscreen
- \* Feminine Items

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION (FRANCE)

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### SEASONAL CLIMATE

Most of France has a temperate climate, but that of the northeast is continental, with warmer summers, colder winters. In general the best time to visit France is during the springtime. Autumn is pleasant, but cooler. August is the hottest month but coincides with the European mass holidays, and should be avoided if at all possible. May temperatures in Burgundy and Champaign are 10 - 23 degrees Celsius. Rainfall is average 70 mm. In Paris the temperatures in May are 10-23 degrees Celsius, with a rainfall of about 50 mm.

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**VISA REQUIREMENTS** Entry visa are not required for CAN, US, UK, & NZ citizens. (Australian other nationalities should consult the French consulate and / or your travel agent). Valid Passports are required for all visitors.

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend travelers consult their physician well in advance of travel.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** *Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure with the relevant authorities.*

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**LUGGAGE / BAGGAGE** You are expected to carry your own luggage during the tour so don't overload. One suitcase and one day bag advised. If you are staying on after the tour it is important to know that European international and domestic flights are governed by the normal international luggage weight limit of 44lb-20kg per person.

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### VACCINATIONS & PROTECTION

**PERSONAL EXPENSES** You'll need some extra money to cover meals not included in

the tour price, optional tours, other sightseeing, airport taxes, souvenirs etc., and items of personal nature (laundry, personal sightseeing etc.).

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### TIPPING

It is not necessary to leave tips (pourboire) in restaurants, hotels, cafes, etc., as a 15% gratuity is included (by law) in most bills. Tipping is not expected. However, small change may be left as tips without causing offense. Tips to taxi drivers of 3-4 FF. are acceptable, regardless of the fare.

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### INCLUDED MEAL PLAN

Local food and drink; Meals other than those included in the itinerary are paid for separately by the traveler. Some examples of comparative costs are given below.

ITEM	USA	FRANCE
Tea	\$0.50	\$0.75
Soft Drink	0.75	0.75
Beer	2.00	1.50
2 Course Meal*	5.00	4.00
3 Course Meal**	15.00	12.00

\* Cheap local fare in small cafe/restaurant  
\*\*Typical food in mid-range restaurant.

### PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

#### Clothing.

Pack for similar Spring weather to Vancouver BC, but anticipate a little less rain. Spring in this region may offer summer to winter weather in a single day, so be prepared. However, along with water resistant clothes you should bring T shirts and shorts.

**Footwear** Sandals and comfortable walking shoes are advised.

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### OTHER USEFUL ITEMS TO BRING WITH YOU

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|---------------|--------------|
| * Medical Kit | * Flashlight |
| * Sewing Kit  | * Sunscreen  |
| * Sunglasses  | * Feminine   |
- Items

### INCLUDED SERVICES

Group flight meet and greet with English-speaking escort upon arrival in Toulouse airport and transfer to Lourdes. Group flight meet and greet upon arrival in Rome with English-speaking escort & transfer from airport to hotel. All accommodation at a 4 star hotel in Lourdes, and in an historic monastery on the outskirts of Rome in Italy, on a room & evening meal basis. Four day exclusive motor coach & professional driver in France. Four day exclusive motor coach & professional driver in Italy. Fully escorted by professional and experienced guides in each country. Full sightseeing itinerary as listed. All entrance fees to listed sites. Group departure transfer in France to catch inter-Europe flight, and in Italy to catch flight back to USA.

