

l'Alliance en Voyage:

PROVENCE & THE FRENCH RIVIERA

A Culinary & Cultural Adventure in France
Hosted by Alliance Française de Chicago + Onward Travel
August 25 to 31, 2020

ONWARD TRAVEL ✈️
EST 2014



VIKTORIJA GUIDES TRAVELERS IN A NICE MARKET
photo courtesy Peter Newbury



Viktorija Todorovska, chef, cookbook author, and former Alliance sommelier, now resides alongside the sparkling Mediterranean in Nice. She has partnered with the Alliance to invite a group of twelve Bon Vivants to join her in Southern France for a one-of-a-kind tour.

Immerse yourself in the Provençal lifestyle while based at characteristic hotels in charming Saint-Rémy-de-Provence and chic Aix-en-Provence. Highlights include excellent restaurants, wine tasting and education, hands-on cooking lessons, strolling picture-perfect markets, inspiring art and culture, and a great group of travelers ready to experience it all together.

Provence is a region characterized by tradition and culture. The locals are passionate people, well practiced in l'art de vivre, the art of living. Located in the Southeast of France, it stretches from the Mediterranean Sea to the hills of Haute Provence, from the Rhone River to the Italian Alps. It is the region home to well-known, healthful Mediterranean cuisine and wonderful wines, most notably, rosé.

Spend a week exploring the culinary and cultural traditions of Provence and another three days on the French Riviera. You'll be accompanied by Viktorija, Nice-resident and wine educator, who will help you truly understand and deeply experience Provence and la Cote d'Azur. This is a one-of-a-kind voyage and you're invited!

IMAGINE YOURSELF...

Experiencing sensory overload at a beautiful Provençal market

Wowed by Pont du Gard: an amazing display of Roman engineering

Cooking (and eating!) ingredient-focused Mediterranean cuisine

Welcome to Provence!

DAY 1: TUESDAY AUGUST 25

- Settle in at a lovely B&B under the fig trees
- Enjoy an early evening stroll through St. Remy's historic center

Arrive in Marseille by train, plane, or automobile and Onward Travel will collect you at your convenience. Sightseeing will be arranged depending on arrival times as all travelers arrive today.

Mid-afternoon we'll arrive in Saint-Remy-de-Provence. We'll be based at a charming small hotel on the edge of town where stylish apartments are clustered under leafy fig trees. Enjoy some R&R and relax by the swimming pool or take a leisurely walk around the lovely town.

Located in the very heart of Provence, St. Remy abounds in charm and elegance. Immerse yourself in the Provençal way of life, strolling along the boulevards under the shade of century-old plane trees. Wander through narrow alleys to discover squares where fountains play, and a lively historic center lined with attractive boutiques and art galleries. In this magical setting, bathed in sunshine for more than 300 days a year, you'll realize why so many famous people have loved this little town.

Viktorija will lead a late afternoon walk through town culminating with wine shared at a cozy winebar. Toast your traveling companions and the special adventure ahead. Taste some delicious local rosés and start learning about these world-famous wines. And then enjoy a group dinner at a terrific local spot known for seafood and homemade desserts.

Meals Dinner



Nice Extension

AUGUST 31 TO SEPTEMBER 3

After a wonderful week in Provence journey east along the Mediterranean to the gorgeous city Viktorija calls home for a few more enriching days. Nice is an enchanting blend of Italian and French, in food and culture, language and the way of life. Located on the French Riviera, Nice embraces the sea whether it be in cuisine or in leisurely strolls along the Promenade or sunnypicnics on the beach.

Viktorija will show you her Nice, the lesser-known markets and wine bars, street food stands and family restaurants. A lover of food and wine, she will introduce you to the unique cuisine of Nice, recount the history of the city, and help you taste authentic Nice. You will go to market, shop for fresh products, and transform them into tasty Niçoise specialties. You will also taste local rosés and reds, learning about the people who make them and enjoy pairing them with local specialties. The group will also leave Nice for a day, for a glimpse of the sparkling Mediterranean and the picturesque villages that dot its shores. These are views that take the breath away and create life-long memories.

The tour extension includes all meals, transfers, a market tour, street food lunch, hands-on cooking class in Nice's Old town, wine tasting, fine dining seaside farewell dinner, and more! Plus three nights accommodations at the newly renovated and well-located Best Western Plus Hôtel Masséna Nice.

\$1,500 per traveler, double occupancy

\$325 single supplement

\$500 deposit due upon registration



THE BEAUTIFUL BLUE WATERS OF NICE

Provençal markets

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY AUGUST 26

- Experience sensory overload at the St. Remy market
- Taste wine with your sommelier guide

Today we'll ease in to the Provençal lifestyle. Enjoy a leisurely morning and a tasty breakfast spread of French cheeses, fresh fruit, croissants, cafe au lait... and other tasty delights. It's market day in St. Remy! A charming expat will take us for a market tour to taste and learn about lavender, cheese, local confections, olive oil, charcuterie, honey, and more. We'll visit an art collective, see where Nostradamus was born, and much more... Then we'll enjoy a picnic together!

Following the picnic, we'll visit Monastere St-Paul de Mausole where Van Gogh spent the last year of his life; he admitted himself in 1889. St-Paul remains a psychiatric institution and has a walking trail with gardens and reproductions. Learn about Van Gogh's most productive artistic period as you enjoy a self guided visit.

In the early evening, we'll meet for a special aperitif. Tour Director Viktorija is a sommelier and author of *The Art of Living in Provence* and she'll lead a guided wine tasting to discover the excellent wines of Provence. Then we will enjoy an elegant dinner at Hotel de Turrel, located in a 17th century palace in the center of St. Remy. The Chef plays with a palette of local ingredients, creating imaginative and modern dishes using the flavors of Provence. Enjoy beautiful food in a beautiful setting.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



photo courtesy Francois Milto

Exploring Art & Culture

DAY 3: THURSDAY AUGUST 27

- Lunch on *le menu* at a charming Bistrot
- Admire artwork projected onto quarry walls

Enjoy a low-key morning before we're off to Pont du Gard for a picnic. Pont du Gard is a spectacular UNESCO-listed Roman site, a three-tiered aqueduct built around 19 BC. It is *huge* and each block was carved by hand and transported from nearby quarries. Enjoy a jaunt on the *Mémoires de Garrigue* walking trail to soak up this site, expertly interpreted by local guide Claire.

Hungry yet? Lunch today is at Le Bistrot du Paradou. Each day, a different menu is featured and the menu and leisurely lunch experience is quintessentially French, capped off with a cheese board that will frequent your dreams. In the afternoon we will visit Carrières de Lumières, a sound-and-light show in a former limestone quarry. Gigantic projections of famous artworks illuminate the cave walls, complete with music. It's a sensory experience.

Tonight you may wander into town for dinner on your own and enjoy a free evening.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Provençal Culinary Immersion

DAY 4: FRIDAY AUGUST 28

- Spend the day at an Instagramable culinary destination
- Tour Aix-en-Provence, a classy college town

Today we'll have a special experience: a cooking workshop at La Belugue, an 18th century village farmhouse... an immersion in the rural French lifestyle. La Belugue is a gorgeous home owned by a Franco/American couple (former execs who met in Singapore, now creating a simpler life in Provence) that lies at the entry of a picturesque, tiny village. Learn lovely recipes, taste the local winemaker's garage wines, and observe village life. And of course feast on a fabulous lunch complete with the village's wonderful goat cheeses. As she hosts us with style and panache, proprietor Kelly will remind us that gastronomic French meals are recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage that must be preserved!

DAY 4: FRIDAY AUGUST 28 - CONTINUED

After lunch, we will be whisked away to charming Aix-en-Provence, which the Romans called the City of Water because of its many beautiful fountains. Aix is the birthplace of Paul Cézanne and the main street *Cours Mirabeau* is leafy and lovely. Calisson cookies are a specialty of Aix. We'll visit a shop together to taste this confection.

For the next three nights, we'll be based at Hotel Cézanne, a boutique hotel close to the city center. Get settled and then join Viktorija for an introductory walk of Aix before you enjoy dinner as you please.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Charming Aix-en-Provence

DAY 5: SATURDAY AUGUST 29

- Shop and sightsee in Aix
- Savor the seasonal fare of a talented chef

Today is market day in Aix-en-Provence and we've left the morning open for you to enjoy shopping and sightseeing at your leisure. On Saturday there are several markets around Aix and you can admire the produce, food, antique, and craft stalls. It's a fun and bustling affair. Mid-afternoon we'll convene to partake in a local art and culture event, to be decided based on what's hot when we visit.

This evening we'll continue in a leisurely mode with an aperitif in a café on the historic *Cours Mirabeau*. Whether you delight in pastis, kir or a glass of rosé, sit back, people-watch and breathe in Provence. Then we'll fill a long table in a tiny bistro and enjoy a delicious and *oh so French* meal. Enjoy the company of your traveling companions as you indulge in a fantastic meal with wine to complement.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Drinking in the Landscape

DAY 6: SUNDAY AUGUST 30

- Stroll charming *Lourmarin*
- Taste wines at an iconic *Provence Chateau*

This morning we will head into the countryside to the charming town of *Lourmarin*. *Lourmarin* is bestselling author Peter Mayle's former home... and is also known for *Chateau de Lourmarin*, a striking Renaissance castle built in the 16th century. Enjoy a visit to the chateau and time to shop and wander around town. Then we're off to a hidden gem restaurant for a gourmet lunch where the chef sources ingredients locally for his creative menu.

Once sated, we're off to *Chateau la Coste*. The property houses a famous winery (making delightful rosé, of course) as well as intriguing art installations. We will walk through the grounds and enjoy the wines of *Chateau la Coste*. Enjoy your last bits of time in Aix this afternoon before we convene to toast the delightful experiences we've shared and enjoy a light cheese-centric dinner at *Fromagerie du Passage*.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Bon Voyage

DAY 7: MONDAY AUGUST 31

This morning we say farewell. You may choose to fly home from Marseille or Nice, or take the TGV train to another destination in France. Onward will organize your transfer. Or, continue the fun and add the *Nice Extension*... we're off to the *Cote d'Azur*! *Bon voyage!*

Meals Breakfast



Trip Essentials

BEGINS	Marseille, France Midday on August 25 Transfer provided from TGV Train Station or Marseille Airport
ENDS	Aix-en-Provence, France on August 31 Transfer provided to TGV Train Station or Marseille Airport OR add the Nice Extension and your journey ends Sept. 3 in Nice, with a transfer to Nice Côte d'Azur Airport or Nice-Ville Train Station
SUITABILITY & MOBILITY	<u>This tour includes walking for 15-30 minutes at a time, plus stairs and cobblestones.</u> Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided.
TRIP LENGTH	7 days, 6 nights with Nice Extension 10 days, 9 nights
LODGING	Unique, well-located small hotels have been selected for <i>l'Alliance en Voyage: Provence and the French Riviera</i> Hotel Sous Les Figuiers 3 Nights A 13-room peaceful oasis on the edge of St. Remy... the rooms are clustered around gardens. Locally sourced breakfast, pool, and fun decor. Hotel Cezanne 3 Nights Snazzy accommodations at a boutique hotel, a short walk to the center of Aix.
TOUR DATES & PRICE	August 25–31, 2020 Double Occupancy \$3295 per traveler Single Supplement \$600 <i>Note that air travel is not included and a current passport is required for travel to France. You are welcome to pay by credit card, please add a 3% surcharge.</i>

Trip price includes the following:

- Arrival and departure transfers and ground transportation to/from all scheduled activities.
- Three nights accommodations at Hotel Sous Les Figueres in St Remy and three nights at Hotel Cézanne in Aix.
- Most meals: daily breakfasts, five lunches, and four dinners. We have fantastic gourmet experiences, wine included, of course!
- Local guide services throughout the tour to truly understand Provence.
- Activities, tastings, cooking class, and tours as detailed in the itinerary.

Register now!

Visit onwardtravel.co to complete the registration form and submit payment.

Space is limited to only 12 travelers.

\$1,250 deposit due upon booking, balance due by June 1, 2020.

AIR TRAVEL:

The tour will start and end with transfers to/from the airport or train station. Please confirm with Onward Travel that the tour is a "go" before booking non-refundable airfare. Contact Onward Travel for assistance. Low cost airfares from Chicago–Paris may be available for those who would like to connect to southern France via train.

TRIP INFORMATION *l'Alliance en Voyage August 25–31, 2020*

About Onward Travel

Onward Travel is a group tour operator owned and operated by sisters Molly Crist and Katerina Dhand. Onward Travel is focused on one-of-a-kind, thoughtful small group tours with itineraries that are researched and pieced together carefully to ensure authentic, engaging trips that foster genuine connection to places and people. A deep love of hospitality and adventure has been in Molly and Kat's blood for generations as Onward Travel is inspired by their family's cooking school on a farm in Bucks County, PA that offered culinary-focused travel to customers for over two decades.

France in Late May

Late August in Provence is warm and summery. Perfect weather for a glass of rosé! Expect sunshine and blue sky. The markets are bountiful this time of year. Average temperatures are low 80s. If you join the [Nice Extension](#) it's the perfect time of year to take a dip in the Med. Onward Travel will provide packing notes in advance of the trip.

Miscellaneous Travel Information

- *Passports are required for American citizens travelling to France. Visas are not required. Note your passport should be valid for at least three months beyond the date of travel.*
- *To determine the current exchange rate, Google "USD to EUR."*
- *Travel Protection: Onward Travel recommends that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. Travel protection plans include coverage for Trip Cancellation, Trip Interruption, Emergency Medical and Emergency Evacuation/Repatriation, Trip Delay, Baggage Delay and more. For more information on the recommended plans or to enroll, contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 32-0704.*
- *For a summary of plan details on benefits, coverages, limitations and exclusions, please refer to the applicable Description of Coverage. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Transamerica Casualty Insurance Company, Columbus, Ohio; NAIC #10952. 1308294*

Get in Touch!

Contact Molly with questions or special requests:

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