

The Northern Illinois University Alumni Association
Presents

Southern France – Rhône River Cruise

April 3 – 13, 2019

Haydn Deck \$4,865 Per Person, Double Occupancy from Chicago; Single Supplement - \$550
Strauss Deck \$5,465 Per Person, Double Occupancy from Chicago; Single Supplement - \$1,310
Mozart Deck \$5,765 Per Person, Double Occupancy from Chicago; Single Supplement - \$1,710



This is an exclusive travel program presented by the Northern Illinois University Alumni Association

Day by Day Itinerary

Wednesday, April 3 – CHICAGO / EN ROUTE (I)

We depart Chicago's O'Hare International Airport this afternoon by scheduled service of Lufthansa German Airlines on the overnight transatlantic flight to Frankfurt, Germany.

Thursday, April 4 – FRANKFURT / CRUISING (I,L,D)

As the sun begins to rise on the German heartland we arrive in Frankfurt and continue by connecting flight to Lyon, France. On arrival, we'll meet our local Tour Guide who will take us to the city's Croix-Rousse district, an entertaining and lively place where we'll enjoy lunch and have an opportunity to browse the artists' studios and workshops. Afterward, we'll embark aboard Lüftner Cruises *Amadeus Provence*. Ever evolving, the recent launch of the *Amadeus Provence* features tastefully furnished cabins complete with the modern amenities of flat screen TVs, infotainment centers, individual climate control, telephones and en suite bathrooms with a spacious shower in the state rooms and a bathtub in the suites. As we'll soon learn, the Rhône River rises from the Rhône Glacier in the Swiss Alps and runs through southeastern France before emptying into the Mediterranean Sea.

Friday, April 5 – CRUISING (Mâcon) (B,L,D)

Our first port of call is the picturesque riverside town of Mâcon, located in southern Burgundy. We'll enjoy an introduction to the Mâconnais, the southernmost part of Burgundy, where a maze of country roads crisscross back and forth across the rolling landscape of this wonderful wine growing region. Our destination is Georges Duboeuf's Hameau du Vin. In the unique setting of a 19th-century railway station, we'll marvel at the wine making process. At the completion of our tour, we'll enjoy a tasting of Beaujolais wines in a room housing a barrel organ called a "bouteillophone." On our return to Mâcon, the afternoon is at leisure. A pleasant stroll through town can lead to a discovery of interesting cultural sights and impressive historic buildings, namely the Musée des Ursulines, where you'll find a presentation of life in Mâcon.

This afternoon you have an opportunity to join an **optional tour** to visit the Abbey of Cluny, the center of a major monastic movement in the Middle Ages. Its church was the largest Christian building in the world until St. Peter's Basilica was rebuilt in Rome in the 16th-century. Although most of the great Abbey of Cluny is in ruins, you can still see remnants showing the size and glory the abbey possessed at its zenith and imagine it as it once was.

Saturday, April 6 – CRUISING (Chalon sur Saône) (B,L,D)

This morning our port of call is Chalon-sur-Saône. On arrival, we'll enjoy a scenic drive along the Burgundy Wine Route before arriving in Beaune, the wine capital of Burgundy. The main draw here are the vineyards, however the town also features some eye-catching architecture; its original walls and ramparts, along with a moat; Notre Dame de Beaune Collegiate Basilica; and the beautiful Hôtel-Dieu, founded as a hospice in 1443, where we'll enjoy a guided tour. Today, Hôtel-Dieu covers a large area with its museum, three courtyards, outbuildings, 15th-century bastion and hundreds of meters of cellars, notable for containing the personal reserve of the Hospices. At the completion of our tour, and before making our way back to Chalon sur Saône, we'll enjoy a wine tasting experience at one of Beaune's famous cellars.

This afternoon sit back and enjoy the views as we cruise the Rhône River in comfort and fall under the timeless spell of southern France on a journey that is nothing less than *magnifique*. For those

interested, an **optional tour** will be offered to Cormatin. Leaving Chalon-sur-Saône, you will travel to the village of Brancion, the most authentic of the medieval villages in Burgundy, where you'll briefly stop for a photo opportunity of the village fortifications and castle. Then you're headed to the Chateau de Cormatin. The castle is undoubtedly one of the most sumptuous castles in Burgundy and boasts a Renaissance garden. It was built by the Marquises of Huxelles in the early 17th-century to show their power and prestige.

Sunday, April 7 – CRUISING (Lyon) (B,L,D)

Today's port of call is the city of Lyon, France's third largest city, and the meeting place of the Rhône and Saône Rivers. An introductory tour of the gastronomic capital of France will reveal a rich, ancient history that includes Roman ruins and early Christian sites. We'll stop atop Fourvière Hill to view the well-known pilgrimage church Basilica of Notre-Dame de Fourvière offering an unforgettable view of the city. Then we'll travel along the banks of the Saône River and take in the city sights including the stately Lyon Cathedral, Palace of Justice, and the Place Bellecour, to admire the equestrian statue of Louis XIV. Afterward, we'll set off on foot for a walking tour that will take us through the cobblestone streets of Vieux-Lyon, followed by free time to explore on your own, an opportunity to shop for souvenirs and Lyon's renowned silk goods.

Monday, April 8 – CRUISING (Avignon & Uzès) (B,L,D)

This morning we arrive in the medieval city of Avignon where massive ramparts enclose one of the most fascinating towns in Southern France. Our day will begin with a guided walk through the "City of Popes" where we'll visit the Palais des Papes, the residence of the sovereign pontiffs in the 14th-century. The Palace of the Popes is the largest Gothic palace in the world, comprised of two palaces – the Palais Vieux and the Palais Nouveau which are linked by the Courtyard of Honor, the main venue for Avignon's festival. We'll also see the Cathedral Notre Dames des Doms and walk the stretch of ramparts that run from its gardens to the Saint Benezet Bridge. Best known as the Pont d' Avignon, the bridge was built in the 12th-century and was later destroyed several times by the raging flood waters of the Rhône River before being abandoned in the 17th-century.

This afternoon we'll travel to the charming town of Uzès and take in the Pont du Gard. The lovely town of Uzès is perched on a hill above the Alzon River, enhanced by the medieval towers that dominate its Old Town. We'll see the famous and long-standing House of Uzès, home to France's highest-ranking ducal family, as well as the Tour Fenestrelle, the local equivalent of Pisa's Leaning Tower. We'll also take in the Pont du Gard, built by the Romans in the middle of the 1st-century to supply fresh water to the city of Nîmes. The three-tiered structure spans the Gardon Valley and was the tallest aqueduct in the Roman empire.

Tuesday, April 9 – CRUISING (Arles & Camargue) (B,L,D)

Our port of call for the day is the charming old town of Arles, originally founded by Greek traders and later flourishing into one of the most important provincial cities of the Roman Empire. Like many cities of the era, Arles was built to resemble a miniature version of Rome. On our morning walking tour, we'll explore the narrow streets filled with relics from the Gallo-Roman past. We'll discover the central Place de la Republique, view the ornate Eglise St-Trophime, and view both the Antique Theater and Coliseum, one of the most spectacular Roman relics in Provence. Following our tour, the remainder of the day is free to explore Arles at your

leisure. Be sure to visit the Café Van Gogh in the place du Forum, renovated to look as it did in his famous painting *Café du Soir*. If you're in search of bright Provencal fabrics, stroll the rue Jean-Jaures, or simply relax in a café along the boulevard des Lices.

This afternoon you have an opportunity to take part in an **optional tour** to the Camargue Delta where the Rhône River meets the sea. This flat, scarcely habited land is one of Europe's major wetland regions and natural history sights, where Camargue bulls and native horses roam the green pastures. You'll also visit the Saintes Maries de la Mer. Steeped in history, full of Spanish charm, and boasting stunning beaches, the village of Saintes Marie de la Mer is built between sky and sea, where the Rhône River meets the Mediterranean Sea.

Wednesday, April 10 – CRUISING

(Chateauneuf-du-Rhône)

(B,L,D)

Today is at leisure onboard the *Amadeus Provence*. While the day away in complete relaxation in the Panorama-Bar or the outdoor, glass-shielded River Terrace. If you'd prefer, an early morning **optional tour** can take you to view the Gorges de l'Ardeche, often referred to as the Grand Canyon of Europe. The entrance to the gorge will take you through the famous Pont d'Arc near Vallon which, at 192 feet is, according to the Natural Arch and Bridge Society, "the largest natural bridge in Europe." For some 20-miles along the route, there are heart-stopping views at every turn, especially on the Haute Corniche, perched dizzyingly high above the Ardeche River.

Thursday, April 11 – CRUISING / EVIAN-LES-BAINS

(Annecy)

(B,D)

This morning we disembark from Lüftner Cruises *Amadeus Provence* and board our waiting motor coach as we travel to Annecy, nicknamed the "Venice of the Alps." One of France's prettiest medieval towns, Annecy is laced with canals and the historic streets that we'll explore on a walking tour of the Old Town. We'll also visit the Palais de l'Isle, a 12th-century island fortress that once housed a prison; it's the perfect vantage point to capture Annecy's charm. Afterward, free time will be set aside to stroll the medieval pedestrian lanes lined with shops, markets, terraced cafés, and restaurants. Then we'll be on our way to the spa



town of Évian-les-Bains. Nestled between the lake and the mountains, Evian benefits from a truly exceptional natural environment that has made it an internationally famous resort.

Friday, April 12 – EVIAN-LES-BAINS

(Yvoire & Thonon-les-Bains)

(B,L)

This morning we travel along the southern shore of Lake Geneva to the medieval walled village of Yvoire. Guarded by a massive 14th-century castle, Yvoire has been nicknamed the "gem of the lake." We'll enjoy a guided tour that will take us through the heart of the village and into the Garden of Five Senses. Following our tour, time will be set aside to explore the narrow streets with tightly packed houses that are bedecked with colorful flower boxes and bordered with fascinating boutiques and gift shops. Then we'll travel towards Thonon-les-Bains to visit the Chateau et Domaine de Ripaille for a private tour of the Chateau and vineyards, accompanied by wine tasting as well as a sit-down lunch. Afterward, we'll return to Evian-les-Bains for an afternoon at leisure along the tree-lined lakefront promenade to enjoy one of the regions most beautiful lake and mountain views.

Saturday, April 13 – EVIAN-LES-BAINS / CHICAGO (B,I)

Early this morning we depart Evian-les-Bains and travel to Geneva International Airport in preparation for the return journey home. No better time to reflect on memories of our *Southern France - Rhone River Cruise* to last a lifetime and new friendships made along the way!

*** Welcome Home ***

Visit myniu.com to make your reservation.

The Tour Price Includes:

- Pre-trip assistance.
- Informational packet.
- Alumni staff assistance for a worry-free travel experience.
- Economy-class air transportation by scheduled airline service.
- Transportation by deluxe private motor coach with accompanying Tour Guides on pre and post cruise days.
- Accommodations based on choice of stateroom aboard the Lüftner Cruises *Amadeus Provence*.
- Accommodations in first-class hotel post cruise.
- All meals as shown in the Day by Day Itinerary.
- Sightseeing as detailed in the Day by Day Itinerary including applicable entrance fees.
- Luggage handling and portage charges for one suitcase per person at the pier and hotel.
- Taxes for included ground services, **and airline taxes and fuel surcharge of \$460 per person.**

The Tour Price Does Not Include: Items of a personal nature such as passport fees; luggage handling at airports; gratuities to the motor coach driver(s), Tour Guides, and shipboard personnel; personal and baggage insurance; and meals other than those stated above.

TOUR CONDITIONS

Tour Deposit and Payment: Reservations may be made by check or credit card (Visa, MC, or Discover). Tour prices do increase every year and it is possible that increases could occur after the printing of this brochure in advance of your tour's departure.

Tour Pricing: This is a package tour in which land tour costs and special group airfares have been combined in the most advantageous way. Should you wish to make any deviation from the package tour by changing your departure and/or return dates, the advantages of the package tour price may be eliminated and additional charges will be assessed.

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is very important and can be purchased through USI Travel Insurance Services. This insurance is designed to cover you and your trip investment from trip cancellation/interruption penalties and provide medical expense, medical evacuation, baggage and personal effects loss, and accidental death coverage, as well as emergency assistance. There is an advantage to early enrollment in this travel insurance program. Purchasing coverage within 21 days (Plus and Elite Options) of your initial trip deposit can make you eligible for 1) Pre-existing Medical Condition Exclusion Waiver, and 2) Optional Cancel for Any Reason Coverage (Elite Option). If you wish to take advantage of the special above provisions, you must enroll within 21 days of the date your initial trip deposit is received. Contact Travel Insurance Services at 1-800-937-1387.

RESPONSIBILITY

THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION and/or any travel agency and/or supplier of services pursuant to or in connection with this itinerary shall not be responsible or become liable for any delay incurred by any person in connection with any means of transportation; nor for any loss, damage or injury to person or property by reason of any event beyond the control of any agency or supplier, or occurring without the fault or negligence of such agency or supplier. The right is reserved to substitute the airline to be used; the type of aircraft; and to alter the dates of the tour; the tour routing; or to cancel the trip if a minimum number of bookings is not reached for either the air or land portion of this itinerary. The right is also reserved to substitute hotels for other hotels in available categories. Further, the right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain at any time any person as a participant on any tour or to cancel any tour. No refund will be made for voluntary absence from the tour unless arrangements are made at the time of booking. The schedules contained herein are subject to change without notice. All rates are based on current Tariff and Exchange rates in effect at the time of the printing of this itinerary and are subject to adjustment without prior notification in the event of changes therein or in changes in the number of participants on which the rates are based. The carriers concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance. The passage contract in use by carrier concerned, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the carrier and the purchaser of this tour.

For more information contact the NIU Alumni Association at 815-753-1512 or visit the Travel section at myniu.com to make your reservation.

\$100 of the trip cost is tax-deductible as a charitable donation.

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