



French Alps Tours 2011

June 4-11 & September 3-10, 2011

Our French Alps Tour is designed to show you the 'real' France in all its stunning beauty. From majestic mountains to crystal clear lakes you will come to love the breathtaking alpine views. The food is excellent too, as demonstrated by our cheese tour, wine tasting day, and chocolate shop visit. The history too will seduce you with the cities' Roman Temple and Museums, Old Towns, Cathedrals and Medieval Castles. And as if that wasn't enough, you can also explore the traditional villages of the region with their wooden chalets and farms covered in colorful flowers. You'll come to agree this is a unique tour not to be missed!

Day One, Saturday - Arrival



Pick up from the Geneva Airport or Annecy Train Station

A light lunch and a welcome dinner will be served at the hotel. The Aravis Lodge, which will be your home for the first four nights, is a chalet hotel with views of the Alps from both sides of the lodge. The nonsmoking hotel has 17 ensuite bedrooms, two terraces, a gym, sauna, massage room, spacious dining room, a separate well-stocked bar with games, a large living area with a lounge, computer

with internet, DVD/TV room with English language channels, and a children's playroom. No single supplement is charged at this hotel but we have limited rooms, so if you prefer not to have a roommate, reserve early because it's first come, first served. Meals at the Lodge are prepared by a professional chef and are NOT typical hotel cuisine. Coq au Vin, wild berry tartes, lamb chops smothered in fruit and rosemary sauce - these are samplings of previous tour meals.

Day Two, Sunday - Local Food Specialties and Outdoor Adventure

In the morning, we'll take a driving tour of the local Alps landscape and visit a traditional fromagerie (cheese making farm). You will have lunch at the farm's restaurant, Rustic Refuge, and indulge in the local cheeses of the Col des Annes, including Reblochon and Tomme de Savoie. (The lunch is included in the price of the tour). Savoie is known for some of the best cheeses in the world. Perhaps on our way down to Grand Bornand we'll see the shepherds bringing the cows home for milking.

Then a special treat is our visit to the Maison de Patrimoine, a restored ancient chalet/farm.

In the late afternoon, you'll have three options to choose from:

1. *High Rope Adventure Course*: swing by wires and ropes between the high trees of the Alps and tightrope from tree to tree. Two hour circuit for 25 Euros
2. *Horseback Riding* either by the river or in the hills. 1.5 hour ride for 25 Euros
3. *Walk around and shop* in the village of Grand Bornand. Free (unless you buy something!) The town features handmade pottery and regional food products and is adorned with cow motifs, some of which will make you giggle.



Dinner at the Aravis Lodge

Day Three, Monday - Mountains and Glaciers



In the morning we'll do a sightseeing tour of the gorgeous scenery of the Col des Aravis on our way to Chamonix. In Chamonix, you'll take the cable car up to the top of Aiguille du Midi, a 12,300 foot mountain in the Mont Blanc mountain range, to see the magnificent views. There are several viewing platforms where you'll see breathtaking views so bring your camera. In the afternoon, dependent on weather and rock slide conditions, you will have the option to take the train up to the Mer de Glace where you'll walk through the glacier's cave of ice (the Mer de Glace is optional and not included in the price of the tour - cost is 24 euros. You can be accompanied by a staff member.)

If you prefer, after lunch you can spend the afternoon wandering through and shopping in Chamonix.

Note: The Mont Blanc tours are dependent on weather and rock slide conditions and is subject to occasional closures of the cable car and train for safety reasons. These closures are rare in June or September, but have to mention it anyway.

Dinner at the Aravis Lodge

Day Four, Tuesday - Annecy and its Spectacular Lake



Annecy, named the Venice of the French Alps, is a lovely Medieval and Renaissance town and sits on one of the most beautiful and cleanest lakes in France. The town is surrounded by gorgeous mountains that are shared with Switzerland, just 20 minutes away.

In the morning, we'll make a stop at Chateau Montrottier to walk the grounds and enjoy the views from this Medieval Castle. A few minutes away are the Gorges de Fier. The Gorges have a cliff hanging, spectacular walkway that clings to the sides of the narrow, deep gorge. You'll have the opportunity to take the walkway and enjoy the views and the thrill of the experience.

Then on to Annecy for lunch. After dining, we'll provide an orientation walking tour of the town and then you'll have a few hours to explore the city and shop. Canals run through Annecy and offer a serene and lovely walk. If you are more ambitious, you can stroll up to the Medieval castle to see its museum, or just explore the many Medieval buildings and churches dotted throughout the town.

Then you'll take a scenic boat ride to the opposite side of the lake to explore Talloires, a quaint, ancient town with an 11th century Abby which has been turned into an exclusive hotel.

Tonight we offer a special cocktail hour or 'aperitif' experience. Weather permitting, we'll be going up the mountain to Col de Forclaz to watch the hang gliders jump off the cliffs. If reserved in advance, you can jump off too with one of the professional hang gliders on a tandem paragliding ride (85 Euros). If that adventure has no appeal, we're sure having an aperitif while watching the hang gliders and sunset will. Then back to the lodge for dinner.



Last night at Aravis Lodge.

Day Five, Wednesday - Tastings and Pampering Day

We start the day chocolate tasting at a Chocolaterie Artisanale in the small village of Bellecombe en Bauges in Savoie. What a great way to start your day! After our visit, we'll go on to Chanaz, a quaint village which sits on the canals of the Jongeix region. Stroll through the streets or walk to the top of the bridge for lovely views of the village. The highlight will be our visit to the Walnut & Hazelnut Grinding Mill where you'll watch the owner grind his specially selected hazel and walnuts the old fashioned way - with a grind stone. You'll have the opportunity to taste the oil and buy the handmade nut and jam



products. We'll have lunch in Chanaz at an outside cafe with a lovely view of the canal and watch the passersby.

The next visit of the day will be taking a look at the Hautecombe Abby, which has sat on the shores of Lake Bourget for nine centuries. It is also the burial place of the Dukes of Savoy and Umberto, the last king of Italy, whose reign lasted slightly longer than a month in 1946.

After the Abby, we'll go to a local Vintner and Vineyards in Savoie where you'll have the opportunity to taste the wines of the region. Savoie has both red and white wines, and some are quite good. This region has some of the best wines in Savoie and has won awards for its quality vintages.



After wine tasting, we'll take you to your new hotel in Aix les Bains. Your hotel is Adelpia Hotel, which sits on Lake Bourget, a few minute walk from the main Marina where you can take boats to see the lake. The hotel has a spa, saunas and a thermal pool which is free to its guests and open until 11pm. A great way to unwind after a day of sightseeing! You can also purchase extra services such as massages, facials and hydrobaths. The hotel has views of the lake, park or the mountains from all of its

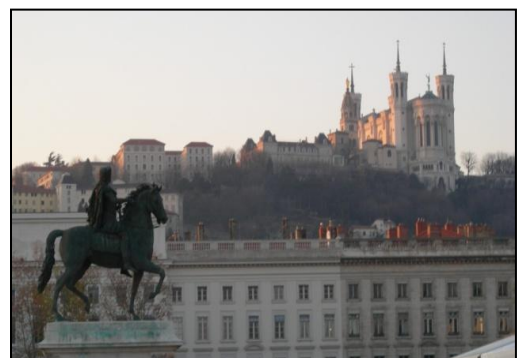
rooms. Each spacious room is equipped with ensuite bathrooms, flat TVs, air conditioning, desks, and terraces with table and chairs. The hotel has a cafe for drinks and snacks, and a restaurant where you'll dine in the evenings (dinners are included in the price of the trip). Attached to the hotel grounds are a walking park and a sunbathing area. The hotel also offers its patrons free bus passes to access the town center to take advantage of its many activities.

Aix les Bains is a small city which sits on Lake Bourget and is known worldwide for its thermal baths. In fact, it's the second largest spa and thermal baths town in France. The Romans used these baths for healing 2000 years ago. Today it is a resort town with hotels, spas, casino, shopping areas, parks and a lovely port, with a sidewalk along the lake. There are also inexpensive boat rides to see the lake. Lake Bourget is the largest and deepest natural lake in France.

Dinner at the hotel in Aix les Bains.

Day Six, Thursday - Historical Tour of Vienne and Lyon

The morning will include a walking tour of Vienne, a small city near Lyon. The town was founded by the Romans more than two thousand years ago. A well-preserved Roman Temple still stands. A trip across the bridge will also reveal Roman ruins with an exceptional Museum displaying several stunning mosaic floors excavated from the site. The town itself has many Medieval buildings including a Cathedral with a Romanesque interior and a Gothic exterior and several well-preserved churches. The Rhone River runs



through the centers of Lyon and Vienne. After lunch in Vienne we'll drive to Lyon. We'll go on a short walking tour of Lyon's Old Town, including a ride up the funicular to see the astonishing views of the city from the Notre Dame Fourviere Basilica. Then either continue with your accompanied tour or take off on your own to stroll the Old Town streets, shop, explore or visit a gallery before we meet and head back to Aix les Bains.

Dinner at the hotel in Aix les Bains

Day Seven, Friday - Chambery and Aix Les Bains



We'll take a quick walking tour of Chambery and then give you time to do some final shopping and sightseeing of this enchanting, fairytale-like city. The town is known for its Trompe L'oeil paintings used throughout the streets and Cathedral. We'll meet for lunch at a traditional Savoyard restaurant specializing in the local cuisine.

After lunch, you'll return to Aix les Bains for a quick orientation tour of the city and then spend the rest of the afternoon in Aix les Bains to enjoy the town Thermal Baths, shop, or a visit the Museums or Roman ruins. If you enjoy gaming, spend some time at the first class, stunning 19th century Casino, which has a disco and restaurants. Or use the afternoon to take a leisurely stroll along the lake promenade or jump on a boat for a lake sightseeing tour.

Our final dinner together will be at the renowned Atmosphere Restaurant which sits on the mountain overlooking Lake Bourget. This exclusive restaurant, which has been awarded a Michelin star, serves a stunning dinner which includes an entree, your main dish, and your dessert, not to mention the palette cleansers and little extras brought during the course of your meal. This experience is not only a joy for your palette but also for all your senses since the presentations of the dishes are pure works of art, the smells are heavenly, and the service impeccable. You can order from an extensive wine list, as you please. (The meal, but not the alcohol, is included in the price of the trip). It is fitting that such a unique trip culminates in this magnificent gastronomical experience.



Last night at the Adelpia in Aix les Bains

Day Eight, Saturday – Departure

After breakfast, transfers to Annecy and/or Chambery train stations and the Geneva Airport

Au Revoir and Bon Voyage!

For further information or to book a trip contact us:

Email: cynthiacaughey@yahoo.com

Call: **213-985-3123** (Voicemail as this diverts to a French phone. Calls will be returned.)

Visit our website: www.french-alps-tours.com

