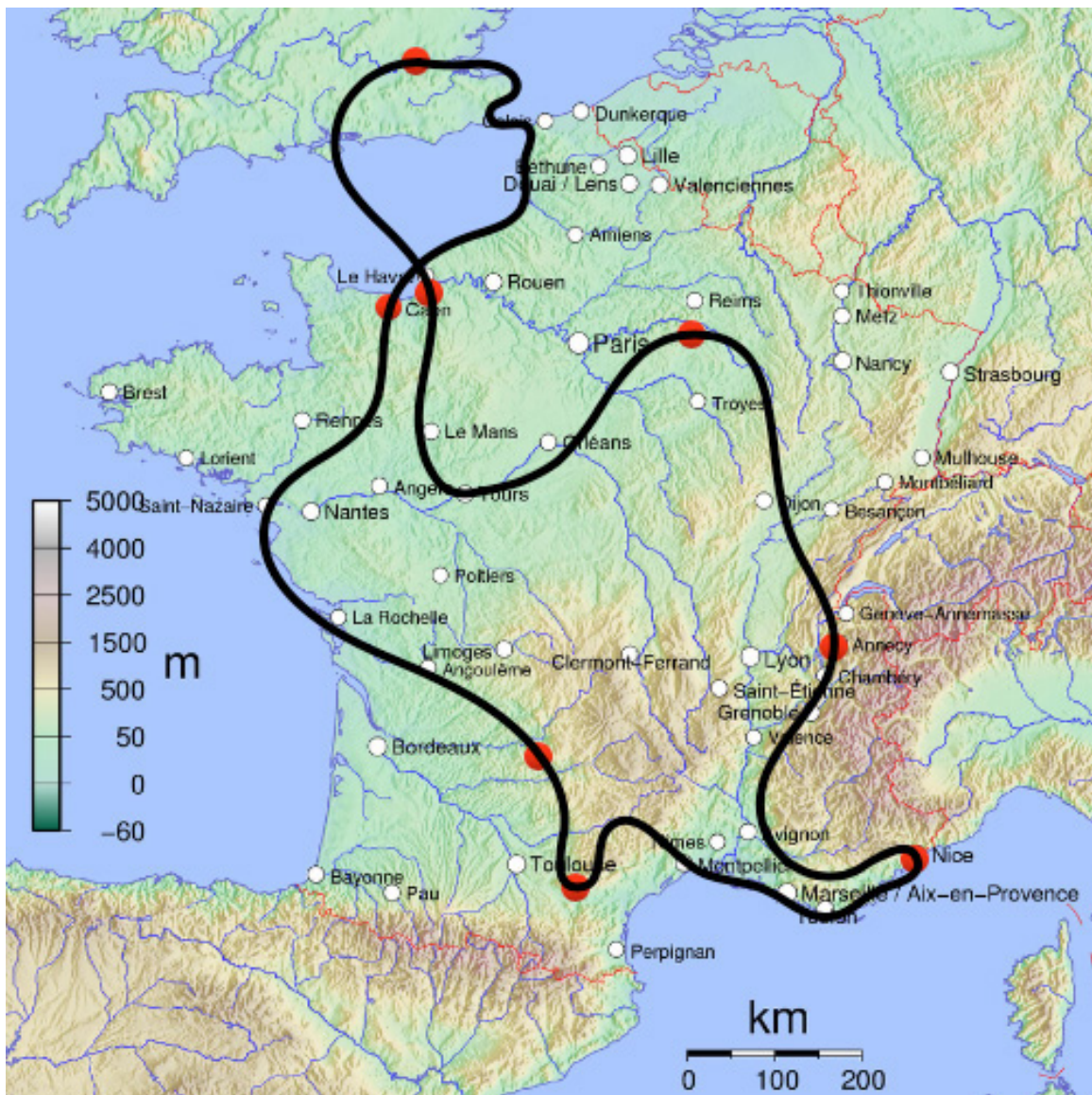


Chateaux, Countryside and Cuisine



Highlights - 16 days, 25 hrs, 2200 nm

A unique opportunity to explore France, away from busy airspaces! Highlights include: overnights in grand country chateaux, fine dining, an ancient walled city, wine tasting in the Champagne region, flying the Alps, the French Riviera, overflying the magnificent chateaux of the Loire Valley, a full day touring the Normandy beaches and, since we start near London England, Windsor Castle. If you like great hotels, beautiful scenery, food and wine, this is the tour for you!

Day 1 - London, England

Welcome to Europe and the start of your adventure vacation!

It begins in our hotel across the street from Windsor Castle, home of the royal family! After breakfast we travel to White Waltham and the West London Aero Club, our home base aerodrome for the trip. The Tour Director will get things started

with a trip overview. This is followed by a briefing from the Lead Pilot. Pilots will “meet” their planes and have a chance to check them over. All the charts and documents needed for the trip will be distributed at this time.

Non-pilot passengers are encouraged to attend this first day’s briefings.

Day 2 - White Waltham

Pilots will spend the day having additional pre-trip briefings and complete their check rides.

Non-pilots are very welcome to join these briefings as well but may prefer to do some sightseeing. A tour of Windsor Castle is highly recommended and downtown London is a short train ride away! Or just wander about Windsor with its numerous shops, cafes and pubs.



Days 3, 4 - Honfleur

Wheels up! We turn towards the coast to fly over southern England before crossing the English Channel. Our first stop is Honfleur, a channel port which is one of the few to have survived WWII intact. It has many unique buildings and shows us the architecture and flavour of French towns hundreds of years ago. Dinner on our arrival day will be at a local café alongside the port.

On our second day we will take a walking tour in the old city to learn the town’s history and to see the ancient churches, buildings and museums. You will then have a time on your own to explore at your leisure.



Days 5, 6 - Epernay

Our route to Epernay, in the heart of the Champagne region of France, is one of the trip highlights as we will follow the section of the Loire Valley known as the the “Land of 1000 Chateaux”. We will see many of the most famous chateaux so have your cameras at the ready!

Our hotel, a countryside spa near the town of Epernay, has a warm and relaxed ambiance so feel free to enjoy its comforts after we check in or to wander in the beautiful flower garden. Dinner will be in the hotel’s fine dining restaurant. Be sure to save room for the desserts and cheese tray, both have been client favourites.

While in Epernay we will tour Champagne Mercier, a family-owned operation. They are one of the few houses that have the entire champagne making process in-house, from growing the grapes, tending the vines, harvesting and making the champagne. At the end of the tour we will have a

sampling session and of course an opportunity to buy some fine champagne.

After lunch you will have free time to visit Epernay, to wander in the countryside or enjoy the hotel spa.



Day 7 - Annecy

A relaxed morning departure and a short flight brings us to Annecy and the French Alps. This beautiful town, with a noticeable Swiss flavour, is located beside pristine Lake Annecy. Before arriving at our hotel, we will stop in the old town where you can wander and explore its canals, waterfront cafés and historic buildings at your leisure.

Our accommodation for the night is another gem, a converted abbey in a small nearby village beside the Lake Annecy. It is well known locally for its beauty and area restaurants. We will dine on a patio overlooking the lake.



Days 8, 9, 10 - Nice

Weather permitting, our track to Nice will take us over the spectacular Alps so have your cameras ready. Coming to the coast from the north, the Mediterranean will appear before us, filling the view to the horizon with blue.

After landing at Cannes airport, we proceed directly to our iconic hotel in old Nice, Le Negresco. We are situated right on the “Promenade des Anglais” so you will be able to head out immediately and wander along the waterfront. We are also close to the historic market and many fine shops and restaurants.

During our first full day we will take a walking history and food tour of old Nice. You will come away with real insight into the local culture and history, and be well fed! By early afternoon you will be free to explore some more on your own.

On the second full day we will take a half day trip to the mountain village of Èze. This beautiful vil-

lage, originally built on the mountain top for defence, offers spectacular views of the Mediterranean and wonderful shops and streets to explore. The cactus garden is worth a visit as is a drink on the patio at La Chèvre d'Or.

After returning to Nice you have the rest of the day and the evening at your leisure.



Days 11, 12 - Carcassonne

Departing Nice we head west to fly along the dazzling French Riviera coast. Another opportunity for some great photos.

Our destination is Carcassonne, a medieval walled town and UNESCO World Heritage site founded over 1500 years ago.

Our hotel, in the old city itself, has been created by connecting several of the ancient buildings to create a unique property. And expect to be amazed at the buffet breakfast selection.

After a morning guided tour that will give us its history and help you get your bearings, you have the remainder of the day to explore and take in the atmo-

sphere of this amazing place! There are many wonderful shops, great restaurants and incredible photos to be taken. If you enjoy photography, we recommend taking an evening walk for some night photography; the lit walls and quiet cobblestone streets exude a totally different atmosphere from that of daytime.



Days 13 - Rocamadour

After departing Carcassonne, we will make a slight diversion to fly over a modern engineering marvel, the Millau Viaduct before arriving at Rocamadour, a village that rises from a gorge and climbs a steep cliff face to the plateau above. We will stay in the heart of the village, from where you can take various walks at your leisure. You are encouraged to walk the 216 steps of the Great Staircase to the castle at the top of the plateau for an amazing view. And along the path do stop at Notre Dame chapel to see the sacred wooden Black Madonna.

In the evening will dine at the hotel overlooking the gorge.

Rocamadour is another spot offering amazing night photography opportunities.



Days 14, 15 - Caen

Departing Rocamadour, we first fly to the Atlantic Coast, passing a number of historical sites including Mont St. Michel.

The focus of our time in Caen is the story of D-Day, the invasion of Normandy in June 1944. We will take a full day with a knowledgeable local tour guide who will take us to many key stops, including the beaches, the cemeteries and more. This tour is both moving and inspirational as we develop a deeper appreciation of the events on that day.

Before returning to our country chateau, we will also see the Bayeux Tapestry, which records the history of a different invasion, the Norman conquest of England in 1066. This “document” is a true historical treasure.

We will have one dinner at our hotel and a second one at a 600-year old cellar restaurant in a nearby village.



Day 16 - White Waltham / Marlow

Departing Caen we fly along the Normandy Beaches we visited the day prior to get an aerial perspective of the D-Day landings. We then turn west and see almost immediately the white cliffs of Dover, just as so many airmen did in WWII. Although we are not coming home from a combat zone, one can still feel that sense of safety the airman must have felt upon seeing the cliffs, perhaps flying a crippled plane over the channel, thankful that they had survived to live another day.

Once back in UK airspace we track up the Thames Estuary and then north of central London before arriving back at White Waltham. We

will have a celebratory drink at the club bar before heading to our final overnight in our hotel on the Thames River.



Day 17 - Depart Marlow

We say our farewells after breakfast at the hotel. Don't forget to exchange email addresses so you can stay in touch with your new friends.

On behalf of Air Safaris International, thank you

for joining us on this trip to France. Do tell your friends and we look forward to seeing you again soon on another tour!

Bon voyage!