



France 2025 Itinerary

Travel Dates: December 12 – 20, 2025

Friday, Dec. 12-

We will fly overnight to Paris

Saturday, Dec. 13-

We will arrive in Paris, France and travel from the airport to the hotel where we will check-in and get refreshed before an Orientation Walking Tour.

- On the tour the group will become oriented with their neighborhood, the public transportation systems, nearby pharmacies, markets, ATMs, etc. Additionally, an in-depth safety briefing will be provided for what to do in case of an emergency.

Accompanied by a guide, we will visit the following sites:

- **Seine Cruise** – This cruise will serve as the perfect introduction to the “City of Lights.” Students will be able to enjoy the city from a different perspective viewing its architectural splendor as night falls. Passing under important bridges like the Pont Neuf, the Seine cruise will pass Parisian sites like Notre Dame, the Louvre, the Grand Palais, and the Eiffel Tower.
- **Eiffel Tower** – The Eiffel Tower is not only a cultural symbol of Paris but is an icon of design and material innovations of the 19th c. Created for the 1889 Worlds Fair, the tower was meant to demonstrate the capabilities of iron. At first somewhat maligned and criticized, the remarkable architectural project was quickly adopted as an important artistic element of the city.

We will then have our Welcome Dinner included in the trip.

Sunday, Dec. 14-

We will start the day with included breakfast at hotel. We will then have a walking tour of the following sites:

- **Notre Dame** – This famed French Gothic cathedral was constructed between the 12th and 14th centuries. The cathedral is a fantastic example of medieval architecture with a façade covered in sculptural elements. The cathedral is an important representation of medieval artistic styles and elements from both the Gothic and the earlier Romanesque. The historical meets the contemporary in this church where repairs are underway to fix damage from a devastating fire that destroyed the roof in 2019. With its sculptural program, vibrant stained-glass windows, and impressive flying buttresses, students will see firsthand the skill and artistic talents of medieval artisans and engage in conversations about preservation, conservation, and repair.
- **Sainte-Chapelle** – Built by Louis IX in the 13th century, the former palace chapel houses one of the finest collections of medieval stained glass in Paris and at one time held one of the most sacred relics in Catholicism; the Crown of Thorns. Canonized as a saint in 1297, Louis IX conceived the chapel as a large-scale reliquary. While its reliquaries were melted down during the Revolution, the church retains its fifteen bays of stained-glass windows showing scenes from the Old Testament and New Testament. Sainte-Chapelle is an exceptional example of medieval stained glass and sculpture allowing viewers to step back in time.

Lunch Break

We will visit the **Musée de Carnavalet**.

- One of the finest history museums in Paris, the Carnavalet traces the history of Paris from pre-history to contemporary times. With a collection of almost 4,000 works, the museum has artifacts that range from guillotine earrings from the 1880s to the armchair of the famed philosopher Voltaire to a shoe believed to have belonged to Marie-Antoinette. The museum offers students a chance to get up close and personal with objects that make history come alive.

Monday, Dec. 15-

After the included breakfast, we will take a day trip to **Versailles**.

- The grand palace started life as a hunting lodge and saw the beginnings of a spectacular renovation in the mid-17th c under Louis XIV. The palace is made up of historically and artistically significant areas like the glittering Hall of Mirrors, the organized and elegant gardens, and the impressive King's Apartments. It was here that Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette led lives of extravagance and were eventually led away to their final fates during the Revolution. Now a museum, the palace has a collection of nearly 90,000 works including Jacques-Louis David's *Crowning of Napoleon*, Marie-Antoinette's desk, and furnishings and works from across France's history.

Afterwards we will return to Paris.

Tuesday, Dec. 16-

We will start the day with included breakfast and then we will visit the Louvre.

- **The Louvre** is the largest art museum in the world and holds famous artworks from Leonardo da Vinci, Jacques Louis David, Delacroix, and countless anonymous masters. One of the oldest museums in the world, the Louvre was founded during the French Revolution. Starting its life as a grand palace for Parisian royalty, the structure became a palace for the people. The staggering collection encompasses multiple styles, time periods, materials, methods, and artists. With nearly nine million visitors a year, the Louvre offers students a chance to not only see some of the most important works of art ever created, but to learn about them in person.

We will then peruse the **Christmas Market Le Magie de Noël at Tuileries Garden**.

- This spectacular Christmas market sits in the Tuileries Garden directly outside of the Louvre. Nearly half a mile long, the market offers a wealth of seasonal fun for all visitors. Students will enjoy traditional foods like roasted chestnuts, raclette, and crepes and also be afforded the opportunity to shop in the "Artisan Village" for unique holiday gifts from around the world. Additionally, students can enjoy a classic Parisian carnival, the type of which originated in the Middle Ages. Full of games, rides, and an ice rink, the Christmas Market is an integral part of Paris' winter culture.

Wednesday, Dec. 17-

After the included breakfast at the hotel, we will take the **West Bank Literary Tour**.

- This literary tour will take students along the West Bank of the Seine introducing them to some of the important writers that worked in Paris for a period. From cafes, to bookstores, to the buildings that authors called home, this tour paints a picture of post WWI Parisian literary flourishing. Students will learn about authors as varied as Paul Verlaine, Ernest Hemingway, and Oscar Wilde among others, and will be able to situate them in their historic and geographic context.

We take a lunch break and then visit the famous **Catacombs of Paris**.

- The historic Catacombs of Paris saw their beginnings in the late eighteenth century. As the cemeteries were understood to be linked with pervasive health problems in the city, officials made the decision to relocate their contents to a new site. Placed underground in a disused fourteenth century quarry, the consecrated ossuary holds the bones of over six million bodies. At first, a simple burial ground, the area was opened to the public in the early nineteenth century and the bodies underwent a rearrangement creating a beautifully organized and aesthetically impressive display of bones. Students will be able to directly engage not only with history, but also with archaeology, art history, and cultural heritage.

Thursday, Dec. 18-

We will start the day with included breakfast at the hotel and then go to a cheese tasting.

- With more than 400 varieties, cheese is integral to France's culinary culture. The system of Appellation d'Origine (controlled designation of origin) protects the authenticity of over forty French cheeses. Roquefort, Gruyère, and Emmentaler are just a small sampling of the important cheeses given the designation. Mainly produced in monasteries and by women throughout French history, cheese has been important both economically and culturally. This cheese tasting will introduce students a taste of France.

We will then take the **Montmartre Walking Tour and Sacré Coeur**.

- Montmartre is situated in the 18th arrondissement and sits at the top of a small hill. The neighborhood, with its quaint village feel, is filled with art, cafes, and historic cobbled streets. The area's crowning glory is the Sacré-Cœur Basilica. The nineteenth century church was created as atonement for the sins of the empire under Napoleon III and was proposed philanthropist who hoped that its dedication would deliver France from misfortune. The basilica is important not only for its historical relevance but also because of its stunning architecture. Students will be able to learn about the magnificent construction and decoration of the building.

Thursday, Dec. 18 (continued)-

We will finish the day with a visit to the **Wall Love**.

- The wall was created in 2000 by artists Frédéric Baron and Claire Kito and is composed of 612 tiles of enameled lava, on which the phrase 'I love you' is featured 311 times in 250 languages

Friday, Dec. 19-

On our last day of this trip, we will start the day with included breakfast at hotel then we will visit the **Opéra Garnier**.

- Built under the auspices of Emperor Napoleon III, the Opéra Garnier is an opulent nineteenth century opera house. The grand theater serves as the setting for Gaston Leroux's famed novel *The Phantom of the Opera* and is the current home of the Paris Ballet. Architecturally classed as Napoleon III style, Opéra Garnier is historically influenced and takes inspiration from the Baroque, Renaissance, and others. The sculptural program on the exterior and the interior mosaics, paintings, and furnishings serve to educate students on a wide variety of artistic methods, materials, and stylistic modes.

We will finish the day with a Farewell Dinner.

Saturday, Dec. 20-

We will begin our travel day with included breakfast at the hotel. Then, we will get on our international flight back to the U.S.A.