

BURGUNDY CRUISING FROM AUXERRE

(at 4/10/11)

7-day / 6-night cruising & sightseeing – departs weekly April to November – includes Paris transfers



Departs: Free transfer to/from Paris every Sunday from 8th April to 3rd November 2012

Cost: \$3890 per person twin share (value season on select dates in April, July & October)
 \$4060 per person twin share (regular season – all other dates)

Single cabin: Limited single use cabins available from \$3890 - \$4060

Starting in the beautiful Yonne region, we cruise the River Yonne past Chablis, Avalon and Vézelay to Clemency in the heart of Burgundy. Interwoven with sections of the Nivernais canal, we cruise through 35 locks, past a succession of pretty stone-built villages along a waterway once used for floating timber and wine barrels downstream to Paris. We follow the path taken by Romans and pilgrims past Charolais cows grazing in the lush green meadows beside this enchanting waterway. A journey through history with all the charm of times past.

Our journey to our traditional French (but English managed) hotel barge starts with a bus transfer from our meeting point in central Paris to Auxerre. The barge accommodates up to 14 guests in eight individually air-conditioned cabins (three have double beds that can be converted into twins, three have a twin bed layout and there are also two single cabins). Each cabin has its own private bathroom.

Meals on board the barge are treasured times, opportunities to share with friends — old and new — a summer luncheon or candlelit dinner. Our chef is encouraged to be innovative and imaginative, creating French cuisine with a contemporary twist using fresh local ingredients. Breakfast offers freshly baked croissants, pastries and bread. Lunch is a feast of salads and savoury dishes, followed by a selection of fresh fruit and cheeses. The four-course evening meal is the gastronomic highlight of each day, to be concluded, on the starlit nights for which Burgundy is noted, with coffee and liqueurs on deck.

Daily, guided excursions are offered by air-conditioned bus – to medieval towns, chateaux and the glorious vineyards of Chablis – blending culture and shopping opportunities along the way! Beside the canal the old towpaths, free of passing traffic, are perfect for a stroll beside the barge as she makes her way between the locks. Bicycles are also provided for passengers to use and are popular early in the morning or before dinner.

We take you on a wine tour of the country, choosing wines to complement our menus – all are recommended by wine expert Marc Ragaine, voted 'the world's best independent wine merchant' in 2003. We serve 18 wines from 12 different grape varieties each with its own specific character, reflecting the 'terroir' and the great diversity of the vineyards of France.

The 'open bar' is freely available at all times. The sun deck, with seating, tables and umbrellas, offers the perfect place to enjoy the scenery as it unfolds or the large picture windows of the air-conditioned saloon area is also a good place to relish uninterrupted views of rural Burgundy. There's plenty of time to be active or just to relax and unwind as your day and your mood takes you.

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Good food and fine wine are an important component of these cruises here are some suggested menus served onboard the barge:

LUNCH

Mushroom and pancetta-stuffed peppers
Mediterranean couscous with roasted vegetables
Mixed bean salad with lemon and thyme
Fresh fruit

Burgundian cheese gougère
Tomato and pesto salad with pine nuts
Green salad with Dijon mustard dressing
Cheese: Petit Billy and Cantal

DINNER

Pan-seared scallops with ribboned courgettes
Gratin Dauphinoise
Crispy leeks
Mango and lime tart with raspberry coulis

Maigret of duck with cassis and Burgundy jus
French green beans
Cheese: Brie de Meaux, Epoisses and Roquefort
Coffee, chocolates and liqueurs

Suggested Itinerary:

THE NIVERNAIS, FROM AUXERRE TO CLAMECY OR RETURN

Sunday: The meeting point is in central Paris at 2.30pm is followed by a private bus journey to the hotel barge at her mooring on the River Yonne and beside the wonderful cathedral of Saint Etienne in Auxerre in Burgundy. The waterfront here is amongst the most picturesque in France. A champagne reception welcomes our guests on board and, after dinner onboard, there is time for a short walk to the historic centre with many cafes and bars.

Monday: A cruise upriver today leads us into beautiful pastoral countryside, along sweeping reaches of the River Yonne. Hand-operated locks lie along our course, providing opportunities to step ashore as we work the barge through. We moor at the village of Bailly, home to Burgundy's Crémant sparkling wine. In the afternoon we visit Chablis in our tour bus, first to a private wine cellar for tasting, then on into the famous vineyards of the area.

Tuesday: The morning's voyage takes us up an attractive arm of the canal and on to the River Cure at Vermenton. In the afternoon we return by bus to tour historic Auxerre and its old shopping centre, taking time to enjoy French provincial life.

Wednesday: From Vermenton, we visit delightful Noyers-sur-Serein. With its friendly market stalls, half-timbered houses and turreted ramparts, it is easy to see why Noyers-sur-Serein has been nominated 'one of the most beautiful villages in France'. After lunch we return down the Vermenton Arm, turning southwards at its end to a nighttime mooring at Mailly-la-Ville.

Thursday: A morning drive takes our group to Vézelay, where the spectacular 12th century Basilica dominates the town. Here, St Bernard preached the second Crusade. Vézelay, a centre of pilgrimage still, is a focal point of the region, with numerous shops and cafes. In the afternoon we cruise again, past the dramatic cliffs of Le Saussois to an evening mooring at Châtel-Censoir.

Friday: In the morning we head to Clamecy, a medieval town of narrow streets and stairways and a worthy climax to the cruise. The final visit is to the imposing Chateau of Bazoches. Set on a hillside amidst a rolling landscape, this was the 17th Century home of the Marquis de Vauban, France's great military engineer.

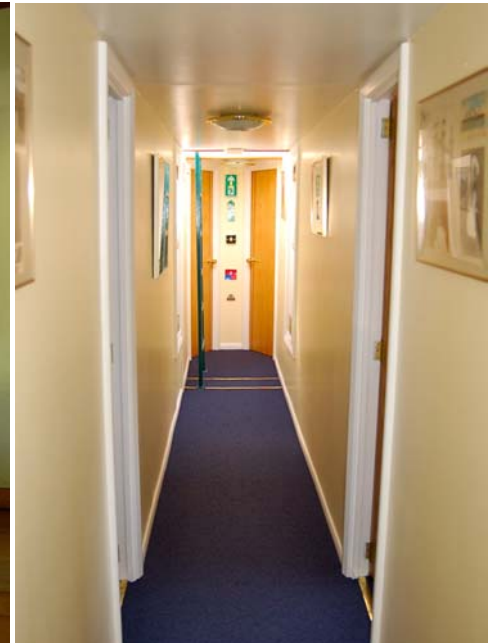
Saturday: After breakfast our bus transfer to Paris is anticipated to arrive in the city by around 1.00pm. For guests wishing to travel elsewhere in France by train or hire car, we can always stop in Auxerre on our way.

This is a sample itinerary: it is subject to modification in the case of unforeseen circumstances such as canal closures and navigation problems. The boat cruises in the opposite direction on alternate weeks.

Other hotel barge cruises available from **Outdoor Travel** - with weekly departures – are in **Burgundy**, the **Loire Valley**, the **Bordeaux** region, **Alsace**, **Provence** or on the **Canal Du Midi** in the south of France.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details, travel brochures and reservations

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