

## Luciole – One week cruising from Auxerre in Burgundy



Starting in the Yonne region, cruise the River Yonne deep into the heart of Burgundy past Chablis, Avalon and Vézelay to Clemency. Interwoven with sections of the Nivernais man-made canal we cruise through 35 locks, past a succession of pretty stone-built villages along a waterway once used for floating timber and wine down to Paris. We follow path taken by the Romans and by pilgrims, past Charolais cows grazing in the lush green meadows alongside this enchanting waterway full of the character and charm of a past age.

Our hotel barge tour departs from Auxerre (which is within easy reach of Paris by train). The barge Luciole accommodates up to 14 guests in eight individually air-conditioned cabins (three have double beds which can be converted into twins and three have a twin-bedded layout and there are two single cabins). Each cabin has its own private bathroom.

Meals on board the Luciole 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, marrying French cuisine with a contemporary twist while 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 use of passengers and are popular early in the morning or before dinner.

We take you on a wine tour of the country, choosing wines to compliment 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 from the air-conditioned saloon area large picture windows allow uninterrupted views of rural Burgundy. Plenty of time to be active or just to relax and unwind as your day and your mood takes you.

Departs: Every Saturday from 4<sup>th</sup> April to 6<sup>th</sup> November 2010  
 Cost: \$3995 per person twin share (value season on select dates in April, July & October)  
 \$4535 per person twin share (regular season – all other dates)  
 Single cabin: Available from \$4175 - \$4715

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

#### 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

**Sunday:** The rendezvous in Paris at 2.30 pm is followed by the journey in our private bus to the Luciole at her mooring beneath the cathedral of Saint Etienne in Auxerre. The waterfront here is amongst the most picturesque in France. A Champagne reception welcomes our guests on board.

**Monday:** A cruise upriver leads us into beautiful pastoral countryside, along sweeping reaches of the River Yonne. Hand-wound 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. An afternoon visit is made to Chablis, to a private wine cellar, 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 2nd 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:** Our cruise in the morning is 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:** An after-breakfast departure for Paris anticipates arrival there around 1pm. For guests wishing to travel elsewhere in France by hire car, we can always stop in Auxerre while passing through 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.*

### Contact Outdoor Travel or your travel agent for more details, travel brochures and reservations

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