

FRANCE - CHAMPAGNE ALSACE BURGUNDY PROVENCE & LOIRE

7-days / 6-nights Small barge canal or river cruising and sightseeing



Hotel Barge cruises combine canal or river cruising with guided sightseeing excursions by bus or on foot. Unpack once and come 'home' each afternoon to your comfortable cabin with your own bathroom.

Cruise through the heart of France at a pace far removed from the hustle and bustle of the modern world. Life is simplicity itself as you float peacefully along these rural waterways. Learn about and explore the region's flora and fauna, its history, its culinary specialities and much, much more. Barges are designed for up to a maximum of 24 passengers which allows access to cruising on the smaller waterways visiting small towns and villages, charming French chateaux or vineyards. An accompanying tour bus gives daily sightseeing options. Discover too the natural beauty on foot or by bicycle on towpaths along the banks of the canals.

These newly constructed custom designed hotel barges have been equipped with comfort in mind to make your holiday unforgettable. With a high client/crew ratio, passengers are well looked after by a trained, professional crew, so you can relax and have a truly wonderful time.

For those interested in fine dining there is chance to savour a wide range of regional gastronomic dishes, accompanied by carefully chosen local wines. These all-inclusive cruises offer a high standard of meals prepared by our onboard chef, serving traditional and regional cuisine with a selection of local wines and cheeses. Breakfast is an impressive self-serve continental buffet. Lunch and dinner are usually 3-course meals with a fixed menu of local specialities prepared daily from fresh ingredients and accompanied by complimentary wines or non-alcoholic beverages. Specialty wines and champagne are available for purchase.

Sightseeing excursions are available on most days, including a guided city walk or bus tours of regional highlights, or you can relax, take a stroll or cycle along the towpaths and a host of other activities.

Duration: 7-days / 6-nights

Cost from: \$3245 per person twin share

Departs: Selected dates from late March to October 2022 in different regions (see page 2)

Cruises usually include: All meals from dinner the first day to breakfast on day 7, drinks (wine, beer, fruit juices and coffee during lunch and dinner on the boat), drinks from the bar (except champagne or listed wines), double-occupancy cabin with ensuite shower/toilet, onboard multi-lingual host/hostess, welcome cocktail, gala dinner, port fees, transfers by bus to/from the barge, excursions as shown, Wifi (where available, may be limited in some areas), use of bikes.

Not included: Drinks on excursions or transfers, optional excursions (offered during cruises - must be reserved and paid for on board), cancellation and baggage insurance, personal expenses, crew gratuities.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

CHAMPAGNE ALSACE BURGUNDY PROVENCE OR LOIRE

Prices are per person based on twin-share cabin occupancy or with a single cabin supplement.

Prices are shown in Australian dollars and are subject to exchange rate fluctuations and booking conditions.

REGION	ROUTE	TOUR COST PER PERSON (Twin share) From:	SINGLE CABIN SUPPLEMENT From:	DEPARTURE DATES FOR 2022
Doubs & Franche Comte	Montbéliard - Besançon	\$3245	\$1545	31 st March
Franche Comte & Burgundy	Dijon – Besançon	\$4175 \$4220	\$1625	2 nd , 14 th April, 20 th August
Burgundy & Franche Comte	Besançon – Dijon	\$4175 \$4220	\$1625	9 th April, 18 th June, 27 th August
Burgundy	Dijon – St Léger	\$4175	\$1625	14 th April
Alsace	Strasbourg – Lagarde	\$4175 \$4220	\$1625	1 st , 2 nd April, 25 th June
Alsace	Lagarde – Strasbourg	\$4175 \$4220 \$4220	\$1625	22 nd , 23 rd April, 21 st May, 18 th June, 1 st , 15 th July, 12 th August
Provence	Arles – Sète	\$4395	\$1625	2 nd , 16 th April
Provence	Sète – Arles	\$4360 \$4395	\$1625	9 th April, 30 th July,
Loire	Nevers – Briare	\$4665	\$1625	7 th , 21 st July, 13 th October
Loire	Briare – Nevers	\$4665	\$1625	22 nd September, 20 th October
Champagne	Paris – Epernay	\$4430	\$1625	13 th October

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CHAMPAGNE – ÉPERNAY TO PARIS OR RETURN

Cruise on the majestic Marne canal through vine-covered countryside, visiting cities full of character: Épernay and Reims, home to some of the world's greatest Champagne houses, and charming and timeless Paris..

Suggested itinerary: (operates in reverse on selected dates)

Day 1: Arrive in Épernay

Transfer from Paris by coach to join our barge at about 6:00pm. After settling into your cabin, meet the crew and have dinner. We remain moored in the port overnight.

Day 2: Épernay – Dormans

A morning excursion to the beautiful Champagne city of Reims for a guided tour of the historic centre and Reims cathedral with its superb stained glass windows by Marc Chagall. We return to the barge and enjoy the cruise to Dormans where we moor overnight.

Day 3: Dormans – Château-Thierry

A visit to the famous Champagne Tourist Route and the picturesque village of Hautvillers, regarded as the birthplace of Champagne. We visit a prominent Champagne house for a tasting. We return to the barge for lunch, spending the afternoon cruising along the beautiful Marne canal to Château-Thierry.

Day 4: Château-Thierry – Saint-Jean-les-Deux-Jumeaux

The 17th Century poet and fabulist Jean de la Fontaine was born in the town of Château-Thierry. We tour the castle and its walls, then we either visit the Hotel Dieu or see a falconry show. Afterwards we cruise towards Saint-Jean-les-Deux-Jumeaux, through the heart of the vine-covered countryside, arriving in the evening.

Day 5: Saint-Jean-les-Deux-Jumeaux – Meaux – Lagny-sur-Marne

After breakfast we cruise to Meaux with an optional excursion to discover the town, cathedral, Bishops' Palace, city ramparts and the Bossuet Garden. We visit the Brie de Meaux exhibition with a tasting of this delicacy known as the '*The Prince of Cheeses*'. We cruise to Lagny-sur-Marne for the overnight mooring.

Day 6: Lagny-sur-Marne – Paris

Morning cruising the Marne and Seine Rivers arriving in Paris after lunch to explore many of the tourist sites, covered walkways and shopping arcades. Return to the ship this evening for a festive gala dinner.

Day 7: Departure day

Tour ends in Paris. Disembark after breakfast, at 9am.

ALSACE & LORRAINE – LAGARDE TO STRASBOURG OR RETURN

A very popular cruising route, known as the Greenway, crosses the plain of Alsace and the Vosges. It links the Alsace wine region at the foot of the Vosges Mountains with forests, hop-growing areas and the Moselle region. We'll find distinctive Alsatian architecture and many fascinating structural works such as the Saint-Louis-Arzviller inclined plane (the only one in Europe), where boats are lifted to avoid a series of locks.

Suggested Itinerary:

Day 1: Strasbourg – Lagarde

Transfer by coach from Strasbourg to Lagarde and board your ship around 6pm. There is a welcome aboard and a presentation of the crew and the week's cruise program before dinner.

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Day 2: Lagarde – Xouaxange

We cruise to Xouaxange from Lagarde passing Réchicourt lock, one of the largest in France. After lunch we visit Sarrebourg at the foot of the Vosges Mountains in Alsace. Sarrebourg offers a rich historical and cultural heritage including Marc Chagall's stained-glass window at the Chapelle des Cordeliers.

Day 3: Xouaxange – Arzviller Inclined Plane – Lutzelbourg

The highlight today is the Arzviller inclined plane and the nearby crystal glassworks. The glassworks is a family-run business specialising in cutting crystal and we can see crystal blowing and cutting demonstrations. Our passage through the Arzviller inclined plane is always a fascinating one as it replaces 17 locks that used to take a full day to navigate. Eat lunch by candlelight while passing through the Arzviller and Niderviller Tunnels to Lutzelbourg. The canal winds through the Vosges Mountains before entering the Lorraine region.

Day 4: Lutzelbourg – Saverne

Lutzelbourg is one of the most beautiful villages in France. Take a walk to Lutzelbourg Castle perched at 300m above sea level on a rocky, red sandstone spur. The ruins of the castle dominate the villages in the Zorn Valley. Afterwards we cruise to Saverne, arriving in the afternoon. The barge moors near Rohan Castle. There is free time in Saverne or an optional visit to the Château de Hohbarr / Haut-Barr, nicknamed "*The Eye of Alsace*" for its splendid views of the wide plains, and the Chappe Tower with a small interactive display on the history of telecommunication. Dinner is on board and we moor in Saverne.

Day 5: Saverne – Waltenheim

Take a guided tour of Saverne including the Grand Rue with its unicorn fountain (the symbol of the city); the Katz House, adorned with magnificent carved timbers; Notre Dame Church with its 12th Century steeple or the Récollets Monastery founded in the 14th Century. In the afternoon we cruise to Waltenheim-sur-Zorn, passing the villages of Hochfelden and Schwindratzheim, nestled on a hillside. You have the opportunity to stroll or cycle along the towpath. Dinner is at a restaurant in Waltenheim where the local speciality is *tarte flambé*.

Day 6: Waltenheim – Strasbourg

We transfer by coach to Wingersheim, centre of hop-growing for the region, where we walk through the hop fields, tour the town by tractor and taste some of the beers made with local hops. In the afternoon we cruise to Strasbourg through the Zorn Valley and past landscaped fields – where the canal is wide and straight. Tonight is our Gala Dinner onboard followed by free time to explore or a boat tour of Strasbourg's old town.

Day 7: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast in Strasbourg.

BURGUNDY – FROM DIJON TO SAINT LÉGER OR RETURN

A tranquil journey through the Saône-et-Loire and La Côte d'Or regions of France. See the natural beauty of the River Saône and discover the many attractions of the Canal du Centre linking the Saône to the River Loire. We pass rolling hills and lush pastures, through forests and rural countryside, discovering the canal de Bourgogne and its tranquil landscapes. At the crossroads of the great wine appellations, we cruise through the vineyards of the Côte Chalonnaise and the Côte de Beaune. On this tour you will discover many famous destinations highly regarded in the world of wine, each unique and authentic, so prepare to be captivated.

Suggested itinerary: *

Day 1: Dijon

Board the barge at Dijon at around 6.00pm for a welcome and an introduction to the crew and life onboard before dinner is served on board.

Day 2: Dijon – Longecourt-en-Plaine

We spend the morning cruising – you may like to simply sit back and enjoy the scenery, or walk or cycle alongside the boat on the canal towpath. After lunch we have an excursion along the Grands Crus wine route, which passes through picturesque villages and the finest, most prestigious Burgundy vineyards. We stop in one of the many estates to enjoy a wine tasting session. Dinner onboard in Longecourt-en-Plaine.

Day 3: Longecourt-en-Plaine – St-Jean-de-Losne

We cruise the Doubs River this morning. Bicycles are available for those wishing to ride along the Green Route cycle trail. In the afternoon, there is a guided tour of Saint-Jean-de-Losne, visiting the monument commemorating the Siege of 1636; the Hôtel-Dieu, a charity hospital founded in 1658; the Gothic-style Church of St John the Baptist, built during the 16th Century; and the Batellerie Museum, also known as the Sailors' House, one of the oldest houses in the town, which tells of the history of navigation.

Day 4: St-Jean-de-Losne – Chalon-sur-Saône

Breakfast is served as we cruise towards the town of Chalon-sur-Saône. As we cruise, admire the Saône River's hilly banks and typical local houses perched on its hillsides. Feel free to ride alongside the boat continuing on the Green Way bike path. In the afternoon, we tour Chalon-sur-Saône, birthplace of Joseph Nicéphore Niepce, who is regarded as the inventor of photography back in 1824. We visit the old town with its old wooden houses, the Cathedral of St Vincent and many classical dwellings from the 17th and 18th Centuries.

Day 5: Chalon-sur-Saône – Chagny

Relax and enjoy the scenery of rolling meadows and farmland as we cruise towards Chagny. In the afternoon we take a short drive to Nolay for a walk to the Cirque du Bout du Monde with its imposing chalk cliffs and waterfall carved by the river Cozanne. We then drive to Mont de Sène, an ancient Celtic religious site which overlooks the Santenay vineyards. Classified as a nature park, there are many plants and wild shrubs here, amazing views of the vineyards of the Côte de Beaune, the Saône Valley, Morvan, Jura and Alps.

Day 6: Chagny – Saint-Léger-sur-Dheune

From the ship we walk to Santenay, a wine village with a priceless historical and natural heritage. There are 38 wine producers here and we are treated to a tasting at one of them. After lunch, we cruise towards Saint-Léger-sur-Dheune through lush green landscapes. Tonight is our gala evening and dinner.

Day 7: Departure day

Breakfast onboard, we then disembark at 9.00am for a coach transfer to Dijon, where tour arrangements end.

** A variation of this cruise runs on select dates between Port sur Saône and Dijon, or between Besançon and Dijon or vice versa - ask for a detailed itinerary.*

PROVENCE – ARLES TO SETE OR RETURN

The Rhône à Sète Canal combines the Canal des Étangs, Canal de Beaucaire and the Canal de la Radelle. In the wetlands we can see flamingos and other water birds, black bulls, coypu and grey Camargue horses. From Avignon to Frontignan Port, we follow the Rhône River to the port of Beaucaire and cruise the Rhône à Sète Canal. The fortified city of Aigues-Mortes has a tumultuous history and is the doorway to the Camargue, the Rhone River delta. We follow the Chemin des Étangs to the port of Sète.

Suggested itinerary: (operates in reverse on selected dates)

Day 1: Arrive in Arles

Passengers are welcome to board at 6:00pm. After you settle into your cabin, meet your crew and have a complimentary cocktail before dinner. We remain in the port of Arles overnight.

Day 2: Arles – Gallician

A tour of Arles is offered to discover the Roman ruins and historical heritage of this cultural centre. We then travel inland to learn about olive oil production in Provence and to taste local products. We return to our barge for the afternoon, cruising to the village of Gallician, where the local school is painted with murals paying homage to Van Gogh. We moor here, on the Rhône River and the Rhône à Sète Canal, overnight.

Day 3: Gallician – Aigues-Mortes

This morning we offer an excursion to the Camargue with free time in Sainte-Marie-de-la-Mer, with its rather unusual underground fortified church sacred to the local gypsies. The afternoon is spent cruising towards Aigues-Mortes, arriving in the early evening, and we moor here overnight. The town's name means 'dead waters' in the ancient Occitan tongue, for the marshes and ponds that surround it.

Day 4: Aigues Mortes – Palavas-Les-Flots

A tour of Aigues-Mortes after breakfast. This fortified city with a rich heritage beside the marshlands of the river delta is one of the most beautiful sites in Provence. We board a tourist train to see the salt marshes and visit the salt museum. We return to our barge and cruise to Palavas-Les-Flots, a seaside resort on a strip of sand dunes, with a history dating back more than three centuries. We stay here overnight.

Day 5: Palavas-Les-Flotes – Sète

After breakfast take a wagon ride to visit a *manade*, a Camargue word for a shepherd's camp or settlement used for herding cattle or horses. We learn of the life of the herders and the animal management of the area. There may be some traditional activities such as bull drafting or marking. We return to the boat for some delicious snacks - local cheeses, olives and wines - from the farm. We spend the afternoon cruising towards the sea and the port of Sète where we moor for two nights.

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Day 6: Sète – free day or an optional excursion

An excursion today to the saltwater lagoon famous for its fresh shellfish. At the *Étang de Thau* we visit the museum to learn of the importance of shellfish and fish to the local economy and taste some of the shellfish while enjoying views of the waterway from a terrace. In the afternoon there is an optional tour of Sète's historical centre, Mont Saint-Clair, a nearby peak with exceptional panoramic views, and the Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette chapel, with its modern frescoes. Tonight is our gala farewell dinner moored in Sète.

Day 7: Sète – Arles or Avignon

Transfer by coach after breakfast to Arles or Avignon, where your tour ends.

LOIRE VALLEY – BRIARE TO NEVERS OR RETURN

A cruise on the Loire River and Canal Lateral de la Loire is an inspiring journey in the heart of France. Cruise past historic cities, taking time to discover the architecture of Briare, Sancerre, and La Charité-sur-Loire. Take in the vineyards of Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé, where we stop and sample these renowned wines. Visit typical rustic farmhouses and taste local produce and artisan goats' milk cheeses. Explore in the richly diverse Val de Loire natural reserve. Join an unforgettable cruise that unites French history, cuisine and cultural heritage.

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Paris – Briare

Transfer by bus from Paris to the barge in Briare. Boarding is from 6.00pm. Settle in to your cabin, then meet the crew and your fellow guests. After dinner, the barge cruises through the Gustav Eiffel-designed Briare aqueduct, one of the longest navigable aqueducts in the world. We return to Briare and moor overnight here.

Day 2: Briare – Léré

After breakfast, we take a tourist train, Le Petit Train de Briare, through the charming village of Briare to the 19th Century Chateau de Trousse-Barriere and town hall. Cruising the tree-lined canal we see many locks, lock-keepers' houses and bridges, some bedecked with flowers. The 19th Century church of Saint-Etienne combines elements taken from both Byzantine and Gothic styles of architecture. Later we visit the Deux Marines Museum to learn of the history of the Loire and its canals. On the barge we cruise to Léré for dinner.

Day 3: Léré – Ménétréol-sous-Sancerre

Today's highlight is an excursion to the beautiful medieval city of Sancerre, in the historic region of Berry. We follow the Fil d'Ariane, a red line painted on city streets, taking us past the old quarters of winemakers and bakers, 15th Century buildings and lovely art galleries. The Fief Tower is all that remains of the 14th Century castle of the counts of Sancerre, and if you are game for a steep climb up significant stairs, you may like to visit the tower (optional, entrance fee not included) for extensive views. After, we visit a family-run goat farm for a tasting of the trademarked local cheeses and the local Sancerre wine. The classic pairing of goat cheese with Sancerre is heavenly. The barge is moored in Ménétréol-sous-Sancerre, where we enjoy dinner onboard.

Day 4: Ménétréol-sous-Sancerre – Herry

After breakfast, depart by bus for Pouilly-sur-Loire via the Tour de Pouilly-Fumé wine tourism centre. We visit the vineyards, a wine cellar and taste some local wines, including of course Pouilly-Fumé made from Sauvignon grapes. Afterwards we cruise to Herry. You may like to cycle along a portion of the EuroVélo 6, the bike route that travels from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea.

Day 5: Herry – Marseilles-les-Aubigny

Today we visit the medieval village of La Charité-sur-Loire with its 11th Century priory. This UNESCO World Heritage site was once a stopping point on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, and in fact the town of La Charité gained its name from the generosity of the monks to the pilgrims. We head to a typical farm deep in the countryside, where we can absorb the rustic calm that is particular to France. This afternoon we cruise through the Val de Loire Natural Reserve, roughly 1500 hectares of rich biodiversity, where nature, culture and heritage meet. Upon arrival in Marseilles-les-Aubigny, tonight is our festive gala evening.

Day 6: Marseilles-les-Aubigny – Nevers

Our first stop is Fontmorigny Abbey, a privately-owned former Cistercian monastery. The present owners have brought the abbey back to life as one of the main cultural sites in the area. Admire the contemporary stained-glass windows, peaceful abbey-church and cloister ruins, ancient guests' quarters, fish pond and abbot's garden. We continue to Apremont-sur-Allier and its floral gardens. One of the most beautiful villages in France, this small medieval jewel on the banks of the Allier offers wonderful views of its castle. Over lunch and through the afternoon we cruise to Nevers. As night falls we may take a romantic tour of Nevers with lanterns.

Day 7: Departure day Disembark after breakfast at 9.00am. There is a transfer by coach available to Paris.



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IMPORTANT NOTE: Cruises may operate in the opposite direction on alternate weeks. These are sample itineraries and may be subject to change at the captain or tour guide's discretion. Care is taken, amendments to the itinerary details and inclusions may occur - ask for current details when you make your booking.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS: Each day there may be optional excursions not included in the tour cost, similar to programs offered on ocean-going cruise ships. These are at your own choice and are paid locally. Costs will vary with the duration and inclusions – ask for details when you make your reservation.



Please ask for a detailed itinerary of your preferred tour, as inclusions may vary between tours.

Other small group hotel barge cruises carrying from 4 to 22 passengers are available from **Outdoor Travel** - with weekly departures – in other areas of **Burgundy**, in the **Loire Valley**, the **Bordeaux** region, **Provence** or on the **Canal du Midi** in the south of France or **Venice** in Italy.

Outdoor Travel offer Self-skipped motor cruisers in most of these areas of France and also in Germany, Italy, Holland, Belgium, England, Scotland and Ireland. Traditional narrowboat hire is also available on canals in England, Scotland and in Wales. Crewed narrowboat holidays are also available in the English Midlands.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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