

– THE – FRANCOFILE

Seek out the extraordinary with our top 25 dream experiences across the Francophone world.

France is one of the world's most visited destinations, welcoming more than 80 million tourists in 2014. While a glimpse of the Eiffel Tower makes our hearts skip a beat and Mont-Saint-Michel always inspires awe, this nation – as well as Monaco, French Polynesia and New Caledonia – is unparalleled in offering once-in-a-lifetime experiences, if you know where to look. From supercars in Provence to cycling through Normandy, we invite you to rediscover France in style.

1 HAUTE COUTURE PARIS *travel.1889experience.com*

Go behind the scenes of haute couture with visits to the ateliers of designers and the workshops of skilled artisans involved in the fashion industry, or join a personal stylist for a shopping experience like no other.

2 A NIGHT AT THE OPERA *operadeparis.fr*

Palais Garnier is one of Paris' most beautiful buildings. Admire it in all its ornate glory by seeing an opera or ballet, and admire the ceiling painted by Marc Chagall, as well as the artistry on stage.

3 THE MOULIN ROUGE *moulinrouge.fr*

Be dazzled by the world's most famous cabaret with a VIP Dinner and Show.

The Féerie revue takes you on a journey through Paris and the cabaret itself – with a detour into exotic Indonesia – full of sequins and feathers. Enjoy it all with a gourmet experience on a private balcony.

4 INDULGE LIKE MARIE ANTOINETTE *waldorfastoria.com*

ducasse-chateauversailles.com
Spend a night in the parkland of the world's most famous château at Trianon Palace Versailles, A Waldorf Astoria Hotel and savour breakfast or lunch at Alain Ducasse's new restaurant, ore.

5 PAINT LIKE THE IMPRESSIONISTS *etangs-corot.com*

Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot's landscape painting would go on to inspire the Impressionist movement and his former home, now Les Etangs de Corot boutique hotel, is the perfect place to hone your artistic technique with a painting lesson.

6 CHÂTEAU LIFE IN THE LOIRE *oliverstravels.com*

Don't just visit the spectacular châteaux of the Loire Valley; stay in your very own with a spectacular holiday rental. We love 14-bedroom Château des Joyaux, known as Petit Chambord for its resemblance to the French Renaissance masterpiece.



01 France by supercar with Wild Drives © Lorenz Richard 02 Stay in your own Loire palace at Château des Joyaux © Oliver's Travels/Cyril Folliot 03 Relais & Châteaux member, L'Hôtel de Toiras, is an ideal place to stay on Île de Ré 04 Biking through Normandy © Butterfield & Robinson/Sebastien Romero 05 Les Etangs de Corot invites guests to discover their inner artist © Roberta Valerio

11 BORDEAUX PAR EXCELLENCE

luxurywineexperience.com

Indulge in a Wine Experience by Bernard Magrez, customised with helicopter and Rolls-Royce transfers, accommodation in vineyard châteaux, wine tasting, dining and wine making.

12 HUNTING FOR TRUFFLES

latruffiere.com.au

Winter is truffle season in the Périgord region, filled with markets, farms, truffle dogs and the annual truffle festival in Sarlat, with tours taking in the wonder of this fantastic fungus.

13 BELLE ÉPOQUE BESIDE THE SEA

lhw.com

Enjoy lavish turn-of-the-century hotel grandeur next to the Atlantic Ocean in Biarritz; Hôtel du Palais was built by Napoleon III for his wife Eugénie and still has an elegant old-world feel.



7 TASTE THE STARS IN CHAMPAGNE

grapeescapes.net

champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk

Immerse yourself in the world of Dom (Pierre) Pérignon with a four-day VIP Atelier Tour in Hautvillers, then hit the Route Touristique du Champagne to explore the rest of the region's wonders. Hire a classic car to add that certain *je ne sais quoi* to your getaway.

8 A CHEESEMAKING ODYSSEY

cheesemaking.com.au

Learn more than you ever thought you wanted to know about Comté, Époisses, Morbier, Raclette and blue-vein cheeses on Australia-based Cheesemaking's annual hands-on Discover the Art of French Cheesemaking tour across Burgundy. Be sure to book well ahead, though, as places fill up quickly.

9 CYCLE THROUGH NORMANDY

butterfield.com

Indulge your inner history buff with a journey through the past – from the Bayeux Tapestry and the Battle of Hastings to the beaches of the D-Day Landings – on a Bespoke Normandy cycling tour with Butterfield & Robinson. Start in the port of Honfleur and savour the elegance of resort town Deauville.

10 ATLANTIC ISLAND IDYLL

relaischateaux.com slh.com

Soak up the sun on Île de Ré, a popular holiday destination off the coast of La Rochelle. Choose from a 17th-century shipbuilder's residence overlooking the mast-filled port at L'Hôtel de Toiras or a classically chic villa with contemporary interiors and a Spa by Clarins at Le Clos Saint-Martin Hotel & Spa.



14 CHARTER A SUPERYACHT

lyc.com

Bask in the Riviera lifestyle aboard a fully crewed superyacht, and cruise to your heart's content between glittering Saint-Tropez and Monaco.

15 FERRARI AND LAMBORGHINI IN PROVENCE

wilddrives.com.au

Hire a supercar and hit the winding coastal roads above the Mediterranean with a four-night drive from Cannes to Monte-Carlo, via hilltop Vence.

16 SECRETS OF PERFUME

molinard.com

Learn the art of fragrance with a workshop, accompanied by champagne, at La Villa du Parfumeur de Molinard in Grasse, the home of perfume.



20 TOUR DE FRANCE VIP

sportstoursinternational.co.uk
Arrive by helicopter to watch a stage of the world's most famous cycling race from an official Tour de France car. Mingle with riders and celebrities at the Village Départ before enjoying the race in comfort and celebrating at the finish line.

21 IN THE WAKE OF PAUL GAUGUIN

aranui.com
Discover how Tahiti and its tropical islands inspired art and literature on a cruise through French Polynesia – including the mysterious Marquesas Islands – aboard the unique freighter-cruise ship *Aranui 5*.

22 COWBOYS OF NEW CALEDONIA

newcaledonia.travel
Explore the intriguing rural West Coast of our South Pacific neighbour with a night under the stars at an authentic local barbecue with a farming family. It's a fascinating insight into a side of island life you might not have known existed.

23 SET SAIL ON THE SEINE

uniworld.com
Cruise the Seine aboard Uniworld's newest ship, *SS Joie de Vivre*, on an eight-day return journey from Paris, visiting Monet's gardens at Giverny, Joan of Arc's Rouen, pretty harbour town Honfleur and the white cliffs of Étretat.

24 FROM PARIS TO MARSEILLE

abercrombiekent.com.au
See the best of France in a whirlwind eight-day private tour with Abercrombie & Kent, going behind the scenes at the Eiffel Tower, touring Paris with a food critic, and sleeping in a medieval citadel in Provence. You'll even stay overnight in Versailles, on the palace's doorstep.

25 PALATIAL STAYS

au.france.fr
There are some hotels where five stars just aren't enough. That's where the Palace of France status comes in. These 24 hotels are the pinnacle of living *à la française* in Paris, across the country and even in the Caribbean. A stay in one (or all) is a must for the true Francophile. ♦

17 RUB SHOULDERS WITH STARS IN CANNES

festival-cannes.com
The Riviera city comes alive in May when the annual film festival rolls into town. Whether you're accredited to attend the film showings or not, it's an exciting time to visit, with glamour at its peak.

18 GO WILD IN CORSICA

wildcorsica.fr
Hike *La Corse's* mythical 170-kilometre-long hiking trail, GR20, with a guide, or marvel at the Milky Way on a star-chasing wilderness adventure by night; Corsica is one of the last places on Earth where you can see our galaxy with the naked eye.

19 MASTER FRENCH COOKING

institutpaulbocuse.com
Learn about French cuisine from the 'pope of gastronomy' at Institut Paul Bocuse in Lyon, the gourmet capital of France, with a week-long program including Michelin-starred dining.



06 Opulence with the Bernard Magrez Luxury Wine Experience 07 The world's most famous cabaret, the Moulin Rouge, in Paris 08 The Cave du Vin aboard Uniworld's *SS Joie de Vivre*