

France's Finest Viking River Cruises

By

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Europe River Cruise Expert

Overview

- Explore Avignon's Palace of the Popes and savor Lyon's culinary heritage.
- Toast centuries-old vineyards and luxuriate in Paris's sophistication.
- Walk in Joan of Arc's footsteps at Rouen.
- Pay your respects at Normandy's World War II beaches.
- Art, cuisine, style, *joie de vivre*—if you love everything *français*, this is for you: a 15-day journey that combines our popular *Lyon & Provence* and *Paris & the Heart of Normandy* cruises into one *tour de force*.

Map From Viking River Cruises



Paris to Avignon

- Your Viking Cruise includes one shore excursion in each port of call (excluding embarkation and disembarkation ports), and there are many optional excursions in most ports that will allow you to customize your journey.
- A full list of available shore excursions is provided to each guest well in advance of each cruise.

Day 1 Paris, France

- Arrive in Paris, romance capital of the world.
- Transfer from the airport to your ship, docked in the heart of the city, just a short stroll from the Eiffel Tower.*
- After boarding, take free time to explore Paris, or join our “welcome walk” to stretch your legs and get oriented. (Dinner)
- * Ground transfers are included with Viking Air purchase.

Day 2 Paris, France

- After breakfast, embark on a tour of this dazzling city and marvel at its most remarkable sights, including the iconic Eiffel Tower.
- Take in the École Militaire (Military Museum), Orsay Museum and Latin Quarter, and resilient Notre Dame Cathedral.
- Then drive past the Louvre and Opera House and along the famed Champs-Élysées.
- This afternoon, you may join an optional tour to explore Montmartre Hill and the Sacré-Coeur or sample the delights of French cuisine during a food tour.
- Return on board for dinner and start your cruise on the Seine this evening.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 2 Shore Excursions

- Panoramic Paris—included--See the major sights of the romantic “City of Light” with a knowledgeable local guide.
- Flavors of Paris--Enjoy a guided walk through a richly historic quarter steeped in culinary traditions.
- Montremarte Hill--Visit one of the most celebrated districts in Paris—Montmartre.
- Scenic Paris & Highlights of the Louvre--Discover the iconic sights of Paris and its renowned museum during a comprehensive full-day excursion.

Day 3 La Roche-Guyon & Vernon, France

- Arrive in La Roche-Guyon before breakfast and enjoy a morning at your leisure to explore.
- The village is officially classified as one of France's most beautiful; you will see why as you stroll through the town's narrow streets lined with picturesque houses with wood-paneled facades.
- After lunch, join an included tour to the town of Giverny, where Claude Monet resided from 1883 until his death in 1926.
- Visit the beautiful gardens and charming stone farmhouse where he lived and worked; see the water garden with the recognizable Japanese bridge, water lilies, wisteria and azaleas that inspired many of his masterpieces.†
- Dinner is served on board.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)
- † Monet gardens not available before April 1 or after November 1; a visit to the village of Auvers-sur-Oise, favored by van Gogh and other artists, will be substituted.

Day 3 Excursions

- Monet Foundation Giverny—included--Visit the enchanting gardens and estate that inspired one of history's great painters, founder of impressionism.
- Money's Garden by Bicycle--Ride through picturesque scenery as you explore the life of Claude Monet and sample a selection of Norman delights
- French Chateau Life--Visit the impressive castle of La Roche-Guyon and learn all about "Les Arts de la Table" during a workshop.

Day 4 Rouen, France

- Indulge in leisurely morning cruising along the Seine.
- Spend the afternoon in the medieval city of Rouen, preeminent capital of Normandy. Begin with a walking tour through the center of Old Town, where you see the spectacular Gothic Notre Dame Cathedral, often painted by Claude Monet, and the famous Gros Horloge, a 16th-century astronomical clock.
- As you walk among the half-timbered storybook buildings, allow yourself to be transported back through time; see the 14th-century courthouse where Joan of Arc was sentenced to death and the nearby Market Square where she was martyred.
- Use your free time to discover more of Rouen or visit one of its museums of art or antiquities.
- Dine on board or at a sidewalk café. Your ship remains docked overnight.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 4 Shore Excursions

- Rouen Walking Tour—included--Explore the medieval quarter of the cultural capital of Normandy.
- Rouen Farm & Countryside--Experience the daily life of a working Norman farm as you enjoy a leisurely visit to a bucolic homestead.
- Picturesque Honfluer on Foot--Explore one of Normandy's coastal jewels where historic houses line the quay amid quaint galleries and eateries.

Day 5 Normandy Beaches

- After breakfast, begin your full-day tour to the historic beaches of Normandy.
- Visit World War II landmarks, such as Omaha Beach, the American Military Cemetery and the Caen Memorial Museum.
- Alternatively, take a tour of Bayeux, where you can admire the magnificent tapestry that chronicles the pre-Battle of Hastings events.
- Afterward, head to Normandy's coast and enjoy free time at Juno Beach after your visit to the museum; then visit the Pegasus Museum.
- Return to your ship for dinner and relax on board or take an evening stroll through Rouen.
- (B, L, D)

Day 5 Shore Excursions

- Normandy Beaches: Commonwealth—included--Witness memorials to two legendary Norman conquests that had far-reaching consequences for the British Commonwealth.
- Normandy Beaches: US—included--Ponder the courage of the Allied troops who changed the course of World War II during a visit to the D-Day Beaches.

American Cemetery Normandy

Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Day 6 Les Andelys, France

- Enjoy a leisurely morning cruise to the small town of Les Andelys, known for its imposing castle, Château Gaillard, built in 1196 by Richard the Lionheart.
- Disembark and join a guided walk to this fatally flawed masterpiece of Middle Ages architecture before returning to your ship.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 6 Shore Excursions

- Château Gaillard Walking Tour—included--Explore one of the most fantastic fortresses of Normandy while admiring sweeping views of the Seine as it winds its way through the countryside.

Day 7 Le Pecq & Paris, France

- After breakfast, disembark for a visit to Château de Malmaison, where Napoleon Bonaparte spent his final days in France.
- Along with the Tuileries, this elegant manor house, purchased by the emperor's wife Josephine in 1799, served as the seat of Napoleon's French government from 1800 to 1802.
- This afternoon, join an optional tour to the luxurious Palace of Versailles, former home of Louis XIV.
- This evening, you can take in the illuminated sights of Paris during a panoramic drive and cruise.
- Your ship remains docked in Paris overnight.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 7 Shore Excursions

- Napoleon's Château de Malmaison—included--Visit the historic château where Napoleon Bonaparte spent his final days in France.
- The Palace of Versailles-- Enjoy a day at the former home of French kings: the awe-inspiring Château de Versailles.
- Paris Cruise by Night-- See Paris in all its illuminated glory as you drift along the Seine River on a leisurely night cruise.
- The Louvre Museum & Dinner--Explore the treasures of the Louvre, France's magnificent repository of art & have dinner in a local French brasserie.

Day 8 Paris & Lyon, France

- After breakfast, disembark and enjoy a leisurely train ride from Paris through the countryside of east central France to Lyon to board your second ship, where a Welcome Dinner is served.
- (Breakfast, Dinner)

Day 9 Lyon, France

- After breakfast, tour the city of Lyon, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Begin with a drive to the top of Fourvière Hill for amazing views of the city.
- Continue with a guided visit to the Basilica of Notre Dame and drive through town past the magnificent St. Jean Cathedral and the Palace of Justice.
- Then take a walking tour through the cobblestone streets of Vieux Lyon (Old Town) and use your free time to shop for souvenirs or sample some of the fine French cuisine for which Lyon is world-famous.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 9 Excursions

- Panoramic Lyon—included
- Timeless Town of Perouges—step back in time to the medieval stone village of Perouges.
- Trek Vieux Lyon—discover the rich history that lies throughout Lyon's charming Old Town known as Vieux Lyon.

Notre-Dame Basilica Lyon

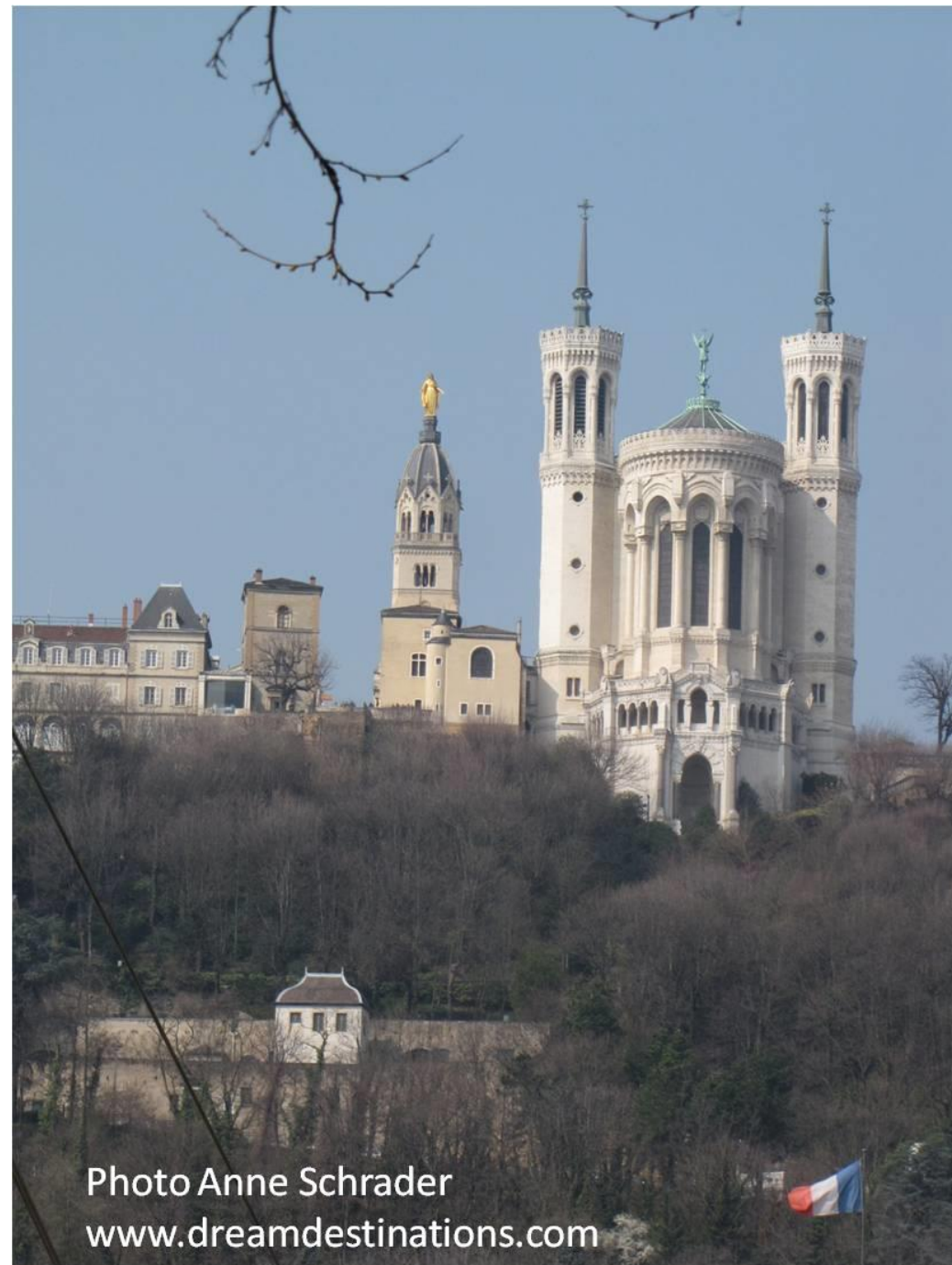


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Old Town Lyon

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Old Town Lyon



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St. Jean Cathedral Lyon, France



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Inside St. Jean Cathedral Lyon



Narrow Streets of Old Town Lyon



Photo Anne Schrader
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A typical
bouchon.
These are
small bistros
often
identified by
their red and
white checker-
squared
tablecloths.
Lyon



Photo Anne Schrader
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A Street Side crepe cart Old Town Lyon



Lyon



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Traboules Lyon



Day 10 Lyon, France

- After breakfast, take a scenic drive through the rolling hills of Beaujolais, where viticultural tradition runs deep and enjoy a tasting in one of Beaujolais's famous cellars.
- Return to your ship for lunch and enjoy the rest of your day at leisure.
- As always, your Program Director can help you plan your free time.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 10 Shore Excursions

- Beaujolais Wine Country (included)
- Beaujolais & Truffles—sample Beaujolais during a visit to a wine chateau and two working farms
- Flavors of Lyon—treat your taste buds to the culinary delights of Lyon, once hailed as “world capital of gastronomy”

Day 11 Vienne & Scenic Sailing: Rhone River

- This morning take a walking tour of Vienne, a beautiful town with an ancient Roman past.
- Visit the Temple of Augustus and Livia, the Roman amphitheater and the Gothic Cathedral of St. Maurice; then spend some time discovering more of this engaging riverside town on your own.
- In the afternoon, enjoy the rolling vine-clad banks of the river as you sail through its wide meanders to Tournon.
- After dinner, enjoy a stroll along the riverbanks under the plane trees.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 11 Shore Excursion

- Vienne Walking Tour—included--Get to know Vienne and its rich Roman past during a leisurely walking tour

Roman Amphitheatre Vienne



Photo Hank Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

Roman Temple of Augustus & Livia Vienne

Photo Hank Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Roman Relics Vienne

Photo Hank Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Tournon



Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

Day 12 Tournon, France

- Board the Train de l'Ardèche this morning for a locomotive ride through the deep gorges of the Ardèche plateau, cut by the Doux River.
- Return to your ship and enjoy lunch on board as we cruise to Viviers, an engaging little town in a mountainous setting.
- After dinner, enjoy an evening stroll through Old Town with its medieval and Renaissance buildings.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 12 Shore Excursions

- Tournon Steam Train—included—traverse one of France's most picturesque corners during a train excursion into the wilds of the Doux Valley.
- Viviers Walking Tour—included--Enjoy a leisurely idyll in a charming riverside village.
- Charming Ardeche—take in the natural beauty and endless charms of France's picturesque region shaped by the Ardeche River
- Rhone Valley Vineyard Hike—explore the landscape history and culture of the northern Rhone valley wine country.

Day 13 Arles, France

- Disembark after breakfast and take a walking tour of Arles with its diverse architectural highlights.
- Experience the city's vibrant colors and striking quality of light that have inspired artists.
- Arles is also the site of some impressive Roman ruins, including Les Arènes, an arena that seats 20,000 and is still in use, as well as Romanesque monuments such as the Church of Saint-Trôphime, completed in the 15th century.
- Return on board for lunch followed by an afternoon on your own to explore or shop for handcrafted gifts.
- As always, your Program Director can help you plan your free time.
- Dinner is served as you depart.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 13 Shore Excursions

- Arles Walking Tour—included
- Unspoiled Camargue & Architectural Gems—see the wetlands and farms” of France’s protected Rhone Delta region and visit 2 celebrated towns.
- Les Baux & Carrieres de Lumieres—see a remarkable multimedia art installation in a former quarry, then ascend to the rock-hewn hamlet of Les Baux.
- Delights of Provence—discover one family’s passion for olive oil during a visit to a countryside mill in the heart of Provence.

Arles



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Arles—Roman Amphitheater



Photo Anne Schrader

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Inside the Roman Amphitheater Arles

Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Arles Narrow Lanes

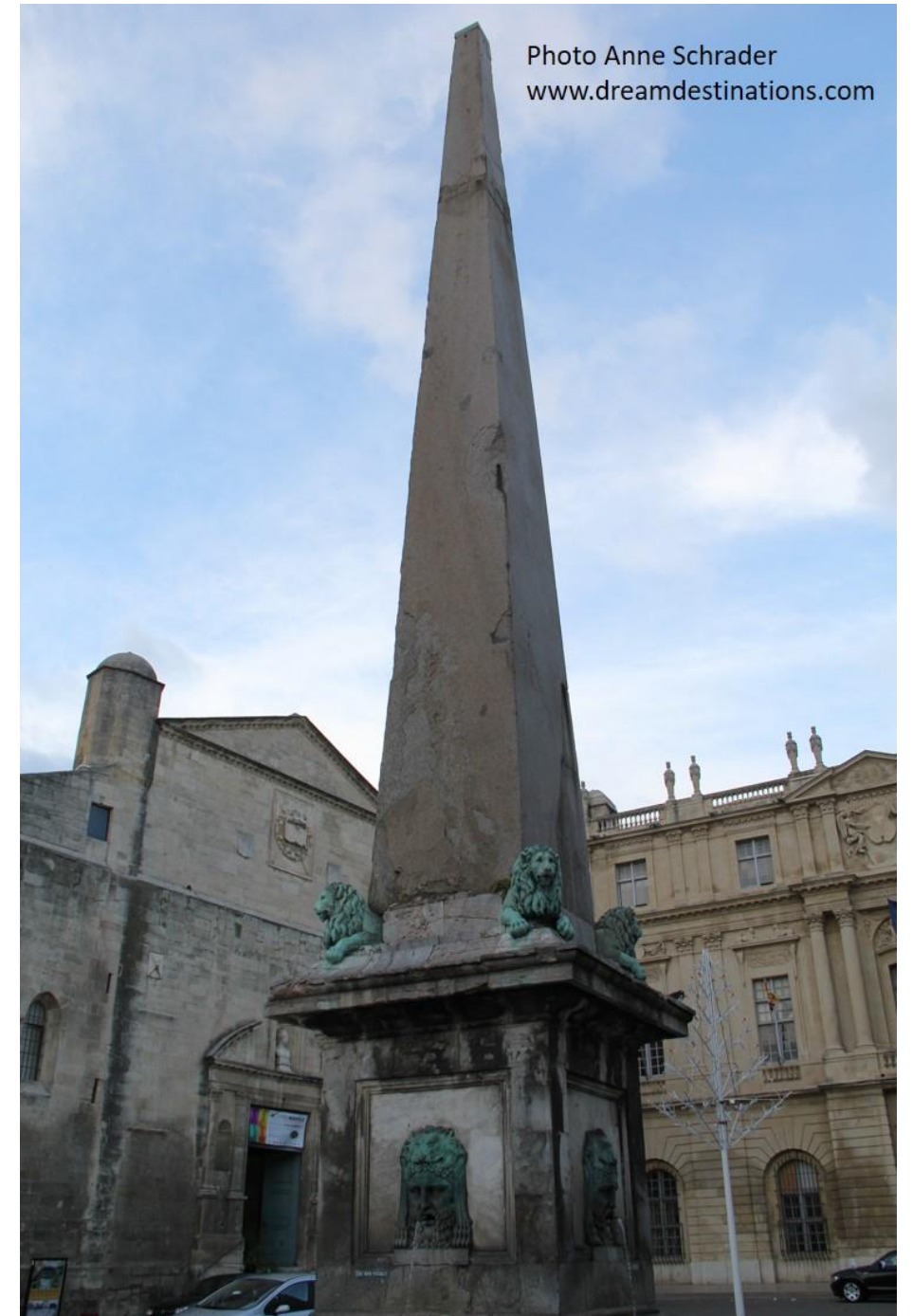
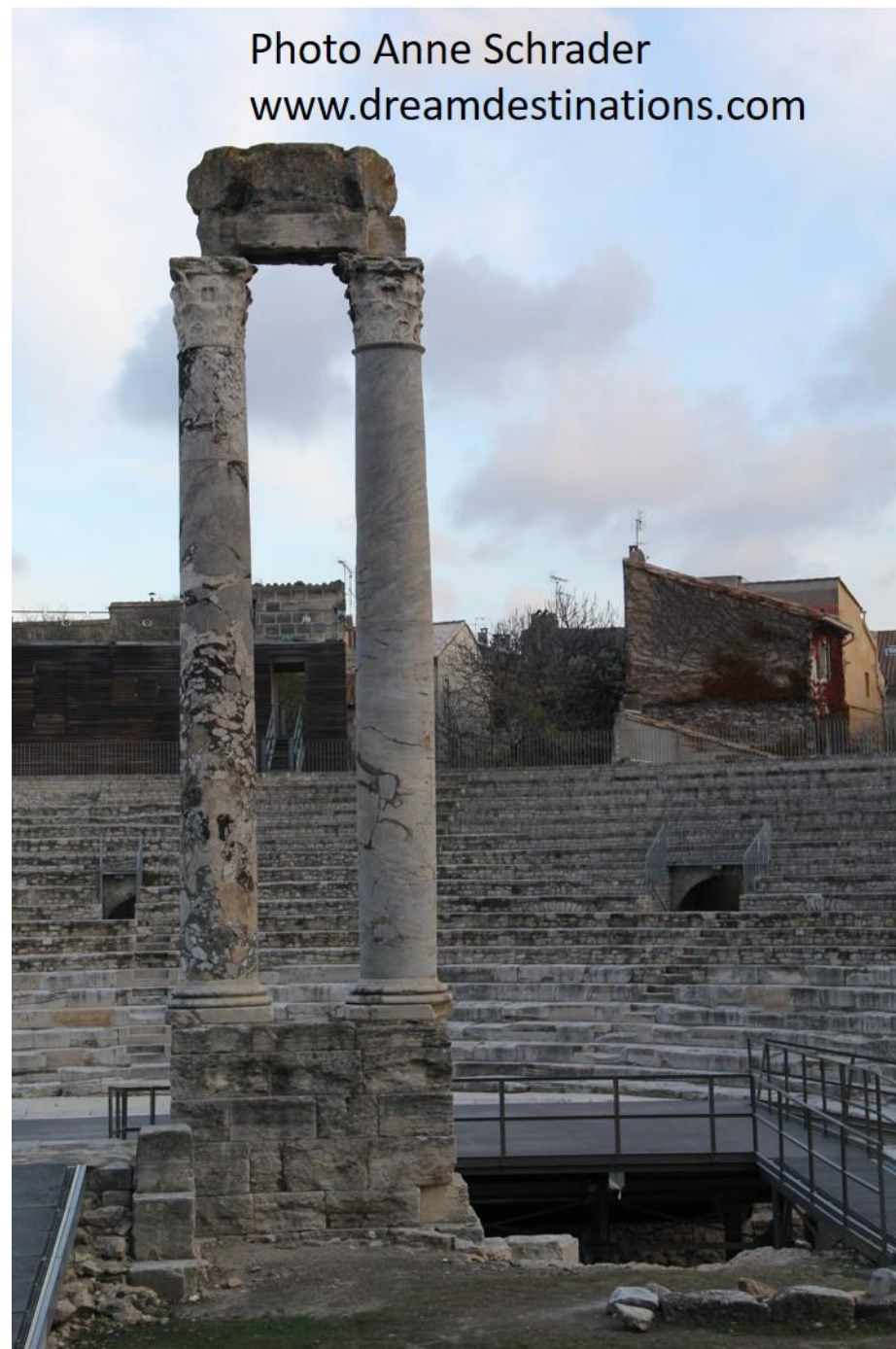


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Arles
Roman
Ruins
(Left)
Roman
Obelisk
(right)



Arles
Town Hall
(left)
Church of
Saint-
Trôphime
(right)



Day 14 Avignon, France

- This morning, set out on a guided walk of Avignon, nicknamed “City of Popes” because it was home to seven popes from 1309 to 1377.
- Stroll through the historic center, stop at the picturesque Pont d’Avignon and walk the Place de l’Horloge.
- Continue to the renowned Palace of the Popes for a guided tour through this rambling maze of Gothic architecture that served as papal residence, fortress, church and palace.
- You can join the optional tour to Châteauneuf-du-Pape, visiting the vineyards and tasting the famous wine.
- Lunch and dinner are served on board.
- Your ship remains docked overnight.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 14 Shore Excursions

- Avignon Walk & Pope's Palace--included
- Lavender Fields of Provence—learn about legendary lavender that graces the field of Provence each summer on this enlightening and fragrant full-day tour.
- Chateauneuf-du-Pape Wine Tasting—explore the town named for its “Pope’s New Castle”, its centuries old vineyard and its superb wines.
- Pont du Gard Aqueduct—see the magnificent three-tiered structure built without mortar by the Romans 2,000 years ago.
- Canoe the Rhone River—admire the beauty of Avignon and learn about the ecosystem of the Rhone River during a scenic canoe ride.

Avignon City Walls



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Avignon Palace of the Popes

Photo Hank Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Pont d'Avignon—the famous bridge of the nursery -rhyme

Photo Hank Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Day 15 Avignon, France

- After breakfast, disembark and proceed to the Marseille airport for your return flight.*
- (Breakfast)
- * Ground transfers are included with Viking Air purchase.

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