

France, Germany & the Passion Play

featuring the TGV Train



Sorry, this travel package is no longer available as an escorted group package on this date. The same itinerary is available (limited space) for individual travel, departing July 2 or August 6, at a lower rate. You will have an escort during your time abroad and be part of a group, but you will not have shuttles to/from the Des Moines Airport or a NorthLand Travel escort. Contact Rhonda at 877-694-8687 for more details.

Once every 10 years, the woodcarving village of Oberammergau returns their thanks to God for sparing them from the plague of 1634. Don't miss your opportunity to experience the last 7 days of Christ's earthly life as portrayed in this picturesque little village. We'll also have some other great experiences!

Day 1 we pick up through our guaranteed departure cities on our way to Des Moines, where you and your experienced international travel escort will check in for your flight to Paris. (In-flight meals)



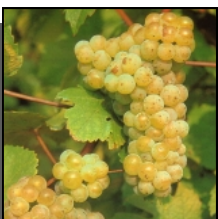
Day 2 we arrive in the magnificent city of Paris. Our escort will lead you through customs and immigrations, then to meet our local host. «Bienvenue en France!» We'll transfer to our hotel, where we will spend the next two nights. Explore on your own (Paris is a very user-friendly city) or rest a little before a wonderful evening. Enjoy breathtaking views and wonderful French cuisine as we have **dinner at the Eiffel Tower**. Then enjoy the illuminated beauty of Paris as we take a leisurely **cruise on the Seine River**. (In-flight meals, D)

Day 3 we take a **panoramic tour of Paris**. The Arch of Triumph, Notre Dame Cathedral, Place de la Concorde and its commanding obelisk from the tomb of Ramses II in Egypt, Place Vendome and the Champs-Élysées, the famed promenade known around the world for its people-watching will all be on our agenda. The rest of the afternoon is yours to spend as you wish. Do as the Parisians do and sit at a sidewalk café or visit one of the city's many renowned museums, such as the Louvre or Musee Orsay. (B)



Day 4 we board the **Train à Grande Vitesse** (high speed train) for our journey to picturesque **Strasbourg** in the Alsace region of eastern France. Strasbourg is the capital of Alsace and one of France's major ports. Strasbourg was absorbed by Germany in 1871 and made the capital of the territory of Alsace-Lorraine. It reverted to France in 1918. Strasbourg is home to the University of Strasbourg, once attended by Goethe, Napoleon and Pasteur. We'll take a leisurely **walking tour of the Old Quarter**. (B)

Day 5 we visit two charming villages of the Alsace wine route. Traditional inns and cool, inviting wine cellars pay tribute to the importance of wine locally. A few steps from the Wine Route, signposted vineyard paths invite the visitor to discover the work of the winegrower and the diversity of the grape varieties. First, we visit the well preserved medieval town of **Riquewahr**, filled with vintners' houses dating back to the 15th century. Next we visit **Kaysersberg**, a village of historic houses and castles, as well as a 16th century fortified bridge. We enjoy regional cuisine as we have **dinner at one of Strasbourg's finest restaurants**. (B,D)



Day 6 we cross into Germany and travel to the lovely town of **Würzburg**. A local guide will take us on a **leisurely-paced walking tour**. This ancient Franconian wine town is rich in historic sights, including the magnificent 18th century residence of the prince-bishops, the Residence Palace, which boasts the largest ceiling fresco in the world. We'll also see the ornate Alte Mainbrücke, the oldest bridge on the River



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Main. The remainder of the day is yours to spend as you wish. Join the locals at one of the wine taverns sprinkled throughout the city and enjoy a glass of delicious Franconian wine. (B)



Day 7 we travel along the **Romantic Road**, a trade route during the Middle Ages. The road often winds through scenic countryside, connecting walled towns and picturesque villages. Travelers may enter a town through an arched gateway with guard towers. Inside, you will find Gothic cathedrals, half-timbered Fachwerk houses and beautiful historic hotels. Fairytale castles and the backdrop of the Alps complete the charm. We'll stop in the Renaissance city of Weikersheim, where we will tour the magnificent **Weikersheim**

Castle. We'll see the Knights' Hall and the formal gardens, which were modeled after the spectacular gardens at Versailles. We then continue to **Rothenburg** where we'll have a **short walking tour** through the winding cobblestone streets of the picturesque old town.

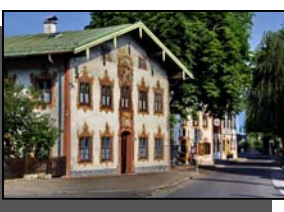
(B)



Day 8 we travel into the heart of Franconia for a **visit to a local winery**. We'll learn about the rich wine making heritage of the region and sample some of the wonderful local varieties. We then depart for **Bamberg**, a UNESCO World Heritage city. Its network of waterways makes it the "Venice of Germany." We'll have plenty of time at leisure to explore the attractions of this wonderful city. Visit the ancient Town Hall which is situated in the middle of the river and accessible only by bridge. Then stroll the charming streets that line the river, shopping for unique handicrafts or perhaps

stopping to try a glass of Bamberg's renowned "smoked" beer. The city has 9 breweries, producing 50 different types of beer. "Prost!" (B)

Day 9 our first stop is **Nuremberg**, where medieval structures sit alongside streamlined, modern architecture. This interesting cityscape came about with the destruction of World War II. Our **local expert** will provide fascinating commentary as we tour the **Rally Grounds** where the Nazi Party held their political rallies and the **Justice Palace**, where the War Crimes Tribunal sat in 1946. We'll also take in the **900-year-old ramparts** that surround the city, **the Imperial Castle** and beautiful **St. Sebald Church**. Later we arrive in the picturesque Bavarian village of **Oberammergau**. Woodcarvers proudly display their wares in quaint shops. (B,D)



Day 10 explore scenic Oberammergau on your own. This afternoon, we witness the performance of the **Passion Play**. The original performance dates to 1634. During the Thirty Year War, the village of Oberammergau was spared the Black Plague and the villagers vowed that every ten years they would give a play to honor the life of Christ. The performers are all natives/residents of Oberammergau. The cast start to grow their hair and beards more than a year in advance. The

intricate costumes are made locally by the villagers. During a break in the performance, we'll have a **farewell dinner** celebrating the end of a memorable trip. (B,D)



Day 11 we leave Oberammergau and transfer to Munich for our return flight. ~~Your experienced international travel escort will guide you through immigration and customs along the way. Upon arrival in Des Moines, Hawkeye Stages will transfer us back to our departure cities.~~ (B, in-flight meals)

Contact Rhonda for pricing and other details.

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