



**ALBATROSS
Tours**

Come share our love of Europe

Europe & UK

Small Group Touring 2020



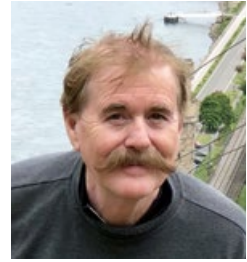
Creating remarkable memories that last a lifetime

Tour departures April – October 2020



Drive through idyllic Tuscan landscapes

European tours personally designed for you!



Since 1995, our sole focus has been the design, creation, and operation of European tours for Australian and New Zealander travellers. Offering leisurely holidays tailored for likeminded people travelling to the far side of the world. People just like you, who want to see more and truly enjoy their European holiday.

The formula for our unique itinerary design is quite simple. Avoid early morning starts and tiresome one night stops. Ensure there is always a significant amount of sightseeing time and a leisurely pace with 2, 3, 4 and 5 night stays in authentic hotels. And ensure our travellers have a personal experience by limiting the group size to a maximum of just 28 on all Europe & UK Summer Small Group tours.

We also ensure your vital free time remains precisely that – free! Believe me, having a sensible balance between included activities and 'My Time' will make a huge difference to the enjoyment of your holiday.

Just like you, I hate doing anything and suddenly discovering there are hidden extras. That is why I insist our tours are always genuinely inclusive and promise that you will never step onboard one of our coaches and be given a long list of later charged, expensive 'optional' extras (so common elsewhere), which can create stress and play havoc with your budget.

People must like what we do as they come back to us time and again! With decades of European touring experience, I am proud of what we, as an expert team, create and deliver.

Come share our love of Europe

Euan

Euan Landsborough, 'The Mo', Managing Director & Tour Designer

What's New for 2020



Rhine Castles, Moselle
Vineyards & Ancient Cologne

11 days

See page 46



Belgium & Holland,
Cobblestones and Windmills

10 days

See page 52

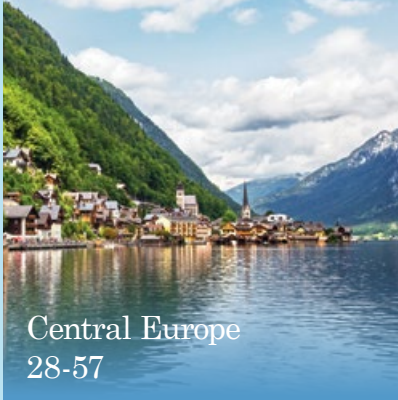


Hidden Italy, the Lands
of the Etruscans

10 days

See page 106

Come share our love of Europe



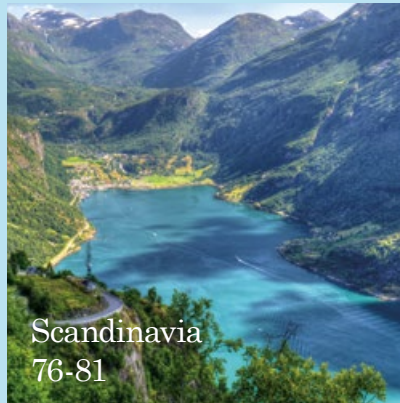
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Discover the difference of travelling with Albatross

Discover a different style of touring. A better way, that delivers to you genuine, in depth European experiences, and more enjoyable and fulfilling holidays.



Specially for you

Unique tour itineraries designed to suit the travel needs of Australians and New Zealanders seeking genuinely authentic European travel experiences.



Longer stays

Enjoy a leisurely and sensible pace with 2, 3, 4 and even 5 night stays in each captivating city or region.



See more, experience more

Packed with fabulous local dining, high quality excursions, authentic activities and unique experiences - and they are all included!



Unique accommodation

Stay in character style accommodation in superb locations. In a historic country house, a centuries old castle, a palace or even a beautiful French chateau hotel.



Small, intimate groups

Enjoy a personal holiday experience travelling with a small group of like-minded travellers. Our group sizes range from just 10 to 28!



Genuinely inclusive

We guarantee there are NO 'optional' activity costs – even your 'end of tour' tips are included. View the outstanding value inclusions in each of our itineraries.



'My Time' guaranteed!

Your days are easier. With our sensible and leisurely pace, we guarantee your 'My Time' so you can relax and truly enjoy the destinations you have travelled so far to see.



Experience you can trust

With well over 20 years of experience in successfully creating and operating market leading European tours, you know you are in safe hands.

Enjoy longer stays



“We were particularly drawn to the longer stays at each location, a major reason why we chose Albatross Tours. In this we were not disappointed, the longer stays were great, we felt so much more relaxed. We really felt that we were on holiday! Each day brought with it a sense of adventure at an enjoyable pace.” Irene

Enjoy time to relax when travelling with Albatross Tours
Image taken by Albatross traveller P. Thornton



Stay 4 nights in Dubrovnik, with time to explore the old town when the crowds have gone



Relaxing 3, 4 and even 5 night stays

Our tours are designed with a leisurely pace featuring 3, 4 and even 5 night stays in each captivating city or region. We consider 2 nights stays to be the absolute minimum!

Let's face it nobody likes continuously checking in and out of hotels, unpacking their bags each evening, and then having to re-pack them again early the next morning. So, relax with Albatross Tours and enjoy your holiday.

Your days are easy

With our leisurely style of hub and spoke touring, we include more of the most essential element of your holiday – time! Since you are not constantly rushing to get to your next destination, Albatross can specifically plan and factor in your included excursions and sightseeing highlights. Whether it be cruising across Lake Como or taking a fantastic cable car up to the top of the Alps we always have time on our side, so we can make sure to do them properly. Plus we also allow time for you to do what pleases you. We call this 'My Time'.

The pace is always relaxed

Since you are not constantly changing hotels, or travelling long distances each day, early morning departures are extremely rare. And, as a bonus you will usually spend lunchtimes in charming towns and villages – not at uninspiring motorway service stops!



Soak up the atmosphere in a local café



Message from the Mo

You deserve more than just photos

On many other tours of Europe, with their regular 1 or 2 night stops and repetitive long drives, you may snap some great photos, but that is just about all you will get! You lose precious time packing and unpacking your luggage daily, waiting for luggage to be handled, checking in and out, settling bills, loading coaches, losing shoes and toothbrushes... the list goes on. That is exhausting, and is a waste of your precious time. Crazy! Wouldn't you rather stay longer, enjoy leisurely breakfasts, explore more, see more, experience more, yet still have time to enjoy lunchtime in a trattoria – 'people watching'... rather than 'clock watching'! There is a massive difference in the way Albatross do things!

Our unique style of touring



Enjoy time to stroll the local streets



Relax over a leisurely meal



Wander through local markets



Message from the Mo

Our tours are to be enjoyed not endured!

Thirty years ago, I was a Tour Manager (working for global tour company) on a coach heading into Austria. The sky was blue, the sunshine was drenching the glorious green meadows and the Bavarian mountains soared either side. It was heavenly! Yet every single person on that coach was fast asleep and oblivious to the surrounding beauty because they were all so tired. It was yet another very long day on the coach, after another early start and an all too rushed one night stay. To me, it felt so wrong, and what is so sad is that those same, horribly tiring style of itineraries are still so common.

I learnt a big lesson that day which drives me to continue to improve our tours. You see, I believe tours should be enjoyed and not endured. That is why Albatross avoids 1 night 'mad dash' stops, and aim for more 3 and 4 night stays which enable us to plan a healthy balance of terrific sightseeing along with satisfying and necessary leisure time.

Our hub and spoke style of touring really works!



Ride up a cable car to the Republic of San Marino

The benefits of our style of touring



- More time for local sightseeing
- No packing and unpacking suitcases every day
- No waiting on others as they pay their bar bills
- Stay in specially selected character hotels and get to know the locals
- Have time to do your laundry and know that before you move on it will be dry
- Enjoy time to relax instead of having to constantly lug your suitcase in and out of rooms
- Have time to get to know the local bars and restaurants and be able to choose one that suits you
- Get beneath the tourist veneer and genuinely explore each region
- Enjoy 'My Time' to feel the ambience and flavours of each region
- Look forward to enjoying full day excursions knowing you will come back to your hotel room and your clothes are already unpacked!

Tours designed to suit you

Each and every one of our tours have been designed specially for you – Australians and New Zealanders. Like-minded travellers, like you, seeking a more fulfilling European holiday experience. We understand you want more from an escorted tour than a few hurried, all too brief visits to the destinations you have travelled so far to see. Which is why we have developed our hub and spoke style touring.

Why our hub and spoke touring style works

Our hub and spoke style of touring ensures your days are easier and more enjoyable. We usually settle in to a charming hotel for 3, 4 or even 5 nights and take day trips out to explore the local region. This allows you to experience a variety of exciting excursions and activities. Not just the usual highlights, but also many more, unique, authentic, regional experiences, often well away from the bustling tourist crowds. Best of all, it also means we can factor in genuine, essential leisure time for you - 'My Time'!

Small group touring



“We had 16 on our tour and that was a great number. Pre-dinner we would all meet at a passenger’s room for drinks and nibbles. The tour was very personal and just naturally led to this type of entertainment.

We have been travelling for the last 12 years to a large number of destinations with numerous travel companies and we found Albatross Tours to be up there with the very best.

That’s where Albatross shines. We visited exclusive areas that only small groups can access. Albatross deliver what they preach. We would travel with Albatross Tours again without hesitation.” Kevin



Stay in the delightful Sassi caves, perfect for small group touring



The benefits of travelling in a small group

- Personalised service from your Tour Manager
- Priority access at attractions
- Dine in delightful, local restaurants
- Stay in hotels based on style, character and location
- More personal space and comfort on the coach
- Swifter getting on and off the coach, in and out of hotels and attractions
- Easier to get to know your fellow travellers

Just 10 to 28 travellers

The average group size with Albatross is just 22. You get so much space on a full size coach! We cap our tours at 28 travellers and give you the peace of mind to know we guarantee our tours will depart with as few as just 10! Albatross Tours is one of the earliest innovators of small group touring. We saw the enormous benefits our travellers would enjoy when combining small, more personal groups with longer stays at each delightful destination. There is a massive difference!

Everything is personal

You've travelled far to experience Europe. With Albatross Tours, you'll never feel like just one of the crowd, you'll feel special. Our small group size means our client to Tour Manager ratio is halved and you are guaranteed a high level of personal service and attention.

So much included!



We ensure you're looked after on your holiday



Experienced Tour Managers



Local dining experiences



Included sightseeing excursions



Exceptional value with NO hidden extras

Albatross tours are genuinely inclusive and already include special excursions, feature dinners and sightseeing tours for you – we even include tips to your Tour Manager and Driver! You will never be confronted with a long 'optional activities list'. We believe these expensive, later charged, hidden extras are entirely predictable – **so we have already included these experiences for you in our tours.**

What's always included with Albatross

- ALL sightseeing excursions, activities, locally guided tours and entrance fees as described
- Specially selected authentic style hotel accommodation in superb locations
- The services of a highly experienced and professional Tour Manager
- Buffet breakfasts daily, often with a local flavour
- Dinners on the majority of evenings, including dining in special feature restaurants
- A complimentary beverage, plus tea and coffee with included dinners*
- Spacious first class coach travel, with window seats for most guests
- WiFi in hotels and on most coaches
- Tips for local guides, hotels, porters, restaurants
- End of tour tips for your Tour Manager and Driver
- Personal audio headsets on tour
- Albatross Tours App featuring 'My Time' travel tips, weather reports and maps
- A stunning Albatross Memories Photobook

When travelling with Albatross there is complete transparency on where your money is going. You will find it so much more reassuring knowing exactly how far your budget will go – giving you the peace of mind of being able to enjoy every magical moment.

**Not included on the 21 day Scandinavia, In the Footsteps of Vikings tour*



I hate hidden extras!

Just like you, I hate doing anything and suddenly discovering there are hidden extras and still more to pay! I think it is only fair and honest that if something should be included, it is. That is why I insist our tours are always genuinely inclusive and I promise that you will never step onboard one of our coaches and be given a long list of expensive 'optional' extras (so common elsewhere), which can be so stressful, and play havoc with your budget. Our Tour Managers are not reliant on kickbacks from special shops or optional extras with grossly inflated prices. At the end of your tour, when our Tour Managers' put out their hand, it is not for a tip, it is simply to say farewell and to wish you well on your onward journey.

Remarkable moments



Discover the picturesque city of Ghent
Belgium & Holland, Cobblestones and Windmills
Days 3-5



Hand Selected Experiences – especially for you

With our unique touring style, we don't just touch on countries, we explore them. When we design our tours, we look at each region and consider what can be done, and what should be done. **We then assemble a carefully balanced touring programme.**

Whilst we emphasise that you always get quality 'My Time' whilst on tour, please do not think that our tours are in any way 'empty'! Far from it. In fact, our style of touring means we can pack our itineraries with specially 'hand selected' experiences. And, since we are not always rushed we can make sure we do each justice, and do them all properly. Some excursions might be guided visits to towns and cities whereas on other days we will add enjoyable, unique activities that are distinctly provincial, maybe quirky or possibly even something for the simple pleasure of it.

Remember, all of these incredible activities are already included. Always included – never an 'optional' expense! Mae West once said, "You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough!" We agree!



Cruise on Lake Como
The Italian 'Grande'
Days 1-4



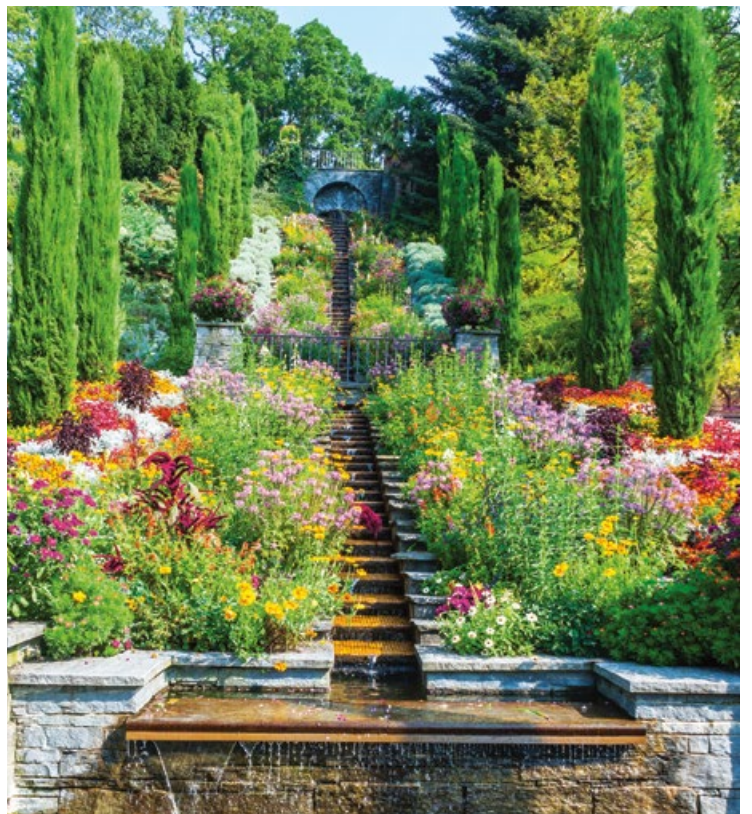
See the stunning Marmore Waterfalls
Hidden Italy, the Lands of the Etruscans
Day 9



Drink vinho verde at an historic vineyard
'Magnifico' Spain & Portugal
Day 12



Stay in Fisherman's cabins
Scandinavia, In the Footsteps of Vikings
Days 14-17



Visit the palatial Gardens of Mainau
Black Forest, Bavaria & the Tyrol
Day 6

‘My Time’ guaranteed!



Relax for an afternoon while soaking up the local atmosphere with new-found friends

Image taken by Albatross traveller S. Deaves



Your free time is essential

Albatross Tours understands the importance of having free time when travelling to relax and explore **at your own pace**, which is why we have incorporated 'My Time' on all of our itineraries. Time to immerse yourself in each destination, perhaps to window shop, wander the streets of delightful towns and villages, or mingle with the locals at a café.

How important is it to you?

Because we feature longer stays on all our itineraries, you are guaranteed to enjoy **'My Time' on every Albatross tour**. We have designed our holidays to ensure adequate, well planned 'free time'. That is the Albatross *difference*.

It's about balance

Beautifully balanced itineraries with a unique range of quality sightseeing and excursions, plus planned leisure time for you to relax and discover hidden delights at your own pace. On an Albatross tour, exciting activities are always included and time is set aside to do them properly. When you have your free time, *it stays exactly that – free to do as you please!*

Make the most of your 'My Time'

'My Time' ensures you will experience and enjoy so many benefits of travelling with Albatross Tours

- **Late starts** – Sleep in or take a morning stroll before enjoying a leisurely breakfast.
- **Free evenings** – Whilst we include many, we don't include every dinner so you will have some nights free to do your own thing. Find that romantic trattoria in the gorgeous Umbrian town of Spoleto, or taste the flavours of famous tapas bars in Northern Spain when wandering the streets of San Sebastian.
- **Relaxing afternoons** – There is no need to rush back to the coach. Enjoy a long lunch then go and visit a local art gallery. Or maybe squeeze in a bit of shopping!
- **Days at leisure** – Many Albatross tours feature a free day for you to do as much or as little as you please. Your expert Tour Manager will be on hand to give you advice, recommendations, or provide directions for you.



We will never steal your free time

I know from experience that, whilst travelling, it is essential you have enough free time to relax, explore or simply 'do your own thing'. Optional sightseeing so commonly offered elsewhere can only steal from your free time. Another reason why we do not offer them! Our noticeably longer stays and already included sightseeing and activities guarantee that your essential, relaxing free time remains completely untouched. Perfect for you to properly enjoy and savour each wonderful destination.

You might only travel this way once. With Albatross Tours you will know you've made the most of every precious moment.

Where you stay is important



Revive in the beautifully restored Sassi caves in Matera, Italy



Stay in a French chateau in the Loire Valley



Absorb the beauty of the Rhine Valley at the Bellevue Rhenhotel



Enjoy an exclusive night in Leeds Castle
Image taken by Albatross traveller S. Boverly-Spencer

“It has been great to stay in lovely hotels for an extended period. Not having to pack and unpack everyday has been marvellous.”

Andrea & Hans

Unique hotels, superb locations



Picture yourself relaxing on the geranium-trimmed balcony of a family run Gasthof, or waking up in a stunning palace hotel. In addition to centrally located city hotels, we believe your European experience should be enhanced with memorable stays in unique hotels, steeped in local character. So, in Italy you'll sleep in a grand villa or a beautifully renovated 'Sassi' cave, in France in a 16th century château and our 'Best of British' tour culminates in the exclusive use of magnificent Leeds Castle.

Comfort guaranteed

You may be staying in historic buildings but that doesn't mean you have to compromise on comfort. Our small group sizes mean we can handpick modestly-sized hotels that still meet our exacting standards. Imagine coming home telling tales of waking up in a 500-year-old inn or a 13th century castle. Every room in your hotel could well be different, but all have quality private facilities. Porterage and WiFi is included at each of your hotels. *

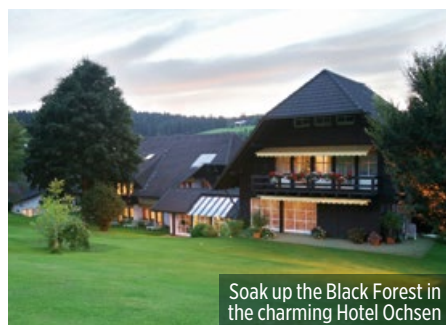
**Porterage is not included in the Lofoten Islands on the Scandinavia, In the Footsteps of Vikings tour.*

Friendly locals

Many of our selected properties have been family owned for generations. How nice is it to be personally welcomed by the hotel owners who take pride in their property and what they offer? Efficient check-ins and porterage are provided at every stop, so all you need to worry about is enjoying the rich diversity of your surroundings. And, as two night stays are a minimum on our tours, you won't be packing and unpacking every day!

Solo travellers?

For solo travellers in most hotels, we offer **double rooms for single use**. Alternatively, if you wish we can try and match you with another solo traveller of the same gender in a twin room.



Soak up the Black Forest in the charming Hotel Ochsen



Be amazed at the scenery from the historic Rorbuer cabins in the Lofoten Islands



Our hotels have memories

George Bernard Shaw once said, "I dislike feeling at home when I am abroad." Mr Shaw, you were so right. This makes so much sense, so where possible, we purposefully avoid those large, impersonal, international chain hotels cloned around the world. They have so little character, no uniqueness, depth or history. The only 'memory' these hotels have is the last corporate conference staged there. Waking up, you could be anywhere, so why on earth would we want to stay in one of those? We choose our hotels because they have 'memories'. So, when you stay there, you can add those memories to yours, making your holiday experiences so much richer.

Savour the regional flavours



Visit one of the many tapas bars in Spain

Included

- Full buffet breakfasts daily
- Most dinners, including the first night and special feature dinners
- A complimentary beverage, plus tea and coffee with all included dinners*
- Genuine local dining experiences
- Special diets catered for
- Feature lunches included on some tours

**Not included on the 21 day Scandinavia, In the Footsteps of Vikings tour.*

Authentic culinary experiences

Just like you, we know that enjoying great local cuisine is an integral part of your travel experience. We love fine dining, but the real enjoyment is more than just that. It is also about the location, style and ambience created for that moment. For example, in Spain we savour traditional paella accompanied by the sounds of a Flamenco guitar; in Tuscany, we enjoy an 8-course antipasto feast of cured and cooked meats, cheeses and bread in an Olive Farmhouse Estate; and in Italy we toast with prosecco whilst dining in a castle cellar.



The Restaurant 'Twist'

It should be clear that we already include most dinners. But look further and you will see the Albatross 'difference'. We already include all those special, local restaurant dining experiences and they are therefore never offered on any tour as 'options'. The 'twist' is that our inclusive policy is quite the reverse of what most mainstream tour companies do. They often sell these highlight dinners in each city as extra, costly 'optional' excursions. With Albatross if an evening is left intentionally free - it stays free!



"Tasting the local regional cuisines was a highlight of the tour." Graham



Dine with the locals

Dining with the locals makes up so many of your travel memories. Since our tours are limited in size, we are able to hand select authentic local restaurants. Places where the locals go. From cosy taverns, restaurants, and farmhouses to beautiful wine estates with delightful local cuisine reflecting the produce and culinary style of the regions you are visiting.

Also, many of our authentic, regional hotels have their own excellent character restaurants, so eating in at your hotel is an added pleasure and experience.

'My Time' to dine

We have purposefully left some evenings free for you to discover your own private dining experience in a local bistro or traditional trattoria. Your Tour Manager is always on hand bringing his or her local knowledge and experience 'to the table' providing you with ideas and dining suggestions to suit your taste and budget.

Special diets catered for

We can cater for most special diets on all our tours. Simply let us know your requirements prior to travelling.

Travelling with Albatross



Enjoy spacious seating on a full-size coach



You will love our drivers

Image taken by Albatross traveller A. Telenko

Spacious, first class travel

You will always have plenty of space on our coaches. Imagine relaxing on a full-size coach with around 22 other travellers!

Albatross Tours use first class, full-size, modern touring coaches with 40-45 seats. Even if your tour group is full you can be certain there will always be spare seats. We guarantee that on our touring coaches you will enjoy more personal space and that essential extra 'elbow room'.

Enjoy the best views from your seat

With so many spare seats available, we guarantee you panoramic views and, more often than not you will have a window seat. You will be able to sit back and admire the evolving landscapes from the comfort of your seat.

Travel in exceptional comfort

You will always enjoy a more comfortable ride on our full-size coaches featuring high quality reclining seats, spacious leg room, additional luggage space, great sound insulation and comfortable suspension. Our coaches also feature 2 doors to make it easier to get on and off the coach, and of course on-board toilet for emergencies. WiFi is available on most coaches.

More than just a coach tour

Albatross tours are cleverly designed for the modern day traveller and so it goes without saying we also add highlight train rides, flights and boat rides to your escorted holiday experience.

Our expert tour managers



Our professional, highly experienced Tour Managers are passionate about providing the very best touring experience that you can imagine. With a reputation for being some of the finest in the business, they'll attend to your needs, share their knowledge, join in the fun, and take care of every detail to ensure your holiday runs smoothly.

And, because Albatross Tours are so inclusive, your Tour Manager won't be concerned with 'selling' optional extras or taking you to 'special' stores. Their only interest is being friendly, helpful and knowledgeable travelling companions and guides; which is why they receive such overwhelming praise from our guests.



Prisca Demolli

“Prisca was an absolute stand out. What a fabulous asset she is as a Tour Manager. She was so efficient, helpful and patient with all of us, and had a great sense of humour.” Mandy



Darren Wheatley

“Darren was exceptional, very knowledgeable, extraordinarily talented and fluent in languages, plus very helpful and caring.” Barbara



Eve Charlier

“Eve was excellent, professional and nothing was too much trouble – she always went the extra mile. And she has a great sense of humour!” Jan



Luis Cardoso

“I thought Luis was an excellent Tour Manager – thoughtful, caring and well organised. He has charm and a lovely sense of humour. Thank you Luis!” Dorothee



Vanessa Nicol

“Vanessa is an absolute gem. Her skills in organisation, commentary and human interaction is exemplary.” Kerrie



Richard Ellis

“Our Tour Manager, Richard, was very enthusiastic, helpful and is very passionate about Italy.” Jayne



“We have found Albatross the best company to travel with. Their tour managers are excellent and everything is covered in the original price. Accommodation is always of a great quality and in a good location. We have travelled with them three times so far and will travel with them again.” Albert

Enjoy the magnificent scenery of Scandinavia with fellow Albatross travellers

Special offers

Earlybird savings



Book by 31 October 2019 and save!

Book and deposit on any 2020 Europe & UK Summer tour by **31st October 2019** to receive a \$300 per person discount off the tour price.

That's a saving of **\$600 per couple!**

Your loyalty rewarded



CLUB ALBATROSS MEMBERS

Have you travelled with Albatross Tours before? If so, we look forward to welcoming you back and we would like to offer you our Club Albatross discount of \$200 per person off the price of any of our 2020 Europe & UK Summer tours. **If you are new to travelling with Albatross Tours** and book any two different 2020 Europe & UK Summer tours our Club Albatross discount will be applied to the price of your second tour.



CLUB ALBATROSS SAPPHIRE MEMBERS

Have you travelled on 3 or more Albatross tours? If so, we welcome you to Club Albatross Sapphire. We would like to offer you our Club Albatross Sapphire discount of \$400 per person off the price of any of our 2020 Europe & UK Summer tours.

To view our Club Albatross and Club Albatross Sapphire benefits please visit albatrosstours.com

Travelling in a small group?

If you are travelling in a small group of 6 or more people on one of our 2020 European Summer tours additional discounts may apply. Please contact us for details.

All discount offers apply to our 2020 European Summer Small Group Tours and are not applicable to any additional pre or post tour hotel accommodation booked. Albatross Tours reserve the right to at any time withdraw or amend any or all of the discounts and special offers featured on this page.

Glorious Germany & the Czech Republic




Relax on a peaceful boat ride down the River Vltava in Cesky Krumlov

14 Astonishing Days Berlin to Munich

See Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie, Potsdam's Palaces and 'Bridge of Spies', Prague's medieval Hradcany Castle and WWII Colditz. Stand on the Bastei Bridge and giant Königstein's ramparts. Relax in the magnificent Saxon Switzerland National Park, float on a punt through Spreewald's marshes, cruise along the River Elbe to Dresden's Royal Palace and glide down the Vltava in Cesky Krumlov, and more!

BERLIN

Days 1 & 2

- Stay 2 nights in vibrant Berlin
- See the famous Brandenburg Gate, Unter den Linden and rebuilt Reichstag, Checkpoint Charlie and sections of 'The Wall'
- Enjoy 'My Time' to explore the  museums

DRESDEN

Days 5, 6 & 7

- Stay 3 nights in the very heart of wonderful  Dresden
- Be guided through the infamous 'escape castle' of WWII – Colditz and visit medieval Meissen
- Visit majestic Saxon Switzerland, walk over the Bastei Bridge far above the River Elbe and explore the ramparts of Germany's largest fortress – Königstein
- Wander through Pillnitz Palace gardens and cruise along the River Elbe
- Enjoy a walking tour of Dresden and see the glorious Zwinger Palace, the Semper Opera House and stunning Frauenkirche. Visit the Royal Palace museums including the treasures of the New Green Vault
- Dine in a local restaurant


PRAGUE

Days 8, 9 & 10

- Stay 3 nights in the heart of glorious medieval  Prague
- Enjoy authentic Czech cuisine in a local restaurant
- Explore the massive Hradcany – Prague Castle, St Vitus Cathedral the colourful houses of Zlatá Ulička
- Savour a full day of exploring Prague at your own pace
- Visit the historic silver city of Kutná Hora, the Sedlec Ossuary, the Cathedral of Saint Barbara and enjoy a torch lit guided tour through the 500 year old silver mine

SALZBURG

Days 13 & 14



- Stay 1 night in the baroque city of Mozart –  Salzburg
- Enjoy a walking tour including several locations from the film 'The Sound of Music'
- Spend time at leisure exploring the ornate squares and churches, fascinating shops and traditional coffee houses
- Savour a memorable farewell dinner at the St Peter Stiftskeller, the oldest known restaurant in central Europe!

AVERAGE 96 KMS PER DAY

-  Tour commences
-  Overnight stays
-  Included excursions
-  UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits


SPREEWALD

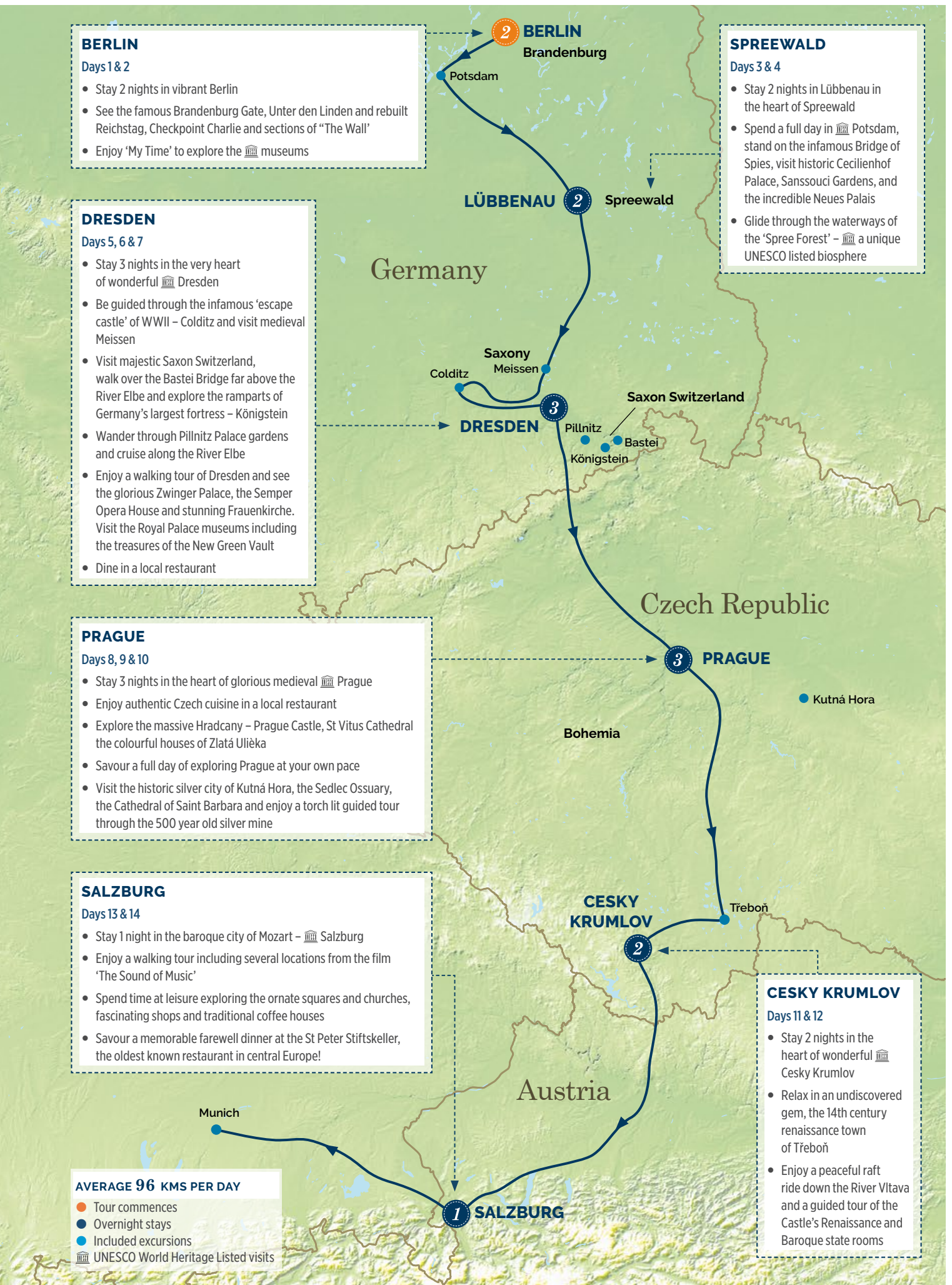
Days 3 & 4

- Stay 2 nights in Lübbenau in the heart of Spreewald
- Spend a full day in  Potsdam, stand on the infamous Bridge of Spies, visit historic Cecilienhof Palace, Sanssouci Gardens, and the incredible Neues Palais
- Glide through the waterways of the 'Spree Forest' –  a unique UNESCO listed biosphere

CESKY KRUMLOV

Days 11 & 12

- Stay 2 nights in the heart of wonderful  Cesky Krumlov
- Relax in an undiscovered gem, the 14th century renaissance town of Třeboň
- Enjoy a peaceful raft ride down the River Vltava and a guided tour of the Castle's Renaissance and Baroque state rooms





Where 'old' is often newer than the 'new'

Berlin and Dresden were decimated in WWII. Now, risen from the ashes, they are two of the most exciting and rewarding cities in Europe. Here in the old 'East', they have vigorously rebuilt many of the old cathedrals and churches, grand buildings and stately palaces. Simply stunning, the glory days are back but with a conundrum. The newer, modern looking buildings (post war) are now often much older than the majestic old cathedrals and palaces, which are of course the new ones!

Bursting with classic sights and major museums, these cities have so much to offer. One of my most cherished memories was enjoying a 'nourishing', cool beer in a Dresden café, with the late afternoon sun shining down on the glorious Frauenkirche. And in front of me was a busker, playing classical pieces on a white, grand piano. For that sort of experience you need time, and that is why we insist on staying 3 nights in Dresden and Prague.

I also planned 2 night stops in Berlin and amongst the idyllic waterways of Spreewald and in historic Cesky Krumlov. Breaking up the journey like this allows us so much more time to relax and savour each destination, plus enjoy boat rides, scenic walks and full days exploring places like Potsdam's Palaces, glorious Saxon Switzerland, Kutná Hora and Třeboň. Packed with huge highlights, adventures, and bags of quality leisure time – you will not find another itinerary remotely like this one!

“We thoroughly enjoyed this tour as it offered well organised daily activities by our excellent tour manager. Thank you very much.” Barbara



Enjoy 2 nights in vibrant Berlin

DAY 1 Berlin welcome

Your tour commences this evening in vibrant Berlin – a city now united and rebuilt in even greater glory. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

**Your Berlin hotel –
Maritim proArte or
Hotel Eurostars Berlin**

Both these modern, 4 star hotels are located near Berlin's historic Friedrichstraße shopping street and a stone's throw from "Unter den Linden" street.



DAY 2 Berlin sightseeing and 'My Time'

This morning we are joined by an expert local guide for a panoramic tour to see all the major sights from the famous Brandenburg Gate, Unter den Linden and rebuilt Reichstag to the Victory Column in the Tiergarten, Potsdamer Platz, Checkpoint Charlie and remaining sections of "The Wall".

Your afternoon and evening is entirely at leisure. The shopping is amazing and the city brims with world class sights. Perhaps visit one of the five world class museums on UNESCO Heritage listed Museumsinsel (Museum Island) or the riveting Checkpoint Charlie museum and moving Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. This evening discover your own local restaurant for dinner. Maybe dine 'al fresco' in Gendarmenmarkt square, dramatically flanked by two beautiful cathedrals and the Berlin Concert Hall. Meals: B



Glide through the UNESCO Spree Forest on a punt boat

DAY 3 Potsdam Palaces and Gardens

A full day amongst the UNESCO Heritage listed glorious palaces and gardens of Potsdam! On our way to Potsdam we enjoy a photo stop on the famous Bridge of Unity – more famously known as the 'Bridge of Spies'.

Arriving in Potsdam we enjoy a guided visit to Cecilienhof Palace, the last palace built by the German Kaiser, and the site of the 1945 Potsdam Convention where Churchill, Truman and Stalin famously met. Inside is a fascinating museum! The furniture, private reception rooms and huge conference table remain exactly as they were when these great leaders met to carve up a ravaged, post war Europe.

After lunchtime in Potsdam's pretty Dutch Quarter, accompanied by our expert local guide, we stop to admire the elegant terraces in the gardens of Fredrick the Great's Sanssouci Summer Palace. We visit the astounding Neues Palais with its newly restored palatial rooms, including the Gottensaal (Grotto Hall) and Marmorgalerie (Marble Gallery). Later we drive south to Lübbenau in Spreewald, where we stay the next two nights. Meals: B,D

**Your Spreewald hotel –
Hotel Schloss Lübbenau***

Perfectly situated a short walk from the edge of town, this wonderful 4-star hotel offers first class amenities and an award winning restaurant.



**11 September departure stays at the superb 3 star Hotel and Restaurant Spreeblick.*



See breathtaking views from the Bastei Bridge in Saxon Switzerland National Park

DAY 4

Spreewald punt ride and Lübbenau 'My Time'

Spreewald, or 'Spree Forest', is an utterly entrancing UNESCO listed biosphere reserve. Boarding our punts we are 'poled' silently through a dreamy forest on a lacework of channels and canals, lined with wooden cottages, jetties and hamlets. In the heart, at the village of Lehde, we enjoy a lunchtime stop at a waterside restaurant and 'biergarten'. Back in Lübbenau, your afternoon and evening is at leisure. 'My Time' to relax or shop in this delightful inland harbour town. For the more active, maybe take a walk or a bike ride along the forested pathways. And the local food speciality? Gherkins! Meals: B

DAY 5

Meissen, Colditz Castle and Dresden

Travelling south we arrive mid-morning in the medieval town of Meissen. As we approach the city, the first thing that comes into view is the Burgberg (castle hill) rising over the River Elbe. The hill is home to the magnificent gothic cathedral and Albrechtsburg, a 15th century palace, designed for luxury and style rather than defence. At the base of the Burgberg is Meissen's marketplace. Cobblestoned streets are bordered by pastel coloured Renaissance buildings – the perfect place to find a café for an early lunch.

Continuing on, we reach one of the most infamous castles of WWII – Colditz. Subject of numerous books and films, this enormous castle became the prison for all the greatest POW escapees of the war. Ironically the Nazis therefore created an incredible escape training school! The museum is full of the most amazing array of escape tools and memorabilia. Our local guide will also show us some of the most impossible tunnels and escape routes. Utterly fascinating! Later we arrive in Dresden, where we stay the next three nights. Meals: B, D

Your Dresden hotel – The Westin Bellevue*

Overlooking the River Elbe, this excellent, period style 4 star hotel is in a fantastic location just a short walk across the bridge from Dresden's Baroque old town.



*12 June departure stays at Hyperion Hotel Dresden am Schloss

DAY 6

Dresden sightseeing and 'My Time'

Rebuilt after the massive bombing raids of WWII, Dresden has once again bloomed into one of the most beautiful and elegant cities in Europe, reflecting the grandeur of this capital of the Electors of Saxony, who once ruled a powerful empire. On our morning walking tour you will see the glorious Zwinger Palace, the Semper Opera House and the symbolic Frauenkirche dominating the massive, ancient market square. Following the Fürstenzug – a dramatic, 100 metre long painted porcelain mural depicting the procession of Princes – we visit the Dresden Royal Palace. We have included entrance to the museums including the Armoury, Turkish Chamber, Riesensaal (Giants' Hall) and the fabulous New Green Vault with over 1,000 beautiful gold and silver bejewelled objects. Simply stunning! The rest of your day is at leisure to explore this delightful city. Meals: B

DAY 7

Saxon Switzerland National Park sightseeing and River Elbe cruise

We have an incredible day planned in Germany's 'Saxon Switzerland' National Park. First stop will be at the dramatic 75 metre long (easily accessible) stone Bastei Bridge, which links the incredible rock formations, walkways and lookouts, 200 metres above the River Elbe. The panoramic views are stupendous! In the distance you will see the massive rock ramparts of Festung Königstein, which we visit next. Dating back to the 13th century, this is the largest fortress in Germany, and one of the very best castle visits in all Europe! The main entrance tunnel is so impressive, as is the 152 metre deep well, barracks and old wine cellars. The 1.5 kilometre long cliff top ramparts, often lined with restored cannon, are a thrill to walk along. Later, at Pillnitz, we stop to see the park and ornate gardens of Pillnitz Palace, before taking a cruise down the beautiful River Elbe. Journeying past palaces, mansions and the UNESCO listed river farmlands, we arrive into Dresden at Brühl's Terrace, nicknamed 'the balcony of Europe'. This evening we have included dinner in a local restaurant. Meals: B, D

continued



Step back in time in Potsdam

Often called the 'Prussian Versailles', Frederick the Great's iconic Sanssouci Palace is certainly magnificent. But there is so much more to Potsdam! Between 1730 and 1916, 500 acres of parks, lakes and gardens were lavishly developed along with 150 palaces and ornate buildings. There is even a giant windmill! UNESCO designated the entire area as World Heritage listed, and that is why we spend a whole day exploring it! Sanssouci Palace was Frederick's smaller and more intimate home, and naturally we visit his spectacular terraced gardens. We also visit inside the enormous 'New Palace', which was sumptuously built to impress the world! Incredibly, it is 16 times bigger than Sanssouci! We enjoy lunchtime in Potsdam's rejuvenated Dutch Quarter; we send you back in time as you stand on the infamous Bridge of Spies, and in the Kaiser's Cecilienhof Palace, beside the table where a Dictator, a President and a Prime Minister changed the world forever! What a day! See Day 3.



Stay 3 nights in the heart of medieval Prague



3 Additions to your bucket list

Many people do not realise that Germany and the Czech Republic boast some truly extraordinary scenery, much of it so easily accessible. Take Spreewald, for instance. By staying two nights here, right in the delightful inland harbour town of Lübbenau, we can enjoy an incredible day exploring the amazing labyrinth of pretty waterways. So beautiful, so rewarding, and the hardest thing you have to do is just sit and relax on a punt! Then, there is the stunning Saxon Switzerland National Park. The Bastei Bridge and Königstein Castle are simply dramatic. Lübbenau, Bastei Bridge & Königstein in the Saxon Switzerland National Park? Never heard of them? 'Google' images of them and you will be simply amazed how quickly they rise up your 'bucket list'. See Days 4 and 7.

DAY 8 Prague sightseeing

Early afternoon we arrive in Prague, where we stay three nights in the very heart of the old city.

On arrival we are joined by our expert local guide for a tour through this fascinating city to the Hradcany – Prague Castle. Covering 7 hectares it is the largest ancient castle in the world. We also visit St Vitus Cathedral and the colourful houses of Zlatá Ulička, or Golden Lane, named after the goldsmiths who lived here in the 17th century.

Dinner this evening will be authentic Czech cuisine in a local restaurant **Meals: B,D**

Your Prague hotel – Clarion Hotel Old Town

This modern 4 star hotel is perfectly located in Prague's historic centre and offer comfortable, tastefully decorated, air conditioned rooms.



DAY 9 Prague 'My Time'

Your day is completely at leisure to explore the laneways, churches and bridges of this beautiful, UNESCO Heritage listed city. Prague is justifiably known as one of the truly great cities of Europe and the old town is right on your doorstep. Your 'My Time' today will so relaxing and rewarding. **Meals: B**

DAY 10 Kutná Hora sightseeing

Join us today on a full day excursion to the nearby UNESCO World Heritage listed city of Kutná Hora. Fortune-hunters flocked to Kutná Hora in the 13th century to dig out the silver-rich ore discovered here. Once bigger than medieval London, the city minted coins used all across Europe, and its wealth underpinned the power of the Bohemian kings. Here we will visit the Sedlec Ossuary (Church of Bones), with macabre décor of bone art, followed by the wonderful Cathedral of Saint Barbara, a masterpiece of late Gothic fantasy. You will also have free time to relax and explore the lovely old town. For those at ease within narrow, dark spaces we have also included an incredible torch lit guided tour through the 500 year old silver mine labyrinth, deep under the city. **Meals: B**

DAY 11 Třeboň and Cesky Krumlov

Driving south, we spend lunchtime in the spa town of Třeboň, an undiscovered gem that sits in the heart of this UNESCO listed biosphere. Since the 14th century, man has transformed the surrounding land into an idyllic countryside filled with over 6,000 lakes and islands and it is famous for its ... fishponds! The town centre, Schloss and Masaryk Square are a delightful mixture of colourful renaissance buildings and 'al fresco' cafés serving fish, and there are so few tourists! We continue to the perfectly preserved 13th century city of Cesky Krumlov. Originally built as a hamlet around the impressive castle, the wealth from the silver and gold mining, plus Catholic aristocrats seeking refuge during the Reformation, made Cesky Krumlov the most important city in southern Bohemia. We stay the next two nights in the very heart of this extraordinary, UNESCO World Heritage listed time capsule. On arrival, we board large wooden rafts to enjoy a leisurely float slowly down the placid River Vltava. From your seats you will get the very best views up onto the castle walls and into the old town. What better way to introduce you to the city? **Meals: B,D**

Your Cesky Krumlov hotel – Hotel Ruze

This 16th century monastery has been extensively reconstructed to preserve the beautiful Renaissance architecture and create a 70 room first class hotel, located in the centre of town, with beautiful views of the Vltava River from the hotel's terrace.



DAY 12 Cesky Krumlov tour and 'My Time'

This morning we are joined by a local guide to bring to life the history and background of this extraordinary town. You will also enjoy a guided tour of the Castle's Renaissance and Baroque state rooms.

Your afternoon and evening is at leisure in UNESCO Heritage listed Cesky Krumlov. Relax and enjoy 'My Time' amongst the cobblestoned streets, cafés, restaurants, shops and ancient winding alleys. **Meals: B**



Wander through the Mirabell Gardens in Salzburg

DAY 13**Salzburg guided tour and 'My Time'**

Heading into Austria we soon reach Salzburg – the baroque city of Mozart. On arrival a local guide will accompany us on a walking tour of this enchanting UNESCO Heritage listed city, including several locations used in the film, 'The Sound of Music'. Your afternoon will be at leisure to explore the ornate squares and churches, fascinating shops and traditional coffee houses. The views from the enormous Festung (Fortress), sitting high above the city, are magnificent. This evening we have included a memorable farewell dinner at the St Peter Stiftskeller. First mentioned as an Inn as far back as the year 803, this is the oldest known restaurant in central Europe! **Meals: B,D**

**Your Salzburg hotel –
Radisson Blu Hotel Altstadt***

This 4-star hotel could not be more central! Set in the cobblestoned streets barely 100 meters from Mozart Platz, it dates back to 1377, and features elegant rooms, wooden ceilings, intricate stucco and antique artwork.



15 May departure stays at Altstadt hotel Stadtkrug. 11 September departure stays at Star Inn Hotel Premium Salzburg Gablerbräu.

DAY 14**To Munich**

Your tour ends on arrival in Munich, mid-morning. We will make drop offs in the city centre and at Munich airport. We recommend you book flights or trains that depart Munich after 2pm. **Meals: B**

See the Oberammergau Passion Play

Would you like to extend your holiday to see the Oberammergau Passion Play? This once in a decade event is back in 2020 and Albatross Tours have guaranteed category 1 seating! See page 136 for further details.

Outstanding Value Inclusions**Over \$1,400 value of extras already included**

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 13 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 20 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 7 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Berlin
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Spreewald punt ride, River Elbe cruise, Vltava raft ride, Kutná Hora silver mine visit, 'Saxon Switzerland'
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips for your Tour Manager, Driver and local guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!**The Albatross difference**

- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

14 days from \$6,597 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Berlin	Ends Munich	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
15 May	28 May	\$6,897	\$1,640
12 June	25 June	\$6,597	\$1,320
14 August	27 August	\$6,597	\$1,320
11 September	24 September	\$6,597	\$1,320

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation.

Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.



An Alpine Adventure



Visit the delightful village of Lauterbrunnen and the impressive Trummelbach Falls

16 Exciting Days Zurich to Milan

Discover the breathtaking scenery of the French and Swiss Alps from the remarkable Aiguille du Midi, to the meadows of the Bernese Oberland, climb high into the mountains to the Jungfrauoch, see Zermatt and the mighty Matterhorn, ride across the breathtaking Alps on the Glacier Express and explore delightful Lake Garda.

AVERAGE 127 KMS PER DAY

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions
- 🏛️ UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

THE BERNESE OBERLAND

Days 5, 6 & 7

- Stay 3 nights in a superb spa hotel in Grindelwald
- Drive over the spectacular Forclaz Pass
- Enjoy a guided tour of Byron's Château de Chillon in Montreux
- Explore hilltop Gruyères, one of the great sights of Europe
- Enjoy 'My Time' to explore your glorious mountain surrounds
- Take the incredible funicular train up to the Jungfrauoch, explore the Ice Palace, look down on the massive Aletsch Glacier
- Visit lovely lakeside Luzern
- Wander the medieval cobblestoned streets of 🏛️ Bern

ZURICH

Day 1

- Stay 1 night in Zurich
- Meet and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers over dinner

KLOSTERS

Days 10 & 11

- Stay 2 nights in a chalet style hotel in the mountain resort of Klosters
- Ride in panoramic carriages on the amazing Glacier Express, passing over chasms and through the mighty Alps
- Explore Chur, Switzerland's oldest village

THE FRENCH ALPS

Days 2, 3 & 4

- Stay 3 nights in Chamonix under the shadow of the Mont Blanc massif
- Explore the Swiss city of Geneva and see the Jet d'Eau fountain
- Experience two incredible mountain rides – a cable car to the top of the stunning Aiguille du Midi (3,842 metres high!) & the famous 'Little Red Train' up to Montenvers station
- Visit the exclusive, chic ski resort town of Megève
- Enjoy a guided tour of the delightful lakeside town of Annecy

ZERMATT

Days 8 & 9

- Stay 2 nights in the stunning village of Zermatt with views of the mighty Matterhorn
- Visit Lauterbrunnen, in the magnificent 'Valley of the Waterfalls'
- See the thundering Trummelbach Falls inside a mountainside
- Experience the spectacular scenery of 'Le Valais'
- Enjoy a day free to explore the chic mountain resort of Zermatt and surrounding areas

LAKE GARDA

Days 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16

- Stay 4 nights beside stunning Lake Garda
- Enjoy lunchtime in centuries old Bolzano
- Spend a day at leisure exploring the lakeside port and villages of Lake Garda
- Enjoy a guided tour of Romeo and Juliet's 🏛️ Verona
- Enjoy a morning visit to historical Salo
- Enjoy a wine tasting & lunch at the Redaelli de Zinis wine estate





Are the mountains calling you?

This 16 day Alpine Adventure is precisely that – a real Alpine Adventure! It is such a completely different experience to take a leisurely walk on well-worn trails through meadows bursting with spring alpine flowers, or to take an exciting mountain cable car ride to savour lunch on a restaurant terrace, set on a sunny plateau ringed with snow, with views stretching for literally hundreds of kilometres! To do this you need time – and with this unique Alpine Adventure that is exactly what you get!

I have an absolute love of the mountains. Every magical step, every curve and turn opens up a completely new vista, and the character changes all the time. That's why I designed this tour to really experience the complete diversity offered by the French and Swiss Alps. From standing above the clouds on the tip of the remarkable Aiguille du Midi, to being inside the Trummelbach mountain as the thundering waterfall roars down around you, shaking the ground you stand on. From delightful, lakeside Annecy and Château Chillon beside Montreux, to staying in a fantastic spa hotel in Grindelwald with views of the Eiger, or Zermatt beside the Matterhorn, and especially experiencing the incredible Glacier Express panoramic train ride that cuts through the glorious Alps.

Why Lake Garda at the end? Maybe as a logical finalé completing your grand Alpine mountain traverse by relaxing beside a glacier carved, deep blue, beautiful Italian Lake? Or perhaps... just for the sheer pleasure of it! Enjoy!



Take a cable car up the Aiguille du Midi

DAY 1 Zurich welcome

Your tour commences this evening in Zurich. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. **Meals: D**

Your Zurich Hotel – Swissotel

Conveniently located just a five minute train ride from either the centre of Zurich or the Airport, this 4-star hotel features contemporary rooms that reflect an elegant & modern style, featuring panoramic views of Zurich and the Swiss Alps.



DAY 2 Geneva and Chamonix

We arrive in Geneva around lunch time. You will have time at leisure to explore Switzerland's second largest city and once home of the Red Cross. Make sure you take a walk along the beautiful foreshore of Lake Léman (Lake Geneva) to see the city's symbolic 140 metre high Jet d'Eau fountain which is set offshore in the lake. Crossing back into France we continue deep into the heart of the mighty French Alps and the Chamonix Valley in the Haute Savoie, to Chamonix, where we stay the next three nights. Set at an altitude of 1000 metres, and surrounded by a dozen world class ski resorts, Chamonix is the world capital of skiing and mountaineering. **Meals: B,D**

Your hotel in the French Alps – Le Refuge des Aiglons*

This 4 star hotel is only a short walk from the pedestrianised centre and offers magnificent mountain views.



*21 August departure stays at Chalet Hotel Le Prieure.

DAY 3 Aiguille du Midi and the 'Sea of Ice'

Today we have included not one, but two incredible mountain rides. The first, arguably one of the world's greatest mountain rides, is by cable car up to the very tip of the Aiguille du Midi - the 'Needle of Middy'. At an altitude of 3842 metres (12,605ft) you are seemingly within reach of Mont Blanc and the views across the French, Italian and Swiss Alps are astounding. The second ride is on the famous 'Little Red Train' – a funicular railway that follows a scenic route through the forests of conifers up to Montenvers station. Soaring high above you is the spike of the Drus Mountain and the massive rock wall of the Grands Jorasse. Filling the valley below you is France's largest Glacier, the 'Mer du Glace' or 'Sea of Ice'. You can even take a cable car (subject to opening) down to explore the hand carved ice caves, beautifully illuminated deep inside this glacier*. The less adventurous can of course relax in Montenvers panoramic restaurant or enjoy an afternoon at leisure exploring the shops and boutiques of lovely Chamonix. **Meals: B**

*From the foot of the cable car you need to go down a large number of steps to access the ice caves entrance.



Spend time in the pretty town of Annecy

“One of the reasons we chose Albatross was because of the 2, 3 and 4-night stays. This certainly made a huge difference to our comfort and relaxation. There was a good mix of sightseeing and adventures, and the quality of hotels was excellent.” Sue



Enjoy a guided tour of Château de Chillon

DAY 4 Chic Megève and lakeside Annecy

First stop this morning will be in the exclusive, chic ski resort of Megève. Running from the delightful cobblestoned central square, the main pedestrian street is lined with medieval buildings, al fresco cafés and some hideously expensive designer boutiques. The rest of the day will be in the delightful French lakeside town of Annecy. A local guide will show us around the cobblestoned streets, half-timbered and beautifully painted houses that sit beside picturesque canals which are criss-crossed with stone bridges. With a back drop of mountains and the turquoise lake, the Vieille Ville (Old Town) is incredibly pretty. **Meals: B**

DAY 5 Château de Chillon, Montreux and Gruyères

Driving over the spectacular Forclaz Pass into Switzerland we reach Montreux. Our first stop will be to enjoy a guided tour through Château de Chillon. Made famous in Byron's poem 'The Prisoner of Chillon', this 13th century fortress juts out imposingly into Lake Geneva. The rest of the morning is at leisure on the grand lakeside promenade and foreshore of Montreux. In the afternoon we visit the fortified village of Gruyères, which rises out of the flat valley floor, perched on top of a steep rocky hill. The broad cobblestoned main street, flanked by centuries old houses, is an astounding time capsule and one of the great sights of Europe. Later we drive deep into the heart of the Bernese Oberland to Grindelwald where we stay the next three nights. Grindelwald is known the world over for its dramatic setting surrounded by massive snow covered peaks and meadows. The views of the north face of the Eiger are exceptional! The village is full of restaurants, cafés and shops. Tonight we will enjoy dinner in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**

Your Grindelwald hotel – Sunstar Hotel

This superb hotel is in a central location with unspoilt views of the north face of the Eiger. The atmosphere is charming and features traditional alpine design with large, comfortable rooms and modern amenities.



DAY 6 Jungfrau mountain ride & 'My Time' in Grindelwald

Boarding a local train we climb high into the mountains to Kleine Scheidegg. Changing on to the Jungfrau Railway we travel into a tunnel which takes us through the inside of the north face of the Eiger, and up to the Jungfraujoch – the highest rail station in Europe. At 3,454 metres (11,332 ft) the views down onto the Aletsch Glacier are magnificent. You will find several restaurants, an Ice Palace and the Lindt Swiss Chocolate Heaven display. You can also take a lift another 100 metres higher to the dramatic Sphinx lookout point. Your afternoon is entirely free for you to enjoy the spectacular Swiss scenery. Perhaps go for a walk in the hills or catch a train to explore nearby Interlaken. **Meals: B**

DAY 7 Lakeside Luzern and medieval Bern

Our morning will be spent at leisure exploring the lovely lakeside town of Luzern with its quaint old town and the famous Chapel and Mill wooden bridges which cross the river. In the afternoon we set off to explore the medieval cobblestoned streets of Bern. A UNESCO World Heritage Listed landmark, this capital city is set on a spectacular bend above the River Aare, and boasts kilometres of sheltered arcaded shopping ways, an intriguing clock tower and the famous 'Bärengraben' bear pits. **Meals: B**

continued



Stay 3 nights in the French village of Chamonix



Mountains are meant to be conquered!

Fortunately, nowadays we can so easily capture that exhilarating mountain experience without any effort at all. Like our ride up the astounding Aiguille du Midi. To give you an idea of what a feat of engineering this is, the steel cable or hawser on just the second cable car stage is an unbelievable, continuous 7 kms long! On top, at an altitude of 3,842 metres (12,605ft), you will find observation platforms, a café, mountaineering and alpine exhibition, plus a glass bottom observation booth. Stand on that if you dare, and you will 'feel' the whole world dropping away beneath your feet! Far below you can see where the massive 'Mer du Glace' or 'Sea of Ice' is born and how it snakes its way down the valley. And 'down there' is where we go on our afternoon adventure on the Little Red Train. The Glacier moves 70 metres a year so each season they hop back inside the glacier and re-carve the cave labyrinth, lining it with blue carpets, beautiful lighting shows and adding ice sculptures and chairs. A fantastic experience! See Day 3.



SPECIALLY
HAND
SELECTED
FOR YOU

The mighty Trummelbach Falls

Lauterbrunnen village is in a spectacular setting but the highlight of the day is actually a visit where sunlight never penetrates. Inside the sheer mountain walls, like a scene from 'The Lord of the Rings', a massive waterfall is channeled by nature to pummel down through the core of the mountain, vigorously carving and expanding the rock chambers. On carefully constructed walkways (yes, safe) you will be amongst it, right by it, feeling the sheer power and ferocity as the vibration and energy engulfs you. An extraordinary sight, feeling and sensation! See Day 8.



Ride on the amazing Glacier Express
Courtesy of Swiss Tourism

DAY 8 Lauterbrunnen, Trummelbach Falls and Zermatt

Our first stop of the day will be in the nearby delightful village of Lauterbrunnen. Set spectacularly with 1000 foot sheer cliffs rising either side, this valley is often called the 'Valley of the Waterfalls' – these are the cliffs that James Bond keeps leaping off when he is being chased by the baddies. Here we visit the unusual Trummelbach Falls. Taking a funicular up inside the cliff face we then walk through the mountain caverns that are still being carved by these 'living waterfalls' which thunder right beside us, down through the inside of the mountain. An extraordinary sight and sensation! Later we drive through spectacular scenery into 'Le Valais' and Taesch where we catch a cog railway train up to the world-famous alpine resort of Zermatt. Set at an altitude of 1620 metres (5315 feet), the village is surrounded by a dozen huge peaks and dominating all is the mighty Matterhorn. Petrol-driven vehicles are banned from the village and as such the peace and quiet enhances the beauty of the wooden chalets and small winding village streets. Stunning! Meals: B,D

Your Zermatt hotel – Hotel National

This distinctly first class hotel is superbly located in the heart of the stunning village of Zermatt.

STAY
2
NIGHTS

DAY 9 'My Time' in Zermatt

Today has been left free for you to explore the town, walk on the well sign posted hiking trails to mountain restaurants and waterfalls, and relax in the crisp clean air. Alternatively pamper yourself in the hotel's excellent indoor pool, spa and wellness centre. Looking for another classic mountain ride? The Sunnegga Paradise cable car is situated right beside the hotel, or maybe jump on the nearby funicular train which takes you up to the Gornergrat station and terraced restaurant with its massive views across to the Matterhorn. Alternatively if you want to spend a day skiing, maybe catch a cable car ride up the Kleine (little) Matterhorn, where there are twenty-five kilometres of pistes and eight ski lifts which remain open all summer long! Meals: B



Enjoy 'My Time' in Zermatt
Image taken by Albatross traveller J. Slack

“What a trip of contrasts! The tour was full of surprises and treats. Our tour manager was organised and knowledgeable. The pace was relaxed and easy.” Angela

DAY 10 Glacier Express, Chur & Klosters

This morning we board the famous Glacier Express train which takes us along the 'Valais' through Switzerland's finest mountain scenery. Ranked as one of the world's top train trips, you will be seated in panoramic carriages as we cross some of the 291 bridges, the 2033 metre Oberalp Pass and go through 91 tunnels. Early afternoon we arrive and have time to explore Switzerland's oldest city, Chur. The traffic free zone in the old town has a wonderful atmosphere with its boutiques, shops, bars and restaurants. Later we continue to Klosters where we stay two nights. Meals: B,D

Your Klosters hotel – Hotel Alpina*

Set in the centre of town, this family run, chalet style hotel offers traditional Alpine ambience.

STAY
2
NIGHTS

*24 May, 31 May & 21 June departures stay 2 nights at Silvretta Park Hotel in Klosters.

DAY 11 'My Time' in Klosters

Your day is free to relax and explore Klosters*. Meals: B

*24 May & 31 May departures include a visit to nearby St Moritz and dinner in the hotel on Day 11.

DAY 12 Bolzano and lakeside Bardolino

Today we go to Italy! Passing through the Alps, we enjoy lunchtime in the centuries old town of Bolzano. Influenced by both Tyrolean and Italian cultures, you will find intricately carved gables, painted timber façades and an elegant arched main street. Later we continue to the charming lakeside town of Bardolino, where we stay the next four nights. Dinner tonight will be in our hotel restaurant. Meals: B,D

Your Lake Garda Hotel - Hotel Caesius Therae & Spa Resort, Bardolino

Situated on the shores of Lake Garda this 4 star resort & spa hotel offers spacious and comfortable air conditioned rooms.

STAY
4
NIGHTS

DAY 13
'My Time' in Lake Garda

We have left today entirely free. Do as little or as much as you want. Lake Garda is Italy's largest and perhaps most beautiful lake, and its shores are lined with quaint villages and colourful ports. The shopping is excellent and the cafés, lakeshore restaurants and shady gardens, all have that distinctly Mediterranean feel. Perhaps catch a ferry across the lake and wander around Gardone Riviera with its botanical gardens on the hill, or explore the characterful 'picture postcard' ports of Lazise or Sirmione. **Meals: B**

DAY 14
Verona and the lakeside town of Garda

Skirting the lake we will visit Romeo and Juliet's Verona. A local guide will bring to life this beautiful city, where these tragic lovers avowed a love that spanned the centuries. After free time to explore and find a restaurant for lunch, we return to glorious Lake Garda and enjoy an afternoon visit to the delightful lakeside town of Garda, after which the lake is named. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 15
Lakeside Salo and Redaelli de Zinis

This morning we visit the delightful lakeside town of Salo to explore its historical centre filled with lanes and little squares adorned by noble houses, elegant shops and the longest promenade on Lake Garda. Later we continue to Redaelli de Zinis in Calvagese della Riviera. This is a famous local winery and restaurant. Here we enjoy a wine tasting and sample some of the locally grown produce before enjoying our farewell lunch. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 16
To Milan

We soon reach the stylish city of Milan where your tour ends on arrival. Drop off points will be Milan Centrale train station and Milan Malpensa Airport. We recommend you book flights that depart Milan after 3pm. **Meals: B**

See the Oberammergau Passion Play

Would you like to extend your holiday to see the Oberammergau Passion Play? This once in a decade event is back in 2020 and Albatross Tours have guaranteed category 1 seating! See page 136 for further details.



Spend a morning exploring Salo on Lake Garda

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$1,600 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 15 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 23 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), Lake Garda wine estate lunch (L) and 7 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Zurich
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - Lake Garda wine tasting, cable car excursion to Aiguille du Midi, Jungfrau Railway excursion, Glacier Express train
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Leisurely 2, 3 and 4 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS
SAVE
\$300_{pp}
Must book and deposit before **31 October 2019**. Further discounts may apply - See page 27.

2020 Dates & Prices

16 days from \$8,667 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Zurich	Ends Milan	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
24 May	8 June	\$8,667	\$1,350
31 May	15 June	\$8,997	\$1,350
7 June	22 June	\$8,997	\$1,350
21 June	6 July	\$8,997	\$1,350
26 July	10 August	\$9,257	\$1,350
21 August	5 September	\$9,257	\$1,350
6 September	21 September	\$8,997	\$1,350
13 September	28 September	\$8,997	\$1,350

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Black Forest, Bavaria & the Tyrol



Explore the fairytale Neuschwanstein Castle on a guided tour

15 Relaxing Days Frankfurt to Munich

Wander down cobblestoned streets in stunning villages, explore Ludwig's fairytale castles and taste wine on the 'route Alsace du Vin'. Tour the stunning Gardens of Mainau, take in the spectacular mountain views from Hitler's Eagles Nest and soak up the atmosphere of the undulating 'Sound of Music' hills near beautiful, baroque Salzburg... ahhh!


FRANKFURT

Day 1

- Stay 1 night in Frankfurt
- Meet and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers over dinner

THE BLACK FOREST

Days 2, 3, 4 & 5

- Stay 4 nights in Schönwald in the centre of the Black Forest
- Take the funicular up to Heidelberg Castle
- Visit Gengenbach, a 'pearl among the Black Forest towns'
- Ride the 'Petit Train' in picture perfect Colmar
- Taste wine on the 'route Alsace du Vin'
- Cruise on the River Ill in  Strasbourg
- Visit Triberger Wasserfälle - Germany's highest waterfall
- Relax in gothic Freiburg
- Enjoy lunch on the shores of Lake Titisee, cruise on the lake and explore the resort town of Titisee

BAD REICHENHALL NEAR SALZBURG

Days 12, 13, 14 & 15

- Stay 3 nights in  the delightful Spa town of Bad Reichenhall
- Explore Hitler's Eagles Nest and visit Berchtesgaden and the historic town Salt Mines
- Enjoy a full day to explore Salzburg
- See 'The Sound of Music' church at Lake Mondsee
- Discover the stunning village of  Hallstatt
- Enjoy dinner at St Peter Stiftskeller, Salzburg's oldest restaurant dating back to the 1500's

Germany

France

Alsace

Strasbourg

Ribeauvillé
Kaysersberg
Colmar

The Black Forest

Triberg
Freiburg
Titisee

4 SCHÖNWALD

Mainau

Lindau

FÜSSEN

Bavarian Alps

Wieskirche

Bavaria

Linderhof
Neuschwanstein

Munich

BAD REICHENHALL

Salzburg

Mondsee

Hallstatt

Berchtesgaden

3 KIRCHBERG

Innsbruck

Mayrhofen

Italy

Rattenberg

Jenbach


Krimml

Tyrol

Switzerland

BAVARIA

Days 6, 7 & 8

- Stay 3 nights in picturesque Füssen
- Wander around the amazing gardens of the 'Flower Island' of Mainau
- Cross Lake Constance to Meersburg and visit the old harbour of Lindau
- Explore Neuschwanstein Castle on a guided tour
- Enjoy the mountain cable car ride up to Tegelberg
- Explore the extravagant Linderhof Palace and gardens
- See the most beautiful church in Europe -  Wieskirche

THE AUSTRIAN TYROL

Days 9, 10 & 11


- Stay 3 nights in an Alpine style hotel in Kirchberg
- Explore picturesque Rattenberg and in the old town of Innsbruck see the Golden Roof
- Relax with a day free to explore the old town of Kirchberg
- Ride on a steam train along the picturesque Ziller Valley
- Visit the chic ski resort of Mayrhofen
- Drive over the magnificent Fern and Gerlos Alpine Passes
- Admire the Krimmler Wasserfälle (Waterfalls)

AVERAGE 129 KMS PER DAY

● Tour commences

● Overnight stays

● Included excursions

 UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits



Julie Andrews and that Mad King

Mad? Or just eccentric? Ludwig emptied Bavaria's treasury by building a series of Palaces and Castles inspired by Germanic Gods, the surrounding countryside and the composer, Wagner. Castles like the 'Fairytale' Neuschwanstein Castle. Who doesn't identify Austria's undulating hills, deep blue lakes and gorgeous church steeples with the first scene of the iconic film 'The Sound of Music'?

Julie Andrews, arms outstretched singing 'The hills are alive'? I do! These regions are riddled with palaces, baroque churches, mountains and medieval towns, ripe to be visited. You may never tire of the 'chocolate box' perfection. I find it really strange that virtually every mainstream tour out there spends just a few scant hours in these entire regions en route to their next all too brief overnight stay. Ridiculous!

Neuschwanstein Castle is wrongly treated to a 'happy snappy' roadside photo stop or hurried morning visit, the other castles and sights are completely ignored, and you never have time to relax by 'those' lakes or ride high up on 'those' magical Austrian hills. Madness! Aren't these iconic sites the reason you are going to these regions in the first place?

I believe these magnificent, romantic, and beautiful regions deserve better. That is why Albatross spends 4 nights exploring the Black Forest, 3 nights amongst Bavaria's castles, 3 nights in the Austrian Tyrol and 3 nights in delightful Spa town of Bad Reichenhall.

It is absolutely the only way these hills can come alive!



See stunning scenery along the Alsace Wine Road

DAY 1 Frankfurt welcome

Your tour commences this evening in wonderful Frankfurt: a city of contrasts – from modern skyscrapers to beautifully maintained old buildings. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Frankfurt hotel – Maritim Hotel*
This first class hotel is in a superb location near the city centre.

**13 June departure stays at Steigenberger Airport Hotel & 5 September departure stays at Hilton Frankfurt.*

DAY 2 Heidelberg, Gengenbach and the Black Forest

We spend the morning in the nearby ancient university town of Heidelberg. Set in the wooded Neckar Valley, it is noted for its twin-towered bridge and red sandstone castle. We have included a funicular ride up to the castle and entrance to the castle courtyard and terrace. From here you can enjoy the magnificent views of the city and Neckar River below. Entrance is also included to see the world's largest wine barrel and the German Apothecary Museum. Later, we drive deep into the Black Forest to enjoy an afternoon stop in Gengenbach. With its watchtowers and market square surrounded by lovely half-timbered houses, it is easy to see why it has been called a "pearl among the Black Forest towns". We continue to nearby Schönwald, where we spend the next four nights. Meals: B,D

Your Black Forest hotel – Hotel Ochsen, Schönwald

This charming, family run, 4 star hotel, in a building dating from 18th century, provides an excellent base for all of our included excursions to the surrounding areas.



DAY 3 Strasbourg cruise and Triberg

Our morning will be spent in Strasbourg, the seat of the European Parliament. On arrival, we board a glass topped boat to enjoy a river cruise around the heart of this beautiful city. Retaining its old world charm, there are three bridges spanning the River Ill, massive fortified towers and the pedestrian streets around the Place de la Cathédrale and Place Broglie are a delight. Take time to enjoy one of the numerous cosy bistros and cafés. Late afternoon and evening is at leisure in Triberg, in the very centre of the Black Forest, famous for its cake, and home to the world's largest cuckoo clock and Germany's highest waterfall - Triberger Wasserfälle. Meals: B

DAY 4 Colmar and the Alsace Wine Road

Crossing the Rhine in France, we spend the morning in postcard perfect Colmar. On arrival we will enjoy an orientation tour through the heart of town on the 'Petit Train'. Brightly painted, half-timbered houses on narrow, twisting lanes make a perfect backdrop. The River Lauch winds its way through the centre, known as the Little Venice district. Your afternoon will be spent driving along the Route Alsace du Vin (Alsace Wine Road). Stretching from Strasbourg to Colmar, we pass the pretty villages of Ribeauvillé, Riquewihr and Kaysersberg on this famous wine road. At one of the local wineries we will stop to enjoy a wine tasting of various classic local wines. Meals: B,D



"Once again Albatross has delivered us a fantastic holiday. The planning and organisation of this trip is excellent." Russel & Margaret



Tour the extravagant Linderhof Palace and Gardens

DAY 5**Gothic Freiburg and Lake Titisee**

This morning we visit the capital of the Black Forest – the gothic city of Freiburg. Sensitively restored, Freiburg is one of the most charming of German cities, located where the Black Forest meets the Rhine Plain. Arcaded shopping streets and little streams lead through the old town to its great gothic cathedral. Lunch today is included on the terrace of a restaurant on the shores of Lake Titisee, offering the most splendid panoramic views across the lake to the forest. Afterwards, enjoy a cruise on the crystal clear waters of this famous lake and time to explore in the lake resort town of Titisee. Your evening is at leisure in Schönwald. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 6**Flower Island of Mainau to Bavaria**

Heading south-east we soon arrive on the western shore of Lake Constance. Crossing a short causeway we visit the Flower Island of Mainau where a local guide leads us through the 111 acres of beautiful gardens and landscaped grounds. Originally created nearly 200 years ago by Prince Nikolaus, these magnificent botanical gardens also boast an arboretum and an Italian rose garden complete with pergolas, sculptures, fountains and 500 varieties of roses. In summer it is splendid with its rhododendrons along with huge displays of over 350,000 flowers. After catching a ferry across Lake Constance to Meersburg, we follow the northern lakeshore to enjoy an afternoon break in the old harbour town of Lindau. Later we continue to Füssen, in the mountains of Bavaria. **Meals: B,D**

Your hotel in Bavaria – Hotel Hirsch in Füssen

This superbly located hotel, in the town of Füssen, was built in the 'Art Nouveau' style and has been owned by the same family for four generations.

**DAY 7****Neuschwanstein Castle and Tegelberg**

We start the day in Hohenschwangau. On one hill overlooking the little village you have the neo-gothic castle of Hohenschwangau and on the other side above the village is a wooded mountain spur and Neuschwanstein – the fairytale castle of 'mad' King Ludwig. We take a leisurely stroll up the wooded road to enjoy a guided tour through Neuschwanstein Castle's state rooms, king's apartments, halls and throne room; all reminiscent of a Wagner operatic saga. Later this afternoon we will take a cable car ride up to Tegelberg to take in the excellent views down onto the fairytale castles far below. Your evening is at leisure in Füssen. **Meals: B**

Please note: The guided tour through Neuschwanstein Castle incorporates climbing up and down a number of staircases and, as there are no elevators, the inside visit to the castle this morning may not be suitable for those with walking difficulties or limitations.

DAY 8**Linderhof Palace, Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Wieskirche**

There is nothing quite like a day in the mountains! Our first stop will be a visit to Linderhof, an extravagant French Rococo Palace – yet another of King Ludwig's amazing creations. Lunchtime will be in the beautifully decorated town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. 'My Time' to relax in one of the traditional beer gardens or restaurants, or shop in the broad pedestrian mall. This afternoon we drive through Bavarian farmlands and forests to make a stop in arguably the most beautiful church in Europe – Wieskirche (the 'Church in the Meadows'). Surrounded by green fields, the interior of this World Heritage Listed church is an astounding Rococo creation. **Meals: B,D**

continued

**The palatial Gardens of Mainau**

It would be too easy to simply take the quickest route from the Black Forest to Bavaria. However, we don't and we won't. Instead we choose to stop at one of Europe's classic palatial gardens that cover the entire island – Mainau on Lake Constance. Different flower gardens and displays bloom depending on the season, as they have done for hundreds of years. This is European grand garden design at its finest, and it is a wonderful heritage experience. See Day 6.



Enjoy a full day to explore the city of Salzburg



A day in the mountains

Since modern Alpine skiing originated in Austria it makes absolute sense to combine a visit to the classic ski resort of Mayrhofen with a wonderful day exploring high mountain passes, cascading waterfalls, picture perfect wooded meadows and valleys. We even throw in a steam train ride! This is the authentic essence of Austria. With our 3 night stay you not only see the mountains but you get to truly experience them – to enjoy them the way the locals so proudly do. See Day 11.

DAY 9 Innsbruck, Rattenberg and Kirchberg

Taking the beautiful Fern Pass across the Bavarian Alps, we descend into the Inn Valley to visit the nearby winter resort city of Innsbruck. There will be time at leisure to explore the sights of the Altstadt (old town) such as the Hofburg Imperial Palace, cobblestoned streets and the renowned Golden Roof. Later, we follow the dramatic Inn Valley through the rolling Tyrolean hills and villages, to enjoy a short afternoon stop in the pretty village of Rattenberg. We then continue to Kirchberg where we stay for the next three wonderful nights. Meals: B,D

Your Tyrolean hotel –
**Hotel Kirchberger Hof or
Hotel Metzgerwirt**

Both 4 star hotels are located in Kirchberg, and offer rooms furnished in modern Alpine style.



DAY 10 'My Time' in the Austrian Tyrol

Your day is entirely free to explore the old town of Kirchberg and maybe the nearby town of Kitzbuhel. Why not take a cable car up one of the surrounding peaks and enjoy lunch in one of the mountain top restaurants. Alternatively relax on a sun terrace and soak up the glorious surroundings. Meals: B,D

“We loved the extended stays in the towns of Triberg, Füssen and Kirchberg in “family” hotels. It was a very pleasurable experience.” Anthony

DAY 11 Ziller Valley, Mayrhofen and the Krimml waterfalls

An exciting day in the mountains. Driving to Jenbach we board the old wooden carriages of the historical Zillertalbahnen steam train*. Sit back and relax as the train puffs its way up the full length of the Ziller Valley, through conifer forests and rich green meadows, to reach the chic ski resort of Mayrhofen.

This is a perfect place to enjoy lunchtime amongst the numerous shops, cafés and restaurants surrounded by the soaring Alps. Meeting up with our coach we enter the Hohe Tauern National Park and drive over the spectacular 1630 metre high, 12 km long Gerlos Pass. Stopping at Krimml we visit the Krimmler Wasserfälle (Waterfalls) – the highest in Austria – where we enjoy a walk along the valley pathway to a number of spectacular viewpoints. Meals: B,D

**13 June, 22 August & 5 September departures travel on the Achensee Cog Railway from Jenbach to Achensee then by coach to Mayrhofen.*

DAY 12 Berchtesgaden, Eagle's Nest and Salt Mines

A fascinating day ahead as we visit Berchtesgaden and Hitler's Eagles Nest. We take a breathtaking bus journey up the winding Kehlstein road and then, joined by a local guide, and in Hitler's personal luxurious brass elevator, we ascend inside the mountain for a guided tour of the Kehlsteinhaus. This alpine retreat is better known as Hitler's Eagles Nest and the mountain views are spectacular.

Lunchtime will be spent in the picturesque and historic town of Berchtesgaden, before we visit the old Salt Mines. After dressing up in a salt miner's uniform, we enjoy a fun filled ride on a small train deep underground, take wooden slides (or steps) and then float on a barge across a crystal clear underground lake, beautifully illuminated by a light show. Next stop, the delightful spa town Bad Reichenhall, where we stay three nights. Meals: B,D



Your Bad Reichenhall hotel – Wyndham Grand Bad Reichenhall Axelmannstein

This charming 4 star hotel, located in the pedestrian area of this spa town, oozes character. Bedrooms in this grand historic hotel vary in shape and size however, all are spacious and feature traditional furnishings. The hotel boasts its own landscaped park, a Wellness area with an indoor swimming pool and its own patisserie.

DAY 13

Salzburg and ‘My Time’

We have allowed a full day to explore Salzburg – the baroque city of Mozart. A local guide will take us on a walking tour of this enchanting city, including several locations used in the film ‘The Sound of Music’. Your afternoon will be at leisure to explore the myriad of narrow, cobblestoned streets, ornate squares and churches, fascinating shops and traditional coffee houses. The views from the enormous Festung (Fortress), sitting high above the city, are magnificent. This evening we have included dinner at St Peter Stiftskeller, Salzburg’s oldest restaurant dating back to the 1500’s. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 14

Lake Mondsee, Hallstatt and Salzburg

Our day is spent exploring the Austrian Lakes District! After a leisurely start we spend the morning beside Lake Mondsee and visit the church made famous in the wedding scene of the film ‘The Sound of Music’. Later, we drive deep into the Lakes District to enjoy lunchtime exploring the picturesque town of Hallstatt. Set on a rocky terrace jutting into the quiet dark water of the lake and surrounded by towering peaks, this is considered the oldest inhabited village in Europe and perhaps the most beautiful in Austria. Our return journey to Bad Reichenhall takes us alongside Wolfgangsee (lake) and around Lake Fuschl. Our farewell dinner this evening is in our hotel’s traditional Bavarian restaurant, Axelstüberl. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 15

To Munich

Bidding Austria farewell, we drive to Munich where your tour ends on arrival, mid-morning. Drop off points will be Munich airport & in the city centre. We recommend you book flights or trains that depart Munich after 2pm. **Meals: B**

See the Oberammergau Passion Play

Would you like to extend your holiday to see the Oberammergau Passion Play? This once in a decade event is back in 2020 and Albatross Tours have guaranteed category 1 seating! See page 136 for further details.



Explore picturesque Hallstatt

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$1,500 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 14 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 26 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), lunch on the shores of Lake Titisee (L) and 11 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Strasbourg river cruise, Lake Titisee lunch and cruise, cable car ride to Tegelberg and Ziller steam train ride
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
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- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with ‘My Time’ guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

15 days from \$6,997 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Frankfurt	Ends Munich	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
25 May	8 June	\$6,997	\$770
13 June	27 June	\$7,197	\$770
29 June	13 July	\$6,997	\$770
27 July	10 August	\$6,997	\$770
10 August	24 August	\$7,197	\$770
22 August	5 September	\$6,997	\$770
5 September	19 September	\$7,197	\$770



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Rhine Castles, Moselle Vineyards & Ancient Cologne



Enjoy time at leisure in Cochem on the banks of the Moselle River

NEW
FOR
2020

11 Spectacular Days Amsterdam to Frankfurt

Explore the spectacular castles, steep hill clinging vineyards and delightful riverside towns of the Rhine and Moselle Rivers. Stay in Germany's ancient towns of Trier and inspiring Cologne. Visit Luxembourg, Koblenz and Aachen, cruise down the Rhine, relax in Rudesheim, dine on vine covered terraces and stand on a massive 'treehouse platform' with sweeping views down over the River Saar. *And in July... We have special departures that include a superb André Rieu concert in Maastricht.*

AMSTERDAM

Day 1

- Get to know each other with a welcome drink and dinner

COLOGNE

Days 2, 3 & 4

- Stay 3 nights in the heart of Cologne and enjoy dinner in a traditional beer hall
- July departures enjoy a special André Rieu concert in his home town of Maastricht
- Explore historic Cologne with a local guide, visit majestic Cologne Cathedral and its famous treasury, enjoy 'My Time' in the old town
- Visit the incredible palaces and gardens of Augustusburg and Falkenlust at Brühl
- Spend a day in Holland exploring Maastricht and enjoy a private guided tour through the amazing, historical man-made passages and caverns of the North Caves

RHINE VALLEY

Days 8, 9, 10 & 11

- Stay 3 wonderful nights in the heart of the UNESCO listed section of the Rhine Valley
- At picturesque Cochem visit the nuclear money bunker, relax beside the Moselle and visit the perched castle Burg Eltz
- Take a cable car up to the Niederwald Monument, enjoy lunch on a hilltop restaurant terrace with stunning views over vineyards and down to the Rhine.
- Enjoy 'My Time' in beautiful Rudesheim, relax on an afternoon cruise along the Rhine past the Lorelei Rock
- Explore ancient Koblenz, ride in a cable car across the Rhine for a guided tour through Ehrenbreitstein Fortress
- Visit the gorgeous village of Bacharach, enjoy a farewell drink on a picture postcard Rhine valley terrace, and a farewell 'wine cellar' dinner
- Special event departure in September for the famous 'Rhine in Flames' celebrations

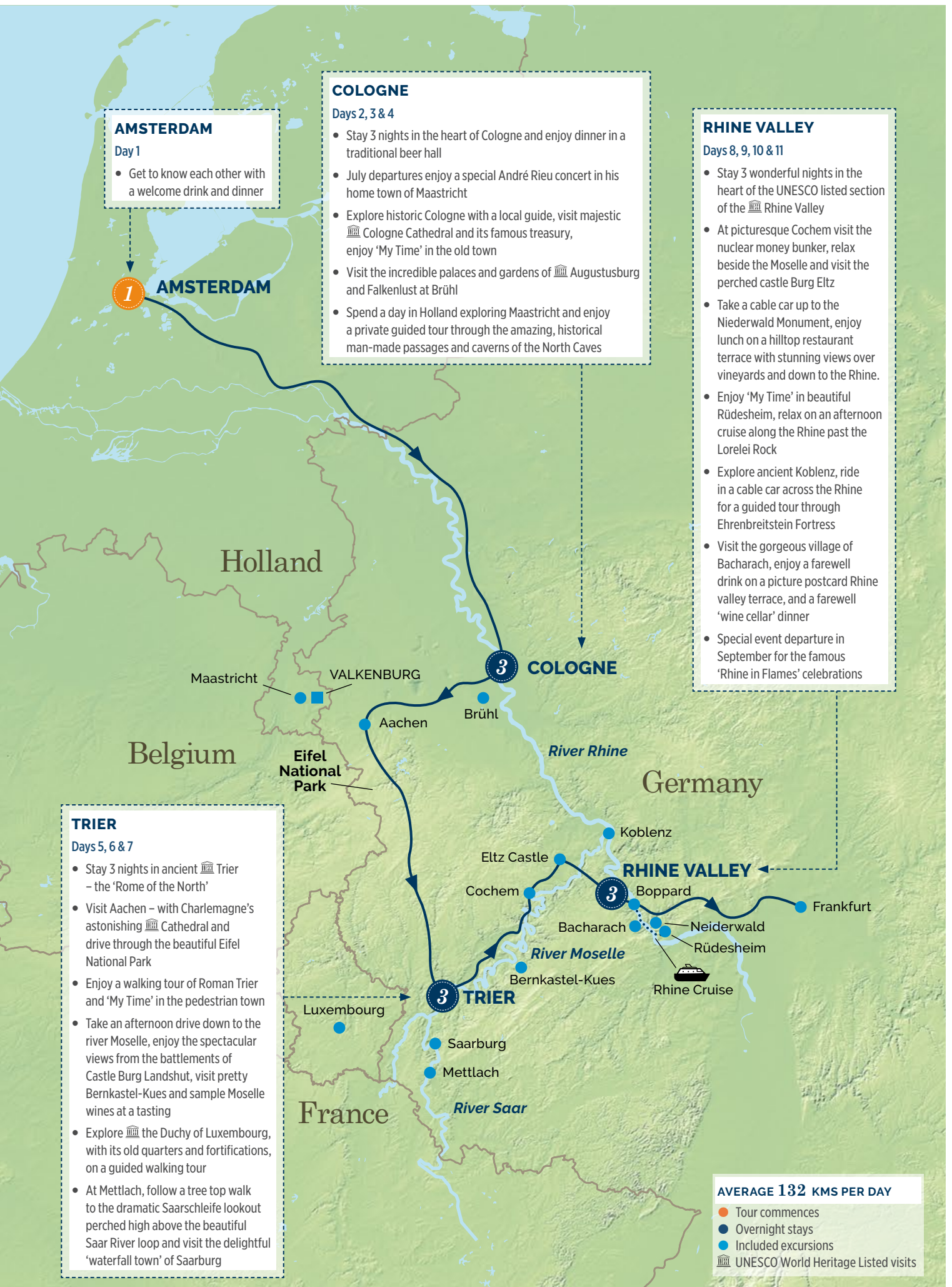
TRIER

Days 5, 6 & 7

- Stay 3 nights in ancient Trier – the 'Rome of the North'
- Visit Aachen – with Charlemagne's astonishing Cathedral and drive through the beautiful Eifel National Park
- Enjoy a walking tour of Roman Trier and 'My Time' in the pedestrian town
- Take an afternoon drive down to the river Moselle, enjoy the spectacular views from the battlements of Castle Burg Landshut, visit pretty Bernkastel-Kues and sample Moselle wines at a tasting
- Explore the Duchy of Luxembourg, with its old quarters and fortifications, on a guided walking tour
- At Mettlach, follow a tree top walk to the dramatic Saarschleife lookout perched high above the beautiful Saar River loop and visit the delightful 'waterfall town' of Saarburg

AVERAGE 132 KMS PER DAY

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions
- UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits





Why on earth settle for less?

There is a 65 km long stretch of the Rhine River that is UNESCO Heritage listed. Lined with historical villages, vineyards and castles it is quite wonderful however, many mistakenly think this is all that the region has to offer! By coach or by cruise boat, you usually get offered a cursory few hours here, or maybe a day or so on this stretch, and then you are moved on. Big mistake! This is so wrong because there is so much more just waiting to be discovered. That is why we spend 11 whole days in this divine region, delving so much deeper and seeing so many readily ignored, world class sites.

We boast three sets of three nights stays – in the UNESCO cities of Trier and Cologne, and in the heart of the UNESCO listed region of the Rhine. This gives us... gives you... that most valuable of all things – **Time!** Time to dine in spectacular castles, sip wine in steep hill clinging vineyards, and relax in the delightful riverside towns along the glorious Rhine and Moselle Rivers. Yes, we visit all the classic sites but why stop at that? How about a visit to ancient Aachen to see the tomb of the guy that became the first Holy Roman Emperor – Charlemagne. Or a visit to the dramatic, rock perched castle of Burg Eltz, the beautiful UNESCO Palaces of Brühl, and the lovely town of Maastricht. At Saarschleife we will even take you on a stunning ‘treetop platform’ for incredible, sweeping views down over a huge loop of the River Saar. In Cochem we visit a strange nuclear fallout shelter designed to only protect money! There are so many sites and possibilities.

Oh yes... did I mention Maastricht earlier? That guy André Rieu lives there, and every July he performs world-class concerts in the medieval town square. Yes, we have tickets. Interested? It will be such fun. Come and join us!



See the stunning scenery of the Rhine river

DAY 1 Amsterdam welcome

Your tour commences this evening in Holland’s cosmopolitan capital city, Amsterdam. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Amsterdam hotel – Park Plaza Victoria

Cleverly combining historic architecture and modern amenities, this 4 star hotel offers contemporary accommodation, and is perfectly located right on the famous Damrak, a few steps from the railway station, in the very centre of Amsterdam.



Day 2 Cologne Cathedral and dinner in a classic Beer Hall

Travelling into Germany we reach Cologne around lunchtime. We will stay in this wonderful city for the next three nights. On arrival we are joined by a local guide who will walk us through the old town’s narrow cobblestoned lanes and lively squares such as Alter Markt. The highlight will be a visit to the UNESCO Heritage listed, twin spired Cathedral and its remarkable Treasury, the biggest in Germany. Secreted away in the medieval crypt, the ancient artefacts, treasures that include gold and bejewelled crowns, orbs and sceptres are outstanding. This evening we have included dinner in one of Cologne’s classic Beer Hall restaurants. Meals: B,D

Your Cologne hotel – Maritim Hotel Köln or Pullman Cologne

Both these excellent 4 star hotels are centrally located within easy walking distance of the cathedral, shops and old town.



DAY 3 Brühl – the Palace and Hunting Lodge and ‘My Time’

This morning, in the nearby town of Brühl, we enjoy a guided tour of the UNESCO heritage listed, Augustusburg Palace and the Falkenlust Hunting Lodge. Once the sumptuous residence of the prince-archbishops of Cologne, the interior of this grand rococo palace is sheer extravagance, and the grand staircase is a sight to behold. Behind the palace are ponds, waterways, fountains, ornate gardens and shady paths that lead through the woodland to the Hunting Lodge.

Your afternoon and evening will be at leisure in Cologne. Wonderful ‘My Time’. This evening make sure you stroll along the Rheingarten - the river bank green strip with its pedestrian and bike pathways. Along here, and leading right through the pedestrianised old town, you will find a mesmerising array of restaurants, al fresco cafés and bars, all absolutely buzzing with locals. Meals: B

DAY 4 Maastricht and the mysterious North Caves

Heading west we re-enter Holland and visit the ancient city of Maastricht. We start the day with a guided tour of the incredible man-made labyrinth of cave tunnels and passageways deep below the St Pietersberg Hill, called the North Caves. Dating back hundreds of years, you will discover underground living areas, hideaways, charcoal murals and paintings on stone cavern walls. During the Napoleonic Wars the locals evaded the French down here. In WWII, allied servicemen were hidden here, locals used them as air raid shelters, and even the Dutch national artworks and priceless treasures were secreted away here. An amazing story.

We will spend the rest of the day in beautiful Maastricht. Dating back to Roman times, and still retaining much of its defensive walls, this very pretty city will surprise and captivate you with its lively squares, stately buildings and narrow streets with excellent shopping and al fresco cafés. Your evening is at leisure in Cologne. Meals: B



Relax in Trier's main square for an afternoon during your 3 night stay

© ttm GmbH

July – Special André Rieu departures

That world-famous violinist André Rieu was born and lives here in Maastricht. Renowned as the modern day 'King of Waltz', every July, along with his Johann Strauss Orchestra, he transforms the gorgeous medieval square into a wonderful auditorium, where he performs to adoring crowds. Yes, we have tickets! Our July departures have been specially timed to catch these fantastic hometown concerts. Interested? It will be such fun and spaces are obviously limited, so we recommend you book now!

NOTE: these wonderful performances end with a firework display at midnight. Due to this extremely late finish time we will stay 3 nights in nearby Valkenburg, instead of Cologne. We have therefore flipped the day to day touring on these special 'André Rieu departures. Instead of driving directly to Cologne on Day 2, we visit Aachen and Drielandenpunt and then continue to Valkenburg, where we stay at the 4 star Parkhotel Valkenburg. The next day we visit Cologne and Brühl. On 'André Day', a leisurely start before we visit the Northern Caves. We have also included a pre-performance dinner in Maastricht.



Marvel at the sounds of André Rieu in concert

DAY 5 Charlemagne's Aachen and the Drielandenpunt

Our day begins with a photo stop at the Drielandenpunt (three country point) in the forests above Aachen. Here you can stand on one spot with your feet in 3 countries – Holland, Belgium and Germany. We spend the rest of the morning in ancient Aachen. Dating back 1,200 years this city is steeped in history. The soaring octagonal chapel, in the heart of the cathedral, is bathed in glorious gold frescoes and murals. This is one of Europe's great cathedrals and the resting place of Charlemagne - Charles the Great, founder of the holy Roman Empire. Because of the grandeur it was also the coronation place of over 30 German kings, and was the first site in Germany to be added to the UNESCO World Heritage list. All around the Cathedral and the striking Gothic Town Hall are the squares and cobbled streets of the Altstadt – Old Town. Moving on, we drive through the Eifel National Park to the UNESCO listed city of Trier, where we will spend the next three nights. Dating back 2,000 years this city became important as Rome's capital of the North.

Meals: B,D

Your Trier hotel – Hotel Eurener Hof

Staying in a thoroughly Germanic style hotel is always a great experience. Located just outside of town, this romantic, 4 star hotel is beautifully decorated. The public areas feature traditional craftsmanship skilfully implemented to provide a contemporary feel, in keeping with the region. The restaurant serves local specialties and the bar 'Stube' and terrace are the perfect place to relax.

continued



The Saar Loop

You know about the famous rivers of the Moselle and Rhine, but how about the Saar? Big enough for Saarland region to be named after it, it also sits in spectacular countryside. Near Mettlach the picturesque river hooks back on itself and it is considered the prettiest river loop in Germany. Above it, at Saarschleife, we will take you on a treetop walk which rises to 23 metres above the forest floor, leading to a 42 metre high 'treetop platform'. The sweeping views right down over the huge 'Saar Loop' are incredible. What an experience! See Day 7.



Explore historic Cologne with a local guide



Magnificent Burg Eltz

Spectacularly perched 70 metres high on a rocky outcrop above a forest, this 850-year-old, perfectly preserved castle has been the family home of the counts of Eltz for its entire existence. Adorned with 8 towers up to 35 metres high, it was considered so iconic a castle that it featured on the last German 500 DM bank note! (about \$300). There is a Knights Hall, museum, treasury and originally decorated rooms with significant period furnishings. Dramatic, historic, brilliant - uniquely Albatross! See Day 8.

DAY 6 Trier, Moselle Wine and Castle Views

This morning we are joined by a local guide for a walking tour of Trier, which is considered the oldest city in Germany. The city boasts no less than eight UNESCO World Heritage sites, dating from the Roman times to the 13th century Gothic church. Most famous are the Porta Nigra gate, the Roman bridge and amphitheatre, and the acoustics in Constantine's throne room in the Basilica are absolutely astounding. The Hauptmarkt, a large market square, is delightfully encircled by well-preserved Baroque and Renaissance townhouses. The rest of the day is 'My Time' - to shop and amble along the broad pedestrian streets.

Late afternoon we will take a scenic drive along a section of the Moselle River. First stop will be high up at Castle Burg Landshut, with its massive views down over the Moselle, and the beautiful town of Bernkastel-Kues. Later we enjoy a wine tasting in town before 'My Time' to discover your own little Moselle wine restaurant or Stube. The town is littered with historic half-timbered houses, with shops and restaurants, and picturesque little squares. This is the Moselle at its best. **Meals: B**

DAY 7 Luxembourg and the 'Saar Loop' lookout and Saarburg

This morning will be spent in the Duchy of Luxembourg. One of three official capitals of the EEC, it is also the seat of the European Court of Justice. The city is heavily influenced by France, Belgium and Germany, all of whom border this tiny nation. A local guide will show us around the sites and then the rest of the day is free to explore.

Taking a different route back to Trier we reach Mettlach, where we take the Saarschleife treetop walking path through the forests to an extraordinary elevated lookout platform. They say the river loop here is the most beautiful in Germany, and from a height of 42 metres, the view across it is truly magnificent. As a finale, late afternoon, we stop in the pretty, waterfall town of Saarburg. In the middle of town is a large waterfall, surrounded by cafés and restaurants, and below the falls are a series of ancient wooden waterwheels. Very different! **Meals: B**

DAY 8 Cochem and the secret money bunker, Burg Eltz and Boppard on the Rhine

Today, on our way to the Rhine, we visit the lower section of the Moselle. Dropping down to the river we drive through Bremm. Either side we are flanked by incredibly steep vineyards - the steepest in Europe. One set of vines sit at an incredible 68 degree angle, and they have to use scaffolding and ropes to enable harvesting!

In the hills above the riverside town of Cochem we have included a visit to the Bundesbank Bunker Museum. A really strange place - it was the secret underground bunker of the German Federal Bank. It was not built for people, but as a gigantic, bomb proof vault keeping 15 billion Deutsche Mark safe in event of a fiscal or nuclear war. Amazingly, for its entire existence no one knew it was there.

Lunchtime will be at leisure in the picturesque town below, with its famous castle looming high above. In the afternoon we also visit the iconic, perched castle of Burg Eltz. Dramatically positioned on top of a rocky promontory and lordly magnificently over the forest, we enjoy a guided tour through the castle and staterooms. Later we continue to the dramatic Rhine Valley where we stay the next three amazing nights. Dinner is in your hotel with views onto the River Rhine. **Meals: B,D**

Your Rhine hotel – The Bellevue Rheinhôtel*

This first-class hotel is perfectly located in the village of Boppard, right in the heart of the UNESCO Heritage listed upper middle Rhine Valley. Dating back 130 years and still family-owned, this stylish Bella Epoque property sits directly on the banks of the River Rhine. Perfect!

**10 September departure stays 3 nights at the excellent, 5 star Hackers Grand Hotel in Bad Ems. The itinerary for this departure will vary slightly as it incorporates a farewell dinner cruise on the Rhine taking in the Rhine in Flames celebration. See Day 10.*



DAY 9**Rüdesheim, Niederwald monument and Rhine Cruise**

One of the most gorgeous Rhine towns is Rüdesheim. Your morning is free to explore its old town, museums, squares and narrow alleys. The highlight will be the famous Drosselgasse. 144 metres long, this cobblestoned street is at the very heart of the town and is filled with historic buildings, bars restaurants and shops.

Later, we will ride on a cable car up over terrace after terrace of manicured vineyards to the Niederwald monument. Set on a terrace high over the Rhine, this impressive 32-metre-high monument of 'Mother Germany' commemorates the country's unification.

We have also included a leisurely lunch on the terrace of a nearby restaurant. Time to relax and savour the dazzling views down across the vine clad slopes to the River Rhine far below. Later, you can either catch the cable car or enjoy a gentle walk down through the vineyards to Rüdesheim.

As a finale we will enjoy a relaxing cruise on a historic paddle steamer down the Rhine, past the famous Lorelei Rock, to our hotel. This is the most scenic stretch of the Rhine with picturesque villages either side, and ruined castles perched high above hillsides covered with neat, terraced vineyards. Delightful! **Meals: B,L**

DAY 10**Koblenz, Ehrenbreitstein Fortress and Bacharach**

Our morning will be spent in the ancient city of Koblenz. This is where the Rhine and Moselle rivers join, and on the junction is the giant equestrian statue of William I, the first German Emperor. Here we catch a cable car across the river and up to the huge Ehrenbreitstein Fortress. A local guide – Humphrey – will take us through the fortress telling stories and breathing life into its centuries of history.

Later, you will have free time to explore Koblenz's beautiful old town with its riverside walk, picturesque courtyards and pretty squares.

This afternoon we will drive back down the Rhine to enjoy an afternoon stop in beautiful Bacharach village, with streets of multi storied half-timbered houses. On the way back to our hotel we have one last stop, high up a mountain side, to enjoy a 'farewell to the Rhine' drink on a tree shaded terrace, with expansive views both ways along the river, far below.

Our farewell dinner tonight promises to be a special event as we dine in the old wine cellar cave located beneath our hotel. **Meals: B,D**

10 September – Rhine in Flames special departure

This departure has been specially timed to take in the famous 'Rhine in Flames' celebration. For your farewell dinner we have included a special evening dinner cruise. Called the 'Night of the Lorelei', this September spectacular event is very dramatic as it takes place in the heart of the Rhine Gorge, near the Lorelei Rock. Join us on board as the river explodes into light with impressive firework displays. What an experience!

DAY 11**Frankfurt**

Your tour ends today after breakfast with a morning group transfer to Frankfurt airport and city centre. We recommend you book flights that depart Frankfurt after 1pm. **Meals: B**

Outstanding Value Inclusions**Over \$1,100 value of extras already included**

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first-class air-conditioned touring coach
- 10 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 16 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), 1 lunch (L) and 5 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink Amsterdam
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Cologne Cathedral treasury, Brühl's incredible palaces of Augustusburg and Falkenlust, Saarschleife scenic lookout, Bundesbank Bunker, Burg Eltz, cable cars at Rüdesheim and Ehrenbreitstein Fortress
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!**The Albatross difference**

- Leisurely 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

11 days from \$5,247 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Amsterdam	Ends Frankfurt	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
15 May	25 May	\$5,247	\$780
10 June	20 June	\$5,247	\$780
2 July	12 July	\$6,187	\$1,170
16 July	26 July	\$6,187	\$1,170
26 August	5 September	\$5,247	\$780
10 September	20 September	\$5,587	\$1,170

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.



Belgium & Holland, Cobblestones & Windmills



See the historic Windmills and Farmhouses at Zaanse Schans

NEW
FOR
2020

10 Delightful Days Brussels to Amsterdam

From medieval towns to quaint cobblestoned villages, delve deeper to discover the hidden treasures of Belgium and Holland. Cruise down canals, walk through fields of tulips, relax in beautiful town squares amongst ornate gabled merchant houses and explore fishing villages and windmills. And in May, tulips bloom at the colourful Keukenhof Flower Festival!

AVERAGE 114 KMS PER DAY

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions
- UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

GHENT

Days 3, 4 & 5

- Stay 3 nights in the heart of gorgeous Ghent
- Visit the Waterloo Battlefield, 1815 Museum, the Lion's Mound and the 360-degree Panorama Painting
- Enjoy a walking tour of Ghent's cobblestoned, medieval city centre
- Relax on a boat ride through Ghent's delightful canals before dinner in a local restaurant
- Visit Flanders, moving Tyne Cot, the Passchendaele Memorial Museum, the Australian Memorial at Polygon Wood and the German war cemetery at Langemark
- Explore Ypres and witness the moving 'Last Post' under the Menin Gate
- Relax with 'My Time' in beautiful Bruges, enjoy a guided walking tour through the historic centre

UTRECHT

Days 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10

- Relax over 4 nights in the heart of beautiful Utrecht, sometimes called 'Amsterdam without the tourist crowds'
- 2 May departure will include the incredible Keukenhof Tulip and Flower Festival (instead of Het Loo Royal Gardens)
- Drive across the three massive dykes that form Holland's incredible Delta Project including the enormous flood barriers that hold back the North Sea
- Take a cruise through Rotterdam's enormous port and visit the incredible Market Hall
- See Amsterdam by canal boat and with a local guide before 'My Time' amongst the wonderful city sights and shops
- Visit the enormous Aalsmeer Flower market, Zaanse Schans with its reconstructed historical village and museum windmills, relax in the picturesque port of Volendam
- Visit the gardens and stables of the Dutch Royal Palace of Het Loo
- Visit the romantic, moated castle and colourful gardens of De Haar Castle
- Enjoy your farewell dinner in the delightful red and white shuttered 'toy house' Dutch village of Haarzuilens



BRUSSELS

Days 1 & 2

- Stay 2 nights in the very heart of Brussels
- Enjoy a walking tour of historic Brussels including the Grand-Place
- Sample chocolate in the beautiful Galeries Royales
- Meet your travel companions over a Welcome Dinner in a local restaurant



It's not just about the Clogs and cheese!

Planning and researching this tour was thirsty work. Duty befell on me to thoroughly test the local Belgian beer to see how it matched the plate of moules et frites (mussels and chips) - the sacrifices I make, but someone had to do it! Tasked as I was, I was happy because I was sitting in a quaint canal-side café in a gorgeous, cobblestoned square in Ghent, surrounded by ornate gabled merchant houses. 'My Time', and it was heavenly. That is why we include a three night stay here - to guarantee that you too could sit here with 'My Time' enjoying your favourite tippie. Add to this a further four night stay in Utrecht, near Amsterdam, and we have a great itinerary with a perfect touring balance. Easy paced - the 'Albatross Way' - yet packed with great visits, quality sightseeing without the rush, making sure we do these two countries the justice they deserve.

Both these glorious countries once commanded trading empires that spanned the globe, and the massive wealth they generated built gorgeous cities and palaces, spawned artistic movements, and their unique, rich and progressive cultures hugely influenced Europe through centuries. Yet these two tiny countries - Belgium and Holland - are so readily ignored by international travellers who often just whizz through. What a shame. Sure, there are lots of clogs and canals, the cheese tastes great and windmills are iconic, but there is so much more to discover... to feel... to savour. And that is what we do. Yes, we tick off the major sights, but with our longer stays we get to see so many other attractive places, and a big plus is our quality 'My Time' to take absolute pleasure in them! Moules anyone?



Stay 2 nights in the heart of Brussels and learn of the city's history on a walking tour

DAY 1 Brussels welcome

Your tour commences this evening in Belgium's cosmopolitan capital city, Brussels. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in a local restaurant. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Brussels hotel - Hotel Amigo

This 5 star, luxury hotel is a part of the exclusive Rocco Forte group. Set in a Heritage building (it was once a prison!), its location is absolutely unbeatable, being less than 100 metres, along a pedestrian walkway, directly into the glorious Grand Place.



DAY 2 Brussels Grand Place and Galeries Royales

This morning we are joined by a local guide who takes us on a walking tour through the old city. From the Grand Place - Grote Markt, with its dominating tower, surrounded by beautiful 300-year-old buildings, we take you to the famous Manneken Pis & Jeanneke Pis, to Mary's Chocolate shop in the beautiful Galeries Royales - a timepiece shopping centre recently nominated for UNESCO Heritage inclusion. After a tasting of Mary's famous chocolate, the rest of the day is free. This evening make sure you stroll back to the Grand Place, which is right on your hotel doorstep; the evening illuminations are delightful. Time to discover your own restaurant or lively pub in the nearby, winding cobblestoned streets. Meals: B



Relax in the Grote Markt square, Bruges



Cruise the blissful canals of Ghent

DAY 3**Waterloo and a boat ride through Ghent**

We spend the morning outside of Brussels on the site of the Battle of Waterloo. We have included entrance to all three major attractions that commemorate the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815. For the energetic, take the stairs to the top of the Lion's Mound topped by a massive cast iron lion. At the foot of the mound is the Rotunda with its huge 360 degree painting of the final battle. There is also a brilliant underground museum, filled with colourful uniforms, memorabilia of the time and a brilliant cinematic battle re-enactment.

Early afternoon we arrive into the glorious city of Ghent, where we stay the next three nights. On arrival, a local guide will take us on a walking tour through this wonderful, historic city.

Between the 11th and 16th centuries Ghent was one of the most important cities in Europe. The 900-year-old Castle of the Counts and the Graslei and Korenlei (Grass and Corn) riverside quays are surrounded by beautifully ornate, gabled merchant's houses that are evidence of the massive wealth this trading city generated.

In St Bavo's Cathedral you will find the famous 15th century 'Ghent Altarpiece', attributed to the van Eyck brothers. The Belfort (Belfry tower) is the tallest in Belgium. Scattered around the old town are alfresco cafés, lively bars and restaurants. Perfect for your 'My Time'. Late afternoon, we have included a short boat cruise along the canal, followed by dinner in a local restaurant.

Meals: B,D

**Your Ghent hotel –
Pillows Grand Hotel Reylof**

Recently renovated, this stylish, grand, 4 star hotel is brilliantly located just 500 metres from the historic centre of town. Set in a restored 18th century historical building, this delightful hotel makes a perfect base for our stay over the next 3 nights.

**DAY 4****Ypres, Flanders Fields and Menin Gate**

Your morning is free – 'My Time' to enjoy the beauty of Ghent. Your afternoon will be fascinating as we are joined by a specialist military historian who will immerse us into the battlefields, heartbreak and drama that was the infamous Passchendaele. We have included entrance to the Passchendaele Memorial Museum, with its amazing exhibits and replica trenches. We will also visit the pivotal sites and cemeteries including Tyne Cot, with its endless lines of white grave stones and the 5th Australian Division Memorial at Polygon Wood. Contrasting this we pay our respects at the German war cemetery at Langemark, which sits in the shadows of old oak trees.

Later you will have free time to explore the beautiful town of Ypres. Completely flattened in WW1, it has been lovingly re-built, exactly the way it was. The Cloth Hall, lording it over the main square, is an incredible piece of Gothic architecture.

In the evening we will join the crowds gathering under the Menin Gate to witness the soulful, sounding of the Last Post, which is still commemorated every night. It will be one of the most moving experiences as you listen to... *no... feel* the haunting bugle echoing around and above you in the towering Menin Gate, whilst surrounded by the engraved names of 53,000 Commonwealth Soldiers – young men and boys, who died in just Belgium alone, and all who sadly have 'no known grave'. Later, we return to Ghent. **Meals: B**

DAY 5**Delightful Bruges**

A very leisurely start. Late morning, we visit the 'Venice of the North' - Bruges. So named because Bruges is riddled with canals, bridges and quiet back streets. On arrival we are joined by a local guide for a walking tour around the quaint and picturesque cobblestoned centre. Later, take time to relax in one of the pavement cafés on the glorious old market square. This evening, back in Ghent, your evening is free amongst the cafes, lively bars and restaurants near your hotel. **Meals: B**

continued

**In Flanders Fields**

Using our huge experience and intimate knowledge gleaned from sensitively handling Western Front ANZAC Commemorative tours, we bring to you an absorbing day retracing the key historical moments and tragic events that unfolded here, in Flanders Fields, 100 years ago. We balance the day with visits to both the key ANZAC sites and the remarkably somber, German memorial. The sounding of the 'Last Post' at the Menin Gate will be with you forever. Not interested in these old battles? You will be. Truth is stranger than fiction and this day will be wonderfully fulfilling and rewarding, and often so uplifting. **See Day 4**



Spend a day in delightful Amsterdam soaking up the city streets and enjoy a cruise through the famous canals



3 nights in Ghent

All who visit Bruges, say it is the quintessential Belgian town. And yes, it is delightful, and we visit it. But anyone who also visits Ghent will say I'd rather stay there. Far less touristy, much easier to walk around, Ghent has an even more impressive medieval heart. A big plus is that we can stay right in the very heart of the old town in a first class hotel. An easy five minute stroll away is the picturesque grand canal, the cathedral, the shops, the cafés and that big bowl of 'Moules and Frites' is just waiting for you! Ghent shrieks out for some quality 'My Time' and we guarantee you will get exactly that. See Days 3-5

DAY 6 3 massive dykes and Rotterdam port cruise

Heading into the Netherlands we take the dramatic western route – a fascinating journey across three enormous dykes that form Holland's incredible Delta Project. The first one, the Peilerdam, is an astonishing 9 kms long, and our journey takes us along the actual top of the enormous flood barriers that hold back the North Sea. An extraordinary engineering achievement! On the second dyke, Brouwersdam, we will make a mid-morning coffee stop beside the broad sandy beach. On a windy day there are literally hundreds of kite surfers in action offshore.

Reaching the dynamic city of Rotterdam, we board a cruise boat to follow the river with its city sights and gigantic, modern port – the world's biggest. Lunchtime will be spent at leisure in the ultra-modern design Market Hall. The giant curved ceiling is one enormous mural of painted flowers, colourful butterflies, fruit and vegetables. Beneath are dozens of specialist food stalls, gourmet eateries and shops.

Late afternoon we reach the historical city of Utrecht where we stay our final four nights. Utrecht is often called 'Amsterdam without the crowds'. Beautiful, with canals, narrow gabled merchant houses, and humped back bridges it makes a superb base for our unique 'hub and spoke' style touring.

After settling into our hotel, your Tour Manager will accompany you on a stroll into the quaint old town, to a local restaurant where we have included dinner. **Meals: B,D**

Your Utrecht hotel – Grand Hotel Karel V*

This superb 5 star hotel is uniquely located right in the very heart of the city, in the museum quarter, within easy walking distance, along the pedestrianised streets, to all the character cafés, al fresco restaurants, bars and shops. Founded as a monastery in the 14th century, and once home to knights, the Karel is a quiet, urban retreat with its own café gardens.

**17 August departure stays 4 nights at the 4 star Hotel Mitland Utrecht*



DAY 7 Amsterdam cruise and 'My Time'

We will spend the day in nearby Amsterdam. First up we board a glass roofed canal boat for a cruise through this amazing city. Later we are joined by a local guide who will take us by coach and on foot around all the major city landmarks. Your afternoon is entirely free to relax, with 'My Time' to shop, explore and visit some of the many world class museums. Your evening will be free back in Utrecht amongst the canal side cafés and restaurants, all so close to your hotel. **Meals: B**

DAY 8 Flowers, cheese and windmills

An early start as we visit the Aalsmeer Flower Market. Here you will see the speed of a genuine Dutch Auction as millions of flowers are bought and sold, and then speedily shipped across Europe. Walking on a raised gantry right down the middle of this massive market warehouse you will be astounded by its sheer size and buzzing energy. From above, you will watch the amazing daily dispatching process - thousands of crates and containers of gorgeous flowers and blooms of every variety are whisked around on literally hundreds of electric 'flower trains' and forklift trucks. Then it is off to explore Zaanse Schans. This historical 'open air museum' village was created by relocating and preserving 18th and 19th century wooden houses, barns, workshops, and of course a number of giant windmills! So much to see and enjoy. Perhaps visit the cheese factory or have lunch in the Pancake Restaurant De Kraai – once an 18th century Zaan granary?

Later we enjoy an afternoon stroll through the pretty fishing port of Volendam. **Meals: B**



Wander through the tulip Keukenhof Flower Festival in May



Walk through the impressive gardens of De Haar before a self guided tour

Special Keukenhof Flower Festival departures

Keukenhof Flower festival is one of the world's major flower events. Spanning 8 weeks in April and May, 7 million flowers of all sorts, shapes and colours are magically displayed across 32 hectares – it is utter Tulipomania!

Come join us on our special 2 May departure!

Please note: on this special 2 May departure we will visit the Keukenhof Flower Festival instead of Het Loo Royal Gardens. The day to day itinerary has therefore been slightly adjusted so we can visit the Aalsmeer flower market and Keukenhof Flower Festival all on one 'blooming amazing' day.

DAY 9

Het Loo Royal Gardens and De Haar Castle

This morning we will visit the gardens and stables of the Dutch Royal Palace of Het Loo. This afternoon, after 'My Time' relaxing back in historical Utrecht, we will visit the nearby moated castle of De Haar Castle. In a simply stunning setting, this gem of a palace is set romantically amongst waterways, parklands and beautiful gardens. Just around the corner, we also visit the quaint Dutch village of Haarzuilens. With traditional white and red painted window shutters you get the feeling you are strolling through a village of toy houses. Here we enjoy our farewell dinner. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 10

To Amsterdam

Your tour ends today after breakfast with a morning group transfer to Amsterdam airport and city centre. We recommend you book flights that depart Amsterdam after midday. Interested in joining our superb Rhine Castles, Moselle Vineyards and Ancient Cologne tour? It's easy as selected departures start right here in Amsterdam, this very evening. **Meals: B**

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$1,000 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first-class air-conditioned touring coach
- 9 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 13 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 4 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Brussels
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – special boat rides in Ghent, Rotterdam and Amsterdam, Waterloo museums, special Flanders Fields tour, Aalsmeer Flower market and Zaanse Schans historical windmill village
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Leisurely 2, 3 and 4 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

10 days only \$5,747 pp twin share

Single supplement \$1,760

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Brussels	Ends Amsterdam	Starts Brussels	Ends Amsterdam
2 May	11 May	17 August	26 August
10 June	19 June	1 September	10 September
7 July	16 July		

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.



Best of British



Explore the beautiful villages of the Cotswolds

16 Magical Days London to London

We take the time to do Britain justice... from Stonehenge to the 'bravehearts' of Scotland and Tintern's romantic Abbey. Discover the Kingmakers of Warwick and learn of Australia's own heritage in Captain Cook's Whitby. Soak up the history of Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon and indulge in traditional British fare. As a finale, be treated like royalty with an overnight stay in magnificent Leeds Castle!

EDINBURGH

Days 6, 7 & 8

- Stay 3 nights in the heart of  Edinburgh
- Visit  New Lanark's 18th century Cotton Mill village
- Sample a 'wee tippie' at The Scotch Whisky Experience
- Cross the drawbridge to visit Edinburgh Castle and visit the Royal Yacht Britannia
- Explore the Trossachs in Rob Roy country
- Enjoy a William 'Braveheart' Wallace tour of Stirling Castle

THE LAKE DISTRICT

Days 4 & 5

- Stay 2 nights on the shore of Lake Windermere
- Explore the walled city of Chester
- Spend a day touring the stunning Lake District
- Visit Wordsworth's Dove Cottage & the Wordsworth Museum
- Cruise on Lake Windermere

YORKSHIRE

Days 9, 10 & 11

- Stay 3 nights in historic York
- Dine in the historic Guy Fawkes Inn
- Visit the lavish and famous Alnwick Castle
- See  Durham's magnificent cathedral
- Relax in York and go shopping in the historic 'Shambles'
- Indulge in a decadent afternoon tea at Betty's Tea Rooms in York
- Board a heritage train and ride to Whitby
- Enjoy a fish & chip lunch in Whitby, once home to Captain Cook
- Explore Whitby's Benedictine abbey

Callander
The Trossachs
Stirling

3 EDINBURGH

Scotland

LAKE DISTRICT

Yorkshire
YORK

North Sea

Ireland

Irish Sea

England

Midlands

Wales

3 STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

BATH

Days 1, 2 & 3

- Stay 3 nights in historic Bath
- Visit the remarkable stone megaliths of  Stonehenge
- Explore the ruins of Glastonbury and  Bath's Roman Baths and Pump room
- Enjoy Tintern's Cistercian Abbey
- Take in the majestic Clifton Suspension Bridge above the River Avon

Cotswolds

Monmouth
Tintern Abbey

Broadway

Bourton-on-the-Water

Oxford

Windsor

LONDON

Bristol

Glastonbury

Salisbury

LEEDS CASTLE

Days 15 & 16

- Enjoy your final night with an exclusive stay in Leeds Castle!
- Visit the old town of Windsor
- Explore Leeds Castle on a private tour
- Indulge in a pre-dinner drink in the Castle library
- Experience a grand farewell Dinner in Lady Baillie's Dining Room

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Days 12, 13 & 14


- Stay 3 nights in Shakespeare's Stratford-Upon-Avon
- Explore the stately home of Chatsworth House
- Visit Anne Hathaway's Cottage
- Explore medieval Warwick Castle with an expert local guide
- Relax and wander the streets of Elizabethan Stratford-upon-Avon
- Discover Oxford on a guided walking tour
- Spend an afternoon exploring the villages of the Cotswolds

AVERAGE 173 KMS PER DAY

● Tour commences

● Overnight stays

● Included excursions

 UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits



Think of Twiggy in her mini

40 to 50 years ago, when super-model Twiggy was driving her sparkling mini along Britain's newly laid motorway systems, it was quite possible to zip around the country in no time at all. In that long ago era British coach touring itinerary styles evolved and even then, they were at a mad pace, littered with one night stops. Half a century later this same senseless touring style is still promoted everywhere yet these motorways are now so clogged they are more like car parks! Despite incredible congestion combined with massively increased tourist numbers those itineraries have not changed. Due to these new time constraints they have no time to explore the gardens of a stately home or grab a leisurely drink in a delightful country pub! Astonishingly, incredible sites and landmarks are actually disappearing from itineraries or becoming snappy photo stops. One example is Warwick Castle. A fantastic, amazing visit for which you need to set aside about 3 hours to really enjoy. Yet virtually all 'those' itineraries find this inconvenient so they have dropped it! Ridiculous! Albatross will not do that. I am so proud of our Best of British tour. With 2 and 3 night stays throughout and our unique style of touring we have time to do Britain justice. Just look at the pace of our tour and the incredible list of unique excursions and events we are able to include. Isn't this why you are visiting Great Britain?

"The places we visited were wonderful. We enjoyed the unique hotel accommodation and the most special place was of course Leeds Castle where we were made to feel very important." Ellaine & Kim



Visit the remarkable megaliths of Stonehenge

Courtesy of English Heritage Library

DAY 1 Stonehenge and Bath

Your tour departs from London at 9am. Travelling west we reach Salisbury Plain where we visit the remarkable megaliths of Stonehenge. After time at leisure in nearby Salisbury, we continue to Bath where we stay for the next three nights.

Meals: D

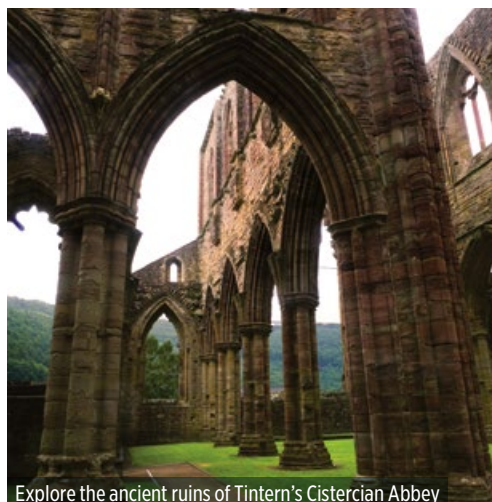
Your Bath hotel – Francis Hotel

Located in the heart of the historic city of Bath, the Francis Hotel is a Regency style townhouse close to galleries, markets and the Georgian buildings on The Circus.



DAY 2 Glastonbury and 'My Time' in Bath

A leisurely start this morning before we drive into Somerset to visit Britain's earliest Christian sanctuary – the famous ruins of Glastonbury. Legendary burial place of King Arthur and his Queen Guinevere, Glastonbury was once the grandest and richest abbey in England. Later we visit Bath's famous Roman Baths and Pump room. The remainder of your afternoon and evening is at leisure to explore Bath's picturesque Abbey, the Georgian crescents, sights and shops. Meals: B



Explore the ancient ruins of Tintern's Cistercian Abbey

Image taken by Albatross traveller, G. Coward

DAY 3 Tintern Abbey, Chepstow Castle & the Clifton Suspension Bridge

This morning we take a scenic drive beside the winding, picturesque River Wye through the delightful Welsh borderlands. The highlight of your day will be a visit to the ancient ruins of Tintern's Cistercian Abbey, romantically set in a peaceful forest and providing inspiration to poets through the centuries. We will also visit Monmouth and enjoy a photo stop at Chepstow Castle. Set high above the River Wye, this Norman Castle dates back nearly 1,000 years. On the outskirts of Bristol we will also stop to take in the majestic Clifton Suspension Bridge, designed by the great Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, which gracefully spans the River Avon. Later we return to Bath. Dinner tonight is included in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

DAY 4 Medieval Chester & Lake District

Heading north, we arrive into Chester late morning. Rich in Roman ruins, Chester also has a wonderfully preserved medieval centre, full of half-timbered houses and the famous 'Rows' – double level, balconied shopping arcades that date back to the Middle Ages, 700 years ago. Whilst exploring this incredibly historic town make sure you take a walk along the perfectly preserved, red stone, Roman city walls. Mid afternoon we continue to the picturesque Lake District where we stay two nights. Meals: B,D

Your Lake District hotel – Low Wood Bay Resort and Spa*

Standing directly on the shore of Lake Windermere, in the heart of the Lake District National Park, this hotel is reputed to be one of best Lake District hotels, and offers individually styled accommodation.



*6 July departure stays 2 nights at Macdonald Old England Hotel and Spa.



Explore Edinburgh during your 3 night stay

DAY 5
Lake District sightseeing

We will spend a delightful day touring the famous Lake District. This morning we visit Ambleside and Grasmere where we have included entrance to the Wordsworth Museum and a guided visit through Dove Cottage, once home to the poet William Wordsworth. Later this afternoon we have included a private cruise on Lake Windermere. **Meals: B**

DAY 6
New Lanark and Edinburgh

Crossing into Scotland we enjoy a morning tea stop in Gretna Green before we reach the New Lanark World Heritage Site, a sensitively restored 18th century cotton mill village in South Lanarkshire. The giant mill wheels still sit over the torrential river and the 200 year old terraced houses have been restored offering an intriguing look at the workers family life two centuries ago. Later we continue to Edinburgh, where we stay for the next three nights. Before arriving at your hotel we have included a tour and tasting to sample a 'wee tippie' at the Scotch Whisky Experience. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 8
Callander and ancient Stirling

Today you have a choice – enjoy a free day in Edinburgh or join us as we visit Stirling and the Trossachs. This morning we travel to the Trossachs and the town of Callander, in the heart of Rob Roy country. Set dramatically beneath high, wooded crags, this delightful town with its tearooms, craft and woollen shops makes the ideal morning tea stop. Continuing on we visit Stirling, the ancient capital of Scotland, that lies at the heart of the nation's history. The streets of the old town wind upwards towards the castle, 250 feet up on a craggy rock. Our local guide takes us through this grand fortification, with its splendid views across the countryside to the Wallace Monument – built in commemoration of this legendary Scottish hero, William 'Braveheart' Wallace. Tonight we have arranged an unmissable evening. Enjoy dinner, including a taste of haggis, neeps and tatties & traditional Scottish entertainment including bagpipes, fiddles and dance. **Meals: B,D**



See the iconic Roman Baths

DAY 9
Alnwick Castle & Durham

Crossing the border into England and Northumbria, we reach striking Alnwick Castle where we have included a privately guided visit. Dating back 1000 years, the grand staterooms and lavish furnishings will not disappoint. Home to the current Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, Alnwick Castle is also famous for having featured in numerous TV series and movies, such as special editions of Downton Abbey, and of course as mysterious 'Hogwarts' in the Harry Potter series. In the afternoon we enjoy a stop in the beautiful city of Durham with its majestic cathedral. Later, we continue to the historic walled town of York where we stay the next three nights. Tonight promises to be memorable as we dine at the Guy Fawkes Inn. Standing in the shadow of York Minster, this is the birthplace of the notorious plotter Guido Fawkes. **Meals: B,D**



SPECIALLY
HAND-SELECTED
FOR YOU

Och aye,
the noo!

Think of historical Scottish characters and vivid images of Rob Roy and William 'Braveheart' Wallace immediately spring to mind. What could be better than dedicating a full day in the stomping grounds of these larger than life heroes? That is why Albatross plan a fascinating day in the landscape of the Trossachs and our expert, local guide spins wee yarns as we follow their immortal footsteps through Stirling Castle. A day of legends! See Day 8.

Your Edinburgh hotel – Hilton Edinburgh Carlton Hotel or Apex Grassmarket Hotel

Both these contemporary 4 star hotels are located in the heart of Edinburgh's old town area and offer modern amenities.



Subject to availability of tickets, the 3 August & 17 August departures may include attending a performance of the Edinburgh Military Tattoo one evening during our Edinburgh stay.

DAY 7
Edinburgh sightseeing and 'My Time'

After a hearty Scottish breakfast, we are joined by a local guide to discover this city's rich history. The highlights today include visiting the Royal Yacht Britannia and crossing the drawbridge to visit Edinburgh Castle, which dominates the city's skyline. Your afternoon and evening are at leisure in this grand city. **Meals: B**

Your Yorkshire hotel – Dean Court Hotel

This 4 star hotel boasts an enviable position, opposite the iconic York Minster and within walking distance of the main attractions. Each of the 40 rooms is unique and individual, decorated in different styles and colour schemes.



continued



Be treated like royalty on an overnight stay in Leeds Castle
Image taken by Albatross traveller S. Boverly-Spencer



Captain Cook's Whitby

I'm not sure that Captain Cook ate fish and chips here but we certainly do! One of the world's greatest maritime explorers and surveyors, and indelibly linked to Australia and New Zealand's 'discovery', James Cook learned his seaman's craft here. Standing in the ruins of Whitby Abbey, perched high on the East Cliff headland, it is stimulating to gaze down on historic Whitby town, where the great Captain Cook lived and called home. His ship 'The Endeavour' was built here, and exploring the streets and quayside is so interesting. Our visit also includes a fascinating visit to his house in Whitby's Grape Lane which is now the Captain Cook Memorial Museum. Now add a fun, heritage train ride across the famous Yorkshire Moors and we enjoy such a rewarding day. Oh yes, and don't forget the tasty fish and chip lunch! See Day 11.

DAY 10 York sightseeing and Betty's Café Tea Rooms

This morning will be spent exploring York. Following an orientation walk around the city with your Tour Manager, the rest of the morning will be at leisure. The Minster, the largest gothic church in England is a must see, whilst the narrow streets around the historic 'Shambles' (the preserved medieval street) offer great shopping or, perhaps take a leisurely walk along the Roman built city walls. This afternoon we indulge in a decadent afternoon tea of dainty sandwiches, handmade cakes, scones and specialty teas at 'Betty's Café Tea Rooms', with its art deco interior, curved windows and ornate mirrors. **Meals: B**

DAY 11 Train to Whitby, Whitby Abbey & Captain Cook Museum

Driving north, we stop at Pickering where we board a heritage train of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway for the ride to the coastal town of Whitby, once home to the famous explorer Captain Cook. Sit back and relax as we pass by charming villages, such as Goathland - known to many as Aidensfield in the television series Heartbeat, and the bewitching Hogsmeade Station in the first Harry Potter film. Arriving in Whitby, we visit both Whitby's Benedictine abbey and the Captain Cook Memorial Museum and enjoy a fish & chip lunch. Your evening is at leisure in York. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 12 Chatsworth House & Stratford-upon-Avon

A leisurely start as we drive south into Derbyshire to reach Chatsworth mid morning. Here we enjoy a guided visit of stately Chatsworth House with its glorious interior, treasure rooms and gardens complete with an ornate maze and the 300 year old water 'Cascade', falling 200 metres down the hill in a series of 24 steps. Arriving in Stratford-upon-Avon we visit Anne Hathaway's cottage before settling into our central hotel, where we stay for the next three nights. **Meals: B**

Your Stratford-upon-Avon hotel – DoubleTree by Hilton

This 4 star hotel provides the perfect base for exploring Shakespeare's home town, within easy reach of the main attractions of this historic market town.



DAY 13 Warwick Castle and 'My Time' in Stratford-upon-Avon

This morning we visit nearby Warwick and its medieval castle. An expert local guide will join us to breathe life into a thousand years of secrets which hide in the shadows of the castle – tales of murder, mystery, intrigue and scandal. After also visiting Shakespeare's Birthplace the rest of the day and evening will be free to relax and wander the streets of Elizabethan Stratford-upon-Avon. **Meals: B**

DAY 14 Oxford and the Cotswolds

Today we visit Oxford, home to one of Europe's oldest and most famous universities. A local guide takes us on a walking tour around the city and its colleges. Later this afternoon we will wander leisurely through one of the most beautiful and unique regions in England – the Cotswolds. Our country drive will take us through famous villages such as Bourton-on-the-Water and we enjoy an afternoon stop in Broadway. Tonight enjoy a traditional roast dinner with all the trimmings in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**



Visit Anne Hathaway's cottage in Stratford-upon-Avon

“Leeds Castle was the highlight of this magnificent trip! Absolute dreamlike accommodation in a comfortable castle with dedicated staff making it a memorable experience. A must in a lifetime!” Jenny

DAY 15

Magnificent Leeds Castle

Travelling south we skirt London and enjoy a morning stop in Windsor. Later we continue into the heart of Kent and arrive at Leeds Castle where we stay our last, and most memorable night! Set romantically on an island surrounded by a broad moat, the Castle, Gatehouse and Maiden's tower comprise one of the world's greatest sights. Tonight the entire castle becomes ours to enjoy! We have included a private tour through the grand staterooms, halls, library, chapel and the 13th century section of the castle. Later, in the Library, we will enjoy a pre-dinner drink before our farewell dinner in Lady Baillie's Dining Room. **Meals: B,D**



Your home for the night – Leeds Castle

You are in for a treat! Albatross Tours have chartered the entire castle for our own use for the evening and overnight to ensure you experience this breathtaking castle to the fullest. With a butler, wait staff and a footman available for your service you will enjoy an unforgettable experience at Leeds Castle. Go to www.leeds-castle.com

It is important to stress that Leeds Castle is NOT a hotel. It is, as its name suggests, a genuine castle. There is no hotel room service and nor are there any other guests. There is no hotel bar, there is a drinks trolley. There are no hotel porters. The Butler acts as the major-domo to a team of white gloved wait staff ensuring service is always entirely correct.

Your rooms for the night

You have a choice of two categories of accommodation – State rooms or Battlement (Servants) rooms. A full set of details and pictures are displayed on the Best of British tour page on our website www.albatrosstours.com.

The tour price is based on Battlement (Servants) rooms.

BATLEMENT (SERVANTS) ROOMS – 7 ROOMS

Beautifully renovated and still using quality, period style furniture. These converted servants' living quarters are spacious and the bathrooms have all been completely modernised. Each room tells a story and is sensitively decorated in keeping with the role of the original servants who lived there. These rooms have limited views.

STATE ROOMS – 10 ROOMS

The largest of all the rooms available, they have a grand style with 20's style period piece furniture and retain the original, older style bathrooms.

Please note, spaces in each room category are naturally limited and will be sold specifically on a first come first sold basis.

Book early to avoid possible disappointment.

Additionally, whilst each room in each accommodation category has a specific name, we are not able to allocate any particular named room to a booking. You can only book a category of accommodation. Requests for specific named rooms are not guaranteed.

Note: there is NO lift in the Castle. The State rooms are on the first floor. The Battlement (Servants) rooms are on the second floor.

DAY 16

To London

Mid morning, after a leisurely breakfast, we will transfer to St Pancras and Paddington stations, in central London, where your tour ends. **Meals: B**

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$1,600 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 15 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 24 Meals – including English/Scottish breakfast daily (B), 1 fish & chip lunch (L) and 8 dinners including a traditional Scottish evening, roast dinner in Stratford-Upon Avon and farewell dinner in Leeds Castle (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Afternoon tea at Betty's tearooms in York
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - Private cruise Lake Windermere, Captain Cook's Whitby
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

16 days from \$8,687 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Leeds Castle State room supplement:

Upgrade to a State room \$75 per person twin share, \$150 single.

Starts London	Ends London	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
18 May	2 June	\$8,687	\$2,420
8 June	23 June	\$8,687	\$2,640
6 July	21 July	\$8,957	\$2,740
3 August	18 August	\$9,197	\$2,740
17 August	1 September	\$9,197	\$2,640
8 September	23 September	\$8,687	\$2,420

Is this tour suitable for you?

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Book our tours with confidence!

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The Ireland Connection





Take in the incredible views along the Cliffs of Moher

14 Inspiring Days Dublin to Dublin

Ireland in depth... a unique itinerary, with longer stops packed with wonderful sightseeing, from Temple Bar in Dublin, Killarney and the Wild Atlantic Way, to the Aran Islands, ancient megalithic tombs and the Titanic Experience in Belfast, plus the fascinating story of the mass emigration and deportation of the Irish to Australia.

BELFAST

Days 11, 12, 13 & 14

- Stay 3 nights in a grand 19th century hotel set on 12 acres of beautiful gardens just a short drive from Belfast
- Explore the  ancient megalithic tombs of Knowth
- Visit the haunting Monasterboice monastic ruins with its round tower and enormous Celtic High Crosses
- Follow the famous Causeway Coastal route to visit the  Giants Causeway
- Enjoy a tour and tasting in the Bushmills Whiskey Distillery
- Visit the fascinating Ulster Folk Park and the Titanic Experience in Belfast
- Dine on a Titanic themed menu for a special farewell dinner

AVERAGE 136 KMS PER DAY

-  Tour commences
-  Overnight stays
-  Included excursions
-  UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

GALWAY

Days 8, 9 & 10

- Stay 3 nights in lively Galway
- Enjoy Irish Coffee and a tour of the Foynes Flying Boat Museum
- Take in the incredible views along the Cliffs of Moher
- Drive through The Burren and reflect at the 'Boy at the Workhouse Door' memorial
- Admire the magnificent scenery in Connemara National Park
- Explore Kylemore Abbey and Gardens
- Visit the dramatic Aran Islands
- Experience Ireland's very best folklore show – the 'Trad on the Prom'



DUBLIN

Days 1 & 2

- Stay 2 nights in the heart of Dublin
- Enjoy a panoramic city tour of Georgian Dublin
- Take a fascinating 'below decks' tour through the Jeanie Johnston Famine Ship
- Tour the famous Guinness Storehouse and sample a pint of the 'black stuff'
- Dine in a beautifully renovated 300 year old church along with live Irish music

KILLARNEY

Days 5, 6 & 7

- Stay 3 nights in vibrant Killarney
- Visit the beautiful and haunting 'church on an island' at Gougane Barra
- Enjoy a scenic cruise of Lough Léin on board The Lily of Killarney
- Relax on a jaunting car tour of Killarney National Parklands
- Explore the incredibly picturesque Dingle Peninsula
- Visit the Blasket Heritage Centre at Dún Chaoin
- Drive along the Wild Atlantic Way and around the Ring of Kerry
- Enjoy a special visit to Derrynane House, with its fairy garden and windswept beaches

CORK

Days 3 & 4

- Stay 2 nights in an 18th century country house near Cork
- Visit the Irish National Stud Farm & Japanese Gardens
- See the moving Australian Convict Memorial at Clonoulty
- Explore the iconic 'Rock of Cashel'
- Kiss the world famous Blarney Stone and visit the Blarney Woollen Mills
- Enjoy an afternoon exploring the pretty port of Cobh
- Visit the Cobh Heritage centre with its stories of the mass Irish emigration, the ill-fated Titanic and Lusitania



Top o' the morning to you

There are three clear differences about this tour which really make it stand out from the pack. By now, you will know we always emphasise 3 night stops as a standard. Why? So we can see, visit and experience so much more. Even though Ireland is considered a smaller, more compact destination, it is packed with incredible sights and experiences, so our longer stays become even more essential. For example, by staying 3 nights in delightful Killarney we see so much more. Not only do we visit both the Ring of Kerry and the Dingle Peninsula, but we also enjoy a scenic lake cruise, a jaunting car ride and take time to relax and properly explore the buzzing old town.

The usual 1 or 2 night stops you commonly see elsewhere seem so senseless as they miss so much.

What a terrible tragedy it would be if you went all the way to Ireland and totally missed the visually stunning ancient sites dating back to Neolithic times.

With Albatross you will stand in the stunning stone fort of Dún Aengus, perched on the dramatic cliff walls of the wild Aran Islands, and inside a megalithic Passage Tomb, which is older than Stonehenge and the Pyramids. These world-class sites make such important and rewarding visits, so why miss them? And we have added yet another overlapping level of interest. With so many deep connections with Ireland, we also interweave the incredible story of the mass Irish migration and convict exportation to Australia. This 'Ireland Connection' tour is truly unique, and delivers the most rewarding and complete Irish experience.



Explore the historic port of Cobh

DAY 1 Dublin welcome

Your tour commences this evening in vibrant Dublin. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Dublin hotel – Riu Plaza The Gresham Dublin*

This 4 star hotel is located in the very heart of Dublin, on the famous O'Connell Street. The contemporary guest rooms are equipped with the most excellent amenities.

*21 June departure stays at the 4 star Spencer Hotel



DAY 2 Dublin sightseeing and 'My Time'

This morning we have included a half day panoramic Dublin city tour which takes in all the sights from Trinity College to St Patrick's Cathedral. Starting in the beautiful 18th century Merrion Square we get a real sense of the glory of Georgian Dublin. Here many significant Irish lived including Daniel O'Connell, the poet W B Yeats and Oscar Wilde. Nearby we make an intriguing visit to the three masted, Jeanie Johnston Famine Ship to understand what life was really like below decks for those fleeing poverty stricken Ireland two centuries ago. Later we visit the famous Guinness Storehouse, where we learn to pour the perfect pint before enjoying a pint of the 'black stuff'. Your afternoon is free in this most beautiful city of poets, literary giants and political reformers. This evening we have included a special dinner in a beautifully renovated 300 year old church, complete with a giant pipe organ, stunning carved wooden balconies, and a traditional Irish band! Meals: B,D

DAY 3 Irish National Stud Farm, Clonoulty and Rock of Cashel

First stop this morning will be near Kildare where we enjoy a fascinating tour through the paddocks and stables of the Irish National Stud Farm, with their breeding stock of elite racing horses. After time to explore the beautiful Japanese Gardens we continue to the little village of Clonoulty to see the moving Australian convict memorial and hear the intriguing story. Later we have included entrance to the famous 'Rock of Cashel' with its sweeping views of the surrounding countryside. Standing there at the top by the ruined church it is fascinating to know as you look around that 70% of all Irish emigrants to Australia came from the land within a 50 mile radius. Later we continue to Cork where we stay the next two nights. Meals: B,D

Your Cork hotel – Vienna Woods Hotel

The Vienna Woods hotel is an 18th century country house located in 22 acres of wooded grounds, in the Glanmire Valley, just a 10 minute drive from the centre of Cork.



Wander the iconic Temple Bar District, Dublin

“We enjoyed this tour! The beauty of Ireland was enhanced through the wonderful group of people we experienced it with. My personal highlights were visiting the Irish National Horse Stud, Aran Islands and Cliffs of Moher. Thank you.” Sue

DAY 4
Blarney Castle and Cobh

This morning we have included a visit to Blarney to explore the castle grounds, 'poison garden' and delightful paths through the woodland. After an opportunity to kiss the world famous Blarney Stone, we will enjoy our morning break at the very popular Blarney Woollen Mills. Later we will continue to Cobh – 'huge harbour'. Here we visit the excellent Cobh Heritage Centre, with its stories of the Titanic (Cobh was its last port of call), the ill-fated Lusitania, the early assisted emigration to the colonies from Cork and the convict transportation to Australia. Between 1791 and the early 1850s Cobh Harbour was the departure point for dozens of convict ships heading for Sydney and Hobart. Later we have time at leisure to explore this attractive, historic Irish port with its waterside cafés, bars and shops. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 5
Lake cruise and Jaunting Cars in Killarney

This morning we head west to Killarney. With time in hand, we take the scenic route through Macroom, and side track to visit incredibly picturesque Gougane Barra. This makes a perfect stop, with St Finbarr's little church set romantically on a small island in the lake. Later we continue to Killarney where we stay the next three nights. This afternoon we have included a scenic lake cruise on Lough Léin on board The Lily of Killarney. Later, at Ross Castle, we board our horse drawn Jaunting Cars, for a tour through the Killarney National Parklands. **Meals: B,D**



Visit the beautiful 'church on an island' at Gougane Barra

Your Killarney hotel – Victoria House Hotel*

This 4 star boutique style hotel, is located 5 minutes' drive from Killarney town, overlooking Killarney's National Park. The hotel's spacious guest rooms are unique – each one individually decorated in a country house style.

**24 May departure stays at the Lake Hotel Killarney*



DAY 6
Picturesque Dingle Peninsula

Today we enjoy a scenic drive around the incredibly picturesque Dingle Peninsula, famous for its beauty and is the setting for many of the scenes in the film 'Ryan's Daughter'. At the far end of the peninsula we stop and visit the Blasket Heritage Centre at Dún Chaoin (Dunquin). This fascinating museum focuses on the unique Blasket community who lived on the wild and remote Islands until their evacuation in 1953. With its interactive displays, models and artwork, the centre tells the story of traditional subsistence life on the island, their culture and struggle for existence. All this, with a fantastic back drop of sweeping views across to the islands. Later we make an afternoon stop in the quaint village of Dingle, on Dingle Bay. **Meals: B,D**

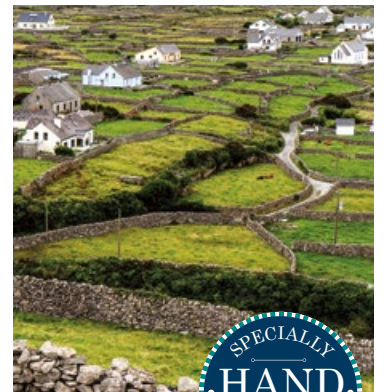
continued



Relax on a jaunting car ride in Killarney



Explore the iconic Rock of Cashel

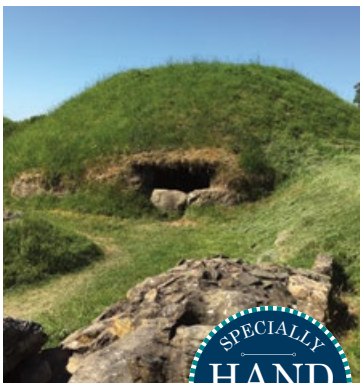


The 'Islands of Saints and Scholars'

Standing atop the wild and rugged Cliffs of Moher on the 'Wild Atlantic Way' is an experience in itself, with its views across the ocean to the ancient Aran Islands – the 'Islands of Saints and Scholars'. Many Irish saints had connections with Aran and at one time there were a dozen monasteries on Inishmore alone. Now you will find literally dozens of Christian and Celtic mythological monuments and heritage sites. Everywhere you will see a lacework of ancient stone walls which were built to keep livestock in, and here too are some stunning cliff top forts, built to keep others out. Dún Aonghasa (Dún Aengus) fort is one of the oldest archaeological remains in Ireland and you will also see early dry-stone clocháns – beehive huts dating back to early Christian times. An amazing experience. See Day 10.



Drive the coastal route of Sleah Head Drive



The ancient megalithic tombs of Knowth & Newgrange

Half way between Belfast and Dublin you will find what some have described as being “the great national monument of Ireland”. At the UNESCO World Heritage listed Brú na Bóinne (Boyne) Visitor Centre there are a series of ancient megalithic passage tombs – Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth which pre-date the Egyptian pyramids and Stonehenge by 500 years. They epitomise ancient Neolithic history, so we ensure we visit Knowth and Newgrange. Archaeologists now recognise that as well as being a passage tomb, they are also a place of astrological, religious, spiritual and ceremonial importance. At the base of the huge mound covering roughly one hectare, are 127 decorated kerbstones. See Day 11.

DAY 7

Ring of Kerry, Derrynane House and Killarney ‘My Time’

Today we will drive along the Wild Atlantic Way around the entire Iveragh Peninsula, known better as the Ring of Kerry. Renowned for its grand scenery, we make a special visit to Derrynane House, which was the ancestral home of the “great Liberator of Ireland” Daniel O’Connell (there is a statue of him by Parliament House in Melbourne). The house makes a fascinating visit having been restored to its former glory with genuine period furnishings. Make sure you take a stroll through its ‘fairy garden’ and along the windswept beach to the rocky headland. The remainder of the day is at leisure in Killarney. The vibrant town, full of shops, restaurants and music bars, is waiting for you. This evening, maybe visit a local pub for some music and the ‘craic’. Meals: B

DAY 8

Foynes, Cliffs of Moher and Galway

Driving north we make our first stop at Foynes to enjoy a guided visit of the Flying Boat Museum. Foynes has some important connections to Australia. The destination of two of the last flying boats ever to leave was ‘Down Under’. Foynes also claims to be the birthplace of Irish coffee and we enjoy a demonstration on how to make it properly. Naturally we must ensure they still make it right, so we enjoy a cup too! We will also stop to reflect at the incredibly moving ‘Boy at the Workhouse Door’ famine memorial near Ennistymon. Later we continue to the Cliffs of Moher to take in the incredible views along the mighty cliffs battered by the incessant Atlantic waves. Driving through ‘The Burren’ we continue to Galway where we stay three nights.

Meals: B,D

Your Galway hotel – Menlo Park Hotel

The 4 star Menlo Park Hotel is family run and offers spacious and elegant guest rooms.

The hotel is located 15 minutes’ walk from the city centre.



See the spectacular Giant’s Causeway

DAY 9

Aran Islands

Today we visit the Aran Islands. What an experience! Crossing to Inis Mór (Inishmore) – ‘the big island’- we board our ‘Wild Atlantic Bus’ for a private tour of the island. Home of the Aran sweater, the island is laced with over a thousand kilometres of ancient stone walls and cliff top stone forts that date back thousands of years. Here we visit the remarkable Dún Aonghasa (Dún Aengus) fort. One of the oldest archaeological remains in Ireland, this stone fort sits atop the huge cliffs, and the views down to the wild Atlantic rollers are inspiring. In Kilronan town, we will enjoy lunch in a local restaurant. Your evening is at leisure in Galway town with its shops, buskers, restaurants and buzzing bars. Meals: B,L

DAY 10

Connemara National Park, Galway ‘My Time’ and ‘Trad on the Prom’

Today the choice is yours! Relax and enjoy ‘My Time’ to explore Galway, or join us as we travel through Connemara National Park and visit Kylemore Abbey, romantically set in woodlands beside a beautiful lake. We also make sure you have time to visit the stunning Victorian walled garden. This evening after dinner, relax and enjoy what has been voted the best Irish music and dance show in all of Ireland – the ‘Trad on the Prom’. Meals: B,D



Visit the Titanic Experience in Belfast

DAY 11**Brú na Bóinne, Monasterboice and Belfast**

Driving across Ireland we reach the Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre where we stop to visit the ancient megalithic tombs of Knowth and Newgrange. Stepping back in time, these UNESCO World Heritage listed passage tombs pre-date the Egyptian pyramids and epitomise ancient Neolithic history. Later we visit one of the most emotive sites in Ireland – the ruined monastic site of Monasterboice, with its round tower and tall Celtic high crosses. Peacefully surrounded by trees, the beautiful Muiredach cross is acknowledged as being the finest example of Celtic stonework. Entering Northern Ireland we reach Belfast where we stay the next three nights. **Meals: B,D**

Your Belfast hotel –
Culloden Estate and Spa

The Culloden Estate stands in 12 acres of beautiful secluded gardens and woodlands, 10 minutes' drive from the city centre.

**DAY 12****Giant's Causeway and Bushmills Distillery**

Today we follow the Causeway Coastal route on the Antrim Coast to visit the UNESCO Heritage listed Giant's Causeway. Supposedly built by an Irish giant called Finn McCool, this unique geological feature consists of 40,000 hexagonal, basalt columns cutting through the broad beaches, forming an intriguing, patterned promontory stretching out to sea. We also enjoy a tour through Bushmills Distillery – the oldest licenced whiskey distillery in the world. Time for a tippie! **Meals: B**

DAY 13**Belfast Titanic Experience and Farewell Dinner**

This morning we explore this rejuvenated city. Highlight of the morning will be a visit to the Titanic Experience. This multi award winning museum is an audio and visual feast as it reveals the story behind 19th century industrial Belfast and how this was indelibly linked to the story of the building of the Titanic. In the afternoon we also visit the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum – a heritage time capsule of Ireland, north and south, throughout the centuries. Back at our hotel our farewell dinner promises to be special, as we feast on a Titanic themed menu. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 14**To Dublin**

Your tour ends today after breakfast. For those departing from Belfast, the airport is a short taxi ride away. We have included a morning group transfer to Dublin, with stops at the airport and the city centre. We recommend you book flights that depart Dublin after 2pm. **Meals: B**

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$1,400 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 13 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 24 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), 1 lunch (L), 10 dinners including a special farewell dinner with 'Titanic themed menu' (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Dublin, Guinness Storehouse visit and tasting in Dublin, Irish coffee demonstration and tasting in Foynes, Bushmills whiskey tour and tasting
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Lake Cruise and Jaunting Cars Killarney, Aran Islands boat ride, Trad on the Prom Folklore show
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

14 days only \$7,237 pp twin share

Single supplement \$1,820

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Dublin	Ends Dublin	Starts Dublin	Ends Dublin
24 May	6 June	16 August	29 August
21 June	4 July	6 September	19 September
19 July	1 August		

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.



Croatia & the Adriatic



Explore the Old Town of Dubrovnik during your 4 night stay

13 Magnificent Days Trogir to Dubrovnik

Journey along the azure coastline of Croatia's Dalmatia before exploring the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Escape to the 'lavender island' of Hvar, sip wine in Jelsa and discover the lovingly rebuilt city of Mostar and historic Sarajevo. Cruise the waters of the Adriatic, dine on oysters in Mali Ston, take the cable car up to Mount Srd and soak up the panoramic views of Dubrovnik!

TROGIR

Days 1, 2 & 3

- Stay 3 nights in the UNESCO city of Trogir
- Visit Krka's dramatic waterfalls
- Visit Šibenik's remarkable Cathedral of St James
- Enjoy a guided tour of the charming squares and alleys of Trogir
- Take in the magnificent views from Klis Castle
- Explore Split and the Diocletian Palace

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Days 7 & 8

- Stay 2 nights in Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Explore lovingly rebuilt Mostar on a walking tour
- Walk over the striking Stari Most humped back bridge
- Visit the Srebrenica Memorial Museum
- Dine in a local restaurant

HVAR

Days 4, 5 & 6

- Stay 3 nights on the beautiful island of Hvar
- Enjoy a day free to explore Hvar and the nearby islands
- Visit Stari Grad, Hvar's oldest port
- Sip wine in Jelsa
- Drive along the stunning 'Lavender Mountain Road'
- Enjoy lunch in a local restaurant overlooking the Bay of Milna

DUBROVNIK

Days 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13

- Stay 4 nights in Dubrovnik, superbly located right beside the Old Town
- Discover the walled city of Ston
- Experience a wine and oyster boat ride
- Enjoy lunch at the Bota Sari restaurant in Mali Ston
- Take a cable car up Mount Srd and soak up the panoramic views of Dubrovnik's dramatic walls
- Explore Dubrovnik's old town on a guided walking tour
- Visit the old Franciscan Monastery and Apothecary
- Cruise from Perast around the islands of St George and Our Lady of the Rock
- Visit the beautifully preserved walled city of Kotor in Montenegro
- Enjoy a cruise along the coast to Cavtat for a special farewell dinner

AVERAGE 79 KMS PER DAY

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions
- UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits





Get out your walking shoes!

The most amazing thing about the cities on the Dalmatian Coast is that virtually every one of the old, walled, town centres are perfectly preserved, traffic free zones – because cars simply cannot fit down the narrow winding back alleys and cannot negotiate the ancient stairways. That is why these towns are just so incredibly attractive.

Personally one of my life's greatest travel highlights was 'walking the Dubrovnik walls'. But it is imperative you pick the right time of day. You see, anything up to a dozen massive cruise ships disgorge multitudes of passengers each day, who clog up the quaint narrow alleys until mid-afternoon, when they simply disappear, sailing off in their massive cruise ships. Afterwards, peace and serenity abound and this glorious 'Lady of the Adriatic' drops her veil, entrancing you with her beauty. The evenings here are long, the late afternoon sun golden, and the two kilometre walk around the city, on top of the ramparts, is absolutely delightful. On one side are the colonnaded squares and terracotta rooftops and on the other is the deep blue Adriatic. This is something most cruise and coach tour passengers on all too brief tour itineraries, completely miss, and why I insist we stay here 4 nights, in a hotel that is within easy walking distance of the old town.

“Congratulations on a well-planned tour. The use of local professional tour guides, experienced tour manager and limited size of the group is where Albatross stands out. Having to not unpack all the time should be what holidays are about.” Peter



Enjoy a guided tour of the charming squares and streets of Trogir

DAY 1 Trogir welcome

Your tour commences this evening in the delightful town of Trogir. Join us for a welcome drink at your hotel before we walk to the nearby old town, to enjoy a welcome dinner in a local restaurant. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. **Meals: D**

Your hotel in Trogir – Trogir Palace
This family run 4 star hotel is in a fantastic location only 200 metres from Trogir's UNESCO World Heritage Listed old town.



DAY 2 Trogir and Split sightseeing

This morning enjoy an orientation tour of this remarkably preserved town. Heavily influenced by the Greek, Roman and Venetian Empires, the core of Trogir is a mass of tiny alleys and charming squares, filled with shops and restaurants. In the afternoon we are joined by a local guide as we drive up into the rugged hills behind Split to visit the ruined castle of Klis. This is the most famous fortress in all of Croatia with a remarkable history spanning a thousand years, and the views down across Split and the Adriatic are astounding. Continuing to the port of Split our guide will take us on a walking tour through the vast 4th century Diocletian Palace complex, the Cathedral and pedestrian friendly town centre. Later you will enjoy free time to explore the beautiful old town which is littered with numerous alfresco cafés, and where the shopping is rumoured to be the best in Croatia. Tonight we enjoy a local restaurant dinner before returning to Trogir. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 3 Krka National Park and Šibenik

First stop of the day will be in the beautiful Krka National Park. A leisurely stroll brings us to the dramatic Skradinski Buk falls. Afterwards, we head down stream by boat to the town of Skradin. Later we stop in Šibenik, the oldest native Croatian town on the Adriatic. Here we are joined by a local guide who takes us into the UNESCO World Heritage Listed Cathedral of St James. Your evening is at leisure in Trogir. **Meals: B**

DAY 4 Travel to the island of Hvar

Mid morning we return to Split to catch a ferry over to the famous Adriatic island of Hvar. Cruising out between the islands of Brač and Solta we arrive at the oldest port on the island, Starigrad. Time to enjoy a break and stroll through the town before crossing the island to the delightful harbour of Hvar town, where we stay the next three nights. **Meals: B,D**

Your Hvar Island hotel – Amfora Hotel
Offering views across the Paklinski Islands, situated just 10 minutes' walk from the centre of Hvar, the Amfora Hotel features modern amenities, poolside restaurant and stylish lounge area.



DAY 5 'My Time' on Hvar Island

Your day is completely at leisure to do as much or as little as you choose! Hvar port is regarded as perhaps the most beautiful within the Dalmatian Islands. The cobblestoned alleys which wind up from the big, open main square are littered with restaurants, cafés and shops. For the more active, you can go on boat trips to the nearby islands, or perhaps take an energetic walk up to Castle Spanjola. From here, there are breathtaking views across the islands and down onto the picturesque harbour – teeming with expensive cruisers and yachts. **Meals: B**



Visit the stunning Krka National Park



Stay in lovingly rebuilt Mostar

DAY 6 Hvar sightseeing

A day to explore the island! First stop of the day will be on the other side of the island at the pretty port of Jelsa. Later we will visit a local vineyard to enjoy a tasting of the excellent local wines before driving along a spectacular ridge, past timeworn villages, along the spine of the island. This incredibly scenic old mountain road is called the 'lavender road' and the steep mountainsides are covered with stone enclosed fields of lavender (lavender blooms on Hvar throughout the month of June). Reaching the Bay of Milna, we have included a leisurely lunch in a charming restaurant with a terrace over the rocky shoreline. Later we return to the delightful port of Hvar to enjoy an evening at leisure. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 7 Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina

After a leisurely start we enjoy the drive down the entire length of Hvar Island to the port of Sucuraj, where we board a ferry and cross back to the mainland at Drvenik. We continue to Mostar in the country of Bosnia-Herzegovina. On arrival we will meet a local guide for a walking tour of this amazing town. Ravaged and smashed in the Balkans War, Mostar has now been lovingly rebuilt and the locals are intensely proud of their Stari Most (Old Bridge) – a curious humped back pedestrian bridge spanning the River Neretva – a reconstruction of the original 16th century Ottoman bridge. A place where adherents of Islam, Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Judaism have coexisted for centuries, this cultural melting pot makes a fascinating visit. Mosques and churches stand side by side with charming riverside terraced cafés and the occasional, bomb damaged, bullet pock-marked ruin. We stay here two nights. This evening we enjoy dinner in a local restaurant accompanied by local wines. **Meals: B,D**

Your Mostar hotel – Hotel Mepas

The 5 star Hotel Mepas is situated in the centre of the business area, 10 minutes' walk from Mostar's Old Town. All guest rooms offer a blend of superior comfort and modern conveniences.



DAY 8 Sarajevo sightseeing

This morning we are joined by a local guide to visit the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the amazing city of Sarajevo – nominated as the European Capital of Culture for 2014. Once the site of the 1984 Winter Olympics, Sarajevo suffered the longest siege of a city in the history of modern warfare (1992-1996) during the Balkans Conflict. To the locals it was the 'Bosnian War for Independence'. Since then Sarajevo's rebuilding programme has galvanised the city. Highlight of your guided tour will be a visit to the Memorial Museum of Srebrenica to learn about the events that took place during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995.

The remainder of your afternoon and evening will be free back in Mostar. A perfect time to find your own riverside terrace restaurant. **Meals: B**

continued



A heavenly day in Mali Ston

Whether you like oysters or not, or whether a glass of wine is your 'thing', the whole concept of cruising out to the sheltered waters of the oyster beds in the Bay of Mali Ston is just so, so heavenly! Now, add the backdrop of massive walls and fortifications creeping up over the mountain and the knowledge that following this you will be enjoying a relaxing lunch on the vine shaded terrace of the famous Bota Sari Restaurant. This is a total experience that we know simply cannot be missed. See Day 9.



Relax over 3 nights on the island of Hvar



First impressions are important

That is why we have included a cable car ride to the top of Mount Srd which looms high over Dubrovnik city! From the lookout platforms beside the café and the symbolic fortress you will have sweeping views inland across the Dinara Mountain range, and up and down the dramatic Dalmatian Coast. But it is the view down on Dubrovnik itself which will captivate you. The historic, 500 year old city walls entirely frame this 'Pearl of the Adriatic'. Outside is the deep blue sea, and inside you will watch over a maze of narrow alleys, squares and churches that litter the old town. Incredible! See Day 10.

DAY 9 Dalmatian Coast touring

Returning to the Dalmatian Coast we visit the remarkable twin towns of Ston and Mali Ston. Famous for having the longest complete city walls of any city in Europe, you will be struck by the giant fortifications extending completely over the wild mountain side linking these two small towns. Scenically, the tiny bay is wonderful however, we are here for the oysters of Mali Ston, which are reputed to be the finest in the world. On arrival we will board a small boat to visit the Oyster beds and sample fresh oysters, washed down with a glass of wine. Back ashore, it is time for a lazy lunch in the famous Bota Sari restaurant which is built into the ancient castle walls. Delightful! Later this afternoon we arrive at the famous city of Dubrovnik. Our hotel for the next four nights is superbly located within easy walking distance to Dubrovnik's old town. On arrival, join us for a welcome drink on the beach terrace overlooking the sea and Dubrovnik city. Meals: B,L

Your Dubrovnik hotel – Grand Villa Argentina

The 5 star Grand Villa Argentina possesses regal, old world charm and spectacular panoramic views across the Adriatic Sea, and is an easy stroll away from the heart of the Old Town.



DAY 10 Dubrovnik sightseeing and 'My Time'

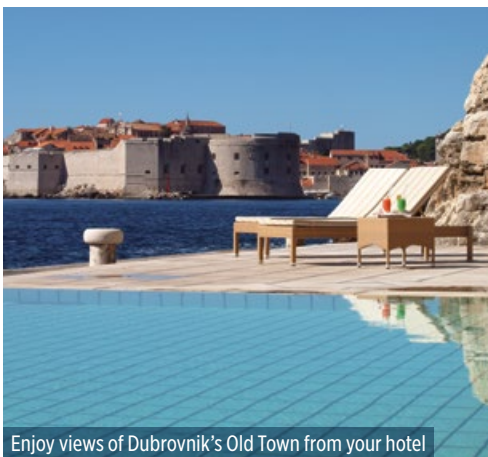
In the 15th and 16th centuries Dubrovnik became the heart of a maritime empire to rival Venice. This morning we are joined by a local guide who will breathe life into this extraordinary UNESCO World Heritage Listed, walled city – from the finely carved facades of the renaissance palaces, lining the broad pedestrian walkways and squares, to the churches and the baroque Cathedral. First impressions are so important so to begin our tour we catch the cable car up to the scenic lookout on top of Mount Srd. What a fantastic way to introduce you to the city! We have also included entrance to the old Franciscan Monastery and Apothecary. The rest of your day is at leisure. Later this afternoon, when the heat has gone from the day, and the crowded cruise ships have departed, make sure you enjoy a peaceful walk along the top of the city walls. Running almost two kilometres around the entire city, and flanked by turrets and towers, a walk along the ramparts is a wonderful experience. Meals: B



Enjoy lunchtime in the city of Kotor



Take a boat ride from the village of Perast



Enjoy views of Dubrovnik's Old Town from your hotel

DAY 11**Montenegro excursion**

Today we will enjoy a full day excursion to the country of Montenegro. Reaching the dramatic fjord like Bay of Kotor we will make a stop at the little village of Perast. Here we will enjoy a boat ride out and around the twin islands of St. George and Gospa od Škrpjela (Our Lady of the Rock). Arriving in Kotor we are met by a local guide for a short orientation tour. Lunchtime will be in the beautifully preserved walled city of Kotor. Returning to our superb hotel, the rest of the day and evening is at leisure to relax in your hotel or explore Dubrovnik town. **Meals: B**

DAY 12**Dubrovnik 'My Time'**

Your day is at leisure. Maybe relax in your delightful hotel located directly beside the deep blue Adriatic, or walk into town to explore the narrow alleys, squares and churches that litter the old town. Time to shop or sit and enjoy a leisurely lunch in this city which is aptly named the 'Pearl of the Adriatic'. Late afternoon we board a traditional Dalmatian boat to cruise south along the coast to the picturesque port of Cavtat where we enjoy our farewell dinner in the excellent family owned 'Restaurant Leut'. We return to our hotel by coach. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 13**Dubrovnik**

Your tour ends today after breakfast. **Meals: B**

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$1,300 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 12 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 19 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), 2 lunches (L) and 5 dinners (D)
- Wine tasting in Hvar
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Trogir and Dubrovnik
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - Mount Srd cable car, Cruises in Krka, Perast, Cavtat and Oyster cruise Mali Ston
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
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- Albatross Memories Photobook

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- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

13 days from \$6,197 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Trogir	Ends Dubrovnik	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
10 May	22 May	\$6,197	\$1,670
24 May	5 June	\$6,197	\$1,670
14 June	26 June	\$6,727	\$2,070
23 August	4 September	\$6,987	\$2,310
6 September	18 September	\$6,987	\$2,310
20 September	2 October	\$6,587	\$1,810

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Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.



Scandinavia, In the Footsteps of Vikings



Stay 3 nights in historic Fisherman's cabins in the dramatic Lofoten Islands

21 Stunning Days Copenhagen to Oslo

Visit and see the classic Scandinavian sights such as Bergen, the Flam Railway and Geiranger. Now add unique highlights such as iconic Pulpit Rock, lovely Stavanger, the incredible Atlantic Road, and the glorious Lofoten Islands. Sleep in historic 'Rorbuer' fisherman's cabins over the Reine Fjord, visit an enormous Viking Longhouse, follow the Troll's Road and take a power boat out to see Jules Verne's 'Maelstrom'. This is the real Norway!

AVERAGE 72 KMS PER DAY (BY LAND)

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions
- + Train journey
- ⋯ Cruise and Flights
- 🏛️ UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

MOLDE & TRONDHEIM

- Days 11, 12 & 13**
- Stay 2 nights in Molde and 1 night in Trondheim
 - Walk across the raging Gudbrandsjuvet gorge
 - Drive over the famous Troll's Road
 - Drive the length of the Atlantic Ocean Road, voted the world's most beautiful drive!
 - Enjoy a guided visit of the Nidaros Cathedral in beautiful Trondheim

GEIRANGER

- Days 9 & 10**
- Stay 2 relaxing nights in Geiranger
 - Visit the Fjordland Glacier Museum and the Bøyabreen Glacier
 - Cruise down the 🏛️ Geiranger Fjord
 - Drive up the Dalsnibba Pass to the incredible Geiranger Skywalk

BALESTRAND

- Days 7 & 8**
- Stay 2 nights in beautiful Balestrand on the shores of the Sognefjord
 - Ride on the world famous, scenic Flam Railway
 - Take the scenic Vikafjellsvegen road across the Stølshøimen plateau
 - Visit the 800 year old Hopperstad Stave church at Vik
 - Discover Balestrand's Viking mounds and Swiss villas

BERGEN

- Days 5 & 6**
- Stay 2 nights in the heart of Bergen old town
 - Explore the 🏛️ listed Bryggen wharf
 - Ride on the Fløibanen funicular up Mount Fløyen

LOFOTEN ISLANDS

- Days 14, 15 & 16**
- Stay 3 nights in the scenic Lofoten Archipelago
 - Sleep in 'Rorbuer' fisherman's cabins set on stilts over the Reinefjorden - voted Norway's prettiest fjord
 - Enjoy an afternoon cruise on a Hurtigruten ship from Bodø to the Lofoten Islands
 - Take a RIB boat ride out to Jules Verne's giant maelstrom whirlpool
 - Visit the harbour town 'Å', the 'time capsule' village of Nusfjord and Sakrisøy Island
 - Visit a Viking Longhouse

TROMSØ

- Days 17 & 18**
- Stay 2 nights in historic Tromsø
 - Visit the Arctic Cathedral and fascinating Polar Museum



OSLO

- Days 19, 20 & 21**
- Stay 2 nights in the centre of Oslo and enjoy a farewell dinner
 - Enjoy a panoramic city drive to see sights such as Akershus Castle and the Royal Palace
 - Visit Bygdøy peninsula, Norsk Folkemuseum and the Viking Ship Museum

STAVANGER

- Days 3 & 4**
- Fly directly to Norway's fjord land (saving 2 days drive!)
 - Stay 2 nights in delightful Stavanger
 - See the Sverd i fjell – Viking 'Swords in the Rock'
 - Cruise or hike the iconic Pulpit Rock

COPENHAGEN

- Days 1 & 2**
- Stay 2 nights in the heart of Copenhagen
 - Join our local guide for a panoramic tour of Copenhagen



The Norwegians got it right!

When I went to Norway researching this tour I naturally ticked off a number of 'must include', classic sights such as Oslo, the scenic Flam Railway, Geiranger Fjord and Bergen's wharves. But then I dug deeper checking out the 'what else', and I was astonished at the extraordinary sights that are simply missed or brushed past by the other, oh so conventional tour programmes out there.

Bergen is great, but I found (and the Norwegians agree) that Stavanger is more charming, with its own heritage wharves, quaint old town and 18th century alleys. Plus Norway's iconic Pulpit Rock is just a morning cruise away. I also hiked to the top of the rock. It was stupendous! So we offer you the choice – cruise or hike! Likewise, hidden in the north are the virtually unspoiled Lofoten Islands, the ultimate Norwegian beauty spot. The scenery is astounding and here we stay 3 nights in historical, stilted, fisherman cabins perched on rocky outcrops over crystal clear water of the Reinefjorden - which the Norwegians voted their most beautiful fjord. We visit historical fishing villages, a huge Viking Longhouse and even ride through the archipelago on a power boat discovering sea eagles and shooting the maelstrom - the world's largest whirlpool. Absolutely superb.

I mean, really, how could 'everyone else' bypass the Lofoten? Ridiculous! Or miss the unbelievable Atlantic Road – built with North Sea Oil money and voted the world's most scenic drive – yet avoided just because 'they' don't have time? Criminal! And that's just for starters... We see, do and experience so much more because we avoid those nasty one night stops and, by hopping on a few flights we save well over a week's unnecessary bus driving. *At Albatross, we don't just touch on regions, we explore them properly. Just like the Norwegians do!*



Enjoy a scenic journey on the world famous Flam Railway
©sverrehjornevik.com and Flåm AS

DAY 1 Copenhagen welcome

Your tour commences this evening in Copenhagen. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner. Meals: D

Your Copenhagen Hotel – Phoenix Copenhagen

Located in the city centre, this historic 4 star hotel provides elegant accommodation, and is within easy walking distance of the major attractions.



DAY 2 Nyhavn colourful wharf and Amalienborg Palace

With a local guide we enjoy a panoramic tour of Copenhagen including sights such as the Little Mermaid, Christiansborg Palace, Amalienborg Palace and Nyhavn's colourful wharf. Your afternoon and evening are at leisure to explore this wonderful city. Meals: B

DAY 3 Stavanger and 3 massive Viking words

After flying directly to the beautiful city of Stavanger (saving 2 long days driving!) we stop at Sverd i fjell – a massive monument of three gigantic Viking 'Swords in the Rock'. Commemorating Norway's unification into one kingdom in 872, they symbolise peace, unity and freedom. Later we have 'My Time' exploring Stavanger's delightful cobbledstoned old town, wooden wharf and the colourful houses along the Øvre Holmegate. We stay two nights in Stavanger. Meals: B,D

Your Stavanger Hotel – Clarion Hotel or Radisson Blu Atlantic

Both these excellent, modern 4 star hotels have been selected because of their superb location near the old town and port.



DAY 4 Lysefjord scenic cruise and world-famous Pulpit Rock

As a highlight we enjoy a scenic cruise down the Lysefjord, one of Norway's most breathtaking fjords, to the Vagabond's Caves and one of the world's most iconic sights – Preikestolen (Pulpit Rock). For those that enjoy a good walk we have something special! Instead of taking the Pulpit Rock cruise, we can arrange for you to hike to the top and stand on that gigantic rock slab overhanging the fjord. A magnificent experience and the views on top are sensational! Your afternoon is at leisure exploring Stavanger's cafes, shops and excellent museums. Meals: B

DAY 5 A scenic drive to Bergen

Our journey to Bergen today takes us along the coastal road and then inland through the spectacular landscape of mountains, glaciers and pristine fjords. We hop between lush green islands on bridges and ferries, hug the scenic shores beside deep fjords, before arriving into the famous Hanseatic city of Bergen, where we stay two nights in the heart of the old town. Meals: B,D

Your Bergen Hotel – Clarion Hotel Admiral or Radisson Blu Royal

Both these 4 star hotels are located in the heart of Bergen, nearby the Bryggen, the city's historic wharf area, and offer hotel rooms furnished with stylish, contemporary décor.



DAY 6 Bergen's Bryggen and funicular up Fløyen mountain

This morning we are joined by a local guide for a walking tour of this historic town and the old terraced houses of the UNESCO listed Bryggen on Vågen Harbour. We have also included a ride on the Fløibanen funicular up Mount Fløyen to take in the magnificent views over Bergen. The rest of your day is 'My Time' – it is a pleasure exploring this historical port city. Meals: B

DAY 7

Flam Railway and 800 year old Hopperstad Stave church

A fabulous day ahead! Catching the train, we cross the undulating hills of Vestland, through Vossevangen, to Myrdal where we ride on the world famous, scenic Flam Railway. After a stop beside the massive Kjosfossen (waterfall) we follow the picturesque valley to Flam. Later, we take the dramatic Vikafjellsvegen high road across the Stølsheimen plateau. At Myrkdalsvegen, a photo stop for the colossal waterfall that crashes right next to a hairpin bend. Continuing, we soon reach Vik and visit the 800 year old Hopperstad Stave church, one of the oldest in Norway. Crossing the massive Sognefjord by ferry, we reach beautiful Balestrand set right on the fjord shores. This is the real Norway, far from the crowds, where we stay two peaceful nights. **Meals: B,D**



Your Balestrand Hotel – Kviknes Hotel

Superbly located right beside the fjord, this is the region's most historical hotel. The period décor is beautiful and each evening there are piano recitals in the bar. The restaurant has sweeping views across the fjord. We will stay in the connected, modern bedroom annexe.

DAY 8

Swiss villas, Viking mounds and 'My Time'

A very leisurely start. A local guide will join us to take us on a short walking tour through the historic village, passing authentic wooden Swiss style character villas, small Viking mounds and a classic English church with a leprosy history. The rest of the day is entirely free in a perfect location. 'My Time' to relax, enjoy local walks, hire a bike or maybe visit The Cider House orchard and brewery*? **Meals: B,D**

**Cider House orchard and brewery is closed in September*

DAY 9

Bøyabreen Glacier and Geiranger Fjord cruise

After visiting the Fjordland Glacier Museum we enjoy a stop by the mighty Bøyabreen Glacier on the edge of the Jostedalbreen National Park. Departing from Hellesylt we enjoy a wonderful cruise down the UNESCO listed Geiranger Fjord, passing the famous Seven Sisters waterfalls to charming Geiranger where we stay the next two nights. **Meals: B,D**

Your Geiranger Hotel – Hotel Union Geiranger

First Class and the best hotel in town, the Union has stupendous views down the length of the gorgeous fjord.



DAY 10

Geiranger Skywalk and 'My Time' for waterfalls & walks

This morning we drive up the Dalsnibba Pass to visit the incredible Geiranger Skywalk – Norway's highest lookout with exceptional views across the snow covered mountain tops.

Returning to Geiranger, the rest of your day is at leisure. Opposite the hotel is the Geiranger Museum and there is a waterfall walkway down into town. Maybe hike or catch a taxi up to the rustic restaurant cabin at Westerås, with its panoramic dining terrace. For the more energetic the Storseterfossen waterfalls are a must – here you can even walk on a rocky terrace inside, behind the falls. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 11

The Eagle's Road and the famous Trollstigen

Winding up a dozen hairpin bends of the Eagle's Road we stop at Ørnesvingen lookout where the waterfall has been diverted over the cliff edge on a glass shelf. After a farewell look far down onto the fjord and Geiranger we then experience the zig zag walkway that snakes its way over the Gudbrandsjuvet gorge. Next... the world famous Trollstigen or 'Trolls Road'. From the lookouts we gaze down on the amazing hairpin bends and the route we will soon follow down the valley, and to the craggy mountains above – folklore tells us these are Trolls turned to stone by sunlight. Later, we continue to Molde. Dinner tonight is in our hotel restaurant with stunning views directly over 200 peaks. Amazing! **Meals: B,D**



Your Molde Hotel – Scandic Seilet

Modern and stylish, this sail-shaped hotel is located right beside the Romsdal Fjord and a short distance from the heart of the town.

continued



The Atlantic Ocean Road

The Norwegians could have squandered the massive wealth coming in from North Sea Oil. But instead they invested in huge infrastructure projects building massive bridges, tunnels, super scenic drives and incredible panoramic lookouts. And they did it with such architectural style! We looked at these and built our tour around the best. Take the Atlanterhavsveien – or Atlantic Ocean Road. Not only voted 'the most beautiful coastal drive in the world' and 'the world's best road trip', the Norwegians even awarded it the heady accolade of Norway's 'Construction of the 20th century'! That is really saying something. Since then they have even extended it with a tunnel that goes 250 metres under a fjord. Utterly incredible. The Norwegians know about it, Albatross know about it and now you know about it! Join us... See Day 12.



Enjoy 'My Time' exploring the streets of Stavanger



Cruise the UNESCO Geiranger Fjord, passing the Seven Sisters waterfalls



Lofoten land of the Vikings

Some call the Lofoten Archipelago the most beautiful place on earth. The Norwegians do, also saying the dramatic Reinefjorden, where we stay 3 nights, is the prettiest fjord of all. Maybe it is the utter absence of mass tourism or visually polluting cruise ships, or maybe it is that incredible 'natural light' - famous with avid photographers. I say it is all the above, plus the surreal setting. A series of beautiful islands, each with their own authentic fishing villages. Hamnøy, Sakrisøy and the island of Moskenesøya, (where we stay in historic fisherman's cabins) set against an almost unbelievable backdrop of the majestic Lofoten peaks rising from the Arctic Ocean. This is where the Vikings settled. Perhaps so because it is comfortable being on the warm ocean currents, maybe because of the wealth from massive schools of cod. But I reckon it's really because the Vikings were a bunch of softies and just thought it a beautiful place to live! See Days 14 to 17.

"For such a large area covered it was an excellent itinerary. We saw some amazing scenic fjords and mountains which were stunning. Thank you."
Darlene



Enjoy 2 nights in Bergen with time to explore the historic wharf by night

DAY 12 The stunning Atlantic Ocean Road and German bunkers

Travelling through Elnesvågen (home of Jarlsberg cheese) we reach Bud. Here we make a fascinating visit deep down inside the WWII German artillery bunkers - an essential part of Hitler's Atlantic Wall defence. Now it is time to experience one of the world's greatest drives as we follow the entire length of the Atlanterhavsveien - the Atlantic Ocean Road. Voted 'the most beautiful coastal drive in the world', this stunning route criss-crosses islands and skerries with sweeping bridges, passing incredible scenery. Your evening is at leisure in Molde. **Meals: B**

DAY 13 Trondheim and Nidaros Cathedral

This morning we continue north to visit Norway's 3rd largest city, Trondheim. Dating back to the 11th century this photogenic town has colourful warehouses along the waterside, pedestrianised walkways and the striking Nidaros Cathedral - the world's northernmost medieval cathedral. We have included entrance and a guided visit. **Meals: B**

Your Trondheim Hotel - Scandic Baklandet*

Located on the waterfront in of the old town, the Baklandet district is very picturesque with its 17th and 18th century wooden buildings, shops, cafés and restaurants.



**17 August departure stays 1 night at the 3 star Comfort Hotel Trondheim.*

DAY 14 Bodø and the fabulous Lofoten Islands

Crossing the Arctic Circle, we take a short flight north to Bodø (avoiding 3 days of driving!). Here we board one of the famous Hurtigruten ships to enjoy an afternoon cruise past scenic islands and skerries, into the wonderful Lofoten Archipelago. Disembarking at Stamsund, we drive south through incredible scenery to Reine where we stay the next three memorable nights in historic fisherman's cabins. **Meals: B,D**

Your Reine Hotel - Historic Rorbuer cabins

In this renovated fisherman's village each authentic cabin is completely different and unique. Perched on wooden stilts, many cabins sit out over the shallows of the crystal-clear fjord. Newly restored, they combine the atmosphere of their old use as fishermen's dwellings with modern comfort. With private facilities each Rorbu (Rorbu singular, Rorbuer is plural) dates back over 100 years. What an experience!



DAY 15 A RIB boat ride to the 'maelstrom'

Here, in the most western part of the Lofoten archipelago, at the mouth of dramatic Reinefjorden, we stay in the village of Reine, set with an almost unbelievable backdrop of the majestic Lofoten peaks rising from the Arctic Ocean. After time to explore we board RIB boats (Rigid Inflatable Boats) to experience a ride to the tip of the Lofoten archipelago to see sea eagles and visit the giant Moskstraumen - the huge maelstrom whirlpool featured in Jules Verne's '20,000 Leagues under the Sea'. The rest of your day is free. 'My Time' to explore your sensational location, maybe on foot or hire a bike? Kayakers - you might like to join an escorted kayaking trip up the sensational, placid Reinefjorden. No experience is necessary, and it is an incredible experience! **Meals: B,D**

DAY 16 'Å', Flakstad Fisherman's Church and Nusfjord

At the end of the road south we find the pretty harbour town simply called 'Å'. This beautifully preserved village contains a number of heritage buildings, cafés, museums, shops, and the Lofoten's oldest working bakery. Later we visit Flakstad Church, which honours the hundreds of sailors and fishermen from the local communities who have perished or been lost in the unforgiving sea. At our next stop we explore the 'time capsule' fishermen's village of Nusfjord with its old-fashioned village store, preserved sawmill, forge and cod-liver oil workshop, before enjoying a buffet lunch in the Karoline Restaurant. As a finale, on our way home, we take a break on Sakrisøy Island with its fish drying racks and seafood delicatessen. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 17

Viking Soup in a Longhouse and Henningsvaer

This morning we visit the amazing Lofotr museum with its Viking Longhouse, relics and treasures. 1,200 years ago, the Lofoten Islands were heavily populated by Vikings and this enormous Longhouse is the biggest ever discovered. A local guide will take us through the authentically reconstructed rooms, where costumed characters re-enact the ancient Viking community life. We have also arranged for you to enjoy a bowl of steaming, traditional Viking lamb soup.

From here the scenery is breathtaking as we follow the coastal road to the iconic harbour town of Henningsvaer. With time to explore, make sure you check out the unusual soccer stadium carved into the island rocks. Later we make our way to Leknes Airport to board a plane for the brief flight to Tromsø, capital of the North! **Meals: B,D**



Your Tromsø Hotel - Radisson Blu Tromsø

This boutique style, 4 star hotel showcases breathtaking views of the city, the Bay of Tromsø and the surrounding mountains.

DAY 18

Arctic Cathedral, the fascinating Polar Museum and 'My Time'

First stop will be at the Ishavskatedralen - the Arctic Cathedral, standing high over the Tromsø Sound. Later we visit the fascinating Polar Museum depicting the achievements of the great explorers and the harsh life of the early hunters and trappers. The rest of the day is at leisure. **Meals: B**

DAY 19

Flight to Oslo and 'My Time'

We catch a flight to Norway's capital, Oslo. Your hotel is located right in the heart of town and after checking in you will have free time to explore the nearby sights at leisure. There is a long, lively pedestrian mall. Akershus Castle and the Royal Palace are nearby. Make sure you visit the pretty port lined with excellent cafés, bars and restaurants. **Meals: B**



Your Oslo Hotel - Thon Hotel Opera*

This 4 star hotel features modern architecture and is conveniently located in the heart of Oslo, within easy walking distance of the pedestrianised shopping area.

*1 September departure stays at Hotel Bristol.

DAY 20

Norsk Folkemuseum and the mighty Viking longboats

This morning we will visit Frogner Park to wander amongst hundreds of the artist Vigeland's amazing giant sculptures. Next, on the Bygdøy peninsula, we visit the fascinating Norsk Folkemuseum where dozens of historic regional dwellings, houses, buildings and even villages have been saved, brought in and reconstructed. As a finale we see the mighty Viking longboats and treasures in the Viking Ship Museum. The remainder of your day is at leisure in Oslo. This evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 21

Oslo

Your tour ends today after breakfast. **Meals: B**

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$2,100 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach, on a Hurtigruten ship and 4 included flights
- 20 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 33 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) buffet lunch in Nusfjord (L) and 12 dinners (D)
- Welcome drink in Copenhagen, Viking soup in Lofoten
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Lofoten RIB boat ride, drive the Atlantic Ocean Road, Viking Longhouse, Pulpit Rock cruise
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

21 days only \$13,987 pp twin share

Single supplement \$2,810

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Copenhagen	Ends Oslo
15 May	4 June
7 June	27 June
23 June	13 July
17 August	6 September
1 September	21 September

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.



'Magnifico' Spain & Portugal



Enjoy time to explore the old quarter of Seville

18 Inspiring Days Madrid to Madrid

Such emotion... The passion of the flamenco, the click of heels and clack of castanets. The charm and beauty of Spain and Portugal will leave you wanting more. From the seductive gardens of Granada's Alhambra Palace, the heart stopping chasm at Ronda, your private cruise on the Alto Douro then waking up in a renovated 16th century citadel in a delightful Portuguese fishing village... just Magnifico!

AVERAGE 158 KMS PER DAY

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions
- 🏛️ UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

PORTO

Days 10, 11 & 12

- Stay 3 nights in the heart of 🏛️ Porto on the River Douro
- Walk the cobblestone streets of medieval Obidos
- Enjoy lunchtime in the fishing village of Nazaré
- Take a funicular up to Sitio for breathtaking views of the coastline
- Enjoy a port tasting and tapas lunch
- Visit Braga's Bom Jesus Sanctuary
- Discover the birthplace of Portugal – 🏛️ Guimarães
- Taste Vinho Verde at Aveleda Wine Estate

SALAMANCA

Days 13 & 14

- Stay 2 nights in beautiful Salamanca
- Relax on a lunch cruise on the 🏛️ Alto Douro
- Explore the striking monuments and Plaza Mayor in Salamanca

SEGOVIA

Days 15 & 16

- Stay 2 nights in the centre of Segovia
- See the city walls of 🏛️ Avila
- Explore El Valle de los Caídos (The Valley of the Fallen)
- Enjoy lunchtime in the leafy squares of 🏛️ El Escorial
- Visit the massive palace monastery complex of San Lorenzo de El Escorial
- See 🏛️ Segovia's dramatic Alcázar and relax beside the massive stone aqueduct

MADRID

Day 1

- Stay 1 night in Madrid
- Meet and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers over dinner

TOLEDO

Days 17 & 18

- Spend your final night in a hilltop hotel in Toledo
- Explore the monuments, churches and palaces of 🏛️ Toledo
- Enjoy a special farewell dinner with dramatic city views

CASCAIS

Days 7, 8 & 9

- Stay 3 nights in a renovated 16th century citadel complex
- Discover the rich history of 🏛️ Évora on a walking tour
- Visit the 🏛️ Jeronimos Monastery
- See the Monument to the Discoveries and 🏛️ Belem Tower
- Enjoy coffee and Portuguese Pastel de Nata
- Explore dramatic, mountain top Palace de Pena in 🏛️ Sintra and visit Cabo da Roca
- Experience a traditional Portuguese Fado dinner show

SEVILLE

Days 4, 5 & 6

- Stay 3 nights in Seville's vibrant Santa Cruz neighbourhood
- Walk over the famous chasm at Ronda and enjoy an Andalusian lunch
- Enjoy a guided tour of beautiful Seville and its enormous 🏛️ Cathedral
- Dine at a Spanish Flamenco dinner show
- Visit the Atlantic port of Cadiz
- Put on your dancing shoes in a special Flamenco dance class

GRANADA

Days 2 & 3

- Stay 2 nights in Granada in the Alhambra Palace Hotel
- Visit 🏛️ Córdoba's Mesquita Cathedral
- Explore the 🏛️ Alhambra Palace and the verdant Gardens of the Generalife
- Relax with free time in Granada's old town





'Magnifico' won the title

I wanted to call this tour Paradors, Pousadas and Palaces because of the stunning selection of 'antique' hotels we stay in, but 'Magnifico' won the title. When designing it, it just struck me that we had a fantastic opportunity to create a dramatically different tour staying in some of the most extraordinary 'timepiece' hotels in Europe.

We could quite easily have gone for modern, steel, concrete and glass, first class hotels and kept the price down but that would be so boring, so dull, so ordinary and would not have been even remotely sensitive to these gorgeous, evocative destinations. Spain and Portugal – home and heart to two empires that stretched across the globe spanning centuries of conquistadores, galleons, castles and monasteries, port and sherry, Fado and Flamenco, the strum of the Spanish guitar, the click of heels and the clack of castanets. We had to do it justice.

Where we stay adds so much depth and flavour. Distinctly Spanish and Portuguese. The name 'Magnifico' won because the longer, two and three night stays in our selection of hotels set the scene wonderfully for our unique activities and inclusions – such as Portuguese pastries and coffee in Lisbon's Belem district and chartering our own lunchtime cruise boat to sail on the Alto Douro. It is the complete touring experience which makes it absolutely 'Magnifico'.



Commence your tour in Madrid



Join a local guide through Alhambra Palace and the Gardens of Generalife

DAY 1 Madrid welcome

Your tour commences this evening in Spain's cosmopolitan capital city, Madrid. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Madrid hotel – Melia Madrid Princesa Hotel

This modern hotel is located a short walk from Plaza España.



DAY 2 Cordoba's Mesquita and Granada

Travelling by AVE express train we enter Andalusia and reach Córdoba late morning. Here we are joined by a local guide who will show us the major sights and take us through the famous 8th century, UNESCO World Heritage Listed Mesquita – the Cathedral and former Great Mosque of Córdoba. Later we join our touring coach and drive through to the famous city of Granada where we stay two nights. Dinner tonight is in your wonderful hotel. Meals: B,D

Your Granada hotel – Alhambra Palace Hotel

Inspired by the beauty of Alhambra, the Alhambra Palace Hotel offers spectacular views across Granada and features Moorish inspired décor. Located just outside Alhambra Palace's ancient walls, it is just a short walk to many attractions including the UNESCO World Heritage site of Albayzin.



DAY 3 Alhambra Palace and 'My Time' in Granada

This morning we are joined by a local guide who will take us through the incredible Alhambra and Generalife Gardens. With origins dating back to the 9th century and named for its reddish walls, this fortress complex looms high over the city. In the 13th and 14th century the Moorish Emirates built the famous Nasrid Palaces surrounded by lavish gardens and courtyards. Moorish poets once described the Alhambra as "a pearl set in emeralds". This is one of the great sights of the world. This afternoon will be free in Granada's old town which boasts a mixture of original Arab and Christian architecture, the Cathedral and Royal Chapel. Meals: B

DAY 4 Stunning Ronda and Seville

Cutting through the mountains we reach Ronda. Retaining much of its historic charm, Ronda is famous for being divided by the deep El Tajo gorge which carries the Rio Guadalevin through its centre. The 18th century Puente Nuevo 'new bridge', which spans the 100m chasm below, has stunning views out over the Serrania de Ronda Mountains. Take time to walk over the bridge and explore the old quarter before enjoying lunch featuring specialties of the Andalusian area, accompanied by local wines. Later we continue to Seville where we stay the next three nights. Meals: B,L

Your Seville hotel – Hotel Fernando III

Located in Seville's Santa Cruz neighbourhood, this elegant, Andalusian-style hotel is six minutes' walk from the Gothic Seville Cathedral.





Walk across the famous chasm of Ronda

DAY 5 Seville sightseeing and 'My Time'

Welcome to the home of Carmen, Don Juan and Figaro. This morning we are joined by a local guide who will take us through the enormous cathedral and bring to life this wonderful capital of Andalusia. Your afternoon is at leisure. The Santa Cruz quarter is famous for its narrow streets, flowered balconies and hidden patios. Nearby are the Giralda Tower and the royal palace, the Alcazars of Seville. This evening we have included a special evening out to enjoy dinner and a traditional Flamenco show. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 6 Atlantic port of Cadiz, Seville and Flamenco lesson

A leisurely start today as we enjoy an excursion to the Atlantic port of Cadiz. Situated on a peninsula, the seafront is lined with centuries-old houses and behind this you will find the grand cathedral surrounded by a historic centre of honeycombed narrow streets. Returning to Seville, the rest of your afternoon is free. How would you like to learn how to dance the Flamenco? For those of you who are interested we have included a special treat as we visit a Flamenco Dancing School to try our hand at this flamboyant folk dance. Don't wish to dance? Then come along and just sit and enjoy the spectacle, as it is so much fun! Your evening is free and the old town near the flamenco school is bursting with tapas bars, lively cafés and restaurants, perfect for 'tapas hopping'. **Meals: B**

DAY 7 Évora sightseeing and delightful Cascais

Driving into Portugal we stop at the UNESCO World Heritage Listed town of Évora where a local guide joins us for a walking tour to discover the town's rich history which spans 2000 years. The compact centre of town is easily explored on foot and boasts a Roman temple, Moorish buildings, Christian monasteries and convents. Later we continue to the charming Portuguese fishing village of Cascais, situated on the Lisbon coastline, where we stay the next three nights. **Meals: B,D**



**Your Cascais hotel –
Hotel Pestana Cidadela
Pousada & Art District**

Situated in the renovated 16th century citadel complex, and one of the first hotels in Europe to have an Art District on site, this historic, waterfront hotel is surrounded by an Art Gallery, a museum, and is located a short stroll from the charming centre of this fishing village.

DAY 8 Lisbon sightseeing and 'My Time'

Today is spent exploring Lisbon. We meet our local guide for a tour to see the major sights of this wonderful, historical city – from the Belem Tower, to the fairytale palaces and the Discoveries Monument, built on the north bank of the Tagus River. The highlight will be a guided tour through the Jeronimos Monastery, and of course the chance to try Portuguese Pastel de Nata (small, soft custard pies – served hot). Your afternoon is at leisure amongst Lisbon's grand sights, paved avenues, shops, cafés and colourful trams. Returning to Cascais, your evening is at leisure to explore the delightful town centre, a short stroll from the hotel, with an array of cafés and restaurants. Alternatively, you might like to spend the evening in Lisbon and make your own way back to Cascais later. **Meals: B**

DAY 9 Palace de Pena, Sintra, Cabo da Roca and 'My Time' in Cascais

Today we visit the Palace de Pena and explore the old town of Sintra. Dating back 500 years the Palace de Pena was originally a peaceful monastery until destroyed by an earthquake. Due to its fantastic hill top location, Ferdinand II rebuilt it to be the luxurious summer palace of the royal family. With stupendous views – on a clear day you can easily see Lisbon – the palace is one of the greatest expressions of 19th century architectural romanticism in the world. We have included a guided visit through this UNESCO World Heritage site which is also classified as one of the 'Seven Wonders of Portugal'.

We enjoy lunchtime in the delightful town of Sintra. Its noble villas and palaces prompted Lord Byron to say the town was "perhaps in every respect the most delightful in Europe". We return to Cascais via the dramatic cliffs at Cabo da Roca - the westernmost point in Europe which, until the 14th century, was believed to be the 'edge of the world'. This afternoon, 'My Time' to explore Cascais. Historically, Cascais was the summer retreat of the Portuguese nobility. Today, it boasts an elegant fusion of decorative 19th century architecture and modern facilities. Within the cobblestoned streets of the historic centre are lavish mansions, an imposing fort and fascinating museums. This evening we have included a special treat! We enjoy dinner and a traditional Portuguese Fado show. **Meals: B,D**

continued



An absolutely 'Magnifico' experience

No visit to Portugal would be complete without sampling a glass of smooth white Vinho Verde in an age old, historical wine estate. Visiting the 350 year old Quinta da Aveleda winery is like stepping into a different world. Behind its large entrance gate, you will find the villa and 160 hectares of manicured vines. The winery is surrounded by magnificent gardens and century-old trees. Your hosts, the Guedes family, keep ancestral traditions alive, creating award winning Vinho Verde wine. An absolutely 'Magnifico' experience. See Day 12.



Enjoy a day of sightseeing and relaxing in the stunning city of Lisbon

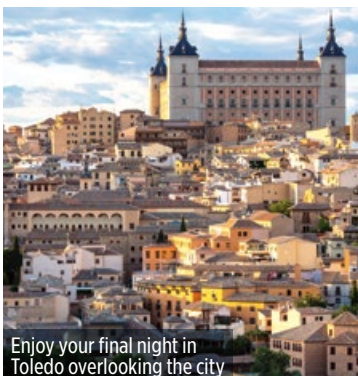


Spend an afternoon exploring Porto during your 3 night stay



Cruise the River Douro

The River Douro stretches from Spain's Duruelo de la Sierra across to Porto in the West. But it is only the Alto Douro or 'High' Douro region that is UNESCO Heritage Listed – a 2000 year old wine-producing region with age old terraced vineyards, quintas (winery complexes) and villages. This is where we enjoy a unique tapas lunch cruise. We could board a large, impersonal tourist boat but instead we choose to charter our own private 'Barco Rabelo' to complete an amazing touring experience. Absolutely Albatross! See Day 13.



Enjoy your final night in Toledo overlooking the city

DAY 10 Obidos, Nazaré and Porto

Travelling north we enjoy a morning stop in medieval Obidos. Known as one of Europe's most romantic medieval villages, you will find picturesque cobblestone streets lined with colourful houses adorned with geraniums and bougainvillea and whitewashed churches – all of which is encircled by the walls of a 12th century castle. Lunchtime will be spent in the traditional fishing village of Nazaré. Here we have also included a funicular ride up to the overhanging village of Sitio, to take in the breathtaking views of the coastline. We continue to Porto where we stay three nights. Meals: B,D

Your Porto hotel –

Pestana Vintage Porto Hotel

Located in the heart of Porto, the Pestana Vintage Porto Hotel has been classified World Heritage by UNESCO. The hotel's amazing location allows easy access to the River Douro with the Torre dos Clérigos Bell Tower and the Porto Cathedral less than a 10-minute stroll away.



DAY 11 Porto sightseeing and 'My Time'

After a city tour with a local guide, we cross the River Douro to Cais de Gaia. The city's stunning skyline is enhanced by the picturesque boats and the soaring Dom Luis Bridge. Here we visit one of the port wine warehouses to sample this famous brew and enjoy a tapas lunch.

The rest of the day is completely free. Visit the Avenida dos Aliados – a sloping boulevard lined with grand buildings, and the medieval streets and dark alleyways of the Ribeira which meander down to the riverfront square ("Praça da Ribeira"), the most picturesque spot in the city. Here you will find traditional boats moored by the quayside, overlooked by colourful trader's houses. Meals: B,L

DAY 12 Bom Jesus Sanctuary, Guimarães and Wine Tasting

First stop on our full day excursion is at Braga where we take a funicular train up to the famous Bom Jesus Sanctuary. Built in 1784, this twin towered neoclassical church sits on top of a hill, above an enormous baroque staircase lined with chapels. Lunchtime will be spent amongst the medieval streets and historic monuments in the birthplace of Portugal – Guimarães. Later in the afternoon we sample Vinho Verde at the Aveleda Wine Estate with its magnificent gardens. Meals: B

DAY 13 Scenic lunch cruise on River Douro

Crossing the country we join the River Douro at Régua where we board a vessel to cruise up the most scenic stretch of the Alto Douro River. Exclusively chartered for your use, your cruise includes a port aperitif and tapas lunch with wine and tea or coffee. Relax as we cruise past vineyards and riverside wine estates. Later we continue into Spain and arrive in Salamanca where we stay two nights. Meals: B,L,D



Your Salamanca hotel – Hospes Palacio de San Esteban

This stylish hotel is set in a renovated convent and superbly located in the heart of Salamanca, five minutes' walk from the Plaza Mayor, one of Spain's most beautiful squares.

DAY 14 Salamanca sightseeing and 'My Time'

Salamanca has a largely pedestrian centre and the city brims with striking monuments and buildings such as the ancient university and cathedral, many of which are constructed out of golden stone. After a fascinating walking tour with a local guide, enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. Make sure you relax in a café on Plaza Mayor, one of the finest squares in Spain. Meals: B

DAY 15

El Valle de los Caidos and El Escorial

Passing the walled city of Avila we spend the morning in El Valle de los Caidos (The Valley of the Fallen). Set in the woodlands of the Sierra de Guadarrama hills, the enormous Basílica de la Santa Cruz is remarkable as it is actually underground – hewn out of the centre granite ridge which is topped by the tallest memorial cross in the world. We spend lunchtime amongst the leafy squares of El Escorial before visiting the massive palace monastery complex of San Lorenzo de El Escorial. Later we continue to a hidden gem of a city – Segovia. **Meals: B,D**



Your Segovia hotel – Hotel Real Segovia

This 4 star hotel is located in the centre of Segovia between the Cathedral and Aqueduct.

DAY 16

Segovia sightseeing and 'My Time'

This morning we have included a guided walking tour to discover this amazing city. Dating back to Celtic times, the beautifully preserved hill top town revolves around the huge main square which is flanked by the massive cathedral, heritage buildings, picturesque restaurants and al fresco cafés. In one direction a winding street will lead you to the impressive Alcázar – the fortified stone palace that juts out on a rocky crag, surrounded by sheer cliffs. Down another street you will find the astonishing Roman Aqueduct that cuts high across the base of town. The rest of the day is at leisure to explore this splendid town. **Meals: B**

DAY 17

Toledo sightseeing and 'My Time'

Arriving into Toledo mid-morning, we are joined by a local guide who will take us on a city walking tour. Toledo has a wealth of monuments. Christians, Arabs and Jews lived together here for centuries hence it is sometimes called the "city of the three cultures". Here you will find a city crammed with churches, palaces, fortresses, mosques and synagogues. Highlight of your day will be a visit to Catedral Primada Santa María de Toledo, which many consider to be Spain's finest cathedral. The shopping is excellent and the rest of your day is free. This evening we enjoy a farewell dinner in your historic hotel. **Meals: B,D**



Your Toledo hotel – Parador Toledo

Located on a hilltop position on Cerro del Emperador (the Emperor's Hill), there are stunning 180° views from the hotel's dining room, terraces and pool, across the old Arab fortress and the whole cathedral city of Toledo.

DAY 18

To Madrid

After breakfast we will transfer you to Madrid where your tour ends late morning. Drop off points will be the city centre followed by the airport. We recommend you book flights or trains that depart Madrid after 2pm. **Meals: B**

"The tour went without a hitch! We had a wonderful and unforgettable experience, and the Flamenco dancing was a hoot!" Terri

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$1,800 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- AVE train Madrid to Córdoba
- 17 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 29 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), Andalusian lunch in Ronda, tapas lunch in Porto and tapas lunch cruise on the River Douro (L), 9 dinners including a Flamenco Dinner show and Fado Dinner show (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Madrid and Aveleda Vinho Verde wine tasting
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - Flamenco dance class Seville, port warehouse visit and tasting, River Douro lunch cruise
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'Me Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

18 days only \$9,697 pp twin share

Single supplement \$2,680
Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Madrid	Ends Madrid
28 April	15 May
12 May	29 May
26 May	12 June
16 June	3 July
25 August	11 September
8 September	25 September
22 September	9 October

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability



Northern Spain & the Pyrenees



Soak up the atmosphere during a 3 night stay in San Sebastian

17 Sensational Days Madrid to Barcelona

From the rich, rolling vineyards of the Rioja region, follow Spain's Costa Verde to elegant San Sebastian. Explore the mighty French Pyrenees and stay in the walled city of Carcassonne. Ride high in mountain cable cars, cruise down the Canal du Midi and sip wine and dine as the lucky locals do!

SANTANDER

Days 5, 6 & 7

- Stay 3 nights in Santander on the Atlantic Coast
- Visit the old medieval heart of Vitoria in the Basque Country
- Drive through the wild La Hermida Gorge to Potes and enjoy a traditional 'Fabada' mountain lunch
- Take the spectacular cable car ride up to the summit of the Picos de Europa
- Enjoy time to explore the exciting city centre of Santander
- View the  Altamira Paleolithic cave paintings
- Visit beautiful Santillana de Mar with its noble palaces & romanesque church

SAN SEBASTIÁN

Days 8, 9 & 10

- Stay 3 nights in Spain's culinary capital of San Sebastián
- Visit scenic Castro Urdiales harbour on the Costa Verde
- Explore Bilbao and enjoy lunchtime in the grand old quarter
- See the world famous Guggenheim Museum
- Enjoy the view of San Sebastián from Monte Igueldo
- Discover the famous tapas bars in San Sebastián
- Visit Saint Jean de Luz and the dramatic French coastal resort of Biarritz

CARCASSONNE

Days 13, 14 & 15

- Stay 3 nights in the heart of historical  Carcassonne
- Visit the medieval time capsule of Mirepoix
- Enjoy a visit to the Abbey of St Hilaire in Limoux
- Sip bubbly where it was actually first invented
- Explore the ramparts and old town of Carcassonne
- See the ancient Cathar citadel of Minerve
- Enjoy lunch and a cruise down the Canal du Midi





A peek at two peaks!!

Why do we include 2 cable car rides on this trip? Because the days are so different. You see, it is not just about the dramatic views from the top of each, it is about the journey, the mountain experience – it is about the whole day itself. Take the Picos de Europa ride. Our journey takes us up through the dramatic gorges and villages, deep into the wild Picos National Park. Here we also enjoy a ‘Fabada’ mountain lunch (included, of course, after all this is Albatross). So the cable car itself is not the destination, but an excuse for a great day out. And in the Pic Du Midi, in the French Pyrenees? Much higher, much bigger views, and a huge observatory at the top like something out of a James Bond movie. And the journey? We follow a part of the famous Tour de France bicycle route over the Tourmalet Pass, an experience enhanced by the struggling cyclists we pass up hill. Albatross always include those extra days to really experience additional, unusual, sensational sights. There’s more to travel than simply ticking highlight cities off a list. There’s also the experiences. Whether travelling from peak to peak, or visiting the cliff top citadel of Minerve, or the cafés by the canal du Midi, we do these extra things because they simply can’t be missed!

“Albatross you’ve done it again! From the wonderful countryside we travelled through to the small villages so full of character it was a gastronomic holiday unsurpassed, wow such delights!” Lloyd



DAY 1 Madrid welcome

Your tour commences this evening in Spain’s cosmopolitan capital city, Madrid. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Madrid hotel – Melia Madrid Princesa Hotel

This modern hotel is located a short walk from Plaza España.



DAY 2 Burgos, El Cid and the Rioja Region

Travelling north, we soon reach Burgos, the historical capital of the Castile and León region, which was one of the four ancient kingdoms of Spain. This stunning medieval city is a masterpiece of Spanish Gothic architecture.

We have included a self-guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Listed cathedral, where you will find the tomb of the famous, 11th century warrior, El Cid. Later, we enter the famous Rioja region of Spain where we stay three nights in the charming town of Santo Domingo de la Calzada. Set on the banks of the River Oja, this town sits astride the Pilgrims Route to Santiago de Compostela – the Way of St James. The network of medieval streets within the old city walls are declared as a National Historic Site. The rich soil of the Rioja has also enabled the town to become famous for its gastronomy and local wines. Meals: B,D

Your Rioja hotel – Parador de Santo Domingo de la Calzada

As defined by the Paradores Hotel organisation, a ‘Parador’ is a “kind of luxury hotel, usually located in a converted historical building such as a monastery or castle”. Our first class hotel for these three nights, the Parador de Santo Domingo de la Calzada, will not disappoint. Dating back to the 12th century and sitting in the heart of the old town, this former hospital building was built to house pilgrims on the Way of St James. It now boasts stone gothic archways and magnificent lounges and grand hallways.



DAY 3 Ancient Pamplona and Olite

Today we visit the ancient town of Pamplona, in the Navarre Province. Whilst Pamplona is famous for its annual ‘Sanfermines festival of the bulls’, it actually has a rich and proud history dating back 2000 years. After time exploring the traditional historical centre with a local guide, make sure you relax in a restaurant or café and sample the local Navarre cuisine with food drawn from the surrounding, fertile, Arga plain.

This afternoon we will stop in the small town of Olite to visit the magnificent Palacio Real de Olite - the Royal Palace of the kings of Navarre, one of the ancient kingdoms of Spain. Your evening is at leisure in Santo Domingo de la Calzada. Meals: B

DAY 4 Haro, Laguardia and Marques de Riscal vineyard

This morning we visit Haro, one of Rioja’s most famous wine producing towns with its beautiful square and wonderful baroque church. After a scenic drive through the famous Rioja wine region, lunchtime is at leisure in the fortified hill top town of Laguardia in Rioja Alavesa, a walled medieval town with spectacular views across the Sierra de Cantabria. On arrival we have included a visit to the Church of Santa Maria De Los Reyes, famous for its late-14th century Gothic doorway, adorned with beautiful sculptures.

This afternoon we will make a special stop at the flamboyant Marques de Riscal vineyard. On approach the winery is a sensational sight with a design looking more like a giant chocolate box covered with huge wild colourful ribbons. Here we enjoy a vineyard tour and tasting. Meals: B,D

DAY 5 Elegant Vitoria and coastal Santander

First stop of the day will be in Vitoria, the capital city of the Basque Country. A local guide joins us for a walking tour of this elegant city of parks, gardens and a beautiful main square. This is also the site of the battle in which the Duke of Wellington defeated Napoleon in the Peninsular War. In the afternoon we reach Santander, capital of the Cantabria region, on the Atlantic Coast. Famous for its wide sandy El Sardinero beach and glamorous hotels, we stay here the next three nights. Meals: B,D



Take in the views of the Pic du Midi from a cable car
Image courtesy of Pic du Midi, Claire Soucaze

Your Santander hotel – Hotel Hoyuela

This elegantly designed 4-star hotel is conveniently located nearby the beach, and within walking distance of the Magdalena Palace and all the other notable sights.



DAY 6 Picos de Europa

There is nothing like a day in the mountains! Today we drive through the dramatic La Hermida Gorge and venture into the Picos de Europa, northern Spain's highest mountains. At Fuente De we will enjoy a spectacular cable car ride which will take you high up into the jagged mountains, offering terrific views across this remote national park. In the small mountain town of Potes, we enjoy a typical Picos lunch of 'Fabada' – the local mountain stew with beans and sausages, and a glass of Orujo schnapps. Meals: B,L

DAY 7 Santander 'My Time', Altamira Caves and Santillana de Mar

This morning is at leisure to go shopping and explore the exciting city centre. Maybe take a walk to the Magdalena Palace on the headland with its lush green gardens and sweeping views across the beach and estuary. In the afternoon we will take a drive along the coast to visit the Altamira Caves museum with its stunning 'neocave' (replica), on the site of the original UNESCO World Heritage Listed cave system. A local guide will join us to explain how the actual original cave structure and paintings of bison, wild horses deer and other animals have all been accurately reproduced, using the original painting techniques and materials. A unique and fascinating visit! Later we will enjoy a relaxing stop nearby in one of Spain's most beautiful towns – Santillana de Mar – with its private noble palaces and romanesque church. The town is also famous for its local handicraft and local produce. Your evening is at leisure. Meals: B

DAY 8 Castro Urdiales, Bilbao and San Sebastián

Following the Costa Verde or 'Green Coast' we enjoy a morning stop at Castro Urdiales with its colourful fishing fleet and Knights Templar castle. Later we continue to Bilbao, one of Spain's largest cities, where we are joined by a local guide for an orientation tour. Enjoy 'My Time' for lunch in the charming Casco Viejo – the old quarter, or you may choose to visit the world-famous Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Gehry, with its extraordinary swirling, groundbreaking design. Leaving Bilbao behind, we will cross the lush green hills of the Basque country to reach the chic coastal city of San Sebastián, one of Spain's most elegant cities. We will spend three nights here. Meals: B,D

Your San Sebastián hotel – Mercure Monte Igueldo

Set on Mount Igueldo overlooking the Bay of La Concha, this modern 4 star hotel is connected to the city by a fully functional 100-year-old funicular railway.



DAY 9 San Sebastián sightseeing and 'My Time'

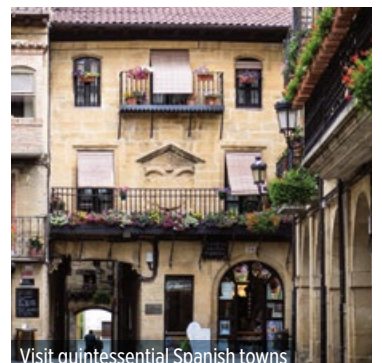
This morning an expert local guide will join us to bring San Sebastián to life. We begin up at the famous Monte Igueldo to take in the amazing views across the horse shoe bay, and the city ringed by mountains. Following that our guide will take us on a guided walk through the narrow streets and old port, before introducing us to the city's famous tapas bars. San Sebastián is noted as the gourmet capital of Europe so it is a perfect time to really focus on enjoying some Pintxo, the local name for tapas, washed down by a glass of local white wine called Txakoli. The rest of the day is free to explore and shop in this lively, cosmopolitan city. Meals: B

continued



Altamira Caves, so close, so real

The UNESCO World Heritage Listed Altamira Caves date back up to 35,000 years, and are said to be the highest quality cave art found anywhere in all of Europe. So perfect, that when discovered, archaeologists doubted they were actually genuine. To preserve the astonishing cave art depicting bison, horses, wolves, and more, the caves have been sealed but we can still see and admire them in the amazing replica cave built beside the cave entrance, as part of a fascinating museum. So close, so real, our local guide will breathe life into the ancient story. See Day 7.



Visit quintessential Spanish towns



Enjoy a vineyard tour and tasting at the famous Marques de Riscal winery in the Rioja region



SPECIALLY
**HAND
SELECTED**
FOR YOU

Sip bubbly, where it was first invented

Everyone thinks 'bubbly' was invented in the Champagne region. Not so! A full 100 years beforehand, the monks of St Hilaire Abbey created this celebratory brew, and they did it so well too! Known as 'Blanquette de Limoux', it tastes terrific. Maybe that is because the abbey and cloisters where it is made is a 600 year old jewel of Romanesque architecture, or maybe because sipping it, where bubbly was first invented, adds dreaminess and nostalgia to the flavour. Or maybe because it is just so good! See Day 13.

DAY 10 Seaside Saint Jean De Luz and Biarritz

Crossing the border into France, we pass through the small town of Ciboure, birthplace of the famous composer Ravel. Our first stop of the day will be in the delightful seaside town of Saint Jean De Luz where Louis 14th, the 'Sun King', married Maria Theresa of Spain in the 17th century.

Later we will continue to the elegant seaside resort of Biarritz, on the Bay of Biscay. Patronised by European royalty since the 1800s Biarritz is still a very chic and thriving beach resort, with a big surfing influence. Biarritz, with its distinctly French feel, is the perfect place for an afternoon stroll along the seaside promenade. Tonight we enjoy dinner in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

DAY 11 City of Pau, Lourdes and Tarbes

Crossing into Aquitaine in France we reach the city of Pau. Time to take a stroll along the Boulevard des Pyrenees or visit the Château de Pau, birthplace of France's King Henry IV. On a clear day the views of the Pyrenees are excellent. In the afternoon we will also make a stop in the pilgrimage city of Lourdes where in 1858 a vision of the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared before Bernadette Soubirous in the Grotto of Massabielle. Later we reach Tarbes where we will stay the next two nights.

Meals: B,D

Your Tarbes hotel – Le Rex

In a fantastic location right in the heart of town, 'Le Rex' is a modern 4 star hotel.

STAY
2
NIGHTS

DAY 12 Hautes-Pyrenees and Pic du Midi cable car

Today we drive into the heart of the Hautes-Pyrenees and classic Tour de France country. At 2115 metres high, the Col du Tourmalet is the highest paved mountain pass in the French Pyrenees, and one of the most famous climbs on the Tour de France bicycle route. As we climb up higher and higher we see bike signs showing the distance to the top, and the gradient over the next kilometre! Often passing struggling cyclists we will make a stop at the large statue of the famous rider Octave Lapize, gasping for air as he struggles to make the climb. In La Mongie we will board a large cable car which will take us up to the summit of the Pic Du Midi de Bigorre. At 2877 metres or nearly 10,000 feet the views are stupendous. Because of the reliable, clear, blue skies they built a massive white observatory up here, and it is like a scene from a science fiction movie. Here there is also an observatory museum, restaurants and deckchairs to sit in and relax and enjoy the panoramic views – one way down onto the broad French plains and the other along the massive Pyrenees into Spain. Memorable! Meals: B

DAY 13 Mirepoix and Abbey of St Hilaire in Limoux

A leisurely start today as we head across the vine covered hills to enjoy lunchtime in the perfectly preserved time capsule of Mirepoix. Without doubt this is one of the most beautiful medieval town squares in Europe, with its colourfully painted, half-timbered houses that date back to between the 13th and 15th centuries. Sitting atop centuries old wooden rafters carved at the ends with monsters, animals and gargoyles, these rows of shuttered houses provide shady covered walkways for cafés and shops. We are now in the 'Pays Cathare', or Cathar country, in the lovely Languedoc Roussillon region. Just south of Carcassonne near Limoux we will make a special visit to the Abbey of St Hilaire, a jewel of Romanesque architecture. Originally dating back possibly 1300 years, the more recently added Abbey church and 14th century cloisters are a delight. The Benedictine monks of the Abbey are also credited with inventing the sparkling wine known as Blanquette de Limoux, a full century before their counterparts created 'bubbly' in Champagne! Our stay for the next three nights is right in the very heart of the massive, UNESCO World Heritage Listed, walled city of Carcassonne. Meals: B,D

Your Carcassonne hotel – The Best Western le Donjon

This 4 star, authentic, medieval hotel is spread within three medieval buildings they call the Donjon, the Ramparts and the Count Roger. It is wonderfully located within the ramparts, amongst the winding cobblestoned streets of the old town, close to the Count's Castle. A perfect place to immerse yourself in this magical fortress town.

STAY
3
NIGHTS



Enjoy lunchtime in the town of Mirepoix

DAY 14**Carcassonne sightseeing and 'My Time'**

Dating back to Roman times, the existing 13th century fortress city of Carcassonne is an extraordinary timepiece. This morning we are joined by a local guide as we explore the ramparts and old town of Carcassonne. The medieval castle, with its gigantic double walled fortifications and 53 watchtowers, is the 2nd most visited site in France outside of Paris. We have also included entrance into the chateau of the Counts of Carcassonne. The rest of the day is completely free to wander amongst the cafés, shops and boutiques within this exceptional town. **Meals: B**

DAY 15**Minerve, Le Somail and Canal du Midi**

A leisurely start as we crisscross the Canal du Midi and then head into the Languedoc hills, to the dramatic gorge and perched, stone village of Minerve. In 1210, during the Cathar Crusade, Simon de Montfort destroyed this village stronghold and burned alive 140 'heretics'. Today Minerve boasts a small, sleepy, 12th century church surrounded by cobblestoned streets and narrow alleys, craft shops and restaurants. Perched by the ravine, the town is delightful and the scenery dramatic. Make sure you walk down to the Cassiere River and through the cavernous tunnel which drills right under and through the hillside.

Later, we descend through the vineyards of the Minervois region to stop and explore the picturesque hamlet of Le Somail, sitting astride the Canal du Midi. Here we enjoy lunch on the leafy terrace of an Auberge, beside the humped back bridge that crosses the canal. To complete the day, we also enjoy a scenic cruise up the Canal du Midi on an authentic 'gabare' (barge). Delightful! **Meals: B,L**

DAY 16**Figueres and Barcelona**

Heading into Spain we reach the Girona province where we will enjoy a morning stop in Figueres. Time to stroll amongst the shops of the tree lined La Rambla, the city's shaded central avenue, and stop in one of the café filled squares. Make sure you visit the Placa Gala, with its Dali statues and the Salvador Dali museum housed in the old municipal theatre. This afternoon we reach the vibrant, cosmopolitan city of Barcelona. On arrival we will enjoy a panoramic drive past many of its famous sights, including Gaudi's incredible Sagrada Familia Basilica. Tonight we will enjoy a farewell dinner in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**

**Your Barcelona hotel –
Crowne Plaza Barcelona
Fira Center**

This 4-star hotel is situated in the heart of Montjuic, one of the most cultural areas of the city. The air conditioned, spacious guest rooms offer modern décor and facilities.

**DAY 17****Barcelona**

Your tour ends today after breakfast. **Meals: B**

“There were moments of our free time as we strolled along the beaches that it felt more like a holiday than a tour.” Michele

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- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 27 meals – including breakfast daily (B), 2 lunches (L) 'Fabada' mountain lunch in Potes, and beside the Canal du Midi and 9 dinners (D)
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17 days from \$7,367 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Madrid	Ends Barcelona	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
27 May	12 June	\$7,367	\$1,690
17 June	3 July	\$7,367	\$1,690
1 July	17 July	\$7,797	\$1,990
19 August	4 September	\$7,797	\$1,990
9 September	25 September	\$7,797	\$1,990

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Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation.

Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.



La Grande France



Cruise down the River Dordogne past medieval castles. Image taken by Albatross traveller J. Woodcock

15 Fabulous Days Paris to Nice

Discover five of France's seductive regions... the graceful châteaux of the Loire Valley, the glorious Dordogne, the land of the Cathars in the Languedoc Roussillon, to ancient Provence and the stunning Côte d'Azur. Wonderful experiences... the extraordinary Carrières de Lumières, the incredible caves of Gouffre de Padirac and afternoon tea in Rothschild's luxuriant Villa Ephrussi.

AVERAGE 162 KMS PER DAY

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions
- 🏰 UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

LOIRE VALLEY

Days 1, 2 & 3

- Stay 3 nights in the enchanting Château Rochecotte nestled in its own gardens and grounds, in the spectacular 🏰 Loire Valley
- See the magnificent Château Chambord
- Enjoy the gardens and interior of the elegant Château Chenonceau
- Visit Amboise and Da Vinci's residence - Château du Clos Lucé
- Guided visit to the Royal Abbey of Fontevraud
- Explore Chinon and its massive castle
- Visit the classic 16th and 18th century gardens of Château Villandry
- Explore Tours and relax in the cafés on Place Plumereau

CÔTE D'AZUR

Days 12, 13, 14 & 15

- Stay 3 nights in the old town of Nice
- Visit the pretty harbour town of Cassis
- Discover the dramatic Calanques on a coastal cruise along the Côte d'Azur
- Explore Nice, Cannes and Monte Carlo
- Visit exclusive Saint-Jean Cap Ferrat and have afternoon tea at Villa Ephrussi
- Enjoy a farewell dinner in the artisan village of Saint Paul de Vence

THE DORDOGNE

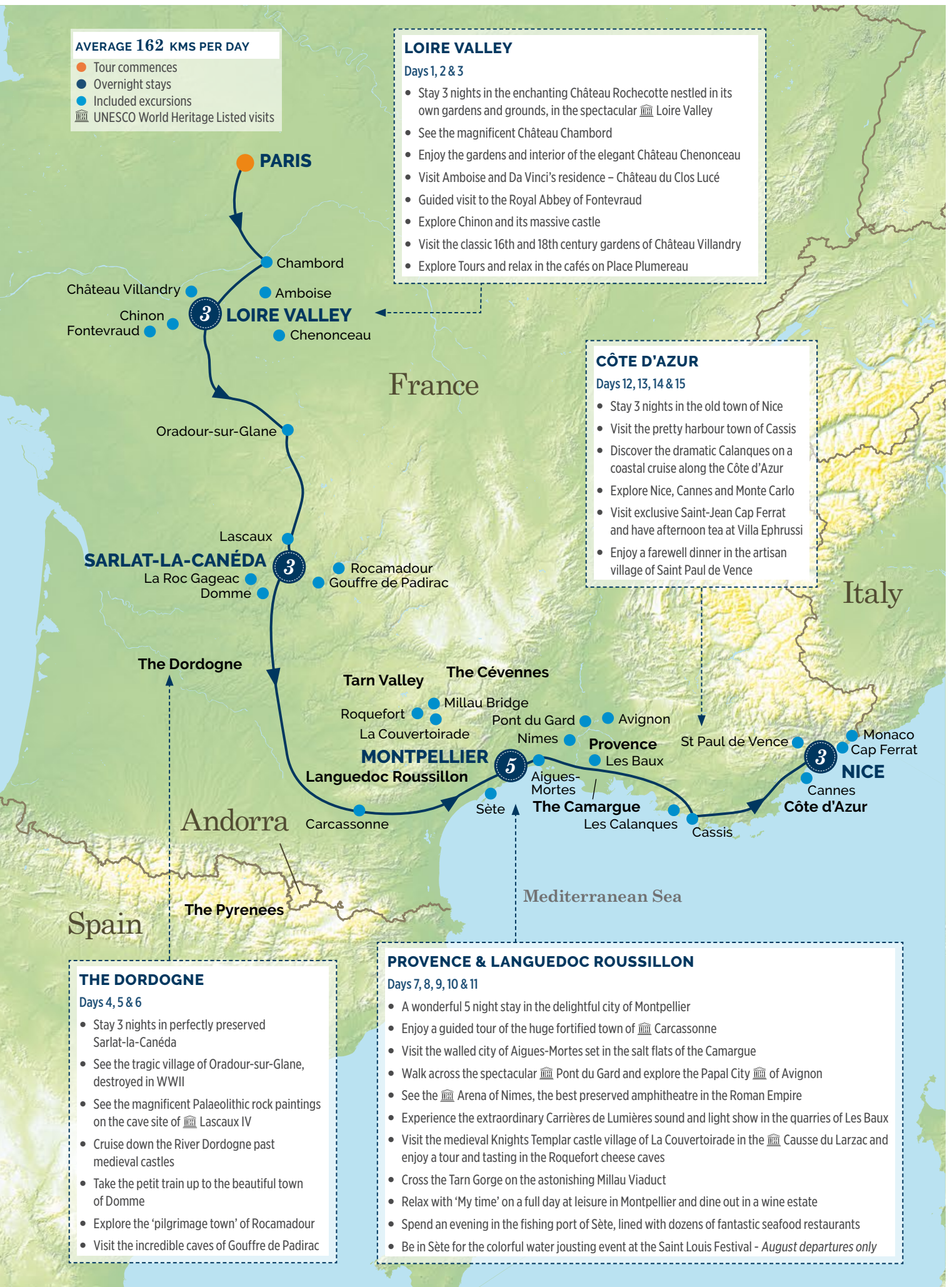
Days 4, 5 & 6

- Stay 3 nights in perfectly preserved Sarlat-la-Canéda
- See the tragic village of Oradour-sur-Glâne, destroyed in WWII
- See the magnificent Palaeolithic rock paintings on the cave site of 🏰 Lascaux IV
- Cruise down the River Dordogne past medieval castles
- Take the petit train up to the beautiful town of Domme
- Explore the 'pilgrimage town' of Rocamadour
- Visit the incredible caves of Gouffre de Padirac

PROVENCE & LANGUEDOC ROUSSILLON

Days 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11

- A wonderful 5 night stay in the delightful city of Montpellier
- Enjoy a guided tour of the huge fortified town of 🏰 Carcassonne
- Visit the walled city of Aigues-Mortes set in the salt flats of the Camargue
- Walk across the spectacular 🏰 Pont du Gard and explore the Papal City 🏰 of Avignon
- See the 🏰 Arena of Nimes, the best preserved amphitheatre in the Roman Empire
- Experience the extraordinary Carrières de Lumières sound and light show in the quarries of Les Baux
- Visit the medieval Knights Templar castle village of La Couvertoirade in the 🏰 Causse du Larzac and enjoy a tour and tasting in the Roquefort cheese caves
- Cross the Tarn Gorge on the astonishing Millau Viaduct
- Relax with 'My time' on a full day at leisure in Montpellier and dine out in a wine estate
- Spend an evening in the fishing port of Sète, lined with dozens of fantastic seafood restaurants
- Be in Sète for the colorful water jousting event at the Saint Louis Festival - August departures only





Don't just tick the big boxes

Too many people go to France and just 'tick off' the major sights. With limited time they brush the surface and miss so many incredible sights. This totally unique tour captures the essence and vibrancy of five incredibly evocative French regions... Regions littered with wonderfully preserved cities and villages, incredible sights and a proud heritage of culture, food and wine. That is why I designed this tour with necessary 3 night minimum stops PLUS a 5 night stay in the wonderful city of Montpellier. Naturally I needed to ensure we have ample time in the famous cities and towns, however I also really wanted to seek out those other activities and sights, famous or not, which exude so much of that essence and style that has made these regions world famous. For instance, have you heard of the 'ghost city' of Oradour-sur-Glane or the awesome caves of Gouffre de Padirac? What about the picturesque fishing village of Cassis, on the Côte d'Azur, beside the stunning fjord like Calanques where we enjoy a morning cruise? Why would you bypass the incredibly pretty Knights Templar, stone castle village of La Couventorade or the magnificent Villa Ephrussi, with its treasures and gorgeous gardens set on a spectacular rocky headland over the Azure Coast. Really, how could you? If you don't take in these 'other' special visits, then you have not seen 'La Grande France'. I say they are a 'must' and these types of places are what Albatross travellers love so much. At Albatross, we don't just touch on regions, we explore them!



Visit the moving village of Oradour-sur-Glane



See the magnificent Château Chambord

DAY 1 Paris to Loire Valley

Your tour commences this morning in central Paris. After meeting your Tour Manager, we board our coach and make our way south-west to the verdant Loire Valley where, during the 15th and 16th centuries, the Kings of France and their courtiers created their grand holiday palaces. What better way to be introduced to the wonderful Loire Valley than our afternoon stop at Chambord to view the magnificent chateau. This enormous chateau was created by King Francois as a hunting lodge within the surrounding grounds, which consisted of over 5000 wooded hectares. Later we continue to our wonderful Château hotel where we spend the next three nights. This evening we enjoy a welcome drink before dinner in our hotel. **Meals: D**

Your Loire Valley Château hotel – Château de Rochecotte*

Surrounded by 20 acres of parks and gardens this 4 star hotel is set within an 18th century chateau in the Loire Valley. Exuding french luxury and style encapsulating the extravagance of a bygone era, the Château de Rochecotte features elegant rooms and an outdoor swimming pool.



*25 May departure stays at Chateau Belmont in Tours.

DAY 2 Château Chenonceau, Amboise and Tours

This morning we enjoy a visit to the magnificent Château Chenonceau, spanning the River Cher on a series of graceful arches, to explore the stunning gardens and interior of the chateau. Possibly one of the most photographed of the Loire chateaux, this was the former home of Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Medici. Later, we stop to explore the charming riverside town of Amboise, on the banks of the River Loire, with its Royal Palace, where Leonardo da Vinci once lived as a guest of King Francois I. We have included a visit to da Vinci's residence – Château du Clos Lucé. In the underground rooms you will see forty machines designed by this amazing inventor. This evening will be free in the old town of Tours around Place Plumereau, to discover your own provincial bistro for dinner. **Meals: B**

DAY 3 Fontevraud, Chinon & Château Villandry

Our first stop of the day will be a guided visit of the Royal Abbey of Fontevraud. The Romanesque abbey with its royal tombs and renaissance cloister, has been beautifully restored and the complex is now a museum and cultural centre. Lunchtime will be spent exploring Chinon, with its massive castle looming over the narrow cobblestoned streets of this riverside town. In the afternoon we will visit the gardens of Château Villandry. Inspired by the classic gardens of the 16th and 18th century, different levels of the gardens include ponds, topiary, ornamental hedges and an extraordinary kitchen garden covering 12,500 square metres. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 4 Oradour-sur-Glane and Lascaux

This morning we make a poignant visit to the 'ghost village' of Oradour-sur-Glane. In June 1944, without apparent provocation, soldiers from the 2nd Waffen-SS Panzer Division massacred all the inhabitants of this quiet, little village. The village was then destroyed. The village was never rebuilt and has been preserved as a memorial to this awful atrocity. We have included entrance with audio guides to the museum 'Centre de la memoire d'Oradour'. Later we continue to Lascaux, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, famous for its magnificent Palaeolithic cave paintings. Whilst the actual caves themselves are now closed to the public, we visit the nearby Lascaux IV museum to see the superb replicas of the cave paintings found in the Great Hall of the Bulls and the Painted Gallery. As a finalé, we continue to the Dordogne Valley with its sleepy villages, medieval chateaux, meandering rivers and lush landscape that so epitomises French rural life. We stay the next three nights in the perfectly preserved Sarlat la Canéda, one of the most stunning towns in France. **Meals: B,D**

Your Dordogne hotel – Hotel Plaza Madeleine*

This contemporary 4 star hotel is situated in the heart of Sarlat. The hotel boasts air conditioned guest rooms and an outdoor swimming pool.



*25 May & 7 September departures stay at Hotel de Selves in Sarlat.



Stay 3 nights in the Dordogne region
Image taken by Albatross traveller, D. Woodcock



Visit the picturesque town of Rocamadour

DAY 5
Sarlat, River Dordogne Cruise and picturesque Domme

A guide joins us for the whole day. First we explore the medieval, architectural time capsule village of Sarlat. Noted for its gourmet food, cheeses, pâté and foie gras, Sarlat is also famous for its beautifully preserved old town with its café filled squares and delightful cobblestoned alleyways. In the afternoon we will drive to the nearby village of La Roc Gageac, set beside the pretty Dordogne River. Here we will board a barge and drift slowly down the River Dordogne past medieval castles. Later, we visit the incredibly picturesque village of Domme. We have included a ride on the petit train up through the ramparts to the town square. You will have time at leisure to explore the sleepy village and enjoy the sweeping views across the Dordogne Valley. **Meals: B**

DAY 6
Rocamadour and Gouffre de Padirac Caves

This morning we will visit the 'pilgrimage town' of Rocamadour. Incredibly picturesque, this town sits on a tributary of the Dordogne. High above the old town are churches and monastic buildings, whilst below is an old town dating back centuries, and which once welcomed those on the 'Pilgrims Trail'. In the afternoon we change our focus from man's creations to that of nature, as we enjoy a visit through the astounding caves of the 'Gouffre de Padirac'. This 25 kilometre underground system boasts massive galleries and chambers. A visual feast and beautifully lit, we also experience a 500 metre boat ride inside the caves to emerge into the spectacular 'Grand Dome'. Your evening is at leisure in Sarlat. **Meals: B**

"We have spent quite a lot of time travelling in France and this tour includes treasures that we haven't seen before." Allan

DAY 7
Old town of Carcassonne and Montpellier

Heading south we reach the walled city of Carcassonne where we are joined by a local guide to explore the ramparts and old town of Carcassonne. The medieval castle, with its gigantic double walled fortifications and 53 watchtowers, is the 2nd most visited site in France outside of Paris. Dating back to the 13th century, Carcassonne is a magnificent timepiece. We also make sure you have time at leisure to explore. Later, we continue through the Languedoc Roussillon region to the graceful city of Montpellier. This is the perfect base from which to fully explore this region, and why we stay here for the next five amazing nights! **Meals: B,D**

Your Montpellier Hotel – the Oceania Le Métropole
Brilliantly located right in the town centre, this excellent 4 star hotel is perfectly situated to enjoy 'My Time' relaxing in the bustling heart of town.



continued



A Natural Wonder

The astounding caves of the 'Gouffre de Padirac' are a natural wonder. Located in France's Lot region the site is the most visited in the area. You descend 75 metres into a chasm, you can do it by elevator or by foot. From there you board a boat to follow a subterranean river for 500 metres through spectacular vaulted caves such as the Lac de la Pluie (lake of rain) where a 60 metre stalactite hangs from the ceiling, and the spectacular 'Grand Dome'. Visually stunning, the extraordinary rock formations and vast rock galleries are beautifully lit. What an experience! See Day 6.



Shop at the village markets



Wander the beautiful canals of Sète



Cruise the picturesque Calanques

If the UNESCO World Heritage Organisation think the 'Calanques' are notable and worth eternal preservation then we reckon you should see them. These deep rugged inlets cover a length of 20 kms and a depth of up to 4 kms along the coast between Cassis and Marseille. Roots of plants and bushes are anchored into colourful rock faces, which tumble down into the crystal clear azure blue waters. Perfect for our spectacular afternoon cruise on the Côte d'Azur! Uniquely Albatross. See Day 12.

DAY 8 Nimes and Aigues Mortes

This morning we visit Nimes, where a local guide will join us for a walking tour of this remarkable city. Dating back to the bronze age, the central part is traffic free. Right in the centre you will find the Maison Carrée Roman temple, and the giant Arena of Nimes – the best preserved amphitheatre in the Roman Empire.

Later we will drive into the famous Camargue region and enjoy 'My Time' in Aigues-Mortes. The 13th century walls and ramparts fully encircle this historical town and form a striking contrast to the vast salines (salt flats) that encircle it. This evening we have included dinner in a local wine estate. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 9 Montpellier, 'My Time' and Sète

A leisurely start. A local guide will take us on a morning walk around Montpellier's city centre to see the highlights. The rest of your day is entirely free to explore and enjoy 'My Time'. In the evening we drive to the colourful Mediterranean fishing port of Sète. Food enthusiasts come from all over France to dine here; all along the canal side wharves you will find lines and lines of well-priced fish restaurants with displays bursting with oysters, mussels, crabs and seafood. A dizzying choice!

Special Note: Our August departures have been timed to visit Sète so you can join in the lively Saint Louis festival and watch the spectacular (and fun) 'boat jousting' that takes place. Contestants dress in white with red, or blue. Each boat holds oarsmen and a small noisy, brass and drum band. Sitting high on a step ladder are the teams of White Knights. Perched high behind the boat on a 'Tintaine' (tiny wooden platform), lance and shield poised, are the combatants. Furiously rowing, but gaining little speed, the combatants clash. One will get very wet! Hilarious, colourful, historical, traditional. This is a wonderful way to pass an evening amongst the noisy, boisterous crowds. Look it up on the web! **Meals: B**

DAY 10 La Couvertoirade, Roquefort and the awesome Millau Viaduct

A leisurely start before we drive inland to the UNESCO listed Causse du Larzac region. Our first stop will be at the medieval village of La Couvertoirade, which was voted one of the 'Plus Beaux Villages de France' (most beautiful villages of France). The village was transformed into a dramatic fortified castle by the Knights Templar approximately 800 years ago; the flower bedecked, narrow, cobblestoned streets are steeped in history and the little church is littered with secret Masonic signs.

Later, equivalent to the height of the top of the Eiffel Tower, we take the extraordinary Millau Viaduct across the mighty Tarn Gorge.

After visiting the Viaduct Museum, we enjoy lunchtime at leisure in Millau. Next stop Roquefort! We have included a guided tour down through the Caves and a tasting of varieties of this rich tasty cheese. (And the salami infused with Roquefort is quite unbelievable!). **Meals: B**

DAY 11 The Pont du Gard, Avignon and Les Baux

A busy, but incredibly rewarding day. First up will be a short walk across the spectacular Pont du Gard – an imposing 2,000 year-old Roman aqueduct which was built with giant stones weighing up to six tons. In a beautiful setting, this remarkable structure spans 200 metres between the craggy hillsides of the River Gard.

Lunchtime will be at leisure exploring the Papal city of Avignon. Mid-afternoon we journey to the crumbling castle and once deserted village of Les Baux to discover the craft shops and cafés scattered throughout the ruins. Set on the craggy hillside, this rejuvenated town is an extraordinary sight. We have also included entrance to enjoy a stunning audio-visual art show – the Carrières de Lumières.

Underground, inside an abandoned quarry, you will have a totally unique sound and vision experience as classic works of art are projected as massive fresco all around you, onto the walls and ceilings. Please do check out the video on the web. Astounding!

Your evening is at leisure in Montpellier. **Meals: B**

DAY 12 Cassis, Calanques Cruise and Nice

First stop today will be in the old fishing village of Cassis, on the Côte d'Azur. We enjoy a morning cruise to explore some of the incredibly picturesque Calanques. These rugged inlets with steep cliffs tumbling into the crystal clear, azure waters are best viewed by boat. Lunchtime will be at leisure in the picturesque harbour of Cassis. Later we continue to Nice, nicknamed the 'Queen of the Riviera', where we stay the next three nights. **Meals: B,D**

Your Nice hotel –
Le Méridien

Located on the famed Promenade des Anglais, this contemporary 4 star hotel is within close proximity to the charming Old Town.



DAY 13

'My Time' in Nice, Villa Ephrussi and Monaco

Your morning is entirely free in the elegant resort town of Nice. Make sure you visit the wonderful fresh food, local produce and flower markets which are amongst the best in France!

Take time to stroll and shop amongst the winding streets and perhaps enjoy lunch in one of the attractive seaside restaurants. Nice also boasts a number of art museums.

This afternoon we will visit Saint-Jean Cap Ferrat and the fabulous Villa Ephrussi – home of the Rothschild family. We have included a self-guided tour through this exceptional villa, perhaps the grandest on the Côte d'Azur, to see Béatrice Ephrussi's grand apartments, tapestry and porcelain collections, and the magnificent gardens. We have also included afternoon tea in the restaurant, which boasts enormous views along the Azure Coast.

Later this afternoon we have also included an excursion to Monaco. Following the scenic drive along the 'Moyenne Corniche' to the city of Monte Carlo we will see the Royal Palace before time in the old town to enjoy dinner at leisure. **Meals: B**

DAY 14

Cannes and St Paul de Vence

Our morning is spent in the extravagant seaside resort of Cannes. Famous for its movie stars and the Cannes Film Festival, we have time to explore the old port town and 'La Croisette' – the seafront promenade lined with palm trees, upmarket boutiques, cafés and grand hotels.

As a finalé, we will drive in to the foothills of the Alpes Maritimes to the old town of St Paul de Vence. With its imposing ramparts, overlooking the Provençal countryside, the wonderful natural light attracted an artists' colony. Soon they were followed by film directors and movie stars, then galleries and shops. We enjoy a farewell dinner in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 15

Nice on the Côte d'Azur

Your tour ends today after breakfast. **Meals: B,**



Stand in awe on the Pont du Gard

"A wonderful well-paced holiday with many varied activities and a great group of travellers. Each new destination was an unexpected delight." Carolyn

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$1,500 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 14 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 21 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 7 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink Loire Valley
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Dordogne barge cruise, Calanques cruise, visit Carrières de Lumières, Villa Ephrussi afternoon tea
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Leisurely 3 and 5 night stays in each location
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

15 days from \$7,747 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Paris	Ends Nice	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
25 May	8 June	\$8,147	\$1,970
22 June	6 July	\$8,347	\$2,390
19 July	2 August	\$8,347	\$2,390
16 August	30 August	\$8,347	\$2,390
7 September	21 September	\$7,747	\$1,970

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation. Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

Sardinia & Corsica, the Lands of Myths and Legends



Stay 2 nights in the cliff top town of Bonifacio

14 Surprising Days Cagliari to Calvi or Bastia

Two islands, so different, so intriguing. One Italian, one French, both fiercely independent. Visit 3,500 year old huge stone 'Nuraghe' Tower villages, cruise to the beautiful Neptune's Caves, enjoy stunning cliff top coastal drives, take 4WDs deep into rugged ravines for a shepherd's picnic lunch. Visit colourful Bosa, 'bandit' Orgosolo, Catalan Alghero, the exquisite Costa Smeralda, the staggering cliff top town of Bonifacio, Napoleon's Ajaccio and...best of all...3 nights in remarkable Su Gologone.

CALVI

Days 12, 13 & 14

- Stay 2 nights in the delightful seaside port of Calvi
- Catch the scenic train to the ancient capital of Corte
- Visit the Corsican Museum and explore the Citadelle ramparts
- Relax in L'île Rousse and enjoy a tasting of local produce & wine in Calvi
- Enjoy 'My Time' amongst Calvi's pedestrian alleys, shops and cafes
- Cruise to the Scandola Nature Reserve
- Enjoy a farewell dinner in one of Calvi's delightful squares

AJACCIO

Days 10 & 11

- Stay 2 nights in Napoleon Bonaparte's Ajaccio
- Relax amongst the 16th century streets of charming Sartène
- Visit the house where Napoleon lived
- Enjoy 'My Time' to relax and explore the old town

ALGERO

Days 6 & 7

- Stay 2 nights in the heart of the exotic 'Catalan' town of Alghero
- Visit Nuoro, and drive past fields and fields of Nuraghe ruined towers
- Enjoy lunchtime in colourful Bosa and travel along the spectacular cliff road to Alghero
- Cruise to the spectacular Neptune's Caves
- Follow the 'Escalade del Cabiol' - a stone staircase hugging the enormous cliffs of Capo Caccia

AVERAGE 84 KMS PER DAY

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions
- 🏛️ UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

CAGLIARI

Days 1 & 2

- Stay 2 nights in the heart of Cagliari
- Explore the sights of Cagliari, visit the National Archaeological Museum and take in the views from the Bastione di Saint Remy

SU GOLOGONE

Days 3, 4 & 5

- Stay 3 nights enjoying the extraordinary Su Gologone 'Sardinian Experience'
- Explore the 3,500 year old Su Nuraxi - mysterious Nuraghe rock towers and enjoy a wine tasting and light lunch in a local vineyard
- Take a 4WD tour into the Supramonte Mountains and savour a shepherds picnic
- Visit the natural springs of Sorgente Su Gologone
- See the fabulous revolutionary murals in Orgosolo
- On the 'Terrace of Dreams' enjoy spectacular views of Mount Corras

BONIFACIO

Days 8 & 9

- Stay 2 nights on the cliff tops of Bonifacio and dine out in a Corsican restaurant
- Visit Palau, see the exquisite Costa Smeralda and explore La Maddalena Island
- Cross the straits to Corsica
- Enjoy 'My Time' exploring the extraordinary cliff hanging, citadel town of Bonifacio





It's the smell, the feel, the taste

You have to understand, any visit to these islands will not be about giant monuments, man-made edifices or historic marbled buildings. Instead it will be about the smell, the feel, the taste and nature's visual feast. I originally aimed to create a tour about 8 days long, but failed miserably. But with so many different sights to see what dare I exclude? Eventually, I settled on 14 days. These two islands are so different, so intriguing, with so many startling contrasts and so much to enjoy and absorb. One island Italian, the other French, both fiercely independent from each other and from their mainland overlords.

In Sardinia's south, Cagliari is a mixture of rich emotion, Naples to the east, and glorious Sicily to the south. Alghero faces westwards towards Spain, and they speak Catalan, even flying the yellow and red striped Catalan flag. Huge stone 'Nuraghe' Tower villages, as old as the Pyramids, litter the landscape. In the wild hills of the Supramonte Mountains, shepherds live past 100 years, they speak a language older than Latin, and until recently, banditry flourished!

Then we cross the water to Corsica where crumbs fall from French croissants and everything, especially the people are decidedly French. In Bonifacio, perched high on overhanging cliffs, amble through a harbour bursting with modern mega yachts and ludicrously flamboyant cruisers. Enjoy the visual feast of rugged mountains and sweeping coastal drives. Cruise azure waters to hidden sea caves. Stunning!

However, it will be returning home where you will find it hardest, trying to explain Sardinia's soul, captured during your stay in remarkable Su Gologone, in those wild bandit hills!

P.S. the food is great too!



Relax with 'My Time' to explore the Old Town of Alghero

It is easy to join the tour!

How to get there? Our tour commences in Cagliari, capital of Sardinia, and ends in Calvi, or Bastia, in the north of Corsica. Each city has an airport with regular flights serving a wide range of destinations in Italy, France and further afield. Cagliari is serviced half a dozen times a day by flights from Rome. Daily ferries also link these cities with mainland Italy and the South of France. On arrival in Cagliari, the airport is a short taxi ride to your hotel.

DAY 1 Cagliari welcome

Your tour commences this evening in Cagliari. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in a local restaurant. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Cagliari Hotel – the Regina Margherita

First class and in a great location a mere 200 metres in each direction to the port, the pedestrian shopping zone and the historical Bastione.



Take a guided tour of the UNESCO site of Su Nuraxi

DAY 2 National Archaeological Museum, Bastione views and 'My Time'

Well off the tourist map, Cagliari has a unique identity and feeling. To the south east lies Sicily, to the east is Naples. Whilst definitely Italian, it also stamps its own Sardinian personality. Joined by a local guide we explore this historic city. Cagliari's old city sits astride a plateau. We enjoy a walking tour that begins with a visit to the National Archaeological Museum. Continuing on, our tour takes us down through the streets of the old town to the Cathedral, and on to the Bastione di Saint Remy, with its views back over the bay. Later, 'My Time' to further explore this engaging town. Meals: B

DAY 3 UNESCO listed Su Nuraxi and wine tasting in a local vineyard

Heading north we soon reach Barumini where we visit the UNESCO World Heritage listed Su Nuraxi – an impressive Nuraghe rock town. Dating back 3,700 years these Sardinian ruined giant stone villages are still somewhat of a mystery – and there are an incredible 7,000 Nuraghe scattered around the island. A local guide will take us right inside the heart of the central tower complex. Fascinating! Afterwards, in nearby Gergei, at the Olianias Winery, we enjoy a vineyard tour, wine tasting and light lunch of locally grown produce. Crossing into the Gennargentu Massif we reach an extraordinary hotel where we stay the next three nights. The setting is amazing, the food fantastic, the region wild and untamed. The comfort is excellent, décor is divine, unique and colourful. You will forever remember staying in this unique 'Experience Hotel'. Before dinner we enjoy a pre-dinner drink on the champagne terrace – The Champagnoteque. Dinner tonight is a Sardinian specialty – Suckling Pig! (Vegetarians are extremely well catered for). Meals: B,L,D

Your Su Gologone 'Experience Hotel'

White washed villas and terraced rooms scattered up a hillside of olive trees, oleander blooms, hydrangeas and prickly pears, colourful décor with local crafts and artwork, stylish terraces and lounges. The hotel's artisanal art boutique offers original handmade local pieces. To truly appreciate this unique hotel, visit their website www.sugologone.it/en





Take a 4WD and enjoy a Shepherd's Picnic in the mountains

DAY 4
4WD into the Supramonte Mountains for a Shepherds picnic & 'My Time'

There is nothing like a day in the mountains! Climbing aboard 4WDs we venture deep into the Supramonte mountains to enjoy an indulgent Shepherds Picnic. First stop is to enjoy a short walk to a recently discovered Nuraghe site in the forest, to learn how this ancient site was once used and the theories of what happened to the inhabitants. Re-boarding our 4WDs we drive to a shepherd's hut to enjoy our picnic. The authentic grass and wood covered hut has been used for hundreds of years, and is still used by shepherds. The fabulous food is all local. You will enjoy 'pane carasau', traditional Sardinian flatbread, paper thin, antipasti, roast meats – lamb, veal and sausage, vegetables, cheeses, mountain honey, fruits and deserts... all washed down with delicious Cannonau (Sardinian red wine). Bellissimo! The rest of the day is free in our 'Experience Hotel'. Maybe enjoy a siesta, a dip in the pool, or even join one of the ceramics, painting and embroidery workshops? How about an aperitif on the 'Terrace of Dreams', relaxing on the 'Terrace of Desires' or putting a message in a bottle on the 'Terrace of Wishes', all with exceptional views of the sunbathed Mount Corrasi? At dusk maybe join a yoga class in the aromatic setting of the Herb Garden? **Meals: B,L**

DAY 5
Orgosolo – the 'City of Murderers'

After a leisurely start, we enjoy a walk through a peaceful glade near our hotel to see the mystical natural springs of Sorgente Su Gologone flowing from a rock wall. So picturesque! Lunch time is spent in the nearby bandit town of Orgosolo – known also as the 'City of Murderers'. Until only a few decades ago this was the home and refuge for the regions notorious kidnapers (rich tourists only!) and bandits. Now peaceful, the locals have transformed the whole town. We are joined by a local guide who will explain the significance of the large colourful 'murales' (murals) that adorn the walls of houses and shops. Revolutionary art, portraits of saints and sinners, dictators and world events, oppression and humour, it has the lot. This evening we gather on one of the terraces to enjoy a tasting of local wines and produce. Before dinner relax around a bread oven in the Nido del Pane (Bread Basket) area, an expert artisan baker will create and cook tasty local breads. The aroma of the freshly baked bread will 'whet your appetite'. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 6
Bosa, a cliff top drive and Alghero

After a morning stop in Nuoro we cross to the west coast, passing farmlands filled with remnants of dozens of ancient Nuraghe ruins and towers. Lunchtime will be in the medieval streets of Bosa. Set beside the River Temo, with the hilltop Malaspina castle above, the tall houses all painted in pastel colours make Bosa such a pretty and interesting town. Later we take the scenic road up to Alghero, where we stay the next two nights. Hugging the coastal cliffs on sweeping curves around rocky promontories this memorable drive offers outstanding views. Alghero was once part of the Catalan empire and their allegiance westwards towards Spain still stands strong. You will see the Catalan flag everywhere and the locals still speak Catalan. Therefore Alghero is a unique blend of Spanish, Italian and independent Sardinian! In our hotel's 9th floor 'Sky Bar' we enjoy a welcome drink. The views over the old town port and across the sea are magnificent. Later we wander to a local restaurant in the old town to enjoy a traditional Alghero style Sardinian dinner. **Meals: B,D**

Your Alghero Hotel – Hotel Catalunya*
 The 4 star Hotel Catalunya boasts a fantastic location, right on the edge of the historic old town.



**16 May departure stays at Hotel Punta Negra in nearby Fertilia, overlooking the Gulf of Alghero.*

continued



Cruise to Neptune's Caves followed by a guided tour



The Su Gologone 'Experience'

It all started with the food! In 1967, newly weds Peppeddu and Pasqua Palimodde opened the Oliena region's first ever restaurant. The simple food cooked every day was such a success that people started coming in from far and wide, even overseas. Accommodation in the area was scarce, so they opened a small hotel. The word spread that here was a very different Sardinia to be discovered. Their daughter Giovanna later transformed the hotel into a world-renowned destination, with exotic terraces and beautifully decorated hidden corners. Interiors feature the works of local and national Sardinian artists, and the furnishings, crafts and décor are created in Su Gologone's own Botteghe d'Arte. The staff are all locals and so proud of their hotel, and all the food and wine comes from the surrounding local Oliena region. Stay here and you will gather memories that last a lifetime! See Day 4.



See the stunning azure waters of the Costa Smeralda coastline



SPECIALLY
HAND
SELECTED
FOR YOU

You are definitely in bandit country!

Once the epicentre of bandit country, shepherds scratching a meagre living from the surrounding hills got the bright idea to go to down to the coast, kidnap a few tourists and bring them back into the mountains. Holding them to ransom, they found sending home a severed ear in an envelope would announce their genuine intention, and get maximum payout! Nowadays Orgosolo is a very different town. Whilst banditry is gone, you get a constant reminder of its past and roots. Driving into town you pass the town sign which is still riddled with bullet holes. More interesting, in town there are dozens of houses with huge colourful 'murale' (murals) of highly topical political events and revolutionary characters. On one wall might be a picture of an aeroplane crashing into two giant skyscrapers, on another Gandhi at prayer. Absolutely fascinating! See Day 5.

DAY 7 Neptune's Caves, Alghero sunsets and 'My Time'

Today the choice is yours - cruise or cliff walk. Crossing the beautiful bay on a cruise boat, we reach the massive Capo Caccia cliffs to visit the spectacular Neptune's Caves. A specialist cave guide will walk us several hundred metres deep into the beautifully light caverns past underground lakes, stalactites and stalagmites. Anyone fancy a fantastic cliff walk? Instead of a cruise to the caves we can take you to the top of the cliffs and you can descend the amazing 'escala del cabirol' (goat's steps). The 654 step descent is an incredible walking experience as the stone stairway hugs the cliffs down to the cave entrance. Then you will enter the caves. The rest of the day and evening is at leisure in Alghero. Maybe enjoy dinner in a trattoria in the old town. The rich red sunsets across the sea and the cape are justifiably famous. Meals: B

DAY 8 The Costa Smeralda and La Maddalena Island

We cross northern Sardinia to the exquisite Costa Smeralda coast, famous for its azure blue seas and archipelago of rocky islands. From Palau it is only a short ferry ride across to Isola Maddalena. After a short stop in La Maddalena town, we enjoy a panoramic drive around the island. Lunchtime is at leisure at Punta Tegge where there is the opportunity to swim or relax and enjoy lunch at the beachside trattoria, Zi Anto. In the afternoon we cross the water to Corsica, France. As we approach Bonifacio the citadel and fortifications loom high, perched magnificently, overhanging the deep blue sea. Entering the harbour we are surrounded by enormous mega yachts and cruisers moored there. The entire harbour is one giant marina and lining the quays are dozens and dozens of bars, shops, restaurants and cafés. Dinner tonight is included in a local restaurant, a short stroll from our cliff top hotel. Meals: B,D

Your Bonifacio Hotel – Santa Teresa Hotel

This excellent 3 star hotel, a former mansion built in the late 19th century, is located on the cliffs of Bonifacio. Offering breathtaking panoramic views of the Mediterranean Sea, the hotel is a short stroll from the old town.

STAY
2
NIGHTS

DAY 9 'My Time' in Bonifacio

After a short walking tour of the medieval clifftop citadel, your day is free in Bonifacio. 'My Time' to relax and amble around the yacht filled harbour, go shopping, explore the historic citadel at your own pace, or maybe hire a boat for a joyride around the bay. A wonderful relaxing day! Meals: B

DAY 10 Medieval Sartène, Propriano and a scenic drive

Skirting the south west corner, we arrive in charming Sartène. By the leafy main square is the gateway to the 16th century streets of the old town. Take time to stroll and shop amongst the little winding alleys, or to settle in a café and enjoy the medieval surroundings. Lunchtime is at leisure in the coastal town of Propriano.

Later we cross over the hills to Ajaccio for our next two night stay. Dinner tonight is included. Meals: B,D

Your Ajaccio Hotel – Best Western Plus Hotel Ajaccio Amiraute

This 4 star hotel is located nearby the centre of Ajaccio, overlooking the Ajaccio Gulf. The hotel boasts contemporary, air conditioned rooms and an outdoor pool.

STAY
2
NIGHTS

DAY 11 Napoleon's home and 'My Time'

This morning we are joined by a local guide for a walking tour of the old town of Ajaccio. Most famous as being the birthplace of that 'little Corsican' Napoleon Bonaparte, we also visit the house where he was born and spent his youth. The rest of your day is free. 'My Time' to explore and shop in the lengthy pedestrian shopping street or relax and enjoy the facilities at our resort hotel. Meals: B

"I loved my tour. Everything was taken care of, fabulous accommodation, restaurants, excursions and a first class tour manager. I look forward to choosing my next tour with Albatross." Richelle

DAY 12**Scenic train ride,
Corte and L'ile Rousse**

Boarding a train we cut straight through the scenic mountains of Corsica's rugged interior to arrive in the ancient capital of Corte. We have included entrance to Corte's historical museum and ramparts. From there you will have access to the picturesque old fortification standing high on a rocky outcrop. It was here that the Pasquale Paoli, head of the Corsican resistance, declared their new republic in 1794, making Corte the capital. His statue is in the main square amongst the cafes and restaurants, and the buildings are still pockmarked with hundreds bullet holes! In town there are lovely laneways and alleys, cafes and shops. A delightful place to spend lunchtime. Later we enjoy an afternoon stop in the 'oh so French' port of L'ile Rousse. This evening we will walk to the pedestrianised old town. After a tasting of local produce and wine in a delicatessen specialising in charcuterie, your evening is free. Calvi is a delightful place to stroll around, filled to the brim with shops, cafes and 'al fresco' dining. **Meals: B**

**Your Calvi Hotel –
Hostellerie de l'Abbaye**

In a great location just 200 metres from the old town, what was once a 16th century Franciscan monastery is now an elegantly furnished 4 star hotel, offering contemporary, air conditioned guest rooms.

**DAY 13****'My Time' in Calvi and
Scandola Reserve cruise**

Your day begins with a short walking tour to orientate you with delightful Calvi. Set on a crescent shaped bay, the pedestrian streets full of shops, boutiques and cafes run parallel to the marina and Quai Landry esplanade which is lined with restaurants. At the end on the rocky promontory above is the medieval fortified citadel. Afterwards, 'My Time' to explore further at your own pace. In the afternoon we take a terrific cruise along the coast to see the fabulous cliffs and calanques (narrow, steep walled inlets) of the UNESCO World Heritage listed Scandola Nature Reserve, in the Gulf of Girolata. The gigantic rocky outcrops, which emerge from the deep blue water, catch the sun and create an amazing contrast of colour between the sea and sky. This evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 14**Calvi to Bastia**

Your tour ends today after breakfast. Calvi has a small airport which is a short taxi ride away. For those wishing to catch a flight or ferry out of Bastia we have included a morning Group transfer. We recommend you book ferries and flights that depart Bastia after 1pm. **Meals: B**



Spend time in Ajaccio, the birthplace of Napoleon

Outstanding Value Inclusions**Over \$1,400 value of extras already included**

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 13 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 22 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), a light lunch in a local vineyard, a shepherd's picnic lunch in the Supramonte Mountains (L) and 7 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Cagliari and on the Champagnoteque Terrace in Su Gologone
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Su Nuraxi Nuraghe, 4WD excursion deep into the Supramonte Mountains for shepherds picnic lunch, train ride to Corte, Neptune's Cave and Scandola Nature Reserve cruises
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Free WiFi on coach in Sardinia and at all hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!**The Albatross difference**

- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays in each location
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices**14 days from \$6,887 pp twin share**

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Cagliari	Ends Calvi or Bastia	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
25 April	8 May	\$6,887	\$1,290
16 May	29 May	\$7,147	\$1,370
30 May	12 June	\$7,147	\$1,370
29 August	11 September	\$7,147	\$1,370
26 September	9 October	\$6,887	\$1,290

We have 5 departures. We purposefully avoid travelling through late June, July and August as the weather, even for Australians, is usually too hot and tourist crowds hinder satisfying sightseeing. When we go is the best time to visit. In late April and May the wild flowers are out in the Sardinian mountains.

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.



Hidden Italy, the Lands of the Etruscans



Explore the hilltop town of Civita di Bagnoregio



NEW
FOR
2020

10 Intriguing Days Rome to Rome

A hidden land with ancient Etruscan cities and frescoed tombs, spectacular perched medieval towns, catacomb labyrinths, water cascades, a colossal man-made waterfall, and a park full of giants and monsters. Sip Prosecco in 1300-year-old Abbey ruins, dine in amazing locations, explore the undulating Tuscan Hills of the Val d'Orcia which so inspired the Renaissance painters. So different – so absolutely delightful!

CHIANCIANO TERME

Day 5, 6, 7 & 8

- Stay 4 nights in the Spa town of Chianciano Terme
- Walk across a viaduct to explore the extraordinary, perched, medieval hill top town of Civita di Bagnoregio, visit the fascinating walled city of Pitigliano and walk along an ancient Etruscan 'Via Cava' – rock carved walkway
- Enjoy a guided walking tour of Perugia, including the 'Rocca', frescoed Collegio del Cambio, and visit the hilltop town of Cortona
- Relax with 'My Time' in the Spa town Chianciano Terme
- Walk around the water filled square of Bagno Vignoni
- Drive through the rolling hills of the delightful heritage listed  Val d'Orcia, spend 'My Time' in Montepulciano and that gem of a city, beautiful  Pienza
- Dine on the terraces of a glorious farm estate with huge views down the Val d'Orcia

ORVIETO

Day 2, 3 & 4

- Stay 3 nights in the very heart of the Etruscan hill top city of Orvieto
- Be guided through the  Etruscan Necropolis and fascinating National Museum in Tarquinia and see inside the ancient hill top tombs
- At Bagnaia, visit the palatial terraced gardens of Villa Lante, wander amongst the huge 'monster sculptures' of the beautiful Parco dei Mostri
- Relax with 'My Time' amongst Orvieto's cobblestoned streets, cafes and shops, take a guided tour of the city, visit the beautifully painted cathedral and explore the age-old subterranean caves and catacombs
- Enjoy dinner beside the picturesque ruins of 'La Badia di Orvieto' Abbey which dates back 1,300 years!
- Savour 2 special lunches - in a mysterious Labyrinth restaurant, and on a shady terrace with spectacular views over the Lazio countryside

RIETI

Day 9 & 10

- Stay in the palatial 'Villa Potenziani' enjoying a farewell drink on the terrace before dinner with music
- Visit Todi and see the remarkable waterfalls of Marmore

ROME

Day 1

- Get to know each other over a welcome drink and dinner in a local trattoria

Mediterranean Sea

AVERAGE 91 KMS PER DAY

-  Tour commences
-  Overnight stays
-  Included excursions
-  UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits



It is perfect because of the humble mosquito

I always wanted to visit a town called Civita di Bagnoregio, a couple of hours north of Rome. It was on my bucket list, but being in what I thought was an uninteresting 'no mans' land without any major sights, I had always bypassed it. Until a couple of years ago. My wife and I decided to 'tick it off' the list, and when planning a quick visit, we were astounded by what else was hidden in this remarkable area. How could this be so... a whole new Italy I had never heard of! Our planned visit became longer, and we fell in love with the whole, beautiful unspoiled region. The North boasts all the famous sites, but what about the Tuscan south? How come there are so many magnificent sites, yet virtually no tourists? It is because of the humble mosquito! For centuries, sadly, malaria was rife and so people naturally stayed away. The land then slept as the English poets and writers, on their grand Italian pilgrimages, avoided the area. No one wrote romantically about it, and so the late 19th and 20th century 'gentry' tourists passed by it. Now, thankfully, the mosquitoes are long gone, and the land is just starting to wake. Beware, soon it will be discovered... And that is why *'now is the time to visit'*. With Umbria and Lazio, what a stunning set of regions, littered with UNESCO sites, dramatic cliff top cities and rock perched towns. And such history.

Centuries before a humble assembly of crude shelters grew to become Rome, this was the hub of the incredibly civilised Etruscan empire. Here they built massive cities, created artworks and dug underground frescoed tombs. The Romans came and left their empiric stamp, and later medieval hilltop cities evolved. And now, so rarely touched, the region is waking. Come join us, before it is 'discovered'.



Wander through the terraced gardens of Villa Lante

DAY 1 Rome welcome

Your tour commences this evening in the eternal city of Rome. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in a local trattoria. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Rome hotel – Hotel Victoria

This 4 star hotel is centrally located beside the ancient Roman Walls, close by the Villa Borghese gardens.



Tour the beautiful Duomo of Orvieto

DAY 2 Etruscan Necropolis, Villa Lante and an ancient Abbey dinner

We travel north along the Mediterranean Coast, past the cruise port of Civitavecchia, to Tarquinia. Here we are joined by an expert local guide, who will show us around the UNESCO World Heritage site of Tarquinia's ancient Etruscan Necropolis. This is where we step back to pre-Roman times and learn about the very special Etruscan civilisation that thrived around 2,500 – 3,000 years ago. On a landscape scattered by ancient burial mounds, we will descend stairways to look inside the tombs, complete with colourful paintings and frescoes. Later, in the town of Tarquinia, we will also enjoy a tour through the National Etruscan Museum with its ancient sarcophagus, statues and artefacts. The artwork of this ancient civilisation is beautiful. The Etruscans are a people many of us have heard of, but know little about. So these visits are an excellent introduction as, over the next few days, we will continually encounter cities, sites and legacies of this amazing civilisation.

Lunchtime will be at leisure in Tarquinia. Continuing, we drive through the undulating hills around Viterbo, to a small town called Bagnaia, to visit the 'Mannerist' style gardens of Villa Lante - an amazing, cascading set of water gardens created by the Duke of Bomarzo in the 17th century. Despite being voted one of the top gardens of Italy, due to its remote location, it is so peaceful and virtually without tourists. Delightful!

Our destination for the next three nights is the ancient Etruscan cliff-top city of Orvieto. Access to the middle of the pedestrianised old town, and our hotel, is via an elevator up through the cliffs. In the evening, we reboard our coach and drive outside town to the Abbey 'La Badia di Orvieto'. First, we enjoy a welcome drink in the ruins of this ancient Abbey, which date back 1300 years! From here, the views across the valley are stunning and the city you see high up on the hill, across the valley, is Orvieto. What a magnificent location. Dinner is inside, under the vaulted ceilings of the converted abbey. Meals: B,D

Your Orvieto hotel – Hotel Aquila Bianca

Located in the heart of historic Orvieto. This 4 star hotel is within walking distance of all the major sights, and surrounded by shops, cafés bars and restaurants.





Visit the ancient Etruscan city of Pitigliano and wander its winding streets

DAY 3

Orvieto, and a Labyrinth lunch

A leisurely start before we are joined by a local guide who will take us on a walking tour of Orvieto. We have included a visit to the magnificent Cathedral. The carved detail, and colours on the exterior stonework, make this arguably the most beautiful Cathedral you will ever see. Inside, the statue of the 'Pietà' is astounding. After time at leisure to visit the cafés or do some shopping, we will meet up to enjoy a superb, private lunch somewhere very, very special. Whilst the food is all homemade and delicious, the highlight will be accessing a system of ancient, Etruscan catacombs and caves via a stairway inside the restaurant. The caves are absolutely fascinating, and the food is terrific. The rest of your day is free in Orvieto. Make sure you visit, and walk down the amazing 72m deep, St Patrick's Well. Called the 'Pozzo di San Patrizio', this engineering marvel, is about 500 years old. Once inside, the light bouncing off the walls, coming in from the natural opening at the top, is stunning. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 4

Park of Monsters and a lazy lunch

A very relaxing day. First stop is at the Sacro Bosco in Bomarzo. Otherwise known as the Parco dei Mostri - or the Park of the Monsters. Designed in the 16th century the shaded pathways are filled with weird and wonderful sculptures, hewn from volcanic boulders scattered through a woodland park. You will be immersed in the surreal experience of a 'monster world' created 500 years ago. Here you will see Neptune, the gods, enormous dragons, a war elephant, a huge tortoise, and two angry giants tearing each other apart. There is a tilted stone house, serpents, monsters and enormous heads with mouths agape, appearing to scream at you. You can even walk inside that mouth! Hungry by now? It is time for a long, leisurely lunch on a tree shaded, stone terrace, enjoying great food, whilst gazing out over the Lazio countryside.

Later we return to Orvieto and the rest of your day and evening is free. Maybe climb the great tower, or walk to the massive fortified ramparts. An absolute must is the highlight of enjoying an evening aperitif in front of the gorgeous Cathedral as dusk approaches. The surrounding square is so peaceful and quiet, and the golden light bathing the colourful church façade is sublime. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 5

Civita di Bagnoregio, Pitigliano and the 'Via Cava'

Be prepared for a fascinating day as we go well off the beaten track. First stop will be at a mysterious town called Civita di Bagnoregio. A thousand years ago, an absolutely picture-perfect, walled citadel was built on a rocky pinnacle in the middle of the 'Badlands'. The land around eroded and subsided and eventually access was only possible by a skinny unstable ridge. Bridges were built, and then collapsed. Now there is a strong, 300 metre long stone and steel viaduct connecting this striking medieval, hilltop town with the rim of the huge crater. Probably the most striking hilltop town in all Europe. Inside are picture-perfect stone buildings, squares, flower boxes, cafés and magnificent views.

Next we visit the ancient Etruscan city of Pitigliano. You will love the winding streets, dark shady alleys, and the buildings which ooze history. The Jewish quarter is famous, and one of the oldest in Europe. Afterwards, we will pop just outside of town to one of the extraordinary 'Via Cava' - carved walkways which once linked Pitigliano with other nearby Etruscan cities. Amazingly, even now historians and Etruscan archaeologists do not know what their true purpose was! Up to 15 metres deep, walking along inside them is a very surreal experience.

Later, we continue to the spa town of Chianciano Terme where we settle in for the next four nights. Dinner tonight is in the hotel. **Meals: B,D**

Your Chianciano Terme hotel – Grand Hotel Excelsior

This 4 star, grand style hotel in the heart of the spa town, provides the perfect base to explore the surrounding region.

continued

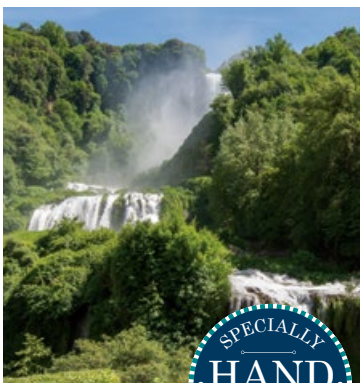


A Labyrinth lunch

In Orvieto we have lunch somewhere quite unique, and very, very special. Many years ago, when Rita and Adriano were renovating their famous pastry shop, they discovered a whole labyrinth of ancient Etruscan caves, passageways and catacombs beneath them. They brought in the archaeologists, and were astounded to discover that these caves were 2,500 years old. Over 20 years, archaeologists sensitively renovated them revealing a labyrinth of ancient passageways, water-wells and high ceiling caverns with carved reliefs and niches. Now, these wonderful caves are private and access is only possible through our lunchtime restaurant. Perfectly preserved, they are absolutely beautiful, and fascinating. Later, of course, we must have lunch – Italian style! A private experience, 4 courses, all home-made, and delicious. **See Day 3**



Relax over 4 nights in the spa town of Chianciano Terme



The Marmore Waterfalls

Known as the Cascata delle Marmore, the Romans diverted the Velino River over this cliff to cleanse the stagnant swamp below. In doing so, they created the tallest man-made waterfall in Europe which cascades in three stages, the top tier alone being 83 metres high! Diverting this vast amount of water created the problem of occasionally flooding the cities downriver. That is why, 450 years ago, a new feeder canal was built with water flow regulators. In effect, these waterfalls now have an 'on/off' switch and we will be there to see the falls switched on! Not fast, at first, but with growing force you can see the massive power of the falls as they erupt over the precipice, feeding the falls below, one by one. You simply must take the walkway up alongside the falls to the middle stages, where the views are excellent, and the air becomes refreshingly wet with clouds of spray. See Day 9.

DAY 6 Perugia, the Rocca and Collegio del Cambio

Perugia is an ancient city, high on a hill and the historical heart of it is wonderful. It is often bypassed because in order to get a fully rewarding visit you need quality time. And that is what we have! On arrival, a local guide will take us on an escalator up into the dramatic 'Rocca'. The subterranean ruins of this 500-year-old fortress contain the structures of the stone villas of the Perugian nobles that were converted into the foundations. Nowadays they are buzzing with commuters using these ancient passageways to cross the city to work. Fascinating! Coming up to the surface, we continue our walking tour through this splendid historical town. A highlight will be our visit to the glorious frescoed Collegio del Cambio and the colourful Cathedral. Lunchtime will be at leisure in this city, famed for its rich chocolate. On our return journey, we will enjoy an afternoon stop for coffee or gelati at one of the towns beside Lake Trasimeno. The rest of the day and evening is free in Chianciano Terme. Maybe enjoy a stroll through the parklands, or visit the quiet old town. **Meals: B**

DAY 7 Hilltop Cortona and dinner with an extraordinary view

A leisurely start this morning as we visit another, but very different hilltop town, Cortona. The centre of town is car free, and the cobblestoned streets radiate out from the picturesque central square. You will have 'My Time' to explore, shop, relax and find a charming café or al fresco trattoria to enjoy lunch.

Your afternoon is free back in Chianciano Terme. This is a spa town and there is a terrific Spa and Wellness Centre just a few hundred yards away from your hotel. Mud bath anyone?

This evening we have included a wine and Pecorino cheese tasting in the ancient cellars of a nearby farm house in the Val d'Orcia. Their Val d'Orcia Pecorino is famous. Afterwards, dinner will be on their wonderful terrace with stunning views directly over to the hilltop city of Montepulciano. This restaurant is part of a 600 acre homestead and all the food and wine comes from its own land. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 8 Pienza, Montepulciano and Val d'Orcia

The glorious landscape around us is called the Val d'Orcia. This whole valley has been listed by the UNESCO Heritage Organisation because of its unique character, beauty and the fact that it has remained unchanged for 600 years or more! The countryside has wide open vistas of farmland, broken up here and there by cypress or umbrella pine trees lining zig zag roads, up the rolling hills to charming farmhouses. The beauty was celebrated by Renaissance painters and some of the scenes from Ridley Scott film 'Gladiator', and the film 'The English Patient' were filmed here.

Our morning will be spent exploring stunning Montepulciano with its 14th century Palazzo Comunale and Duomo on the Piazza Grande. They love their food here, and you have time to visit the wine cellars, olive oil and local food and produce shops, as well as enjoy the shopping.

Lunchtime will be at leisure in beautiful Pienza. In the 15th century this non-descript, poor village was the birthplace of Pope Pius II. When he became Pope, he patronised this town and with his enormous wealth, transformed the town into what you see today. And that is why it is on the UNESCO heritage list! The compact, central Piazza Pio II is surrounded by 15th century buildings, such as the Pienza Cathedral and Piccolomini Palace, his summer residence. The views down to the valley are vast, and the city just bursts with flower filled window boxes and quaint walkways, shops and cafes. Utterly delightful!

Later we follow the Via Francigena, an ancient pilgrimage route, to Bagno Vignoni. This peaceful little town is unique in that the whole flooded central square is one giant thermal water lake. From the arcaded walkway at one end you can see the earth's hot water bubbling into the surface, filling the huge pond. Time to take your shoes off and bathe your feet in the hot water channelled through a gully in the centre of a street. **Meals: B**



Drive through idyllic Tuscan landscapes to the town of Pienza

DAY 9
Medieval Todi, and Marmore Waterfalls

After a leisurely start, we enter Umbria to enjoy lunchtime in the picturesque town of Todi. Overlooking the River Tiber, as it flows on its way towards Rome, the central Piazza del Popolo is surrounded by the three palaces and is often used as the set for movies.

Later, we visit a very special set of waterfalls. The Romans actually created these 'Cascata delle Marmore'. In doing so they became Europe's highest man-made waterfalls. 450 years ago, to avoid flooding, an 'on/off' switch was installed, and we will be there when it gets switched on. It is a remarkable experience to witness the dribble of water turn into a cascading, raging torrent! Make sure you follow the walkways up along the hillside, beside the falls, for the excellent views. So impressive. Moving on, we stay our last night on the outskirts of Rieti.

To celebrate, we have arranged a farewell dinner in our hotel – which happens to be a palatial villa! After time to relax, we meet for farewell drinks under the garden gazebo, surrounded by rose beds, before enjoying a private dinner with music in the ornate dining room. **Meals: B,D**



Your Farewell Hotel – Park Hotel Villa Potenziani

This first-class Villa hotel was once the hunting residence of the Potenziani family. Dating back to 1788, and set in a beautiful park with gardens and fountains, this grand, noble villa makes a perfect place to enjoy our last night together.

DAY 10
To Rome

After breakfast on the rooftop terrace, have included a morning group transfer to the centre of Rome and to Fiumicino airport. We recommend you book flights that depart after 2.00 p.m. **Meals: B**

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$1,000 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first-class air-conditioned touring coach
- 9 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 16 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), 2 lunches – one in a labyrinth of ancient Etruscan caves and one on a tree shaded terrace overlooking the Lazio countryside (L) and 5 dinners including an ancient Badia Abbey dinner, in a Val d'Orcia farm house and private farewell dinner in our palatial villa (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink Rome
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Underground Etruscan tombs, Villa Lante cascading gardens, Parco dei Mostri, Civita di Bagnoregio experience, Etruscan Via Cava walk, Val d'Orcia wine and Pecorino cheese tasting, Marmore Falls
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

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2020 Dates & Prices

10 days from \$4,247 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Rome	Ends Rome	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
23 May	1 June	\$4,387	\$540
13 June	22 June	\$4,387	\$530
4 July	13 July	\$4,247	\$480
22 August	31 August	\$4,247	\$480
5 September	14 September	\$4,387	\$540
19 September	28 September	\$4,387	\$540



Is this tour suitable for you?

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Book our tours with confidence!

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The Italian 'Grande'



Drive the scenic coastal road of the Amalfi Coast

18 Stunning Days Milan to Rome

Explore Italy's evocative regions as you travel from Milan to Rome discovering regional delights and stunning scenery along the way. Cruise on Lake Como, stay in a dreamy Italian castle, stroll the romantic canals of Venice and explore the idyllic villages of the Cinque Terre. Indulge in local Tuscan delights, walk beautifully preserved medieval towns and of course stay on the Amalfi Coast.


THE ITALIAN LAKES

Days 1, 2, 3 & 4

- Stay 4 nights beside Lake Maggiore in the magnificent Italian Lakes District
- Explore the magnificent gardens of Villa Carlotta
- Travel by private boat across Lake Como to Bellagio
- Visit the ancient mountain village of Macugnaga set high in the stunning Alps
- Cruise on Lake Maggiore to Isola Bella and visit Isola Pescatori
- Be guided through the palatial Borromeo villa and garden
- Visit beautiful Orta San Giulio on Lake Orta

VENETO

Days 5 & 6

- Stay 2 nights in a centuries old Italian Castle
- Enjoy lunchtime beside splendid Lake Garda, the largest Italian Lake
- Spend a day exploring the romantic canals and squares of  Venice

UMBRIA

Days 12 & 13

- Stay 2 nights in the Umbrian Hills staying in medieval Spoleto
- Discover the fairytale 'town of towers'  San Gimignano
- Walk the beautifully preserved streets of medieval  Siena
- Explore Assisi and visit the wonderfully restored  cathedral with a local guide
- Relax with an afternoon at leisure in Spoleto


TUSCANY

Days 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11

- Stay 5 nights in the Tuscan spa town of Montecatini Terme
- Enjoy a day discovering the beautiful city of  Florence
- Relax with an entire day at leisure in Tuscany
- Explore the scenic villages of the  Cinque Terre
- Discover the medieval walled city of Lucca
- See the famous  Leaning Tower of Pisa and Cathedral
- Sample the regional wines, olive oil and delightful local produce in a Tuscan farmhouse


ROME

Days 17 & 18

- Spend your final night in  Rome
- Enjoy a visit to the mighty Colosseum
- Celebrate at a farewell dinner in a local restaurant

THE AMALFI COAST


Days 14, 15 & 16


- Stay 3 wonderful nights in Minori on the Amalfi Coast
- Marvel at the ancient ruins of  Pompeii
- Cruise across the Bay of Naples and explore the beautiful island of Capri
- Experience the world famous, cliff hanging 'Amalfi Coast drive'
- Visit the picturesque towns of Amalfi and Ravello on the stunning  Amalfi Coast

AVERAGE 169 KMS PER DAY

 Tour commences

 Overnight stays

 Included excursions

 UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits



Italy is big. Very big!

Did you know, with motorway service station stops for morning tea and lunch, taking into consideration tolls, traffic and entering and exiting major cities it takes over eight and a half hours to travel on a coach from Florence to Sorrento or Venice to Rome! Yet so many tours have these drives as a standard day in their itinerary. Even worse they often have just one or two night stops at either end. That is why Albatross Tours breaks these journeys with five nights in Tuscany and two nights in Spoleto, en route to the Neapolitan Riviera. That is also why when we travel between destinations our days are not endurance tests. We allow leisurely stops en route! For instance, between Tuscany and Umbria we enjoy visits to both Siena and delightful San Gimignano and between Stresa and CastelBrando we have lunchtime beside Lake Garda. Aren't these sorts of visits exactly why you want to travel to glorious Italy? By providing four nights in the glorious Lakes District, two in either an ancient castle or grand villa, five in Tuscany, two in Spoleto and three in Minori to explore the Amalfi Coast and the nearby island of Capri, and a night in Rome as the finalé, we perfectly complete your Italian experience!

It's all about a sensible touring style, a civilised pace, genuine inclusions and actually enjoying what you have come so far to see.



Spend a day in Venice

Image taken by Albatross traveller M. Adams



Take a cruise on Lake Como and soak up the surrounding beauty

DAY 1 Stresa welcome

Commencing in central Milan at 2pm we will transfer you to Stresa on wonderful Lake Maggiore, where you will stay the next four nights. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. **Meals: D**

Your hotel in the Italian Lakes – La Palma Hotel, Stresa

Set in its own private gardens and within an easy walking distance of Stresa's old town, this first class hotel is superbly located on the lakeside promenade with magnificent views across Lake Maggiore.



DAY 2 Villa Carlotta and Lake Como cruise

This morning we drive to the town of Como and follow the shore of the lake to Tremezzo, where we visit the world famous Villa Carlotta. This wonderful Villa is set in 70,000 square metres of romantic Italianate Gardens and faces across Lake Como to the Bellagio peninsula. The classic gardens boast fountains and pergolas and in spring time is famous for its rhododendrons and azaleas. Later we board our private boat and enjoy a cruise on Lake Como, past a number of striking lakeside villas, to delightful Bellagio. This beautiful town is situated at the tip of the peninsula separating the lake's two southern arms, with the Alps visible across the lake to the north. It's time to relax in this delightful town which boasts peaceful villas and gardens nestled by the lakeside, elegant shops and walkways plus stylish al fresco dining at its very best. Later we return to Stresa. Dinner tonight is included in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 3 Macugnaga and lakeside Orta San Giulio

There is nothing like a day in the mountains – especially amongst some of the highest and most dramatic in the Alps! Following a deep valley we soon reach the mountain village of Macugnaga, close to the Swiss border. Used as a location in many films, the village is famous for its beautifully preserved wooden huts and chalets, and the stunning backdrop of the Monte Rosa (Pink) Massif and the 4638 metres high Dufourspitze – Europe's second highest mountain. Your time is at leisure to explore the village and surroundings, and perhaps take a mountain cable car ride (subject to operating) to enjoy lunch and the extraordinary views. Later today we also visit the delightful town of Orta San Giulio beside the beautiful, and some say most romantic of all the lakes – Lake Orta. Your evening is at leisure in Stresa. **Meals: B**

DAY 4 Islands of Lake Maggiore

Boarding our private boat we visit the famous islands of Lake Maggiore. First stop will be Isola Bella where we have included entrance and a guided tour of the palatial Borromeo villa and gardens, which dominate the island. The villa boasts Murano glass chandeliers, gobelin-covered chairs, intricate tapestries and paintings. The spectacular formal gardens rise behind the ornate villa, with patterned flower beds falling in terraces, with statues and ornamental stonework completing the Italianate style. Next we visit Isola Pescatori (the Fisherman's island). Lunchtime is at leisure on this small, picturesque island with its quaint cafés and restaurants set amongst the old houses with wooden balconies, tiny boats and fishing nets. The afternoon and evening are at leisure in delightful, lakeside Stresa. **Meals: B**

DAY 5

Lake Garda and CastelBrando

Bidding farewell to Lake Maggiore we drive east and arrive at Lake Garda late morning. This is the largest of the Italian lakes, with a circumference of approximately 100 kilometres; it is surrounded by lemon and citrus groves and is the meeting point of three Italian regions. There will be time at leisure for lunch in one of the colourful and diverse lakeside towns. You stay in the foothills of the Dolomites, in the superb CastelBrando for the next two evocative nights.

Meals: B,D



Your Castle hotel – CastelBrando*

Located above the village of Cison di Valmarino, this 2000 year old Roman fortress was turned into a sumptuous noble's palace in the 13th century. Access to the castle is by funicular. On arrival we have included a guided tour of the castle. Skilful restoration and sensitive modernisation have brought the original magnificence back to life. Guelph style decorative battlements, stone cellars, tapestries, swords and suits of armour set the scene for the elegant halls, dining rooms, manicured gardens and terraces overlooking the valley. Glorious for those après dinner drinks on those long summer evenings!

**27 May & 3 June departures stay 2 nights at Villa Contarini Nenzi Hotel & Spa near Treviso.*



Stay 2 nights in an Italian castle, CastelBrando

DAY 6

Venice sightseeing and 'My Time'

After a leisurely start we visit nearby 'Venezia' (Venice) – arguably one of the most romantic cities in the world. At Tronchetto we board a private boat to take us to St Mark's Square, where we join our expert local guide for a walking tour. The rest of the day is free to meander through the myriad of narrow, water lined streets and alleys spanned by humped back bridges. Meals: B,D

DAY 7

Montecatini Terme in Tuscany

A leisurely start today as we travel south to Tuscany. We arrive in the charming spa town of Montecatini Terme mid afternoon. This was once a favourite 'cure resort' of the crowned heads of state from all over Europe. We stay here for the next five nights, in a traditional family run, 4-star hotel, close to the major sights. As a highlight, this evening we drive into the picturesque Tuscan countryside, where we have arranged dinner at a local olive oil farmhouse estate. Meals: B,D



Enjoy a day discovering the city of Florence

Your Tuscan hotels – Ercolini & Savi Hotel

Located in a Liberty style building dating back to the 19th century, the Hotel Ercolini & Savi offers a fantastic location as well as being a relaxing and welcoming place to stay. The hotel is in an extremely central location in the elegant Via San Martino, close by Piazza del Popolo.

Or

Grand Hotel Francia & Quirinale*

Offering classic décor and modern features, including air conditioned rooms and an outdoor pool, this family run hotel is also conveniently located in the centre of Montecatini Terme. The hotel's restaurant features Murano glass chandeliers and serves Italian and Tuscan specialities.

**29 April, 17 May, 27 May, 8 July, 19 August, 13 September & 19 September departures stay at the Francia & Quirinale Hotel. All other departures stay at Ercolini & Savi Hotel.*



Time to explore the majestic lakes

World famous Bellagio epitomises the gorgeous towns lining the shores of the majestic Italian Lakes. That is why we charter a private cruise boat to admire the sumptuous villas and mansions adorning Lake Como before enjoying a relaxing lunchtime in beautiful Bellagio. Our leisurely 4-night stay in lakeside Stresa allows you the necessary time to do this, plus another cruise on Lake Maggiore, take in the Lakes of Garda and scenic Orta, and visit the mighty Alps. Absolutely Albatross! See Days 1 to 4.

DAY 8

Florence sightseeing and 'My Time'

Today is dedicated to nearby 'Firenze' (Florence). A local guide will bring to life this truly beautiful city which is otherwise known as the 'Cradle of the Renaissance'. We see the Duomo and take in the magnificent statues in the Piazza della Signoria. We also visit the famous Accademia Gallery, home to Michelangelo's 'David' and numerous other extraordinary Italian, Florentine and Renaissance works of art. You will have plenty of 'My Time' to enjoy Florence at your own pace. Espresso coffee on Piazza Santa Croce where Michelangelo is buried? A gelato whilst strolling across the Ponte Vecchio? Don't forget the excellent shopping.

Meals: B,D

continued

"Our tour was a trip of a lifetime, covering so many highlights of Italy and included many hidden gems." Jenny



Spend a morning in the 'town of towers' San Gimignano



Ahhh... 5 nights in Tuscany

We used to spend 4 nights here in Montecatini Terme, but then many past clients commented on how lovely and typically Tuscan this elegant spa town is and suggested that adding an extra day here – completely free – would make the stay perfect. So we did. Yes, we fully explore this amazing region, but now, by staying 5 nights in this delightful town, we add a fabulous, authentic activity – a completely free day to ‘go native’ simply for the pleasure of it! See Day 9.

“I was looking for a tour that gave me a taste of authentic Italy, and found it with Albatross Tours. The ‘Italian Grande’ tour is the perfect trip to experience all that Italy has to offer, from the lakes to the mountains, to the food, the people and the history.” Kylee

DAY 9 Medieval Lucca, Pisa and Olive Oil tasting in a local farmhouse

Our first stop today is in one of the most typically ‘Tuscan’ towns in the area, Lucca – a medieval walled city, filled with palaces, churches, ancient houses and the former home of Puccini, where he wrote Turandot. Walk on top of the city walls for the very best city views, or visit Piazza San Michele and stroll along the shops of Borgo Giannotti. Later we visit Pisa with its famous Leaning Tower, Cathedral and Baptistery in the magnificent Piazza dei Miracoli. This afternoon we visit a local farmhouse to enjoy an olive oil tasting accompanied by Tuscan wines and a selection of antipasto including local meats, cheese and bread – all specialities of this region. **Meals: B**

DAY 10 Cinque Terre sightseeing

A delightful day is planned as we explore the famous Cinque Terre. The name means ‘five lands’ and comes from the five unspoilt fishing villages that cling to the cliffs, overlooking the sea. We have arranged a coastal boat ride for you to admire the spectacular scenery and almost inaccessible fishing villages, and to visit Portovenere and Monterosso. Our return journey to Levanto, to meet our coach, is by train. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 11 ‘My Time’ in Tuscany

The whole of today has been purposely left entirely at leisure. This is a perfect opportunity for you to do as little, or as much as you want! Maybe take the local train back to the museums and shops of Florence. Alternatively explore Montecatini’s old centre and parklands, or pamper yourself in one of the spas. Perhaps just relax in your hotel or sip wine in a café and watch the world go by! **Meals: B**

DAY 12 San Gimignano, Siena and Spoleto

We make the short drive across Tuscany to the fairytale ‘town of towers’ San Gimignano, famous for its 13th and 14th century Tuscan towers. Exploring the pedestrian walkways of this hilltop town is an absolute delight. Lunchtime will be at leisure in the beautifully preserved streets of medieval Siena amongst the great sights such as the gothic town hall and the Piazza del Campo, scene of the famous Palio horse race. Next we wind up to the hills of Umbria and the wonderful walled town of Spoleto where we stay the next two nights. Medieval Spoleto is easily explored on foot. There are numerous romanesque churches and cobblestoned alleyways lined with shops, bars and trattorias. **Meals: B,D**

Your Umbrian hotel – Hotel Dei Duchi

This unpretentious, family run hotel is located just outside the old city walls and is known locally for its cuisine. The hotel has the dual benefit of being a ‘town’ hotel but at the same time giving the feeling as if you are in the middle of the countryside.



DAY 13 Assisi sightseeing and ‘My Time’ in Spoleto

We spend this morning in the nearby beautiful Umbrian city of Assisi. Badly damaged by earthquakes in 1997 the city, dominated by two medieval castles, undertook a remarkable programme of restoration which soon brought it back to all its glory. On arrival in Assisi we are joined by a local guide for a tour of the Basilica of St Francis with its magnificent frescoes. Afterwards there is time for you to explore Assisi at your own pace. Returning to Spoleto, the rest of the afternoon is at leisure. Perhaps take a leisurely walk along the path around the castle. This is the real Italy! **Meals: B**

DAY 14 Ancient Pompeii and the Amalfi Coast

Driving south past Vesuvius we visit the ancient ruins of Pompeii, where a local guide takes us through the city that was buried under volcanic ash in AD 79. Paintings, frescoes, mosaics, sculptures and graffiti are wonderfully preserved. From here, it’s only a short drive to the Amalfi coast and the port town of Minori, where we stay for the next three nights. A perfect base for visiting all the local sights and soaking up the unique atmosphere of the Amalfi Coast! **Meals: B,D**

Your Minori Hotel – Hotel Minori Palace, Hotel Villa Romana or Hotel Santa Lucia*

These 4 star, family run hotels are all located in the delightful village of Minori and provide the perfect base for exploring the Amalfi coast.



*26 August, 9 September, 13 September & 23 September departures stay at Hotel Villa Romana. 2 September departure stays at Hotel Santa Lucia. All other departures stay at Hotel Minori Palace.

DAY 15

Ferry ride along the Amalfi Coast to the island of Capri

Enjoy your day as we take you on the ferry along the Amalfi coast, and across to Marina Grande on the island of Capri, which the Roman emperor Tiberius made his capital. On arrival we meet our local guide and board a bus which takes us up to the top of the island to explore the charming village of Anacapri. In the main town, Capri, we visit the Giardino d'Augusto overlooking the Faraglioni, before 'My Time' amongst the boutiques and galleries. Your evening is at leisure in Minori. **Meals: B**

DAY 16

Amalfi Coast cruise to Amalfi and Ravello

The Amalfi coast is famous for its twisting, winding scenic drive with picturesque villages and towns hugging the cliffs and craggy coves. This morning we cruise from Minori along the dramatic coastline and spend time exploring Amalfi. Your afternoon is at leisure in Minori. Early evening we will drive up to perhaps one of the most scenic towns along the Amalfi Coast, Ravello. Perched on the mountain, commanding panoramic views across the coast, Ravello is evocatively described as being "nearer to the sky than it is to the sea", and has been a favourite haunt of artists and composers for centuries. After free time to explore, we dine on the terrace at the elegant Villa Fraulo. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 17

Rome & the mighty Colosseum

Arriving in the 'Eternal City' of Rome we drive right into the heart of the ancient empire, past ancient buildings, magnificent squares and monuments, to enjoy a visit to the mighty Colosseum. Later we check into our central Rome hotel. Our finale will be a special farewell dinner in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**



Your Rome hotel – Hotel Mediterraneo

This 4 star hotel is conveniently located close to Rome's Termini railway station and features a roof top terrace offering panoramic views across Rome.

DAY 18

Rome

Your tour ends today after breakfast. **Meals: B**



Take in panoramic views of the Amalfi Coast from Ravello

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$1,800 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 17 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 28 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 11 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - private boat Lake Maggiore, Lake Como and Venice, cruises Cinque Terre, Capri and olive oil tasting in a Tuscan farmhouse
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Leisurely 2, 3, 4 and even 5 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!



2020 Dates & Prices

18 days from \$8,357 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Milan	Ends Rome	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
22 April	9 May	\$8,357	\$1,130
29 April	16 May	\$8,697	\$1,300
6 May	23 May	\$8,357	\$1,130
13 May	30 May	\$8,357	\$1,130
17 May	3 June	\$8,697	\$1,300
20 May	6 June	\$8,357	\$1,130
27 May	13 June	\$8,697	\$1,410
3 June	20 June	\$8,357	\$1,300
17 June	4 July	\$8,357	\$1,130
8 July	25 July	\$8,697	\$1,410
19 August	5 September	\$8,697	\$1,410
26 August	12 September	\$8,697	\$1,130
2 September	19 September	\$8,357	\$1,300
9 September	26 September	\$8,697	\$1,130
13 September	30 September	\$8,697	\$1,300
19 September	6 October	\$8,697	\$1,300
23 September	10 October	\$8,697	\$1,130
7 October	24 October	\$8,357	\$1,130

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability

Italian Lakes & Tuscany



Stay on the shores of Lake Garda for 3 nights

16 Superb Days Milan to Venice

Discover the delightful ports, towns and villages that litter the Italian Lakes and Tuscany regions. Enjoy time soaking up the atmosphere of Italy's famous lakes, explore the historic naval city of Genoa and cruise the coastline to seductive Portofino and idyllic Cinque Terre. Visit the fantastic Ferrari museum, dine in a Tuscan Osteria and stay in an elegant Venetian Villa.

THE ITALIAN LAKES

Days 1, 2, 3 & 4

- Stay 4 nights in Stresa beside wonderful Lake Maggiore
- Take the scenic Centovalli Express train to Locarno
- Enjoy private cruises on Lake Maggiore and Lake Como
- Visit beautiful Orta San Giulio on Lake Orta



LAKE GARDA

Days 11, 12 & 13

- Stay 3 nights beside glorious Lake Garda
- Visit the fantastic Ferrari museum and enjoy a light lunch at the Panini Hombre Parmesan cheese farm
- Relax with a day to explore Lake Garda
- Enjoy a morning visit to historical Salo
- Enjoy a wine tasting followed by lunch in a vineyard estate in Calvagese, near Lake Garda

VENETO

Days 14, 15 & 16

- Stay 2 nights in an elegant Venetian Villa hotel near Treviso
- Enjoy a guided tour of  Verona and historical  Vicenza
- Taste Grappa in the hometown of Bassano del Grappa
- Enjoy a farewell dinner in our historic Villa




LIGURIA

Days 5 & 6

- Stay 2 nights in Liguria in historic Genoa
- Enjoy a walking tour of Genoa with its magnificent  palaces, stately homes and massive medieval quarter
- Visit beautiful Santa Margherita Ligure
- Cruise to world famous Portofino and the hidden Abbey of San Fruttuoso
- Evening at leisure in the delightful seaside town of Arenzano

TUSCANY

Days 7, 8, 9 & 10

- Stay 4 nights in the typically 'Tuscan' town of Lucca
- Spend a delightful day exploring the famous  Cinque Terre
- Explore the beautiful city of  Florence
- Enjoy an expert Italian cooking demonstration followed by lunch
- See the famous  Leaning Tower of Pisa and Cathedral
- Dine out in the olive groves at a Tuscan Osteria

AVERAGE 125 KMS PER DAY

-  Tour commences
-  Overnight stays
-  Included excursions
-  UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits





Ahhh... Italy

You have just got to go back! What is it that makes you fall in love with this evocative, stimulating destination? Is it the history, the art, the culture, the boastful style and elegance, or maybe just the undulating Tuscan Hills, rich red wine and the taste sensations scattered across every menu? Sadly so many travellers quickly dash through, only just scratching the surface, and subsequently realise they just have to go back.

Over time we have been repeatedly asked to create a new tour, like our incredibly successful Italian 'Grande' tour, featuring longer stays and more in depth sightseeing, but this time only focusing on the dramatic northern lands. So we did!

This totally unique tour evolved quite naturally with half the time devoted to the gorgeous necklace of Italian Lakes and the other half to the coastline of Liguria, the Cinque Terre and wonderful, sensual Tuscany. As a bonus, our last two nights stay is in a gorgeous villa in the much ignored Veneto region. From here we explore the magnificent Palladian Villas and UNESCO World Heritage Listed towns and sites. With Venice only a hop and a skip away we also end with a transfer into Venice giving you the choice of extending your stay, and giving yourself time to explore this remarkable city, or jumping on one of the excellent Mediterranean cruise ships that start their voyages from here. So if you have the urge to go back and rekindle your Italian romance, this tour is designed specifically for you!



Follow the scenic route to Locarno, on the banks of Lake Maggiore

DAY 1 Stresa welcome

Commencing in central Milan at 2pm we will transfer you to Stresa on wonderful Lake Maggiore, where you will stay the next four nights. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in a local restaurant. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. **Meals: D**

Your Italian Lakes hotel – Regina Palace Hotel

The 4 star Regina Palace Hotel is situated on the banks of Lake Maggiore, in the centre of Stresa and offers stunning view of the Borromean Islands.



DAY 2 Scenic train journey to Locarno and visit Ascona

This morning we drive north to Domodossola at the foot of the Italian Alps. Here we board the famous Centovalli Express train which runs through the 'Hundred Valleys' to Locarno. Relaxing in the panoramic carriages, we pass over numerous bridges and through numerous tunnels, travelling beside waterfalls, villages and vineyards. A spectacular journey! Arriving in Locarno we will make a short stop in the grand square before boarding our coach to visit nearby Ascona. Lunchtime will be at leisure in this delightful lakeside town. As a finale, we follow the scenic route home hugging the shores of Lake Maggiore all the way back to Stresa. Dinner tonight is in your hotel. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 3 Island of Isola Bella and lakeside Orta San Giulio

Boarding our private boat we visit Lake Maggiore's famous island of Isola Bella where we have included entrance and a guided tour of the palatial Borromeo villa and gardens, which dominate the island. The villa boasts Murano glass chandeliers, gobelin-covered chairs, intricate tapestries and paintings. The spectacular formal gardens rise behind the ornate villa, with patterned flower beds falling in terraces, with statues and ornamental stonework completing the Italianate style. Lunchtime is at leisure back in lakeside Stresa. Later this afternoon we visit the delightful town of Orta San Giulio beside the beautiful, and some say most romantic, of all the lakes – Lake Orta. Your evening is at leisure to discover a local trattoria for dinner. **Meals: B**



Cruise to the gardens of Isola Bella



Enjoy a day exploring the famous Cinque Terre



DAY 4
Cruise on Lake Como to Bellagio

This morning we drive to Lake Como where we follow the western shore of the lake to Cadenabbia. Here we board our private boat and enjoy a cruise on Lake Como, past a number of striking lakeside villas, to delightful Bellagio. This beautiful town is situated at the tip of the peninsula separating the lake's two southern arms, with the Alps visible across the lake to the north. It's time to relax in this delightful town which boasts peaceful villas and gardens nestled by the lakeside, elegant shops and walkways plus stylish al fresco dining at its very best. Your evening is at leisure back in the lakeside town of Stresa. **Meals: B**

DAY 5
Explore medieval Genoa

Bidding farewell to Lake Maggiore we drive south to the coastal region of Liguria, arriving around midday in Genoa. Once the capital of a naval empire, Genoa boasts the largest intact medieval city centre in the whole of Europe. Here we are joined by a local guide to enjoy a walking tour through the city's old heart, with its pedestrian shopping malls, beautiful churches and squares, and nearly 50 UNESCO Listed palaces and stately homes. We have included a guided visit to the opulent Royal Palace. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 7
Cruise the coastline of the Cinque Terre

A delightful day is planned as we explore the famous Cinque Terre. The name means 'five lands' and comes from the five unspoilt fishing villages that cling to the cliffs, overlooking the sea. Boarding a train in Genoa, our first stop of the day will be in the pretty port of Monterosso. From here we catch a boat and cruise along the spectacular coastline of the Cinque Terre to visit the delightful villages of Vernazza and Portovenere. Arriving in La Spezia we board our coach and travel to Tuscany. We stay the next four nights in the typically 'Tuscan' town of Lucca – a medieval walled city, filled with palaces, churches and ancient houses. Dinner tonight is in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**



Your Lucca hotel – San Luca Palace

This 4 star hotel is perfectly located in the historic centre of Lucca, a short walk to all the major sights.

continued

Fancy a trip into Switzerland?

To the north of Lake Maggiore are the massive Italian and Swiss Alps. Just before the mountains get really high there is a delightful valley that cuts through them into the pretty Ticino region of Switzerland. Boarding the Centovalli Express mid-morning, we relax in a panoramic carriage, as the train follows this dramatic valley crossing 83 bridges, goes through numerous tunnels, passing waterfalls and unspoiled scenery. To cap off the day our return route by coach follows the beautiful shores of Lake Maggiore back into Italy. Delightful! See Day 2.

“If you love Italy, food and wine this is a fantastic tour for you!”
Christine

Your Genoa hotel – Grand Hotel Savoia

Located close to the historic centre of Genoa the hotel contains all the features you would expect from a 4 star hotel.



DAY 6
Santa Margherita Ligure, Portofino and Abbey of San Fruttuoso

We spend the morning at leisure in the beautiful harbour town of Santa Margherita Ligure with its elegant shops, boutiques and cafés that litter the port. Later we take a boat along the rugged Liguria coastline to the world famous harbour of Portofino. Delightfully set in a tiny bay, overlooked by the church and castle high above, this old port makes a perfect afternoon stop. Later, we continue around the coast to visit the Abbey of San Fruttuoso, which is only accessible by boat.

This evening your coach is going to the delightful seaside town of Arenzano. Join us if you choose! We suggest a stroll along the promenade before you discover a local restaurant for dinner. **Meals: B**



See the UNESCO palaces of Genoa



Relax with 'My Time' to explore delightful Lucca



Who likes a bright red Ferrari?

Nothing quite demonstrates Italian fire and passion as does a bright red Ferrari. In Maranello we enjoy a guided visit through the amazing Ferrari Museum with its fascinating display of past and present Ferrari road and racing cars. But it is more than that, with its engaging historical displays, Formula One racing simulators and pit stops. Later we visit the Panini Hombre Parmesan cheese farm. We will see how their organic 'King of Cheese' Parmigiano Reggiano is created, and enjoy a tasting and a light lunch. This is Italy after all! See Day 11.

DAY 8 Leaning Tower of Pisa and 'My Time' in Lucca

This morning we visit nearby Pisa with its famous Leaning Tower, Cathedral and Baptistry in the magnificent Piazza dei Miracoli. Your afternoon has been left entirely free to explore delightful Lucca. Perhaps visit the former home of Puccini, where he wrote 'Turandot'. Take a bike ride or a stroll around the entire town on top of the broad city walls. As a highlight this evening we drive into the picturesque Tuscan countryside to visit a local olive oil farmhouse estate. Before dinner is served in the Osteria, we spend time amongst the olive groves and enjoy an olive oil tasting accompanied by Tuscan wines and a selection of antipasto including local meats, cheese and bread – all specialities of this region. Meals: B,D

DAY 9 Florence sightseeing and 'My Time'

Today is dedicated to nearby 'Firenze' (Florence). A local guide will bring to life this truly beautiful city which is otherwise known as the 'Cradle of the Renaissance'. We see the Duomo and take in the magnificent statues in the Piazza della Signoria. We also visit the famous Accademia Gallery, home to Michelangelo's 'David' and numerous other extraordinary Italian, Florentine and Renaissance works of art. You will have plenty of 'My Time' to enjoy Florence at your own pace. Espresso coffee on Piazza Santa Croce where Michelangelo is buried? A gelato whilst strolling across the Ponte Vecchio? Don't forget the excellent shopping. Meals: B

DAY 10 Cooking demonstration and lunch in Lucca

After a relaxing start we enjoy a pizza and pasta cooking demonstration, to learn how pizza, focaccia and various pasta is created. Next it is time to taste it, as we enjoy a leisurely lunch. Your afternoon and evening are at leisure in Lucca. Meals: B,L

DAY 11 Ferraris and Parmesan Cheese lunch

Driving north we visit the fantastic Ferrari Museum at Maranello, near Modena. A local guide will join us and show us around this fantastic exhibition of bright red, old, new and future Ferraris and Formula One racing cars. Later we continue to the Panini Hombre cheese farm to learn how 'Parmigiano-Reggiano' (Parmesan) cheese is made, before enjoying a cheese tasting and light lunch.

Continuing to Lake Garda, we reach the charming lakeside town of Bardolino, where we stay the next three nights. Dinner tonight will be in our hotel restaurant. Meals: B,L,D

Your Lake Garda Hotel - Hotel Caesius Thermae & Spa Resort, Bardolino

Situated on the shores of Lake Garda, this 4 star resort & spa hotel offers spacious and comfortable air conditioned rooms.



Experience an Italian pizza and pasta cooking demonstration

DAY 12 'My Time' in Lake Garda

We have left today entirely free to enjoy glorious Lake Garda. Often regarded as the most beautiful of all the Italian Lakes, Garda is also the largest and deepest. Do as little or as much as you want. Maybe catch a ferry across the lake to explore and shop in the characterful 'picture postcard' ports of Lazise or Sirmione. Meals: B,D

DAY 13

Lakeside Salo and wine tasting at Redaelli de Zinis

This morning we visit the delightful lakeside town of Salo. Explore its historical centre which is filled with lanes and little squares with noble houses, elegant shops and the longest promenade on Lake Garda, at your own pace. Later we continue to Redaelli de Zinis in Calvagese della Riviera. This is a famous local winery and restaurant. Here we enjoy a wine tasting and sample some of the locally sourced produce before lunch. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 14

Verona and Vicenza sightseeing

Skirting the lake we will visit Romeo and Juliet's Verona. A local guide will bring to life this beautiful city, where these tragic lovers avowed a love that spanned the centuries. This afternoon we continue to beautiful Vicenza, where a local guide will join us for a walking tour to explore the medieval centre. Later we arrive at our Venetian Villa hotel, where we stay the last two nights. **Meals: B,D**



Your Treviso hotel – Hotel Villa Contarini Nenzi

This is an elegant 18th century grand residence now sensitively restored into an excellent 4 star spa hotel. Located just outside of Treviso, the Contarini Nenzi contains traditional period piece furniture, and is surrounded by wonderful Italian-style parkland, with some old stables and even a delightful nineteenth century little church with frescoes.

DAY 15

Bassano del Grappa & historic Treviso

After a leisurely start this morning, we visit delightful Bassano del Grappa located on the foothills of the Alps. You will have free time to stroll across the ornate, centuries old, covered bridge which spans the River Brenta, before exploring the wonderful arcaded streets and piazzas in the heart of town. Later we will enjoy a visit to the Poli Grappa Museum to taste some Grappa liqueur. This afternoon we enjoy a stop in the historic centre of Treviso. Tonight we will enjoy a farewell dinner back in our historic Villa. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 16

To Venice

Your tour ends today after breakfast. We have included a morning group transfer to drop off at Venice Marco Polo airport. We recommend you book flights that depart after 12 midday today. **Meals: B**

See the Oberammergau Passion Play

Would you like to extend your holiday to see the Oberammergau Passion Play? This once in a decade event is back in 2020 and Albatross Tours have guaranteed category 1 seating! See page 136 for further details.

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over \$1,600 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 15 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 27 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), lunch in Lucca, a light lunch at Panini Hombre & wine tasting and lunch at Redaelli de Zinis (L) plus 9 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Stresa, wine & olive oil tasting in a Tuscan Osteria and Grappa tasting in Bassano del Grappa
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - private boat trip on Lake Maggiore and Lake Como, panoramic train Centovalli Express, cruises Portofino and Cinque Terre
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Leisurely 2, 3 and 4 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!



2020 Dates & Prices

16 days from \$8,357 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Milan	Ends Venice	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
6 May	21 May	\$8,357	\$1,150
29 May	13 June	\$8,357	\$1,150
17 June	2 July	\$8,357	\$1,150
17 July	1 August	\$8,597	\$1,150
14 August	29 August	\$8,597	\$1,150
2 September	17 September	\$8,497	\$1,150

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Italian 'Alternativo'



Travel by cable car up to the Republic of San Marino

15 Splendid Days Venice to Rome

Explore the 'alternative' Italy, the eastern side of the Apennines Mountains, with its glorious towns and unspoiled villages. See the extraordinary mosaics of Ravenna and take a cable car up to the Republic of San Marino. Wake up in a 16th century palace in the unspoiled Le Marche region, cross the incredible Gran Sasso plateau and relax in the sumptuous gardens of Villa d'Este in Tivoli!

AVERAGE 103 KMS PER DAY

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions
- 🏛️ UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

VENETO

Days 1 & 2

- Stay 2 nights in the delightful Venetian Villa Margherita, dine in your Villa restaurant
- Be guided through Palladio's historical 🏛️ Vicenza - visit his masterpiece, Teatro Olimpico and see the incredible Basilica Palladiana
- Enjoy an evening of 'My Time' in nearby 🏛️ Venice

CASTELLO DI MONTEGRIDOLFO

Days 6, 7 & 8

- Stay 3 nights in the hilltop castle complex of Hotel Palazzo Viviani
- Relax in delightful Ravenna, visit the incredible 🏛️ early Christian monuments including the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia
- Ride a cable car up to the tiny country of San Marino and enjoy a special Pecorino cheese tasting and see mosaic art created in Mondaino
- Visit the incredible Ducal Palace in 🏛️ Urbino and relax in Mussolini's favourite bar by the Passo del Furlo

BOLOGNA

Days 3, 4 & 5

- Spend 3 nights in the heart of Italy's culinary capital - Bologna
- Enjoy a walking tour of Padua, see Giotto's masterpiece frescoes in Capella degli Scrovegni
- Explore the gem 'City of the Renaissance' Ferrara with a local guide
- Experience an Italian style lunch in a local trattoria
- Visit the Basilica San Petronio & the Archiginnasio Palace
- Indulge yourself in a traditional Bolognese restaurant

SPOLETO IN UMBRIA

Days 12 & 13

- Spend 2 nights relaxing in the heart of delightful Spoleto and enjoy a guided tour of 🏛️ Assisi
- Cross the Gran Sasso dramatic plateau in the Apennines
- Enjoy lunch in the crumbling ruins of a deserted village in Abruzzo

ASCOLI PICENO IN LE MARCHE

Days 9, 10 & 11

- Stay 3 nights in a charming 16th century Palace in Ascoli Piceno, enjoy a full day exploring this remarkable, travertine marble, Roman and Renaissance city
- Spend time at leisure in delightful Jesi and hilltop Macerata
- Explore the 'Le Marche' region, visit the tiny 'lace town' of Offida with its antique opera theatre and the Santa Maria della Rocca. Relax over lunchtime by the Adriatic in Grottammare
- Enjoy an apéritif and dinner in the historical Café Meletti

FRASCATI

Days 14 & 15

- Stay 1 night in a Frascati villa, in the hills of Castelli Romani
- Be guided through the wonderful 🏛️ gardens of Villa D'Este in Tivoli
- Enjoy a wine tasting in the vineyards of the historic Cantine Santa Benedetta Frascati wine estate, followed by a stunning private farewell dinner with classical 'musica'





‘Under Italy’s Skin’

I was originally going to name this tour ‘Sotto la Pelle’, which is Italian for ‘Under the Skin’. Instead I decided to call it the ‘Alternativo,’ because we really are showing the other side of Italy. A wonderful side, and one so far virtually ignored by mass tourism and bustling crowds. How is that so? Looking at a map of Italy you will see the Italian Apennines runs down the centre of the land like the ridged spine of an animal. But in the middle section, the Le Marche region, it actually looms really close to the Adriatic coast. Sometimes it’s barely 10 kilometres from the sea to the rocky summits. Because of that geography there is just one major highway heading straight up the east coast. And, because there is little that is noteworthy on that highway, tourists thunder by desperately trying to reach their next ‘high profile’ destination. They have no time, patience or knowledge that there is a gorgeous, richly historical, beautiful world just up and over the hills. I have made absolutely sure we discover and explore this beautiful world. Let me give you just one example - the UNESCO Heritage listed city of Urbino. Urbino is home to the master artist Raphael and Donato Bramante who designed St Peter’s Basilica in Rome. It is also home to one of the most powerful men in early Renaissance times – Duke Federico da Montefeltro. His wealth and influence spread right across Europe, and he built a monumental Ducal Palace to exhibit that power. The man not only had military might and tactical skill, he was also a patron of the arts and sciences - something you clearly see when you stroll through his hometown! It is quite extraordinary that this whole region is so readily missed. Actually I am so pleased with that, because otherwise there would be nothing ‘alternative’ about this tour. *But I can assure you there is!*



Relax in Piazza del Popolo in Ascoli Piceno

DAY 1 Mira welcome

Your tour commences this evening in your delightful Venetian Villa hotel, in the little river side town of Mira, near Venice. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in this historic Villa. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. **Meals: D**

Your Venetian Villa hotel – Villa Margherita in Mira

This elegant 17th century Palladian style villa, now a 4 star hotel offering traditionally styled, elegant guest rooms with modern conveniences, is situated just 25 minutes from the centre of Venice.



DAY 2 Beautiful Vicenza and the Palladian Villas, ‘My Time’ in Venice

After a leisurely start, we drive west to spend time in the beautiful city of Vicenza. Made famous as the home of the influential 16th century architect Andrea Palladio, ‘Vicenza and the Palladian Villas’ is UNESCO heritage listed. Our local guide will bring this beautiful city to life. Highlights will include; seeing Piazza dei Signori, with its ‘Torre di Piazza’ clock tower, flanked by Palladio’s striking Basilica Palladiana and medieval law courts, and visiting Palladio’s last work and masterpiece, Teatro Olimpico. Later you have free time to explore the heart of the town at leisure. The shopping down Corso Andrea Palladio is excellent. Mid-afternoon we return to our Venetian Villa. Early evening, we travel by boat across to Venice - arguably one of the most romantic cities in the world, where you will have ‘My Time’ to meander through the myriad of narrow streets and alleys spanned by humped back bridges to find that perfect Trattoria for dinner. **Meals: B**

DAY 3 Padua and its magnificent frescoes

We will spend this morning in the ancient university town of Padua. With our local guide, we will explore this historical city. We have included entrance to the Cappella degli Scrovegni (Scrovegni Chapel) with its magnificent Giotto frescoes. Lunchtime is at leisure in the old town. You may like to take a stroll through the nearby UNESCO Heritage listed Orto Botanico – the centuries old Botanical Gardens. We are now in the Emilia-Romagna region, and our home for the next three nights is in the heart of Italy’s gourmet capital – Bologna. Tonight we test the cuisine as we dine out in an excellent local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**

Your Bologna hotel – Hotel Internazionale

This 4 star hotel is perfectly located in the historic centre of town, within easy walking distance to all the major sites and the best restaurants.



DAY 4 Bologna guided tour and ‘My Time’

This morning we are joined by a local guide for a walking tour of this great city. The highlight of your day will be visiting the Basilica San Petronio on Piazza Maggiore and the Archiginnasio Palace – Europe’s first University. The walls of the courtyard and staircases are covered with crests and heraldic symbols. Included is a visit to the historic Anatomical Theatre. The rest of the day is at leisure. In the evening discover your own café or trattoria around Piazza Maggiore and Piazza Nettuno. After all, this is Italy’s gourmet capital! **Meals: B**

“The tour delivered what I hoped for – visits to places not on the popular tourist itineraries so the crowds were missing. Wonderful!” Pamela



Enjoy a walking tour of Urbino with a local guide

DAY 5

Renaissance Ferrara and a relaxing Italian lunch

This morning we are joined by a local guide to explore the UNESCO Heritage listed 'renaissance city' of Ferrara – a true gem of a city that once attracted the greatest artists and intellectuals of the 15th and 16th centuries. This region of Emilia Romagna is justifiably famous for its food, so it would be a crime not to enjoy a relaxing lunch in a local trattoria. So we do! Your evening is at leisure in Bologna. **Meals: B,I**

DAY 6

Ravenna and Castello di Montegrifolfo

We enjoy the day exploring the elegant city of Ravenna. Joined by a local guide we visit the UNESCO Heritage listed, early Christian monuments. Dating back around 1450 years, the striking Basilica of San Vitale is built simply with red bricks. The interior is lavishly decorated with striking marble and Byzantine mosaics. We have also included visits to the Neonian Baptistery, Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo and the 1700 year old Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Later you have free time to explore and find a relaxing lunch spot – perhaps in the attractive Piazza del Popolo which is lined with historical buildings. Mid-afternoon we continue up into the rugged Apennines, and to Montegrifolfo where we stay three nights. **Meals: B,D**

Your Montegrifolfo hotel – Hotel Palazzo Viviani

Your hotel is set in a hilltop hamlet of this old castle. With large modern rooms, located in a modern set of buildings just below the castle, the views from the terrace are astounding.



DAY 7

San Marino and Mondaino Pecorino

This morning we visit a new country – the Republic of San Marino! On approach the view is spectacular, with its walled castles and towers standing on the rim, beside huge precipices. Joined by our local guide, we catch the cable car up the mountain to San Marino. Dating back to 301 AD, San Marino is one of the smallest countries in the world, covering barely 61 square kilometres. It is also the world's oldest Republic and has earned UNESCO World Heritage status. From the terrace of Mount Titano there are stunning, sweeping 360 degree views down over the Alta Valmarecchia and Montefeltro hills, right down to the flat plains beside the Adriatic Coast. After free time to explore, shop and enjoy lunch, we then drive to the hill top town of Mondaino where we are met by a medieval character and 'regally' led into the Pecorino Fossa cheese cellars, with its 3 original, large pecorino 'wells'. After a short introduction, you will compare 4 different cheeses and locally cured salamis and meats. Forming a 'parade' through town we also stop at a small mosaic craft shop and learn about this traditional, ancient Roman art form. Dinner tonight is in a local village trattoria. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 8

Raphael's Urbino and Mussolini's Bar Furlo

First stop of the day will be in the lovely UNESCO Heritage listed city of Urbino, birth place of the famous artist Raffaello (Raphael). Here we are joined by a local guide for a walking tour of the old town and through the impressive Ducal Palace, once home to the rich and powerful Duke; who's small private study with inlaid wood artistry, is simply unbelievable. After a relaxing lunchtime, we visit Mussolini's favourite café, Bar Furlo. This was Mussolini's favourite tea room and you will discover historic memorabilia and photos of visits. Time to relax as we have included an enjoyable afternoon coffee or aperitif. For the more active, take an easy stroll through the dramatic Passo del Furlo, now closed to cars by landslides, but kept open as a scenic walking path. Later, back in Montegrifolfo, we will enjoy a dusk stroll around the castle hamlet before dinner. **Meals: B,D**

continued



Mussolini's favourite stopping point

Before WWII Mussolini would take the Furlo Pass on his way to and from Rome. At one end of the pass, set in a small and pretty tree lined village, flanked by the steep walls of the gorge, is Bar del Furlo which has an incredible history. It was Mussolini and his entourage's favourite stopping point. The original tea room he would sit in has been perfectly preserved, along with the memorabilia, photos of his visit, and post war political graffiti on the walls. It is like stepping back in time. The furniture is exactly as it was, and you get an uneasy feeling sitting on the same wooden seat that 'Il Duce' would have sat on! See Day 8.



Be guided through the gardens of Villa D'Este



Offida, a magical timepiece

Offida – the town itself is so pretty and beautifully preserved. And for such a small town it has amazing sights. At the end of town the 13th century Church of Santa Maria della Rocca is actually ‘upstairs’ and, unusually, has a wooden roof. It is the entrance way through the lower level crypt that is most striking. Lines of stone vaulted archways, beautifully lit, support the whole church structure above. The 19th century town theatre is a gorgeous, magical timepiece. Called the Teatro Serpente Aureo (Theatre of the Golden Snake), it has three levels of brightly coloured box seats rising vertically above and surrounding the lower stalls. There is lots of rich velvet, and the old wooden stage actually slopes forward and down towards the stalls, for better audience visibility. Magnificent! See Day 11.

DAY 9 ‘Le Marche’, Jesi and Macerata

Tourists have not yet discovered the glorious Le Marche region. We have! Taking the inland route, we drive through the rolling hills and vineyards of Le Marche, to stop and explore the 14th century fortified town of Jesi. Following the spine of the Apennines, our afternoon stop will be to explore the charming medieval town of Macerata with its impressive Loggia dei Mercanti – a 16th century arcaded merchants hall. We spend the next three nights in a ‘Palazzo’ hotel, in the wonderful historic city of Ascoli Piceno.

Meals: B,D

Your Ascoli Piceno hotel – Palazzo Guiderocchi

Your hotel is a magnificent converted 16th century residence, located just 100 metres from the main Piazza del Popolo.



Join a local guide through the Basilica of St Francis

DAY 10 Ascoli Piceno sightseeing and ‘My Time’

This morning we are joined by local guide for a walking tour. Dating back well over two centuries, the massive Piazza del Popolo central square, resplendent with travertine marble, is generally recognised as one of the most beautiful squares in Italy, if not all of Europe. This compact city is bursting with colonnaded walkways, Roman antiquities, churches, palaces and remarkably 50 stone towers still exist. The highlight of your tour will be visiting the glorious Duomo. The mosaics and shimmering blue roof are stunning, as is the 900 year old crypt beneath. The rest of your day is entirely free in this gorgeous town. There is so much to see and enjoy. Meals: B

DAY 11 Lovely Offida and the Adriatic coast

Today we visit one of the little gems of Le Marche – the lovely little ‘lace town’ of Offida. One of the ‘Borghi più belli d’Italia’ – most beautiful villages in Italy, this was one of the most important lace making towns in Italy, and on a warm day you will still see ladies sitting in their doorways using bobbins to make intricate lace garments. The medieval church of Santa Maria della Rocca (church on the rock) impressively sits perched on a craggy rock outcrop. We have included entrance to the catacombs with their 13th century, time worn frescoes, the lace museum and the 19th century antique opera theatre. An absolute delight! Lunchtime will be enjoyed at leisure in the seaside resort town of Grottammare, on the Adriatic, before we return to Ascoli. This evening we have included a real treat as we dine at Caffè Meletti, looking down directly on the beautiful polished marble main square. This period-piece restaurant still retains the traditional, fashionable décor of over a century ago, and even brews its own aniseed liqueur! Meals: B,D

DAY 12**Santo Stefano and Spoleto**

We now step back in time and drive into the wild Apennines of the Abruzzo region. Crossing the Gran Sasso plateau we reach the hill top town of Santo Stefano di Sessanio, in the province of L'Aquila, where we have time to explore before enjoying a light lunch in one of the centuries old, crumbling buildings. What an experience! Next we venture into the hills of Umbria and the wonderful walled town of Spoleto where we stay the next two nights. Medieval Spoleto is easily explored on foot. There are numerous romanesque churches and cobblestoned alleyways lined with shops, bars and trattorias. **Meals: B,L**

**Your Umbrian hotel –
Hotel Dei Duchi**

This family run hotel is located just outside the old city walls, offers wide panoramic views of the stunning Umbrian countryside and is known locally for its cuisine.

**DAY 13****Explore Assisi and 'My Time' in Spoleto**

We spend this morning in the nearby Umbrian city of Assisi. Badly damaged by earthquakes in 1997 the city, dominated by two medieval castles, undertook a remarkable programme of restoration which soon brought it back to all its glory. We are joined by a local guide for a tour of the Basilica of St Francis with its magnificent frescoes. Afterwards there is time for you to explore Assisi at your own pace. Returning to Spoleto, the rest of the afternoon is at leisure. Perhaps take a leisurely walk along the path around the castle and across the medieval viaduct in to the Umbrian countryside. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 14**Tivoli, Villa D'Este and 'Musica'**

We enjoy a morning stop in the historic town of Tivoli. Here we are joined by a local guide to enjoy a visit of the wonderful UNESCO heritage listed gardens of Villa D'Este. Circling Rome, we reach the area known as Castelli Romani, and the town of Frascati where we stay for our last wonderful night. This evening we visit a nearby, historic wine estate called Cantine Santa Benedetta – the perfect venue to enjoy a truly grand Frascati farewell dinner, with 'musica'. First, we relax with a Frascati tasting accompanied by a variety of antipasti on the terrace overlooking the vineyards, with the Rome skyline in the distance. Then, we enjoy dinner accompanied by music from a pianist and opera singer. An extraordinary farewell evening in the hills of Frascati! **Meals: B,D**

**Your Frascati hotel –
Villa Tuscolana Park Hotel**

Located in the hills outside of Frascati, this 4 star hotel dates back to the 16th century. Deluxe category rooms have been confirmed for our overnight stay.

**DAY 15****To Rome**

This morning we will transfer you into the centre of Rome and to Fiumicino airport. We recommend you book flights that depart after 1pm. **Meals: B**

“There were very few tourists in the villages and towns so it felt like you were seeing the real Italy.” Jan

Outstanding Value Inclusions**Over \$1,500 value of extras already included**

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- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 25 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), 2 lunches (L) and 9 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
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- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

15 days only \$7,327 pp twin share

Single supplement \$1,660

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Mira**Ends Rome**

13 May

27 May

3 June

17 June

2 September

16 September

16 September

30 September

Is this tour suitable for you?

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Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation.

Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.



Italy, the Deep South & Sicily




Stay in the Trulli cottages of Alberobello

17 Incredible Days Rome to Palermo

Explore the ancient villages and towns of Puglia and Matera before crossing to the glorious island of Sicily. Sleep in the ancient sassi of Matera and the delightful Trulli cottages of Alberobello. Stand on the highest active volcano in Europe, feast in mafia country and cruise to San Vito Lo Capo... 'va bene'!

ROME


Day 1

- Stay 1 night in  Rome
- Meet and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers over dinner

1 ROME

ALBEROBELLO, PUGLIA


Days 2, 3 & 4

- Stay 3 nights in the 'Bee Hive'  Trulli cottages of Alberobello
- Dine in a delightful local restaurant
- Enjoy a walking tour of Alberobello and local wine tasting
- Explore the baroque city of Lecce with a local guide
- Relax in the 'white city' of Ostuni

3 ALBEROBELLO

MATERA


Days 5 & 6

- Stay 2 nights in the beautifully restored  'Sassi' caves of ancient Matera – a truly remarkable experience
- Stand on the Murgia Timone plateau above the 'La Gavina' ravine
- See the thousand-year-old frescoes adorning the walls of the Crypt of the Original Sin
- Gain an insight in to life in a 'Sassi' house when we visit La Casa Grotta
- Enjoy an afternoon to relax and explore extraordinary Matera
- Visit the coastal towns of Monopoli and Polignano a Mare, famous for its gelato

2 MATERA

PALERMO



Days 16 & 17

- Spend your final night in Palermo
- Visit the  Palatine Chapel, in the Palace of the Normans
- Enjoy a special farewell dinner

1 PALERMO

TAORMINA

Days 7, 8, 9 & 10

- Stay 4 nights in the stunning town of Taormina
- Cross Calabria and then catch the ferry across the Straits of Messina to Sicily
- Relax with a completely free day to explore Taormina at your own pace
- Explore the ancient Greek and Roman ruins of  Syracuse
- Visit beautiful Ortigia Island, the historical heart of ancient Syracuse
- Take a dramatic cable car and 4WD bus to stand at the top of  Mount Etna
- Enjoy a sumptuous lunch in 'The Godfather Country'

4 TAORMINA

MARSALA



Days 13, 14 & 15

- Stay 3 nights near Marsala in a converted Baglio farmhouse
- Explore the fishing port of Sciacca
- Enjoy a lunchtime seafood feast at Vittorio's famous beachside restaurant
- Visit the ancient city of Erice and Segesta's romantic temples
- Cruise through the Zingaro marine reserve to San Vito Lo Capo
- Enjoy a Baglio wine tasting

3 MARSALA

AGRIGENTO

Days 11 & 12

- Stay 2 nights in Agrigento, with spectacular views over the  Valley of the Temples which we explore with a local guide
- See the extraordinary mosaics in  Villa Romana del Casale, Piazza Armerina
- Enjoy an olive oil tasting and light lunch at Mandranova Estate

2 AGRIGENTO

AVERAGE 145 KMS PER DAY

-  Tour commences
-  Overnight stays
-  Included excursions
-  UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits



Italy intensifies as you plunge deeper

Travel guru Rick Steves once wrote, “If you like Italy as far south as Rome, go further south. It just gets better. If Italy is getting a little overwhelming by the time you get down to Rome, think twice about going further. Italy intensifies as you plunge deeper.” Rick is so right! Sicily, of course, stands out, having absorbed a myriad of influences from a long history of invaders, empire builders and exotic sea traders. Turn one corner and find a massive Greek Temple or Roman Amphitheatre. Around the next you will find a delightful baroque square or verdant vineyards springing from the volcanic ash of mighty Mount Etna.

Puglia and Matera are just as evocative. The fresh produce is amazing and endless hills of olive groves testify to Puglia’s reputation as the food basket of Italy. When designing the tour I leapt at the opportunity for us to stay in the beautifully converted, white washed, beehive style ‘Trulli’ town houses. And then there is Matera. Italy’s oldest inhabited town where the rock faces are riddled with ancient caves or ‘sassi’. Mel Gibson even filmed ‘The Passion of Christ’ here as many reckon Matera actually looks authentically like Jerusalem would have done 2000 years ago! Ancient? It has been said, “Matera is the only place in the world where people can boast to be still living in the same houses of their ancestors of 9,000 years ago”. What an experience!

“There are so many memories I will cherish. It was such a divine experience staying in the sassi caves of Matera and in a trulli cottage in Alberobello.” Paul



Stay 2 nights in the breathtaking city of Matera

DAY 1 Rome welcome

Your tour commences this evening in the eternal city of Rome. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Rome hotel – Hotel Victoria

This 4 star hotel is centrally located close by the Villa Borghese gardens. The air-conditioned guest rooms feature classic décor.



DAY 2 To Alberobello in the Puglia region

Driving across the spine of Italy – the Apennine Mountains – we continue deep into the Puglia region to the remarkable city of Alberobello where we stay three nights. This is one of the most unusual towns you will ever see. The whole city centre is a mass of whitewashed ‘bee hive’ type houses called ‘Trulli’ which date back hundreds of years. Puglia is known as Italy’s bread basket and is also justifiably famous for its olive oils, wine and local produce. Dinner tonight is included in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

Your Alberobello accommodation – ‘Trulli cottages’ scattered around town

Shunning conventional hotel accommodation we have leapt at the chance of offering an amazing touring experience. We have selected to stay in a number of beautifully renovated Trullo (stone houses with the conical shaped roof) or Cummerse houses (stone houses with barrel vault ceiling), set amongst the winding backstreets of this UNESCO Heritage Listed old town. Bursting with character each one offers all the amenities you would expect of a high quality, self-contained studio or town house. Each house is unique and varies in size, shape and layout. No two have the same furnishings or décor. Porterage is naturally all taken care of and breakfasts are all taken together in a centrally located restaurant. www.charmingtrulli.com/en



DAY 3 Ancient Lecce and the white city of Ostuni

Driving down into the Salentine Peninsula – the ‘heel of Italy’ – we spend the morning exploring the city of Lecce on a walking tour with our local guide. Dating back to the early Greek empire, the city boasts numerous baroque monuments and also has a Roman amphitheatre on the central square. Later we visit ‘La Città Bianca’ (the ‘white city’) of Ostuni. Perched on a hill, with views down over the coast, we enjoy time at leisure amongst the winding streets and white washed alleys. Meals: B

DAY 4 Alberobello sightseeing, ‘My Time’ and wine tasting

This morning we are joined by a local guide who will take us on a walking tour of this remarkable ‘bee hive’ town. In the afternoon we will enjoy a relaxing tasting of local wines. The rest of your afternoon and evening are at leisure. Meals: B



Image taken by Albatross traveller, B. West



Spend time at leisure in Polignano a Mare

DAY 5**Polignano a Mare and ancient Matera**

Passing hamlets and typical Pugliese 'masserie' (fortified large estate-farms), we reach the port of Monopoli. Later we continue to the nearby coastal town of Polignano a Mare. Built directly on the cliffs over the sea, Polignano is famous for its gelato and ice cream parlours and makes a perfect lunch stop. Crossing to the 'ankle' of Italy we reach the extraordinary city of Matera. On arrival we visit the Murgia Timone, a huge rock plateau riddled with ancient man made stone caves or 'Sassi', to take in the views directly over the 'la Gravina' ravine to the old town. Reputed to be the oldest inhabited settlement in Italy, your view encompasses rock churches and numerous Sassi (including the cave complex hotel we will be staying in) with the more 'modern' baroque town on top of the hill. We also visit the Crypt of the Original Sin*, located inside one of the many natural caves, adorned with thousand-year-old Biblical frescoes and nicknamed 'The Sistine Chapel of Rupestrian Art'. Your next two nights will be memorable! This evening we dine al fresco style on the terrace of our cave hotel. **Meals: B,D**

*Closed Mondays

**Your Matera 'Albergo Diffuso' – Le Grotte della Civita**

A hotel experience you will never forget. Your rooms are a series of 'Sassi' or caves, dating back into pre-history, beautifully renovated and with exceptional appeal. Each are large in size and reminiscent of the 'Flintstones', but with luxury and all modern conveniences. Your breakfast is served in a converted rock church featuring classical music. It is impossible to paint the full picture of this truly unique experience.

DAY 6**Matera sightseeing and 'My Time'**

This morning we are joined by a local guide who will show us around this extraordinary town from the ancient rock hewn churches to the baroque city above. We have included entrance to La Casa Grotta – a typically furnished cave dwelling, to gain an insight in to how families lived in their 'Sassi' houses. Your afternoon and evening are free to relax and explore. **Meals: B**

DAY 7**Cross the Straits of Messina to Sicily**

Driving across Calabria and down the toe of Italy we reach the Mediterranean, where we catch the ferry across the Straits of Messina to Sicily. Following the coast we arrive at the stunning town of Taormina where we stay the next four wonderful nights. **Meals: B,D**

**Your Taormina hotel – Hotel Excelsior Palace**

Built with a Moorish style, this 4 star hotel offers sweeping views along the Taormina coast. To one side is the coastline of the Ionian Sea, and on the other panoramic views of Mount Etna and the hillside village of Castelmola.

DAY 8**'My Time' in Taormina**

A totally free day to relax and explore the boutiques, handicraft shops and restaurants which make Taormina so famous. Make sure you visit the Greek Amphitheatre with its striking views and also wander through Villa Comunale, one of the most beautiful little gardens in all of Sicily. **Meals: B**

continued

**Stand on Europe's highest active volcano**

Mt Etna – some stop far below thinking they are 'there'. Some take the chairlift up to the snow fields and stop. We go even higher including the guided 4WD bus tour up to where the 'internally warmed' earth melts most of the snow, vast horizons unfold and you will stand facing the steaming caldera. (and yes, it is easy and safe!) See Day 10.



Relax in delightful Ortigia



Join a local guide through the Valley of the Temples



Vittorio's, so memorable!

On Day 13 we visit the fishing port of Sciacca, on Sicily's south coast. Earlier that day restaurant owner Vittorio (known locally as the 'wild boar') will have been down at the fish market selecting seafood and fish for his beachside restaurant down the road in Porto Palo. And that's where we go for a leisurely lunch. Featured in the acclaimed BBC2 series 'Sicily Unpacked', Michelin master chef Giorgio Locatelli enthuses over Vittorio's simple cooking style – nothing fancy, but so memorable!



Enjoy 'My Time' in Taormina

DAY 9 Ancient ruins of Syracuse and Ortigia Island

Driving past Catania we reach the city of Syracuse, where we are joined by a local guide. First stop will be at the temples and massive amphitheatre in the 2500 year old Greek and Roman ruins. We will also visit the overgrown quarries and test the amazing acoustics in the famous 'Ear of Dionysus' cavern. Later we cross onto Ortigia Island, the heart of ancient Syracuse, to wander through the delightful backstreets to the breathtaking architecture of the main square, Piazza del Duomo. Enjoy time to find a quiet café or trattoria for a leisurely lunch. **Meals: B**

DAY 10 Mt Etna adventure followed by a leisurely lunch

What an adventure today! First we drive up the slopes of Mount Etna to Sapienza Refuge, lying at the south of the crater at an elevation of 1910 metres. Here we board a cable car up to a restaurant and museum at 2500 metres where we meet our local guide who will drive us in a large 4WD bus up to the (usually snow covered) viewing crater area at 2920 metres. You will now be standing on the highest active volcano in Europe with views across to the steaming caldera on one side and the Sicilian coastline far below. All around you will see craters, caldera and petrified lava flow. Following this magnificent experience we descend to the village of Forza d'Agro, just north of Taormina. This area was the setting for some scenes from the film 'The Godfather', and is the perfect location for another leisurely, typically 'Italian style' lunch. The rest of the day and evening is free back in beautiful Taormina. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 11 Piazza Armerina and Agrigento

Cutting through the heart of Sicily we reach Piazza Armerina where a local guide will take us through the opulent Villa Romana del Casale. UNESCO Heritage Listed and one of the great sites of Sicily, this massive 1700 year old Villa was covered by a mud slide in the 12th century which beautifully preserved its breathtaking mosaics. Later we arrive in Agrigento on the south coast, where we stay two nights. **Meals: B,D**

Your Agrigento hotel – Colleverde Park Hotel

Offering spectacular views directly over the Valley of the Temples and the Mediterranean Sea from their beautiful gardens, the Colleverde Park Hotel is located near the city centre of Agrigento. This elegant hotel offers classic style hotel rooms.



DAY 12 Valley of the Temples and lunch at Mandranova

This morning we are joined by a local guide who will take us through the famous UNESCO Heritage Listed Valley of the Temples. Originally the ancient city of Akragas, and built out of sandstone tufa, the golden amber hue of the giant complex of ruins and temples blend perfectly with the natural surroundings. This afternoon we will drive east to the farm of Mandranova, to enjoy an olive oil tasting and light lunch. **Meals: B,L,D**

DAY 13 Sciacca and lunch at the famous Vittorio's restaurant

First stop this morning will be in the fishing port of Sciacca. Encircled by 16th century walls, the fascinating old town is where Arab, Norman and Greek cultures co-existed. We then follow the coast to the beach at Porto Palo where we enjoy a delicious seafood lunch at Vittorio's restaurant (specially mentioned in the acclaimed BBC2 series 'Sicily Unpacked'). Later we continue to our hotel inland from Marsala where we stay the next three nights. **Meals: B,L,D**

Your 'Baglio' hotel – Baglio Oneto

Set on a hill amongst vineyards, with views across to the Egadi Islands, this was originally a feudal dwelling and later a notable farmhouse estate built in the late 18th century. The hotel section has been designed to maintain the architectural integrity of the ancient Baglio.



DAY 14**Temple ruins at Segesta and Erice**

This morning we visit the Temple ruins at Segesta. Later we visit the city of Erice. Standing on top of Mount Erice, 750 metres above sea level and overlooking the port of Trapani, the views out to San Vito Lo Capo and the Aegadian Islands are fantastic. Here you will still find the remains of the ancient Phoenician fortifications and in the old city there are still two castles. Pepoli Castle which dates from Saracen times and the Venus Castle built by the Normans. Time to relax and wander through the quaint old alleys and cobblestoned streets of the old town, and find a trattoria in a peaceful courtyard to enjoy lunch. This evening before dinner we will enjoy a wine tasting. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 15**Zingaro marine nature reserve cruise**

After enjoying free time for your morning coffee at the authentic fishing port of Castellammare del Golfo, we board a boat to enjoy a scenic cruise through the Zingaro marine nature reserve, past Scopello and the faraglioni' rocks to San Vito Lo Capo. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 16**Palermo sightseeing and 'Farewell to Sicily' dinner**

On arrival in Palermo we are joined by a local guide for a panoramic tour to explore the palaces and squares of this most Sicilian of cities! Entrance is included to visit the Palatine Chapel, in the Palace of the Normans, which is adorned in extraordinary 12th century mosaics. You will also have time to shop, or sit and enjoy a leisurely lunch. Tonight we will enjoy our 'Farewell to Sicily' dinner in a local trattoria, a short stroll from our hotel. **Meals: B,D**

Your Palermo hotel – Hotel Principe di Villafranca

This 4 star, boutique style hotel, is located in an elegant residential area of Palermo and features a fusion of classic and contemporary décor. The hotel boasts an art collection that is on loan from female Sicilian artists..

**DAY 17****Palermo**

Your tour ends today after breakfast. **Meals: B**



See the Sicilian coastline aboard a scenic cruise

Outstanding Value Inclusions**Over \$1,700 value of extras already included**

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 16 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 29 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), 2 typically 'Italian style' lunches in 'Godfather Country' and Vittorio's at Porto Palo, light lunch & olive oil tasting at Mandranova Olive Oil farm (L), plus 10 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Rome, wine tastings in Alberobello and in a Sicilian Baglio
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - cable car and 4WD bus Mount Etna, Zingaro cruise
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Tours App
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!**The Albatross difference**

- Leisurely 2, 3 and 4 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

2020 Dates & Prices

17 days only \$8,847 pp twin share

Single supplement \$2,320

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Rome	Ends Palermo	Starts Rome	Ends Palermo
2 May	18 May	28 August	13 September
14 May	30 May	11 September	27 September
17 June	3 July	18 September	4 October
17 July	2 August	2 October	18 October

Is this tour suitable for you?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues. If in doubt, please contact us or visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.



Oberammergau Passion Play 2020



Join us for the 2020 Oberammergau Passion Play


**GUARANTEED
CATEGORY 1
SEATING FOR
PASSION PLAY**

The Passion Play

The famous Oberammergau 'Passionsspiele' or Passion Play, has been performed every ten years since 1633, a time when the Thirty Year's War and Bubonic Plague were ravaging Europe. The town pledged that if God would spare them from further suffering and death, they would perform a play each decade in tribute to the Passion of Christ. The first play was performed during Pentecost in 1634, where a stage was erected in the local cemetery.

A moving experience

Nowadays the performance is on a much larger scale! With a backdrop of Kofel Peak and surrounded by the Ammergau Mountains, the massive open-air stage erupts with colour, music, song and up to 2,000 local inhabitants enacting the story of the Passion of Christ. Such is the dedication of the residents, all male actors performing in the play take part in a "Hair Decree" – from Ash Wednesday in 2019, all men are requested to let the hair on their heads and face grow to ensure they have an authentic look in time for 2020!

Following our outstanding success handling the 2010 Passion Play season, we will once again be offering a wide choice of unique European escorted touring programmes with regular departures throughout the 'Passion Play' months between May and September 2020.



Innsbruck, Bavarian 'Fairytale' Palaces *and* the Oberammergau Experience

5 Fabulous Days | Innsbruck to Munich

- Category 1 seating for the Oberammergau Passion Play
- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described in the brochure
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 4 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 7 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 3 dinners (D)
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels

5 days only \$2,823 per person twin share

Single supplement from \$737

Land only prices in AU dollars



Salzburg, Bavarian 'Fairytale' Palaces *and* the Oberammergau Experience

7 Incredible Days | Salzburg to Munich

- Category 1 seating for the Oberammergau Passion Play
- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described in the brochure
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 6 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 10 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 4 dinners (D)
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels

7 days only \$3,663 per person twin share

Single supplement \$993

Land only prices in AU dollars

Book Now!

Oberammergau is a 'one in ten year' event. There is significant worldwide demand and spaces are limited, which is why we urge you to book now.

To order a brochure or make a booking for our 2020 Oberammergau tour programme please call 1300 135 015 (Australia) or 0800 446 232 (New Zealand) or email info@albatrosstours.com.au



Christmas, New Year & Winter Wonderland Tours





Creating magical Festive memories

In 1995, we launched our first European Christmas tour. Now nearly 25 years later, we offer the widest range of European festive tours designed specially for Australians and New Zealanders. With departures from early December until late March, we have something for everyone!

Explore stunning Christmas Markets, take incredible cable car rides up the Alps, stay in a 900 year old Italian castle or visit the fairytale castles of Germany. There are so many experiences to be had including romantic horse and carriage rides and enjoying mulled wine and ginger biscuits.

Albatross tours are genuinely inclusive and are packed with so many experiences. In Switzerland, you will travel on the famous Glacier Express train, in Austria you will hurtle down the Olympic bob sled run and in France you will gasp at the astounding views across Mont Blanc as you soar 4,000 metres to the peak of the mighty Aiguille du Midi.

There is a magical European winter wonderland out there waiting for you, filled with exciting 'bucket list' experiences, amazing adventures, and bursting with heart-warming festivities – and with Albatross you will get to experience the best!

See over for a taste of what's in store during the festive season with Albatross Tours.

European Festive Tour Experiences



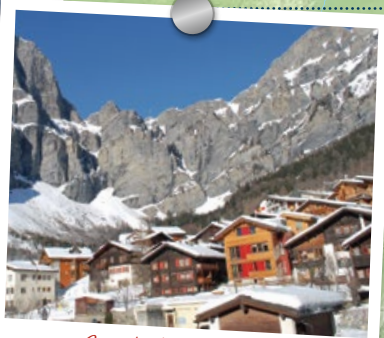
For your copy of our European Christmas, New Year & Winter Wonderland Tours brochure please call us on 1300 135 015 (Australia) or 0800 446 232 (New Zealand) or visit www.albatrosstours.com



See the world's largest advent calendar



Stay in a spectacular hotel in the heart of the Alps



Stay high in the Alps in an incredible Spa town



Ride above the clouds to the peak of the awesome Aiguille du Midi



Savour mulled wine beside the mighty Matterhorn



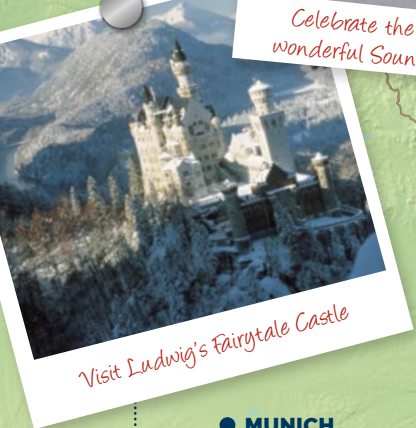
Celebrate the New Year in the wonderful Sound of Music Palace



Be amazed by the wonder of the Northern Lights



Have fun on a horse drawn carriage through the snow



Visit Ludwig's Fairytale Castle



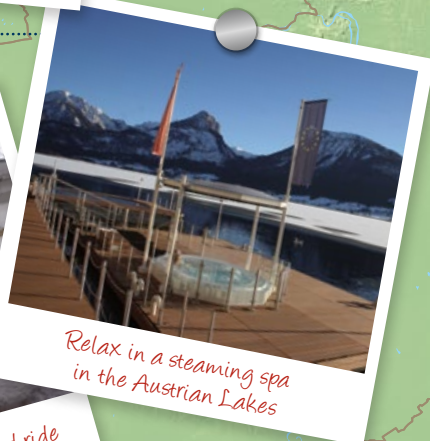
Explore romantic villages and medieval towns



Relax in a steaming spa in the Austrian Lakes



Experience a thrilling bobsled ride



Croatia

MUNICH

Germany

SALZBURG

WOLFGANGSEE
Austrian Lakes District

Bavaria **• OBERAMMERGAU**

NEUSCHWANSTEIN

The Tyrol **• INNSBRUCK**

Austria

The Dolomites

CASTELBRANDO

LJUBLJANA

Slovenia

Italy

• VENICE

Lake Garda



Celebrate Christmas in a fantastic 900 year old Italian Castle



Glide through the Swiss Alps on the world famous Glacier Express



Play in the snow

Frequently asked questions



Albatross travellers in Portugal

Are your tours suitable for me?

Due to the unique places we visit and stay a reasonable amount of walking will be involved, and our tours do require a certain level of fitness and mobility. Our tours are not suitable for people with walking difficulties or limitation. To find out more visit www.albatrosstours.com.au/suitability.

What is the average Albatross group size?

You will be travelling with an average of 22 like-minded people, made up of a mix of couples, friends and solo travellers. Some groups may be as small as 10 travellers and we cap all tours at only 28 guests. We believe travelling in a small group ensures a more pleasurable touring experience for you. It allows us to select more private hotels and attractions for you to experience, plus you have much more room on the coach!

Note: On our Christmas, New Year & Winter Wonderland Tours our group sizes can be larger, ranging from 10 to 40 travellers.

How much money do I need to budget for optional meals and excursions?

Nothing! Unlike most other tour companies we simply don't sell extra 'optional' tours once you arrive. All the excursions, activities and meals we outline are already included. Most dinners, even special regional restaurant dining, are already included. To help matters we also include a glass of wine, beer or soft drink with dinner and later, tea or coffee.

Do I need to budget for tips on tour?

One of the benefits of travelling with Albatross is we have already taken care of all tips on tour. We understand that knowing when to tip, who to tip, and how much to tip can make you uncomfortable. That's why we have included all tips whilst you are 'on tour' including the end of tour tips for your Tour Manager and Driver. That makes life easier!

Why do you stay longer at each stopover?

We want you to enjoy your holiday! Longer stays allows you to experience more in each town, city or region. Another bonus is you are not constantly moving hotels. How delightful to unpack for a number of nights and really experience where you are staying, explore the local area and develop a real feel for the region.

Is my tour guaranteed to depart?

You will be happy to know that we guarantee to run any tour with as little as 10 travellers. Plus we are very happy to tell you how many travellers we have booked on any tour, giving you peace of mind when you book.

Will I have free time while touring?

Yes, *absolutely!* We refer to this as 'My Time'. And since we do not sell ANY optional excursions your free time remains free! We believe the perfect touring holiday includes a balanced mix of included activities as well as free time to enjoy your surroundings. Let's face it, part of the joy of a destination is to relax and enjoy a leisurely lunch or wander through the streets and experience the local culture.

What time do I need to get up each morning?

Later! It is rare we start a day before 8.30 a.m. Our longer stays ensure you are not constantly checking in and out of hotels all the time and packing and unpacking your bags is not a repetitive chore. The pace is so much more relaxed and most mornings you have time for that second cup of coffee over breakfast.

What are your hotels like?

We hand select unique and authentic accommodation to enhance your touring experience. It is important to us that you stay in accommodation which has been selected for the style, elegance, location or character. We see all the rooms being different as adding to your holiday experience. Some unique accommodation we use, like Leeds Castle in England, and the beautiful 'Sassi' caves in Matera, Italy, are beyond classification!

What standard and size of coaches do you use?

We use first class, full size touring coaches with 40-45 seats. Which means on an average group size of 22 passengers everyone gets a window seat and a spare seat! WiFi is available on most coaches and there is an on-board toilet for emergencies.

Note: Occasionally we may also use day charter coaches for sightseeing and in rare cases when touring groups numbers are below 15 we may use a smaller coach, without a toilet.

What is the food like?

Just like you, we like good food! The daily breakfast is usually an extensive buffet selection. You will also be very happy to know that most dinners are also included. Not just those in your hotel but also special ones in authentic local taverns, restaurants, bistros and beautiful wine estates. Sometimes leisurely, feature lunches are also included. We purposefully leave a few evenings free for you to discover your own local restaurant or bistro.

Who will I be travelling with?

Our unique touring style and better itineraries attract a wide variety of travellers, from early empty nesters to baby boomers. Perhaps more importantly, it is about the type of people we carry... usually Australians and New Zealanders. People who want to see more, experience more and who want a more authentic European holiday experience.

How much luggage can I bring?

Hotel portorage is included for one large suitcase per person. Since we carry smaller groups there is usually extra space to stow more bags and any further luggage. Please liaise with your Tour Manager and Driver regarding portorage for additional luggage. Club Albatross members, are entitled to additional portorage. Visit www.albatrosstours.com for details.

Can you cater for special dietary needs?

Yes, of course. When booking your tour please ensure your special dietary needs are advised. Once you arrive and begin your tour please reconfirm your dietary needs with your Tour Manager. Please note, whilst every effort is made to ensure your dietary needs are properly catered for we cannot guarantee absolute satisfaction every time.

Do you offer pre & post tour accommodation?

Yes. We offer pre and post tour accommodation for most tours. If you would like to enjoy an extra night or two before or after your tour at the same hotel, we will happily book this on your behalf.

Travel documents – when and how will I receive them?

Approximately 4 weeks prior to the tour departure, assuming full payment and traveller information forms have been received. If you are departing our fair shores earlier, please ensure you, or your Travel Agent, have advised our Reservations team and we can of course get them to you earlier.

For more frequently asked questions visit www.albatrosstours.com



Exciting new tours coming soon



Enjoy time in the capital of Malta, Valletta

Sicily, the Aeolian Islands and Malta

14 Captivating days | Palermo to Valletta

Stay on 4 incredible Mediterranean islands – beautiful Lipari, in the gorgeous Aeolian islands, pretty Ortigia off the coast from Syracuse, Sicily and sensational Malta. Cruise to Panarea, with its whitewashed villas, Vulcano Island with its hot sulphur mud baths and Ginostra to witness mighty Stromboli's fiery eruptions against the night sky. In Sicily's rugged south-east, eat gelati strolling through the baroque heart of delightful Noto, Ragusa Ibla and Scicli, and enjoy a special evening 'Modica Experience'. Stay in the heart of beautiful Valletta with 'My Time' amongst its palaces and café filled pedestrian promenades and visit Malta's huge fortifications and 6,000-year-old stone temples. Enjoy lazy lunches and dinners on terraces perched over azure waters, inside castle fortifications and dine beneath a Norman Tower. Utterly amazing.

Departures: May, June & September 2021

To register your early interest in our 2021 & 2022 tours please call us on 1300 135 015 (Australia) OR 0800 446 232 (New Zealand) or email: info@albatrosstours.com.au

We will keep you informed as tours are developed and released.

2022 The Dutch Floriade

10 Blooming Days | London to Amsterdam

Every 10 years the Dutch showcase a floral extravaganza – and in 2022 the Floriade Expo will be staged over 6 months at Almere, with the theme of 'Growing Green Cities'. Once again Albatross will be offering a series of unique, floral tours commencing in London and ending in Amsterdam. With a limited number of departures in the European Springtime, they will be specially timed to also take in the famous Chelsea Flower Show, Hampton Court Palace gardens and the 'Tulipomania' of Keukenhof Flower Festival. In addition, we will naturally be visiting a host of other cities, sites, castles and palaces. All done the 'Albatross Way'.

Departures: April & May 2022

Connect with us

Join us at one of our information sessions to discover more about our European tours, or connect with us on our website or via our social media channels.

Information Sessions & Functions

Find out firsthand what makes travelling with Albatross such a different experience. Come along and find out more about our European tours and speak to past Albatross travellers about why they enjoy travelling with Albatross Tours.

Find out more at
www.albatrosstours.com/travel-shows

Website

Visit our website for the latest information on our tours including availability, tour reviews, videos and informative blog articles which can assist you in planning your European holiday.

Visit
www.albatrosstours.com

Newsletter

Have you signed up for our email newsletter? Receive the latest news from Albatross Tours, special offers and travel tips from the experts right to your inbox! Contact us or visit our website to sign up.

Email us at
info@albatrosstours.com.au



Facebook & Instagram

Be inspired by stunning holiday imagery, videos and stories from 'The Mo' and our travellers on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Find us at
www.facebook.com/albatrosstours
www.instagram.com/albatrosstours

YouTube

We have a range of videos featured on our YouTube channel, including videos dedicated to each tour featured in this brochure.

Visit
www.youtube.com/thealbatrosstours

Prefer to speak to someone?

We love to receive your calls. Our European tour experts are available business hours Monday to Friday to assist your enquiries. After hours please email info@albatrosstours.com.au and we will call you the following business day.

From Australia	1300 135 015
From New Zealand	0800 446 232
Worldwide	+61 7 3221 5353

Booking Terms & Conditions

These Booking Conditions set out the terms on which you contract with Albatross Tours. A contract between us and you on these conditions comes into effect once we receive your deposit. By placing a booking with us and paying your deposit, you acknowledge that you have read, understood and agree to be bound by these Booking Conditions.

“You” and “Your” means all persons named on the booking (including anyone who is added or substituted at a later date). “We”, “us” and “our” means Albatross Travel Group Pty. Ltd. trading as Albatross Tours.

Except where otherwise stated, these booking conditions only apply to holiday arrangements which you book with us and which we agree to make, provide or perform (as applicable) as part of our contract with you. All references in these booking conditions to “tour”, “holiday”, “booking”, “contract” or “arrangements” mean such holiday arrangements unless otherwise stated.

PRICING

All prices are in \$AUD or \$NZD and are for cash/cheque payments. Credit card payments attract a surcharge.

We reserve the right to amend the price of unsold holiday arrangements at any time and correct errors in the prices of confirmed arrangements.

The price of your confirmed arrangements is subject to variations in: -

- (a) the level of taxes or fees on your confirmed arrangements imposed by third parties not directly involved in the performance of the package, including tourist taxes, city taxes, landing taxes or embarkation or disembarkation fees at ports and airports;
- (b) the price of the carriage of guests resulting from the cost of fuel or other power sources.

All tours are guaranteed on the basis of a minimum of 10 deposited guest bookings. Wherever possible, any price increases will be absorbed by us, but in the event of fewer than 10 guests travelling on any specific group tour departure, we reserve the right to withdraw and cancel that departure or pass on a proportional increase in cost.

In the event of any increase in cost due to low numbers, you will have the option to accept the increase or to cancel and receive a full refund. We, will not be responsible for any loss or expenses you incur due to the cancellation, including, without limitation, any lost airfares or the costs of alternative travel arrangements. Prices may go up or down and we will notify you about any variation explaining the change before final payment is due.

Unless otherwise stated, prices are guaranteed against currency surcharges.

Unless otherwise stated, flights, visas, airport taxes, port taxes, city taxes, security charges, airport transfers, items of a personal nature, laundry, additional beverages and consumables are not included in the tour price.

PAYMENT

You must make payment for your booking in accordance with the instructions we give you. If we do not receive any payment due in full and on time, we reserve the right to treat your booking as cancelled by you, in which case the cancellation charges set out below will become payable.

- A non-refundable deposit of \$500 per person, per tour, is required within 7 days to secure your booking.*
- Deposits represent a booking fee and are non-refundable and non-transferable.
- A charge of \$250 applies to each amendment made on deposited bookings.
- Unless otherwise stated, full payment is required 90 days prior to travel.
- In the event full payment is not received by the required date, an additional charge of \$200 may be applied to cover extra courier fees for travel documents and tickets.

** Due to the number and nature of the inclusions, some tours may require an additional deposit or a higher deposit amount. If an additional or higher deposit amount is required, this will be advised at the time of booking.*

UNUSED SERVICES

No refund is given for any partially or wholly unused services/ tour inclusions. No overseas supplier or associate is authorised to promise a refund on behalf of Albatross Tours.

TRAVELLER INFORMATION FORM

A completed and signed Traveller Information form, one form per person travelling, confirming your fitness for travel, specifying any medical conditions (including any allergies) and full passport details (with at least 6 months validity from the date of return to Australia), must be returned to Albatross Tours within 14 days of receipt. Failure to submit this form, may result in your booking(s) being cancelled and the forfeiture of any deposit paid.

SPECIAL DIETARY OR OTHER REQUESTS

Special dietary or other requests must be noted at the time of booking and confirmed to us in writing on your Traveller Information Form. Whilst we will endeavour to meet all requests for special dietary requirements or other requests, these cannot be guaranteed at all European hotels and restaurants and a failure to meet them will not be a breach of contract on our part.

Non-smoking rooms may be requested however, they cannot be guaranteed as not all European hotels offer non-smoking rooms.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

We rely on the information provided in your Traveller Information Form and as updated as necessary. You warrant that the information you provide is accurate and there are no other medical issues that may impact your ability to participate in the tour without the need for special assistance. We reserve the right to exclude you from a tour if we, acting reasonably are of the opinion that you require special assistance for a condition not previously fully disclosed.

If your circumstances change following completion of your Traveller Information Form, then you must notify us as soon as reasonably possible, in writing, and in any circumstance prior to travel. We reserve the right to cancel your booking if your changed circumstances mean you will require special assistance from our personnel during the tour.

We will not be liable for any damage, injury, death or loss of any kind arising from your failure to disclose relevant medical information.

CANCELLATION BY YOU

All cancellations must be received in writing. Because we incur costs from when we confirm your booking, the following cancellation charges will be payable:

- If cancelled prior to the final payment due date a cancellation fee of the deposit applies
- If cancelled after the final payment due date but more than 45 days before travel a cancellation fee of 50% applies, less any non-refundable deposits already paid for tickets or special events.
- If cancelled less than 45 days prior to travel, a cancellation fee of 100% applies.

If you cut short your holiday, we are unable to offer you any refund of your holiday not completed or assist with any curtailment cost you may incur.

CHANGES AND CANCELLATION BY US

Because we plan our itineraries and your arrangements many months in advance, in some circumstances, we must reserve the right to make changes to them and cancel or amend them. Most changes will be insignificant and we will not notify you of them.

Examples of “insignificant changes” made before departure include the following:

- A change of departure time or overall length of your arrangements of twelve hours or less.
- A change of accommodation to another of the same standard or classification.
- A change to included arrangements such as excursions. Occasionally we may have to make a significant change to your confirmed arrangements. A significant change is one where we or our suppliers significantly alter any of the main characteristics of your arrangements. Examples of “significant changes” made before departure include the following:
- A change of accommodation area for a significant part of your time away
- A change of accommodation to that of a lower standard or classification for the whole or a significant part of your time away.
- A change of departure time or overall length of your arrangements of twelve hours or more.
- A significant change to your itinerary, missing out one or more destinations entirely.

If we have to make a significant change or cancel, we will contact you or your travel agent as soon as possible and if there is time to do so before departure, we will offer you the choice of:

- agreeing to the changed arrangements,
- having a refund of all monies paid; or
- accepting an offer of alternative arrangements of comparable standard from us, if available.

In the event that any proposed change or alternative results in a reduction or increase in the price you have agreed to pay; we will also notify you of any refund or additional amount due.

You must notify us of your choice within 7 days of our offer. If you fail to do so we will assume that you have chosen to accept the change or alternative arrangements.

If we become unable to provide a significant proportion of your arrangements after you have departed, we will make alternative arrangements for you at no extra cost to you. If the alternative arrangements we make are of a lower quality than those you originally booked, we will make a refund in respect of any price differential.

If any such changes or cancellations are caused by unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances (see below), we regret we will be unable to make any refunds, pay you compensation or meet any costs or expenses you incur as a result.

In the event of a tour being withdrawn due to low numbers we will advise you as soon as possible and at least 90 days prior to the scheduled date of departure. The above sets out the maximum extent of our liability for changes and cancellations and we regret we cannot meet any other expenses or losses you may incur as a result of any change or cancellation.

UNAVOIDABLE AND EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES (FORCE MAJEURE)

Except where otherwise expressly stated in these booking conditions we will not be liable or pay you compensation if our contractual obligations to you are affected by unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances which we or the supplier(s) of the service(s) in question could not avoid even taking all reasonable measures. These events can include, but are not limited to war, threat of war, civil strife, terrorist activity and its consequences or the threat of such activity, riot, the act of any government or other national or local authority including port or river authorities, industrial dispute, lock closure, natural or nuclear disaster, fire, chemical or biological disaster and adverse weather, sea, ice and river conditions and all similar events outside our or the supplier(s) concerned control. Advice from the Department/ Ministry of Foreign Affairs to avoid or leave a particular country may constitute unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances.

Albatross Tours will advise all parties concerned of the cancellation of a tour due to unavoidable, extraordinary circumstances as soon as practically possible.

INSURANCE

It is a condition of travel that every guest takes out comprehensive travel insurance for the duration of your tour with us. Your travel insurance policy must provide adequate cover for medical emergencies, your personal belongings and participation in all included activities as part of the tour.

We strongly recommend that you take out comprehensive travel insurance upon confirmation and that it includes comprehensive cancellation cover.

It is your responsibility to check the cover details and limitations within your product disclosure statement and ensure you are aware of its conditions and omissions.

TRANSPORTATION

When group sizes are considered too small to use a full-sized touring coach, we reserve the right to use a smaller coach. Smaller coaches and any vehicles used for local transfers and occasional day excursions may not have toilet facilities or WiFi access on board. Individual country and EEC laws regarding coach transportation will be abided by at all times.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

We contract double rooms for sole use for guests paying the single supplement price. Whilst we contract the same standard of room for all guests, it is at the discretion of the hotel as to the allocation of rooms. Due to the unique nature of our contracted hotels, allocated rooms may vary between guests and single travellers may receive a smaller sized double room or in some cases a twin-bedded room. The single supplement reflects fees and charges passed on to us by our suppliers.

TWIN SHARE MATCH

Individual guests may request to be matched in a twin share room with another traveller of the same gender, on most of our tours. This offer does not apply if only one twin room is available at the time of booking. On tours where twin share matching is offered, should a match not be found the single supplement price will be charged and the guest allocated a double room for sole use. At some hotels single travellers may be allocated a twin bedded room. If you are matched with another traveller there is always a risk of incompatibility and we cannot be held responsible if the person, or the allocated room, is not to your satisfaction. All rooms allocated to twin share match guests shall be treated as non-smoking.

TWIN & TRIPLE SHARE ROOMS

Throughout much of central Europe traditional hotels sometimes offer 'French Twin' sleeping arrangements which comprises of a large bed base, often sharing a single headboard, topped with two single mattresses with separate bedding.

Many modern hotels now have glass-walled bathrooms, with or without privacy curtains. Please consider this when booking a twin share room, particularly on a twin share match basis.

Triple rooms are available on request. If available, triple rooms may consist of one double or two single beds and the third bed may be a rollaway or sofa bed, which in some cases may not always be entirely suitable for an adult. Therefore, triple share rooms are only available for children aged 16 years or younger. In most cases, the addition of a third bed will result in the space in the bedroom being limited.

PORTERAGE

Unless otherwise stated, hotel portage for one suitcase per person is included at each stay during your tour. Porterage is not included on the first or last days of your tour when arriving or departing your hotel independently.

MINIMUM MOBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Albatross Tours offers a range of tours to a variety of destinations. A number of tours include visits to hilltop towns, which may have some steep, uneven cobblestoned streets or castles, and attractions with steep staircases and no lifts. Additionally, some larger cities only provide coach drop off points beyond the city-wall limits of old town centres. A reasonable amount of walking will be involved on all tours and therefore a certain level of fitness and mobility is required. If you have walking difficulties or mobility limitations our tours may not be suitable, and we reserve the right not to accept your booking. For further information or clarification on minimum mobility requirements please refer to your brochure, the Albatross Tours website or call our offices.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

It is your responsibility to hold a valid passport and arrange all necessary visas, permits and certificates required for your selected tour(s). Albatross Tours cannot meet any expenses or losses you may incur as result of not having the correct visas or valid passport to travel. If you are unsure please contact your travel agent or call our offices.

EXCLUSION FROM TOUR

We may exclude you from the tour at our discretion if you fail to comply with our (or any of our supplier's) reasonable instructions, or if we (or our supplier) acting reasonably consider that you are interfering with the other travellers enjoyment of the tour, or if you require special assistance due to an existing medical condition or disability not previously disclosed to us. If we exclude you from the tour, then you will not be entitled to any refund for any remaining portion of the tour and you will be responsible for all costs associated with your onward travel.

COMPLAINTS

In the event of a problem with any aspect of your tour you are obliged to make an Albatross Tours representative or our local supplier aware of such problems immediately. Albatross Tours offers a 24-hour emergency contact phone number for this purpose.

In the event of dissatisfaction with your hotel room, please advise the hotel and/or your tour manager immediately so they may try to rectify the situation if possible.

Albatross Tours will only consider claims made against it in those circumstances where we or our suppliers have had the opportunity to put things right and where the claim has been received by us, in writing, within 30 days from the end of the services provided by us, otherwise, the client will have no right to make any claim against us.

ACCURACY

Albatross Tours makes every effort to ensure the quality of accommodation and the accuracy of information in our brochures, on our website and in other marketing. We shall not be liable for any dissatisfaction you may have with the accommodation and itinerary or any injury, damage or loss caused by the change or withdrawal of any price, detail or other item or service.

RESPONSIBILITIES

We will provide the agreed travel arrangements to you with reasonable skill and care. This means that, subject to these conditions, we will accept responsibility if, for example, you suffer death or personal injury or your contracted holiday arrangements are not provided as promised or prove deficient as a result of the failure of ourselves, our employees, agents or suppliers to use reasonable skill and care in making or providing your travel arrangements. We will only be responsible for our employees in the course of their employment, and for our agents and suppliers if they were carrying out the work, we had asked them to do.

We will not be responsible if the loss, damage, claim or expense was caused by the acts or omissions of yourself, of any other third party not connected with the provision of your holiday arrangements, or due to an event of force majeure.

Please note that if the services which gave rise to the claim complied with local laws and regulations, the services will be deemed to have been properly performed, even if this would not be considered the case in Australia.

Australian Consumer Law and corresponding legislation in other jurisdictions in certain circumstances imply mandatory conditions and warranties into consumer contracts ("Consumer Warranties"). These conditions do not exclude or limit the application of the Consumer Warranties. Other than the Consumer Warranties, Albatross Tours disclaims all warranties.

To the extent permitted by law, the maximum liability of Albatross Tours to you under these conditions, in tort (including negligence) or at law is limited to arranging for the travel arrangements to be resupplied or payment of the cost of having the travel arrangements resupplied.

This agreement shall be governed and controlled in accordance with the laws of Queensland, Australia. If any provision of these conditions is found to be unenforceable, then it will be severed from these conditions without affecting the remaining provisions.

PRIVACY STATEMENT

Albatross Tours respects your privacy and will only use your personal information in accordance with our Privacy Policy and in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and EU General Data Protection Regulations. You can obtain full details of how we collect, hold, use, manage and disclose your personal information from our Privacy Policy, a copy of which may be obtained by calling us on (61) 7 3221 5353 or by visiting our website at www.albatrosstours.com/privacy-policy. We reserve the right and you consent to use any group photographs received from our guests or Tour Managers in our marketing material and promotional activities.

Albatross Tours | ATAS No.A11341 | CATO No. T01107 | ABN 45 010 565 143

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Holiday with the European Tour Experts

- Our head office is located in Brisbane, Australia – we're locals who understand the needs of Australian and New Zealand travellers
- Established in 1995, we have over 20 years' experience
- Albatross Tours has been nominated 5 consecutive years as 'Best Niche Wholesaler in the National Travel Industry Awards'
- We're part of the UK Albatross Group who operate over 5,000 tour groups annually
- To help you in Europe our operations team are based in Kent, UK providing local support in local time.



Come share our love of Europe

For Expert Advice & Reservations

From Australia call 1300 135 015

From New Zealand call 0800 446 232

International +61 7 3221 5353

Website albatrosstours.com

Email info@albatrosstours.com.au



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