CULTURE

Art Tour of France

Known for high cuisine, couture and art, France is the place to go to indulge a passion for beauty and fine things. This private, flexible tour aims to maximise the traveller's experience of France's rich artistic history. The tour begins in Paris, where you'll stay in the heart of the city at the Park Hyatt Place Vendome. Each day your personal driver and guide will take you to your choice of museums and cultural sites.

Once you've explored Paris and Versailles you'll set out on a four-night trip to the Cote d'Azur in the South of France where you'll stay at either the Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc or the Chateau de la Chevre d'Or overlooking the Mediterranean. There is much to see in the region such as Roman ruins, markets packed with regional specialties, local antique stores and ancient towns built into mountains or dotted along the country side.

DATE: Nine-day private tour departing daily.
PRICE: US$16,635 (about A$16,481) per person twin share
INCLUDES: Accommodation, airport transfers, private guide, driver and luxury vehicle while in Paris, a gourmet dinner cruise and daily breakfast.
WEBSITE: artisansofleisure.com

HISTORY

Icons of China by Private Jet

See China with ease on board Captains Choice Icons of China Tour to see China's historical landmarks. Only 44 seats are available on the private jet, which takes you from Melbourne to the scenic inland town of Guilin to begin an 18-day fast-tracked trip across the vast nation. Visit the stunning Lijiang River and the Stone Forest in Kunming. Play with the giant pandas in their two-hectare panda house in Chongqing before boarding the three-day cruise of the Yangzi river on board the Yangzi Explorer. Next stop is Xian, one of China's oldest cities and home to the world famous Terracotta Army. Over four days in Beijing, guests tour the Great Wall of China, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. Fly from Beijing to Shanghai for the last leg of the journey. A full-time Australian doctor accompanies the entire journey.

DATE: 18 days from September 11 or by request
PRICE: A$27,990 per person
INCLUDES: Private flights aboard an A319 Jet from Melbourne, five-star accommodation, three-night cruise, all sightseeing, all meals travel insurance, tipping and taxes.
WEBSITE: captainschoice.com.au

MOTOR

WA | South West Wineries & Karri Forest

This self-drive tour gives you the convenience of an organised tour but the power lies in your hands. More specifically, the power of a luxurious classic S1 Bentley, Rolls Royce Silver Shadow or a Lexus LX470 4W. Over seven days and six nights, travellers explore the vineyards and stunning scenery of the South West of Western Australia from behind the wheel. A personal guide will drive you to the best Margaret River wineries where you'll be able participate in a private barrel tasting and tour a working winery. You'll spend a couple of nights at Cape Lodge, set in a private vineyard. Then it's your turn behind the wheel as you drive to Pemberton to visit the Karri Forest and on to coastal Albany. Visit an old whaling station before driving back to Perth through Stirling Ranges.

DATE: Seven days over flexible dates
PRICE: A$2,268 twin share
INCLUDES: Seven-day car hire of S1 Bentley, Rolls Royce Silver Shadow or Lexus LX470 4WD, five-star accommodation, breakfast daily, driver for one day, admission fees and wine tastings.
WEBSITE: abercrombiekent.com.au

SPORT

Mexico Luxury Golf Vacation – West Coast Splendour

Mexico is known for its sandy beaches but LPGA star and former world number one, Mexico's own Lorena Ochoa, has put the country's golf scene firmly on the map. Over 13 nights play eight rounds on the best and most exclusive golf courses in Mexico including Lorena Ochoa's home course; Guadalajara Country Club. When you're not working on your swing on Guadalajara's two best courses, you're free to explore the culturally rich streets. Next stop is the seaside Balneario resort city Puerto Vallarta and the Four Seasons Resort. Guests arrive at the last stop of the tour, the secluded and exclusive El Tamarindo Resort at Costalegre, via an overnight cruise on luxury private yacht. If desired, Luxury Golf Escapes will arrange a private jet to get you there and back.

DATE: Private tour for individual groups with flexible dates.
PRICE: from US$21,900 (around A$21,693) per person
INCLUDES: 13 nights five-star accommodation; golf at six different golf courses; all transfers; choice of spa treatments at two hotels.
WEBSITE: luxurygolfescapes.com

HISTORY

Cambodia

Cambodia is well known for its temples, lush landscapes and rich history. Urbane Nomads' six day/five night tour is designed to show guests Cambodia's wonders as well as a snapshot of Thailand. The journey begins in Siem Reap at the luxury Amansara, an ideal place from which to explore the temples in the surrounding Angkor region including the 12th century ruins of Angkor Wat as well as the intricate temples of Ta Prohm and Angkor Thom. Travelling off the beaten track guests will visit the lesser known Banteay Chhmar region and spend the night among the ruins of a temple in a luxury tent with a private chef, guide and hot water showers. The tour then crosses over the border to Thailand, with the first night spent in a luxe colonial-style tent with a private spa/jacuzzi. Next is Thailand's bustling capital city Bangkok to spend the last night of the tour Mandarin Oriental.

DATE: Private tour with flexible length and dates
PRICE: US$3,745 (about A$3,709) per person twin share
INCLUDES: All accommodation, all breakfasts, domestic transfers, all transport via 4WD or private car, all admissions
WEBSITE: urbanenomads.com

CULTURE

Spain and Portugal Tour

Tauck's Spain and Portugal tour compares the distinctive cultural and historical personalities of these European neighbours. This journey along the Iberian Peninsula begins at the Four Seasons Hotel Ritz Lisbon and while in Portugal you'll visit many World Heritage Sites including the Tower of Belém, the 14th century Royal Palace of Sintra and the medieval walled city of Evora. Even the lodgings are full of history. While in Evora the tour will stay at Convento do Espinheiro - a 15th century convent-turned-luxury hotel and spa. On day four of the tour bid adieu to Portugal and head into Spain. Stay in many of Spain's great cities; Seville, Marbella, Granada, Córdoba and Madrid. Enjoy national traditions such as Flamenco dancing, tapas and bullfighting. There is a lot packed into the tour over 14 days, however guests will have flexibility to explore cities on their own throughout.

DATE: 14 days departing various dates from April to September including April 8, 22, 29.
PRICE: from US$4,290 (about A$4,249) per person twin share.
INCLUDES: All accommodation, experienced Tauck director, airport transfers, 27 meals and admission fees to scheduled activities.
WEBSITE: traveltheworld.com.au