

# Topdeck

## DELVE DEEP: FRANCE



**TRIP CODE:**

TBFPP3



## TOPDECKER, meet Europe (TD)

TRIP VIBE = iconic sights and in-depth adventures with a local Trip Leader. Mesdames et messieurs, allow us to introduce your personal insider guide to France. Grab a macaron (or five), practise your finest French accent and prepare to give this legendary country the attention it deserves. On this unforgettable adventure we'll be delving deep into the big-gun cities, the idyllic countryside, the ultra-glam coast and the eye-popping Alps. You can expect the following: good food, good wine, good friends and good times. Bon voyage? Guaranteed.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Delve Deep



Nights



Download app



Meals

# Thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

Ready for the time of your LIFE?  
The countdown's on...

## ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

### INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Visit Château de Chambord
- Walking tour of Carcassonne with Trip Leader
- Walking tour of Monaco with Trip Leader
- Orientation walk of Avignon with Trip Leader
- Walking tour of Lyon with Trip Leader

**IMPORTANT:** please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.

### YOUR TRIP WILL START

PICK UP:

Paris  
France

### YOUR TRIP WILL FINISH

DROP OFF:

Paris  
France

## TRIP CURRENCIES

- France - EUR
- Monaco - EUR

# YOUR ITINERARY

## DAY 1 | PARIS (FRANCE)

Bonjour, Paris! Welcome to the home of croissants, crêpes and crème brûlée. First up: air kiss your fellow explorers (top tip: do not confuse with French kiss). Then: get ready to put Duolingo to the test with our first group dinner. You accidentally ordered a semi-detached house? Cool.



### MEALS:

- Dinner

## DAY 2 | PARIS

Good news: you've woken up in Paris. Great news: today this iconic city is all yours to discover. Grab a seat in one of Montmartre's quirky bistros for main character vibes. Soak up the sights with an optional cruise down the Seine River. Or make like the locals and explore on two wheels. Keen to channel your inner royal? Take a day trip to the pretty extra Palace of Versailles for a serving of pure French decadence. With over 2,300 grandly decorated rooms and the largest back garden you've ever seen, there's plenty to keep you occupied. Tonight, an optional cabaret show is on the table. Ooh la la!



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Seine River cruise: from €10
- Bike tour of Paris: from €30
- Parisian cabaret show: from €75

## DAY 3 | PARIS – LOIRE VALLEY – BORDEAUX

Wave goodbye to the City of Love this morning – we've got our sights set on the land of fairytale castles and fine wines. Glue your nose to the window and watch rows of centuries-old grapevines rush past as we make our way through the Loire Valley. First stop? The ultra-boujee Château de Chambord. Supposedly designed by Leonardo da Vinci himself, explore the 60 opulently decorated rooms, surrounding gardens (as big as inner-city Paris) and climb the mind-boggling double helix staircase. This place will have you feeling like French royalty (minus the ridiculous hairstyles). Later, we'll make tracks to Bordeaux where the evening is up to you. Our suggestion? Buy some local cheese, a bottle of the good stuff and picnic like a true French(wo)man. Just make sure you leave room for desert – you're going to want to try a canelé (can-eh-lay). Trust us.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Château de Chambord

## DAY 4 | BORDEAUX – BIARRITZ

Sun, sand and seafood. Today we roll on to glitzy Biarritz, where the afternoon's yours for the taking. Once a humble seaside town, Biarritz was discovered by French royalty in the 19th century, who set about sprucing things up regal-style. Soak up the fancy vibes and stroll by the Rocher de la Vierge: a rock with a statue of the Virgin Mary perched on top, accessed via a bridge over the ocean. Or hit the waves at Europe's first ever surf beach – the wild and wonderful Côte des Basques. Tonight, swap stories over our included group dinner. Très bon!



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

## DAY 5 | BIARRITZ

Rise and shine! Why not kick off the day with a totally gnarly surfing lesson \*insert shaka\*. Surfing not your bag? We suggest a day trip to San Sebastian in northern Spain for rolling mountains, quaint cobbled streets and authentic pintxo (snack) bars. Back in Biarritz, there are plenty of cafés and restaurants to sample the local specialties for dinner. Looking for local recs? Your Trip Leader's got them by the bucketload: just ask.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast

## DAY 6 | BIARRITZ – CARCASSONNE

Grab your swords and pitchforks, this morning we're off to the medieval city of Carcassonne. Perched up on a rocky hillside, with spiky turrets and sturdy walls this place looks like something out of a storybook. Get the lay of the land with a walking tour around the must-see sights, before delving deeper into local life in your own sweet time. Get lost in a maze of winding alleys. Channel all the Game of Thrones vibes with a wander around the ramparts of the citadel. And for dinner? Make sure you try the hearty, mouth-watering dish this place is famous for: cassoulet. Like casserole, but better (and Frenchier).



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Walking tour of Carcassonne with Trip Leader

## DAY 7 | CARCASSONNE – NICE (FRENCH RIVIERA)

Today: something Nice is in store (pronounced 'knee-ss' not 'nice', though it is both). We're heading to the glamorous French Riviera, where the day's yours to get your explore on. Prepare to be charmed by the Old Town, where a treasure trove of museums, art galleries and even Queen Victoria's favourite chocolatier (Maison Auer – go get it) await. Head to the beach for a dip. Or find a local haunt for some seriously good salade niçoise (it was invented here and is living its best life). Tonight, we'll round up the fam for a group dinner.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

## DAY 8 | FRENCH RIVIERA, INCLUDING MONACO

Free day = your chance to do exactly what you want. Laze on a sunlounger at Blue Beach. Go wild in Nice's designer boutiques. Or trek up Castle Hill for allll the views. The choice is yours. Later: we'll turn it up a notch with a visit to Monaco. Home of the Grand Prix and the Monte Carlo Casino, we'll see how the 1% live on a walking tour (hint: it involves Ferraris and bathing in caviar). Then, ogle at the superyachts and their perfectly manicured owners along the waterfront. Or hit the tables and make it rain (or not).



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Walking tour of Monaco with Trip Leader

## DAY 9 | FRENCH RIVIERA – AVIGNON – CHAMONIX

Say au revoir to the sparkling French coast – today we're heading for the jaw-dropping French Alps. We'll swing by Avignon en route, where our fact-filled Trip Leader will point out all the hot spots. The popes moved into this riverside city in the 14th century after they'd had enough of Rome. Expect grand buildings galore, including the Palais des Papes which looks like it's dropped out of Disney. Afterwards: it's back on the coach towards Chamonix for dreamy alpine scenery and the best fondue of your life. Let's go.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Orientation walk of Avignon with Trip Leader

## DAY 10 | CHAMONIX (FRENCH ALPS)

Leave the lie-ins for another day – you've got exploring to do! From hiking to mountain biking, kayaking to skydiving, there's an adventure activity for absolutely everyone. Adrenalin not your thing? Take the cable car up Mont Blanc for some top (literally) panoramic views. Or just soak up the alpine vibes in town, chat to the locals, and while away an hour or two in a cosy bar or coffee shop. Tonight: quiz your Trip Leader on where to find the best raclette – a hunk of melted cheese you scrape over your dinner. The perfect date.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Mountain biking in Chamonix: prices available locally
- Aiguille du Midi cable car up Mont Blanc: from €67

## DAY 11 | CHAMONIX – LYON

Today we slow down the pace and say hey to the foodie capital of France: Lyon. Take a wander around medieval Old Town on a walking tour, then hit up a traditional bouchon (that's 'tavern' to you and me) to see what all the fuss is about. This afternoon: a few thousand years of history awaits, if you're keen. Explore the mind-boggling ruins of the ancient Roman theatre. Delve into the art and anthropology museums. Or get your Indiana Jones on and discover the city's traboules – secret passageways once used by silk merchants to transport their goods to the riverbank. Tonight we'll regroup for our final dinner together and toast to one hell of a French adventure. Santé!



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Walking tour of Lyon with Trip Leader

## DAY 12 | LYON – PARIS

What a journey it's been. You tried the food. You met the locals. You said yes to culture. Yes to history. Yes to the new and the kooky. You embraced it all. It's back to Paris today – you've got one more coach ride with the crew before we vamoose so swap those socials! Where to next?



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



# OTHER INFORMATION

## TOPDECK APP

Feeling appy? Download the Topdeck app and get PUMPED for the adventure ahead. Best bit is: from 45 days before departure you'll be able to chat with your soon-to-be tripmates.

Plus, get your itinerary at your fingertips – so you know where you'll be going and what you'll be doing on each day of your trip. Nice!

Links:

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/topdeck/id994727866>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FlexiTechSolutions.TopDeck&hl=en>



## YOUR SAFETY

### NIGHTS OUT

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, remember to avoid walking alone – particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking – and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

### DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana – even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip immediately. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

**REMEMBER:** if you are found in possession of drugs, not only do you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if they are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you don't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!

- Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home too – so they're sure to know some tried- and- tested ways to beat the blues
- Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (fact!)

## TRAVEL SINCE COVID-19

Travel looks a bit different since COVID-19. That's why we've put some new procedures in place to help keep you safe on the road.

What remains the same? Your Topdeck trip will be run hygienically, responsibly, and with your safety at the forefront of everything we do. End of.

Here's the info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/travel-safely>

# RESPECT ON THE ROAD

## RESPECTING FELLOW TRAVELLERS

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow tripmates . The golden rules? Respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation, and treat others how you'd wish to be treated. Easy!

## HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome adventure AND a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your room towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets, and book tours and activities run by local guides
- Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

# INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.



Head to our FAQ for more info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/faqs-0>

Got more Qs? Chat with our Customer Service team: <https://www.topdeck.travel/about-us/contact>

## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling. Check out our handy interactive map showing global visa requirements:

<https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/latest-border-restrictions>

PLEASE NOTE: some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

## TIPPING

Basically: it's not necessary.

Your Trip Leader and Driver don't expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. Meaning? More dollar to spend on optional activities (and a souvenir for your nan).

## WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it (as long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is!).

Off to Japan? Your luggage must be no bigger than 160cm in total (height x width x length). So maybe leave the hairdryer at home.

Psst: this is a packing list for Topdeck trips in general. Obv you'd look silly splashing around the Greek islands in a snowsuit.

- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes + 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- 2 pairs of jeans/trousers
- 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- 4 shirts/T-shirts
- 2 sweaters/jumpers
- Smart casual evening wear
- 1 warm jacket + 1 rainproof jacket

- Underwear and socks + swimwear
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Hat and sunscreen
- Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- Adaptor plug
- Reusable water bottle
- Snow gear



**THAT'S IT!**