

Grand Tour of Europe 2016

Detailed Itinerary

Walking Guide

Light = 3 to 5 miles

Moderate = 5 to 8 miles, stairs and hills

Heavy = 8 miles or more, plenty of stairs and hills and museum miles!

SATURDAY, JUNE 4

Depart Salt Lake City

Be at the airport at least two hours early. All you need for check in is your passport. That is the way ticketless travel works these days!

Now all you can do is sit back and enjoy the ride. Remember our jet-lag suggestions — drink plenty of water and try to sleep on the plane. Once we all arrive in Rome we will hit the ground running for a full afternoon of sightseeing and getting oriented to our wonderful Roman neighborhood.

SUNDAY, JUNE 5 – ROME

Walking - Moderate

Arrival Rome!!! Once everyone has collected their luggage just follow the signs through customs (very easy, they just wave everyone through) and gather together *to the right* as you leave the customs check area. That is where I and our very own Roman will meet you and take you to meet your Roman coach driver for a transfer to our hotel. **Note: If your luggage does not arrive you must report that to the lost luggage area before you leave baggage claim. Be sure you have our Rome hotel address on your person!**

Our first stop is our hotel, the *Hotel Nord Nuova* www.romehotelnord.it. If we arrive before check-in is possible we will drop our bags in the hotel luggage storage area. If we can check in we will. Then I will show you where the nearest ATM's are, show you where to grab some lunch at one of the many little places near our street, and then we will all head out for an orientation walk of this magnificent city, talking about the history of Rome from its beginnings to today. Our first stop will be early Christian Rome as we visit **Santa Maria Maggiore**, a 5th century Basilica that still has much about it that is original. It is a prototype of the three aisled Early Christian Basilica that serves as a pattern for Christian architecture to this day. With its original flat timber roof and original cycle of mosaic decoration it is a great introduction to the Christian history of Rome. We will also take a look and a remarkable little mosaic covered chapel in *Santa Praxedde* nearby for an up close look and the beautiful mosaic craft. Next stop are the **Baths of Diocletian**, the largest public baths the Romans every built. Michelangelo converted the ruins into a Christian church. Visiting this place gives you an idea of the scale the Romans built on! And our discussion of the details of the baths will give you an idea of life in ancient Rome.

4:00 P.M. – This is our reserved visit of the *Villa Borghese*. This remarkable museum was once the private residence for a Cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church during the Late Renaissance and Early Baroque periods (late 1500's through early 1600's), the Cardinal Scipione Borghese. His uncle was Pope Paul V, so he was rather well connected. With his high connections and the family money Cardinal Scipione devoted himself more to matters of art than matters of church – lucky for us! He created the sprawling Villa Borghese set amidst the pines of Rome on a hill outside the city walls, and proceeded to collect paintings and sculpture on a grand scale.

Today the villa has been restored and turned into one of the finest museums in Europe. It houses the best collection of sculpture by the great Baroque artist **Gian**

Lorenzo Bernini anywhere in the world. His works are the centerpiece of the collection, but the upper floors house some wonderful paintings.

Stick close to me for a discussion of the Baroque world and Bernini's masterful sculpture, including his *David*, his *Rape of Proserpine*, and his fabulous *Apollo and Daphne*. Extraordinary! You will then have time to wander the second floor and take in the great painting collection, which includes works by **Titian** and **Caravaggio**.

After the gallery we will take the short walk to Restaurant Saponi Sardi for dinner together. This is a great place near our hotel with wonderful food authentically Roman! You'll love it! Then it is back to our hotel for an early bedtime to help you get over your jet lag and have you refreshed for tomorrow!

MONDAY, JUNE 6– ROME

Walking - Heavy

7:00 A.M. - Breakfast at our hotel

We'll have breakfast at 7:00 A.M. this morning and hit the trail by 8:00.

Today we focus on Classical Rome – the great Roman Empire that held sway over all of Europe for hundreds of years and was so influential in the making of our western world.

We will make our way downtown for our 9:00 A.M. reservation to visit the **Roman Forum** the very heart of the great Roman Empire, and the **Colosseum**, that great amphitheatre around which so much of the lore of ancient Rome is built. I will show you how this mighty building was constructed and separate fact from fiction regarding its use. Even in its ruined state it is an absolute wonder! You'll see first-hand the glory of ancient Rome and learn a lot about the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. You'll walk the ruins of ancient Rome, on the very paving stones that have seen so much history. We'll talk about Caesar, Augustus, Cleopatra, Peter and Paul and Nero to name a few. Even in their ruin the Forum and Colosseum evoke the glory that was Rome.

1:00 P.M. Siesta! Break for lunch and shopping and free time to hit some of the suggested sites that are nearby. We will designate a specific time and place to meet later.

4:00 P.M. From our meeting place we will walk to what I believe to be the greatest building in the world and the only Roman building to have survived completely intact – the incomparable **Pantheon**. It was a temple to all the Roman gods and one of the most innovative buildings ever constructed, a true testament to the glory of the Roman Empire. I'll tell you the whole story of how and why it was built, and then we will head inside for one of the most awe inspiring architectural experiences of your life.

Nearby is the glorious church of **St. Ignazio de Loyola**, a Baroque masterpiece with the greatest illusionistic ceiling fresco I've ever seen! You will be astounded at what Fra Andrea Pozzo painted, covering the entire ceiling of the nave of the church with hundreds of figures floating up to heaven. It is amazing. We will also pop into **Il Gesu**, another magnificent

Baroque interior built by the same monastic order that built St. Ignazio, the Jesuits.

6:30 PM Dinner together tonight at **Insalatta Ricca** in the heart of the city. Great food, great conversation, and all at a relaxed Italian pace. The Bruschetta here is awesome!

After dinner enjoy an evening walk with me through some of the great piazzas of Rome, from the **Piazza Navona** to the **Spanish Steps**, finishing at the **Trevi Fountain**, or enjoy the evening on your own. This is fun stuff! Plenty of gelato on the way! This has been quite a day!

TUESDAY, JUNE 7 — ROME

Walking - Moderate

7:30 A.M. – Breakfast at our hotel.

8:30 A.M. – Off we go!

Our primary focus today is on Christian Rome – the place where Christianity really established itself as a force in the world.

First we dive into my favorite neighborhood in Rome with the **Campo di Fiore** at its heart. This is living in Rome at its most authentic. In the Campo you can **assemble an awesome picnic lunch** at one of Rome's best outdoor markets. Then we'll head toward the mighty **Castle San Angelo**, then up the Via Della Conciliazione. Look up to the end of this street and there it is, **St. Peter's Basilica**, with Giacomo della Porta's mighty dome dominating the sight. St. Peter's enforces modesty. Boys must wear pants. Girls must have their shoulders covered and legs covered to the knee. This is a good day to bring pants or a skirt in your daypack or just dress like that for the day. You will not be let in otherwise.

11:00 A.M. Picnic lunch.

12:00 Noon Vatican City is its own country in the heart of Rome. We'll walk you around the medieval walls and meet our local guides for our 12:00 tour of the **Vatican Museum** and the **Sistine Chapel**. Chief among the great works of art are **Raphael's School of Athens** and **Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel** ceiling fresco.

Our guide will also give you a tour of mighty **St. Peter's Basilica**, the largest church in the world. *Once* inside this titanic cathedral be sure to see **Michelangelo's Pieta**, inside the front door and to your right. Also, wander up the very center of the nave and notice the gold lettering in the floor, marking where the front doors of all the other great Christian churches in the world would be. Gives you an idea of the scale of this marvelous church!

Take a good look at **Bernini's Baldacchino**, the 100 ft. high canopy over the main altar and St. Peter's tomb. Also visit the far end of the church, **Bernini's Cathedra Petra**, or Throne of St. Peter, with its sunburst and great bronze throne. Bernini certainly did things on a grand, theatrical scale! This stuff dates from the 1600's.

We will finish up at **about 4:00 PM**, and the rest of the evening is yours. You can visit the roof and climb to the top of the dome for a stunning view of the city. The crypt under the basilica is also open. You can view the tombs of a number of popes, including the shrine to St. Peter.

Find your own Roman culinary delights as you dive into the great restaurant scene in Trastevere, or just grab some more great pizza and gelato and enjoy Rome as the sun sets, the lights come on, the moon rises, and the Romans take to the streets. Soak it all in, your last night in the Eternal City! Just remember that we pull out in the morning at 7:30 A.M. sharp! With or without you! If you are late you can catch a train to Florence. Honest!

Have a wonderful evening!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8 — ROME TO FLORENCE

Walking - Moderate

6:30 A.M. – Breakfast at our hotel. BE ON BOARD THE COACH AT 7:30 A.M.!

7:30 A.M. - We leave the Eternal City and head into the hills of **Tuscany** to spend three days in one of Italy's truly wonderful cities -- **Florence!**

Tuscany is Italy in all its picturesque beauty! The olive groves and grape vines draped over the rolling hills, the farmhouses and villas – it is spectacular. And we are going to drive right into the heart of it all for a visit to one of the great Tuscan hill towns – **San Gimignano!** Quaint and beautiful, the many towers of San Gimignano are its most recognizable feature. Built during troubled times in the Middle Ages by individual families, these towers served as fortresses in a lawless age. Many more existed than stand today, but it's easy to get the picture. Admittedly, San Gimignano is quite touristy, but it is the tourist trade that allows the locals to keep the town restored to its medieval design. Wander the town on your own, get some lunch, and for a great view of the surrounding countryside go behind the church and follow the signs for the tower (Rocca) at the top of the hill. Take your camera! We'll designate a time when you need to be back at the bus. There is a grocery store where we get off the bus where you can get fixings for a picnic.

After our stop in San Gimignano it is off to **Florence**, the birthplace of the Renaissance and home to Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Galileo, Dante and so many others. We check in at the **Hotel de Lanzi**, www.hoteldelanzi.it in the very heart of Florence, then off for a **Renaissance walking tour** of this icon of Western Civilization. You'll see the beautifully restored **Florence Cathedral**, the great **Bronze Doors of the Baptistry**, the **Palazzo Medici**, the pedestrian-only **Piazza Signoria** – the main town square of Medieval and Renaissance Florence – the **Home of Dante** and so much more.

7:00 PM Dinner will be together tonight at a great Florentine restaurant, the (need a different restaurant) Taverna Divina Commedia, with a meal that is authentically Florentine – whatever the family that runs the place happens to be cooking. You'll have a couple of options. Then we are off for a great evening stroll, the passeggiata, which will include a stop for the best Gelato in Florence! Our stroll tonight includes a walk across the Arno River and up the hill to the **Piazzale**

Michelangelo, a plaza that overlooks all of Florence. What a beautiful sight Florence is at night, with the river, the Cathedral, and the Church of Santo Spirito lit up. You'll love it!

THURSDAY, JUNE 9 — FLORENCE

Walking - Moderate

7:00 A.M. – Breakfast in our hotel.

At **7:50 A.M.** sharp we walk to the **Accademia**, the museum that houses Michelangelo's famous statue of *David*. It is one of the most amazing feats of sculpture ever and a powerful symbol of the Renaissance Florentine Republic. But don't miss the powerful, unfinished works by Michelangelo in the gallery as well. I'll have a bit to tell you about those!

This museum, at most, take about 1 ½ hours. You will have some free time between now and our Uffizi Gallery reservation at 1:00. I strongly suggest you take advantage of an early morning climb of the great cathedral dome or the great cathedral tower. Both cost about 6 euros and the views of Florence from either are stunning! Then, of course, grab a bit of lunch somewhere and gather in the Piazza Signoria no later than 12:45. We will have designated an exact spot to meet.

At **1:00 PM** we have our reserved visit of the **Uffizi Gallery**, former palace of the Medici and now the greatest collection of Renaissance paintings anywhere in the world. Art lovers will swoon through this fine collection. Stick with me if you are interested in the details of a number of these works. I'll give you a thorough two-hour tour (until **3:00 PM**) of the highlights of this great museum, then turn you loose to take more time here or hit the town.

The rest of the afternoon and evening is completely free. We have been pretty intense tourists the last few days, so an afternoon to relax, rest up a bit, and *leisurely* enjoy Florence at your own pace is nice! Enjoy the shopping in the great **San Lorenzo flea market!** Explore the other side of the Arno. Check out more great Renaissance art. Or take a short busride to **Fiesole**, nestled between two hills overlooking Florence. Ancient Romans built a city up here to escape the torrid heat of summertime Florence, just as the Etruscans had before them. It's lovely, with the ruins of the Roman city and the cooling breezes that make this break from Florence a delight.

Dinner tonight is on your own. Find a local spot and enjoy Florentine cuisine at its best. And don't forget to find more great Gelato after dinner!

FRIDAY, JUNE 10 - FLORENCE

Walking - Your Choice!

8:00 A.M. – Breakfast at our hotel. That's right – not till 8:00!! Or later if you want. *It is a free day in Florence!*

9:00 A.M. – For those that want to I am planning a train trip out to **Lucca**, a wonderful medieval town that is still surrounded by its old rampart walls. The top of the wall has been converted into a wide bike trail, so one of the things we do in Lucca is rent a bike and ride the ramparts for an hour! Great fun!

We will cycle the ramparts and then find a great place for lunch. After that we will go on a walking tour of Lucca and just enjoy the change of pace that Lucca affords. I love this town! The train ticket and bike ride will cost you about 15 euros total.

If you had rather just hang out in Florence you are more than welcome to do so. Or you could train to **Pisa**. Do your homework, study up on Florence, and decide how you want to spend your day.

Dinner tonight is on your own. Those going to Lucca will be back in time for dinner in Florence.

SATURDAY, JUNE 11 — FLORENCE TO VENICE

Walking - Moderate

8:00 A.M. – Breakfast in our hotel.

9:30 A.M. – We will check out of the hotel and meet our coach for our three and a half hour transfer to **Venice**, the Jewel of the Adriatic and, during the 14th and 15th centuries, the maritime King of the Western World! Wonderfully preserved, Venice is still a jewel with villas, bridges, and churches from the 12th through the 18th centuries, all in a maze of winding paths and canals that hold surprises around every corner. Get lost! Seriously! That is the best thing to do in Venice, just wander and enjoy it all.

We will arrive sometime around 2:30 P.M. and transfer by water taxi to our hotel, the **Hotel Al Sole Palace** www.alsolehotels.com

Once you are checked in join me for an orientation walking tour of the world's most enchanting city. We'll explore the different regions of Venice, talk about its history, its current precarious condition, visit the wonderfully gothic **Frari Church**, and the incomparable **Piazza San Marco**. We will eventually make our way to the **Hosteria Da Sorzi** for dinner together at 7:00 P.M. On tonight's menu – Tomato and Mozzarella Salad, Lasagna Bolognese! After dinner I'll take you on a beautiful nighttime stroll along the quay and into the many enchanting piazzas, away from the tourists, scattered throughout the city. You'll love Venice by night!

SUNDAY, JUNE 12 — VENICE

Walking - Light

7:30 A.M. – Breakfast in our hotel

8:20 A.M. Sharp!

We leave together to meet our excellent local guide for an expert tour of the **Doge's Palace** and the sparkling history of Venice, **St. Mark's Basilica** and the wonderful **Piazza San Marco**. From the Romans to Napoleon our guide will give you the low down on this sea-level wonder. After we say goodbye to our guide we will see a short but interesting demonstration of the art and craft of glass blowing, something Venice has been rightly famous for and of course a big part of the tourist trade. Though touristy it is quite interesting. We will finish up at about **12:30 PM**. *Then you are on your own* to enjoy many of the other sights and sounds of this completely unique city. Remember, the thing to see in Venice is Venice! Just wander and enjoy! Also, boat trips out to the surrounding islands are a fun thing to do as well, especially **Burano**. I'll have a 12 hour Vaporetto pass for you to use on the many water taxis and boats that can get you out to the surrounding islands or simply a cruise down the **Grande Canale**. Again, I hope you have done your homework and are ready to explore. ***I am at your service to help you get where you want to go!***

Dinner is on your own tonight. Find a little corner and eat like a local!

MONDAY, JUNE 13 - VENICE TO OBERAMMERGAU

Walking - Light

Early Breakfast

6:30 A.M. – Collect your boxed breakfast at the front desk.

7:00 A.M. – Water taxi transfer to our coach for ride to Bavaria (Southern Germany)

8:00 A.M. – Depart by private coach to **Oberammergau** in Bavaria, Southern Germany. *Today's bus ride is spectacularly beautiful!* Have your camera ready! We will also stop along the way and a roadside joint for lunch.

4:30 P.M. – Reserved visit of **Linderhof Castle**, the private palace of the last King of Bavaria, King Ludwig II. It is a miniature version of Versailles. Ludwig was a big fan of the Sun King, Louis XIV, and even emblazoned his motto on the ceiling of the entry hall – *Nec Pluribus Impar* – “I am the best!” This is Neo-Baroque architecture at its most stunning. After the Castle we will wander up the hill to Ludwig's private underground grotto, purpose built to stage the operas of Richard Wagner for an audience of one – Ludwig himself. Complete with lake and waterfall, this unique opera venue is quite the deal!

6:30 P.M. – Arrive at the **Hotel Wittelsbach** – www.hotelwittelsbach.de. This place is my favorite hotel on the trip! I have been staying here for 20 years, and the inn is now run by the children of the proprietors that were running it when I first started coming here. It is creaky, old, immaculately clean, and wonderful! And the food – they do it up right!

Oberammergau is a wonderful Bavarian village made famous for its **Passion Play**, a huge production recounting the last week of Christ's life, staged every four years by the locals, in commemoration for having been spared a plague back in the 1600's. You will love this little village, and you'll love the Christmas Market next door to the hotel!

7:30 P.M. – Dinner at the hotel – Wienerschnitzel with Apfel Strudle! Zer Gutte!

TUESDAY, JUNE 14 – OBERAMMERGAU

8:00 A.M. – Breakfast

Walking – Moderate

8:30 A.M. – Departure

This morning we take a beautiful drive to Hohenschwangau for our **9:30 AM** visit of the fairytale **Castle of Neuschwanstein**, the inspiration for Walt Disney's Sleeping Beauty castle in Disneyland. We'll also hike up above Neuschwanstein to the **Marianbrücke**, the suspension bridge above a 1,000 ft waterfall with a stunning view of the castle.

If the weather is great we can take a gondola to the top of the nearby mountain peak of Tegelberg for a stunning view of the surrounding mountains, valleys and lakes. This part of Germany is beyond gorgeous!

Back to Oberammergau at about **3:00 PM** for some R&R and a visit of the beautiful Rococo style **Parish Church of St. Peter and Paul**, a lovely gem in the center of our beautiful Bavarian village. Or go hiking, or take the tram to the top of the mountains behind our hotel, or shop, or take the local bus to **Etal** to see the fantastic monastery there, or . . .

7:30 P.M. – Dinner at our wonderful hotel!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15 – OBERAMMERGAU TO PARIS

Walking – Light

7:00 A.M. – Breakfast

8:00 A.M. – Departure

Today we board our coach for a sobering morning visit to **Dachau**, the infamous Nazi Concentration Camp and Work Camp outside Munich. Our visit there will be a stark reminder of why D-Day had to happen, and why we had to put a stop to

Nazi Germany in World War II. It will make out time in Normandy all that more poignant.

From Dachau we head to the train station or the airport for our transfer to Paris – the City of Lights!

Check into the **Best Western Trianon Rive Gauche** www.hoteltrianonrivegauche.com in the heart of Paris at about **6:00 PM**. Perhaps a light dinner at the nearby creperies, and it is off for a night stroll of the heart of the City of Lights! You are going to love this evening!

THURSDAY, JUNE 16 – PARIS

Walking – Medium

guided tour of **Versailles**, the palace of the 18th century French Kings and perhaps the most spectacular palace in all of Europe. We will bus straight to Versailles, stop there for a bit of lunch, the dive into the palace with our guides. We will learn much of the history of this incredible place, as well as a lot about the history of 18th century France. It is an amazing experience! After the palace and the grounds we will head out to the **Hameau**, Marie Antoinette's peasant Hamlet that she had built for herself so she could play peasant when she wanted! Seriously! And it is a beautiful little idealistic village that I am sure you will enjoy. This promises to be a favorite day of the whole trip!

FRIDAY, JUNE 17 – PARIS

Walking – Heavy

7:00 A.M. – Breakfast

7:30 A.M. – We will walk down the street and be the first in line to tour the great **Notre Dame Cathedral!** I will tell you a lot about Medieval Paris as well as the history and construction of this incomparable Gothic masterpiece with its beautiful stained glass. You'll love having this place to yourself!

Now, because we could not get a group reservation for the Eiffel Tower we will do the next best thing (some say even better) and that is a trip to the top of **Tour Montparnasse**. This skyscraper in the south of the city is the only tower allowed in Paris. Finished in 1973 its 59 floors was immediately criticized as not fitting in with the traditional cityscape, and as a result nothing in Paris is allowed to be build over 7 stories tall. We will metro on over here for a 9:30 AM reservation to the top for a spectacular panorama of Paris. Most Parisians greatly prefer the view from here rather than from the Eiffel tower.

After Montparnasse we will head over to the **Latin Quarter**. I'll give you a walking tour of the heart of Paris – the Ile de la Cite, the Ile St. Louis, and the Latin Quarter. We will talk about the tribal origins of Paris, the Roman Leticia (that's what they called the place), Medieval and Revolutionary Paris, and the wonderful, modern City of Lights! We'll grab lunch on the go, sample some incomparable French pastries, and arrive at the Musee d'Orsay for our 3:30 visit.

The **Musee d'Orsay** is, in my opinion, the finest museum in the world. It is a converted train station that houses the greatest collection of **Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art** on the planet! If you enjoy Monet or Van Gogh or the like, this is the museum for you. It is the most visitor friendly museum in all of Europe, and even if museums are not your thing you will like this one. I'll give you a guided tour of the highlights, then time on your own in this wonderful place

After the museum we will wander through the **Tuilleries Gardens**, the **Place de la Concorde** (where the guillotine was set up during the French Revolution), then of to a group dinner tonight at one of my favorite brasseries in Paris, the **Brasserie Flotes**. We have our own private room. This is an authentic Parisian dinner of French Onion Soup, Duck, vegetables, and a killer desert! After dinner Paris is just getting started! And the patisseries! Magnifique! Paris – the city of lights! Wow, you are really here! After dinner I'll take anyone who wants to go on a stroll up the famous **Champs Elysee** boulevard to the **Arc de Triomphe**, Napoleon's little monument to his armies and himself, then catch the metro back to the hotel. It has been quite a day!

SATURDAY, JUNE 18 – PARIS

Walking - Moderate

7:30 A.M. – Breakfast at our hotel

8:30 A.M. – Departure for Louvre

We will hop on the Metro and head to the great **Musee de Louvre!** This is when I'll give you a guided visit of one of the greatest museums in all the world – the **Louvre**. This museum is huge! We will pause in the courtyard for a rundown of the history of this great building, then I'll be giving you the two hour highlights of the highlights tour which includes works such as the **Nike of Samothrace**, **Code of Hammurabi**, the **Lamassu**, **Death of the Virgin**, and of course the **Mona Lisa**. But there is **so much more** we will see together. After the highlights tour you are free to spend more time in the Louvre if you wish. I'm hanging out here for the evening, and you are free to stick with me if you want. There is a lot to see!

We will finish up the guided portion of the Louvre at about 12:30 PM. Many will want to stay and see more, including myself. Those that want to can follow me for more Louvre delights. There is also a good food court in the museum where you can get some lunch. But from **12:30 PM on you are free to do as you please**. Do your homework and decide what other wonderful things Paris has to offer that you want to see. Take some friends and go exploring! This is your last afternoon and evening in Paris. Make it count! After more of the Louvre and lunch I am heading to **Per Lachaise Cemetery**, perhaps the coolest cemetery anywhere in the world. You are certainly invited to come visit Chopin and Jim Morrison with me!

SUNDAY, JUNE 19 – PARIS TO NORMANDY (Bayeux)

Walking - Moderate

6:30 A.M. – Breakfast

7:30 A.M. – Depart by motor coach for Northern France (Normandy) and enjoy the beautiful countryside as we make our way to some of the sights of the D-Day invasion along the Normandy coast. We'll see **Pointe du Hoc**, sight of a German artillery battery on the edge of a cliff. Our Army Rangers had to approach by sea in full view of this batter, scale the cliffs with grappling hooks and ladders borrowed from the London Fire Brigades, and then storm the batteries a take the gun emplacements to protect our forces that were storming the beaches of Utah and Omaha. It was one of the greatest feats of that fateful morning.

Next we'll take lunch along the way as we drive to **Omaha Beach**, site of the bloodiest part of the landing and the final resting place for nearly 10,000 American soldiers who gave

their lives to preserve your freedom and liberty. The American Cemetery here is the most beautiful, peaceful place anywhere. You'll be moved like never before as we walk through this hallowed ground and walk down to the beach together. We'll stand on the very sands that saw so much agony and talk about what happened here 70 years ago, and why it is still important today. I promise you will never forget your time here on Omaha Beach. Standing on the beach we will see first-hand what the American soldiers faced as they came ashore. I will read accounts of soldiers as they struggled through that first day taking this small part of Normandy. This place is unforgettable.

At about 4:00 PM we'll head off to our hotel, aptly named The **Churchill** www.hotel_churchill.fr in the charming town of **Bayeux**, the first French town liberated on D-Day and a wonderful town to relax in and stroll through. You will also want to shop for a picnic lunch for tomorrow!

MONDAY, JUNE 20 – NORMANDY AND THE D-DAY INVASION SIGHTS

Walking - Easy

7:00 A. M. – Breakfast at the hotel

8:00 A.M. – Depart for the unique **Medieval Monastery of Mt. Saint Michel**, atop of great rock outcropping off the Normandy coast. We'll get there at about 9:30 A.M. to explore, before our reserved visit of the **Abbaye du Mt St Michel** at 11:00. This is a fantastic place. You'll love wandering through this fortress. (more info)Plenty of places to grab some lunch as well! Lunch here as well!

1:30 P.M. - After our visit of the Abbaye we head for **Sainte Mere Eglise**, our first stop on today's D-Day itinerary. This quaint town was taken early in the morning of D-Day by paratroopers of the 82nd airborne division. As we stand in the town square I'll tell you the incredible tale of that night and the things that happened right here in this square. We also have a reserved visit of the **Airborne Museum** just off the town square where you will see and learn much about the paratroopers during D-Day.

Next stop is Utah Beach (more info)

From here we will head to **Arromanches** for our **5:15 P.M.** visit of the D-Day museum there, and see the remains of the artificial port the allies built right after the invasion to unload the men and material that eventually brought an end to Nazi tyranny.

You will have time to grab dinner here in Arromanches. Enjoy a great *crepe* at the vendor on the right corner of the main square!

9:05 – After this full and most memorable day we check in for our overnight ferry to **Portsmouth, England** via Brittany Ferries. Hang out on the boat and settle in for our 11:00 P.M. departure.

TUESDAY, JUNE 21 – STONEHENGE and BATH

Walking - Moderate

6:45 A.M. – Arrival in Portsmouth after a full English breakfast on board. Meet our coach at about 7:30 A.M. for our transfer to Stonehenge! Perhaps the greatest Neolithic site in the world, Stonehenge stands out on the Salisbury Plain of Southern England as a testament to the incredible power of belief and organization. Different peoples worked on this willingly over a 1000 year period, quarrying these massive stones from over 100 miles away, dragging them to this site, and them somehow erecting these 60 ton stones into this circular solar calendar. It really is an amazing thing to see.

From Stonehenge we drive to the delightful Georgian city of **Bath**. We will arrive at about **12:30**, check into **Pratt's Hotel** www.sjhotels.co.uk, and have a lunch break before starting our **2:00 PM** wonderful three hour guided walking tour of Bath by a great English Blue Badge guide. This is where you channel your Jane Austen! She lived nearby, and some of her stories are set in and around Bath. This is a beautiful city in a delightful part of the English countryside. We will be done with the tour at about 5:00 pm, where we will then enter **Bath Abbey**, one of the last and best of the great English Gothic cathedrals. It is such a beautiful church. *You are free to roam from 6:00 to 7:00.* **7:00 PM** We will have dinner together and then enjoy an evening stroll through Bath after the tourist hoards have disappeared. You will love this place!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22 – BATH TO LONDON

Walking - Medium

7:30 A.M. – English Breakfast

9:00 A.M. – Depart for London! Samuel Johnson said that if a man was bored with London he was bored with life! True! We will be staying at the **St. Giles Hotel** www.stgiles.com on the edge of the great West End Theatre district! Dinner on your own tonight, and each night we are in London. I want you to have your evenings completely free from group activities so you can take advantage of the theatre opportunities that abound. As we have discussed, our first stop this morning is the Leicester Square Half Price Ticket Booth. Here each morning you can see what shows are being offered that day for a discount, and you can buy them here. This will save you a lot of money if you are willing to risk not getting to see the show you absolutely have to see! Each morning you can stop by here and pick up tickets. After Leicester Square we are off for an afternoon half-day tour of the heart of London– **Whitehall**, the **Houses of Parliament**, and **Westminster Abbey**! Westminster Abbey is London's greatest Gothic church. Since the 11th century the church has been the coronation site of England's Kings and Queens. One of the most interesting parts of the abbey church is **Poet's Corner**, burial and memorial site for many of England's greatest poets, playwrights, novelists, musicians and scientists. Geoffrey Chaucer was one of the first interred there, and Charles Dickens is nearby. You'll find it fascinating.

You'll love this part of London – it is so much more than just the normal tourist photo op! We will finish up at around 5:30 PM and the evening is yours to enjoy theatre or whatever you want!

THURSDAY, JUNE 23 – LONDON

8:00 A.M. – English Breakfast

9:00 A.M. - We are off to tour the wonderful **Southbank**. What used to be a down and out area with abandoned warehouses

everywhere is now one of the finest neighborhoods in all of London, all thanks to the arts! **Shakespeare's reconstructed Globe Theatre** was built in the late 90's very near its original site, and it utterly transformed the whole of Southwark and beyond. I LOVE this place! We will have a guided visit of the Globe this morning, then explore more of the Southbank for lunch! As we explore this neighborhood you'll see the very modern **London City Hall**, the site of the famous **Clink Prison**, Sir Francis Drake's ship **The Golden Hind**, and of course the original site of **Shakespeare's Globe Theatre** and it's rival, the **Rose Theatre**. We will also visit the site of the **Bear Bating Pit**! And you thought our entertainment was crass!

At **1:00 P.M.** we will cross the beautiful **Tower Bridge** to visit the 11th century castle built by the Norman conquerors of England, the famous **Tower of London**. It has a spectacular history, and we'll talk a lot about that as we tour this wonderfully preserved site. You may want to join one of the free Beefeater tours – tours given by the honorary guards of the Tower who give very entertaining and informative commentary as they walk you through the complex.

Next we dive into the heart of **London City**, the square mile that made up the old Roman Londinium and the heart of today's bustling business district. We'll see Roman ruins, Medieval walls, and modern skyscrapers all crammed together in a wonderful, vibrant city. **St. Paul's Cathedral** and the **World War II Blitz** will cap our tour of this part of London.

Back across the Thames to Southwark for some dinner, then get in line at 6:00 for our groundling tickets to Shakespeare as Shakespeare was meant to be seen and heard! You are absolutely going to love our night at the theatre! What a day!

FRIDAY, JUNE 24

Walking – Your Choice!

This entire morning is completely free to enjoy at your own pace. You can rest a bit and get ready for your trip home tomorrow (so sad) or go exploring Hyde Park – whatever suits you!

1:00 P.M. – After lunch I am going to the **National Gallery** and the **British Museum**, both free, then lead whoever wants to come on a walk of the **heart of West End London**, talking **Charles Dickens** as we go. **Trafalgar Square, Covent Garden, the Dials**, we'll just go and go until we can't go any more! Come along if you want or do your own thing on this last day in London!

SATURDAY, JUNE 25 – BACK TO SLC

7:00 A.M. – English Breakfast Buffet

8:30 A.M. – Hop on the coach for your transfer to Heathrow Airport (LHR) and your flight back to SLC.

Well dang it! It's over. But on the long flight home sit back and think about what you have seen over the last several days. Let it sink in, realize how blessed you are, how wonderful Europe is, and promise yourself that **you will return!**

And thanks for letting me share my passion for Europe with you! It has been a pleasure!

Ciao,

Kelly