

South Coast Youth Symphony Orchestra American Celebration of Music in Spain and France

December 28, 2023 to January 4, 2024 (6 nights/8 days)

Day 1 Thursday December 28, 2023

Depart via scheduled air service to Barcelona, Spain

Day 2 Friday December 29 Barcelona (D)

Arrive in Barcelona

Meet your MCI Tour Manager, who will assist the group to awaiting chartered motorcoach

Enjoy a panoramic tour of Barcelona's highlights including Gothic Quarter, Plaça del Rei, Roman City, Plaça Reial, Port Vell, etc

Late afternoon hotel check-in

Welcome Dinner included, and overnight

Barcelona was originally founded by the Phoenicians. Although it belongs to Spain, it is the capital of Catalonia, and is a more dynamic city than ever, hosting the 1992 World Olympic Games. It is a large industrial center with a very busy port; it's also a university town, and important cultural center with an opera-house and many museums, theaters and concert halls

Day 3 Saturday, December 30 Barcelona (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel

A guided tour includes the Eixample Quarter, location of many of Barcelona's best Modernista buildings. Travel down the Passeig de Gràcia, a luxurious street adorned with elegant wrought iron street lamps which contains the finest examples of Modernist architecture in Barcelona. Pass by Parc Güell. Then visit the La Sagrada Familia, Europe's most unconventional church, yet uncompleted

Lunch, on own

Afternoon Rehearsal

*Performance at Church of Pi in Barcelona as part of the American Celebration of Music in Spain**

Dinner included, and overnight

Day 4 Sunday, December 31 Montserrat / Barcelona (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel, followed by check-out

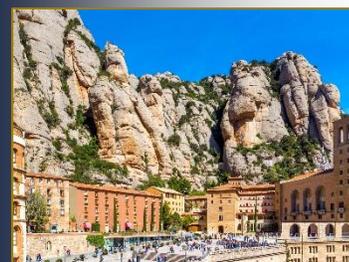
Half-day sightseeing to Montserrat to visit the monastery. The monastery, with its church and the various subsidiary buildings, is a little city on its own. The monastery complex proper is reached by way of the Plaza de la Cruz (Catalan Plaça de la Creu), which is flanked by a restaurant, souvenir shops, a post office, and a bureau de change

Lunch, on own

Return to Barcelona. *Afternoon workshops for both flamenco and guitar*

Dinner included (New Year's Eve) including flamenco show

Montserrat is a special rock formation in Catalonia. According to tradition, this is the most important and mysterious mountain in Catalonia. The Montserrat mountain is located approximately 50 km north-west of Barcelona and forms the separation between the comarcas Anoia, Bages and Baix Llobregat. On the mountain is the sanctuary and



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the Benedictine Montserrat monastery ("Monasterio de Montserrat"). Every year this abbey (dedicated to the Virgin of Montserrat) and mountain attracts many tourists, including Catholic pilgrims, walkers and rock climbers

Day 5 Monday, January 1 Pont du Gard / Avignon (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel, followed by check-out

Transfer to Avignon via Pont du Gard

Visit Pont du Gard, the 2000 year-old bridge that is a major feat of Roman engineering. See the bridge and take a walk on the 157-foot high waterway. Continue to Uzès, source of the springs that traveled over the Pont du Gard. This charming town has an arcaded marketplace and several fine medieval towers

Lunch, on own

Enjoy an orientation tour of Avignon. See the Palais des Papes, the site of the Papal Court during much of the 1300's. Seven "official" popes reigned here, followed by three "anti-popes." Also visit the famous Pont St-Bénézet (best known from the children's round "Sur le pont d'Avignon"), built in 1177, and for centuries the only stone bridge over the Rhône

*Performance at Salle Blanchard Forum in Avignon as part of the American Celebration of Music in France**

Dinner included, and overnight

Protected by its ramparts, the historic core of Avignon is a lively center of art and culture. For 68 years it was the residence first of seven French Popes, then of three others once Pope Gregory XI had returned to Rome in 1377, then of the Papal Legates who remained here until the city was reunited with France in 1791

Day 6 Tuesday, January 2 Arles / Aix-en-Provence / Cannes / Nice (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel, followed by check-out

Take a half-day sightseeing tour of Arles, focusing on the old Roman portion. Visit the Théâtre Antique, a Roman theater that was once a fortress. Its stones were later used for other buildings; its remaining columns are called the "two widows." Also visit the Arènes, the Roman Amphitheater that is one of the best-preserved monuments of Roman Provence. Each arch is supported by Doric and Corinthian columns. In summer there are bullfighting contests in the 20,000-seat arena. Lastly visit the 12th century Église St-Trophime and its cloisters

Lunch, on own

Excursion to Aix. See the 13th century Cathédrale de St-Sauveur, noted for its 16th century walnut doors, Merovingian baptistry and Romanesque cloisters. Also see the Atelier de Cézanne, the perfectly preserved studio of Paul Cézanne, Aix's most famous son, and the Cours Mirabeau, one of the most pleasant boulevards in all of France, with its overarching trees, rows of old mansions and numerous street cafes

Next, stop in Cannes, a resort town on the French Riviera. Cannes is famed for its international film festival

Continue to Nice

Dinner included, and overnight

The ancient town of Arles is an important center of Provençal life, proud of its traditions and famed for both its Roman and its early-medieval heritage. It lies on the Rhône south of the point where the river divides into two arms - the Grand Rhône to the east and the Petit Rhône to the west. Though the painter van Gogh resided here in 1888-89; the



famous "Bridge of Arles" in his picture no longer exists, and Arles possesses none of his works

Day 7 Wednesday, January 3 Nice (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel

A guided tour of Nice includes Le vieux Nice, Chateau, on castle hill for a view of the city, and entrance to the Marc-Chagall Museum. Musée National Message Biblique Marc Chagall is the most important exhibition of Chagall's works (paintings, etchings, lithographs, sculptures, stained glass, mosaics, wall tapestries on Biblical themes). The stained glass wall in the concert auditorium is an excellent Chagall example

Lunch, on own

Afternoon time at leisure

Performance at Espace Laure Ecard in Nice as part of the American Celebration of Music in France*

Farewell Dinner included, and overnight

Nice is the largest resort on the Mediterranean coast and the fifth biggest city in France. It was founded by the Greeks and colonized by the Romans. Its temperate winter climate and verdant subtropical vegetation have long attracted visitors. Nice has beautiful museums, good beaches, and an atmospheric street life

Day 8 Thursday, January 4 Depart for home (B)

Breakfast at the hotel, followed by check-out

Transfer to the Nice Airport for return flight home

****Subject to confirmation***

This is a very flexible itinerary. Except for confirmed appointments and performances, the places of interest and the sequence of sightseeing might be changed if necessary or desirable. In the event of an unavoidable conflict in the performance and the sightseeing schedule, the concert schedule will prevail, and it may be necessary to exclude some sightseeing activities.

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