

MEDITERRANEAN IN-DEPTH

Sept. 20 - Oct. 9, 2016

BY TRAIN

\$6,299 plus air tax



Day 1 Depart Honolulu

Day 2 flying to Europe

BARCELONA

Sept. 22/25 Along the Mediterranean shore of eastern Spain lies Barcelona, one of the great cities of Europe, home to 4.2 million residents.

We will see the main attractions of this country's second-largest city in four days by walking through its square-mile historic center and visiting the most famous building, Sagrada Familia, the fantasy church designed by eccentric architectural genius Gaudi.



To reserve space on this tour
please send a deposit of \$100 per person to:
Callans' Tours 1022 Prospect St., #1007,
Honolulu, HI 96822



The tour will stay four nights in Barcelona so that we can enjoy the many important historical attractions of this very popular city.

We'll spend much of our time in the old section of town, called the Barri Gotic, or Gothic Quarter, a giant pedestrian zone dating to ancient times. This is perhaps the most extensive automobile-free district in Europe (except for Venice, which has no roads). Indeed, one of the most enjoyable activities in Barcelona is taking a walk through its many narrow lanes. They wander, bend and curve like a maze, posing the traveler's question, What's next?

These streets have survived for 2,000 years, ever since the city was established by the Romans, who built a wall around what would become the Gothic Quarter. Over time the Gothic Quarter was ignored and neglected while the rest of the city developed. In recent decades the city

realized what a treasure it had with this intact medieval core and has done a great job to keep it that way.

Many of Barcelona's 35,000 independent boutiques are packed into this pedestrian zone, which is delightfully different than the American system of identical shops in every mall. Barcelona's retail zone continues north from the Gothic Quarter in a 3-mile corridor extending along trendy boulevards, including the Passeig Gracia. This zone was developed in the late 19th century in the Modernista style, a richly decorated version of art nouveau architecture that developed in Barcelona as an expression of Catalan identity.

Barcelona is a bicultural city, with Spanish and Catalan influences. Catalan culture rose here in the ninth century and thrived during eight centuries in the independent kingdom of Catalunya. Its native language is a mixture of French

and Spanish
w h i c h
follows its
own rules.
Barcelona
has always
had close ties
with the rest
of Europe;



for example, while most of Spain was occupied by Muslims during the Middle Ages, this region was not, but was allied with the Franks.

Barcelona's main square, Plaza de Catalunya, is a patch of greenery flanked by two large department stores, El Corte Ingles and FNAC. Catalunya is a transit hub, with metro and commuter trains running underground, major bus





stops and nine streets leading into it.

R a m b l a :
Stroll from Catalunya along

this famous, broad pedestrian promenade extending from the square's southwest corner and continuing to the waterfront and column honoring Columbus. The Rambla is Barcelona at its best, day and night. The huge food market along the Rambla, the Mercat de la Boqueria, is housed in an old-fashioned steel-and-glass structure in the Modernista style of the early 20th century. This busy food hall comes to life in the early morning and stays open all day



All but one lane extending from the east side of the Rambla into the Old Town are for pedestrians only. Rather than walking to the waterfront now, detour into the Gothic Quarter. Half the fun of this layout is getting lost in its alleys, although it helps to have a map and list of destinations for guidance.

Barcelona's cathedral is in the center of this Gothic

Q u a r t e r :
Catedral de Seu was first built in the 13th through 15th centuries in the gothic



style, with a soaring nave, pointed arches, tall columns, 28 side chapels and a spectacular cloister that is home to a flock of noisy geese with attitudes.

Royal palace: One block east you will find the former home of kings and queens, the Palau Reial or Royal Palace, now a history museum, the Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat, which you can enjoy on an optional visit. In 1493, Columbus reported his great discovery of the New World to Ferdinand and Isabella in the palace's spectacular Banqueting Hall. Several other halls and chambers exhibit period paintings, furnishings, weapons, altars and artifacts.

An even more ancient world awaits below street level. The elevator is a time machine whose button says “-2,000 years” rather than “basement,” and brings you 30 feet

down to the original Roman streets where you can see foundations of former houses, wineries, bakeries, leather factories and fortified towers. Smooth paving of the streets and sewers attest to Roman engineering skills behind the world's most sophisticated cities.

Plaza de Sant Jaume: The main Roman street intersection in the underground museum is in approximately the same location of the modern plaza Sant Jaume, home to the city and regional government headquarters.

A few blocks west is Carrer d'Avinyo, which is a pleasure to stroll. Just two blocks further is another main square, the large Plaza Reial, surrounded by classic arcades that are home to several popular cafes. Five blocks south brings you to Passeig de Colon, a wide boulevard along the water's edge.

Waterfront: You could easily spend an afternoon along the waterfront, visiting two major museums and Europe's largest aquarium, containing 8,000 fish. This open, sunny area feels like another world compared with the constricted lanes of the Old Town. Palm trees, outdoor restaurants with views of the Port Vell marina, wide busy streets, and a mix of modern and old buildings make this a refreshing change of pace.

Nautical buffs will surely enjoy the naval history museum, Museu Maritim, housed in the original shipyard structure that partly dates to the 13th century. It is one of Europe's largest secular medieval buildings.

Gaudi: We will see several of Gaudi's most wonderful architectural creations. Start at Park Guell, whose park pavilions are a colorful whirl of curved surfaces, looking something like big ice cream sundaes, inspired by "Hansel and Gretel" and other fairy tales. Bright ceramic mosaics liven up the surfaces in the "trencadis" style of ornamentation, especially on the sinuous benches that line the upper terrace.



From there we continue to Sagrada Familia: This unfinished church is like a whimsical, steel-beam mountain growing out of the landscape, and has become a symbol of Barcelona.

There are many additional beautiful buildings and historic neighborhoods to see in the downtown that we will find in our walking tours. Entering the section of old Barcelona, La Ribera, you will find the main walkway Correr Montcada, which changes names a few times while taking you through the historic center. In the Middle Ages this area was home to palaces, many still standing but adapted to new uses, such as the Picasso Museum.



We will continue rambling through the old town together, checking out the side streets with hidden restaurants, shops, plazas and many historic attractions. You will also have free time to wander back through the Gothic Quarter and absorb more of this fine city.

Indeed, one of the most enjoyable activities in Barcelona is simply taking a walk through the many narrow lanes, away from the traffic. They wander, bend and curve like the maze of a travel mystery that leads to the overwhelming question: what's coming up next? This pattern of narrow streets has survived for 2,000 years, ever since the city was established by the Romans, who built a wall around what would later become the Gothic Quarter. Some of the street pattern we see today was actually established way back then by those clever Romans. Their clustered town surrounded by the wall became what is the heart of today's Gothic Quarter



CARCASSONNE

Sept. 26 Now we're heading by train into France, to one of the most magical places that we've ever been. It's the town of Carcassonne, the largest fortified, medieval village in France.

We'll take you inside the village and on walks through the streets. You'll find it very rewarding to stroll about on the cobblestone lanes within the walled village, where no cars are allowed. It's not a large town by any means, just one-quarter mile long, so it's easy to walk around within the walled area and get a nice feeling for it. Two main lanes and several side lanes make up the entire plan, and yet there is enough there you could easily spend a day or two just wandering, looking at the shops and going to the museum.

The walled town of Carcassonne is a medieval castle that has been inhabited since the Middle Ages. The Count's Castle is the "keep" or strong house in the center of the village, and is open as a fascinating museum of history. Carcassonne was occupied by a ruling lord until the 15th century, and is preserved today much as it was then. There are still 100 people living here today, mostly the descendants of families who have been living here for centuries.



Actually the whole village functions as a large castle, with the double layer of walls running all the way around it. The village was built on top of a hill, with some cliffs around it to offer natural supplements to the defensive walls. There were some battles fought here but the attackers never did get inside.

WALL WALK

One major activity is taking a walk on the wall. From the top of the wall and outside the wall, the walk gives you a real good perspective. The spectacular wall is the defining monument of the city, created by the medieval defenders of the town. You get the feeling that somehow you are back in the Middle Ages when these walls were built, in the 12th and 13th centuries. Take in the interesting views looking down on the parapets, and through the slits for the bow and arrows. On one side there's a





Early evening is also an excellent time to visit the fortified village, enjoying the special combination light from the twilight sky and street lights shining on the cobbled walkways. The town is lit up by spotlights, making a fine view as you approach from below. Several excellent restaurants in the old village offer tempting local cuisine to finish off your night.

BRIEF HISTORY

The hill has been occupied by people

lovely view looking out on the newer side of town, and on the other you see extensive vineyards around this hilltop village, producing some of the excellent wines of the Languedoc. We will probably see beautiful fall colors here even though it will be in late November.



for about 2,500 years. The Romans occupied this land in 122 B.C. when they conquered the south of France, and the Romans set up a fortified town on this hilltop and built the first walls.

With the departure of Rome, the Visigoths took over, the Goths, and they occupied Carcassonne from 460 until 725 A.D. At that point the Muslim armies attacked and then occupied Carcassonne for about 30 years, and they were pushed back by the Franks, who were the ancestors of today's French. Various French factions have controlled Carcassonne ever since.

The main town of Carcassonne is on flat land just below the hill with the castle, and this too is a fascinating place to explore. A pedestrian mall runs for a mile through the center lined with shops and cafes, with branching side streets containing many more stores and sights. It's said to be the new city compared to the medieval castle, but it was built a long time ago in the 13th century for King Louis. It only takes about 15 minutes to stroll from the village down below up to the castle on the hill, so it is quite easy to get back and forth.



the Place de l'Horloge and the adjacent Place du Palais containing the Palace of the Popes. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is considered the largest Gothic palace in all of Europe, although its original furniture is gone and its cavernous rooms are mostly empty.

AVIGNON

Sept. 27/30 With many ancient and medieval sights to see, this 2,000-year-old city is a good home base for touring the Provençal region. We stay four nights to provide plenty of time to visit the nearby towns. Home to nine popes during the 14th century and one of the most beautiful cities in France today, Avignon is a treasure house of palaces, museums and meandering lanes, surrounded by a fortified wall.

This city in the heart of beautiful Provence lays claim to dozens of historic monuments, especially the great Palace of the Popes, which grew into an imposing fortification during the 60-year papal residency and is now a museum.

The popes left the Vatican in Rome for political reasons and lived in Avignon from 1316 until 1377, the city's Golden Era, when great mansions and the massive wall were built. Great wealth flowed into the church coffers, some from rowdy foreigners who could pay their way into the city, much like today's tourists, such that wise visitors make plans to visit in the off-season.

Main sights:

Orient yourself with the town's 7 main squares,



Behind the palace is the old neighborhood where ancient Romans established their town 2,000 years ago, following the Greeks and prehistoric tribes. Simple Roman ruins are still visible on the right side of the small square.

The pedestrian shopping district extends 10 square blocks south, providing a lot of fun streets for us to explore in our visit. On the northern end of Palace Square, you will spot the fortresslike Petit Palais, built in 1318 as a mansion with Gothic pointed arches and an interior courtyard. Now a museum, it houses a collection of 300 medieval paintings, including Botticelli's "Madonna and Child." You might also stop inside the nearby Cathédral Notre Dame des Doms, the town's major surviving Romanesque structure.

Walk a few minutes north from the Place du Palais into a lovely public park called Roche des Domes, resting on the top of a small hill overlooking the Old Town. From the ramparts, take in the beautiful views across the city's rooftops and across the Rhône

River. You will also spot the romantic castle of St. Andre in the distance and the famous half-bridge, Pont St-Bénézet, your next destination.

Pont St-Bénézet,

Avignon's legendary bridge, is another UNESCO World Heritage Site, built in the late 12th century, made famous in the 15th-century children's song: "On the bridge of Avignon, everyone is dancing." You'll be able to see it well from the river bank. This was the only bridge across the lower Rhône River when built, connecting the kingdoms of France and Germany, and thereby turning Avignon into an important trading center.



keep you guessing what's around the bend or which museum or monument is coming up next. Streets are level, riddled with little plazas, fountains,

trees, benches and numerous cafes. While the façades are historic, shops and galleries feature modern interiors and contemporary European items for sale.

Museums: Le Musée Calvet is one of Avignon's major museums, located in the lower section of Rue Joseph Vernet. It's set in a magnificent 18th-century mansion with collections of fine art and decorative pieces from the 15th through 20th centuries.

Paintings from the 19th and 20th centuries are on display at another excellent, small museum, Le Musée Angladon, with masterpieces by Degas, Manet, Sisley, Van Gogh, Cézanne, Picasso and Modigliani, among others.

Day Trips from Avignon

Avignon is ideally situated to offer a variety of easy excursions to beautiful, nearby towns. Two of the best choices are Arles and Aix-en-Provence, which we shall explore on included tours, returning to Avignon each evening.

The Old Town: Enter the Porte du Rhône gate through the town wall. In late afternoon the lighting is a delightful mix of soft sunshine and shop lights, enhancing Rue Joseph Vernet's romantic atmosphere. After about eight blocks it ends at the town's busy main street, Rue de la République.

Continue strolling along Rue de la République, the town center's busiest street, extending from the train station nearly to the town's main square, Place de l'Horloge. This popular square has many cafes all around it and a mix of restaurants that range in quality from simple bistro to fine dining. Several lovely streets branch out from this main square into the Old Town, and will be great fun to explore during our visit on walking tours we will provide and during free time on your own.

Avignon's Old Town is a charming neighborhood of pedestrian shopping lanes, narrow residential streets and little back alleys. At a half-mile wide and long, this historic center can easily be seen on foot in one day. The curved streets will



ARLES

Most famous for its old Roman amphitheater, still intact, Arles is also associated with Vincent Van Gogh, who spent one of his final years here painting 200 canvases. Its real appeal, however, is found in the lovely pedestrian promenades, historic landmarks, museums and tranquil plazas, all of which make Arles one of the most charming places in Europe. Arles, in the heart of Provence, retains a friendly small-town atmosphere with plenty of historic attractions to keep you happily entertained all day.

Our primary strategy for sightseeing here is simply strolling up and down the main lanes to catch their different moods as the day progresses. With such a small historic center, one half-mile long and a quarter-mile wide, it's easy to revisit various sites and thoroughly see the whole place on foot. There are also various museums, monuments and plazas to consider in your visit, along with shopping and eating.

Much of the town center was built during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and its stone buildings have been beautifully maintained, functioning today as apartments and modern shops. Most of the medieval wall surrounding the town is intact, protecting the enclosed space from undue modernization, so the historic center looks as it did centuries ago.

We'll start at the most prominent landmark, the Roman amphitheater called the Arenes d'Arles, one of seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites in town. With a capacity of 25,000 people, it is a smaller version of Rome's Colosseum, completed about



10 years earlier. From the arena, we walk two blocks down the Rue de la Calade to the center of the Old Town, the Place de la Republique, which contains the city hall, ancient church and obelisk centerpiece with fountain, flanked by shopping lanes. The former cathedral, Eglise San Trophime, is another UNESCO World Heritage site with a fantastic series of Byzantine sculptures. The interior is also Byzantine, older than the Gothic.

While there, find the Cloister of San Trophime, the equivalent of an open-air museum, including architecture and sculpture spanning a 300-year period, with Gothic pointed arches on one side and older, Romanesque barrel vaulting on the other.

Museum of Ancient Arles: A 15-minute walk through Place Antonelle and along the Rue du Porcelet (soon to become Rue de la



Roquette) leads us to the promising Musee de l'Arles Antique, displaying treasures from Arles' Roman period, including rows of richly decorated marble sarcophagi, or tombs, of the Romans and early Christians.

Elevated platforms enable you to look down on the large collection of mosaic floors from Roman homes with brilliant depictions of sea creatures, the zodiac, Nereids, the four seasons and people.

An impressive 3-D model of Arles in ancient Roman times shows how

Office a few blocks along on the south side for maps and brochures. Helpful agents can tell you about area attractions.

Next we walk along narrow pedestrian lanes to the Place du Forum, probably the most popular plaza for eating and drinking. Named after the ancient Roman Forum, which was the center of social life in ancient Arles, and part of it has survived. Barrel-vaulted arcades, which served as storerooms



sophisticated the buildings were. A large model shows how little the arena has changed over the millennia. Also on display are original glass works, tools, gold jewelry, small statues and a nice lineup of emperors' busts. The displays remind us that Arles was one of the largest economic centers in the Roman Empire, with a busy commercial harbor and an extensive urban core. Many Roman generals retired here and are buried in the Alyscamps cemetery, along with hundreds of their soldiers, in the south part of town.

Main square: Return to the center along the wide Boulevard Georges Clemenceau, Arles' busiest street. Stop at the Tourist Information

and foundations for the main forum, are beautifully preserved in the underground Cryptoporticos Museum of Arles. Walking through these dark, musty basements is an eerie experience, with water dripping from the stone roof and fragments of statues and buildings lying on the floor. Mysterious side chambers lead to spooky dead ends in what had been a busy shopping mall 2,000 years ago.

Place Voltaire is a another charming spot to observe daily life, with a quiet stroll through a tree-shaded square. Walk a few hundred yards west to the ancient Roman Baths of Constantine, another reminder of the deep history here.



AIX-EN-PROVENCE

It's time to move along on a major day-trip to the city of Aix-en-Provence, so lovely that various French surveys have chosen it the most desirable city in which to live, due to its special ambience. The modest population of just 150,000 residents gives it a small-town charm, yet Aix is big enough to provide all the necessities and comforts of urban living. Nearly 30 percent are university students, lending an air of youthful energy, culture and enthusiasm.

The large pedestrian zone is an idyllic urban landscape of pretty, low-rise buildings three and four centuries old, criss-crossed by a maze of tranquil pedestrian lanes lined with shops and cafes. Little plazas with fountains and benches often accent

1651. Simply called the Cours, it is sometimes considered the most attractive boulevard in all France: lined with shops, outdoor cafés and restaurants in all price ranges along a wide sidewalk with magnificent plane trees towering overhead and three moss-covered fountains in the middle of the street.

The historic, pedestrian center is "Le Vieil Aix," the old neighborhood to the left (north) of the Cours. About one half-mile square, it's easy to cover in a few hours but offers enough variety and texture that you might be tempted to spend the entire day exploring.

Walk a few blocks along the Cours to experience its allure, then turn left on Nazareth or Clémenceau and plunge into the magic of Le Vieil Aix. In two short blocks you arrive at Place d'Albertas, one of the half-dozen small squares you are about to discover, breathtaking in its beauty.

Continue north along what is the main pedestrian lane of the old section, at first called Aude, then changing names to Foch, and you will soon arrive at the prettiest of all squares, Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. Drop anchor for a while at the terrace café to absorb the grand sights all around: the baroque city hall's columns and triangular pediment define this square, punctuated by the tall clock tower and a Roman column in the center, sheltered under a generous sprinkle of trees and livened by a constant parade of



the intersections of various paths. This is French living at its best.

We'll spend our time in this oldest part of Aix, starting on Cours Mirabeau, the broad street established in



people passing through this central crossroad. The neoclassical grain market, now a post office, completes the scene with a matching pediment of sculpted, allegorical figures.

Another attractive square two blocks west is the Place des Cardeurs, whose pastel facades surrounding the large central plaza create a distinctly Provençal atmosphere, enhanced by a row of outdoor restaurants. Cardeurs is often frequented by university students, so it's a prime budget location for lunch. However, you will be tempted by an enormous variety of foods in all price ranges throughout Aix, from the simple take-out sandwiches to the highest quality haute cuisine. You can't walk a minute without seeing more food.

That main pedestrian lane continues north, changing names now to Rue Gaston de Saporta, and leads to Aix's main church, the Cathédrale St-Sauveur. This ancient building is a mix of styles including Gothic, Romanesque and Baroque, and has a peaceful cloister, all of which close at mid-day for siesta, as do many of

the shops. Now backtrack, choosing some alternative routes to wander through.

When done exploring the old section, we return towards the train station with a walk on the south side of the Cours through what is called the Mazarin district. This rectangular grid, five blocks long and wide, has a series of attractive mansions that are now divided into private apartments, along with a significant art museum, Musée Granet, exhibiting a broad range from prehistory up through Aix's most famous native son, Paul Cézanne. A whimsical fountain with four dolphins and an obelisk sits in the middle of Place Dauphin, the central crossroads of this neighborhood.

Aix is an amazing place to visit, but we don't need to spend more than a day to see it, so it is not worth relocating from our comfortable hotel in Avignon to stay overnight. A day-trip will cover it just fine.





FRENCH RIVIERA

The south coast of France along the sunny Mediterranean Sea is one of the world's most beautiful destinations, dotted with colorful seaside towns and inland villages, and its major city of Nice, where we shall stay for three days as a base for visiting many of the nearby sights. Artists, movie stars, jet-setters, backpackers, billionaires and millions of ordinary tourists are drawn by the sweet appeal of this paradise-by-the-sea. Nestled in southeastern Provence, this 50-mile stretch of Mediterranean coast is called the Cote d'Azur by Europeans, or the French Riviera by Americans.

NICE

Oct. 1/4 Nice is divided into numerous neighborhoods, but there are four main areas we will focus: the beachfront, Old Town, shopping district and hotel section. The most famous image of Nice is the broad, ocean-front boulevard, Promenade des Anglais, framed with the blue Mediterranean on one side and a long row of hotels on the other.

Shopping: Nice's main commercial street is Avenue Jean Medecin, stretching 12 blocks, anchored at the lower end by Place Massena and the department store, Galleries Lafayette. On the west side are Rue

Massena and Rue Paradis, with luxury shops such as Cartier, Louis Vuitton and Hermes.

Old Town: Called "Vieux Nice," the Old Town is home to galleries, shops, bars and cafes. In the off-season, Vieux Nice is very peaceful.

A morning street market in the wide Cours Saleya plaza features fresh produce and flowers daily. The Old Town's maze of narrow lanes occupies a triangular slice about 300 yards long on each side. Take a break



at the lovely intersection of Rue Centrale and Rue de la Boucherie, a good spot for people watching. The other great focal point is Place de Palais, which retains an Italian ambience. Nice was part of Italy until it was joined to France in 1860, and still displays a strong cultural blend in features such as its unique language and mixed cuisine.

Art fans will enjoy visiting one or two of the town's fine museums, such as The Matisse Museum. Matisse lived in Nice many years and created some of his finest paintings here. Near the museum, people can be found playing petanque, or boule, France's national sport. The goal is to get your ball near a red ball while knocking other balls as far away as possible.



Next to the Matisse Museum are ruins of a small Roman amphitheater and housing foundations, and a small Archaeology Museum reminding us that the Romans had a major presence here 2,000 years ago. At dinner time, there are hundreds of choices ranging from cheap pizza up to perfection at Le Chantecler in the Hotel Negresco. In between, you will find many wonderful restaurants specializing in Provençal cuisine, featuring local seafoods, fresh vegetables and elaborate salads, with influences from Italy, Spain and Northern Africa.

CANNES & ANTIBES

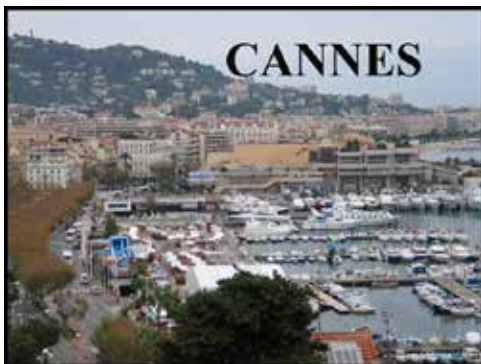
We shall take the train along the coast to Cannes, and drop by the waterfront town Antibes on the way back. Cannes is one of the most legendary of Riviera towns, famous as a glitzy jet-setter destination and for its International Film Festival.



But surprisingly, the main shopping area and old section are down-to-earth, with normal prices and friendly atmosphere.

It's an easy four-block walk from the train station to the shore where we can have a peek at the high life exemplified by extraordinary hotel palaces lining the grand Boulevard de la Croisette. The grande dame is the Carlton, a magnificent century-old structure. The Majestic is another fabled hotel, with Egyptian-themed lounges and cafe.

Old Town: On the other side of the Film Festival Hall, we will reach the



Old Town of Cannes, easily missed by those hesitant to walk uphill, but don't be dissuaded. Called "le Suquet," this simple neighborhood is a welcome counterpoint to the ostentatious display of wealth you've just seen. Stroll through a pedestrian zone that gently rises via staircases and Rue Saint-Antoine to the top of the small hill, providing a great view of the marina and Festival Hall. A few pleasant squares here feature restaurants, ice cream and creperies.

A central lane, Rue Meynadier, is for pedestrians only and runs about a mile toward the train station, where we'll continue the day's journey.



Antibes: Trains whisk you in 15 minutes to beautiful coastal Antibes, which can be explored in a few hours, leaving time to return to Nice for dinner.

Antibes was once a fortified village and has an ancient fort in the harbor with its original wall running along the shore. Walk two blocks to the marina and continue to a gate in the city wall leading into Old Town. Stroll a few blocks farther to explore a peaceful residential neighborhood.

Next, find your way to Rue des Revennes, which becomes Rue James Close, a charming shopping lane lined with boutiques and restaurants so cute that you might want to stay to sample such local grinds as “socca,” comparable to a thick bread crust but made from chick-peas. These few blocks are some of the best in the Riviera.

Rue James Close leads to the main pedestrian shopping street, Rue de la Republique. It connects Place National to Place General de Gaulle, where we turn right and walk five blocks along Avenue Robert Soleau back to the train station, and Nice for the evening.

VILLEFRANCHE and MONACO

Today’s adventure winds along the eastern shores of the Cote d’Azur. We begin at Nice’s main bus station, the Gare Routier.

Villefranche: Leave the bus and walk downhill toward the Cafe de la Paix, then take the steps leading to Old Town, taking note of the arcaded street, Rue Obscure, a historic landmark a block inland from the picturesque marina. This stroll can be finished in 45 minutes. Villefranche is a popular cruise port as well, only about 15 minutes from Monaco by bus or train.

Monaco: Boasting the highest per-capita income, Monaco is the world’s richest, most densely populated country. It is also the second-smallest, after the Vatican, measuring just under a square mile, half the size of New York’s Central Park. Its 30,000 residents don’t pay income taxes, which is why most of them live here. It is a sovereign country with full membership in the United Nations.

Monaco has done a magnificent job with all its money, building wonderful structures and creating an extremely well-planned community. Monaco’s exclusive marina is filled with opulent yachts and circled by fancy shops and cafes. La Condamine is the adjacent shopping zone with several pedestrian lanes including Rue Princesse Caroline. For many, the famous Monte Carlo casino is a highlight, designed in the belle Epoque style by Charles Garnier, architect of the Paris Opera.





ITALIAN RIVIERA:

Oct. 4/5 We stay for two days in the Italian Riviera which gives us time to explore this scenic area further. There are optional boat and train rides along the coast that will take you to Rapallo, Sestri Levante, Levanto and the five famous seaside towns of Cinque Terre.

Portofino: This classic seaside village is preserved in the old-fashioned Italian style as a designated national historic treasure. Located just a few miles from our hotel in Santa Margherita, we will be able to spend most of the day strolling along the cafe-lined harbor of Portofino and exploring its little back-streets with many shops, specializing in lace and other fabrics. With its little bay and colorful square surrounded by lush green hills, it still retains much of its charming old atmosphere.

Cinque Terre: This beautiful stretch of five villages along the rocky cliff-lined shores just south of Santa Margherita, will make a wonderful day-trip. Easily reached by train, we can enjoy a shoreline walk and a scenic boat ride along the coast past the villages, stopping perhaps in Manarola for lunch. A lovely fifteen-minute walk will bring us past dramatic cliffs to Riomaggiore, where we can catch the train back to Santa Margherita for the night.

ROME:

Oct. 6/8 We now continue by train to Rome, the Eternal City, where we spend the final two days of the tour.

Rome is probably the most historic city in the world, with 2,000 years of art and architecture still visible in the great monuments that stretch from one end of town to the other. Along with the ancient history, Rome pulsates with the energy of a great world capital, bursting with fine shops and outstanding restaurants.



Our first walking tour brings you to the famous Piazza Navona, with its picture-postcard perfect St. Agnese Church, and stunning Fountain of the Four Rivers by Bernini — an artist we will encounter several more times in Rome, for he was the greatest of all the Baroque sculptors and architects. This Piazza is considered one of the most beautiful and lively outdoor spaces in the city, and you will probably return here on your own, for it is interesting night and day, and just minutes away from our hotel.





From here we walk two short blocks to the best-preserved ancient building in Rome — the Pantheon. This is a perfect structure, still standing with its great dome intact after one thousand nine hundred years. We walk to another incredible church, St. Ignazio, with its illusionistic ceiling mural painted during the 17th in a three-dimensional perspective that will truly amaze your eyes with its vivid realistic depiction of the heavens opening above.

A few blocks away is the spectacular Trevi Fountain, made famous by the movies and arguably the world's most beautiful fountain. We walk a few more blocks to the Spanish Steps and its lively piazza, to settle in for dinner in any of a dozen fine restaurants in this neighborhood.

church in the world. During this tour you will have an optional chance to visit the Vatican Museum, or you can have the afternoon free to go shopping or pursue your own interests. The grand climax here is the breathtaking ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, painted by the greatest of all renaissance masters, Michelangelo.



We will also show you some of the most fascinating and historic neighborhoods in the area near the hotel. The walk will begin at the Campo dei Fiore, a colorful fruit and vegetable market that has been in business for three hundred years. Nearby is the Palazzo Farnese, one of the most famous renaissance palaces of the city, currently housing the French Embassy. We visit these charming narrow streets along Via Giulia and experience the heart of Rome.

We then walk a few minutes to the Chiesa Nuova, elaborately decorated in the high baroque style, and then on to the Ponte Sant'Angelo, the lovely bridge across the Tiber with baroque angels carved by Bernini.

In late afternoon of our third day in Rome we will fly to Frankfurt and check in to the deluxe Airport Sheraton hotel to spend our final night. This will be a good rest and make it easy to check in the next morning for our flights home to Honolulu, arriving the same evening on October 9.

Next day, our morning city tour will take you to some of the most important highlights of Rome: the Roman Forum, the Colosseum and St. Peters, the most spectacular

Mediterranean by Train Itinerary Sept. 20 – Oct. 9, 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	2 flying to Europe.	20 Depart Honolulu night flight to San Francisco	21 Flying: San Francisco to Frankfurt.	22 BARCELONA 9:45am arr in Frankfurt 11:25am-1:20pm Fly to Barcelona Afternoon rest followed by orientation walk.	23 BARCELONA Morning visit to Gaudi's Parc Guel, with a colorful whirl of curved surfaces. 11am-12noon Visit Sagrada Familia, a Gaudi	24 BARCELONA 9:00am Walking tour in the Barri Gotic, or Gothic Quarter, a large pedestrian zone dating to ancient times. We also walk into the modern downtown, Eixample.
25 Barcelona Full day to enjoy the Merce Festival	26 Carcassonne train: Barcelona-Figueres 9:05-9:58am Figueres-Narbonne 10:20-11:24am Narbonne-Carcassonne 12:00-12:26pm Afternoon walk	27 AVIGNON Morning free in Carcassonne; optional visit into castle museum. Afternoon train to Avignon. Evening orientation walk.	28 AVIGNON Walking tour in Avignon visiting the main sights. to ARLES After lunch a short train ride to Arles for a walking tour then return to Avignon.	29 AVIGNON 9:00am Tour in van to PONT DU GARD, ST. REMY and LES BAUX 6:00pm Back to Avignon	30 AVIGNON TGV to AIX en PROVENCE 9:00-9:35am then continue TGV 12:59-1:11pm to Marseille TGV 6:29-6:46pm	1 NICE Avignon-Nice by TGV 9:33am-12:27pm Afternoon walking tour of Nice's Old Town and walk to the modern downtown.
2 NICE Train to CANNES 9:27-9:54 walking tour Cannes-ANTIBES 1:00-1:08pm walking tour Antibes – Nice ----- Sunday 9 Fly home	3 NICE Bus to MONACO morning visit. Afternoon bus to ST. PAUL and Vence. Bus to Nice	4 Santa Margherita Train ride from Nice to Italian Riviera, 3pm arrival. Afternoon bus ride to PORTOFINO	5 Santa Margherita All day visit to CINQUE TERRE By train and walking.	6 ROME Rapallo-Rome 9:23am-2:16pm Afternoon walk in Rome's historic center visiting the main sights.	7 ROME Morning walking tour in Rome visiting the Roman Forum and Colosseum. Free afternoon	8 ROME Free morning. 3:00pm Dep Rome hotel 6:45pm-8:50pm Fly to Frankfurt

Let's compare our travel style

We travel by train: The train is comfortable, smooth, quiet, relaxing, and so fast it gets you there in half the time. On the train you are free to walk around, have a meal in the dining car or enjoy a picnic lunch, and talk with some of the other travelers on board. First class trains are air-conditioned, so they are cool and quiet. The spacious seats are like sofas, and can recline to make you very comfortable -- you might even take a nap. You can use the clean, convenient bathrooms anytime you want. The rail routing is through scenic countryside, and you can move around to enjoy the views on both sides through picture windows.

Centrally located hotels: We have made a great effort to select fine hotels in the historic centers of the places we visit. This is extremely important, for it enables you to experience much more by just stepping out your front door. In such an advantageous location there are many nearby restaurants, monuments, shops, historic sights, important buildings, landmarks, and other features that you have come on vacation to see. Our central hotel locations enable you to walk freely and safely through interesting neighborhoods, which is the best way to get to know a place. We want you to get the most out of your precious time, and really get a feeling for each destination. Nothing enhances that better than a good hotel in a central location. This is probably our biggest difference in approach.

Shopping like a local: With us you always have time for shopping in local stores, or, if you are not a shopper, use your precious time for other activities, instead of being led by the nose into tourist traps. The historic centers of town are filled with fascinating and unique little shops that are fun to browse through, and we will point you to those neighborhoods and set you loose. If you are looking for any particular items, your Hawaii escort can take some time to help you find them.

In-depth city tours: We include several tours in each city, to give you a well-rounded look at the place. In the large cities we offer panoramic tours are on a motorcoach, and we always provide in-depth walking tours with your Hawaii escort. Our guided walks really make you familiar with a place, and prepare you for some exploring on your own. Because we are staying for two or three days, you have enough time for this, with time left over for your independent activities. We put a special emphasis on history and fine arts. The trips are educational, cultural experiences, and they are also a lot of fun. Our walking tours will take you through historic neighborhoods filled with architectural treasures, and you have time for museums and other cultural attractions.

Leisurely pace -- quality time: We stay for two or three nights in each place. This gives us enough time to show you around with our tours, and then you actually have free time so you can do some exploring on your own. This approach gives you the "best of both worlds" for the guidance we provide on our included tours helps you get the most out of your free time as well. With a proper orientation to a city, you can make the best choices for your independent activities, and we are always there to help. This is how you really get a sense of place, and gain a feeling for the character of each of the cultures on the itinerary.

Small groups, from Hawaii: We limit our group size to 28 people, which we have found is quite important, for when you get above that size the group becomes very impersonal. Nearly every one of us is from Hawaii, so we become a friendly ohana on the road, looking out for each other, and showing a lot of courtesy. New friendships are made that last well beyond the length of the tour.

with the typical bus tour:

They travel by bus: Sitting on a crowded bus for up to eight hours on a long journey can be very tiring. You are confined to a small space, and cannot move around at all. There is no dining car, and often when you pull into a roadside cafeteria, long lines are waiting ahead of you. Restroom stops also slow down the journey and waste your precious time, and they might not stop when you need it the most. The “scenic view” is dominated by the highway filled with trucks and cars. Buses often get stuck in heavy traffic jams on crowded streets, with many other vehicles competing for your road space, which can produce a lot of stress.

Hotels on the edge, or beyond... You finally arrive at your hotel after an all-day bus ride, and find that you are still far away from the main attractions of town. Your tour operator is saving money by putting you in a nondescript hotel on the fringe of the city. There will be very little to see in your immediate vicinity, so you have to spend money and time on a taxi ride into town, or you just don't bother, and miss out. You are practically held hostage in these remote locations, so your tour guide can sell you optional tours. These hidden expenses quickly increase the price you pay for the trip. All you are going to see is what the tour operator shows you on a brief bus tour, and that is usually a quick view of highlights through the window, and then off to the next city for more of the same treatment.

Shopping in tourist traps: With the bus tour, during the brief time you have in a place, you are often herded into tourist-trap “factories” and “showrooms” for “bargain” shopping. You are stuck on the bus, so you are at their mercy. If the tour bus stops at a souvenir mill, you stop too, and there is usually no other shop nearby except the one they have chosen for you. Your guide and driver are getting a commission for taking you there, so that's the place they want you to shop.

Quick city tour: At best they might give you a three-hour bus tour, and that's all. You are usually in town for only one night, and then leave the next morning, so there is little time for anything else. If there is any extra time, you will find the tour guide wants to sell you options that take you away from town, and if you don't buy the option, they set you loose with very little preparation, so you are on your own. Without proper guidance you might end up wasting time and being unable to find the important sights on your own. But there is no time, since you are already heading for the next city. If you get lucky you might have a quick look in one museum, and the little bit of history that you hear is probably delivered in dry lectures on the long bus rides that just might...lull...you...to...sleep.

One-night stands: Most bus tours keep you moving all the time. You arrive in a city late in the day, after driving for many hours, and then you leave in the morning for your next destination. The standard bus tour operators have devised exhausting itineraries that appear to show you all of Europe in 17 days, but when you analyze them, you are sitting on the bus most of that time! Unpacking every night, and repacking every morning, you don't have much time left for sightseeing. With a bus tour you have precious little free time for you are on the go all the time. If it's Tuesday, where are we now? All too often the quick stream of cities becomes a fuzzy forgettable blur.

Big groups, from everywhere: You really don't know whom you are going to be traveling with, or how full the bus is going to be. The bus has up to 55 seats, and they are usually full, with everyone jockeying for position, so you are part of a very big group, with most of the people from every place but Hawaii. A big anonymous group like that creates a less friendly environment in which people do not care much about each other.

CRUISING is even more superficial than a bus, spending only a few hours sightseeing on a tour bus during a brief port visit, the exact opposite of our in-depth walking tours.