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# French Winter Christmas Delights



## Itinerary

### Day 1 - Lyon - Culinary Delights in Lyon's Gastronomic Haven

Arriving in Lyon, the gastronomic heart of France, and commence your tour with a culinary extravaganza at one of the multiple renowned local restaurants. This welcome dinner will allow you to meet your travel companions and your French tour leader. Let your taste buds embark on a delightful journey through a carefully curated meal, expertly paired with local French wines. This immersive dining experience sets the stage, introducing you to the richness of French culture right from the start of your tour.

### Day 2 - Lyon's Festival of Lights Exploration

Embark on foot to explore Lyon's enchanting Festival of Lights. Immerse yourself in the warmth of French hospitality and witness the locals illuminating their windows with candles, a cherished tradition that defines the festival's essence. Create lasting memories in the magical ambiance of the holiday season.

As you wander through the streets, multiple opportunities arise to pause and savour the moment with a glass of Champagne or a delightful local red wine blend from the Rhône region. Lyon's festive charm unfolds in the Christmas market, where chalet booths adorned for the festivities beckon you into the joyful holiday atmosphere. Wander at your leisure, indulging in the vibrant spirit of the season and savouring the unique blend of culinary delights and cultural festivities Lyon has to offer.

### Day 3 - Lyon > Annecy

You will have a leisurely morning to explore Lyon at your own pace. Consider a visit to the famous indoor market, Les Halles, a vibrant hub brimming with local flavours. Indulge your palate in the culinary excellence of the renowned Michelin Star restaurant of Paul Bocuse or embrace the charm of a traditional French bouchon restaurant.



In the afternoon, embark on a scenic journey to Annecy, hailed as France's most livable city, and soon you'll understand why. Nestled against a backdrop of crystal-clear lakes and embraced by a string of majestic mountains, Annecy is a postcard setting that captivates every visitor.

The city, often nicknamed the Venice of the Alps, boasts a unique charm that's hard to resist. As you settle in for 5 days in this picturesque region, the French Alps unfold with snow-capped mountain vistas, medieval allure, and a touch of Venetian ambiance.

#### Day 4 - Annecy

Embrace the vibrant atmosphere as today unfolds as your free day for exploration in Annecy. Immerse yourself in the bustling Market Day, where local and fresh products beckon, creating a sensory delight. Wander through charming streets, exploring local crafts and delicacies that reflect the authentic flavours of Annecy.

Watch the local shops come to life, try the offerings of various restaurants, and roam the old neighbourhoods crisscrossed by charming canals and alleys. This day invites you to leisurely stroll and explore the unique charm that Annecy exudes.

For those seeking adventure, consider a bike ride around the lake, offering breathtaking views of snow-capped mountains and an opportunity to soak in the serene beauty of the Alpine landscape.

#### Day 5 - Annecy

Start on a delightful morning adventure with a visit to a typical Cheese Factory nestled in the mountains—a hidden gem cherished by the locals. Immerse yourself in the art of cheese-making, indulging in a variety of exquisite cheeses. Sample to your heart's content, surrounded by the unique ambiance of the Alpine setting.

In the afternoon, set out on a scenic tour of Lake Annecy, whose pristine waters flow from the snow-capped mountains above. Relax on the tranquil lake, absorbing the unspoiled beauty of the surroundings and enjoying a leisurely day away. This experience provides the perfect blend of culinary exploration and serene enjoyment against the backdrop of the stunning Alpine landscape.

#### Day 6 - Annecy > Chamonix > Annecy

Embark on a breathtaking day trip to Chamonix Mont-Blanc, a world-famous mountain resort renowned for its towering peaks, majestic glaciers, and the picturesque alpine town that bears its name.

In the morning, weather permitting, ascend via the Brévent/Flégère gondola to witness an exceptional panorama facing the Mont-Blanc range. From this vantage point, the Alps unfold in a dramatic display, stretching across the borders of France, Italy, and Switzerland. Later in the day, the journey continues with a ride on the famous red train, leading to France's largest glacier, La Mer de Glace. Translated as the "Sea of Ice," La Mer de Glace is a spectacular sight. Explore the Ice Cave, intricately sculpted into the heart of the glacier, enhanced by fantastic ice sculptures and a mesmerizing colour lighting show.



Following this glacial adventure, enjoy some free time to discover the picturesque alpine town of Chamonix. Immerse yourself in spectacular sceneries, explore historic monuments, peruse artisan boutiques, and indulge in local delicacies such as chocolate and cheese. This day trip promises to leave an indelible impression, with memories of majestic landscapes, glacial wonders, and the charming alpine town lingering long after the day's adventures come to a close.



### Day 7 - Annecy > Switzerland > Eguisheim

Bid adieu to the astonishing French Alps for the picturesque Alsace region, making a captivating stop in Basel, Switzerland. Revelling in the Swiss charm, Basel's market is a haven where wishes come true. Nestled in the heart of the city centre, the historic old town hosts 155 small rustic wooden chalets. Traders and artisans offer an array of products, providing ample inspiration for those seeking unique gift ideas in a magical atmosphere.



As you explore the market, gastronomic pleasures abound; Indulge in waffles, mulled wine, authentic Basel Läckерli (a kind of gingerbread), tasty Swiss raclette, or popular grilled sausages—there is something to satisfy every palate. The festive ambiance, coupled with the culinary delights of Basel, sets the stage for a memorable transition from the Alps to the enchanting Alsace region, where Eguisheim awaits with its own charm and Christmas magic.



### Day 8 - Eguisheim > Gertwiller > Chateau du Haut-Koenigsbourg > Eguisheim

Commence on a sweet journey to a gingerbread Palace, sampling some of the world's best biscuits speciality of the region before tasting in Gertwiller some of the finest renowned Alsace wine. Positioned in the heart of the Alsace wine-growing region you'll learn the heritage and well-kept tradition of what make Alsatian wine so special.



Perched above vineyards and hills, the turreted red sandstone Chateau du Haut Koenigsbourg offers a fairy-tale setting. Marvel at breathtaking panoramas from its ramparts, spanning the Vosges, the Black Forest, and, on clear days, the Alps. Delve into the castle's turbulent 900-year history using Audioguides, gaining a profound medieval impression as you explore this historic gem.



### Day 9 - Eguisheim > Kayserberg > Riquewihr > Colmar

We'll head to Kaysersberg for a Christmas exhibit. Each year, the village goes all out showing the expanse of Alsatian Christmas decorations. Take some time getting into the Christmas spirit by admiring the meticulous, original designs straight from the creators' imaginations. Next stop is Riquewihr, a charming medieval village nestled among the vineyards, where you'll discover an authentic Christmas market in a unique setting. The bright colors of the half-timbered homes add to the postcard-like setting of traditional Alsace. Take your time wandering the cobblestone streets and admiring the marvelous decorations covering the facades and village monuments.

Immerse yourself in the shimmering colours of Little Venice in Colmar, warming up with a cup of delightful hot chocolate. Spend some time strolling through the Christmas market enjoying what the ambiance



has to offer— small chalets with traditional Christmas decorations and housewares, original gift ideas, and culinary specialties swathed in spicy holiday smells.

### Day 10 - Eguisheim > Strasbourg > Eguisheim

Our journey transports you to the winter wonderland of Strasbourg, home to one of the world's oldest Christmas markets. Begin by strolling down cobblestone streets, marveling at medieval architecture, and sipping on Mulled wine, immersing yourself in the enchanting atmosphere of the French Christmas capital.

You'll enjoy a delightful boat ride on Petite France, where the magic of the holiday season comes to life. From the awe-inspiring Gothic Cathedral to the charming canals of La Petite France, each element holds a tale waiting to be explored.

As part of this cultural immersion, you'll also visit the Caves Hospices de Strasbourg, adding a historical touch to your exploration of this captivating city. These caves, with their intriguing history, add another layer to the rich tapestry that Strasbourg weaves for its visitors.

### Day 11 - Eguisheim > Champagne region > Paris

As we bid farewell to the enchanting Alsace region, our journey takes us to the dazzling City of Lights. Along the way, we make a delightful stop in the Champagne region, unravelling the secrets of its renowned fabrication and indulging in the sampling of one or two exceptional varieties.

Upon settling in Paris, you'll have a free evening to explore the capital at your leisure. Roam the Parisian Christmas market stalls, immersing yourself in the festive ambiance, and savour gourmet treats that add a touch of culinary delight to your evening.

### Day 12 - Paris > Versailles > Paris

In the morning, our journey continues with a visit to the Chateau de Versailles, an emblematic symbol of French royalty and dynasty. Explore the opulent halls and gardens that resonate with the grandeur of France's historical legacy.

Later in the day, we gather for our last dinner together, a moment to reflect on the magical journey we've shared. Cheers resound as we celebrate the bonds formed with our fellow travellers, the magic that unfolded in each destination, and the sparks of joy in everyone's eyes. This tour has been more than a travel experience; it's been a journey of a lifetime, filled with moments to cherish and friends made for life. As the evening unfolds, immerse yourself in the nostalgia of the past days and savour the magic of this unforgettable tour.

### Day 13 - Paris

As we bid farewell to your tour leader and fellow travellers, your enchanting journey through France may be coming to an end, but the possibilities for exploration continue. We invite you to consider optional local cruises, offering unique ways to celebrate Christmas and/or New Year in different regions of France.



Our team is here to assist you in making your way to your next destination, ensuring a seamless transition from this magical tour to your future adventures.

We sincerely hope that we've been successful in providing you with a true French Christmas wonderland experience.

It has been our pleasure to have you travel with France Travel Solutions, and we look forward to welcoming you again for another adventure. May your memories of this journey be filled with the warmth of holiday magic, and may your future travels be equally filled with joy and discovery. Safe travels, and à bientôt!



## Tour Inclusions and Entry Admissions

### Accommodation

- 12 nights in boutique accommodation

### Your Tour Team

- Experienced bilingual Tour Leader and Chauffeur

### Transport

- Premium minibus transportation
- Your Tour Leader has the flexibility to take you to your point of interest; you can choose between many options

### Meals

- 6 European-style breakfasts (B),  
1 lunch (L), 2 traditional dinners with locals (D)

### Entry Admissions

- Welcome Dinner
- Festival of Lights Tour of Lyon
- Funicular Panoramic experience in Lyon
- Entrance tickets at the Chamonix Mont-Blanc cable car (if weather permitted)
- Entrance tickets for The Monteverdi Railway (red train)
- Discovery Lake Cruise on Annecy Lake
- Cheese Factory visit
- Visit of the Palace of Gingerbread and factory
- Entrance and audio guide Château du Haut-Koenigsbourg
- Visit of Alsatian's wineries with tastings
- Sightseeing river boat cruise on Petite France Canal Strasbourg
- Visit of the historical Cellars of Strasbourg Hospice
- Visit of a Champagne winery with tasting
- Entrance and skip the line Versailles castle Paris



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