



**NACAA Horticulture & Master Gardeners Tour
France & Malta**

Date 1- May 13 - May 24, 2018

Possible 2nd date - May 20 - 31, 2018

Day 1 (Sunday, May 13) - Depart the U.S. for an overnight flight to Paris, France.

Day 2 (Monday, May 14) - Morning arrival in Roissy Charles de Gaulle International Airport where you will meet your English speaking guide. Departure to Giverny (90km) with lunch on the way. Visit the famous Monet's gardens in Giverny. Claude Monet called this place home for forty-three years, from 1883 to 1926. With a passion for gardening as well as for colors, this founder of Impressionist painting created a number of famous true works of art at this scenic garden. Transfer and check into your hotel.

Overnight Honfleur

(L,D)



Day 3 (Tuesday, May 15) - Departure to Varengeville-sur-Mer (65 km). Visit the fabulous gardens of Bois des Moutiers with one of the family members of the owner. The 30 acre park is located in a valley facing the sea created on acidic soil, which allows the growth of many rare species, in total contrast to the local vegetation. The gardens were established at the time Dieppe hosted artists and writers in the late nineteenth century. Later, depart Moutiers by the shaded path to the old church of Varengeville and its marine cemetery at the top of the cliffs. Stop for lunch on the way to an apple cider producer's farm for a visit and tasting. Next, visit Astredhor, the regional association of horticultural experimentation. This organization aims to help both producers and community resources work together to improve horticultural production with environmental requirements and techniques in mind. When you arrive at Honfleur, there will be a guided visit followed by a small amount of free time.

Overnight Honfleur

(B,L)



Day 4 (Wednesday, May 16) - After breakfast, travel to the World War II historic area of Normandy and walk along Omaha Beach and see the memorial monument. Make a short stop to a Military Cemetery where over thousands of soldiers who died in the Normandy campaign are buried. Afterwards, visit Levavasseur Nursery, a 200 year old

family owned nursery that focuses on hedge plants.

(Overnight Chaumont)

(B,L,D)



Day 5 (Thursday, May 17) - Departure to the Loire Valley, with a length of 280 km (174 mi) and covering 800 km² (309 mi²), the area has been registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its living cultural landscape. Visit the château and gardens of Villandry which is a Renaissance château located at the heart of three levels of terraced gardens. It is the last of the great Renaissance châteaux to have been built on the banks of the Loire River. Although the estate is renowned for the harmony of its architecture, it is especially well-known for its gardens that spread across three terraces combining esthetics, diversity, and harmony. Lunch and visit the château and gardens of Chenonceau, once a royal residence as property of the crown. It is a truly exceptional site, being built along the Cher River and is second only to Versailles as the most visited château in France.

(Overnight Chaumont)

(B,L,D)



Day 6 (Friday, May 18) - Visit to Chaumont-sur-Loire's Park, you will see that from the outside of the castle which overlooks the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Loire Valley, is a fine illustration of both the defensive architecture of the Gothic period and

the more leisure-inspired style of the Renaissance. A natural belvedere overlooking the Loire, offers one of the most beautiful views of this royal river, the Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire that extends over an area of 75 acres. The estate is comprised of the castle (15C-19C), stables and landscaped park designed by Henri Duchêne. This area is also the venue for the International Garden Festival (late April to mid-October). The estate is also currently hosting installations by contemporary artists and exhibitions by famous photographers. Following lunch, travel to Versailles Palace and Gardens. First, you will have a special guided tour of the beautiful gardens designed by Le Notre. Then continue with a tour (audio guides included) of France's most famous and prestigious castle of Kings that will give you a chance to see the unique Hall of Mirrors and all of the King and Queen's apartments.

(Overnight Paris)

(B,L)



Day 7 (Saturday, May 19) - Visit Albert Kahn's gardens, where guests can experience horticulture models from different areas such as Europe, America, Africa and Asia in the 7 variations of gardens in this 4 hectare (10 acre) site. After lunch, enjoy an extensive 2 hour city tour of Paris. All of the world famous classics will be on the itinerary from the Champs Elysées, to the Louvre, Notre Dame, Latin Quarter and more! Dinner will be served at a traditional restaurant close to the hotel.

(Overnight Paris)

(B,L,D)



Day 8 (Sunday, May 20) - Departure to the airport and flight to the island of Malta located in the central portion of the Mediterranean Sea. Meet your guide as you depart the airport and enjoy lunch. Next, take an afternoon walking tour of the capital city of Valetta which will allow you to discover the Upper Barraka Gardens, which offer a splendid view of the Grand Harbour. You will then visit St. John's co-cathedral, with its magnificent decorations dating back to the time of the Knights, includes the cathedral museum as well as the oratory to view the famous Caravaggio masterpiece: The Beheading of St. John. The last stop will be 'The Malta Experience', a slideshow on a big screen that traces the history of Malta.

(Overnight Saint Paul)

(B,L,D)

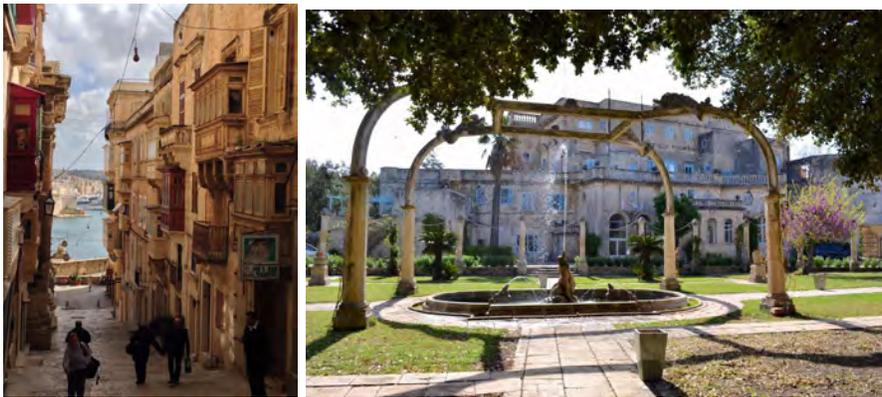


Day 9 (Monday, May 21) - Visit the beautiful President's Kitchen Garden in Malta. The Kitchen Garden is one of the most historical gardens in Malta. The beautiful garden belongs to the San Anton Palace and has been providing the palace with vegetables since the time of the Knights. Next, pay a visit to San Anton Gardens. From 1802 until 1964, San Anton Palace was the official residence of the British Governor, after which it

remained a state building and is now the residence of the Maltese President. Various heads of state have visited the gardens over the years and numerous plaques mark their ceremonial tree planting. The garden is a botanical delight with mature trees, old stone urns, fountains, ponds and formal flower beds. The garden also holds a wide variety of plants and flowers, such as Jacaranda trees, Norfolk Pines, Bougainvillea and roses. Lunch and visit to Villa Bologna: a charming, elegant and welcoming 18th century Maltese country house, still lived in by successors of the family that built it in 1745. The stunning Villa Bologna Garden is one of the finest examples of a historic Maltese garden. Split in two sections– the old garden and the new – you can actually see how there were two stages of development here, with some spaces crafted during the baroque era and others later.

(Overnight Saint Paul)

(B,L,D)



Day 10 (Tuesday, May 22) - Meet a botanist professor from the University in charge of the Argotti Botanical Gardens and visit one of the botanical gardens. Situated in Floriana, the Argotti Gardens were laid out in the 18th century as a private garden belonging to Grand Master Pinto. The gardens became botanical a century later, with a rich collection of trees and shrubs from oaks to oleanders and potted plants, especially cacti. The gardens also hold a variety of water features – fountains, ponds and water towers. The private section has a number of both indigenous and foreign plants. There is a small horticultural museum housed in part of the villa exhibiting seeds, plant pressing equipment, gardening maps and records. Lunch and a landscape reading activity will take you on a remarkable site that will allow you to understand how, on the scale of a small territory, this landscape allowed people to create communities, agricultural areas and urban development and how it relates to local issues.

(Overnight Saint Paul)

(B,L,D)



Day 11 (Wednesday, May 23) - The day will begin with a Harbour cruise where you can gaze at the impressive defensive architecture of the Knights of St. John and admire the creeks of the Port of Marsamxett and the Grand Harbour. This excursion will end with a panoramic tour by coach of the marinas of Ta' Xbiex and Msida, the bastions of Valletta and the Lower Barrakka Gardens. After lunch, visit an apiculture centre to discover the traditional methods of bee breeding and the extraction of local honey. A 15-minute commentary will be followed by a tasting session of different honeys. You will then be able to visit the apiary. The final tour of the day will be to an olive grove where the different methods of the olive culture used throughout the centuries will be explained. This culture dates back to the Phoenician and Roman domination establishing the olive trade of our times, and which eventually an industry boosted by the local farmers became popular. You will then have the opportunity to witness the olive pressing, the oil separation and bottling (generally in September and October). The sampling of different qualities of olive oil will conclude this highly interesting visit, all this accompanied by dried tomatoes, goat cheese, Maltese bread and local wine. In the evening enjoy a farewell dinner! There you will discover some ancestral treasures of Malta's culture regarding Maltese wines and traditional cooking dating back 1,000 years. A duo of musicians dressed in traditional costumes will stroll from table to table, all of this in a typical Maltese atmosphere.

(Overnight Saint Paul)

(B,L,D)



Day 12 (Thursday, May 24) - After breakfast, take a flight from Malta to Paris to connect with your return flight home.

(B)

"This itinerary is subject to change without prior approval. Please note that if a last minute cancellation occurs, a replacement technical visit of equal value will be arranged."

Included: 20 passengers - Estimated per person \$3,780 based on double occupancy, single room supplement upon request

***Subject to booking**

- Accommodations (10 nights)
- Transportation
- Bi-Lingual Guide/Driver
- Tours/Technical Visits
- Gratuities for guide
- Meals as indicated on itinerary (28 meals)
 - B= Breakfast
 - L= Lunch (2 course)
 - D= Dinner (3 course)
- Roundtrip airfare France to Malta

Not Included:

- International Airfare US>France (Roundtrip estimated \$600-\$1300 depending on departure city. Your guide and bus is scheduled to leave the airport just before lunch and you should schedule your flight to arrive in the morning. Contact alex@explorationsbythor.com to validate your time of arrival and departure before booking your airfare.
- Cost of valid U.S. passport or other documents necessary for travel to France/Malta
- Upgrades on travel insurance coverage (optional)
- Airline seat upgrades
- Excess baggage fees
- Souvenirs
- Leisure activities on free days
- Hotel charges for incidentals, including telephone calls, pay per view movies, mini bars, and snack trays, personal laundry, room service, and hotel penalties for smoking in hotel rooms.

Payment Schedule:

October 15, 2017- \$500 non refundable deposit

January 15, 2018- \$1,640

March 15, 2018- \$1,640

**3% credit card transaction fee*