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Best Boutique French Tour Operator

FRANCE OFF THE BEATEN PATH



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Off the Beaten Path, LLC is a multi-award winning, American owned and operated tour company specializing in small group active tour travel in France. We invited Founder and President Christy Destremau to tell us more about the company and the unique experiences it offers.

Founded and helmed by Christy Destremau, an American Francophile who holds French citizenship and has been living in France, totally immersed in French culture for over two decades, France Off the Beaten Path Tours by Off the Beaten Path, LLC celebrates 24 years of delivering excellence in 2018. With offices in the USA and St. Remy-de-Provence, France, the firm draws upon its extensive experience and local friendships with France's best loved and most highly recognized professionals to design and deliver authentic and engaging active small group, walking, gourmet foodie, wine, culinary, and cultural tours in France.

Services offering include regularly scheduled six day/ five night tours to Provence, Loire Valley, and Bordeaux, France, and four day/ three night tours to Champagne, France. The company also specializes in organizing custom designed tours for private groups to discover France. Christy, travel expert, photographer, and contributor to PJ Adams' Travel Guide series; Loire Valley, southern France, Bordeaux, and Champagne, outlines how the company aims to ensure that guests receive the very best possible and authentic experience when they travel with Off the Beaten Path, LLC.

"At Off the Beaten Path we ensure that our tour guests feel welcomed and at home with our French friends on every tour. Whether we're cooking at home with famous French chefs who are family friends, wine tasting in a friend's 13th century wine cellar, or picnicking amidst lavender fields during a walking excursion, each experience contributes to a globally enriching experience of French cultural and tradition. Offering more than just a holiday, Off the Beaten Path transforms the entire guest experience into a personalized and exclusive unparalleled active and cultural affair that aims to exceed guest expectations every time. We connect guests with our lifelong, local French friends and family who rank among France's top-rated chefs, specialty artisans, artists, wine producers, entertainers, and hotel and even castle owners.

"Every tour offers an unparalleled level of flexibility with numerous daily options featuring varying levels of activeness and cultural experiences to choose from. Designed to appeal to both walkers and non-walkers, there is something for everyone,

and guests always have the flexibility of deciding how each day unfolds. In order to provide guests memorable, unparalleled vacation experiences in France year after year, we also incorporate guest feedback to improve and enhance tour itineraries. With each new tour travel season comes some new experiences and additions to keep itineraries fresh and fun. With so many options available during each tour, the company ensures guests the flexibility to be as active as one chooses (more walking, less walking, shopping time, cultural discovery, people watching, photography, etc.), and to also enjoy leisure time to pursue independent interests, all while enjoying the perks of traveling in a small group."

Within the tour travel industry, the company is seeing a growing interest from travelers for more authentic, personalized, and interactive experiences that are unique to truly understanding or getting a genuine feel for France and its exceptional foodie, wine, and artisan culture. Travelers are in search of experiences that open doors to French culture through activities that take them beyond typical touristic outlets. For example, some favorite experiences featured in our tours include "cooking at home" cooking classes, dining at home with local French families, private wine touring and tasting to estates closed to the public, and tours of cultural artisan workshops (olive oil, chocolate, art).

As such, Off the Beaten Path tours now include a cooking at home culinary class with award winning chefs who are more than just famous faces, but rather are personal family friends who welcome travelers into their homes and kitchens for an opportunity to spend time in a French home, and offer travelers a close-up look inside what it means to be French, share a meal in a French home environment, and enjoy moments traditional tourists could not enjoy on their own.

Overall, in order to meet clients' ever evolving expectations, Off the Beaten Path is committed to constantly innovating and adapting, as Christy concludes.

"At Off the Beaten Path we are continually striving to create exciting itineraries to additional destinations within France. Currently, one of our most popular tours is our "Best Adventures in Provence"® Gourmet

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Walking Tour," a 6-day tour featuring guided daily walks (through lavender and sunflower fields, vineyards, olive orchards, artist perched villages, and more) combined with foodie, wine, and cultural experiences, as well as guided options for non-walkers, and runs April to end of October each year.

"Thanks to the success and popularity of our "Best Adventures in Provence"® Gourmet Walking Tour", our team recently designed a 2nd style tour to discover Provence exclusively through food and wine experiences (no walking) called, "Provence in Your Plate"®, and is available to book for 2019. Our "Provence in Your Plate"® Tour is a non-walking tour of Provence that focuses uniquely on hands-on cooking and pastry making classes, wine touring and tasting, and gourmet foodie experiences. We have also developed a Van Gogh tour, to be led by our Van Gogh specialist, that takes travelers on a journey following in the footsteps of the artist from Paris to Provence, and will be available for the 2020 travel season. Our multi-region French foodie and cultural tour that begins with unique culinary experiences in Paris, and from there takes guests on a premier gourmet tasting adventure through the Loire Valley and southwest France concluding in Provence will be offered twice each year beginning with the 2019 travel season. Our philosophy is to continually reach out to design itineraries that take travelers on authentic and engaging experiences to discover the heart and soul of this beautiful country that we have the good fortune to call home."