Gardens of the River Seine Cruise



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Cruise & Walks	France	1	190kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Be inspired by the beauty of France's most celebrated gardens while cruising in comfort through Normandy and the Seine Valley aboard luxury river cruise ship, the Amadeus Diamond. Accompanied by a Horticultural Specialist Tour Manager, we'll explore the magnificent grounds of the Palace of Versailles, visit Monet's house and gardens at Giverny, and discover the imaginative clifftop gardens of Étretat overlooking the Alabaster Coast and the English Channel. From magnificent rose displays and innovative château gardens to the dramatic coastal settings of Belle Époque villas, this delightful journey offers fresh gardening inspiration at every stop.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Smaller ship for a more intimate experience and relaxed feel on board
- Fully escorted travel from the UK with an HF Horticultural Specialist Tour Manager
- River cruising and guided garden visits with your Specialist Tour Manager and local guides
- A visit to Monet's house and garden at Giverny
- The grand gardens at the Palace of Versailles
- Roses in bloom at the Parc de Bagatelle
- The spectacular clifftop Jardins d'Etretat

- The renowned Jardin d'Agapanthe

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return rail travel from the UK and transfers
- Fully escorted from the UK by an HF Holidays Horticultural Specialist Tour Manager
- 7-night river cruise with accommodation in an en-suite river view cabin
- Full board dining featuring breakfast, multi-course lunch on board or picnic lunch during excursions and dinner with menu choices, afternoon tea and late night snack
- Wine, beer and soft drinks served with lunch and dinner
- 24-hour complimentary tea and coffee available in the Amadeus Club
- Welcome cocktail reception and dinner and gala dinner
- Guided garden themed excursions as described in the itinerary
- Onboard entertainment as described in the itinerary

ITINERARY - ITINERARY

Day 1 **Arrival and embarkation**

Meet your HF Holidays Horticultural Specialist Tour Manager and fellow travellers at London St Pancras International before boarding the Eurostar to Paris. On arrival, we'll visit Parc de Bagatelle, home to an impressive rose garden filled with around 10,000 plants. We'll then continue to our river cruise ship, *Amadeus Diamond*, with time to unpack and settle in. This evening, enjoy a welcome cocktail and special dinner as we set sail along the River Seine.

Day 2 **Palace of Versailles**

We wake in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, where the Seine and Oise rivers meet. From here, we'll travel by coach to the magnificent Palace of Versailles to explore its world-famous gardens. Designed by André Le Nôtre, these vast formal grounds feature elegant parterres, ornamental lakes, fountains and tree-lined avenues that reflect the grandeur of the French royal court. We'll return to the ship in the late afternoon before sailing towards Rouen.

Day 3 **Gardens of Normandy**

During breakfast this morning we arrive in Rouen, the historic capital of Normandy. Today we'll visit two exceptional private gardens, beginning with Les Jardins d'Angélique. This charming garden is filled with herbaceous borders, roses and carefully considered planting schemes. We'll then continue to Le Jardin Plume, an acclaimed contemporary garden regarded as one of France's finest. Later this afternoon, we'll return to the ship and sail towards Le Havre.

Day 4 The gardens of Étretat

From Le Havre, we'll travel along the Normandy coast to the remarkable Jardins d'Étretat. Set high above the area's famous white cliffs, these contemporary gardens combine imaginative topiary and sculptural planting with sweeping views across the English Channel. Afterwards, there'll be free time to explore Étretat's seafront, cafés and charming streets. Once a favourite retreat of artists and writers, this delightful seaside town has plenty of character. This evening, local chanson singers will entertain us on board with a taste of French music and culture.

Day 5 Saint-Georges de Boscherville and Jardin Agapanthe

Today we leave the ship in Le Havre and travel to the gardens of the Abbey of Saint-Georges de Boscherville. These beautifully restored monastic gardens recreate medieval horticultural traditions through medicinal plant beds, orchards and formal terraces overlooking the Seine. We'll then continue to Jardin Agapanthe, designed by landscape architect Alexandre Thomas. Known for its imaginative planting, reflective pools and intimate garden "rooms", it is considered one of France's most innovative gardens. In the late afternoon, we'll rejoin the ship at Caudebec-en-Caux and set sail after dinner.

Day 6 Monet's garden at Giverny

Relax on board and watch the scenery unfold as we sail towards Vernon, pausing briefly at Les Andelys. This picturesque stretch of the Seine takes us past chalk cliffs, wooded hills and wide valley views. After lunch on board, one of the holiday's highlights awaits: Claude Monet's house and gardens at Giverny. Explore the colourful flower garden and Japanese-inspired water garden that influenced some of the artist's best-known Impressionist paintings. We'll rejoin the ship at Mantes-la-Jolie in the late afternoon and continue towards Paris.

Day 7 Château de Fontainebleau

Today we'll visit the splendid Château de Fontainebleau, one of France's most important royal residences. Surrounded by formal gardens, landscaped parkland and ornamental lakes, the château offers a fascinating glimpse into centuries of French history, art and garden design. This evening, a gala dinner on board provides a fitting finale to our cruise.

Day 8 Departure day

After breakfast, we'll say farewell to the crew and transfer across Paris to Gare du Nord. From here, we'll board the Eurostar for our return journey to London.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Gentle walking grade 1

Short, easy walks on level paths with no stiles. Ideal for relaxed walking and active sightseeing. Typically, 2-3 miles (3-5km) or less, with little if any ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

MS Amadeus Diamond

Cabin Facilities

Newy refurbished in 2027, Amadeus Diamond brings new levels of luxury to your river cruise experience. For moments of relaxation, guests can enjoy the sun deck, fitness room, hair salon and massage room. In the restaurant, regional-inspired specialties are served alongside ever-changing river views.

Each cabin features a spacious bathroom with a walk-in shower, luxurious Rituals bath products, and a hairdryer. Fixed panoramic or French windows fill the accommodation with natural light whilst thoughtful touches like a comfortable bed, ample wardrobe space, in-room safe, flat-screen TV, individual climate control and direct dial telephone ensure a restful stay.

Ship facilities

- Restaurant
- Panorama lounge bar
- Massage room
- Fitness room
- Lift between the Haydn and Mozart decks (sun deck not accessible by lift)
- Shop
- Amadeus Club with 24 hour tea and coffee station
- Putting green, chess board, shuffleboard and loungers on sun deck

Ship Technical Details

- Construction: 2009
- Renovation: 2019
- Flag: Germany
- Length x Width 110m x 11.4m
- Draft: 1.3m
- Decks: 4
- Cabins/Suites: 62/12
- Max.passenger: 146
- Crew members: approx. 40
- Speed: 25 km/h

VACCINATIONS & HEALTH

Vaccinations & health information

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see whether any health precautions are needed for your trip. Health advice and requirements can change, so we recommend doing this in good time before travel.

As a general rule, travellers should ensure they are up to date with routine UK vaccinations and boosters, including, for example, MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Some countries may require you to have specific vaccinations such as Malaria, Rabies and Yellow Fever. Please check with your GP if you are unsure.

Please note that the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is restricted or banned in certain countries. If you will be carrying medication, you should check with the relevant embassy or consulate before travelling. As an extra precaution, we recommend keeping medication in its original packaging, carrying a copy of your prescription, and, where possible, asking your pharmacist to provide the medication name in the language of the country you are visiting.

For further country-specific health advice, visit www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk. If you are travelling from outside the UK, please consult your own doctor and check local entry requirements.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passport & Visa information

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

Passport Requirements

This information applies to travellers holding a full British Citizen passport. Entry requirements vary by destination and can change at short notice. For most EU and worldwide destinations, passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay. Some countries also require a minimum period of validity remaining on your passport (often up to 6 months beyond your return date), even if you are not staying that long.
We strongly recommend ensuring your passport has at least six months' validity remaining at the time of travel to avoid any issues.

If you hold a different type of British passport or a passport issued by another country, you must check the requirements with the relevant embassy, consulate, or official government website.

Visa Requirements

Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling.
British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website:
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

· Walking boots

· Waterproof jacket

· Waterproof trousers

· Insulated jacket/top

· Walking clothing

· Walking socks (plus spares)

· Sunhat

· Gloves/mitts and warm hat

· Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)

· Headtorch

· High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)

· Sunglasses with a dark lens

· Rucksack (15-30 litres)

· Mobile phone

· Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)

· Passport

· Visa (if applicable)

· Copy of your travel insurance policy

· UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

· Collapsible walking poles

· Swimwear and travel towel

· Snacks

· Dry bags

· Rubbish bags

· Insect repellent

Optional extras

· Camera

· Sit mat

· Flask for hot drinks

· Durable lunch box

· Gaiters

· GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

USEFUL INFORMATION

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so before you travel.

For more information about healthcare and its costs, please visit: https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/

Drinking Water

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Standards for drinking water vary widely around the world. In many destinations, tap water may not be safe to drink, brush your teeth with, or use for making ice. Where advised, you should drink only bottled or treated water and ensure that bottle seals are intact before use. If bottled water is unavailable, water should be boiled or filtered.

Staying well hydrated is particularly important in hot climates and during active holidays. Carry water with you and drink regularly.

If you are unsure about local water safety, check official country-specific health advice before travel, or ask your accommodation or local guides for guidance once you arrive.

Useful information

Dress Code On Board Ship

There is a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere on board. Smart casual clothing is acceptable for all meal times; jackets and ties are not required for meals. The Captain's Dinner is an opportunity to dress up should you wish.

Optional Excursions On Board

A small-group guided excursion is included every day exclusively for HF Holidays guests. In addition the ship offers a range of optional excursions which can be booked and paid for onboard. Details will be provided by your Cruise Director.

Tipping

Gratuities for the Amadeus onboard crew are included in the price of your holiday. You are not required to pay any additional tips for onboard services. Gratuities for local guides and drivers are not included in the price of your holiday. Should you wish to tip them for excellent service, it is customary to tip local guides between €2 and €5 per person and drivers €1 to €2 per person for a 1/2 day tour.

Useful information

Luggage

To facilitate the transportation of your luggage to/from the ship, we ask you to affix a clearly visible luggage label on the outside.

Wi-Fi

Complimentary wireless internet access is available on board the ship. Please note that the connection during your cruise may be weaker within certain sections of the route and does not meet the standard of a land-based internet connection. In addition, downtimes may occur on board, as international borders are often crossed during the cruise.

Laundry

Washing and pressing services are available onboard at a nominal fee and are handled through your cabin staff. Self-service laundry facilities, iron and ironing boards and dry-cleaning services are not available.

On board currency and payments

The currency on board is the EURO. You can pay on board with cash, debit card and credit card (Visa, Master Card, Diners Club and American Express). There are no ATMs on board and often only a limited number in the smaller towns along the rivers.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

Document produced: 23 November 2026