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CON BRIO CHORAL SOCIETY PERFORMANCE TOUR TO SPAIN & FRANCE

Barcelona, Toulouse, Sarlat la Canéda, Tours, Paris

MAY 10 – 26, 2014

Saturday, May 10

Fly from New York City to Barcelona

4:30 pm Check in for your flight at the JFK Airport.

- ** 7:20 pm Depart on Delta Flight #94 to Barcelona
Meals served on board your transatlantic flight.

Sunday, May 11

Arrive in Barcelona

(Barcelona)

- ** 9:40 pm Arrive at the Barcelona Airport. Claim your luggage and clear customs. You will be met in the Arrivals Hall, after customs, by your Cultural Tour Consultants tour manager.

A stop will be made on **Montjuic Hill** for photo shots of the city below. You will drive past the Olympic Stadium before descending to central Barcelona. You will see the Olympic Village area and Barceloneta before continuing on to your centrally-located hotel.

Afternoon Time for lunch on your own.

HOTEL Check into your centrally-located hotel. **Hotel Regente:**
<https://www.hcchotels.es/en/hotel/2/hcc-regente>
(confirmed).

Afternoon at leisure.

Evening Welcome Dinner at a restaurant located within walking distance of your hotel.



** Flights schedules given are based upon current Delta/Air information. Schedule changes may occur which could force an itinerary modification. Should this occur, CTC will discuss alternatives with group organizers.

Monday, May 12

Modernista Architecture of Barcelona

(Barcelona)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Transfer to the [Parc Guell](#) for a visit. Designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, this is Gaudi's most colorful creation.

After a tour of the Parc with your Tour Manager, transfer by coach to the [Sagrada Familia](#). Tour the church, Gaudi's masterpiece which he was unable to finish. Work has continued for the last few decades and the interior has recently been completed!!

♪ **Con Brio Choral Society may perform informally in the Sagrada Familia (tentative).**

Lunch on your own in the area around the Sagrada Familia.

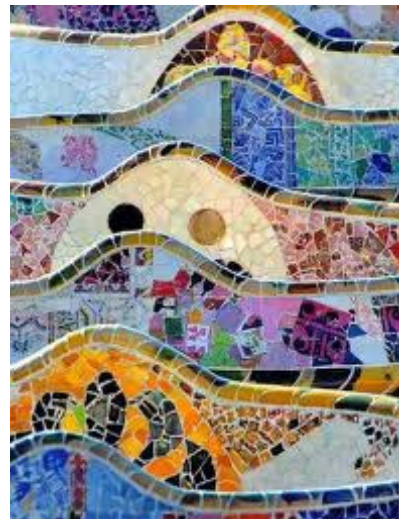
Transfer to the Illa de la Discorda to admire the *modernista* architecture in this most famous block of the city. Barcelona claims to have the greatest collection of Art Nouveau buildings of any city in Europe.

Arrive at Antoni Gaudi's [Casa Milá \(La Pedrera\)](#) for a tour including the modernista interior of the apartment of the Milá family and the spectacular roovescape of chimneys resembling abstract sculpture.

Choral workshop with a local choir from Barcelona (tentative). The afternoon will include time for music, fellowship, and exchange.

♪ **Joint performance this evening offered by Con Brio Choral Society and the Sedeta Gospel Singers of Barcelona or another local choir at a church in central Barcelona (tentative).**

Evening Dinner on your own.



Tuesday, May 13

Continued discovery of Barcelona

(Barcelona)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Walk from your hotel to the [Palau de la Música Catalana](#) for a guided tour. Since its construction in 1908, the Palau has maintained its original purpose as a concert hall. The building is a masterpiece of modernist architecture, achieved by Lluís Domènech I Montaner. It is a celebration of tile work, sculpture, and glorious stained glass.

Continue by foot to the [Gothic Quarter](#) of Barcelona for a leisurely tour of this district's most important landmarks: the Cathedral, the Royal Palace, the Generalitat Palace (seat of Government) and the Town Hall. Tour will end at [Mercado la Boqueria](#), the very lively covered market located just off the famous Ramblas Street..

Lunch on your own.

OPTIONAL *Excursion to Montserrat, site of a Benedictine Monastery, located on the Montserrat Massif located 4,055 feet above sea level. You will have a short orientation tour of the monastery complex. You may be able to hear the famous boys' choir perform. You may want to take the St. John's funicular for splendid views and walk back to the monastery. Cost of excursion to be announced.*

Or free time in Barcelona.

Evening Dinner on your own.

Wednesday, May 14

*Travel (398 kms/247 miles) from Barcelona to Toulouse, France
with a stop in the walled city of Carcassonne*

(Toulouse)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Depart Barcelona, crossing into France.

A stop will be made in Carcassonne, surrounded by its medieval fortifications.

Afternoon Lunch on your own in Carcassonne.

Free time to explore the narrow medieval streets of Carcassonne.



Reboard coach and continue on to Toulouse, know as La Ville Rose (the pink city) for the lovely shade of stone used for much of the medieval architecture and built along the Garonne River.

HOTEL Check into your centrally-located hotel. **Grand Hotel de l'Opéra** <http://www.grand-hotel-opera.com> (confirmed).

Evening Dinner on your own.

Thursday, May 15

Discovery of Toulouse

(Toulouse)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Meet your guides and begin a tour of this amazing city including the Place du Capitole - the magnificent mansions built around it and the Roman ruins found underneath - the Romanesque Saint Sernin Basilica, Hôtel du Bernuy, the Carmelite Chapel, and Saint-Etienne Cathedral.

Afternoon Lunch on your own.

Remainder of afternoon at leisure for independent exploration.



OPTIONAL *Interested individuals may sign up for a tour of the Airbus factory, specifically of the "super jumbo" A380 assembly site. Advance reservation and security clearance required.*

🎵 **Joint performance this evening offered by Con Brio Choral Society and a local choir in one of the city's beautiful churches or in a nearby town (tentative).**

Evening Dinner on your own.

Friday, May 16

Day excursion into the Garonne Region

(Toulouse)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Transfer to the sleepy little town of [Albi](#), on the River Tarn.

Meet your guides and begin a tour of the town which is dominated by the gigantic [Cathedral](#), resembling more a fortress than a place of worship. It was built during the period immediately following the Albigensian Crusade when the French King and Catholic Church put down the religious sect known as the Cathars or Albigensians. You will also see the [Bishop's Palace](#) now a museum dedicated to artist Toulouse-Lautrec. This district of the city, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Afternoon Lunch on your own in Albi.

Then continue on to the perched village of [Cordes-sur-Ciel](#) (Cordes in the Sky). Given its charter in 1222 by Raimon VII, Count of Toulouse, it is considered to be the first bastide. Bastides were planned towns built in grid fashion around a central square, constructed by the French King in an effort to colonize this virtually uninhabited land as the French and English fought to conquer the area.

Time for independent exploration.

Return to Toulouse.

Evening Dinner on your own.

Saturday, May 17

Travel (197 kms/122 miles) from Toulouse to Sarlat-la-Canéda with a stop in Cahors

(Sarlat)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Depart Toulouse for Cahors. Tucked into a rounded nook of the Lot River, [Cahors](#) is a lovely medieval city almost entirely surrounded by water. Walk with your Tour Manager to the famous [Valentré Bridge](#). Then continue on to the medieval city.

Free time to wander through the town, see the Cathedral and the impressive medieval townhouses dating from the 13th century when Cahors prospered as a banking and commercial center.

Afternoon Lunch on your own.

Arrive in [Sarlat-la-Canéda](#), a town that was largely passed by for centuries allowing for the almost perfect preservation of the medieval architecture. It has the largest concentration of Renaissance buildings in France.

HOTEL Check into your hotel: **Hotel de Selves** www.selves-sarlat.com (confirmed).

🎵 **Con Brio Choral Society will give a joint performance at the beautiful Sarlat Cathedral in the historic center with the Ensemble Vocal de Sarlat (tentative).**

Evening Dinner on your own.

Sunday, May 18

Day at leisure in Sarlat

(Sarlat)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Meet your guides and begin a walking tour of of [Sarlat-la-Caneda](#), a vast outdoor museum of Renaissance architecture

Remainder of day at leisure to enjoy the beautiful town.

OPTIONAL *Excursion to the spectacularly-situated town of [Rocamadour](#). Following the discovery in 1166 of an ancient grave and sepulcher, Rocamadour became one of the most famous enters of pilgrimages in the Middle Ages. The town's site, perched on a rocky peak above the Alzou Valley, is phenomenal. Free time to visit the town and its religious monuments and for lunch on your own. Depart Sarlat at 11AM and return at 4PM.*



Afternoon Lunch on your own.

🎵 **Con Brio Choral Society will give a performance this evening in the church of Domme (tentative).**

Evening Dinner on your own.

Monday, May 19

Discovery of the Périgord Region: Prehistoric caves & Dordogne River (Sarlat)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Transfer to the [prehistoric cave](#) of Rouffignac. You will ride a train into the cave, viewing drawings of woolly mammoths, bison, horses and sooly rhinoceros dating from about 13,000 years ago. This area of France is where the study of prehistoric man began, with the discovery of Cro-Magnon Man. Two prehistoric eras are named after local towns where major archaeological discoveries were made.

Transfer to the town of [La Roque-Gageac](#), literally built into the side of a cliff overlooking the Dordogne River.

Afternoon Lunch on your own in La Roque-Gageac.

Board boat and commence a [cruise down the Dordogne River](#). You will see several castles dotting the cliffs and embankments on each side of the River. These date from the Middle Ages when the English and French fought over this area known as Aquitaine.

Return to Sarlat.

Evening Dinner on your own.



Tuesday, May 20

Travel (379 kms/235 miles) from Sarlat to Tours

(Tours)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.
Board coach and depart your hotel.

A stop will be made at [Oradour-sur-Glane](#). The original village was destroyed on 10 June 1944, when 642 of its inhabitants, including women and children, were massacred on order of the German Waffen-SS as a collective punishment reprisal action. A new village was built after the war on a nearby site but on the orders of the then French president, Charles de Gaulle, the original has been maintained as a permanent memorial. Time to visit the site independently, an emotionally moving experience.



Afternoon A stop will be made en route for lunch on your own. Continue on to the city of [Tours](#), known for its wines and the perfection of the locally spoken French language.

HOTEL Arrive in Tours and check into your hotel: **Hotel L'Univers:** <http://www.oceaniahotels.com/hotel-lunivers-tours?lg=UK> (confirmed).

Evening Dinner at your hotel or nearby restaurant.

Wednesday, May 21

Châteaux of the Loire Valley and Tours

(Tours)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.
Board coach for transfer to the [Château of Chenonceau](#), home to several royal mistresses including Diane de Poitiers. After the death of Henry II, his strong-willed widow, Catherine de Medici had Diane expelled and spent a fortune on the chateau. Visit independently – no guide is necessary.
Return to Tours.



Afternoon Lunch on your own.

Free time to stroll through the original medieval district, called [le Vieux Tours](#). Unique to the Old City are its preserved half-timbered buildings and la Place Plumereau, a square with busy pubs and restaurants, whose open-air tables fill the centre of the square. The Boulevard Beranger crosses the Rue Nationale at the Place Jean-Jaures and is the location of weekly (day-long) Wednesday market.

Reassemble and walk together to the [Maison des Vins](#) for an introduction to the many fine wines of the Loire including Vouvray, Amboise, Chinon and Touraine appellations.

Evening Dinner on your own.

Thursday, May 22

Excursion to Amboise

(Tours)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Transfer to Amboise, on the Loire River and capped by the beautiful royal château. The Renaissance King François I brought Leonardo da Vinci here where he spent the last three years of his life as the court architect. His tomb is in the courtyard of the Château.

Entrance included to the Château Clos Lucé, former residence of Leonardo da Vinci, which now houses exact replicas of many of the inventions of da Vinci that were centuries before their time. Visit independently at your leisure, no guide is necessary.

Afternoon Lunch on your own and free time in Amboise.

You may visit independently the Royal Château (entrance not included).

Or wander through the quaint town.

Return to Tours to prepare for evening concert.

♪ **Con Brio Choral Society will give a joint concert with La Notina Choir of Cheverny (tentative).**

Buffet reception following the concert offered by the host choir.



Friday, May 23

Travel (439 kms/272 miles) to Paris

(Paris)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

8:00 am Depart Tours.

9:45 am Arrive at Benedictine Abbey of Solesmes, originally founded in 1010. With a long and eventful history, it is a working monastery to this day.

10:00 am Mass begins and lasts 1 hour and 15 minutes. You will hear the monks singing Gregorian Chant. Immediately following the service, the monks will leave the church. You are invited to sing 1-2 religious pieces in the church.

Continue on to Paris.

Afternoon A stop will be made en route for lunch on your own.

Arrive in Paris and check into your centrally-located hotel.

HOTEL **Hotel Château Frontenac** <http://www.frontenac-paris-hotel.com/> (confirmed).

Evening Dinner on your own.

Saturday, May 24

Discovery of Paris

(Paris)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Transfer by coach to the Marais. Meet your guide and begin a leisurely walking tour of the Marais to include several of the sublime mansions built during the 16th and 17th centuries when the Marais gained favor with the royalty and court members vied to build in the area the finest mansion. Several of these mansions are now museums such as the Picasso Museum and the Caranavalet (History of Paris) Museum. The tour will also include the splendid Place des Vosges.

Afternoon Lunch on your own in the Marais.

Walk together across Ile St. Louis to Ile de la Cité, the island in the Seine River where Notre Dame is located.

2-3:30 pm *A rehearsal is required at Notre Dame Cathedral in preparation for your participation during mass during Sunday mass tomorrow. Time to be announced by the Cathedral.*

Remainder of day at leisure.

Evening Dinner on your own.

Sunday, May 25

Discovery of Paris

(Paris)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Board coach and transfer to Notre Dame Cathedral. Proceed directly to the crypt by a side entrance to the church. You will be able to leave your belongings in this locked room during the service.

♪ **Con Brio Choral Society will participate during morning mass at Notre Dame Cathedral (tentative).**

Afternoon Lunch on your own.

Afternoon at leisure for independent exploration.

Evening Festive Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.



Monday, May 26

Return Travel to JFK Airport

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

9:30 am Transfer to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport.

11:00 am Check in for your flight.

** 1:55 pm Depart Paris on Delta Flight #8550 direct to JFK Airport..

** 4:10 pm Arrive at JFK Airport. Claim your luggage and clear customs.

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