TRIP INFORMATION SHEET

Bordeaux and the Dordogne: Great Wine, Fine Cuisine, and History Come Alive
Led by Wendy Allen, Professor Emeritus of French and Rich Allen, Professor of Computer Science
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Resources
As a reminder, please familiarize yourself with the many resources we have online at stolaf.edu/travel/resources, including the overseas travel insurance coverage, how to be an independent group traveler, safety overview, culture shock, and much more.

Connecting to the Group
The address of the group hotel and the timing of the first gathering will be provided in an email with the subject line “Final Notes and Tips” about 3 weeks prior to departure.

A Typical Day
A typical day will normally start with a good French style breakfast and a departure time on our bus at approximately 8 to 9 a.m. Each day, we will set out to see one or more historical, cultural or museum sites; as well, we will visit several renowned vineyards and have meals featuring some of the region’s gastronomic delights. We will coordinate our departure time in order to maximize our time at sites. Factors will include opening and closing times as well as anticipated tourist traffic. We will typically return to the hotel in time to relax and freshen up for dinner.

On every Travel program we try to strike a balance between scheduled activities and time on your own. We work to include activities we feel are essential to the educational theme, or which get you into an area where you can do many things. Your program leader, national guide, or hotel front desk staff can provide many suggestions for free time on-site. Don’t forget to use free time to process what you are learning, seeing and feeling, to shop, or simply to rest.

Activity Level
The majority of movement will be by private, air-conditioned motor coach. However, France is full of tiny streets and alleys that modern busses just can’t get to. And one philosophy of St. Olaf Travel is that any destination is more fully experienced on foot. You should be able to walk fair distances in one shot — at times it could be a mile to mile and a half. Past participants have reported that between group activities and their own explorations, their pedometers have logged 5 to 7 miles in one day. Make sure to have an already-broken in pair of walking shoes along; on certain days, these will be your best friends.

Weather
The weather in late September and early October should be delightful, with highs in the mid-70s and lows in the mid 50s. Keep in mind that we rarely seem to actually hit averages these days. Temperatures could fluctuate by 5 or 10 degrees warmer or cooler. We recommend
bringing multiple light layers to that you can add or remove as necessary to stay comfortable. Be sure to have comfortable walking shoes and an umbrella.

**Clothing Suggestions**
If you want to try and blend in, you might consider dressing as the French do: in general they do not dress sloppily, and older folks do not generally wear shorts. However, capris for women and longer shorts are acceptable attire. Men do not need a sport coat, nor do women need a dress. We have no formal events or meals on our agenda. As mentioned above, we recommend bringing multiple light layers so that you can add or remove as necessary to stay comfortable.

**Cuisine**
Discovering traditional French food and understanding the importance of sitting down together to share a meal can be one of the most pleasant surprises you may experience on this trip. Our hope is that you will return home, ready to incorporate this aspect of French culture into your daily routine.

Breakfast: The hotels will have available for you a French breakfast which always includes great croissants and bread, butter, confiture, orange juice and great coffee. Often, yogurt, a boiled egg, cereal, fruit, sliced cheese and ham will be available.

Our itinerary includes six group lunches and five group dinners. All of these group meals will be in traditional restaurants characteristic of the region. We will start with a first course followed by a main dish. Then dessert and coffee or tea follow. This region is one of the most well known culinary regions of France. Some of the special foods include duck (confit or magret de canard), goose (confit d’oie), lamb, ham, foie gras, truffles, cassoulet, cheeses, olives, walnuts (gateaux and pain aux noix) and fine wines. And, of course, there are plenty of fresh locally grown vegetables and fruits, especially strawberries. Beverages taken with meals are normally paid by the group members who ordered them.

On days when lunch or dinner is on your own, our local guides can suggest either a small typical restaurant or you can buy lighter fare in a local brasserie or perhaps ‘un sandwich’ (baguette with ham and cheese) from a boulangerie.

Paying and Tipping: After a meal on your own (i.e., not a group meal), the waiter will come with the bill, which by law includes a 15% service. It is customary to leave a few coins on the table, more if the service has been very good.

**Recommended Readings**
As a reminder, the Resource List has been posted on the program web page under Documents. Get started at stolaf.edu/travel. Then scroll down to the trip and click on Read More.

**Medical Facilities**
Both Bordeaux and Sarlat have hospitals. In addition, pharmacists in France can dispense medicines and even antibiotics. Of course, if you are taking regular medicines or even home remedies, it is highly recommended that you bring along a sufficient supply.
Laundry Service
Both hotels will have laundry services available. Such service is sometimes expensive. We recommend bringing some laundry soap and doing small batches of laundry in your hotel sink/bathtub.

Money
How much money you budget for this program depends on what you plan on doing during your free time, and what kind of meals you like to eat. (Yogurt from the corner store will cost less than a three-course lunch with wine at a local café). Many of you will want to bring home souvenirs and other items – pate, confit de canard, wine, liqueur, candy, pottery, woven materials, and gold jewelry.

We strongly recommend carrying a variety of forms of money, so you will not be without funds if one form should fail or be stolen. ATMs are readily available throughout the country, so that you can take out smaller increments of money if you wish. Most restaurants and shops in and around Bordeaux and the Dordogne normally take credit cards.

While this program does not take us through the capital city of Paris, where pickpocketing is most prevalent, you should still carry your money and credit cards in a buttoned pocket or money belt — i.e., someplace secure. Pick-pocketing is most common at bus and train stations, at ATMs, and around tourist hotels. Be especially careful in those situations! Cash, if stolen, cannot be replaced. Credit cards can be replaced if stolen, but you will be charged a fee by your bank to use them overseas.

France’s currency is the Euro. The exchange rate at the time of this publication – early June 2018 – was approximately €1.00 to $1.18.

Gratuities and Tipping Guidelines
Gratuities to guides, drivers, group meal servers, are included in the program fee, so no tips are due to individuals who provide these services to the group.

Tips to hotel porters and maids are not included in the program fee and it is customary to leave a small tip each morning in your room (perhaps 1€ per guest) for the hotel maid. Bellhops and doormen should also be tipped depending on any services provided for you as an individual (generally 1€ per bag).

This information about tipping was taken from frommers.com:
By law, all bills in cafes, bars, and restaurants say service compris, which means the service charge is included. However, it is customary to leave 1€ or 2€, depending on the quality of the service; in more upscale restaurants leave 5€ to 10€. Taxi drivers usually expect a 5 percent to 10 percent tip, or for the fare to be rounded up to the next euro.

Time Difference
France is 6 hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Daylight Time. When it is 9 a.m. in New York, it is 3 p.m. in Bordeaux.
Metric Conversion
The rest of the world uses the metric system of measurement. You will find temperatures given in degrees Celsius, gas and oil sold by liters (1 U.S. gallon = 3.78 liters), and road speeds posted in kilometers per hour (1 mile = 1.6 kilometers).

To convert Celsius to Fahrenheit:
- multiply the Celsius temperature by 9
- divide the answer by 5
- add 32

Thus, if the temperature is 20 degrees Celsius: 20 x 9 = 180 ÷ 5 = 39 + 32 = 71 degrees Fahrenheit.

Others say you can simply take the Celsius temperature, double it, and then add 32. For example, if the temperature is 20 degrees Celsius: 20 x 2 = 40 + 32 = about 72 degrees Fahrenheit.

Electricity
You can use hair dryers and electric razors and many other portable appliances overseas. You will need a converter and an adapter.
- **Converter:** The converter cuts in half the number of volts flowing into your appliance, so it operates just like it does at home. Just be sure you choose the right type, as each is designed to operate specific appliances: 1-50 watts (electric razors, radios, cassette players, etc.) and 50-600 watts (hair dryers, hair curlers/setters and irons).
- **Adapter:** An American plug has two or three flat, parallel blades that slide right into the outlet. But most of the world's outlets have round holes. Some take three square pins. Others require flat, angled blades. The round pins you'll need are already built into the voltage converters. All you do is plug your appliance into the wall. But if you happen to run into different configuration, just snap the proper adapter onto the round pins.
- Converters and adapters can be found at electronics stores such as Radio Shack. Make sure that you get a converter and not just an adapter. The adapter allows the plug to fit in the outlet, but the converter actually converts the voltage.
- **Dual Voltage:** Dual voltage appliances are designed to work on either 110V or 220V without a converter just by flipping a switch on the appliance. Be sure to check this before you leave. In any case, you will still need the proper adapter to plug into the foreign outlet.

Customs (Going Home)
You may import $800.00 worth of goods duty-free and must pay a 10% tax on the next $1,000.00. You must declare all purchases, so keep sales receipts, especially for larger purchases. When your purchases exceed $800 you can avoid paying customs fees by mailing to yourself items costing up to $200 and marked “personal purchases.” Of course, you would want to check that the postage paid isn’t greater than the customs fee. Mail only one package per day, because multiple packages mailed the same day and exceeding $200 when added together will be charged the appropriate customs fee. Limitations exist for tobacco, alcohol and perfume. For more information visit the U.S. Customs and Border Protection web site at
www.cbp.gov. Click on the Travel section, and then choose “Pleasure and Vacation Travel (Know Before You Go).”

**Packing Tips**
- Mix and match several items of clothing. Pick a scheme like black, brown or navy.
- Take an all-purpose jacket, one that is warm, can double as rain gear, and has pockets.
- Do not take anything that would upset you if you lost it, such as valuables and jewelry.
- Take only comfortable shoes. Match all or most of your wardrobe with one or two pairs.
- Roll clothing in your suitcase to maximize space and cut down on wrinkling.
- A dressier outfit is appropriate for any performances that may be scheduled on your program (i.e., not jeans).
- Small backpacks are very useful as a day pack. Many days we will be out and about for several hours and you will want to carry water, a small umbrella, and layers.

**Don’t forget to pack**
- Credit card account numbers and toll-free phone numbers for card replacement
- Insurance contact information
- A copy of the itinerary — if your name and flight tags go missing, the airline will still know how to contact you or where to send your luggage
- Contact solution or an extra pair of glasses in case you break or lose yours, and your prescription
- Small, battery powered alarm clock
- Electrical plug adapters. You may also need voltage converters to go from the usual 110 volts in the U.S., to the 220 volts elsewhere in the world, though most electronics now have these converters built in to the cord.

**Items to carry with you**
- Neck safe or money belt
- Passport and another picture ID
- Overseas or non-toll free numbers for credit card replacement
- Medical insurance card
- Travel insurance provider information and contact numbers
- Prescription medications in their original containers
- Small amount of over-the-counter medications for headaches or allergy relief (these items are readily available for purchase at reasonable prices throughout our journey)

**Items to leave with someone at home**
- Copy of the identification page of your passport
- Credit card account numbers and toll-free phone numbers for card replacement
- Photocopy of your medical insurance card
- Travel insurance provider information and contact numbers
- Photocopy of your itinerary, which will include hotel contact information closer to departure
- Prescription medication information
Visit [www.onebag.com](http://www.onebag.com) for more packing tips, including what to pack, what to pack it in, how to pack and packing lists.

**Airport Security**
Visit [tsa.gov/travel](http://tsa.gov/travel) for up-to-date guidelines on getting through the security lines faster, what you can bring, the liquids rule, proper identification, and more.

**Miscellaneous Tips**
- Investigate – prior to departure – how to replace lost traveler’s checks and credit cards.
- Bring with you only those credit cards and documents you will need.
- Do not take or wear expensive jewelry. It can be stolen, even when you are wearing it.
- Put your name and address on the outside and the inside of each piece of luggage.
- Make sure you receive a claim check for each piece of checked luggage.
- Read the fire safety instructions in hotels and know where the exits are located.

If you have any questions at any time, do not hesitate to contact the Travel Director:
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