

# France Fall 2026



## Come Discover France

From September 24 to October 4, 2026, join Reed and me for a discovery tour of Paris, Normandy, Brittany and the Loire Valley. We will explore five UNESCO World Heritage Sites, as well as many architectural and historical wonders. We will also partake of the wine and food France is famous for. You will come back from this workshop with a deeper appreciation for the French *Joie de Vivre*.

## Our Mentor



The group will be led by renowned photography instructor Reed Hoffmann. His career has spanned more than four decades, the first two of those working at newspapers in the Midwest, South and Eastern U.S. Reed began teaching in the '90s with a class on photojournalism at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Managing his paper's conversion to all-digital in 1997, he was then asked to speak at conferences around the country about that process. In 2000 Reed left his last newspaper and spent the next few years helping dozens of news and other organizations around the country convert to digital. Now based in Kansas City, he divides his time between assignments and teaching photography. His corporate clients have included USA Today, The New York Times, The Associated Press, Getty Images, NBC, Children's Mercy Hospital, EPA, Reuters, NCAA Photos, Nikon, Lexar, Lowepro, Best Buy, Blue Pixel, Eco-Challenge and Mark Burnett Productions. In 2002 he also began a long career teaching the Nikon School of Photography, creating and teaching the classes and managing the instructors

through 2018. Every year Reed leads many hands-on photography workshops, ranging from weekend treks in the U.S. to two-week trips abroad. Reed has received several industry honors, being named a Nikon Legend Behind the Lens, a Lexar Pro Elite photographer and a Microsoft Icon of Imaging. More information can be found at <http://reedhoffmann.com/> and <https://www.instagram.com/reedhoffmann/>.

## Highlight Photo Tours



My name is René Bastien, the founder of Highlight Photo Tours. The company has been in operation since 2018. Together with Reed, we have offered trips to many locations in Canada, the USA and Europe. This includes workshops in Quebec City, Montreal, Nova Scotia, the Canadian Rockies, the province of Newfoundland, Hawaii's Big Island, Croatia-Slovenia-Venice, and Ireland. I also offer on demand trips in Montreal and Ottawa, Canada.

# Itinerary

Our French visit will start in Paris, the City of Light (la ville lumière, in French). We will then make our way west to the Atlantic Coast. We will stop at many unique sites, famed for their architecture, history and cultural significance. After exploring Normandy and Brittany, we will make our way to the Loire Valley, where we will discover some of the castles. As we will be there during grape-picking season, we will certainly look for photo ops and taste the local wines. We will then make our way back to Paris on our last day. The details are provided in the next section. I have extensively scouted the regions we will be visiting. It will be fun! French is my mother tongue, so I will be able to help you along, no worries.



## September 24. Day 1; arrival in Paris

Arrive at your leisure. No activities are planned during the day. Activities will start with our first dinner as a group. After dinner, we will shoot the streaming lights along the Champs Élysés.

### September 25. Day 2; in Paris

We will make extensive use of the subway, and of our walking shoes as I show you some of the lesser-known sites in the city, such as Place des Vosges and the Palais Royal Gardens. We will also see the Tuileries Gardens, the Louvre Pyramid, the Palais Garnier, and Notre-Dame-de-Paris. We will have dinner at Chez Maxime, one of the great classic French restaurants.

### September 26. Day 3; in Paris

We will continue our walking/subway discovery of Paris. We will go to the Jardins du Luxembourg, the Eiffel Tower, the Sainte-Chapelle (famous for its stained glass), the Sacré-Coeur and Montmartre. After dinner, we will do an evening shoot of the famous Moulin Rouge.

### September 27. Day 4; to Rouen

We will leave Paris on our bus and make our way to famous impressionist painter Claude Monet's house and gardens. Monet found much of his inspiration in these very surroundings. After lunch, we will head to Rouen. Rouen Cathedral was an inspiration for a series of Monet paintings. We will also discover the city's medieval architecture and history.

### September 28. Day 5; to Bayeux

Today will be spent close to the Atlantic coast in Normandy. We will start with the Étretat cliffs from up close and then make our way to the modern Étretat Gardens. After lunch, we will leave for Honfleur, a medieval harbor town. We will visit the city center and its typical medieval architecture. We will then make our way to Bayeux for a quiet evening.



Figure 4. Palais Garnier; ceiling by Chagall



Figure 1. Jardins du Luxembourg



Figure 2. Jardins de Monet



Figure 3. Étretat Cliffs

## September 29. Day 6, in Normandy

For the first half of the day, we will take a guided tour of the D-Day sites: Omaha Beach, the Pointe-du-Hoc battery and the American Cemetery. After lunch in Bayeux, we will visit Mont Saint Michel Abbey. We will lodge very close to Mont Saint Michel, and go out for an evening shoot.



Figure 5. Mont Saint-Michel Abbey

## September 30. Day 7; to the Loire Valley

We will leave Mont Saint Michel after a sunrise shoot. We will explore the fortified city of St-Malo, then make our way to the medieval city of Dinan. After lunch we will drive to the Loire Valley and the town of Chambord and its famous Chateau de Chambord. Our hotel will be on the grounds of the Chateau.



Figure 6. Saint-Malo Fortifications

## October 1. Day 8; Loire Valley

Today's shoots will be dedicated to some of the famous castles of the valley. We will start with a sunrise shoot of Chambord, then visit the Chateau de Blois, and do a golden hour visit and shoot of Chateau de Chenonceau. We will then return to Chambord for a well-earned rest.



Figure 7. Château de Chambord

## October 2. Day 9; Loire Valley

There will be an optional hot air balloon excursion early morning, for those who may be interested. Today we will explore the Loire's wine operations. We will experience local wines and cheeses at a local winery. We will also visit Chateau de Villandry, famous for its gardens.



Figure 8. Gardens, Château de Villandry

### October 3. Day 10; back to Paris

As our tour of France is winding down, I will take you to two significant sites. We will first stop and visit the Chartres Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage building of resplendent gothic architecture. After a quick lunch, we will spend the afternoon at the famous Chateau de Versailles. Many historic events took place in Versailles, such as the treaty ending World War 1, the treaty ending the Anglo-French war in 1763, and many others. We will leave for Paris, and we will stay close to the airport.



Figure 9. Chateau de Versailles-Hall of Mirrors

### October 4. Day 11; return home

Board your flights to head back home, or wherever your travels may take you.

## More Details

### Requirements

The level of activity is expected to be easy to moderate, with many stops to take in the scenery and get those great shots!

Comfortable, quick-dry walking/trekking shoes are recommended. Proper rain gear should be close by.

### What to Expect

Tap water is fine to drink. Current is 50 Hertz/220 V, which most laptops and battery chargers are usually compatible with; please check your devices for compatibility in advance. You will need an adaptor to plug in; France uses type F plugs, the same as most of mainland Europe. Cell coverage is good, but it tends to drop away from the main roads.

Our hotels have free Wi-Fi and breakfast is included. The selected hotels will be (subject to final confirmation):

- In Paris, Days 1 to 3: Hotel Brighton (3 nights)
- In Rouen: Radisson Blu (1 night)
- In Bayeux: The Belle Normandy (1 night)
- In Mont Saint-Michel: Mercure Mont Saint Michel (1 night)
- In Chambord: Relais de Chambord (3 nights)

- In Paris, Day 11: the Sheraton Paris Charles de Gaulle Hotel (1 night)

France is GMT+1. This means France is 6 hours ahead of New York City.

The currency used in France is the Euro. As a rule, you can pay with Visa and MasterCard at almost every store and restaurant. However, make sure you have some Euros with you, for tips and some of the shops out of the major centers may only accept cash. You can exchange funds in most cities and ATMs are readily available in the cities.

Most airlines offer direct flights to Paris (airport code CDG) from North American hubs.

## Photo Gear

Reed will provide you with details as we get closer to our departure.

## Contact Information

René's cell phone: 613-276-4763 and email [rbastien@highlightphototours.com](mailto:rbastien@highlightphototours.com)

Reed's cell phone: 913-568-8444 and email [reed@reedhoffmann.com](mailto:reed@reedhoffmann.com)

# Pricing

- All prices are in US\$. Please inquire if you would like to pay using a different currency.
- Price is US \$7,300 per person, taxes included, based on double occupancy. Single occupancy is an extra US \$1,575.
- Payment through Stripe (Visa, MasterCard, with a link provided in the invoice I will send) or wire transfers.
- Deposit of US \$1,500 required to reserve your seat.
- The deposit is refundable until April 30, 2026.
- Balance required on invoicing by May 15, 2026. No refund after April 30, 2026, as we engage funds on your behalf. This is one key reason why we require you to purchase travel insurance.
- Minimum of 5 attendees required for the workshop to be confirmed. Maximum 12 attendees.

## What is Included

- All guide and photo instructor services.
- All lodging, double occupancy, from September 24 to October 4, 2026, breakfast included.
- Photo reviews and critiques from your mentor.
- All in-country transportation with the group in our bus. It will be a Class C air-conditioned coach.
- Public transit passes in Paris.
- Park and entrance fees.
- We will provide bottled water while in the vehicle.
- Welcome dinner at Chez Maxime.

## What is Excluded

- Flights to/from Paris (airport code CDG).
- Visas if required (you will need a valid passport).
- Extended stays at our initial hotel in Paris, or in our last hotel in Paris, can be arranged on request at your cost.
- All hotel incidentals.
- All lunches and dinners, and all beverages, including alcoholic beverages (dinner at Chez Maxime is included).
- Airport transfers to/from Paris Charles de Gaulle airport.
- Participants are required to purchase their own travel insurance, that will cover their costs if it becomes necessary for them to cancel after payment, or to return home in case of a medical emergency.
- Additional/optional excursions not listed in the itinerary.
- Gratuities for the drivers and hotel staff. I will collect tips for the bus driver on our last day in Paris. I suggest cash, and €75.
- Optional hot air balloon ride in Chambord.

## How to Book a Seat

To reserve seats, please send me an email at [rbastien@highlightphototours.com](mailto:rbastien@highlightphototours.com) and I will send you a link to pay the deposit.

# More Photos



*Figure 10. Paris, Place de la Concorde*



*Figure 11. Tour Eiffel*



*Figure 12. Moulin Rouge*



Figure 13. Honfleur