



GARDENS OF FRANCE

In the SPRING



Pont du Gard



WHAT A CHOICE!

The scope and variety of gardens in France are immense. Jack Hobbs has selected a wide range, offering a cross-section of this diverse country. The journey starts with the opulent Gardens of Versailles, a masterpiece of French formal garden design, followed by the famed gardens of Giverny, where the renowned painter Claude Monet found inspiration for his iconic Water Lilies series. Next, we explore the grandeur of the Loire Valley Châteaux, followed by wine tasting in the Bordeaux region at Saint-Émilion, which is not only renowned for its wine but also a well-preserved UNESCO medieval village. Finally, we head to the south and its Mediterranean gardens, each with its distinct appeal. You'll also have the opportunity to travel along the Cote d'Azur before finishing with time to explore Nice.

Château Villandry



MAY 2026

Thursday 14 Auckland - Dubai

An evening departure for an overnight flight on Emirates.

Friday 15 Dubai D

Early morning arrival and transfer to hotel. Rest day with a Welcome Dinner in the evening.

Saturday 16 Dubai B

A half-day local sightseeing tour, including a 30-minute marina cruise.

Sunday 17 Dubai - Paris B D

A free morning before transfer and midday flight to Paris, arriving in the early evening for a three-night stay.

Monday 18 Paris B

Versailles

Today's highlight is the Palace and Gardens of Versailles, one of the most visited public sites in France, receiving over six million visitors annually.

Tuesday 19 Paris B

Arboretum de La Roche - Guyon - Monet's Garden

A full day to visit- the Arboretum of La Roche-Guyon, a 13-hectare public arboretum located in the heart of a 350-hectare forest. Afterward, we'll visit Monet's Garden, a must-see destination that needs no introduction.

Wednesday 20 Paris - Tours B D

Château de Chambord

On the coach trip to Tours, we'll break the journey with a visit to Château de Chambord, one of the most recognizable châteaux in the world, known for its distinctive French Renaissance architecture and 6.5-hectare gardens.

Thursday 21 Tours B

Château Villandry

The Château of Villandry is one of the most magnificent castles ever built along the Loire River, inhabited since the Renaissance. It is always a highlight of any tour.

Friday 22 Tours B

Château d'Amboise (Leonardo da Vinci) - Chenonceau

Just 400 meters away from Château Royal d'Amboise is Château Clos Lucé, where Leonardo da Vinci lived until his death. Today, it serves as a museum about da Vinci's life, work, and legacy. Nearby, Chenonceau Castle is renowned for its stunning Renaissance-style gardens, home to over 130,000 flowering plants.

Saturday 23 Tours - Saint-Émilion B D

A longer day of travel, concluding with a visit to one of France's renowned red wine regions, with a winery tour included.

Sunday 24 Saint-Émilion - Toulouse B D

Before departing this UNESCO World Heritage-listed medieval village, we'll take a guided walking tour through its narrow streets, including the extensive underground 11th-century church.

The 11th century monolithic church of Saint-Émilion is carved entirely out of a limestone cliff. No documents exist that discuss the building of the monolithic church, its purpose was probably to venerate and conserve the body of the 8th century Breton monk Saint Émilion. It is one of the largest underground churches in Europe, with an estimated 15,000 cubic metres of rock extracted. The great hall measures 38 metres long and 20 metres wide, divided into three naves of six bays. Visitors can enter the church and view its catacombs.

Monet's Garden



Monday 25 Toulouse – Montpellier B D *Jardin Champêtre / Jardin Méditerranéen de Roquebrun*

On the road again to visit Le Jardin Champêtre, a young garden representing a new generation of Mediterranean-zone gardens. Next, we'll explore Jardin de Roquebrun, home to an impressive collection of cacti, lemon trees, and other exotic plants from the Mediterranean region.

Tuesday 26 Montpellier B *City Gardens – Château de Flaugergues*

In the morning, we'll visit the local and highly rated city garden. Afterward, we'll tour Château de Flaugergues, where the descendants of the Colbert family still reside 320 years later.

Wednesday 27 Montpellier B
Le Jardin Saint Adrien – Le Jardin Sec
Outside Béziers, Le Jardin Saint Adrien is a green oasis created in old quarries, dating from the Middle Ages. Le Jardin Sec, nestled between a cliff and the Filippis family home, is an experimental gravel garden that showcases Mediterranean plants collected from around the world. Early May offers one of the richest flowering periods.

Thursday 28 Montpellier – Marseille B D

Today's sightseeing journey takes us via Avignon, with a stop at the Pont du Gard, one of France's most popular tourist attractions. Built in the first century AD, the ancient bridge carried water for 50 km to Nîmes.

Friday 29 Marseille – Nice via Cote d'Azur B D *Le Domaine du Royal*

Located on the Mediterranean coast, Le Domaine du Royal specializes in plants from dry, hot climates around the world. It's surprising to find they've even managed to grow a New Zealand-style garden.

Saturday 30 Nice B Local sightseeing tour with the afternoon free.

Sunday 31 Nice B D *Le Jardin Exotique – Jardin Botanique Val-Rahmsh-Menton*

The Jardin Exotique d'Eze is set in a stunning location, with plants ranging from young specimens to mature old ones, including a crown of thorns weighing half a tonne. We'll also visit the Botanique Garden, which contains around 1,500 taxa growing in a microclimate where temperatures rarely fall below 5°C (41°F) in winter.

JUNE

Monday 01 Nice – Dubai B

Free morning with afternoon departure on Emirates.

Tuesday 02 Dubai – Auckland [overnight]

Change planes.

Wednesday 03 Auckland

Mid-morning arrival.

**Option to Extend
Please ask us!**

Itinerary Subject to change*

In conjunction with this brochure please read the accompanying booklet that outlines details of all the garden visits.



Château d'Amboise

ESTIMATED Cost per person*

Twin Share	\$17,579
Single	\$19,649
Premium Economy Upgrade (Limited Seats)	P.O.A
Business Class Upgrade (Limited Seats)	P.O.A
Early Booking Discount (if deposit paid by 01 September 2025)	\$150
Previous Pukekohe Travel International Tour client discount	\$100

*This is a cash / direct debit price. Credit cards will incur a 1.5% fee *Itinerary and costs subject to change, airline and fuel surcharges and currency fluctuations, subject to final payment.

Inclusions

- Economy air flights with Emirates: Auckland – Dubai – Paris // Nice – Dubai – Auckland
- All transfers and transport as outlined
- 17 nights' accommodation including 3 nights in Paris
- Two nights in Dubai
- Half-day Dubai sightseeing tour
- Wine tour in Saint-Émilion
- Meals as specified
- Local guides for garden visits
- Sightseeing and entrance fees as specified
See garden booklet for garden information
- Jack Hobbs to escort, subject to 20 persons travelling

Included Gardens and Historical Sites:

- Palace and Gardens of Versailles
- The Arboretum of La Roche-Guyon
- Monet's Garden.
- Château de Chambord
- Château Villandry.
- Royal Château d'Amboise
- Château de Chenonceau
- Medieval village of Saint-Émilion
- Le Jardin Champêtre
- Le Jardin Méditerranéen: Roquebrun
- Montpellier Botanical Garden
- Château de Flaugergues
- The Saint Adrien Garden
- Le Jardin Sec
- Pont du Gard
- The Domaine du Royal in Nice
- Le Jardin Exotique d'Eze
- Val Rahmeh Botanical Garden

Booking Conditions

- A non-refundable deposit of \$2,500 per person will secure a place on the tour
- Full payment no later than 01 March 2026

Cancellations and Refunds

- From the date of Booking until 01 March 2026 – loss of deposit
- After 01 March 2026 – no refund

Exclusions

- Travel Insurance – compulsory – please ask us for a quote
- Items of a personal nature
- Tipping and gratuities
- Items not specified
- Airport and airline taxes (approx. NZD\$400)

Documentation

- A current passport is required, valid six months beyond the date of travel
- United Arab Emirates – a visa issued on arrival for New Zealand passport holders
- All other passport holders – please ask

Weather

Weather	Max	Min
Dubai	37°C	25°C
Paris	17°C	10°C
Saint-Émilion	19°C	11°C
Toulouse	20°C	12°C
Nice	20°C	14°C

Health and Mobility

This tour is designed for individuals with a moderate level of fitness. While there are some leisurely walks through beautiful gardens and historic sites, the overall pace is relaxed. Some days may involve longer periods of walking or standing, and there will be some travel by coach between destinations. We recommend that participants are comfortable with walking for up to 2 hours at a time and able to navigate uneven surfaces at certain locations.

Currency

United Arab Emirates (Dubai): Emirati Dirham (AED)
France – Euro

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend all clients purchase travel insurance to protect against cancellations, lost items, and delays that could lead to unexpected costs.
Please ask us for a quote.



By day – comfortable, breathable clothing for daytime sightseeing, as temperatures can vary. Light layers, sturdy walking shoes, and a hat for sun protection are essential.

For evenings – bring a light jacket or sweater as temperatures can cool down. Smart-casual attire is suitable for dinners or more formal occasions.

Terms and Conditions

For full terms and conditions please visit our website www.pukekohetravel.co.nz/termsandconditions or ask our tour consultant for a copy



Jack recently retired after serving 28 years as the Manager of the Auckland Botanic Gardens. He was also the President of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture from 2001 to 2011. With a deep passion for plants and gardens, Jack enjoys tennis and traveling. He is a well-known television presenter on gardening programs and has written numerous articles on plants and horticulture. Jack has led tours to a wide range of destinations, including China, Canada, Vietnam, Borneo, Britain, Europe, South Africa, and the Chatham Islands.

Note Pukekohe Travel reserves the right to correct errors and omissions contained within this brochure without recourse.

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PUKEKOHE TRAVEL

Ph: 09 237 0013 | Toll Free: 0800 785 386

Email: belinda@pukekohetravel.nz | www.pukekohetravel.co.nz



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