



ITALY, MONACO & FRANCE!

An Exclusive Garden Journey with the Alaska Botanical Garden

April 18-28, 2020

"Some spots are the cradle of genius. Provence is one."
Lawrence Durrell

Join the Alaska Botanical Gardens and fellow guests for a garden lover's in-depth exploration of the Italian Lake District, Monaco, the French Riviera and Provence. We are committed to interspersing viewing gardens with time spent walking the lovely villages of the regions we visit.

Your garden adventure commences in Varenna, Italy, on beautiful Lake Como, where you will spend two days visiting stunning gardens and their accompanying gorgeous lakeside villas. On our way to Menton, we will visit the Italianate garden at Isola Bella on Lake Maggiore. Menton is our home for three nights as we explore the garden gems on the French Riviera, including the Jardin Exotique of Monaco and Lawrence Johnston's (Hidcote Manor) Jardin Serre de la Madone.

Provence is next; via the charming university town of Aix, we make our way to Arles, one of Van Gogh's homes in Provence, our home for the next four nights. From Arles we will explore the surrounding area, visiting an outdoor market, Roman ruins still in use today and the delightful Provençal countryside. Join the Alaska Botanical Garden and savor the bounty of beauty these dazzling regions offer: spectacular gardens, delicious food and wine, colorful villages and Roman architecture.



**EARTHBOUND
EXPEDITIONS**

Earthbound Expeditions Inc.
P.O. Box 11305, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 USA
T. 800.723.8454 / T. 206.842.9775
www.EarthboundExpeditions.com

YOUR JOURNEY AT A GLANCE

3 Nights Varenna, on Lake Como, Italy's Lake District

3 Nights Menton, French Riviera, Côte d'Azur

4 Nights Arles, Heart of Provence



JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

Stunning villas and gardens of Lake Como with a local guide ♦ Isola Bella on Lake Maggiore
♦ Val Rahmeh Botanical Gardens, Menton ♦ Jardin Serre de la Madone, Menton ♦ Villa
Ephrussi de Rothschild, St Jean Cap Ferrat ♦ Visits and tours of gardens in Provence ♦
Colorful Provençal market ♦ Wine tasting ♦ The Roman arena of Arles ♦ Traditional
dining in cafés and bistros ♦ Italian Cooking Demonstration

INCLUDED IN YOUR JOURNEY

- Travel with the Alaska Botanical Gardens
- Entrance fees and guided visits of multiple gardens
*see back page of this itinerary for details
- Guided by an Earthbound Expeditions expert guide
- Ten nights of accommodations in charming, centrally-located 4**** hotels
- Transport by private air-conditioned coach
- All breakfasts plus 9 additional meals featuring regional specialties
- Wine and hors d'oeuvres happy hour with your garden hosts
- Entrances to sights and tours led by knowledgeable guides
- Outings to a village market, Roman ruins of Arles, St Paul Mausole
- Wine tasting in Provence
- Gratuities for your drivers and Earthbound guide
- Earthbound Expeditions makes an annual contribution to Carbonfund



TRIP FACTS

11 Days/ 10 Nights

*\$4,795 per person based on double occupancy, Land Package

\$995 Single Supplement (waived if you are willing to share and a roommate is found)

Journey begins in Varenna on Lake Como at 6:00pm on April 18, 2020

Journey ends in Arles after breakfast on April 28

**Price is based on 24 or more guests (excluding hosts). For 19-23 guests, add \$300*

SAVE \$250! Pay your final balance by check and save \$100per person ♦ Earthbound or
ABG Travel alumni save \$100 per person ♦ Reserve before October 1, 2019 and save \$50

NOT INCLUDED: International Airline tickets, airline luggage fees, beverages with meals
(other than coffee, tea and water), any meals not mentioned, room/mini-bar service, gratuities
for hotel staff, travel insurance, items of a personal nature and anything not listed in the
“Included in your Journey” section above.



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ACTIVITY LEVEL: This is an activity-filled walking tour! In Lake Como the gardens are terraced and often include many steps and uphill paths. In Provence, the motorcoach cannot always enter the narrow driveways and entrances to the gardens we visit, so there can be a long walk just to reach the garden. In addition, the city and other walking tours involve quite a bit of standing and walking on cobblestones. All guests must therefore be able to walk unassisted and must also be able to independently manage their own luggage to and from the coach in order to fully take advantage of and enjoy the tour.

YOUR GARDEN ADVENTURE BEGINS!

DAY 0: Depart the USA for Bella Italia

Today say “arrivederci” to the USA and make your way to Italy’s majestic Lake District. You must depart the USA no later than April 17, in order to arrive in Italy on April 18, when your garden tour begins.

DAY 1: Saturday, April 18 - Buongiorno! Meet in Bella Italia on the Shores of Lake Como

Many identify the Lake District as Italy’s most beautiful region and Lake Como certainly is a wonderful place to start our garden journey. Take some time to enjoy the rich atmosphere of this northern Italian gem. Upon arrival, you may wish to tour the nearby gardens of Villa Cipressi or the Villa Monastero before meeting your guide and hosts this evening for a welcome orientation and multi-course dinner. *Sleep in Varenna (D)*



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“Beauty surrounds us, but usually we need to be walking in a garden to know it.”

Rumi

NOTE: Earthbound Expeditions will be able to assist guests arriving on Day 1, Saturday April 18 with a (non-included) airport transfer from Milan Malpensa airport to the hotel in Varenna on Lake Como. Those interested will be grouped together by flight arrival times. For those arriving early, there are public and private transport options you can book directly and information on this will be provided in the deposit packet information.

DAY 2: Sunday, April 19 - The Villa Melzi and Bellagio

Enjoy a walking tour of Bellagio; a wonderful village full of shops and restaurants, Bellagio is a perfect place to stroll and relax. Have an included lunch together, then walk to the nearby Villa Melzi. Known at the “Pearl of Lake Como,” this residence was built in the Neo-classical style and boasts gardens commissioned to Luigi Canonica and the agronomist Luigi Villoresi. The gardens are filled with exotic trees, as was the custom for the time period, as well as Egyptian and Roman statues, which add to the romantic atmosphere of the garden. Stay on in the garden, or join the group to return by public ferry to your hotel. *Sleep in Varenna (B, L)*

DAY 3: Monday April 20 - Stunning Gardens and Villas

Joined by our local Italian guide and traveling by small ferry, we’ll begin with a visit to the gorgeous gardens of Villa Carlotta. With its magnificent botanical garden and art masterpieces, the 70,000 square meters of gardens and museum will certainly be a highlight of your stay on Lake Como. The beautiful villa was built at the end of 17th century by the Milanese marquis Giorgio Clerici in a natural basin between lake and mountains, facing the dolomite Grignas and the peninsula of Bellagio. *The Last Kiss of Romeo and Juliet* is only one of the masterpieces in this extraordinary collection.



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Though the gardens of Villa Carlotta chiefly owe their reputation to the spring flowering of the rhododendrons and azaleas, consisting of over 150 different sorts, they certainly merit a visit in every period of the year. There are old varieties of camellias, century old cedars and sequoias, tropical plants, a rock garden and fern valley, rhododendrons and bamboo garden, an agricultural tools museum and, of course, the sweeping views of Lake Como.

You'll have time for an independent lunch before we make our way to Villa Balbianello, a renaissance villa so spectacularly situated, it has figured in many Hollywood films. Formerly a 13th century Franciscan monastery, the two towers are the former *campanile* (bell towers) of the monastery's church. Skipping ahead to the 18th century, Cardinal Angelo Maria Durini purchased the property and converted the monastery into a summer villa. This magnificent villa has changed hands multiple times and experienced many additions in the subsequent years and is now the most visited of Italy's National Trust Properties. We'll tour both the residence and its famous terraced gardens.

Join the group to return to Varenna, or stay and return on your own by public ferry.
Sleep in Varenna (B, D)

DAY 4: Tuesday April 21 - "Bonjour la France!" Isola Bella and Menton, France

After an early breakfast, we say "arrivederci" to Lake Como and head to Lake Maggiore. The stunning Isola Bella is one of the Borromean islands located on Lake Maggiore and is comprised of a palace, Italianate gardens and a fishing village. We'll take a boat over and tour the Borromeo Palazzo and glorious gardens, have some time for lunch, then re-board our coach and head to France.

Located in Europe's mildest climate and sheltered by the high Maritime Alps, orange and lemon trees bloom here even in winter. (It is said that Menton's first lemons were planted by Eve.) Picture-postcard pretty and with year-round seaside sunshine, Menton is where the British inadvertently invented the French Riviera. When the widowed monarch Queen Victoria arrived in 1882, the city already boasted 5,000 British residents busy building mansions and planting tropical gardens. Enjoy a stroll on the promenade and relax in your beautiful surroundings. *Sleep in Menton (B, L)*

DAY 5: Wednesday April 22 - Gardens of Menton

Enjoy a leisurely morning today; perhaps visit the wonderful covered food market for your independent lunch, after which, we'll visit the Val Rahmeh Botanical garden, a picturesque 19th century garden noted for its exotic trees and pond with aquatic plants.

Enjoy the free late afternoon to visit some of the other wonderful sights and gardens of Menton, and plan to gather together again for an included group dinner. *Sleep in Menton (B, D)*



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DAY 6: Thursday April 23 - An Outing to Monaco

This morning we'll make a short drive to the Jardin Serre de la Madone (Hill of the Madonna). Started as a winter garden by Lawrence Johnston, (Hidcote Manor in England), the Serre de la Madone was purchased after his death by several passionate groups who have joined forces to restore and revitalize it as an international center for rare plant enthusiasts.

We then make our way to the regal principality of Monaco. With an area of just 0.78 sq miles and a population of 36,371, Monaco is the second smallest and the most densely populated country in the world. Prince Albert of Monaco resides in the 12th century Palace of Monaco along with his family as the Grimaldis have done for the last seven centuries.

Delighting all of the senses, the spectacular gardens of Monaco offer everything from lush, flowering rose bushes and exotic cacti to serene Japanese landscapes. Unique plants of native and foreign origin dot the Principality - from the casino terraces to the median strips along the esplanades - in a panorama of carefully tended and stunning displays. From the hill where the palace is perched, you can soak up the fantastic views of the bay and the high-rises of Monte Carlo.

You'll have time for an independent lunch in Monaco, and we will visit the Exotic Gardens and the Observation Cave. We'll also pay our respects to Princess Grace before returning to Menton. *Sleep in Menton (B, D)*



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DAY 7: Friday April 24 - West to Arles via St Jean Cap Ferrat

This morning, we'll drive west along the magnificent coastline of the Côte d'Azur to Beatrice Ephrussi de Rothschild's dazzling villa and gardens. Laid out as a series of 'rooms': Spanish, Florentine, Japanese and Provençal, the garden is a delight to see. Set in front of the villa is a formal French water garden, which leads up to a temple surrounded by Aleppo pines. The villa interiors contain the original Ephrussi furnishings, paintings and collections, which can all be viewed. We'll have time to tour the gardens and have an audio tour of the interior before lunch.

Our next stop will be our home for the next four nights: Arles! *Sleep in Arles (B, L)*

DAY 8: Saturday April 25 - Provençal Market, St Paul Mausole and St Rémy

It's market day in St Remy, a required visit when you're in Provence. Enjoy time to wander in the market and village, and enjoy lunch together in a very typical, Provençal bistro.

Next we make the short drive to the peaceful monastery of St Paul Mausole, via "Les Antiques," two Gallo-Roman monuments that marked the entrance to the Roman town of Glanum.

St Paul Mausole is a veritable masterpiece of Provençal Romanesque art with a covered walk that frames a lovely little cloister garden. This is the famous asylum where Vincent Van Gogh spent time resting and painting, and is still a psychiatric institution today, which encourages therapy through art. You may glimpse some irises and other frequent subjects of Van Gogh's paintings on the grounds here, and your knowledgeable guide will tell you all about Vincent's tragic life.

Return to Arles in the late afternoon. *Sleep in Arles (B, D)*



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DAY 9: Sunday April 26 - Roman Arles

Sleep in, or take an early morning walk before joining your guide and group in the late morning for an in-depth walking tour of Arles. A gem of Provençal history, ancient Arles, with its seven UNESCO World Heritage monuments and sites, has been an inspiration to artists such as Picasso and Van Gogh, and is now quickly becoming internationally known for its photography festival, along with its many photography galleries and exhibits. We'll have lunch together, and you have the afternoon free to relax or further explore this ancient Roman town. *Sleep in Arles (B, L)*

DAY 10: Monday April 27 - Avignon, the Pont du Gard and Wine Tasting

This morning we make our way to Europe's best-preserved Roman ruin, the 2,000-year-old aqueduct, le Pont du Gard. A breathtakingly beautiful structure stretching across the Gardon River, one can only admire the unbelievable feat of Roman engineering; it was constructed with such precision that no mortar was needed between the limestone blocks! Next, depart for Avignon, where we will enjoy a Farewell Luncheon before exploring the summer Palace of the Popes.

The last adventure for today is tasting some wines from the Rhône Valley. This remarkable area was the first region to produce wine in France, started by wine growers from Marseille (known then as "Massilia"). Using the nearby Rhône River, the bottles of wine could then be easily transferred to the harbor of Marseille. The Romans were next to further develop the vineyards, with the oldest remaining vineyards being "Côte Rôtie" and "Hermitage." You will be treated to tasting several delightful wines at a scenic countryside estate. *Sleep in Arles (B, L)*

DAY 11: Tuesday April 28 - Your Journey Culminates in Arles

Your garden journey concludes this morning. There is a train station in Arles that links to many major cities in France. You may want to consider booking a flight home from Marseille, allowing enough time (1.5 hours) to reach the airport from Arles. *Bon Voyage! (B)*

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Concerts, Gardens, Festivals and Events: If (for any reason) the organizers of a scheduled concert, festival or event cancel or postpone a planned activity with little or no notice, Earthbound Expeditions will do its utmost to secure a similar event or secure another concert(s). Strikes, unscheduled delays, lack of funds and acts of God are beyond the control of Earthbound Expeditions. Cancellation of an event, festival or concert is not cause for refund.

Hosted Journeys: If a host or special guest is unable to attend as planned, Earthbound Expeditions will do its utmost to find another host who has similar interests, talents expertise. The inability of a host to participate in a tour is not grounds for a full or partial refund.

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GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

Villa Cipressi (Varenna, Italy)

Villa Cipressi is a series of buildings and gardens of great historical interest built principally between 1400 and 1800. Also a hotel, the property has hosted a number of members of the European elite, including Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria and his family and a number of Nobel laureates. In 1980 it was bought by voluntary public subscription by the “People and Friends of Varenna” and now it is run by a private association of volunteers who ensure, over and above everything else, that it participates in the prestigious international cultural manifestations which take place at the nearby Villa Monastero. It is also a hotel. The terraced garden overlooking the lake deserves a visit and it is open every day from April to October.

Villa Melzi (Bellagio, Italy)

On the lakeshore in Bellagio, this villa was built for Duke Francesco Melzi d’Eril and today is still a private property. The project was given to the architect Giocondo Albertolli and the works were carried out between 1808 and 1810. The spectacular garden is open to the public for visiting. It was achieved by adapting the ground with terraces and rises, adding tropical and exotic essences, valuable sculptures among which stands the famous group with Dante and Beatrice, a Moorish temple and a Japanese pond. Even the “orangerie” is today transformed into a small museum and you can also visit the family chapel.

Villa Carlotta (Tremezzina, Italy)

The villa, the stairway and the landscaped garden were built for the Clerici family towards the end of 1600. Later it became property of Count Sommariva, who partially modified the style of it under neoclassical influence, and after that it passed to Princess Marianna of the Netherlands, who gave it to her daughter Carlotta as a wedding present. Inside there is a significant museum with statues, paintings and original neoclassical furniture, including valuable sculptures by Antonio Canova and canvases by Francesco Hayez. In the garden it is possible to admire trees and plants coming from every part of the globe: citrus arbours, mighty camelia hedges, austral arbored fern, palms, tropical plants, rare centennial conifers and bamboo collections. In springtime (April-May) it is possible to see incredible azaleas flowering of which there are circa 150 varieties at the villa. From the gardens and the terraces of the villa the view looks out to the center of the lake, Bellagio, the Grigne and the Legnone.



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Villa del Balbianello (Tremezzina, Italy)

On the Lenno headland there is the breathtaking Villa of the Balbianello, built in 1700 on the orders of Cardinal Durini, incorporating an ancient monastery on one of the most stunning corners of the lake. The garden is characterized by terraces and balustrades and accurately follows the shape of the rugged ground, formed by steep rocks at some points and milder, more gentle slopes in others. The wonderful panoramic lodge overlooks Bellagio and Comacina island. On the highest floor of the property there is a unique museum exhibiting the art collections and travel memoirs of the former owner, explorer Guido Monzino, who was a passionate and curious traveler. He bequeathed the villa to the Fondo per l' Ambiente Italiano (Italian Environmental Foundation) upon his death.

La Serre de la Madone (Menton, France)

For gardeners the world over, the greatest British legacy in this region of Europe are these subtropical gardens left by Lord Radcliffe's Val Rahmeh and Major Johnston. The garden was created in 1924-1939 by Lawrence Johnston, who had earlier created in Britain the celebrated Hidcote Manor Garden (1907). It lies on a hillside in the Gorbio Valley, with a farmhouse to which Johnston added two large wings. Johnston traveled the world collecting plants, and Serre de la Madone offered an excellent site for plants from subtropical regions. Over the years he created a series of terraces among old olive trees, planted and tended by twelve gardeners.

Val Rahmeh Botanical Garden (Menton, France)

Named for his wife, Rahmeh, Sir Percy Radcliffe purchased the property in 1904. He added buildings to the original house, bought the adjoining farmland and gave the entrance a superb avenue of palm trees. In 1957, the property was acquired by Miss Maybud Campbell, a rich, eccentric Englishwoman. She increased the size of the park and installed a tennis court, replaced by the pond which is now home to lotus and giant water lilies. She adored flowers and brought some superb ornamental plants to the garden. In the late 1960s, management of the property was handed over to the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle which turned it into a botanical garden and created a research centre there. Today, Val Rahmeh plays an important role in the acclimatisation of exotic plants as well as in the preservation of endangered species, like the *Sophora toromiro*, a tree which has disappeared from Easter Island.

The Exotic Gardens and the Observation Cave (Monaco)

This extraordinary garden, bringing together several million species of plants known as succulents was opened in 1933. With its bold plantings on the rocky mountainsides and steep craggy outcrops, the plants not only bloom superbly, but thrive to the admiration of botanists and garden aficionados around the world. It is truly a unique kingdom of nature's exuberance...and 60 meters below ground, a prehistoric cave reveals its spectacular stalagmites and stalactites formed over millennia!

Beatrice Ephrussi de Rothschild's Villa and Garden (Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, France)

The Rothschild Villa is surrounded by nine magnificent gardens decorated with patios, waterfalls, ornamental ponds, flowerbeds, shady paths and rare species of trees. Built from 1905 to 1912, the site chosen for the Villa was not particularly conducive to the establishment of a garden, being on a rocky promontory battered by gusts of wind. It entailed using dynamite and bringing in enormous quantities of earth to make it flat. Hundreds of Italian workers were hired for these colossal excavation works. The Villa was left unmonitored during World War II and its garden was abandoned for two years and suffered serious damage. In 1945, they were rapidly restored to their pre-war splendor.



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Earthbound Expeditions offers customized overseas adventures for universities, museums, garden clubs, and numerous public radio stations. Earthbound Expeditions is committed to supporting environmental education, local small businesses and providing guests with a one-of-a-kind, authentic travel experience. Whenever possible, Earthbound reserves locally-owned hotels, utilizes the talents of local lecturers, and dines in family-owned establishments. Earthbound also supports projects like the Children's Eternal Rain Forest of Monteverde, Costa Rica, the Soweto Youth and Development Project of South Africa, the *Mama Rosie Orphanage in Cape Town and is assisting families and projects in Cambodia and the USA.*

Environmental Commitment

Through Earthbound's proud partnership with the Carbonfund.org, Earthbound Expeditions makes annual donations so as to help offset a guest's carbon footprint. For every guest who signs up on an Earthbound Expedition, \$50 will be donated back to the Carbonfund.

The Carbonfund.org motto, "Reduce what you can; offset what you can't" fits perfectly with Earthbound Expeditions' long established philosophy of supporting locally-owned businesses, promoting education and embracing the concept of "slow" travel.

By using a simple carbon calculator, Carbonfund.org is able to determine the size of your carbon footprint for any specific domestic or overseas adventure. You then may purchase carbon credits. These credits go towards supporting (1) renewable energy, (2) energy efficiency and (3) reforestation projects.

For more information see: <http://www.carbonfund.org/Calculators>.

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