



ESSENTIAL EUROPE

2025 GRADUATION TOUR

US DEPARTURE DATE: **MAY 21, 2025**

LAND TOUR START DATE: **MAY 22, 2025**

ROME RETURN DATE: **JUNE 7, 2025**

ATHENS RETURN DATE: **JUNE 12, 2025**

LAND PACKAGE FROM: \$5,465

Visit our website www.aesu.com/tamu-gradtrip for more details and to book.

START YOUR ADVENTURE

Howdy, Aggie Parent!

Have you thought about a graduation gift for your son or daughter? The Association of Former Students is pleased to announce our twenty-second annual celebratory summer tour: Essential Europe. This 18-day, 9-country trip, with an optional five-day extension to Greece, would make a wonderful gift that continues your Aggie's education.

It offers the chance for your son or daughter to visit Europe's must-see destinations before settling down into a new job or starting graduate school. This trip is a comprehensive tour of Europe designed for new graduates of Texas A&M.

As you will see in this brochure, the Essential Europe is a great value tour. It offers:

- Opportunity for fun, hassle-free travel with other graduates, accompanied by a travel professional.
- Insights into other people, places and cultures that will be a source of personal enrichment.
- Experiences that will broaden your student's worldview and provide an advantage in today's global jobmarket.
- A vacation to remember and a reward for hard work!

Your Aggie's education will not stop when he or she graduates from Texas A&M. Education is a lifelong process and travel offers unparalleled opportunities for hands-on learning. We hope that your Aggie will be able to join us this summer as we visit exciting destinations, learn more about our world, and relax and unwind on a great holiday.

We look forward to welcoming every student to The Association of Former Students and having many of them join us for this enriching travel experience.

Gig 'em,



Julie Scamardo

Manager of Traveling Aggies

The Association of Former Students | Texas A&M University

Travel insurance is compulsory. Traveling Aggies offers travel insurance.

Please visit this website for information or to purchase insurance:

[MY.TRAVELINSURE.COM/AGGIES](https://my.travelinsure.com/aggies)

“ THIS EXPERIENCE CHANGED MY LIFE FOREVER AND I WOULD DO IT AGAIN A MILLION TIMES IF I COULD. ”

FORMER GRAD TRIP TRAVELER



ESSENTIAL EUROPE

18 DAYS PLUS AN OPTIONAL 5-DAY EXTENSION TO SOUTHERN ITALY & GREECE

COUNTRIES VISITED



ENGLAND

FRANCE

BELGIUM

HOLLAND

GERMANY

AUSTRIA

ITALY

VATICAN CITY

GREECE

PROGRAM ACCOMMODATIONS

This trip has been carefully designed to feature these fantastic inclusions and highlights:



For a glossary of these experiences, visit:
www.aesu.com/aspects-awt



ACTIVITY LEVEL: MODERATE

For more details, please visit:
<https://www.aesu.com/activity-levels-awt/>

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

18-Day Land Package Transportation and Lodging

- 16 nights in superior tourist class hotels or better, 2-share rooms with private bath/shower
- All intra-Europe transportation by air-conditioned motor coach
- Eurostar train from London to Paris
- Airport transfers included with purchased AESU group airfare

Meals

- 24 meals: 16 breakfasts 1 lunch, 7 three-course specialty dinners

Activities & Admissions

- London welcome orientation and pub crawl
- 1-day group tube pass in London
- Guided tours in London, Paris, Florence, and Rome, led by local experts
- Seine River cruise in Paris
- Travel cards with unlimited access to public transportation system in Paris, Amsterdam, and Rome
- Biking in the Dutch countryside
- Visit to wooden shoemaker and Edam cheese farm
- Cruises on the Rhine River and Amsterdam canal
- Medieval Rothenburg
- Heidelberg Castle
- Visit to salt mines
- Murano glass blowing workshop and demonstration
- Roma Pass (Book early to secure your spot. Spaces may not be available on short notice.)
- See St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City

5-Day Optional Extension Transportation and Lodging

- 5 nights in superior tourist class hotels or better, 2-share rooms with private bath/shower — including overnight on ship from Italy to Greece (4-share cabins)
- All intra-Europe transportation by air-conditioned motor coach and overnight ship as per itinerary

Meals

- 8 meals: 5 continental breakfasts, 3 three-course specialty dinners

Activities & Admissions

- Guided tours in Pompeii and Athens, led by local experts
- Admission to Pompeii archeological site
- Bike rental on the Isle of Poros
- Greek Island stay
- Toga party
- Admission to Acropolis

Optional Excursions

(not included in land package price):

- Paris, France: Fragonard French Perfume Museum visit, French cabaret show
- Austrian Alps, Austria: Whitewater rafting
- Florence, Italy: Chianti excursion
- Poros, Greece - Watersports (23-day tour only)



ESSENTIAL EUROPE ITINERARY

About the Trip!

Treat yourself to the ultimate post-grad adventure! The Essential Europe grad trip offers 23 days of pure adventure, with a mix of exploration, excitement, and cultural immersion in some of Europe's hottest destinations.

This tour has something for everyone. Starting from mingling with the locals on a lively London pub crawl, to snapping some envy-inducing photos of Il Duomo in Florence, and yes, you can even channel your inner Julie Andrews and dance through the Austrian hills before getting your adrenaline fix in the Greek Isles.

The best part? This trip strikes the perfect balance between thrilling activities, free time to do your own thing, and eye-opening experiences in history, architecture, and stunning European landscapes. It's your chance to embrace your inner adventurer, enjoy a well-rounded journey, and create memories and friendships that will last a lifetime.

So why wait? Join this unforgettable adventure.

- DAY 1 FLIGHT TO ENGLAND**
 Embark on your overnight flight to London.
Meals: In-flight
- DAY 2 LAND TOUR START DAY: LONDON**
 Take advantage of a leisurely afternoon to kick back before joining fellow travelers and your tour director for a lively welcome orientation, followed by a fun London pub crawl.
Meals: In-flight
Inclusions: Transfer from airport to hotel included with purchased AESU group airfare | Welcome orientation | Welcome cocktail | Pub crawl
- DAY 3 LONDON**
 Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, and Westminster Abbey: These familiar names become familiar places on our morning tour of London. During an afternoon at leisure, browse the many food, craft, and clothing stalls at popular Camden Market, walk in the footsteps of Harry Potter at Leadenhall Market aka Diagon Alley, or take a ride on the London Eye for a birds-eye view of the city and the opportunity to take great photographs. After dusk, consider taking in some Shakespeare at the Globe Theater by the Thames River or attending a West End show.
Meals: Breakfast
Inclusions: 1-day group tube pass | Tour of London guided by a local expert | Personal audio headset | See Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, Tower Bridge and more
- DAY 4 LONDON - PARIS**
 Travel through the "Chunnel" below the English Channel to Paris. Our local expert shows us the Arc de Triomphe, Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral and Place de la Concorde, where the guillotine once stood. Tonight, dine on French specialties at our bistro dinner. Afterward, we take a romantic cruise down the river Seine.
Meals: Breakfast | Dinner
Inclusions: English Channel Eurostar train | Tour of Paris guided by a local expert | See the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral, Place de la Concorde, Arc de Triomphe and more | Paris-by-night illuminations | French bistro dinner | Seine River cruise

DAY 5**PARIS**

Enjoy a free day in Paris today. Join your tour director this morning on an optional visit to a French perfumery and museum. Afterwards, consider visiting the Palace of Versailles, Louis XIV's residence with the stunning Hall of Mirrors, the world-famous Louvre, housing the Mona Lisa, Musée d'Orsay, or the Musée National Picasso. Your Paris travel card will provide unlimited public transportation throughout the city (zones 1-3.) This evening you may opt to see a can-can cabaret show at the world-famous Moulin Rouge.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions: 24-hour Paris travel card with unlimited access to public transportation system

Optional activity: Optional visit to French perfumery and museum | French cabaret show

DAY 6**PARIS - BRUSSELS - AMSTERDAM**

Motor to Belgium and stop in Brussels to see the Grand Place, a perfect medieval square, and the statue of naughty Manneken Pis. Continue to Amsterdam, known as the 'Venice of the North' because of its 165 romantic canals, impressive architecture, and diversity. Tonight, discover the fascinating history of Amsterdam as we cruise under some of the 400 bridges linking the 90 islands that make up the city center. Later, consider eating at one of the many world-class restaurants or a local pannekoeken huis, then explore the lively nightlife or a low-key, sultry jazz club. Take advantage of your included 2-day Amsterdam travel card with unlimited access to local transportation.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions: See Brussels' Grand Place, Manneken Pis and more | Amsterdam travel card | Amsterdam canal cruise

DAY 7**AMSTERDAM**

Today, we'll go biking through 13th-century Dutch fishing villages along the IJssel Lake beaches, watch wooden shoes being carved and sample Edam cheese at a cheese farm. Free time this afternoon in Amsterdam will allow time to tour the Van Gogh or Rijksmuseum or visit Anne Frank's house. This evening we invite you to a scrumptious Dutch-Indonesian rice table dinner, a specialty in Holland as Indonesia was once a Dutch colony.

Meals: Breakfast | Dinner

Inclusions: Bike riding in the Dutch countryside | Visit to wooden shoemaker and Edam cheese farm | Amsterdam travel card | Dutch-Indonesian rice table dinner

DAY 8**AMSTERDAM - COLOGNE - HEIDELBERG**

Cross the German border into Cologne, famous for Northern Europe's largest gothic cathedral. Embark on a cruise along the fabled Rhine River, passing steeply sloped vineyards, ancient castles, and the legendary Lorelei Rock. Continue to Heidelberg, the "City of the Student Prince" and climb to the ruins of the Castle of the Palatine Elector for a bird's-eye view of the city and the Neckar River.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions: City of Cologne and its Cathedral, largest Gothic church in Northern Europe | Rhine River cruise | Heidelberg 'City of the Student Prince' | See Heidelberg Castle

DAY 9**HEIDELBERG - ROTHENBURG - MUNICH**

Germany's Romantic Road takes us to Rothenburg ob der Tauber. This medieval city is celebrated not only for its well-preserved gothic and baroque buildings and walls, but also for its unspoiled picturesque setting. Enjoy lunch at a local Gasthaus before continuing our journey to the fun-filled Oktoberfest city of Munich. Tonight, you'll have a free evening to check out the oompah-pah bands at the famous Hofbräuhaus.

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch

Inclusions: Drive along Germany's Romantic Road | See Medieval Rothenburg | Gasthaus lunch | See the Oktoberfest city of Munich

DAY 10**MUNICH**

This morning we visit Dachau Memorial site, established in 1965, twenty years after it was liberated by American forces. During afternoon free time, consider visiting the BMW museum, seeing the Glockenspiel Chimes at the Marienplatz, visiting the 1972 Olympic Village or

shopping for Bavarian beer steins and lederhosen on Maximilianstrasse. Tonight, we'll dine on authentic Bavarian fare.

Meals: Breakfast | Dinner

Inclusions: Visit Dachau Memorial Site | See Munich's Glockenspiel chimes, Marienplatz and more | Traditional Bavarian dinner

DAY 11

MUNICH - SALZBURG – AUSTRIAN ALPS

On our journey to Austria, we stop at a salt mine and enjoy a ride down slides, dressed in miner's clothing. Afterwards we continue to the city of Salzburg, Mozart's birthplace, and the site where the classic movie, "The Sound of Music" was filmed. Explore the narrow streets lined with colorful wrought iron signs and shops before we continue our journey to Europe's largest Alpine sports region. Be our pampered guest for two nights of fitness and fun while nestled in the snow-capped Austrian mountains.

Meals: Breakfast | Dinner

Inclusions: Visit to salt mines | See Europe's largest Alpine sports region | See Mozart's city of Salzburg | Hearty Austrian dinner

DAY 12

AUSTRIAN ALPS

All day today is at our leisure; go for a hike in the Alps or opt to join the fun and excitement of whitewater rafting. A hearty Austrian dinner awaits after all of today's activity.

Meals: Breakfast | Dinner

Inclusions: Hiking in the Austrian Alps | Alpine dinner

Optional activity: Whitewater rafting

DAY 13

AUSTRIAN ALPS - VENICE

The picturesque landscape of the Austrian Lake District makes way for sunny Italy's Venice — "The Sinking City in the Sea." Our private boat takes us to Murano Island, Venice's glassmaking center since the 13th-century, where we visit a workshop and watch famous Venetian glass being made. Back in Venice, we walk along the narrow maze of back streets and bridges that take us to St. Mark's Square with the Campanile, Doge's Palace, and flocks of friendly pigeons. Consider a romantic gondola ride gliding through the intricate maze of canals beneath arched bridges and passing by 12th and 18th-century marble palaces.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions: See Venice's Doge Palace, St. Mark's Square and more | Private boat to Murano Island | Glass blowing workshop and demonstration

DAY 14

VENICE - FLORENCE

Through the fertile Po Valley we approach Florence, Golden City of the Renaissance and home of the famed Italian sculptor, painter, architect and poet, Michelangelo. Our Florence art tour includes the Gates of Paradise, the marble Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral, and Giotto's bell tower. Afterwards, there's free time for shopping and museums. Tonight, enjoy our dinner of traditional Florentine fare.

Meals: Breakfast | Dinner

Inclusions: See the Duomo, Ponte Vecchio, Giotto's Bell Tower and more | Tour of Florence guided by a local expert | Personal audio headset | Traditional Florentine dinner

DAY 15

FLORENCE

Today is a free day to explore the Uffizi Gallery and see the collections of Giotto, Botticelli, Raphael, and da Vinci. The Galleria dell'Accademia houses several sculptures by Michelangelo including his famous David (advance reservation required.) Opt to join us for time under the Tuscan sun starting with a picturesque drive through the vineyards of one of the best-known wine growing areas, Chianti. Our excursion includes a tour of the winery and a tasting of a selection of local wines.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions: Florence city sights

Optional activity: Chianti Tuscan excursion

DAY 16 FLORENCE – ROME – VATICAN CITY

This morning we continue our travels south to the capital of Italy. Get ready to soak up Rome's dolce vita lifestyle as we explore the city's picturesque streets and piazzas with our local expert. Ancient icons such as the Colosseum or Caesar's Roman Forum remind us of the city's golden age as the capital of the world. Vatican City with St. Peter's Basilica towering over the square, and colossal cathedrals throughout the city, tells stories of its history as seat of the Catholic Church.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions: Tour of Rome and Vatican City guided by a local expert | Personal audio headset | See the Colosseum, Circus Maximus, Pantheon, Vatican City with St. Peter's Basilica and more | Roma Pass with access to Caesar's Roman Forum and Palatine Hill | Unlimited access to local transportation

Important information: Most museums and sights, such as the Colosseum require advance reservations when using the pass. Book early to secure your spot. Spaces may not be available on short notice. The best day for museum visits is day 17 of your itinerary, the free day in Rome and Vatican City.

DAY 17 ROME - VATICAN CITY

A free day in Rome may find you exploring Piazza Navona, climbing the famous Spanish Steps, and tossing a coin into the Trevi Fountain to ensure your return to Rome. Try numerous flavors of the fabulous gelato ice cream or find yourself window-dreaming on Via dei Condotti, one of Rome's fashionable shopping streets. This evening, we cross the Tiber River to Trastevere, one of Rome's oldest neighborhoods, for our fun Italian Pizza Party. Toppings range from a simple drizzle of olive oil, rosemary, and salt, to mushrooms, prosciutto ham and artichokes. Buon appetito!

Meals: Breakfast | Dinner

Inclusions: See Piazza Navona, the Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain and more | Unlimited access to local transportation | Pizza Party in Trastevere

DAY 18 TRAVEL HOME – OR CONTINUE TO POMPEII & OVERNIGHT SHIP TO GREECE

For some of us the celebratory tour of Europe ends in Rome this morning. Bid farewell to friends and "arrivederci" to Italy before jetting back home with memories to last a lifetime. For the rest of us - sunny olive groves line the way south to Pompeii. Under the shadow of Vesuvius, the volcano that buried this ancient city in 79 A.D., explore the excavated wonders including homes, markets and temples that remain intact, and streets that still bear the marks of chariot wheels from 2,000 years ago. Afterwards, we cross the Italian "boot" and board our overnight ship to Greece.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions: Tour of the Pompeii excavations guided by a local expert | Personal audio headset | Scenic overnight ship from Italy to Greece | Transfer from hotel to Rome airport included with purchased AESU group airfare

DAY 19 ISLE OF POROS

After cruising through the enchanting aquamarine waters, our ship arrives in Patras. From there, we'll embark on a breathtaking journey along the stunning Corinthian Sea, ultimately arriving at Galatas and the charming island of Poros. Get ready to embrace three days of pure Greek god or goddess living. Start the adventure with a welcoming drink, then dive into exploring this idyllic island paradise. Tonight, prepare for a Greek culinary extravaganza at a charming local restaurant. Afterward, you might just find yourself dancing the night away, Zorba-style, at a lively local tavern.

Meals: Breakfast | Welcome cocktail | Dinner

Inclusions: Relaxing pool and beach time | Enjoy iconic Greek sunsets | Traditional Greek dinner at a local taverna

DAY 20 ISLE OF POROS

Today is all about having fun on your own terms. Dive into the sparkling waters for a refreshing swim, soak up the glorious sunshine, or get your adrenaline pumping with optional watersports like waterskiing, wakeboarding, parasailing, banana-boating, or tubing.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions: Explore the white-washed village center of Poros | Beach and pool

Optional activity: Watersports

DAY 21

ISLE OF POROS

During free time today, get ready for some fantastic shopping in the old town center or, more adventurous souls may embark on a thrilling journey to the 6th-century BC ruins of Poseidon's Temple perched atop the island's highest peak. We'll have bicycles at our disposal, opening up new avenues to discover the island's treasures. And as the sun sets, get ready to join the fun at our epic toga party.

Meals: Breakfast | Dinner

Inclusions: Bike rental on the Isle of Poros | Beach and pool | Toga party | Greek island farewell dinner

DAY 22

ISLE OF POROS - ATHENS

This morning, we hop on a ferry to Athens. Once we arrive, we'll be in for a treat with visits to the awe-inspiring 2,400-year-old Parthenon, the Temple of Olympian Zeus, and Constitution Square. During free time this afternoon, you might find yourself wandering in the footsteps of legends like Plato, Socrates, and Sophocles, or honing your bargaining skills at the vibrant markets of Monastiraki. And as the sun sets, follow the irresistible sounds of traditional bouzouki music and join us for a spectacular farewell taverna dinner in the Plaka District – Athens' oldest neighborhood, right at the foot of the iconic Acropolis. It's bound to be an unforgettable night of fun and feasting.

Meals: Breakfast | Dinner

Inclusions: Tour of Athens guided by a local expert | Acropolis admission | Greek tavern farewell dinner | Greek music and dancing

DAY 23

TRAVEL HOME

With a heavy heart, it's time to bid adieu to Europe and our amazing new friends. As we jet back home, we let the excitement of planning our next alumni adventure fill our thoughts! The world is our playground, and there are countless adventures waiting for us to explore.

Meals: Breakfast | In-flight

Inclusions: Transfer from hotel to airport included with purchased AESU group airfare

TOUR DIRECTORS

Your land package tour includes the services of a professional tour director, who knows this is a trip of a lifetime for you. They are young professionals; multi-lingual and carefully selected graduates from major universities. They are eager to show you the world through the eyes of an adventurer, sharing with you their vast knowledge, as well as interesting little-known facts.

Our qualified tour directors and staff of local experts mean a trouble-free journey with the added security of group travel. We are very proud of our tour directors, therefore it is customary to include gratuity.

Show the tour director and driver your appreciation with a tip. We suggest \$6-7 per person/per day for your tour director and \$4 per person/per day for your driver.

HOTELS

We stay in superior tourist-class hotels or better, all with private bathrooms in 2-share rooms. Our hotels have been specially selected for their European atmosphere, friendly hospitality, and cleanliness. They are centrally located or within a short walk of public transportation, taking you to the landmarks of your choice in the city you are visiting.

All land package rates are based on two people sharing a room. You can book a single-room by paying an additional single supplement of \$1,675 for the 18-day land package or \$2,170 for the 23-day land package. Please note that single cabins are not available on the overnight ship.

If you are a solo traveler and don't want to pay the single supplement, AESU will attempt to arrange a share with a same-gender traveler. If we are unable to arrange a share, the single supplement will be added to your invoice.

By booking your trip with AESU, you are agreeing to all the terms and conditions as outlined on our website:
<https://www.aesu.com/terms-conditions-awt/> | For details on our payment plan, please visit: <https://www.aesu.com/payment-plan-awt/>