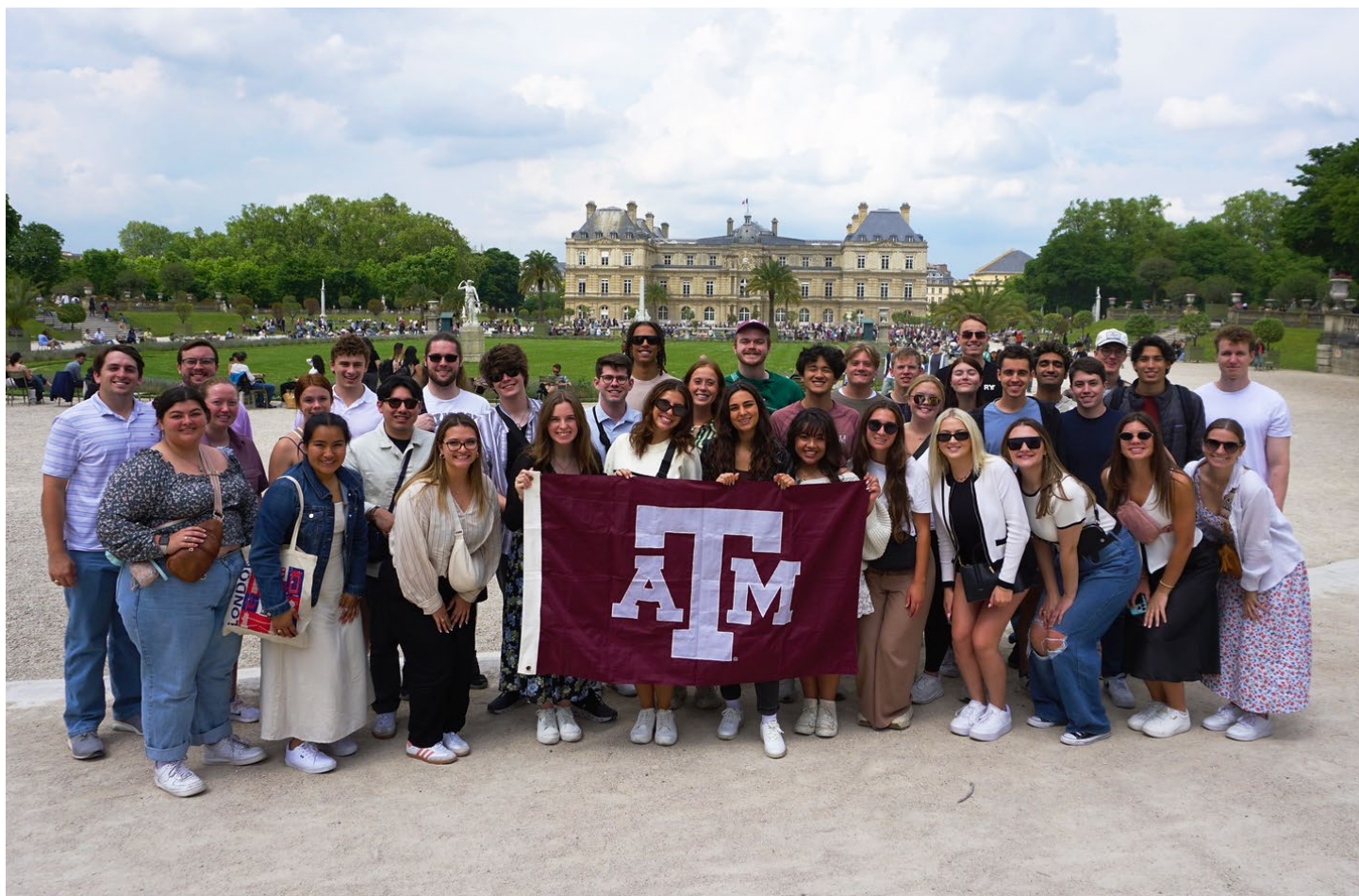


# ESSENTIAL EUROPE

## 2026 GRADUATION TRIP



US Departure Date: **May 18, 2026**

Land Trip Start Date: **May 19, 2026**

Rome Return Date: **June 4, 2026**

Athens Return Date: **June 9, 2026**

Land package from: **\$5578**

Visit our website [www.aesu.com/tamu-gradtrip](http://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 26th annual celebratory summer Trip: Essential Europe. This 18-day, 8-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 Trip of Europe designed for new graduates of Texas A&M.

As you will see in this brochure, the Essential Europe is a great value Trip. 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

Purchasing travel insurance is compulsory.  
Traveling Aggies will send you information regarding travel insurance.



# ESSENTIAL EUROPE

Celebrate your graduation with 23 days of pure adventure. Pub crawl in London, marvel at Florence's Il Duomo, dance through Austria's hills, and relax on the Greek Isles. With a perfect mix of thrills, culture, and free time, this trip promises unforgettable memories and friendships. Europe awaits—let the journey begin!

## 18-DAY TRIP OF ENGLAND, FRANCE, BELGIUM, HOLLAND, GERMANY, AUSTRIA, ITALY, & VATICAN CITY

### Transportation and Lodging

- 16 nights in 3 or 4-star 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 Trips in London, Paris, Florence, and Rome, led by local experts
- Seine River cruise in Paris
- Travel cards providing 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
- Admission to the Colosseum and Roman Forum
- Rome travel card providing unlimited access to public transportation system
- See St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City

## 5-DAY OPTIONAL EXTENSION TO GREECE

### Transportation and Lodging

- 5 nights in 3 or 4 -star 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 Trips 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

### PLUS

A private Trip director for the entire duration of the land Trip  
All service charges and local taxes

### 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 Trip only)



## EXPERIENCES

This trip has been carefully designed for young travelers and features fantastic inclusions and highlights. For a glossary of these key aspects, visit: [www.aesu.com/aspects-awt](http://www.aesu.com/aspects-awt)



## ACTIVITY LEVEL: MODERATE

This Trip requires standing and walking for some extended periods of time during city or nature Trips, museum visits, and/or outdoor activities. For more details, please visit: <https://www.aesu.com/activity-levels-awt/>



## HOTELS

Hotels are centrally located and many offer great extra amenities such as pools, gyms or roof-top bars. All land package rates are based on two people sharing a room. If a single room is desired, a supplement of \$1675 for the 18-day land package or \$2170 for the 23-day applies. 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.





# ESSENTIAL EUROPE ITINERARY

- 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 Trip 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 Trip 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 | Trip 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 | Trip 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 metro card will provide access to 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:** Paris metro card

**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 Trip the Van Gogh or Rijksmuseum or visit Anne Frank's house. This evening we invite you to a scrumptious dinner of Dutch specialties.

**Meals:** Breakfast | Dinner

**Inclusions:** Bike riding in the Dutch countryside | Visit to wooden shoemaker and Edam cheese farm | Amsterdam travel card | Dinner of Dutch specialties
- 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 Trip 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 | Trip 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 Trip 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:** Trip 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 | Admission to the Colosseum and Caesar's Roman Forum | Unlimited access to local transportation with Rome travel card
- 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 | Travel card providing unlimited access to local transportation | Viva Italy pizza party
- DAY 18 TRAVEL HOME – OR CONTINUE TO POMPEII & OVERNIGHT SHIP TO GREECE**

For some of us the celebratory Trip 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:** Trip 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 | Dinner

**Inclusions:** Welcome cocktail | 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:** Trip 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

## TRIP DIRECTORS

Our qualified Trip directors and staff of local experts mean a trouble-free journey with the added security of group travel. Show the Trip director and driver your appreciation with a tip. We suggest \$6-7 per person/per day for your Trip director. To learn more visit [www.aesu.com/Trip-directors](http://www.aesu.com/Trip-directors)

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