



Classic France: Cultural Immersion

Spring 2023

Description:

Napoleon, the Louvre, strolling along the Seine, the Eiffel Tower, ancient cathedrals and medieval chateaux, gardens and monarchs and artists, two World Wars in the last century, the Lost Generation, delicious food, and enchanting music – sound appealing? These places, events and more will be found on this ECS exploring French culture through the ages. Flying from Denver to Paris and then traveling to various locales via public transportation and coach bus, the goal of this ECS will be to discover the richness afforded by French culture. What stories will students hear? What will those tales tell them about the French people and our shared humanity?

Essential Questions:

- What can we learn from a culture much older than our own country's?
- What stories about humanity can we learn to appreciate and share with others?

The Introduction to France

By Morgan J. '23

Feb. 27, 2023

As expected, the first day of ECS is exciting for everyone, and our group was no exception. We were all in the classroom bright and early at 8 a.m., ready to learn and prepare for our upcoming trip to France later this week. Our day was filled with activities, beginning with some common French games. On the quad, we played Pétanque, which consists of up to eight players throwing different colored balls, attempting to be the closest to the small white ball thrown at the beginning of the game. We were very competitive, to say the least, and the winners celebrated thoroughly (even though there was no prize). Shortly after, we made our way to the kindergarten classroom to meet with our ECS buddies. We first read them books that were in both English and French, then followed with coloring activities with sheets of French people, the flag, the Eiffel Tower, and a map showcasing the route from Colorado to France. The kindergarteners seemed to be more excited about our trip than we were, asking us endless questions that we were happy to answer. After lunch, Mr. Frugé gave us a short French lesson, teaching us common, useful phrases like “Parlez-vous anglais?” (Can you speak English?) and “Où sont les toilettes?” (Where is the bathroom?). We wrapped up the day with our first journal entry, reflecting on our hopes and fears for the trip. We are looking forward to our travels later this week.



First Day in Paris

By Chloe P. '23
March 2, 2023

Upon our early morning arrival to Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris, we headed to our first hotel, which was a 40-minute bus ride away. At the hotel located in the city's eighth arrondissement, we were given time to clean up and get ready for the big day planned ahead of us. We first began by taking the metro to Le Champs Elysées, where blocks of big-name stores line two parallel streets. Following the last few stores stood l'Arc de Triomphe, which celebrates the victory of the French army in the 1800s. Then we made our way to Le Marais, an area known for its boutiques, small cafes or boulangeries, and galleries. Around le Marais, we got to take a look at La Place des Vosges, a site of royal origins, built in honor of Henry IV in the 1700s. After browsing and taking some time to sit by la Seine in le Marais, we walked to le Jardin de Tuileries, where we spent some time relaxing and taking in the beautiful scene before us. After the garden, we walked about 25 minutes to our destination for dinner, Le Petit Bistro, where we were served a quintessential French meal. Dinner was our last event of the day, so we headed back to the hotel for some much-needed rest for the night.



A Sight to See

By Mulka B. '24
March 5

To begin with, our day started bright and early. We were awakened by a shrill wake-up call at what felt like the break of dawn. We were off on another adventure, only this time heading off to Amboise, 45 minutes from Tours. The medieval town is located in the Loire Region. Though we may have looked tired, we were definitely ready for this exciting excursion. Once on the bus, we were not in the mood for taking a nap and instead decided to play a great game of Uno to pass the time other than using electronics. Rather than using fancy iPhones, we used polaroids to take such beautiful pictures. My favorite picture was at the Château de Chenonceau, which was coincidentally our first stop in Amboise. We toured an extravagant castle, which was truly a sight to see. We were all blown away by the luxurious beauty of this estate. Catherine de Medici was such a staple of our enlightenment. After going through the interesting maze at the castle that was rebuilt exactly from Catherine de Medicis' plans, we were all ready for lunch. This was a splendid time for great leisure. Our joie de vivre for today was truly fulfilled by eating a filling quiche. After lunch, we were surprised to hear about our next destination, which was the gothic Château d'Amboise, a favorite residence of several French kings. Here, we enjoyed seeing the many outfits the royals would wear. It was interesting to discuss the differences in culture and societal norms, such as learning about how the royals would wear different items of clothing for various events. After an incredible day, we got some time to shop around the little town. We all bought matching bracelets, which made this day memorable. Later this evening, we enjoyed a delectable dinner of traditional French cuisine. We were all delighted to hear that a chocolate mousse would be for dessert. All in all, this day was truly one to remember, and we are thrilled for the days to come!



A Day in Paradise

By Emmitt G. '24
March 7, 2023

Today was a magical day in more ways than I can describe. I will never forget the feeling of driving up to Mont Saint Michel or looking out over the water in Saint-Malo as the sun set over the vast expanse of the English Channel. We got a look into some of the oldest architecture in the world today when we set foot in Mont Saint Michel. It blew our minds how the people of that time managed to build something that was so vast and majestic. They were definitely onto something when they decided this was the place for an abbey. From the balcony on the top of the island, we watched as all the water surrounding the island disappeared in a torrent. I could only imagine what it would be like to stand there hundreds of years ago and look out over the same view with nowhere near the knowledge of the world we have today. No wonder these people saw it as such a spiritual location. This place existed long before the place we call home was even discovered. Later on that day, we arrived in the city of Saint-Malo. This is the place that our guide, Emmanuelle, is from, so she was very excited for us to see it. We were all blown away by how incredible the city was. In some shape or form, all of us embraced joie de vivre in this city. For me it was with two experiences: The first one is when a couple of us decided to go for a walk while the tide was coming in. We ended up walking to an island that for the time being had a path that led to it. By the time we were on the island, we looked back and that path was gone. We had to run through the water to get back, and we were all very wet. It sounds miserable, but it was the most fun I've had so far. All of us felt joy in that moment, and we were thankful for it. Later, we watched the sunset from the walls surrounding the city. It was such a pleasant feeling to watch the gentle waves hit the walls. Right then, I understood the meaning of "joie de vivre," and the whole trip made sense.



Sacrificie for Joie de Vivre

By Celina Kim '24
March 7, 2023

Early in the morning, we woke up from a wake-up call at 7:00 am to start another exciting day. We had a typical French breakfast at 7:30, complete with scrambled eggs, baguettes, of course, and freshly made orange juice. Off to a new adventure, we head to Bayeux, which perfectly combines culture, heritage, dynamism, and modernity. On our way to Bayeux, we stopped by the American Cemetery & Memorial, which is located in Colleville-sur-Mer. We had some moments of silence for the honorable American troops who died in Europe during World War II. Along with this, we got to see Omaha Beach, where the infamous D-Day casualties took place in 1944. It was a great time to reflect on our ECS theme, "joie de vivre" since their sacrifice is what allowed us to have peace, opportunities, and most importantly, joie de vivre. Without the young soldiers' sacrifice, we would not be here laughing, exploring, and learning. Walking above Ohama beach, it was very hard to imagine that so many soldiers died there because the beach now is so peaceful and beautiful, even with cold rain surrounding us. It was most alarming to realize that most of the soldiers who fought in WWII and in the D-Day landing were our age, and it is incredible that they had the courage to sacrifice their life for their country. We expressed our sincere gratitude to the young souls who allowed us to



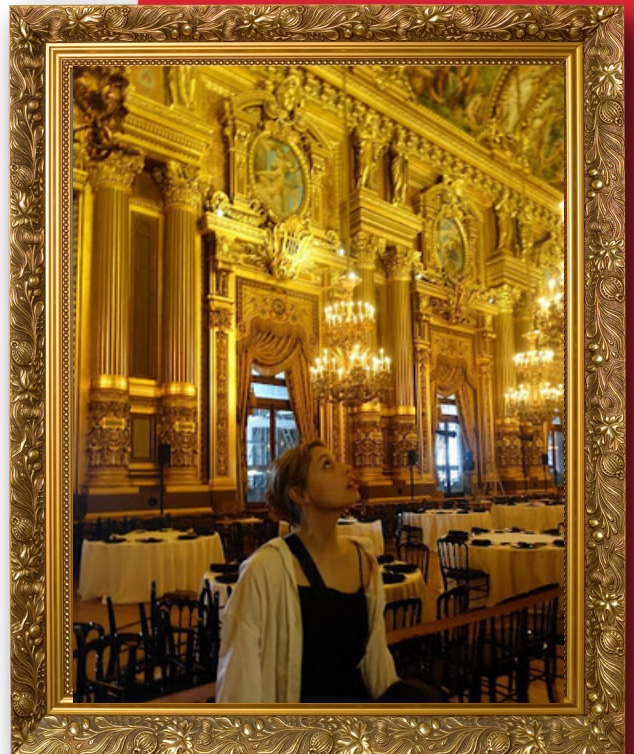
have joie de vivre. After this, we made our way to visit the Tapestry of Bayeux, which portrays the preceding events to the Norman conquest of England in 1066 by William, the Duke of Normandy. The Tapestry of Bayeux was like an old comic book that has over 70 scenes and measures 230 feet long, each scene explaining very important events. The many women who embroidered the tapestry captured the movements of horses and people specifically and in such detail that it seemed I could actually see them move. The tapestry itself is strictly protected under certain lights, humidity, and more. After learning about the Bayeux Tapestry, we drove about 20 minutes to the city of Caen, where we saw signs of the countrywide strike that had occurred the previous day, and we strolled along the shops. We then had dinner at Bistro Regent, where we each were served paté, steak frites (fries and steak), and rich chocolate cake. There is no dessert better than a rich chocolate cake.



Last Day in France

By Hannah M. '24
March 12, 2023

The final day in Paris left bittersweet feelings. The morning started later, giving us more time to sleep in and relax before our last day in Paris. After having a couple of extra hours to sleep in, we had a delicious breakfast served by the hotel. We walked to Opera Garnier, the most famous opera house in the world, and surrounding areas shortly after finishing breakfast. Before entering the Opera Garnier, we had some time to walk around and get lunch. Split into groups, my group went into some beautiful French boutiques and other stores like Zara and Mango. After some shopping, we stopped for lunch. After being in France for nine days, we decided to go back to our American roots and eat lunch at the infamous McDonald's. Then we all met up and went to the spectacular Parfumerie Fragonard and Boutique. Visiting the parfumerie left me in absolute awe. Seeing how perfume has progressed over time and all the different ways it has been made was certainly one of my favorite parts of the entire trip. Learning how they would use animal musk and the fact that consumers would have to buy the perfume and the bottle separately amazed me. After learning more about the creation of perfume and after smelling over 20 delightful perfume samples, we had the chance to buy them. I absolutely loved the vanilla scent and decided to purchase that, and many other people did the same! The joie de vivre of the day for me



was definitely found through the variety of aromas and how certain scents could represent people. Smells and fragrances are a major part of the happiness of life because they can symbolize so much, and smelling certain fragrances can bring endless happiness. Personally, when I smell the vanilla perfume I feel contentment and as though it is something I want to be constantly smelling. Following the pleasant visit to the parfumerie, we traveled across the street to the Opera Garnier and observed this famous opera house, known to be the inspiration and setting for Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera*. The opera house was absolutely stunning, filled with spectacular paintings and architecture. The first thing upon entry into the opera house was the grand staircase. Walking up the staircase where so many audience members have made a grand entrance, I felt as though I was living a magical dream. Gold and velvet fill this incredible building. The opera house was so supremely massive, I estimate over 2,000 people could fit in it. We then finished the night and the trip with a fantastic dinner at an adorable Mediterranean restaurant. I was so sad for the day to end, knowing tomorrow we would be leaving and returning to the U.S., but the day ended perfectly with some tasty Greek yogurt.

