Cruise Details

Name:	Festive Sensations of Lyon & Provence
Reference:	EMERALDEFRM201127-1
Operator:	Emerald Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Emerald Liberte
Regions:	Rhone
Departs On:	20 Nov 27
Departs From:	Lyon
Arrives On:	27 Nov 27
Arrives At:	Arles
Cruise Nights:	7
Total Vacation Days:	8

Itinerary

Day 1: Lyon (France)

Fly from the UK for the start of your cruise.

Welcome to Lyon, the culinary capital of France, set on the confluence of the Rhône and Saône rivers. On arrival at the airport, you'll be met by a member of our friendly greetings team and transferred to the contemporary surrounds of your Emerald Star-Ship.

You will remain docked in Lyon overnight, so you can go ashore to visit the magical Christmas market as it is illuminated after dark.

Arrives On: 20 Nov 27

Day 2: Lyon (France)

France's third-largest city, Lyon, is a former Roman capital, steeped in history and considered to be the gastronomic heartbeat of the country. Home to traditional Lyonnaise cuisine, you'll enjoy an array of exemplary culinary delights at Christmas like bugnes (fried pastry), hot spiced wine and roasted chestnuts. Over the festive period, the centre of the city will be illuminated

with colourful light displays across its most famous buildings. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Lyon with Christmas market visit
Enjoy a guided tour of Lyon, passing by the Romanesque and Byzantine Basilica of Notre-Dame de Fourvière, an impressive building that strayed away from the popular Gothic models of the same period. Afterwards, visit the charming Christmas market in Place Carnon with more than 100 traditional wooden stalls. DiscoverMORE
Excursion to Pérouges (extra expense)
Journey by coach to the medieval walled town of Pérouges, located on a small hill overlooking the Ain River valley north of Lyon. Known for its wine and weaving, it is considered one of the most beautiful villages in France. It's filled with cobblestone streets and fascinating buildings, which will be beautifully decorated for the Christmas season. Rug up for a guided walking tour, followed by some free time.
Activity Level: Moderate, Duration: 3.5 hours

Arrives On: 21 Nov 27

Day 3: Vienne (France)

A quintessentially French town, Vienne began life as a Roman colony in Gaul under the rule of Julius Caesar around 47 BC. Its strategic position on the Rhône River made it an important port for trade and communication over the centuries, and many monuments from the Roman and Medieval periods can still be seen. Included Excursion
Walking tour of Vienne
Take a walking tour to uncover the rich history of this charming riverside town. You'll see the Cybèle Garden, an open-air museum of Gallo-Roman ruins. Admire the beautiful cathedral, which was built between the 11th and 16th centuries, and explore one of the best-preserved Roman theatres in Europe, built around 40 to 50 AD.

Arrives On: 22 Nov 27

Day 4: Tournon-sur-Rhône (France)

The picturesque village of Tournon borders the gently meandering Rhône, dominated by a 16th-century castle that overlooks the village and several iconic landmarks, including a set of ancient watchtowers. Part of the Rhône Valley, the village is surrounded by vineyards producing some of the world's finest reds. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Tournon
Join your local guides on a walk through Tournon as they unveil fascinating local history and offer insight into the traditions of viticulture. Admire its Roman ruins and Renaissance monuments, then marvel at the oldest suspension bridge with cables in the world.

Arrives On: 23 Nov 27

Day 5: Viviers (France)

Arrive in Viviers today, a walled town with Middle Age flair that’s home to one of France’s oldest cathedrals, with parts dating back to the 12th century. In its charming centre, pastel-coloured buildings gently faded by the sun line narrow cobblestone streets, dotted with tiny shops and leafy squares. Look out for the festive nativity scenes dotted throughout the town. Part of the Provence region of southern France, it is known for its natural beauty, relaxed ambience and Mediterranean climate. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Viviers
Your included tour of the town follows a unique heritage discovery trail that touches on many of its iconic monuments. Admire its architectural treasures, including the Maison des Chevaliers, a lavishly decorated Roman house with an extravagant Renaissance façade. EmeraldPLUS
Christmas Santon painting workshop
Immerse yourself in the festive spirit with a Christmas Santon-painting experience. Santons, the traditional hand-painted figurines of Provence, represent the characters and scenes of a classic Provençal nativity. In this workshop, you’ll learn about the rich cultural history behind these figures and will paint your own Santon.

Capture the charm of Provence’s Christmas traditions in a beautiful piece of art to celebrate the festive season. DiscoverMORE
Visit to Chauvet Pont D’Arc (extra expense)
Embark on a transformative journey as you delve into the mesmerising depths of the Caverne du Pont-d'Arc Museum, an awe-inspiring testament to the indomitable spirit of human creativity. Let the luminosity of knowledge guide your steps as you traverse the cavernous expanse with a local guide who breathes life into the ancient canvases that adorn the largest decorated cave replica in the world.
Activity Level: Moderate, Duration: 2.5 hours

Arrives On: 24 Nov 27

Day 6: Avignon (France)

Avignon has a rich history, from its Celtic beginnings to its powerful position as the residence of seven successive Popes between 1309 and 1377. It’s most famous for the World Heritage-listed Palais des Papes, as well as other glorious medieval architecture, a world-renowned arts festival and its role in the French Revolution. The month of December is marked by the excitement of the Christmas market, where Provençal traditions come to life in the heart of the city. The wooden chalets set up by the Federation of Merchants and Craftsmen are spread across the Pie and Saint-Jean le Vieux squares, and are the perfect opportunity to discover artisanal treasures, savour local specialties, and find unique gifts for the holiday season. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Avignon with Christmas market visit
Explore the World Heritage-listed highlights that adorn Avignon’s ancient town centre as you venture down its cobbled alleyways. Witness the splendour of the Pont d’Avignon, a 12th-century bridge, and soak in sights of some of the medieval architecture that generously pepper the city. Afterwards, enjoy some time to explore the bustling Christmas market. EmeraldPLUS
Provençal dinner hosted by

French Chef, Fabien Morreale
This evening, you'll enjoy a delightful Provençal dining experience on board, expertly prepared by Top Chef finalist, Fabien Morreale. Dine on authentic dishes that celebrate the flavours of the region and its abundant fresh produce. Chef Fabien brings his passion for food to the table during this immersive dining experience, where he engages with guests and shares his extensive knowledge of Provençal cuisine. EmeraldPLUS
Classical Christmas concert in Avignon
The fortified city of Avignon, located on the banks of the Rhône River, showcases its rich papal history at every turn. Where palaces, courtyards and private mansions evoke memories of 14th-century Provence, and some of the most elegant streets offer a superior level of charm. Tonight, enjoy a private classical Christmas concert in the halls of one of the Provençal city's churches. DiscoverMORE
Guided tour of the Pont du Gard (extra expense)
In the heart of Provence, the World Heritage-listed Pont du Gard aqueduct is one of humankind’s great masterpieces. This three-level Roman aqueduct is 275 metres (902 ft) long and 48 metres (157 ft) high and served as an aqueduct until the sixth century. Later, it was used as a toll gate, before being transformed into a road bridge. As well as marvelling at this wonderful feat of engineering, you’ll visit the small Roman town of Uzès, ideal for exploring and enjoying some great food in the local restaurants.
Activity Level: Easy, Duration: 4.5 hours DiscoverMORE
Visit to Chateauneuf du Pape with wine tasting (extra expense)
The appellation of Chateauneuf du Pape is one of the most famous in France, known for its warm red blends and creamy whites. The village itself has centuries of history that will charm and delight, including the picturesque ruins of a 14th-century castle. Enjoy a tasting of the region’s famous wines at a local vineyard.
Activity Level: Moderate, Duration: 3.25 hours

Arrives On: 25 Nov 27

Day 7: Arles (France)

The past is yours to uncover in Arles, a once-important Phoenician trading port that was captured by the Romans, who peppered the city with iconic monuments. It has been a favourite retreat for legendary artists like Van Gogh and Gauguin, drawn to its unique light and arresting beauty. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Arles with Christmas market visit
Join your local guide for an insightful walking tour. Follow in the footsteps of Vincent van Gogh, who sought to escape from city life for the vivacious colours of the south. He was incredibly productive during his time in Arles, painting pieces that include his famous “Starry Night Over the Rhône”. You can also explore some of the World Heritage-listed Roman and Romanesque monuments in Arles. Afterwards, visit its popular Christmas craft market, Provence Prestige, where more than 150 local artisans and exhibitors will be set up inside the Palais des Congrés – a wonderful place for a last-minute Christmas gift. DiscoverMORE
Excursion to Les Baux de Provence (extra expense)
Set in the heart of the Alpilles Regional Natural Park, Les Baux de

Provence is a World Heritage-listed site, recognised for being ‘one of the most beautiful villages in France’. Compact, with plenty of shops and restaurants, the village retains its traditional style, with its narrow cobblestone streets and grey medieval stone buildings. The high, rocky pinnacle of Château-Fortress des Baux extends to the southwest of the village, and the incredible views make the trip very much worthwhile.
Activity Level: Difficult / Active, Duration: 4 hours DiscoverMORE
Lavender Distillery – from Field to Perfume (extra expense)
Experience the timeless art of Provençal soap-making in this hands-on workshop. Learn the traditional techniques used to create luxurious soaps from natural ingredients like olive oil, lavender, and other local botanicals. Create your own artisanal soap, guided by expert craftsmen, and take home a unique, fragrant souvenir of your Provençal experience.
Activity Level: Easy, Duration 3 hours DiscoverMORE
In the footsteps of Van Gogh with painting workshop (extra expense)
Follow in the footsteps of Vincent van Gogh as you explore the landscapes that inspired his iconic works. Take part in a painting workshop, where you’ll try your hand at recreating the vibrant scenes that captured the artist’s imagination. You get to keep your own masterpiece inspired by Van Gogh’s legacy and bring it home.
Activity Level: Moderate, Duration: 3 hours

Arrives On: 26 Nov 27

Day 8: Arles (France)

After breakfast, it’s time to bid farewell to your fellow guests and disembark your Emerald Star-Ship for your transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK, taking memories of the idyllic French countryside and delightful cuisine with you. Please book your flight to depart out of Marseille after 11:00 AM. This itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for operational reasons such as high and low water. As such, the cruise may operate altered from that stated above. Please refer to our terms and conditions for further information.

Arrives On: 27 Nov 27

Day 8: Marseille (France)

Arrives On: 27 Nov 27

For more information on this cruise, please call +44 (0)1202 767926.

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