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Travel

Barge Cruise Lets Vacationers Relax In French Countryside

JANUARY 11TH, 2002

Have you found yourself thinking: "Stop the world, I want to get off?" Do you need a little time to reflect on the events of the past year?

Then try a vacation on board a barge cruise through the French Countryside, which lets you take things at your own pace.

At the very end of August, I took a barge cruise through the Burgundy region of France, which turned out to be my last assignment prior to September 11. Now, in retrospect, something that seemed a little too slow moving at the time seems just right for a weary traveler looking for an appropriate vacation.

With a relatively small group of passengers (I was on board with just 13 others) the barge creeps its way along the waters of Burgundy Canal, measuring its day by the number of locks it passes through. Each lock offers the opportunity for passengers to stretch their legs for a walk along the footpath or to grab one of the onboard bicycles to explore some of the hidden villages.

In either case, you're able to stay ahead of the slow moving barge, catching up with it at your leisure.

The Litote is just one of a dozen barges that ply the canals of France carrying up to 50 passengers. The agenda is

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usually the same, even if the itineraries differ a bit.

Sightseeing trips to historic towns and churches eat up parts of the day, and the rest of the time is left for eating, drinking and relaxing.

The cruises are known for their gourmet cuisine and fine wines. After all, you're visiting towns right off the label. On my cruise, the open bar was included, but some of the barges charge per drink.

It is also an area ripe with cultures. I learned more about cheese than I could ever digest.

The barging season in France resumes in March. Rates on the Litote, for instance, start at \$1,690 per person for a 6-day cruise through April 20. That includes all meals with wine and transfers from Paris. Airfare is extra.

For more information log onto <http://www.ewaterways.com> or call Continental Waterways at (800) 676-6613.

--Valarie D'Elia

Now, here's a D'Elia's Deal you don't want to miss on a barge cruise through the Dijon region of Burgundy. This one includes airfare plus two nights in Paris, all for \$1,999. Fares are valid for the following departure dates on the barge known as the Ewaterways: March 8, 15, 22 and 29.

Valarie D'Elia

NY1 Travel Consultant
[Valarie D'Elia](#) is the host of "Travel with Val."



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