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Q&A

On the Da Vinci Trail; A Hiking Vacation

Published: May 9, 2004

On the da Vinci Trail

Q. *I was wondering whether there are any tours based on Dan Brown's best seller "The Da Vinci Code"? - Tiffeni J. Goesel, Williamsburg, Va.*

A. Three tour companies, at least, have grabbed onto this Holy Grail novel's very popular coattails.

The most complete and true to the book's itinerary is On the Trail of "The Da Vinci Code" by **Beyond**

Boundaries Travel, 830 North Tejon Street, Suite 150, Colorado Springs, Colo. 80903; (800) 487-1136

According to Jeannie Barresi, the company's managing director, the tour will begin on Aug. 21 and spend four nights in Paris, three in London and one in Edinburgh, using a scavenger hunt format to learn about symbols and art history.

It begins, as the book does, at the Louvre, visiting the museum with an art historian and a social historian. Then come tours of the Church of St.-Sulpice and of 19th-century female sculptures on Parisian buildings. A trip in Smart Cars to the countryside, including a stop at the Château de la Villette, follows before the group goes to London and other key sites in the novel: Temple Church, Westminster Abbey and King's College Library. The tour ends in Edinburgh, visiting Rosslyn Chapel.

Ms. Barresi said the tour price is \$2,999 a person, double occupancy, including stays in four-star hotels, most meals, Smart Car rental and Eurostar travel across the English

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Channel. Air fare is extra.

A much shorter (but not cheap) option is a two-and-a-half-hour guided visit to the Louvre from Museumpass, a company that sells passes for museums and transportation in several cities. The tour starts at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. daily except on Tuesday at the Arc de Carrousel.

According to Laure K. Dardour, manager of Museumpass, American guides lead participants to the Grande Galerie, where the murder in the book takes place, then focuses on Leonardo da Vinci works, including "Mona Lisa," depictions of Mary Magdalene and other art related to the themes of the novel. The tour must be booked online at <http://www.louvre.fr/>; it costs \$144.99 for one, plus \$144 for each additional participant (up to six).

For those particularly interested in the spiritual, rather than art, themes in the book, there are two tours by **Body Mind Spirit Journeys**, a division of RMC Travel. Its national director, Andrea Mikana-Pinkham, says the Mystic Templar Pilgrimage to England and Scotland, from July 1 to 14, is being led by her husband, Mark Amaru Pinkham, who is the author of books on the Holy Grail and the goddess tradition.

The itinerary includes Temple Church, Rosslyn Chapel, Stonehenge; optional ceremonies and meditations at Glastonbury and Rosslyn; and tours of Salisbury and Winchester Cathedrals, Bath and Edinburgh. There will also be a dinner with Ian Sinclair, preceptor of the Scottish Knights Templar, the order of Grail protectors, and two nights at his preceptory in Noss Head, Scotland.

From New York, the England portion costs \$2,895 a person, double occupancy, including air fare; the Scotland portion (July 9 to 14) is \$995. Ms. Mikana-Pinkham said the tour would stay at upscale hotels like the Jurys Clifton Ford in London and the Moat House in Edinburgh. Daily breakfast and usually a second meal is included, she said.

Many of the same places will be visited on the Sacred Feminine Journey to England, a tour for women only from Sept 18 to 25. This trip also focuses on the Arthurian and Holy Grail legends, but from a feminine point of view. The price from New York is \$2,595 a person, double occupancy, plus taxes and gratuities.

Body Mind Spirit Journeys is at No. 330, 51 Bell Rock Plaza, Suite A, Sedona, Ariz. 86351, (800) 231-9811; <http://www.bodymindspiritjourneys.com/>.

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