

France: Food Sovereignty & Artisan Production, Sept 15 - 25, 2011 (Sample Itinerary)

Sept 15

Arrival in Paris and hotel check-in

Sept 16

Group orientation and opening discussion of food sovereignty with French NGO
Meeting with leaders of the French farmers' union Confédération Paysanne
Free evening in Paris

Sept 17

Travel to Tours, Southwest of Paris
Visit the small town of Amboise and the chateau famous for having hosted Leonardo da Vinci
Wine tasting in Vouvray and visit traditional wine cellar
Free evening to visit Old Town of Tours

Sept 18

Visit the Château de Chenonceau
Lunch in Loire Valley
Travel further south to Clermont-Ferrand
Welcoming reception at La Maison des Paysans, which houses several farmer organizations and NGOs working on food sovereignty, including Confédération Paysanne
Dinner and homestay with French host families near Clermont-Ferrand

Sept 19

Meeting and farm-visit with a local organic farm leader of the Auvergne region
Cooking workshop using local products with French NGO ANIS Étoilé
Dinner at La Maison des Paysans
Wine and cheese tasting with Slow Food and presentation on endangered local products (such as a local lentil variety grown only on the Planeze volcanic plateau and a regional cheese made with milk from Auvergne's Salers cows)
Homestay with French host families

Sept 20

Visit a local high school specializing in dairy production and meet with students and teachers
Lunch at the school
Optional hike through the volcanoes of Auvergne
Meet with local policy-makers promoting sustainability in the local food system

Sept 21

Visit the small-town of Le Mont-Dore, with healing mineral spring baths
Visit farms producing Saint-Nectaire cheese and saucisson (cured meats) using traditional methods
Free evening in Clermont-Ferrand

Sept 22

Visit Allier Riverside and see the Château de Chadieu

Forage for edible wild plants, and wild plant tasting, with a local ethno-botanist

Lunch on the riverbank and optional canoeing or hiking

Participate in a weekly organic food box pick-up in the small town of Vic-le-Comte

Sept 23

Visit an organic vegetable farm (CSA) providing food boxes for local consumers

Meet with leaders of the regional movement against GMOs at their farm

Visit the weekly Organic Farmers' market in Clermont-Ferrand

Dinner at an on-farm restaurant

Sept 24

Travel to Paris

Lunch in the Sancerre region with wine tasting

Group discussion of food sovereignty in France and farewell dinner

Sept 25

Returning flight