Archaeological Institute of America Tours

Decorated Caves of the Pyrenees & the Rhone Valley

April 18-29, 2024 [12 days | 16 guests]
with paleoanthropologist Ian Tattersall

Archeology-focused tours for the curious to the connoisseur.

“Being in the presence of the art was a once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon.”
- Sandra, New York

“The trip was very well organized with the right balance of activity and down time. The trip was exceptionally educational for me, loved every minute of it.”
- Tala, New York
Discover a collection of magnificent but largely unheralded examples of Ice Age art while in the company of acclaimed paleoanthropologist and popular trip leader Ian Tattersall. Admire unusual, elegant bas-relief animal images in Basque caves, a profusion of hand prints at Gargas, and the famous panels of line-drawn and subtly shaded bison, horse, and ibex at Niaux. Visit the recently opened Cosquer Méditerranée, a replica of a heavily decorated, now submerged, prehistoric cave that was discovered in 1985. The trip concludes with a visit to the spectacular Chauvet Cave replica at Vallon-Pont-d’Arc, which expertly recreates the earliest, and perhaps most impressive, of the many masterpieces of Ice Age art dated to some 35,000 years ago. Enjoy fine food and delightful accommodations while an expert tour manager handles all the logistics.

Cover: Charcoal drawings from Chauvet Cave; bottom (left to right) entrance to El Pendo Cave, hand prints at Gargas Cave, and the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. Below, the Ekainberri panel of horses, Spain.

“Ir. T. was straight out of Central Casting — urbane, articulate, humorous, witty, gracious. His knowledge was vast and deep, without being showy. He had enchanting anecdotes up his sleeve for every occasion, and could explain any and everything with the charming turn of phrase and originality that is his hallmark.”

- Eve, California
Depart home on independent flights to Bilbao, Spain.

**Friday, April 19: Bilbao | Welcome dinner**
Arrive at Bilbao airport (BIO) and transfer as a group (time TBD) to the Gran Hotel Domine, situated in the heart of this thriving city. This afternoon, admire both the architecture and the permanent collection of the spectacular Guggenheim Museum during a guided tour. Gather later at the hotel for a welcome drink and dinner. 
*Overnight at the 5-star Gran Hotel Domine for two nights. (D)*

**Saturday, April 20: Covalanas Cave | Ramales | El Pendo Cave | Bilbao**
After breakfast, drive to Covalanas Cave with its extraordinary collection of animal images. After an independent lunch in nearby Ramales, continue to El Pendo Cave, with its nearly 30-foot-long panel of painted figures. Dinner is at leisure in Bilbao. 
*Afternoon at the 3-star Hotel Ithurria for two nights. (B)*

**Sunday, April 21: Ekainberri | San Sebastián | Ainhoa, France**
Check out of our hotel and head towards France, stopping first at the Ekainberri replica (of Ekain Cave) with its famous panels of horses, the originals dating from the Magdalenian period. Continue to the elegant Basque city of San Sebastián, situated on the Bay of Biscay. Enjoy a guided tour of the town and savor an independent lunch before moving on to Ainhoa. Gather in the evening for dinner. 
*Overnight at the 3-star Hotel Ithurria for two nights. (B,L,D)*

**Monday, April 22: Isturitz and Oxocelhaya Caves | Bayonne | Ainhoa**
This morning, visit the caves of Isturitz and Oxocelhaya with their bas-relief sculptures and concretions. Stop for an independent lunch followed by a guided tour of Bayonne (famous for its cathedral, as well as the ham and chocolate that it produces). Return to our hotel in Ainhoa for dinner. 
*Overnight at the 4-star Hôtel du Barry Resort & Spa. (B,L,D)*

**Tuesday, April 23: Gargas Cave | Sauveterre-de-Comminges**
Check out of our hotel and drive towards Gargas. After a group lunch, we visit Gargas, one of the finest caves in the Pyrenees, known for its collection of more than 200 stenciled hand prints, many of which are mysteriously incomplete. Continue on to our hotel in Sauveterre-de-Comminges, where we check in and then gather for dinner. 
*Overnight at the 4-star Hôtel du Barry Resort & Spa. (B,L,D)*

**Wednesday, April 24: Aurignac | Aurignacian Museum | Bédeilhac Cave | Tarascon-sur-Ariège**
This morning we check out of our hotel and drive to Aurignac to visit the rock shelter of Aurignac and the Aurignacian Museum, which illuminates the lives of the anatomically modern humans who lived in Europe about 36,000 years ago. After lunch we drive a short distance to the cave of Bédeilhac, famous for its vast entrance (used as an aircraft maintenance facility in World War II) and which was decorated in the Middle Magdalenian (ca. 14,000 years ago). Check in to Le Manoir d’Agnès, a 200-year-old French chateau in Tarascon-sur-Ariège, and gather for dinner in the restaurant next to our hotel. 
*Overnight at the 3-star Le Manoir d’Agnès for two nights. (B,L,D)*

**Thursday, April 25: Niaux Cave | Parc de la Préhistoire | PM at leisure**
This morning we will visit the cave of Niaux, regarded as one of the most impressive in Europe for its spectacular and well-preserved wall paintings from 14,000 years.
 ago, most of which are found in its “Salon Noir,” situated some 800 meters from the
cave entrance. We will have lunch in the village of Niaux before continuing on to the
Parc de la Préhistoire for an overview of the area’s prehistory through its museum and
numerous reconstructions and demonstrations. Return to our hotel for an evening at
leisure. (B,L)

Friday, April 26: Arago Cave | Tautavel | Narbonne
Check out of our hotel and drive to the Arago Cave, situated just outside the village of
Tautavel and famous for the discovery of “Tautavel Man,” some of the most significant
hominid remains ever found in Europe. After an independent lunch and, time
permitting, a quick tasting of the local wine, visit the small but impressive museum in
Tautavel before driving to our hotel in Narbonne. The balance of the day is at leisure.
Overnight at the 4-star Hotel Le Mosaic. (B)

Saturday, April 27: Marseille: Cosquer Méditerranée
After breakfast we drive to Marseille, where we check-in to
our hotel and have lunch. This afternoon we visit the
inventive replica of Cosquer Cave, Cosquer Méditerranée, a submerged prehistoric
cave that has been referred to as an “underwater Lascaux.” The original cave, found in 1985,
contains approximately 500 Paleolithic paintings, engravings,
and drawings, and is only accessible
by deep sea divers as the entrance is
more than 98 feet below sea level off the coast of Marseille. The building containing
the exact replica opened to the public in June 2022 and has three floors, one of
which is an “underwater” replica of the cave that guests tour via exploratory vehicles.
Return to our hotel for the balance of the day at leisure. Overnight at the 5-star Hotel
InterContinental du Dieu. (B,L)

Sunday, April 28: Chauvet Cave replica | Lyon | Farewell dinner
Check out of our hotel and drive north to what may be the highlight of our journey:
the spectacular replica of Chauvet Cave, Pont-d’Arc Cavern, including a reproduction
of its delicately shaded horses. Chauvet is one of the most famous decorated caves in
the world and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After an independent lunch on site,
drive to Lyon. Tonight we gather for a farewell dinner. Overnight at the 5-star Le Royal
Hotel Lyon. (B,D)

Monday, April 29: Fly home
Transfer this morning to the Lyon airport (LYS) for flights home. (B)
Tour Prices Per Person (10 nights)

Double Occupancy (13 to 16 participants)............. $9,645
Double Occupancy (10 to 12 participants)........... $10,395
Single Supplement ................................................. $1,045

Single room supplement will be charged when requested or required (limited availability).
With fewer than 10 participants, a small group surcharge may be added.

Prices Include:
- Leadership of AIA lecturer/host Ian Tattersall, and a professional tour manager/guide
- Ten nights’ accommodations as outlined in the itinerary
- Breakfast daily; four lunches and six dinners with house wine, mineral water, and coffee included
- Group arrival transfer on April 19th (flights should arrive no later than noon) and group departure transfer on April 29th
- All entrance fees to sites included in the itinerary
- Surface transportation via air-conditioned motor coach with bottled water provided
- Local taxes and service charges
- All gratuities to the tour manager/guide, drivers, waiters for included meals, and porters
- Handling of two pieces of luggage per person
- Practical and cultural information, suggested reading/media guide, name badge/passport wallet, and luggage tags

Prices Do Not Include: Any airfare; passport and visa fees; all airport fees and departure taxes; individual arrival/departure transfers; meals or beverages other than indicated; excess baggage charges; personal, baggage, and trip cancellation insurance; optional excursions or deviations from scheduled tour and other items not listed as included; all items of a personal nature such as laundry, medical expenses, and room service.

Payments: A deposit of $1,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour and is payable by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or check made payable to “Eos AIA-DecoratedCaves4/24.” Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure and must be by check, ACH transfer, or wire transfer only; credit cards are not accepted for final payment. By submitting your deposit you are bound by the terms and conditions delineated throughout this brochure or elsewhere published.

Participant Cancellation Fees: All requests by participants for cancellations must be received in writing by AIA Tours. Cancellations received at least 180 days (October 21, 2023) prior to departure are fully refunded. Cancellations received from 179 through 90 days (January 19, 2024) prior to departure are refunded less a cancellation fee of $250 per person. Cancellations received from 89 through 61 days prior to departure are subject to a cancellation fee equal to 50% of the tour cost. Cancellations received 60 days or less prior to departure are subject to a cancellation fee of 100% of the tour cost. For this and other reasons, participants are strongly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance. Information will be provided with confirmation of receipt of your deposit.

Note: Prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect at the time of publication and are subject to change prior to departure. Substantial changes in tariffs, exchange rates, the price of fuel, services, and labor may increase the cost of arrangements significantly, and we reserve the right to alter our prices.

For questions, and to reserve your space, please contact AIA Tours at: 800-748-6262 | Toll: 603-756-2884 | Fax: 603-756-2922 | aia@studytours.org | www.aiatours.org
P.O. Box 938, 47 Main Street, Suite One, Walpole, NH 03608

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Decorated Caves of the Pyrenees & the Rhone Valley

April 18-29, 2024 | 12 days | 16 guests
with paleoanthropologist Ian Tattersall

"The painted caves themselves were magical... and the scenery, especially in the Pyrenees Mountains, was amazing. I feel that I am a different person having witnessed the creations of the very first 'people' who lived on earth so long ago. We are so lucky that these caves and their contents have been preserved."

- Constance, Florida
To hold your reservation for seven days while this form and your deposit are in the mail, please contact us at 800-748-6262 or aia@studytours.org.

**RESERVATION FORM**

**DECORATED CAVES**
**OF THE PYRENEES & THE RHONE VALLEY**
April 18-29, 2024 (12 days | 16 guests)
with paleoanthropologist Ian Tattersall

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Name 1
(as it appears on passport)
Name 2
(as it appears on passport)
Address
City       State       Zip
Phone (home)       Phone (cell)
Email(s)

☑ I/We have read the ‘What to Expect’ section and am/are physically able to participate fully on the program.

Are you traveling with any other parties on this program?  Yes, _____________________________________________________

How did you hear about this tour?  ☑ eNewsletter  ☑ mailing  ☑ website  ☑ friends/family  ☑ other ____________________________

**ACCOMMODATIONS:**
(Appommodation preferences are not guaranteed.)

☑ Double (one bed)  ☑ Twin (two beds)  ☑ Single
☑ I will be sharing with: ____________________________ ☑ Share-please assign a roommate (not guaranteed)
☑ Please share my contact information with potential roommate(s).

**RESERVATIONS & PAYMENT:**
A deposit of $1,000 per person is required to confirm a reservation. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Please note that credit cards are not accepted for final payment. All prices and payments are in US dollars.

**DEPOSIT TYPE (please check one):**
☑ Check payable to: Eos AIA-DecoratedCaves4/24  ☑ Visa  ☑ Master Card  ☑ American Express  ☑ Already paid by phone

CC#
Exp. Date       3- or 4-Digit Code
Name on Card

Please complete this reservation form, choose/enclose your method of deposit, and sign the release statement below.
Submit via email, mail, or fax to:

AIA Tours - P.O. Box 938, Walpole, NH 03608-0938
Fax: 603-756-2922 • Email: aia@studytours.org

By signing this form, you are acknowledging that you have read and agree to all Terms & Conditions delineated throughout.

Signature (participant #1)                  Date
(as it appears on passport)

Signature (participant #2)                  Date
(as it appears on passport)

(Accommodation preferences are not guaranteed.)

To fill out an online reservation form, click here. Or, print and mail or fax this form to the address below.
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ACCEPTANCE OF CONTRACT: By forwarding of deposit, the participant certifies that he/she agrees with these terms and conditions, and accepts the terms contained in these Terms and Conditions, Release of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Dispute Resolution Agreement. The participant affirms that he/she has not received or relied upon any oral representation of Sponsors/Operator as a basis for executing this Release.