



National Trust *for* Historic Preservation

# National Trust Tours

## **America's Founding Fathers in Paris**

Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence

**April 14 – 21, 2026**





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Le Procope, photo courtesy of La Procope

## TUESDAY, APRIL 14: DEPARTURE

Depart on overnight flight to Paris.

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15: PARIS, FRANCE

Upon arrival in Paris, join a group transfer to the hotel. After checking in, enjoy an optional walking tour featuring a special visit to the recently reopened **Cathédrale Notre-Dame**. This evening, gather for a welcome dinner. D

## THURSDAY, APRIL 16: PARIS

Wander the cobblestone streets of **Saint-Germain-des-Prés**, where brasseries, patisseries, art galleries, museums, and theaters line the way. Pass the Parisian residences of John Jay, Thomas Paine, and John Paul Jones, the founder of the United States Navy.

Stop at the former site of the **Hôtel d'York**, where Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay met British negotiators to sign the Treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783, officially ending the Revolutionary War. A marble plaque affixed to the original building marks this moment in history.

Enjoy lunch at **Le Procope**, the city's oldest café, a gathering place for intellectuals and revolutionaries for more than 330 years. Frequenting by Napoleon, Voltaire, Victor Hugo, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, it was a meeting spot for French revolutionaries such as Danton and Robespierre. Franklin was even rumored to have drafted parts of the U.S. Constitution here.

Afterwards, walk in the footsteps of French nobility through the **Jardin du Luxembourg**, pausing by the Medici Fountain, the Orangery, and the Davioud Pavillon. Nearby, visit **Église Saint-Sulpice**, home to Delacroix's only fresco.

Explore the heart of medieval Paris in the **Latin Quarter**, the city's oldest district, where remnants of its ancient past still endure. Stroll past the **Panthéon**, a monument and mausoleum honoring many of France's greatest figures. Pass the **Sorbonne**, France's oldest university, before ending the day at the food stalls along **Rue Mouffetard**, with dinner at leisure. B,L

## FRIDAY, APRIL 17: PARIS / VERSAILLES / PARIS

Venture outside Paris for an inside look at the grand **Palais de Versailles**. Take a private tour of the **Bibliothèque Municipale de Versailles**, once Louis XVI's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Completed in 1762, this elegant 18th-century residence was the backdrop for critical diplomatic negotiations, including the 1763 Treaty of Paris, which ended the Seven Years' War. Admire its original decorative woodwork, paintings, and five opulent rooms.



Bibliothèque Municipale de Versailles, photo © Christophe Foun



Musée Carnavalet

In an adjacent room, see where Benjamin Franklin was formally welcomed upon his arrival in 1778, as France prepared to support the American Revolution. Gain access to the **King's Private Apartments**, an exclusive experience beyond the reach of regular visitors.

Cross the **Jardin de Versailles**, the masterpiece of André Le Nôtre, where spring's first blossoms color the symmetrical avenues. Follow the Grande Perspective, a sweeping axis of pools and fountains designed to draw the eye toward the horizon. See the Royal Promenade, the Bassin d'Apollon, and the Grand Canal, landmarks of 17th-century landscape architecture.

A short distance away, enter the **Hameau de la Reine**, Marie Antoinette's countryside retreat. Built to resemble a Norman village, this collection of ten thatched-roof cottages surrounds a quiet lake. Pass the Mill, the Marlborough Tower, and the Guardian's House, where the queen escaped court life to embrace an idealized vision of rural simplicity.



Palais de Versailles



Lafayette's memorial, Cimetière de Picpus

At the **Grand Trianon**, an opulent retreat built for Louis XIV, view the **Mirror Room**, where he conferred with his inner circle. Nearby, the **Petit Trianon**, originally commissioned by Louis XV, later became Marie Antoinette's private haven within her gardens. Dinner this evening is at leisure. B,L

#### SATURDAY, APRIL 18: PARIS

As American Minister to the Court of Versailles, Thomas Jefferson observed the first stirrings of the French Revolution in the late 1780s, meeting frequently with the Marquis de Lafayette and other key figures. Explore his role in these pivotal years on a private tour of the **Musée Carnavalet**, where artifacts and documents trace the revolution's early days.

After a bistro lunch in **Le Marais**, visit **Cimetière de Picpus**, where Lafayette rests beneath soil taken from Bunker Hill. An American flag, the only one authorized to fly permanently on foreign soil, marks his grave. Dinner this evening is at leisure. B,L

Monet's Garden, Giverny



**SUNDAY, APRIL 19: PARIS / VAL-D'OISE / GIVERNY**

Visit **Château de La Roche-Guyon**, the ancestral home of the La Rochefoucauld family, an 18th-century residence perched above a bend in the Seine River. The young Duc de La Rochefoucauld, a philosopher and ally of the American cause, translated the Declaration of Independence into French.

Continue to **Giverny**, the Normandy village that famously inspired **Claude Monet**. After lunch, explore Monet's gardens, beginning with **Clos Normand**, the flower garden he designed and filled with roses and Japanese apricot trees.

Walk through the **Water Garden**, where the Japanese bridge draped in wisteria and the floating water lilies evoke some of the painter's most famous works.

Arc de Triomphe



Return to Paris, following the broad avenues of the **Champs-Élysées**. See the Arc de Triomphe, the monument honoring those who fought and died for France, before passing the Parisian homes of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. Dinner is at leisure. B,L

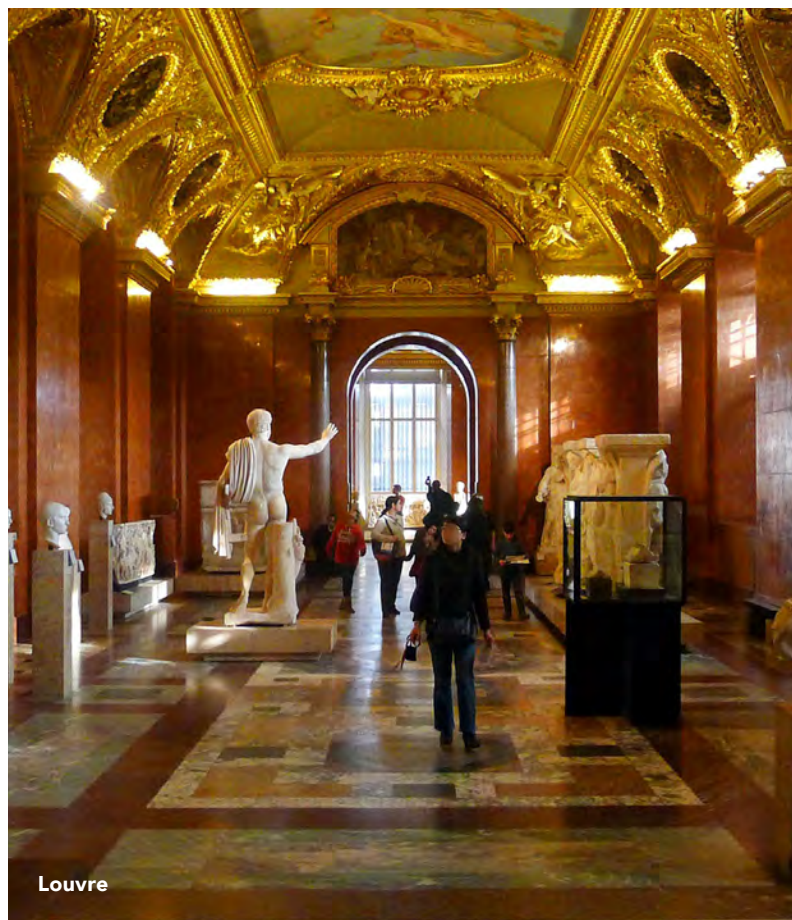
**MONDAY, APRIL 20: PARIS**

After a personalized welcome, enjoy **exclusive priority access to the Louvre** on a specially arranged tour. Admire 18th-century paintings from the Louvre's original collection, including works by Delacroix, Titian, Veronese, and Rembrandt that Thomas Jefferson would have seen during his visits.

After lunch and an afternoon at leisure, gather for a festive farewell dinner at **Lafayette's**, housed in the former mansion of the Marquis de Lafayette. Dine in this beautifully restored 18th-century setting, where a Neo-Bourgeois menu celebrates the depth and refinement of French cuisine. B,D

**TUESDAY, APRIL 21: PARIS / RETURN**

Following breakfast, depart the hotel on a group transfer to the airport. B



Louvre

**DISCLAIMER:** This itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of National Trust Tours and Arrangements Abroad. For complete details, please carefully read the terms and conditions at [www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms](http://www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms).

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Front cover: George Peter Alexander Healy, *Franklin Urging the Claims of the American Colonies Before Louis XVI, 1847*, photo © American Philosophical Society. Highlights page: Jardins de Versailles. Back cover: Hall of Mirrors, Palais de Versailles (top) and Château de La Roche-Guyon (bottom).

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