







• VACATION PLAN-OFF

A Paris Planner

No place says gastronomy like Paris, so we gave a veteran travel writer and a Virtuoso travel advisor a budget of \$10,000 each to design a five-night culinary dream trip for two to the French capital. While both are upscale itineraries, the Virtuoso travel advisor tapped into her vast network of connections for a true insider's experience. Here's how they did.



	DO IT YOURSELF	VIRTUOSO TRAVEL ADVISOR
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 Round-trip airfare from New York (JFK) to Paris (CDG)	\$4,844 for business-class seats on Aer Lingus, with one connection	\$2,829 for premium economy seats on Air France, nonstop, based on a Saturday-night stay
 Round-trip transportation from airport to hotel	\$150 for taxi to and from hotel	\$200 for taxi to hotel, return in a private car
 Five nights at the 60-room Hôtel Lancaster	\$3,445, including breakfast buffet daily and one dinner for two at the hotel restaurant	\$2,916, including upgrade upon arrival (if available), full breakfast daily, Champagne and canapés, and a \$100 credit to be used at the restaurant or bar
 Gourmet pursuits	\$920 for three activities: a full-day cooking class at Le Cordon Bleu, a three-hour culinary tour, and an hour-long Champagne tasting cruise along the Seine	\$3,390 for five activities: a guided market tour, a wine connoisseur meal and tasting, a private Cordon Bleu cooking demo and lunch in Versailles, a bistro dinner with a top chef, and dinner with a culinary journalist
 Planning time	12 hours	30-minute conversation with your advisor
 Grand total	\$9,359	\$9,335

ADVISOR SAYS: "It's coach, with comfort. The seats are wider, there's more legroom, and it's in a separate cabin right behind business class." Plus, it frees up funds for more gourmet pursuits once there.



ADVISOR SAYS: "Everyone knows about Le Cordon Bleu, but the experiences I've suggested are much more comprehensive, in-the-know, and intimate."

BOTTOM LINE: Great hotel pricing and perks, extra excursions on the ground, and major time-and-hassle savings – now you can spend all that saved planning time practicing your French instead. *À votre santé!*

* Special thanks to Ros Chelouche, a Virtuoso travel advisor who specializes in culinary itineraries.

(SEINE RIVER) THE IMAGE BARREL/ALAMY; (EIFFEL TOWER) C SQUARED STUDIOS/GETTY IMAGES; (CHAMPAGNE GLASSES) ICONOTEC/ALAMY