



clockwise, from top left Climb the 502 steps inside Cremona Cathedral's brick bell tower. Parma's famous Parmigiano Reggiano cheese is aged in towering storerooms. Food tours in Paris take guests shopping for fresh produce, wines and fabulous French pastries.

A TASTY TALE OF TWO CITIES: PARIS AND PARMA

Whether it's an afternoon excursion or a weeklong adventure, expert-led food tours specialize in revealing a destination's culture through its regional cuisine Written by CAROLYN O'NEIL



from top Paris A Dream food tour introduces guests to culinary experts, including local butchers in a Belleville, Paris, boucherie. Tour attendees also enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at baguettes in the making.

YOU CAN HAPPILY WANDER PARIS to find fantastic street markets and charming food shops, but a guided excursion will lead you directly to the best bites. Food tour, Paris A Dream, will also take you to rarely discovered parts of the city of lights—such as Belleville, the birthplace of famed singer Edith Piaf—to taste locally produced treats and meet the butchers and bakers behind the scenes.

Belleville is historic with a modern edge, and so is the food scene. “We are very excited to share with you our passion for Belleville and its authenticity,” says Isabelle Pochat, founder of Paris A Dream food tours. “The tour is made of samplings by different artisans who will introduce you to pastries, breads, charcuterie, fresh produce and wine with a journey through the real French population.”

The easy, three-hour walking tour includes a variety of tastings as your guide translates English to French, or vice versa. Guests will step into the kitchen at Boulangerie Au 140, where master bakers work their magic and the yeasty aromas of crispy loaves emerging from the ovens offer another kind of intoxicating French perfume.

At the conclusion of the tour, bring the delicacies you've gathered along the way to La Cave de Belleville wine shop, where French lessons continue as lunch is paired with lesser-known wines of France.

paris-a-dream.com

IN NORTHERN ITALY, **PARMA** is home of the prized Prosciutto di Parma and Parmigiano Reggiano. Nearby, Modena offers the intensely flavored Aceto Balsamico di Modena. Artisans have made these sought-after delicacies for centuries, and today select farms and facilities offer educational tours—tastes included!

The Consorzio Produttori Latte in Parma allows visitors (properly attired in sanitized jumpsuits, hairnets and shoe covers) to walk through the process of transforming milk from the cows of Parma into prized wheels of aged Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

In Modena, balsamic vinegar producers at Aceto Balsamico del Duca di Grosoli share their ancient vine-to-bottle story with a cellar tour and tasting-room experience. When shopping Italian food products, look for PDO, which stands for Protected Designation of Origin and signifies the product was made with traditional quality and is from the specified region. trueitaliantaste.com

