

Montessori Méditerranée & Italy

Experience

Sunday 13 June – Friday 25 June 2027 · 12 nights · France & Italy · maximum 8 travellers

See, explore, discover... and slow down.

This small group experience taking place in France and Italy explores Dr. Maria Montessori's philosophy, walks in Montessori's footsteps, and culminates in something rarely offered: the chance to live the Montessori life yourself, in an environment prepared not for the child, but for the adult. Just as the child concentrates and flourishes in a carefully prepared environment, so too does the adult. Working daily with the mind, heart and hands, free of distraction and at a human pace, you rediscover what humans have always known how to do: purposeful work, work of the hands, mindful work.

The journey unfolds in three movements. It begins in the south of France, housed in a beautiful villa in the incredible region of Provence, close to the small village of La Motte, where you begin each day centering through meditation and exploring Montessori's philosophy through 5 key words. Then, in Rome, the philosophy becomes real as you walk through the places of Montessori's own life, deepening your understanding of how she developed the Scientific Pedagogy, all while exploring the Eternal City. Finally, you travel to a village in the Maiella National Park where time slows down and you live the philosophy as a Montessori adult: orienting to the environment, learning in community, and working with the hands. An observation at a Montessori school and cultural activities such as wine tasting, traditional music, and a local market await you in France and in Italy.

Taken together, these three experiences form a single professional learning journey: an opportunity to immerse yourself in another culture while gaining a deeper understanding of both culture and the Montessori pedagogy. You will reconnect with purpose, build meaningful relationships with Montessorians from around the world, refine your teaching practice through reflection, observation, new concepts, and work, and return home inspired and re-energised. Full participation leads to a certificate from the Montessori Méditerranée and Italy Experience equal to 40 study hours of professional development.

Who Are These Experiences For?

You — a Montessori educator, a Director of a Montessori school, a school Board member

You — a professional seeking deeper philosophical understanding, refining your practice through reflection, observation and work

You — who feels the need to deepen your vision and understanding of Montessori education

You — who wants to reconnect with purpose and is looking for connection

You — who yearns to combine work, knowledge and inspiration with rest, rejuvenation and culture

You — who loves to travel and meet other Montessorians from around the world

You will experience two powerful weeks with like-minded Montessorians in breathtaking surroundings in Provence and Italy. The group is intentionally small: a maximum of 8 travellers.

What We Ask of You

Come with an open mind to new experiences and adventures, a positive mindset, and a willingness to contribute and receive. You are warmly welcome to present something about yourself, your experiences, your work, your background.

Organiser & Tour Leader — Roelie Hartwig

Twenty years ago Australian born and bred Roelie Hartwig exchanged living in a big city for clear blue skies, small communities and big open spaces. She lives in Queensland in the small town of Longreach, on the edge of the Australian Outback.

After many years of teaching young children, gaining two Montessori qualifications, volunteering and working within the global Montessori community, Roelie had an 'aha' moment and realised that she could combine two of her passions: Montessori and travelling.

[Montessori Tours and Travel](#) hatched in 2019 and since then Roelie has created tours to India, Italy, The Netherlands, Vietnam, USA, Mexico, Kenya, Japan and France. Offering small group tours, each one its own unique creation, she provides opportunities for Montessorians to delve deeper into Montessori history as well as appreciate the length and breadth of Montessori's legacy.

FRANCE

Sunday 13 June – Friday 18 June 2027

The Montessori Méditerranée Experience is led by Jacqueline Hendriksen and Roelie Hartwig.

The '[Montessori Maison](#)', a villa with a private pool and a big terrace, will be waiting for you. This specially prepared environment gives you the chance to connect, bond and reflect with Montessorians from around the globe. This retreat is an opportunity for professional development in the south of France balancing study, observation and discussion with rest, rejuvenation and French culture.

You are in a Montessori environment contributing to daily tasks, care of the environment and meal preparation as you live, learn and work together. The Montessori Méditerranée program is not a course. It's an experience. A chance for change.

The Rhythm of Each Day

- Morning meditation by the pool
- The Word of the Day, with a Montessori quote
- Breakfast on the terrace
- 'Going out': French cultural experiences, including a school observation and presentations
- Reflection and discussion on the Word of the Day
- A shared dinner: bring a recipe and be ready to don the chef's cap for one evening
- A ceremonial closing of the day

Before You Arrive

A few months before we come together in France, we have an online session that gives you a chance to meet your fellow travellers and share what you hope for during your time of living and working together. You will also have access to shared online content gathered around five key Montessori words and readings from Dr. Maria Montessori.

Your Guide — France

Jacqueline Hendriksen from The Netherlands will guide you during your Montessori Méditerranée journey. She has vast experience in training and education, with more than 35 years working in Montessori education. Jacqueline offers us an integration of Maria Montessori's original writings and insights from research and how this is relevant to our lives. She guides international groups and is masterful at connecting and enriching Montessori communities.

ITINERARY — FRANCE

Subject to change

SUNDAY 13 JUNE

Arrival at the Montessori Maison

Arrive at the Montessori Maison by the afternoon. After a warm welcome, introductions and the opening of the Montessori Méditerranée Experience, you have the opportunity to explore the villa and orient yourself.

STAY Montessori Maison, La Motte (twin share) MEALS Dinner

MONDAY 14 JUNE

Montessori School Visit

Our first destination is [L'école Montessori L'éclaireuse](#) in Draguignan, with time for observation during the morning work cycle followed by lunch with staff from the school. We take a short walk to visit the American Memorial Park and the local French *cimetière*.

STAY Montessori Maison, La Motte (twin share) MEALS Breakfast, Dinner

TUESDAY 15 JUNE

A Village Market in Provence

Immerse yourself in the energy of a local village market in Provence. Practise some French, allow your senses to be greeted by the smells, the colors of the freshly-from-the-fields fruits and vegetables. Explore and wander. Enjoy a *pâtisserie* and coffee as the villagers pass by.

STAY Montessori Maison, La Motte (twin share) MEALS Breakfast, Dinner

WEDNESDAY 16 JUNE

Montessori Training Centre and Perfume Factory

We go to Grasse to visit the Montessori Training Centre where we learn about how Montessori education is accommodated within the French education system. Grasse is the perfume capital of the world. Here we discover how the fragrance of flowers ignites emotion. We learn about the history of perfume making, dating back to the 16th Century, and marvel that over 60 perfume houses have flourished here.

STAY Montessori Maison, La Motte (twin share) MEALS Breakfast, Dinner

THURSDAY 17 JUNE

Winery & Montessori Workshop

Today we visit *Château Font du Broc*, an historic winery, for a guided tour followed by tasting some of their wines. There will be time for purchases should something take your fancy. In the afternoon we gather together with the teachers from *L'école Montessori L'éclaireuse* for our Montessori Workshop, a time to share knowledge and practices.

STAY Montessori Maison, La Motte (twin share) MEALS Breakfast, Dinner

FRIDAY 18 JUNE

Departure for Rome

After breakfast you say goodbye to Jacqueline and the Montessori Maison and together we make our way to Nice Airport for our flight to Rome, where the adventure of walking in Montessori's footsteps begins.

MEALS Breakfast

ITALY

Friday 18 June – Friday 25 June 2027

The Italian Experience is led by Karin Slabaugh and Roelie Hartwig.

After your time in France you travel to Italy for the unique experience of exploring the Roman chapters of Maria Montessori's life story in an outdoor classroom: the streets of Rome. Maria Montessori moved to Rome in 1875 at the age of five, and in 1951 she offered her last course there. Beginning with her own educational path, you come to understand her formative experiences. This unique opportunity to learn first hand about the environment that influenced Maria Montessori's growth and development between 1875 and 1951 is a once in a lifetime experience.

After your time in Rome you travel to the beautiful Maiella National Park. Your home for the next four nights is in a village that time forgot, at the Montessori Retreat Center Decontra. Here the journey shifts from learning about Montessori's philosophy to living it. Surrounded by natural beauty, in an environment prepared for the adult, you experience what Montessori described for the child: deep concentration, calm, and the mind-body connection of purposeful work. Exceptional dining experiences await you, as does the incredible diversity of flora and fauna, friendly locals, and purposeful handwork.

Your Guide — Italy

Karin Slabaugh will be your guide as you walk around 'Maria Montessori's Rome' and she and her husband will be your hostesses at your Montessori Retreat in Decontra. Originally from the United States, Karin now lives in Italy. Her husband and collaborator Pasquale, an epidemiologist, designs projects for fragile populations, especially elders, using Montessori's wisdom. Since 2009, Karin has been researching the history of Montessori 0-3 in Italy and, following the work of [Grazia Honegger Fresco](#), and offers courses and retreats through a not-for-profit organisation, [Montessori-For-Life.org](#). Grazia Honegger Fresco studied directly under Maria Montessori and Adele Costa Gnocchi and was one of the founders of 0-3 Montessori. As well as offering an online course [Basic Needs of Babies](#), Montessori For Life is involved in programs for: pregnant couples and the care of their newborns; farm based childcare for children from six months to three years of age; children with special needs; intergenerational activities; and active aging for the elderly population.

ITINERARY — ITALY

Subject to change

FRIDAY 18 JUNE

Orientation to Rome

Settle into your private room. Shortly afterwards, join us in the conference room for an orientation to the city, mapping out significant Montessori sites in preparation for tomorrow's 'Walking in Montessori's Footsteps' tour. The rest of the day is yours to explore as you wish.

STAY Domus Helena (single) MEALS Breakfast

SATURDAY 19 JUNE

Montessori's Rome

Karin leads you through the streets of Rome to see where Maria studied medicine, volunteered as a young doctor, worked with the children from the psychiatric hospital, developed the first *Casa dei Bambini*, and wrote her first book. There will be time for a gelato or two, and lunch will be your own choice. Dinner will be at a vibrant local trattoria where you experience fabulous Roman food.

STAY Domus Helena (single) MEALS Breakfast, Dinner

SUNDAY 20 JUNE

Montessori's Rome, continued

Today you see more of Montessori's Rome. You walk through the neighbourhood where she lived, completed her medical studies and offered courses. Nearby you see where 0-3 and Montessori's approach to religious education began. The rest of the day is yours, to do with as you wish, with guidance from Karin and Roelie.

STAY Domus Helena (single) MEALS Breakfast

MONDAY 21 JUNE

Travel to Decontra & Village Life

We make our way to the mountains, stopping for lunch and gelato along the way. The retreat center is located in the village of Decontra which is part of the town of Caramanico Terme, located in the region of Abruzzo and within the Maiella National Park. You are hosted by Karin and Pasquale in stone houses built in the 1700s. After settling in, we begin by walking around the environs of Decontra, gathering, as villagers still do, at the fountain and drinking spring water, orienting ourselves to the environment and stepping back in time. The road to Decontra was built in the late 1970s; before that the outside world was reached only by mule trail, and the village still moves to the natural human rhythms of an agricultural life. Dinner tonight will be at the local restaurant, *Il Cervo*.

STAY Retreat Center Decontra (1 single, 2 doubles, 1 triple) MEALS Breakfast, Dinner

TUESDAY 22 JUNE

The Mountain & The Elders

Today we explore the trails around the village and experience mountain life firsthand with a local guide, slowing down to the pace of the generations of walkers, herders, and gatherers who came before us. Bring your hat, water, camera, and notebook. Learn the names of the native plants and animals. Hear about the traditional way of life herding sheep, and about the *transumanza*, the ancient migration of shepherds and their flocks across Italy, a living example of what humans can do on foot. Meet the village shepherds and their flock, gather edible plants along our way and enjoy a lunch on the mountain. After dinner, enjoy a slideshow on nature's wonders in the Maiella National Park, curated by a local naturalist for our group.

STAY Retreat Center Decontra (1 single, 2 doubles, 1 triple) MEALS Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

WEDNESDAY 23 JUN

The Work of the Hands & Cooking Class

An activity of traditional handwork awaits, and you learn from a local weaver the craft that has been practised here for centuries. The hands are the instrument of the intelligence: as they work, the mind settles, and you relax and reflect on your journey thus far. We go to the local restaurant, this time to make our own handmade pasta for lunch, learning recipes from the chef who was born and raised in the village: a taste of purposeful work with the hands.

After dinner, sit back and hear about a project on 'Montessori Social Education as an Active Aging Experience' bringing the Montessori approach to the end of life. This work asks the same of the adult as this retreat does: to be grounded, centered, and present.

STAY Retreat Center Decontra (1 single, 2 doubles, 1 triple) MEALS Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

THURSDAY 24 JUNE

The Newborn & the Return to Handwork

Karin will guide you in working with newborns and give a presentation about the history of the 0-3 work under Grazia Honegger Fresco. Meeting the pace and needs of our youngest children asks you first to slow down and meet your own needs, an understanding born from the calm, attentive presence you have been practising all week. You harvest your lunch from the farm and we eat together in the grotto surrounded by the white Maiella stone. Next, you return to your traditional handwork, deepening the skill you began on Wednesday. Working with the hands grounds us and gathers our attention; it is here that the Montessori experience of the adult comes full circle.

STAY Retreat Center Decontra (1 single, 2 doubles, 1 triple) MEALS Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

FRIDAY 25 JUNE

Departures

Say goodbye to Decontra. As you head off for your next destination, safe travelling and thanks for joining this tour.

MEALS Breakfast

During the Montessori Experiences there will be local wines, local foods, local guides, local cultural experiences, local larrikins. There will be surprises and activities.

time to wonder · time to wander · time to learn · time to chat
· time to play · time to work with the hands

**These Experiences require participants to be able to walk at least
approximately 3 miles / 5 km in any given day.**

This itinerary will always be a work in progress and what we end up doing on some days may be different to what is stated here. All will be done to ensure the tour proceeds as per the itinerary whilst maintaining the integrity of the tour. Should this happen, your understanding and cooperation will be appreciated. This tour will be conducted in English with local guides and local drivers.

Inclusions & Exclusions

INCLUDED	NOT INCLUDED
– 12 nights' accommodation with breakfast – Twin share in France (5 nights) – Single room in Rome (3 nights) – Shared room in Decontra (4 nights), one single available (€120 supplement, first come first serve) – Sightseeing and guided tours with local English-speaking guides – Meals as stated in the itinerary – Activities as stated in the itinerary – Hotel taxes, service charges and fees – One-way flight from Nice to Rome – Some ground transport as per the itinerary – A certificate of participation for 40 study hours of professional development	– Meals, alcohol & drinks not listed in the itinerary – Early check-in / late check-out (unless required) – Overweight luggage – Personal expenses – Visas as required – Comprehensive travel insurance (compulsory) – Tips and gratuities – Other services not listed in 'Inclusions' – International flights to and from Europe

EUR 5700 per person

To find out more or to secure a place:

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