

# 2025 Cost, Terms, & Essential Information Joyeux Noel

## Cost is Based on Single or Double Hotel Room

\$4,956 - Double Occupancy

\$5,296 for Single Occupancy

\$3,256 for Non-Textile Workshop Participant sharing a Double Room

- Must be at least 18 years old

**I will book our travel dates at the Hotel Saint Petersburg Opera in Paris.**

## Hotel Saint Petersburg Opera

35 Rue de Caumartin, 75009 Paris, France

<https://www.hotelsaintpetersbourg.com/>

**No, sorry I cannot make hotel arrangements for you at either hotel before or after our trip dates.** It adds a significant amount of work and sometimes complications as well as additional cost for me. Just email the hotel with the above email address, and someone will respond and help with your booking.

## What IS included...

Pre-trip Zoom meeting & info on logistics & good-to-know, kits and supplies for workshops

Pre-trip Zoom meeting & info on logistics & good-to-know,

Kits and supplies needed for workshops

6 Nights of lodging in Paris

3 Workshops & 3 kits

3 Textile artist/teachers

1 Cookie Baking workshop

10 Meals

2 Christmas Markets

1 Christmas Lights Drive in Paris

Tour guides

1 Haberdashery tour

Access to Au Ver à Soie  
1 Christmasy Live Performance in Paris, i.e., ballet or symphony  
Ground transportation vehicles, i.e., shuttles, vans, bus  
Lists of restaurants & to-do in Paris  
Tips for drivers & guides  
Fees for 1) Money Transfers and 2) Credit Card Fees  
Money Exchange – Euro to Dollar Rate  
A few surprises! Oh là là!

**What is NOT included...**

Airfare  
Travel insurance - highly recommended  
Some Lunches and Dinners  
Personal shopping purchases

## Payment Schedule

- Deposit of 50% of the total is due at time of registration and is non-refundable
  - **\$2,478 - Double Occupancy**
  - **\$2,648 for Single Occupancy**
  - \$1,628 for Non-Textile Workshop Participant sharing a Double Room
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- Remaining 50% is due by September 19, 2025.

If payment is not received by the due date, Sew & Sew Retreats is entitled to give written notice that your guest retreat reservation is cancelled. You, the guest, will **remain liable to pay the balance of the reservation unless we are able to sell the retreat space.**

Your place on the *Celebrate Joyeux Noel* retreat will be confirmed once receiving the non-refundable deposit. Payment may be made by credit or debit card.

No refunds of any kind for any reason on any amount paid.

## Cancellation

**There are no refunds in the event of a guest cancellation.** The deposit is **not** refundable and there is **no** refund after the balance has been paid. Guests are **strongly encouraged to arrange travel insurance including cancellation coverage**, plus coverage for personal belongings, public liability, medical, etc. (This is why you should get travel insurance. See below.) When purchasing insurance, you can **use the start date for coverage as the day you paid the deposit.**

In the event you need to cancel, you may find a friend to take your place for the retreat. Also, if we have a wait list, we can contact people on that list to replace your spot. Please contact me as soon as possible to see if we can transfer your spot to someone else.

In the event that Sew & Sew Retreats determines the retreat needs to be cancelled, you will receive a refund of your deposit. That refund should be received within 30 days of the announcement of the cancellation by Sew & Sew Retreats.

## U.S. State Department

**Step Program** - The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service to allow U.S. citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. <https://step.state.gov/step/>

**Money Matters:** Before going abroad, notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel, and check exchange rates. For information about using cash, debit/credit cards, and ATMs overseas, read information about your [destination](#).

**Safeguard Your Documents!** Make two copies of all your travel documents in case of emergency. Leave one copy with a trusted friend or relative at home and carry the other separately from your original documents. To help prevent theft, do not carry your passport in your back pocket, and keep it separate from your money.

## Passport Validity for France

Entry into France for short-term tourism (90 days maximum) requires that your **passport be valid for at least three months beyond your intended date of departure** from the **Schengen Area**. If your passport does not meet the Schengen requirements, you may be refused boarding by the airline at your point of origin or while transferring planes. For this reason, it is recommended that your passport has at least six months' validity remaining when you travel abroad.

**Visas:** U.S. citizens with valid passports traveling for tourism or business can **enter France without a visa** for a period of 90 days out of every 180 days. You are responsible for having a valid passport for entry into France. Sew & Sew Retreats or Linda Sweek does not accept any responsibility should there be issues at the port of entry.

## What is the Schengen Borders Agreement?

The [Schengen Borders Agreement](#) permits citizens from certain countries - including the United States - to travel freely to 26 European countries within the Schengen area for up to three months for tourism or business. U.S. Travelers in Europe

## Traveling in Europe

If you are planning to travel through Europe, you should be familiar with the requirements of the Schengen Borders Agreement. The [Schengen Borders Agreement](#) created Europe's border-free Schengen area, where anyone legally present in the European Union (such as tourists, exchange students, or individuals visiting for business purposes) are guaranteed free movement within the Schengen area without being subject to internal border checks. The Schengen Borders Agreement permits citizens from certain countries - including the United States - to travel freely within the Schengen area for up to 90 days for tourism or

business. Today, the Schengen area encompasses most countries in Europe, and also includes four non-EU states: Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. We recommend the following:

### **PASSPORT**

- Have at least six-month's validity remaining on your passport book at the time of entry into the Schengen area.
- Check the expiration date on your passport book carefully before traveling to Europe – especially minors' passports, which are valid for five years, not 10 years like those issued to U.S. citizen adults age 16 and older.
- Carry your passport book when traveling to another country in the Schengen area. Even if there is no border check at that time, officials may reinstate border controls without notice.

You can find passport validity requirements for your destination country, along with other important information, on our [country pages](#). If your passport does not meet the Schengen requirements, you may be:

- Refused boarding by the airline at your point of origin or while transferring planes.
- Denied entry when you arrive in the Schengen area, regardless of how long you will stay.

An immigration official will determine if you qualify for visa-free entry to the Schengen area when you first cross any external Schengen border and present your passport. The officer may bar your entry if you do not qualify.

You should also check passport validity requirements if traveling onward from the Schengen area to a country outside the Schengen area in our [country pages](#).

### **PASSPORT & VISA**

- With a valid U.S. passport book, you can stay up to 90 days for tourism or business during any 180-day period. You must wait an additional 90 days before applying to re-enter the Schengen area.
- If you plan to stay in the Schengen area longer than three months, contact the embassy of the country where you plan to spend the majority of your time to apply for a visa.

Schengen area countries may reinstate temporary internal or external border control without advanced notice. U.S. citizens should carry their U.S. passport book at all times when entering or leaving the Schengen area and when traveling between Schengen countries. For additional information on traveling to and within the Schengen area, see our FAQ below.

### **Schengen Borders Agreement**

The [Schengen Borders Agreement](#) permits citizens from certain countries - including the United States - to travel freely within the Schengen area for up to 90 days for tourism or business.

### **As a U.S. citizen, how long can I stay in the Schengen area without a visa?**

With a valid U.S. passport, you can stay up to 90 days for tourism or business during any 180-day period. **Do not overstay!** You must wait an additional 90 days before applying to re-enter the Schengen area. To stay longer than 90 days, you must have a visa. Apply for a visa through the [embassy](#) of the country where you will spend most of your time.

### **What do I need to enter the Schengen area?**

- A U.S. passport book (with applicable visas, if needed), with at least six-month's validity remaining at the time of entry into the Schengen area.
- Sufficient passport validity for each [country](#) you will visit.
- Justifiable purpose of travel.
- Proof of sufficient financial resources for the visit.
- Compliance with other [entry requirements](#) for each country you will visit or transit.

### **What do I need when traveling to Schengen countries?**

- Make sure your passport has sufficient validity or [renew it](#) before traveling.
- Carry your passport book with you when traveling to other countries in the Schengen area in case officials reinstate internal borders without notice.

### **Does the Schengen Borders Agreement apply to students, interns, or workers?**

- Check with the [embassy](#) of the country before you travel to determine if it requires a visa for the type of activity you wish to pursue.
- If you DO need a visa, wait until you receive it before traveling to any country in the Schengen area.

### **How can the U.S. government help me if border officials do not let me enter?**

- We can give you the contact information of [foreign embassies](#) of the countries you wish to visit.
- We can provide information about hiring an [English-speaking foreign attorney](#) overseas if you choose to do so.
- Note: We cannot influence a foreign government's decision about allowing you to enter, and we cannot intervene in another country's criminal or administrative procedures.

## **Travel Insurance**

**Get it! Well, it is strongly encouraged for you to get it.** Think of it as a vital part of your travel arrangements. Insurance protects you, your trip, and your travel investment. When purchasing insurance, you can **use the start date for coverage as the day you paid the deposit.**

Travel suppliers, airline carriers, and Sew & Sew Retreats or Linda Sweek will not compensate any unforeseen expenses in the event of cancellation or failure to make your trip, missed flights, lost baggage, loss of health, death and/or accidents or emergency evacuation due to illness, natural disasters or acts of terrorism. Also, it is strongly recommended that you purchase a travel insurance policy for the duration of the journey, not just airfare.

*It is strongly recommended you and your party arrange comprehensive travel insurance, which includes cancellation, repatriation, medical and personal cover and also full cover for the party's personal belongings.*

Here are two recommended travel insurance companies.

- 1) **Squaremouth** - <https://www.squaremouth.com/>
- 2) Travel Guard - <https://www.travelguard.com>

Should you decide not to purchase travel insurance, you assume sole financial liability for all direct and indirect consequences and costs resulting from events occurring before or during the trip.

You do not have the right to demand compensation from Sew & Sew Retreats or Linda Sweek, or retreat teachers for any unforeseen expenses incurred as a direct result of cancellation or failure to make your trip, lost baggage, loss of health, death, accidents and/or emergency evacuation due to natural disasters or acts of terrorism.

Per the U.S. State Department regarding insurance:

- **“The U.S. government does not provide insurance for U.S. citizens overseas.** We do not pay medical bills or unexpected costs. We highly recommend that you purchase travel insurance before you travel to cover emergency medical care, either as part of or separate from trip cancellation insurance.
- **Health Insurance:** Medical facilities and providers abroad may require cash up front and may not accept U.S. insurance plans. U.S. Medicare/Medicaid does not provide coverage outside the United States. Check your health care policy to see if it will cover you overseas. If not, consider buying [supplemental insurance](#). Make sure the insurance you purchase covers any special medical needs or risks you anticipate on your trip.
- **Emergency Medical Evacuation:** Evacuation for medical treatment can cost more than \$100,000. You should strongly consider purchasing [medical evacuation insurance](#) in case of emergency overseas.”

**As part of the Registration process, you need to ACCEPT or DECLINE that you will or will not purchase travel insurance.**

## **Credit or Debit Cards & Cash**

Make sure you contact your bank or credit/debit card company to inform them of your travel to France along with the dates of the trip. Otherwise, purchases may look suspicious and be alerted for fraud.

Cash is also accepted, but definitely **get euro**. This can usually be converted locally at a bank in the U.S. before the trip. Not all banks will do this, so investigate where you can exchange dollars for euros before you go. Also, you can exchange money at the airport in Paris or Toulouse or get it from any ATM.

**All purchases made with the textile vender, who will visit us at Chateau Dumas, will have to be in euro.** She will not take U.S. dollars or credit/debit cards. **All purchases made to the vendors at the Flea Market will want cash in euro.** They will **not** take U.S. dollars or credit/debit cards.

## **Covid-19 Policy for France**

Per the U.S. State Department, dated August 4, 2022:

“All France Event: End of French COVID-related entry requirements. The government of France has announced that as of August 1, it has ended all COVID-related entry requirements for France. Travelers no longer require proof of vaccination or a negative test to enter France. In addition, the health/vaccine pass has been eliminated for all locations.”

## **WhatsApp**

We will create a WhatsApp group while we are traveling in France. **This is free and works internationally.** Your phone plans track data and if we were to use text messaging that data adds up and that costs you money. No data is counted with WhatsApp. It does require your cell phone number. This is how we will communicate any announcements, changes to the itinerary, trying to find each other and photos. The group name will be: **Celebrate Joyeux Noel 2025.** Please download the app prior to the trip. If you want to know more, go to <https://www.whatsapp.com/>

## **BE KIND & FULL OF GRACE**

**Please be kind to all those in our group.** Remember it's only 11 days and you'll like the trip better if you don't worry about someone else that is bothering you. This includes the person who is late, or talks nonstop, or is always the last person getting on the bus, or is a slow walker, or has poor table manners or a million other little things that may bug you. This includes the teachers, trip manager or trip liaison. And **do not speak badly** about someone to others on the trip – please don't spread your unhappiness to others. Instead, **choose to let it go** and **show grace** to that person. **You will be happier and you will enjoy the trip so much more!** Thank you.

**Contact email:** [lsweek@lindasweekdesigns.com](mailto:lsweek@lindasweekdesigns.com)