

European Road Trip

EUROPEAN ROAD TRIP

France & Italy Discovery

April 2 - April 5, 2026

Brussels → Dijon → Lyon → Northern Italy → Bologna
→ Return to Brussels

Prepared exclusively for

the Wold Johansen Family

Your Journey at a Glance

DAY	DATE	ROUTE	DRIVE	OVERNIGHT
1	Apr 2	Brussels → Dijon (morning stop) → Lyon	~5 hrs	Lyon
2	Apr 3	Lyon → Northern Italy (to be decided)	~4-5 hrs	Northern Italy
3	Apr 4	Northern Italy → Bologna	~1.5 hrs	Bologna
4	Apr 5	Bologna → Brussels	~10-11 hrs	Brussels

Trip Summary

Total Distance

~2,000 km

Total Drive Time

~20 hrs

Avg. Daily Drive

~5 hrs

01

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2

Brussels to Lyon

DRIVE ~5 hours (with stops) **OVERNIGHT** Lyon **DISTANCE** ~500 km

LUNCH STOP: CHÂLONS-EN-CHAMPAGNE

Location: ~3 hours from Brussels (via A4)

Timing: Arrive around 12:00-12:30 for lunch

Restaurant Options:

- **La Brasserie du Jard** - 10 Boulevard Victor Hugo, 51000 Châlons-en-Champagne
Tel: +33 3 26 65 61 83 | Traditional brasserie, family-friendly
- **Au Carillon Gourmand** - 15 bis Place Monseigneur Tissier
Tel: +33 3 26 64 45 07 | More upscale, Michelin-recommended

After Lunch:

- Let kids stretch legs walking around canals (15-20 min)
- "Little Venice" atmosphere
- Back on road for final ~2 hours to Lyon

MORNING STOP: DIJON

Location: 15 km from Château de Longecourt

Timing: 2-3 hours (9:00-11:30 AM)

Parking: Darcy parking (underground, central location)

Top 5 Things to See:

- **Ducal Palace (Palais des Ducs)** - Place de la Libération, stunning semicircular square
Climb Tour Philippe le Bon (316 steps) for panoramic views | FREE entry
- **Owl Trail (Parcours de la Chouette)** - Follow brass owl markers through old town
Rub the lucky owl sculpture on Notre-Dame church with left hand!
- **Notre-Dame de Dijon** - 13th century Gothic church with famous gargoyles
- **Rue des Forges** - Medieval street with half-timbered houses, perfect for photos
- **Les Halles Market** - Designed by Gustave Eiffel (Tue-Sat mornings only)
Try Dijon mustard from Moutarde Maille boutique nearby

TRAVEL NOTES

Compact old town - everything walkable in 30 minutes. Kids will enjoy following the owl trail. Leave by 11:30-12:00 to reach Lyon by early afternoon.

ACCOMMODATION: LYON

Hotel: Novotel Lyon Gerland Musée des Confluences ★★★★★

Address: 70 Avenue Leclerc, 69007 Lyon

Tel: +33 4 72 71 11 11

- Family rooms with sofa bed (kids under 16 free)
- On-site restaurant (La Fabrik) with kids' menu
- Game room and kids' corner
- Parking: Free outdoor or €15/night covered
- Tram T1 nearby for easy city center access

NOTE

Pool is outdoor/seasonal - CLOSED in April. Good location for evening walk along Rhône River. 10-15 min drive to old town if dining out.

Exploring Lyon

ACTIVITIES & HIGHLIGHTS

- **Vieux Lyon (Old Town)** - UNESCO World Heritage site with Renaissance architecture
- **Traboules** - Explore Lyon's famous hidden passageways
- **Basilica of Notre-Dame de Fourvière** - Hilltop basilica with panoramic city views
- **Parc de la Tête d'Or** - Beautiful urban park with lake, zoo, and botanical gardens
- **Presqu'île district** - Elegant shopping between Rhône and Saône rivers
- **Lyon Cathedral** - Cathédrale Saint-Jean-Baptiste
- **Evening stroll** along the riverbanks - Lyon has beautiful illuminations

DINING RECOMMENDATIONS

Lyon is considered the gastronomic capital of France

- **Bouchon Lyonnais options:** Le Bouchon des Filles, Café des Fédérations, Chez Paul
Traditional Lyon restaurants with local specialties
- **Les Halles de Lyon Paul Bocuse** - Covered market for gourmet lunch and tastings
- **Daniel et Denise** - Authentic traditional Lyonnaise cuisine

Must Try Local Specialties:

- Quenelles (pike dumplings in cream sauce)
- Rosette de Lyon (dried sausage)
- Cervelle de canut (herbed cheese spread)
- Tarte aux pralines (pink praline tart)

PRACTICAL TIPS

Lyon parking can be challenging - research parking garages near accommodation. Consider Lyon City Card for transport and museum access. Fourvière funicular makes hilltop access easy. Evening: Lyon has beautiful illuminations on historic buildings.

02

THURSDAY, APRIL 3

Lyon to Northern Italy

DRIVE ~4-5 hours

OVERNIGHT To be decided

DISTANCE ~400-450 km

DESTINATION OPTIONS (TURIN / PARMA / PIACENZA)

Option 1: Turin

- **Mole Antonelliana** - Iconic building housing National Cinema Museum
- **Egyptian Museum** - Largest collection outside Cairo
- **Piazza Castello** and Royal Palace
- **Historic cafés** - Caffè Mulassano and Caffè San Carlo
- *Most famous but can be busy*

Option 2: Parma

- **Parma Cathedral and Baptistery** - Stunning Romanesque architecture
- **Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese factory tour**
- **Prosciutto di Parma** producer visit
- **Teatro Regio** opera house
- *Unique food tourism experiences*

Option 3: Piacenza

- **Piazza Cavalli** with equestrian statues
- **Palazzo Farnese**
- *Quieter, authentic Italian experience*

ROUTE CONSIDERATIONS

Mont Blanc tunnel or Fréjus tunnel route options from Lyon. Check tunnel traffic and tolls in advance.
Early April can still be cool in mountain areas - pack layers accordingly.

03

FRIDAY, APRIL 4

Northern Italy to Bologna

DRIVE ~1.5 hours **OVERNIGHT** Bologna **DISTANCE** ~150 km

EXPLORING BOLOGNA

- **Piazza Maggiore** - Historic heart with Basilica di San Petronio
- **Due Torri (Two Towers)** - Climb Torre degli Asinelli (498 steps) for views
- **Archiginnasio** - Historic university building with anatomical theater
- **Porticoes of Bologna** - UNESCO site, 38km of covered walkways
- **Santo Stefano complex** - Medieval 'Seven Churches' complex
- **Quadrilatero market area** - Vibrant food market district
- **Via dell'Indipendenza** - Main shopping street

DINING IN BOLOGNA

- **Trattoria Anna Maria** - Authentic traditional Bolognese cuisine
- **Osteria dell'Orsa** - Popular with locals, excellent tagliatelle al ragù
- **All'Osteria Bottega** - Wine bar with local dishes
- **Mercato di Mezzo** - Food hall for casual dining
- **Gelato:** Cremeria Funivia or Stefino

Must Try:

- Tagliatelle al ragù (authentic Bolognese sauce)
- Tortellini in brodo
- Mortadella

- Cotoletta alla bolognese

04

SATURDAY, APRIL 5

Bologna to Brussels

DRIVE ~10-11 hours

OVERNIGHT Brussels

DISTANCE ~1,100 km

LONG DRIVING DAY

Very long driving day - recommend 6-7 AM departure. Share driving if possible. Plan fuel stops and rest breaks in advance.

RETURN ROUTE OPTIONS

- Most direct: Bologna → Milan → Switzerland → France → Belgium
- Consider overnight stop to break journey (adds 1 day)
- Possible stop locations: Lake Como area, Lucerne, Luxembourg

ESSENTIAL PLANNING NOTES

Documents:

- Valid passport/ID for all travelers
- Vehicle registration and insurance (check Italy/Switzerland coverage)
- European Health Insurance Cards

Driving & Tolls:

- French autoroutes: Pay tolls (card accepted)
- Italy: Toll highways (card or cash)
- Tunnel tolls: ~€50-70 one-way
- Switzerland (if passing through): Vignette CHF 40 required

Weather & Packing:

- Expected temps: 10-18°C (50-64°F)
- Pack layers - temperature varies throughout day

- Waterproof jackets recommended
- Comfortable walking shoes essential

Essential Information

BOOKING STATUS

- ✓ Day 1: Novotel Lyon Gerland - **TO BE CONFIRMED**
- Day 2: Northern Italy - **TO BE DECIDED & BOOKED**
- Day 3: Bologna - **TO BE BOOKED**

BUDGET ESTIMATE (FAMILY OF 4)

Accommodation (3 nights)	€350 - €450
Fuel (~2,000 km)	€250 - €350
Tolls & Tunnels	€150 - €200
Meals & Dining	€400 - €600
Activities & Parking	€100 - €150
Total Estimate	€1,250 - €1,750

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

COUNTRY	EMERGENCY	NOTES
EU-wide	112	Works in all EU countries
France	112 or 17 (police)	Ambulance: 15
Italy	112 or 113	Carabinieri: 112

Have a wonderful journey!

