

More Tales of Barging Through Belgium to France: A Memorable River Cruise Experience

Prepare to be captivated by the allure of Belgium and France as you embark on an extraordinary barging adventure. These neighboring countries offer a harmonious blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and culinary delights, all accessible through the tranquil waters of their interconnected canals.



Faring Forth Again on the Shoe: More tales of Barging through Belgium to France by Valerie Poore

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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A Glimpse of Belgium's Enchanting Waterways

Our journey commenced in the charming town of Bruges, Belgium, where cobblestone streets and medieval architecture evoke a bygone era. We boarded our luxurious barge, the "Serenity," and set sail along the picturesque canals that meander through the city's heart. The gentle rhythm of the water and the passing scenery created an ambiance of serene tranquility.

As we ventured deeper into the Belgian countryside, the landscape transformed into a tapestry of lush meadows, verdant forests, and quaint villages. We stopped at the historic town of Ghent, where we explored its imposing cathedral and marveled at the intricate artistry of the Belfry. The vibrant atmosphere and friendly locals added to the charm of this captivating destination.



Crossing the Border into France

As our barge approached the French border, the anticipation grew. We entered the serene waters of the Canal du Nord, which seamlessly connected us to the vast network of canals in France. The countryside here

exuded a different character, with rolling hills, vineyards, and charming villages dotted along the banks.

Our first stop in France was the picturesque town of Cambrai, renowned for its magnificent cathedral and the production of fine lace. We strolled through its cobbled streets, admiring the intricate designs of the handmade lace products that adorned the shop windows.



Exploring the Culinary Delights of Northern France

One of the highlights of our barging experience was the opportunity to savor the exquisite cuisine of Northern France. We visited local markets, where we sampled fresh produce, artisanal cheeses, and delectable pastries. The chefs on board our barge transformed these ingredients into culinary masterpieces, showcasing the region's rich gastronomic tradition.

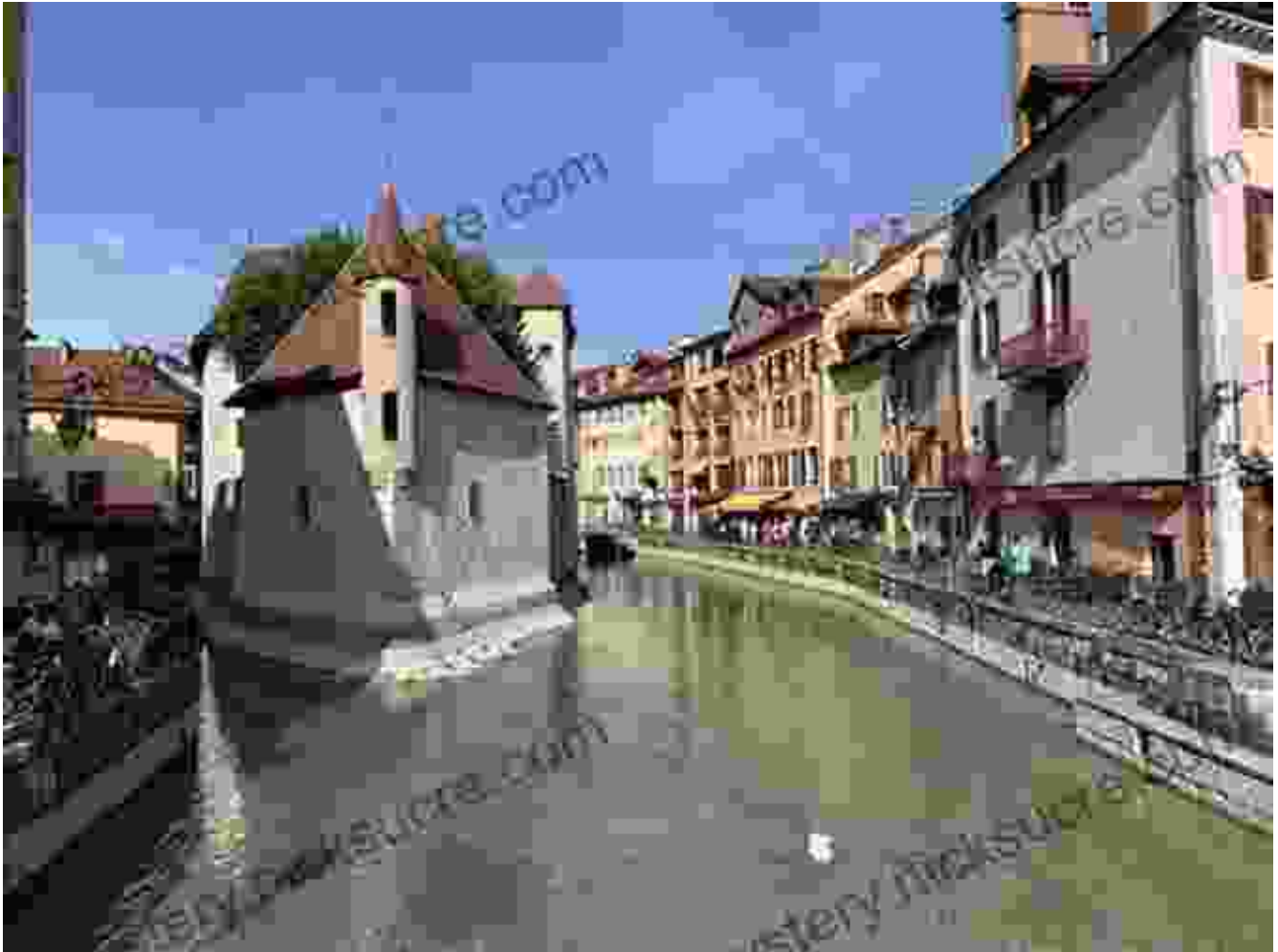
We dined al fresco on the barge's sundeck, surrounded by stunning views of the countryside. The gentle breeze carried the tantalizing aromas of locally sourced ingredients, creating an unforgettable dining experience.



Unveiling the Hidden Gems of the French Waterways

As we continued our journey through France, we discovered hidden gems tucked away along the canals. We visited the medieval village of Péronne, where we explored its ancient fortress and learned about its rich history. We also stopped at the tranquil town of Saint-Quentin, renowned for its exquisite basilica and its vibrant arts scene.

Throughout our adventure, we were captivated by the warm hospitality of the locals. They welcomed us into their communities, sharing their stories and insights into the region's culture and traditions.



Planning Your Own Unforgettable Barging Experience

If you are planning your own barging adventure through Belgium and France, here are a few tips to help you create a memorable journey:

- **Choose a reputable barge company:** Look for companies with a proven track record of excellence and that offer a range of itineraries to suit your preferences.
- **Book early:** The most popular itineraries tend to book up quickly, especially during peak season (April to October). To secure your preferred dates, it's advisable to book several months in advance.

- **Consider your budget:** Barging can vary in price depending on the itinerary, the size of the barge, and the level of luxury you desire. Set a budget before you start planning to avoid any unexpected surprises.
- **Pack light:** Space on barges is limited, so pack only the essentials. Leave room for souvenirs, as you will likely encounter many tempting items along the way.
- **Be prepared for all types of weather:** The weather in Belgium and France can be unpredictable, so pack layers of clothing and a waterproof jacket. Sun protection, such as sunglasses and sunscreen, is also essential.

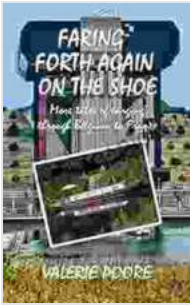
Our barging journey through Belgium to France was an experience that will be etched in our memories forever. We navigated tranquil canals, discovered enchanting towns, and immersed ourselves in the rich history and culture of these two captivating countries. Whether you are a seasoned traveler or a first-time barger, this unique mode of exploration offers an unforgettable adventure that will leave you yearning for more.

As the "Serenity" glided back into Bruges, we bid farewell to the tranquil waters and the cherished memories we had created. Barging through Belgium and France had not only been a journey of discovery but also a journey of the soul, where the beauty of nature, the warmth of human connection, and the allure of history had combined to create an experience that transcended the ordinary.

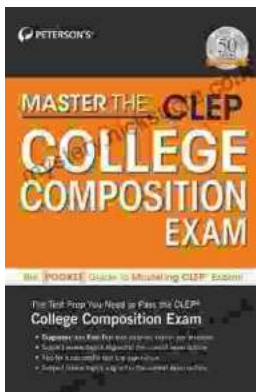
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