



*Guest Senior Traveler PKMcM, Doylestown PA:* When my spouse and I planned retirement, our highest priority was to travel. In the two decades since, we've lived up to that plan. We've visited many states, including Hawaii and Alaska. We've been to Canada, Mexico, Panama, Chile and Argentina.

**Fascinated By European Cathedrals:** We've visited England, Ireland, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Holland, Belgium and Russia. In Europe, we're fascinated by cathedrals. The gothic splendor symbolizes dedication to religious beliefs.

We've spent some enjoyable and educational hours visiting cathedrals, including the Basilica di San Marco in Venice, Cologne in Germany and St. Paul's in London. On our most recent journey to Paris, it was quality time at Notre Dame Cathedral. Then we decided to travel 56 miles southwest to the French town of Chartres and see another historic cathedral.     **How To Get To Chartres:** The scenic 65-minute train ride from Paris Gare de Montparnass costs about \$41 second class and \$50 first class.

**The City:** The cathedral is just a ten-minute walk from the Gare de Chartres through the

pleasant Medieval town of 40,000. The tourist koisk gave us info pamphlets about nearby sites. Along the way we visited the Chateau de Maintenon along the Loire River, the Maison du Saumon tourist center and the Museum de Chartres.

Chartres Cathedral: 16 Cloître Notre Dame, 28000 Chartres, France, [www.cathedrale-chartres.org](http://www.cathedrale-chartres.org). We toured the cloistered sections and lofty towers to enjoy beautiful views of the town and surrounding countryside. The charge is about \$10 for adults, \$6 for students, and free to children 17 and under.

The cathedral welcomes visitors daily from 8.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. We attended a classical and religious music program called Les Soirées Autrement (Summer Evenings). These are scheduled from early June to the end of August on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

Within The Cathedral: The artwork, religious icons and sculptures, as well as the magnificent stained glass windows were fascinating. Bathed in daylight filtered through the windows, we marveled at the soaring Gothic arches, choir loft, nave and realistic sculptures of long-ago religious figures. (<http://www.cathedrale-chartres.org>)

Since it was built the 13th Century, the cathedral has been kept in good condition, except for damage due to a nearby battle during the 18th Century French Revolution. In eras of both World Wars in the 20th Century, local workers removed the windows and other fragile artifacts and stored them in the crypts below. Fortunately, all of the cathedral's precious history has survived intact.

Night In Chartres: Strolling through the narrow streets of the old city in the evening, we could almost transport ourselves back to the 12th Century. From April through September, from 10 pm until 1 am, the cathedral and other historic buildings nightly become a giant light and sound theater.

Restaurant Le Georges (22 Place des Épars F, 28000 Chartres, France, [www.bw-grand-monarque.com/uk/index.php#restaurant-le-georges](http://www.bw-grand-monarque.com/uk/index.php#restaurant-le-georges)). We dined at Le Georges in the Best Western Hotel Grand Monarque, close to the train station and a short walk from the cathedral.

The elegant, Michelin-rated restaurant serves typical French dishes, many with fresh produce, poultry and meats from local farms. Prices for dinner, including a glass of local wine and dessert, are from \$60 to \$90.