

FRANCE

Normandy & Brittany

A Guided Walking Adventure





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Travel Style

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep in to the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.

And, with our **optional Flight + Tour Combo** and **Post-Tour Paris Extension** to complement this destination, we take care of all the travel to simplify the journey. Refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

Overview

A long history, ancient culture and customs, and coastal scenery are interwoven on France's northern coast, along the border between Normandy and Brittany—and highlight a bucolic itinerary of walking, dining, and exploring. Over a thousand years of history have unfolded along these sandy beaches, pebbled coves, and dramatic cliffs—from Romans to Vikings to their descendants, the Normans, whose name derived from these conquering “Norsemen” who arrived on Normandy's shores in the 9th century. Meeting in Rouen's historic center, you follow in the steps of Impressionist painters to the coast of the English Channel, and walk along the D-Day beaches of World War II. Iconic Mont St. Michel is one of your first views on a path along Brittany's rocky shore, overlooking protected islands for migratory birds. Circling back to Normandy, the tour concludes in Bayeux with a visit to the famous Bayeux Tapestry, a depiction of the events leading up to the Norman conquest of England. Normandy's lush pastures produce some of France's best-known cheeses, such as Camembert, but the region is equally known for its apples, cider, and Calvados liqueur. Meals include fresh seafood as well as sweet and savory crêpes, galettes, and apple *tarte tatin* (cake). Sophisticated and comfortable, three hotels showcase each locale and include a converted 16th-century townhouse, a harbor or sea-side hotel, and an original 1920s mansion perched above the Atlantic with views of Mont St. Michel.





Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Transfer from Rouen to the Honfleur area. Apreval to Honfleur; 3-4 miles, easy to moderate

Gathering in Rouen's historic center, you meet your guides and set off toward the picturesque port of Honfleur, a region brimming with apple orchards. Your first stop is the Manoir d'Apreval, a family-owned estate surrounded by an apple orchard with 17 varieties, specializing in cider and Calvados liqueur. At harvest time, a restored press is used to make cider, which eventually also becomes Calvados after ageing in oak barrels.

After a tour of the estate and a buffet lunch, you embark on your first walk through the small village of Pennedepie, entering the Bois du Breuil, a nature reserve. Beginning on a forest trail with views down to the Seine Estuary on your left, you walk along country lanes bordered by Normandy's famous hedgerows. About one mile from Honfleur, you reach the Notre Dame de Grâce Chapel, a pilgrimage site for local fishermen, with ceilings and walls adorned with message plaques from sailors and their families. You descend into Honfleur, marveling at the broad views that extend over the River Seine as it flows out to sea, and the modern Normandy Bridge, linking Honfleur with the port of Le Havre. Many of these views were depicted by late 19th-century painters, such as Monet and Gustave Courbet.

Passing Honfleur's typical slate-shingled houses, you reach your enchanting hotel in the center of town. Later, dinner is in a charming local bistro, where the food reflects the fertile countryside and nearby coast. Monks in Normandy began developing its famous cheeses as early as the 11th century, and dinner may conclude with a rich Pont l'Évêque, Livarot, or, the best known, Camembert.



Les Maisons de Léa, Honfleur

A charming hotel in the heart of Honfleur composed of a restored salt warehouse and three 16th-century houses, with individually decorated rooms, and a *hammam* (steam room).

DAY 2

Cliffs of Étretat; 4 miles, easy to moderate

After awakening in the comfort of your historic hotel and enjoying a copious breakfast with fresh fruit and homemade baked goods and jams, you drive through the beautiful countryside of the Pays de Caux, to the start of the day's walk along a trail that gently descends through an oak forest, and then into an open landscape of pasture and gorse along the dramatic coastline of "La Manche"—the English Channel. You soon have your first views of the towering cliffs and rock formations of Étretat, a favorite subject of the Impressionist painter Monet.

You walk along the trail that takes you on the top of the cliffs and towards the famous Manneporte rock arch, the Porte d'Aval, and the Aiguille or "needle." The 19th-century French author Guy de Maupassant spent a good part of his childhood in the small fishing and resort town of Étretat.

Upon reaching your hotel, you have time to relax, perhaps even indulge in a spa treatment or *hammam* on site before a dinner on your own in Honfleur. There are plenty of restaurants to choose from ranging from gourmet meals to a local *crêperie*.

Les Maisons de Léa, Honfleur



DAY 3

Arromanches to cliff top; 1 mile, easy.
Omaha Beach Walk; 1.5 miles, easy

As the day's main focus is visiting the D-Day beaches and the American Military Cemetery, there is minimal walking. You first drive to a view over Arromanches, a resort town with a sandy beach but no natural harbor, which became one of the world's busiest ports in June 1944. It was here that Winston Churchill's idea of using prefabricated floating ports was implemented for the Battle of Normandy, until the existing ports could be liberated from the Germans. From the town of Arromanches, you walk along a short stretch of beach up to the cliffs on the west side of the town as your guide begins the discussion of the D-Day landings.

After lunch in a local restaurant, you walk along the sands of Omaha Beach to the American Military Cemetery, where 9,387 American soldiers are buried, each marked with a white cross or Star of David—the first American World War II cemetery on European soil. Your guide provides context about the battle, explaining why the casualties along Omaha Beach were far worse than at other locations along the D-Day beaches, here where Allied soldiers ran inland toward the German positions on the nearby ridge.

After a moving visit to the American Military Cemetery, you then transfer to the remote Cotentin Peninsula, which traces its name to the 4th-century Roman Emperor Constantius Chlorus, an enchanting area with unspoiled stretches of rocky coastline, sheltering tranquil bays, and quaint villages. You are warmly welcomed in your charming seaside hotel in the town of Barneville-Carteret, two coastal resort towns separated by a river estuary, with the British island of Jersey just off the coast.

Hôtel de la Marine, Barneville-Carteret

An intimate family-run hotel on the water in the small harbor town of Barneville-Carteret provides views of the English Channel and Cape Carteret. Individually decorated guestrooms are plush, with contemporary furnishings and fabrics. A polished wood salon-bar overlooks the harbor beside its Michelin-starred dining room, while the water's edge patio evokes the style of a 1930s cruise ship.

DAY 4

La Hague Coastal Trail; 5 miles, easy to moderate

This morning you wake to the sound of seabirds and the smell of the salty air. The hotel's harbor-side location permits a stroll on your own before breakfast.

Today, a short drive brings you to La

Hague, meaning “high cape” in French, the Cotentin Peninsula's westernmost point. This area of Normandy is a picturesque place with granite cliffs, small coves, and green fields. Setting off on a bracing walk along a coastal trail lined with wildflowers, you are graced with views of the British isle of Alderney, the closest Channel Island to the French coast. The small harbor of Goury is near some of the strongest currents in Europe. Built in 1834, the Phare de Goury, Goury's lighthouse, signals the local current, which is called the Raz Blanchel. After a picnic lunch of local cured meats, cheeses, breads, and pastries, you continue walking to the Nez de Jobourg. This evening you dine in the charming port town of Barneville-Carteret.

Hôtel de la Marine, Barneville-Carteret

DAY 5

Le Bec d'Andaine to Tomberlaine Island to Le Bec d'Andaine; 6 miles, easy to moderate

Today the itinerary takes you from Normandy into Brittany, starting with a drive to the Baie du Mont St. Michel, known for its extreme tides. ***Please note that today's walk is tide dependent and thus the start time can vary greatly.

Depending on the lunar pull, the difference between low and high tide can be as much as 50 feet—the third largest tide in the world.*** The drive provides a panoramic view of the bay and the pyramid-shaped island monastery of Mont St. Michel, before you arrive at Le Bec d'Andaine and meet your official local guide, who, because of the tides, is required to accompany you over the bay. You step through sand dunes, in the springtime, full of orchids. With broad views over salt marshes, you gradually cross the three rivers of the bay: the Selune, the See, and the Couesnon; the latter is the official border between Normandy and Brittany. The goal of the first part of the walk is Tomberlaine Island, a protected sanctuary for nesting shell ducks, marine and brown seagulls, and white egrets.





From here there are great views of Mont St. Michel, and you may see a group of pilgrims walking along the sands, holding large wooden crosses.

After completing the walk, you drive over the border into Brittany (although you have already been in Brittany once on foot today). Your lovely hotel overlooks Cancale Bay, with spectacular

views of Mont St. Michel. Dinner tonight at the hotel is a true gastronomic experience. Using all local and in-season produce, your hotel's restaurant is known for meticulously incorporating spices from all over the world. Dinner may start with oysters, either plain or some delicately seasoned, and followed by a main course of lamb that grazed in the nearby salt meadows, or scallop "brochettes" simply seasoned with virgin olive oil and mild chili pepper.

Château Richeux, Saint Méloir des Ondes

This Relais & Châteaux property is a luxurious 1920s villa with antique and original furnishings, directly overlooking the water with views of Mont St. Michel. Experience beautiful guestrooms, warm and elegant common rooms, and a renowned restaurant featuring the cuisine of a three-star Michelin chef.

DAY 6

Guided walk of Mont St. Michel; 2-3 miles, easy to moderate

Today you explore Mont St. Michel, one of the most impressive constructions of the Middle Ages—a quintessential image of northern France and also a UNESCO World Heritage site. Your transfer takes you across a causeway to a small island just a half mile off the coast, where your guide leads you through the narrow back streets, winding your way to the top of the mount at the door of the Benedictine Abbey, dating from the 8th century. The majority of the buildings here were built, however, in the 11th century, with the church's main façade dating from the 12th century. You learn about the lives of medieval monks and village life, with a particular emphasis on the island's extraordinarily preserved architecture.

Later you gather for a sumptuous home meal where you toast your exploration of France's enchanting northern coast. Your private chef chooses the freshest selection of the day, perhaps starting with hors d'oeuvres of delicate Normandy cheese or fresh seafood from the Cotentin Peninsula.

Château Richeux, Saint Méloir des Ondes



DAY 7

Bayeux Tapestry visit. Departure

After another delicious breakfast, you transfer to the charming town of Bayeux arriving mid-morning. A settlement since the 1st century B.C., Bayeux has remained an important town in the Normandy region and was virtually untouched during the Battle of Normandy. Here, you visit the fabulous Bayeux Tapestry, which was probably commissioned in the 1070s and commemorated the 1066 Norman conquest of England. The tapestry shows, scene by scene, the story of William the Conqueror and Harold, Earl of Wessex, the men who led the Norman and Saxon armies in 1066. William's defeat of Harold at the Battle of Hastings ensured the success of the Norman invasion of England.

Surprisingly, this priceless treasure is not a true tapestry, but rather a 230-foot-long embroidered cloth.

Strolling through the charming streets of Bayeux, you enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, a final taste of the bounty of this enchanting region. After lunch, a short transfer to the Bayeux train station is provided where you embark on your onward travels.

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Here's just one example that highlights our sustainable practices:

Home Grown: Close to the lovely port of Honfleur, lunch is enjoyed at the Manoir d'Apieval, a family-owned estate surrounded by a magnificent apple orchard. The estate specializes in cider and Calvados, blending 17 different varieties of apples in a restored press to produce their signature cider. With the addition of time and oak barrel storage, Pommeau and Calvados are equally celebrated.

Tour Itinerary Overview

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Hôtel Mercure Rouen Centre Cathedrale, Rouen, France, 9:00 a.m.

7, rue Croix de Fer
76012 Rouen Cedex 1, France
Tel 011 33 235 526 938

NIGHTS 1 & 2

Les Maisons de Léa

Honfleur, France
Tel 011 33 231 144 949
Email contact@lesmaisonsdelea.com
lesmaisonsdelea.com
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHTS 3 & 4

Hôtel de la Marine

Barneville-Carteret, France
Tel 011 33 233 538 331
Email infos@hotelmarine.com
hotelmarine.com
Wireless Internet, and laundry service available.

NIGHTS 5 & 6

Château Richeux

Saint Méloir des Ondes, France
Tel 011 33 299 896 476
Email info@maisons-de-bricourt.com
maisons-de-bricourt.com
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Bayeux Train Station, Bayeux, France, 2:00 p.m.

TRAVEL DELAY AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

If you are delayed while traveling, or experience any unforeseen situation en route to your tour, assistance is only a few, easy steps away:

As a Country Walkers guest, you benefit from 24-hour, toll free access to One Call Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance. Call the numbers below from anywhere in the world to get immediate assistance (regarding everything from lost luggage, to missed connections, to health concerns or notifying your guides or our local partners of a delayed arrival).

To contact One Call, please use one of the following methods:

By Email: mail@oncallinternational.com

By Text: 603.945.0103

By Phone:

If calling from within the USA: 800.555.9095

If calling from outside the USA: 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710

When calling from outside the USA, you will need to dial the access code for the country you are calling from (a complete list of access codes, provided by AT&T, can be found on the Country Walkers website under Travel Planning and Travel Resources: AT&T International Access Codes. If you receive an automated response, when prompted, you can then enter either of the numbers above; One Call accepts collect calls 24/7.

In the unlikely event you are unable to connect by phone with One Call, or the region you are calling from does not have an access code, you should speak with a live international operator and ask them to place a collect call to **800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710**.

Should there be any problems placing a collect call (as is occasionally the case depending on the country), dial, email, or text One Call directly and ask them to return your call immediately to minimize any out of pocket costs.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

7 days, 6 nights

DEPARTURE DATES AND PRICE

Please refer to our website for the most current list of departure dates, scheduled group tour and private tour prices.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Hôtel Mercure Rouen Centre Cathedrale, Rouen, France, 9:00 a.m.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Bayeux Train Station, Bayeux, France, 2:00 p.m.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 3 to 5 miles per day. Walks are along grassy trails, atop cliffs overlooking the sea, and over sand dunes. The terrain is smooth with few rocks or roots to negotiate, although there could be mud in some places after rain. Please note that the walk in the Bay of Mont St. Michel is on tidal flats and entails wading across a few narrow channels of water (maximum of 100 feet in width), therefore you are required to walk barefoot and to wear shorts (the water will be no higher than mid-thigh). *On this day, we recommend sport sandals (such as Tevas or something similar) to wear before and after the walk.* Please note that the mileage when visiting the D-Day beaches and American Cemetery is minimal as the main focus is hearing about the history of that event. The itinerary presents a mixture of lovely seaside and rural landscapes, as well as birdlife, and focuses on the landing beaches of World War II and their accompanying history, the Viking and Norse invasions of the 9th century, medieval architecture and history, and the traditional customs and food of both Normandy and Brittany.

INCLUSIONS

- » Two expert, local guides (for groups of 8 or more), with you 24/7
- » All meals except for one lunch and one dinner; local wine or beer included with dinners
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » Destination information (weather, visa requirements, etc.) and other travel assistance available 24/7 provided by One Call International
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Passenger Participation Agreement and you will receive:

- » Luggage tags
- » List of travel companions and guide biographies

GRATUITIES

Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers. Should you wish to tip your Country Walkers guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per guide, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per guide, per day), and can be paid in USD or local currency.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

If you are interested in reserving the **optional Flight + Tour Combo** and **pre- or post-tour extensions**, please refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Hôtel Mercure Rouen Centre Cathedrale, Rouen, France, 9:00 a.m.

Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG), Paris
aeroportsdeparis.fr or **paris-cdg.com**

GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT

Taxi from Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport to center of Paris (Gare St. Lazare train station): approximately 1¼ hours and 55 euros (approximately \$75 USD), depending on the time of day and the traffic.

Train from Gare St. Lazare train station to Rouen: Trains leave approximately every hour and the journey takes between 1 and 1½ hours, depending on whether the train is direct. Be sure to validate your ticket in the little orange machines located on the platform prior to boarding, or you may be assessed a large fine.

For further rail information, including reservations, schedules, and up-to-date fares, please call Rail Europe at 877.257.2887 or consult their website: **raileurope.com**. Or you may consult the French rail website: **voyages-sncf.com**.

Rouen: A short taxi ride from the Rouen train station to the meeting-point hotel costs between 5 and 10 euros (\$7 to \$14 USD).

Private transfers: Another option is to take a private car from Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport, either to Paris Gare St. Lazare or to Rouen. You can get a quote and reserve a transfer service on-line through Paris City Line (**paris-city-line.com**).

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to stay in Rouen, at our meeting point hotel, which is conveniently located just a two-minute walk away from the cathedral. Quieter rooms are located on the upper floors of the hotel.

Hôtel Mercure Rouen Centre Cathedrale

7, rue Croix de Fer
76012 Rouen Cedex 1, France
Tel 011 33 235 526 952
Fax 011 33 235 894 146
Email H1301@accor.com
mercure.com

Double “Privilege” room rates (one double bed, balcony, cathedral views) start around \$190 USD per night. To make a reservation, please contact the hotel directly or through their website.

If you wish to stay somewhere more luxurious we recommend the following hotel, which is a short taxi ride (approximately 5 to 6 euros or \$7 to \$8 USD) from the meeting point hotel, and about the same distance away from the Rouen train station.

Hôtel de Bourgtheroulde

15 Place de la Pucelle
76000 Rouen, France
Tel 011 33 235 145 050
Fax 011 33 235 145 060
Email info@hotelsparouen.com
hotelsparouen.com

Double room rates start around 230 euros per night (approximately \$260 USD). Please contact the hotel directly to make this reservation.

If you arrive in Rouen with time to spare before the beginning of the tour, we recommend going to the Rouen Tourist Office, which is located on 25 Place du Cathedrale and within a short walking distance from the meeting point hotel. It is open daily from 9:30-12:30 and 1:30-6:00. Here you can rent audio headphones, which will take you on a walking tour of Rouen, at a cost of approximately 5 euros per person (approximately \$7 USD). This will give you a good general overview of the city.

DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS

If you are delayed or miss the scheduled group meeting point for any reason, we kindly request that you contact our emergency assistance provider, One Call International. This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to assist you with any type of travel delay. Please refer to the emergency contact details on your Tour Itinerary Overview page for One Call International contact details.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Bayeux Train Station, Bayeux, France, 2:00 p.m.

The most convenient way to travel from Bayeux to Paris is by train. There are trains leaving for Paris several times a day. The train from Bayeux to Paris takes approximately two hours and 15 minutes. Please see information above about Rail Europe.

POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

If you wish to extend your stay in Bayeux, below are two hotels in the heart of the historic town: a four-star boutique hotel and a three-star hotel. Please contact them directly or reserve via their website.

Hotel Villa Lara

6 Place de Québec
14400 Bayeux
Tel 011 33 231 920 055
Fax 011 33 231 102 808
Email info@hotel-villalara.com
hotel-villalara.com

Rates for classic double rooms start at approximately 290 euros (approximately \$325 USD).

Hotel Churchill

14-16 Rue Saint Jean
14400 Bayeux
Tel 011 33 231 213 180
Fax 011 33 231 214 166
Email info@hotel-churchill.fr
hotel-churchill.fr

Rates for standard double room start at 110 euros (approximately \$150 USD).

If you wish to stay in an alternate hotel, you will find more listed on the following website: normandie-tourisme.fr

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, small-group experience (with an average of 6 or 7 guests per guide). For best availability, reserve your trip today!

**except in cases of force majeure*

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

SCHEDULED GROUP INDIVIDUAL RESERVATIONS

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255 and providing a \$350 per person deposit. The Balance of your payment (final tour cost) is due 90 days prior to the tour departure date.

SCHEDULED GROUP CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Please notify us in writing.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

PRIVATE ADVENTURE RESERVATION & CANCELLATION POLICIES

If you are booking a Private Adventure, a \$500 nonrefundable group deposit is required to secure hotel reservations and guides. Once these arrangements are confirmed, the deposit will be applied as the provider's deposit for the trip. If we are unable to secure the hotel and/or guides for your requested dates, this deposit will be refunded.

Once your Private Adventure is confirmed, your individual \$350 per person deposit is required within 14 days. The balance of your payment (final tour cost) is due 90 days prior to the tour departure date. Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150 (plus the nonrefundable group deposit of \$500); cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. **Please note that Private Adventure tour pricing is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests. Should the group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price, if necessary.**

France at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see travel.state.gov.

Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some euros in small denominations.

CURRENCY

France uses the euro (EUR). For up-to-date exchange rates, see oanda.com.

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

TIME ZONE

France is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus six hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET



France country code: +33

Cell phone coverage throughout France is extensive but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.

Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

LANGUAGE

The official language of France is French.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see bbc.co.uk/languages/french or the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 230V and 50Hz is used in France. Plugs have either two round pins and a hole, or just two round pins. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org.

WEATHER

France has a range of climates, and—depending on the region—spring, summer, and fall are ideal for an active vacation.

Provence, in southern France, has a pleasant Mediterranean climate with daytime temperatures in the 70s during tour dates. Normandy and Brittany, on the northwest coasts, can have pleasant weather in the 50s to low 70s, and evenings in the 50s with occasional rain showers. In the French Alps, mornings and evenings can be around freezing in the morning and evening, especially at higher elevations, with daytime temperatures rising into the 70s and even low 80s.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

FOOD & DRINK

French cuisine has great regional variation and, thus, is based on fresh and local ingredients from each area. In France's northern tier, the rich butter- and cream-based classics originated—and the creamy cow's milk cheeses of Normandy such as camembert. Fresh seafood, especially oysters, is served in Brittany. In the Alps, hearty mountain fare includes cheese fondue and grilled raclette cheese over steamed potatoes. The cuisine of southern France is quintessentially Mediterranean, with olive oil, herbs, fresh vegetables, and goat cheeses. Common to all regions, of course, are crusty breads, buttery croissants, and exquisite desserts, from fine pastries to rustic fruit tarts.

Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.



A meal in France—lunch or dinner—typically consists of three courses, starting with an *entrée* (appetizer), followed by a *plat principal* (main dish), and finishing with a dessert or cheese plate. First brought to Narbonne in the south by the Romans, the wines of France mirror the variation and excellence of its cuisine. Menus feature a region's local wines, as well as those from other regions. For example, In Provence, red Rhône or rosé wines pair perfectly with the cuisine. In Normandy and Brittany, local hard cider is served with crepes and Calvados, apple brandy, as an after-dinner *digestif*.

LIFE IN FRANCE

Shopping and banking hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., and from 2:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; department stores and supermarkets are open all day from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Open-air markets vary by day of the week in towns and villages and generally operate from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Banks are open from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (in Paris they are open all day).

Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10-10:30 a.m. In restaurants, lunch is served (almost exclusively) from noon to 2:00 p.m. (at other times, you'll have to get a sandwich) and dinner is usually served from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m.

Tipping

Gratuities in restaurants and bars are included in the total bill (*service compris*); however it is customary to leave 5 to 10 percent of the total, or to round up the total. Taxi drivers are tipped 10 to 15 percent of the total. For luggage assistance, a tip of 1 to 2 euros per bag is appropriate.



TRAVEL RESOURCES

National French tourist board official site
us.france.fr

Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of

French public holidays, visit the French tourist board's website:
us.france.fr/en/information/french-public-and-school-holidays.

TRAVEL IN FRANCE

Trains

SNCF: sncf.com/en, France's national train company

Rail Europe: raileurope.com or 800.622.8600: a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel.).

Other local transportation

Direct flights from the U.S. are only available to Paris, Nice, and Lyon, but reaching any destination is easy thanks to France's excellent rail network. Regional bus lines and internal flights (which are never more than 1½ hours) are also widely available. For information on French airports, visit www.aeroport.fr (in French only). Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance). Most major car rental agencies are available at French airports and train stations. For more information, go to us.france.fr/en/about-france/renting-car-and-driving-france.

Travel Tip

Be aware that you have to validate your train ticket by "punching" it before boarding, using a small machine located on the way to the train platform, which stamps the time and date on it.

FRENCH WINE AT A GLANCE

Each wine of France has a particular grape varietal linked to its *terroir*—the combination of local climate and soil conditions. Here is an overview of France’s main wine-producing regions: Alsace, Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne, Loire, Provence, and the Rhône Valley.

Region	Grape	Notes
Alsace	Gewürztraminer, Pinot blanc, Pinot gris, and Riesling	Tall, narrow <i>flûte</i> -shaped bottles contain some of the world’s driest Rieslings that pair nicely with seafood, spicy cuisines, and cheeses.
Bordeaux	Cabernet sauvignon, Cabernet franc, and Merlot	Balanced dry reds accompany meat and cheeses, and dry whites with seafood.
Burgundy	Reds are Pinot noir and whites are Chardonnay	Un-oaked white (Chablis) pairs with seafood and poultry, and reds with classic beef dishes.
Champagne	Pinot noir, Chardonnay, Pinot meunier	Champagne’s scale of sweetness from less to more is: Brut Natural or Brut Zero, Extra Brut, and Brut. Delicious as an aperitif and with raw oysters, it’s best served between 45 and 48° F in a <i>flûte</i> , of course!
Loire	Reds: Cabernet franc Whites: Sauvignon blanc, Chenin blanc, Melon de Bourgogne	To accompany seafood, look for whites from Sancerre, Vouvray, and Pouilly-Fumé.
Provence	Reds: Mourvèdre, Grenache, Cinsault, with Cabernet sauvignon and Syrah growing, and Carignan decreasing; White: Grenache blanc, Marsanne, Viognier, Chardonnay	Reds can accompany roasts and grilled dishes. Chilled rosé pairs well with the garlic-based dishes of the region.
Rhône Valley	Grenache, Syrah, and Viognier	Classic red wines, such as the southern Rhône’s Châteauneuf-du-Pape, pair well with grilled dishes, cheese, and fruit.

Packing List

PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage short distances, especially before and after your Country Walkers tour. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

FOOTWEAR

- » Waterproof hiking boots or shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots or shoes while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 4 to 6 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots or shoes with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew. Country Walkers reserves the right to deny participation to any guest not wearing appropriate footwear.
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy
- » Texas, Crocs, or something similar, for the walk in the Bay of Mont St. Michel

CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants
- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual

OUTERWEAR

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable) to protect yourself from the winds coming off the English Channel, which can be chilling when walking along cliffs
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor
- » Gloves
- » Woolly or fleece hat and gloves to keep warm if there is inclement weather on the Bay of Mont St. Michel walk
- » Warm fleece jacket
- » Quick dry shorts which are necessary for the Bay of Mont St. Michel walk

EQUIPMENT

- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, and personal items (camera, etc.), and picnic supplies
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of one liter)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Trekking towel, very useful for the Bay of Mont St Michel walk to dry off your feet.
- » Insect repellent
- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel.
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

OPTIONAL

- » Telescopic walking sticks. (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks are recommended for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore, please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Binoculars
- » Bathing suit for optional swimming in the hotel pools
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries

- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides (see enclosed reading list)
- » Folding umbrella
- » Bandana
- » Washcloth (many European hotels do not provide them)
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes
- » Alarm clock (hotels do provide wake-up calls)