

EXPLORE!



NEW

Self-Guided Cycling in Normandy

8 days

France - Trip code CSFN

Self-Guided Cycling in Normandy

On this self-guided holiday in northern France you cycle from the great beaches and cliffs of Normandy to the fairy tale setting of Mont Saint-Michel. The route is mostly on peaceful cycle paths as you traverse the Cotentin Peninsula through beautiful countryside, forests and marshes home to many bird species. Journey through history, from the Middle Ages to present day, with the chance to visit significant World War II battlefields and strategic towns.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Mont Saint - Michel** - the magical island topped by a gravity-defying medieval monastery
- ★ **Beautiful countryside** - Coastlines, marshes, bird sanctuaries and ancient woodlands
- ★ **War History** - Visit significant battle fields from WWII including Utah Beach
- ★ **Local delicacies** - Enjoy delicious crepes, cider and andouille (smoked sausage)

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

CYCLING GRADE:

Moderate

Medium length rides suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. Mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Trip starts in Carentan, Normandy

Your cycling holiday starts in the town of Carentan, a beautiful marina at the heart of the Nature Park of the Cotentin. Details of how to reach the start point of your holiday can be found on our website in the tour specific 'dates and prices' section by clicking on 'Joining Info' and then the 'Show More' button.



Accommodation: L'Auberge Normande (or similar)



Standard Auberge



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Circular ride through nature reserve to Utah Beach and museum

Today you cycle out of Carentan heading north to Utah Beach. Utah beach was the main site of the D-Day landings in World War II, where the first Americans landed and started a significant operation to remove landmines and secure the beachhead. The ride is beautiful; you cycle up the coast and through the Beaugillot Nature Reserve, home to many species of bird. At Utah Beach you can visit the D-day Museum before riding back Carentan. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 45km.



Accommodation: L'Auberge Normande (or similar)



Standard Auberge



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Cycle through woods and along Vire Canal to Saint Lô

Today you leave behind the marshes of Cotentin and its canals to cycle through Normandy's wooded countryside. The region is dotted with many stud farms. By following the Vire canal you will arrive in Saint Lô; destroyed in WWII the city is now rebuilt and ramparts restored. You spend the night here and if time allows you may wish to visit the fine art museum. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 46km.



Accommodation: Lunotel St Lo (or similar)



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Cycle in Norman wooded countryside to Vire

Today's cycle ride takes you through woodlands and the Vire valley passing sheep pastures, flow-filled hedgerows, not to mention the famous creperies where you can taste local produce. Along the way, discover the dizzying Ham Rocks (over-hanging rock faces, popular with climbers), and Pont Farcy - a village dating back to the Gallo-Roman times which has always been an important crossing point due to its bridge over the River Vire. Arrive at Souleuvre Viaduct; a spot known for bungee jumping and designed by Gustave Eiffel. You continue south to end the ride in Vire - the unofficial capital of smoked pork sausage 'andouille'. Despite the reconstruction of part of the city after a bombing in 1944, you will discover the remains of fortifications erected under Henry I, King of England and Normandy. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 65km



Accommodation: Hotel de France (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Ride from Vire to Mortain

A few kilometres after cycling away from Vire, we suggest a break at the lake of Dathée, a bird sanctuary, 86 different bird species including ducks, coots, grebes, snipes have been observed here. Then cycle on past the heritage villages of Brouains and Vengeons. Finally, you reach waterfalls at the confluence of the Cance and the Cançon rivers; a refreshing stop before arriving in Mortain where you spend the night. We suggest a visit to the white abbey, the little chapel of St Michel, the collegiate of St Evroult and the American Memorial. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 43km



Accommodation: Hotel de la Poste (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 6 - Cycle west from Mortain to Ducey

From Mortain your route winds west along hilly terrain in the valleys of Sée and Sélune. Cycle through Saint Hilaire du Harcouët, a city founded by William the Conqueror and known locally for its bustling weekly cattle market, held on a Wednesday. Arrive in Ducey, gateway to the bay of Mont Saint-Michel and former trading harbour. Discover Montgomery's Castle and the old port, both from the 17th century. Overnight in Ducey or the surrounding area. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 34km.



Accommodation: Chambre d'hotels Les Sources (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available


 Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 7 - Cycle to Pontorson with views of Mont Saint-Michel

Today is a wonderful stage between land and sea, through polders (low-lying land reclaimed from the sea) along the Cousenon River to the extraordinary bay of Mont St Michel and its abbey. Then continue to the charming town of Pontorson where you spend the night. You may wish to explore Mont Saint Michel tonight; you can take a shuttle bus or horse-drawn carriage to the island, view the medieval monastery and dine in one for the islands' restaurants. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 43km



Accommodation: Hotel Montgomery (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends Pontorson

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 276km over six days (an average of 46km per day). We ride generally on cycle paths and have small sections on quiet tarmac country roads with little or no traffic. We have graded the route as moderate.

Bike included

8 gear Specialized Albi hybrid bike or similar

Bike information

Your included bike is an 8 gear Specialized Albi hybrid bike or similar and will be the correct frame size for your height. A handlebar bag, rear pannier bag and water bottle holder is provided as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A lock, pump, spare inner tube and puncture repair kit with tyre levers is included. You will be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Cycling grade

Moderate

Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a pump, lock, spare inner tube and tyre levers. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bicycle



Accommodation

2 nights standard auberge

1 nights hotel

4 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

France Holidays & Tours

Climate

Across France, from April - August, weather conditions are generally warm and pleasant with moderate rainfall; Autumn temperatures are a bit lower and the winter months (though colder) remain mild. The summer months on the Mediterranean Coast

in the south tend to be warmer than the rest of France and have less rainfall, and also more mild winters; freezing conditions are nearly unheard of. The mountainous areas of the Alps, Juros and Pyrenees can be quite different. During summer the morning and evening temperatures are considerably cooler and it becomes much colder in winter with heavy snowfall. Western France, along the English Channel, there can be very strong winds and frequent rain during the winter months Nov - Apr. Wine harvesting takes place in late August/early September.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Catholic

Language

French

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

Bring cycling gear such as quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts and cycle gloves. A waterproof cycle jacket is recommended in case of rain. A light windproof jacket is always useful.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of baggage as per your airline luggage allowance, maximum 20 kg per person. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage if using public transport so don't overload yourself. Luggage transfers between hotels are normally arranged by the hoteliers. Mark your bags clearly and leave them at the place and time arranged with them. When travelling on public transport you should always take your luggage with you.

Luggage transfer

Included between each hotel.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses (to protect against dust, insects, pollen, sun etc) , cycle gloves (padded for more comfort) and a water bottle or water delivery system (eg camelback or platypus). You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage. Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced map we recommend the following:-

Country Information

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Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£11

Dinner price

£16.00 - 18.00

Beer price

£4

Water price

£1.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Pounds Sterling and US Dollars can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change. Please change currency into Euros prior to arriving in France.

Where To Exchange

Bureau de Change can only be found in major cities and large airports. Many French banks no longer exchange Foreign currency.

ATM Availability

In cities and most major towns

Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants (make sure you have informed your credit card company that you are travelling abroad as some companies will reject payments)

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are no longer commonly accepted and can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bicycle

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office

advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

France: Visas are not required by UK, EU, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid

paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
