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How to get to

Travelling to Normandy

If you fly from Helsinki, Copenhagen, Oslo or Stockholm to the French airport Paris-Charles de Gaulle, you’ll either have to rent a car to travel to Normandy or take a taxi to the different stations in Paris.

From the Paris-Saint-Lazare station, you can travel to Rouen, Caen and Cherbourg.
From the Paris Gare du Nord station, you can travel to Le Tréport through Beauvais.
From the Paris-Montparnasse station, you can travel to Argentan and Granville.

Map of Normandy

NEW:
From the 1st May 2016, you can travel by train from the Paris-Montparnasse station to the Mont-Saint-Michel with a bus connection in Villedieu-les-Poêles.
Impressionist Normandy

In the nineteenth century, a group of experimental artists wanting to break away from the strictures of classical French painting arrived in Normandy. Attracted by the quality of the light and the beauty of the unspoilt countryside, they set up their easels in the fresh air and painted the ever-changing landscape. This was the beginning of Impressionism and Normandy was the birthplace of the movement. Today, visitors from all over the world flock to the region to admire the timeless landscapes alongside the paintings they inspired. [www.normandy-tourism.org/impressionism](http://www.normandy-tourism.org/impressionism)

**Le Havre**

Scene of Monet’s ‘Impression: Sunrise,’ this was the painting that rocked the 19th century French art world. When an art critic wrote a scathing review of the exhibition in which it was featured, he inadvertently named the new artistic movement. In the 19th century, Le Havre was the chic seaside resort of choice for Parisians with many, Monet included, having a family summer home in the town. [www.lehavretourisme.com](http://www.lehavretourisme.com)

**MuMa, André Malraux Museum of Modern Art, Le Havre**

The shifting light of Le Havre’s estuary that once inspired Impressionists to paint some of their greatest work, today floods this seafront museum. The museum features the work of Courbet, Corot, Boudin, Monet, Sisley, Pissarro, Dufy, Renoir and Matisse is not to be missed. This is one of the largest collection of Impressionist works in France. [www.muma-lehavre.fr/en](http://www.muma-lehavre.fr/en)

**Giverny**

Situated on the right bank of the Seine, Giverny is known the world over thanks to its depiction in the many paintings of Claude Monet who lived here from 1883 to his death in 1926. His presence in the village drew numerous artists from all over the world, who contributed to turning the village into a site which even today remains a symbol of Impressionism. [http://fondation-monet.com/en](http://fondation-monet.com/en)

Just a few minutes walk from Monet’s house and gardens, the Musée des Impressionnismes has a calendar of temporary exhibitions throughout 2016. [www.mdig.fr](http://www.mdig.fr)

**Rouen**

Ideally located on the Seine between Paris and the Normandy coast, the Impressionist artists flocked to Rouen, fascinated by the new industrial sites, the area’s natural beauty and the plethora of unspoiled architectural gems. Rouen’s majestic cathedral would have its moment of glory when Monet consecrated some 30 canvases to its façade, painted at various times of day to capture the changes in luminosity. [www.rouentourisme.com](http://www.rouentourisme.com)

**Museum of Fine Arts, Rouen**

The Rouen Museum of Fine Arts houses one of France’s most prestigious art collections including paintings, sculptures, drawings and art objects ranging from the 15th century to the present day. The gift of the Depaux collection in 1909 made Rouen’s Museum of Fine Arts the leading Impressionist collection in France outside Paris, including magnificent works by Monet and Sisley. [http://mbarouen.fr](http://mbarouen.fr)

**Honfleur**

Featured in many of the Impressionists’ paintings, the charming fishing port of Honfleur looks much as it did when Monet was a frequent visitor. Eugène Boudin, forerunner of the Impressionist movement and one of Monet’s greatest influences was born in Honfleur and the museum named after him displays Impressionist works by artists who were born or worked in the town. [en.ot-honfleur.fr](http://en.ot-honfleur.fr) and [www.musees-honfleur.fr](http://www.musees-honfleur.fr)
Impressionist Normandy

La Côte d’Albâtre
This spectacular coastline of chalk cliffs and green pastures stretches from Le Havre eastwards along the coast to Fécamp. Special mention goes to Etretat and its stunning cliff formations including the famous chalk needle immortalised by Monet. Visitors can get a great view of the cliffs by taking an audio-guided tour of Etretat available from the tourist office. www.etretat.net / www.fecamptourisme.com

La Côte Fleurie
The sandy beaches stretching from Cabourg to Honfleur are home to some of the region’s smartest seaside resorts which were equally as popular in the time of the Impressionists. Traditional boardwalks, white-washed bath houses and colourful parasols confer a timeless feel to the familiar scenes painted by artists such as Monet and Boudin. www.trouvillesurmer.org / www.deauville.fr / bit.ly/cabourgweb

Caen
William the Conqueror lent the town his favour in the 11th century and commissioned many of the city’s most famous sites including the Abbey aux Hommes and the Abbey aux Dames. www.caen-tourisme.fr

Museum of Fine Arts, Caen
One of France’s finest art galleries. Extremely rich collection of 16th to 20th century paintings and an exceptional collection of engravings comprising over 50,000 individual works, presented in alternating themes. www.mba.caen.fr
The 2016 Normandy Impressionist Festival
16th April – 26th September 2016

Now an established event in Normandy’s calendar and having welcomed nearly a million visitors to date, the Festival Normandie Impressionniste returns in 2016 with Impressionist portraits as the central theme. From April to September, Normandy will come alive to the sight and sound of Impressionism with some 450 different projects showcased throughout the region. Exhibits and events will take place throughout the region celebrating not only painting, but other forms of artistic expression influenced by Impressionism: music, dance, theatre, photography and architecture.

The third edition of the Normandy Impressionist Festival (or Festival Normandie Impressionniste) will run from 16 April to 26 September 2016, its theme this year being Impressionist portraits. Impressionist artists created a whole gallery of male and female portraits of the greatest importance in the history of modern art. Renoir loved to paint young girls’ delicate faces; Degas preferred to depict milliners and washerwomen as well as ballerinas; Pissarro often featured young women from the countryside... These artists, while each focusing on particular types, together presented a wide picture of the social mix of their time.

Major art exhibitions will be put on in many Normandy museums. The Musée des Impressionnismes de Giverny will present an exhibition on Gustave Caillebotte, focusing on his works depicting gardens; later, visitors here can discover the portraits of Spanish artist Joaquín Sorolla. The Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen (Fine arts museum) will put to the fore the intimate side of Impressionist portraiture and the personal worlds of Impressionist painters (among them Manet, Monet, Renoir, Cézanne, Degas and Caillebotte) with its exhibition Scènes de la vie impressionniste (Scenes of Impressionist Life). The Musée André Malraux du Havre will create is own multi-faceted portrait of Impressionist pioneer Eugène Boudin via some 100 paintings. As to the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Caen, it will focus on the canvases of Norwegian artist Frits Thaulow, who settled in Paris in 1875. The Musée Eugène Boudin in Honfleur, meanwhile, will evoke the varied sides of youth through portraits and genre scenes with its exhibition Etre jeune au temps des impressionnistes (Being Young at the Time of the Impressionists).

In addition, over 450 events and related activities will enrich the overall regional programming, revealing much more about Impressionism through all manner of forms: dance, theatre, music, cinema, photography, sound and light shows, outdoor picnics, even guinguettes (casual summer riverside restaurants where diners can dance outdoors, as so often portrayed in Impressionist canvases)... and more. The official programme of events and activities has been published in March 2016.

www.normandie-impressionniste.eu
**Impressionist Normandy**

**New: La carte de festivalier, or festival-goer’s card**

An advantageous carte de festivalier, or festival-goer’s card, will be made available for the Normandy Impressionist Festival 2016. This card, geared to those who wish to make the most of the festival, will be sold online at €4 on the festival website and in the main museums concerned, as well as in major tourist sites around Normandy. The card will provide holders with exclusive advantages: reduced prices for entry to events you have to pay for; special invitations; exclusive additional information; goodies; and more...

The card will prove a money-saving purchase from the second exhibition onwards that users attend.

**The Impressionists’ Train**

Enjoy a trip following in the tracks of the Impressionist painters! You depart from Gare Saint-Lazare in Paris, aboard a train decorated with reproductions of Impressionist masterpieces.

**Leaving from Paris-St-Lazare station,** the Train de l’Impressionnisme transports you along the route through the Seine Valley so frequently taken by many of the greatest Impressionist painters to reach Vernon-Giverny, Rouen and Le Havre.

Starting in Paris, as soon as you reach the platform at St-Lazare (an iconic station for the Impressionists) you’ll be plunged into the Impressionists’ world, as the very train you board will be decorated with reproductions of famous works by the likes of Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro.

The Impressionist story unfolds further once you’ve boarded the train, with:

- explanatory panels on many a relevant Impressionist painter and work;
- a dedicated mobile website, accessible via a matrix bar code, accompanying you along the whole journey

The Train de l’Impressionnisme will run **every weekend from 16 April to 25 September 2016.**

**New:** in 2016, as well as serving Vernon-Giverny and Rouen, the Train de l’Impressionnisme will go as far as the great port of Le Havre at the mouth of the Seine and the very cradle of the Impressionist movement.

[www.letraindelimpressionnisme.fr](http://www.letraindelimpressionnisme.fr)

**All-inclusive package: train + shuttle bus + museum entrance**

The Train de l’Impressionnisme is more than just a train journey, offering an all-inclusive excursion that includes the return train ticket to and from Normandy from Paris Gare Saint-Lazare train station plus queue-jumping entry to the relevant museums and cultural sights.
What’s new at the Mont-Saint-Michel?
The Mont Saint-Michel rediscovers its magic

The Mont Saint-Michel and its bay have been classified as UNESCO World Heritage Sites since 1979. More recently, 2015 saw the completion of 10 years of major works to re-establish the maritime character of Normandy’s holy mount topped by its magnificent medieval monastery, isolated in its vast bay. In 2015, during exceptionally high spring tides, the Mont Saint-Michel became, for brief periods, a truly water-surrounded island once again, for the first time since the 19th century. In 2016, witness this phenomenon again during the highest spring tides, seeing Normandy’s holiest mount in its full magical setting.

The Mont Saint-Michel – identity card

Historical highlights

709  Following several apparitions from what he considered to be the archangel Saint Michael, AUBERT, bishop of the nearby hill town of Avranches (and a man later to be made a saint), ordered the building of a chapel on a then deserted rock known as Mount Tombe.

966  Benedictine monks established themselves on this mount, creating a monastery on it.

C. 1020  The mount’s monastic community decided to remodel the monastery from top to bottom, including building a vast church at the top of the rock in order to welcome the many pilgrims who visited the holy site.

13th century

Magnificent new monastic buildings containing six splendid chambers went up on the rock’s north side. This wing was so stunning; it was immediately named ‘The Marvel’. Pilgrimages here now reached their apogee, making the Mont Saint-Michel one of the most famous places in the Christian world.

From 1490

Following the collapse of the Romanesque choir end in 1424, a new Flamboyant Gothic choir end would go up, giving the abbey church its very distinctive look.
1791 During the French Revolution, the monks then at the abbey were chased away and the place was turned into a prison. It would serve this purpose right up to 1864.

1874 The Mont Saint-Michel’s abbey was handed over to France’s fine arts administration, the Beaux-Arts, in order for it to be restored.

1966 To celebrate the monastery’s 1000th anniversary, a provisional community of Benedictine monks was allowed to inhabit the abbey for a few months.

1969 A new, permanent community of monks and nuns following St Benedict’s rule brought stable monastic life back to the Mont Saint-Michel.

Since 24th June 2001

The Monastic Fraternities of Jerusalem, communities of monks and nuns, began offering a monastic welcome at the abbey once again. They moved into abbey buildings, although these remain the property of the French State, administered by the State heritage body, the Centre National des Monuments Historiques et des Sites.

Visitor Numbers to the Mont Saint-Michel

The Mont Saint-Michel is the most visited tourist site in Normandy

2014: 2.3 million visitors to the mount
2014: 1.22 million visitors to the Mont Saint-Michel Abbey itself

Mont Saint-Michel Abbey

- the most visited site in Normandy that charges an entrance fee
- Mont Saint-Michel Abbey: ranked 17th most visited cultural site in France
- 46% of visitors to the abbey are foreigners

The Mont-Saint-Michel returns to being an island

The replacing of the existing dyke with a road on top by the new bridge and footbridge leading to the Mont Saint-Michel has given rise to an extraordinary new sight.

Since summer 2013, when exceptional high tides have reached beyond a coefficient of 110, the Mont Saint-Michel has become an island once again. On such occasions, the outer ramparts find themselves with their feet in the water. Access from the mainland to the mount is temporarily cut off. The phenomenon, which only lasts a few hours at a time, had not been witnessed for over 130 years.

What with the new welcome to the Mont Saint-Michel, new access to the site and new modes of transport to get there, everything has been carefully thought through and remodelled so that the mount should be accessible to all types of public.


Did you know?

√ Across the year 2016, high spring tides will occur some 34 times, on 22 days:
10th – 11th February / 10th – 12th March / 7th – 10th April / 7th – 8th May / 17th – 19th September / 16th – 19th October / 14th – 17th November
√ When the tidal coefficient exceeds 110, the sight of the Mont Saint-Michel as an island will be visible twice in a day: early in the morning and in the evening.
The Mont-Saint-Michel

The Tour de France Grand Départ (Grand Start) from the Mont Saint-Michel
2nd – 4th July 2016

In 2016 the Grand Départ of the world’s greatest cycling race returns to France. The setting is the spectacular UNESCO-listed Mont-Saint-Michel and its bay which in 2015 was restored to island status at high tide. The week prior to the big day will see festivities take place throughout the Manche region of Normandy where the first three stages will take place.

What a grand setting for the start of France’s legendary cycle race! The Grand Départ du Tour de France 2016 will take place from the foot of the Mont Saint-Michel, on Saturday 2 July, cyclists on the 1st stage of the gruelling event then crossing the Cotentin Peninsula to reach the famed D-Day Utah Beach and Sainte-Marie-du-Mont (188km). The following day, the Tour de France’s riders will tackle the 2nd stage, going from the town of Saint-Lô to the port of Cherbourg (182km). The dramatic seaside resort of Granville will host the start of the 3rd stage, on Monday 4 July.

This great sporting spectacle acts as a reminder that Normandy is a region that is particularly welcoming to cycling enthusiasts, with some 500km of greenways on which cyclists can ride separately from motorised traffic, plus with several major national and international cycle routes crossing the region, among them the Véloscénie Paris-Le Mont-Saint-Michel, the Véloroute linking the D-Day beaches to the Mont Saint-Michel and the Tour de Manche, the last encouraging cyclists to enjoy a cycling tour linking Normandy to Southern England.

The wealth of splendid landscapes and heritage across the Normandy département of La Manche will be put centre stage and honoured by the 2016 Grand Départ du Tour de France, with some 100 major media channels from around the globe covering the event in detail. The Mont Saint-Michel and its bay will provide a grandiose backdrop to the opening drama as the cycling pack sets off for the first time.

The riders will then cross the Cotentin Peninsula from west to east, heading for Utah Beach, one of the celebrated D-Day beaches where the Allied forces landed on 6 June 1944 to begin the liberation of Europe from Nazi Germany. This beach is located in the parish of Sainte-Marie-du-Mont, the village itself hosting the arrival of the cyclists at the end of this 1st stage of this year’s Tour de France. On the 2nd stage, the cyclists leave from Saint-Lô, a town proud of its exceptional equestrian traditions, boasting a national stud farm (or Haras National), to reach Cherbourg, the Cotentin Peninsula’s major port, facing Southern England beyond the horizon. Along the way, the riders will follow the Côte des Isles and ride through the lovely Vire Valley. The seaside resort of Granville will offer a last stunning view over the Bay of the Mont Saint-Michel as it hosts the departure of the last leg of the Tour de France to cross the Norman county of La Manche this year.

So festive and popular, the Tour de France is ranked as the third sporting event in the world after the Olympic Games and the Football World Cup. During the stages through the Normandy département of La Manche this year, members of the public can make the most of free events and festivals around the area, notably between 29 June and 4 July.

www.tourdefrance-manche.co.uk
Named after the Norsemen Viking warriors, the Duchy of Normandy came into being in 911 when the French King Charles the Simple conceded ‘all of the land from the Epte to the sea’ to Rollo, the Viking leader and first Duke of Normandy. The region has had a rich and varied history with iconic characters such as William the Conqueror, Richard the Lionheart and Joan of Arc.

The Vikings
Many villages have been named after the Norsemen Viking warriors. Come and discover the Viking heritage in Normandy in the Ornavik Viking Village.

Ornavik Viking Village
Various weekend openings in summer
To discover life in early Normandy, visit the Viking encampment of Ornavik and immerse yourself in 10th century daily life amongst the craftsmen who reproduce medieval artisan skills. Please check the website for opening dates: www.ornavik.fr

William the Conqueror
The greatest Norman warrior, William the Conqueror will forever be associated with 1066 and his defeat of the English at the Battle of Hastings thus becoming King of England. William was born in the castle of Falaise, the illegitimate son of Robert I, Duke of Normandy. Originally known as William the Bastard, on his father’s death he was named the rightful heir to the Duchy of Normandy and went on to become a formidable leader. Follow William’s footsteps and visit his castle at Falaise, the Abbaye aux Hommes and Abbaye aux Dames in Caen and the Bayeux Tapestry that depicts his victory in the Battle of Hastings.
www.chateau-guillaume-leconquerant.fr
www.caen-tourisme.fr/en
www.tapestry-bayeux.com

A cartoon exhibition at the Bayeux Tapestry Museum
From 1 June to 30 December
From June to December 2016, the Bayeux Tapestry Museum will serve as the setting for a cartoon presentation of William the Conqueror and his dramatic life. This exhibition will revolve around illustrations taken from the cartoon book ‘Guillaume’, published in 2014; it will tell, in an original and playful way, of the unique and epic destiny of the illegitimate son of Duke Robert I of Normandy who had to fight for survival from an early age after his father died on crusade and then managed to assert his inheritance rights in such extraordinary manner.
www.bayeuxmuseum.com

Richard the Lionheart
Duke of Normandy and King of England from 1189 until his death in 1199, Richard I dedicated many years of his life to the Crusades and became known as Richard the Lionheart, or Cœur de Lion, thanks to his reputation as a fearless warrior. He spent much of his time in Normandy fighting to maintain the Duchy’s independence from the French crown. His impressive castle fortress, Château Gaillard, standing over 100 metres high on a cliff above the village of Les Andelys, was built in just one year on a sharp meander of the River Seine and is open to the public.
www.lesandelys-tourisme.fr/en
Churches and abbeys in Normandy
At the height of their glory in the fifteenth century, the abbeys and churches of Normandy numbered one hundred and twenty and played a significant role in all areas of society. The sixty that survive today represent a significant architectural heritage and make Normandy one of France’s richest regions in terms of religious art. Details and news about the Normandy abbeys is available on the dedicated website of the Norman Abbey Circuit.
www.abbayes-normandes.com

Joan of Arc
French national heroine and Catholic saint, during the Hundred Years’ War, the simple peasant girl led the French army to several important victories, claiming divine guidance. Captured by the English in 1431, Joan was tried, found guilty of heresy and burnt at the stake on what is now the Place du Vieux Marché in Rouen. Built next to the site where she was martyred, the church of Saint Joan of Arc was completed in 1979. www.rouentourisme.com

Opened in 2015: Historial - Joan of Arc History Museum in Rouen
A new museum project opened on the 21st March 2015 housed in the magnificent 15th century Archbishop’s palace, a stone’s throw from Notre-Dame cathedral. The museum combines a state of the art immersive exhibition space with comprehensive historical content. The visitor becomes a witness and participant in Joan of Arc’s trial, going back in time to the mid-15th century. In another exhibition space, visitors explore the myths and legends of Joan. Audioguides available in English. www.historial-jeannedarc.fr
Medieval festivities to mark the 950th Anniversary of the Battle of Hastings
April - December

The history of Normandy, founded by Viking invaders, or Norsemen, who settled here, stretches back over 1,100 years. A remarkable architectural and cultural heritage resulted, which you can still admire. Famous figures have marked Normandy’s history, William the Conqueror, Richard the Lionheart and Joan of Arc among the most notable. Such castles as those at Caen, Falaise or Château-Gaillard, abbeys like the great one at Jumièges, and the Bayeux Tapestry bear exceptional witness to this Norman history.

2016 marks the 950th anniversary of the Norman invasion of England and William the Conqueror’s crowning at Westminster. Born and raised in Normandy, William was Duke here before the fateful battle of 1066. To celebrate this occasion, from April to December, medieval themed festivals will take place throughout the region. Medieval street markets, music, dance, theatre, workshops, sound and light shows and special exhibitions will be held in many towns and villages associated with William the Conqueror and his momentous expedition.

During the summer, for example, the département (French county) of Calvados will host no less than 6 medieval festivals. Many further events (special activities, shows, exhibitions, tours, conferences, etc.) will also feature in a comprehensive programme of festivities.

bit.ly/WilliamTheConqueror

Close-up on special events and innovations:

25th - 26th June: Les Médiévales de Touques - Touques
The streets of this typical Norman town will come alive with medieval performances, plus market and medieval tavern. www.mairiedetouques.fr

27th June - 3rd July: Fêtes Médiévales - Bayeux
The streets of the medieval town come alive with medieval performances. www.bayeux-bessin-tourisme.com

9th - 10th July: Les Médiévales de Château-Ganne - La Pommeraye
This archaeological site is open to the public for this festival with reenactments and medieval market. http://medievales-chateau-ganne.e-monsite.com

31st July - 6th August: Les Médiévales de Crévecoeur - Crévecoeur-en-Auge
The grounds and castle are transported back to the Middle Ages. www.chateau-de-crevecoeur.com

7th - 9th August: William the Conqueror’s Festival - Dives-sur-Mer, Cabourg and Houlgate

13th - 14th August: Fête des Jeux - Falaise
Games, medieval shows and re-enactments for all the family. www.chateau-guillaume-leconquerant.fr
Medieval Normandy

History presented in contemporary ways at: the Château de Falaise, Jumièges Abbey, the Château de Caen and the Panorama XXL in Rouen

Château de Falaise: discover William the Conqueror’s childhood haunts via a touch-screen tablet
Reopened to the public in April 2013 after undergoing a major modernisation programme, the Château Guillaume-le-Conquérant dominating the historic town of Falaise now helps visitors travel back in time to the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries with the aid of touch-screen tablets. The historic reconstructions you can watch plunge you back into the splendour of the Anglo-Norman court or daily life for the people living in the castle. These reconstructions are supplemented by projected images, the recounting of tales, and atmospheric soundtracks. Beyond the castle’s core, in the outer bailey and along the ramparts, further interactive elements present augmented reality scenes. All this new scenography serves to emphasise the great importance of this exceptional château through the periods of the dukes of Normandy and the Anglo-Norman kings of England.

www.chateau-guillaume-leconquerant.fr

Jumièges Abbey: travelling back to the time of the Vikings and the dukes of Normandy
Jumièges Abbey is one of the oldest and most important Benedictine monasteries in Normandy. Founded c.654 by Saint Philibert, from the start, the abbots here upheld the rule of Saint Benedict. The abbey grew very rapidly in importance. However, as early as 841, it was devastated by Vikings, whose raids up the Seine forced the monks then living here to abandon it for almost 10 years. The abbey only recovered its original prosperity in the 11th century, when Notre-Dame de Jumièges Abbey was reconstructed – William the Conqueror himself attended its inauguration in 1067. After this huge abbey’s destruction in the 19th century, Victor Hugo nicknamed it ‘France’s most beautiful ruin’ and its great vestiges left open to the skies became a symbol of Romanticism. Now, using touch-screen tablets, follow the interactive trail enabling you, among other things, to discover images of this exceptionally powerful abbey before its destruction.

www.abbayedejumieges.fr

A new concept for welcoming visitors to historic Caen at St George’s Church, with 3-D views of the Château de Caen

Founded in William the Conqueror’s day, then transformed down the centuries, the fine historic Caen parish church of St George’s has now become an information centre welcoming visitors to the Château de Caen and its fine arts museum (Musée des Beaux-Arts). A model of the castle, a 3-D reconstitution and multimedia presentations tell the fort’s history and help prepare visitors for the free tour that they can take within the castle ramparts. You can also follow the trail with the aid of your smartphone. The realisation of this project marks a major stage in a whole programme of restoration and reorganisation works for the Château de Caen.

www.caen-tourisme.fr
Digital art serving history: Rouen’s Panorama XXL takes you back to Joan of Arc’s times

The Panorama XXL is Rouen’s spectacular new cultural venue. Opened on 20\textsuperscript{th} December 2014, it exhibits the world’s largest panoramic works (31 metres high – equivalent to a 12-storey building), created by German artist, Yadegar Asisi.

To house the Panorama XXL, a giant rotunda has been created and installed on the right bank of the Seine River, just a 15-minute walk from the heart of the city centre. Asisi’s artwork blends painting, drawing and digital photography to give a “photorealistic” view. Before viewing the work, visitors will walk through darkened corridors and staircases that eliminate any connection with the outside world. Once in the rotunda, visitors are surrounded by the work and can admire it from a central tower that consists of three viewing platforms. The viewer will have the illusion that they are part of the works and directly at the heart of the action.

Since its opening in late 2014, over 100,000 visitors have already experienced Rouen’s Panorama XXL, made for showing outsized 360º digital art. It’s set in a massive tubular building beside the Seine. The first panoramic show was dedicated to Ancient Rome. Since September 2015, a new piece on a massive scale has been on display, entitled Amazonia. This giant panorama plunges you into the Brazilian equatorial forest to discover its lush nature and incredible biodiversity.

New: Gothic Rouen, Panorama XXL, Rouen – from 28th May 2016

From May, Rouen’s latest cultural attraction, the giant 31-metre high rotunda, will show a specially commissioned work by the artist Yadegar Asisi. The year is 1431, the Hundred Years War is nearing its end and from atop the spire of Rouen’s cathedral, the visitor will look down on the city and see craftsmen busy in their workshops, bustling streets and a crowd forming in the main square to watch a young girl await her fate on the stake. The young girl is Joan of Arc who would later become France’s national heroine. As the sound and light-scape passes from day to night, visitors will become immersed in the action and be transported to the heart of the Middle-Ages.

www.panoramaxxl.com
A short history of the D-Day Landings and the Battle of Normandy

Allied Preparations

For many long months, a debate divided the British and Americans on the best strategy for the liberation of Europe. The British, drawn by peripheral operations in the Mediterranean, initially imposed their point of view: hence the series of landings in North Africa (November 1942), Sicily (July 1943) and then the south of Italy (September 1943). The Americans, favouring a more direct attack against Germany, advocated a cross-Channel assault. In exchange for concessions in the Italian theatre, they obtained the agreement of their Allies at the beginning of 1943.

The Landings of June 6th 1944

The battle began shortly after midnight on 6th June 1944 with the first parachute drop of British troops between the Orne and Dives rivers. It was then the turn of American parachutists to jump over the Cherbourg Peninsula at the other end of the sector. RAF heavy bombers pounded the most dangerous artillery batteries of the Atlantic Wall. At dawn, the Germans were astonished to discover that the sea was covered by boats. This was Operation Neptune, the beginning of Operation Overlord and the liberation of Europe had begun.
At 5.45am, the fleet opened fire on the German defences. At 6.30am, the first waves of the American assault arrived at Utah and Omaha beaches. In the British and Canadian sectors, the attack was launched an hour later on account of the time difference of the tide. By the evening of the 6th June, 20,000 vehicles and 155,000 soldiers, including parachutists, had made the landfall. Losses of those killed, wounded, or unaccounted for were in the region of 10,000 men, a number significantly lower than predicted. With the exception of Omaha Beach where the battle continued and victory took a long time to come, the Atlantic Wall was broken and the Allies penetrated some 10 kilometres inland.

The Battle of Normandy

The Battle of Normandy lasted almost three months - much longer than Allied plans had foreseen. Despite the battle for the extension of the bridgehead having been won in 10 days, the Port of Cherbourg was only captured after a fierce struggle at the end of June. July was the darkest month for the Allies. British and Canadian troops were held back outside Caen by German armoured divisions, and the town was not fully liberated until 19th July. During this time, the American advance stalled in the Cherbourg Peninsula, bogged down by fighting from hedge to hedge, and experiencing great difficulty in capturing Saint-Lô on July 18th. All this changed at the end of July, with the success of Operation Cobra which allowed the Americans to push on relentlessly against the enemy defences, and sweep towards Brittany and the Loire. At the beginning of August, the failure of the German counter-attack ordered by Hitler at Mortain precipitated the rout of the axis armies, threatened with encirclement and partly wiped out in the Falaise-Chambois pocket at the end of the same month, after three days of light fighting. For the survivors, nothing remained but to evacuate the rest of Normandy, re-cross the Seine, and withdraw in the direction of Paris and Germany.
The Atlantic Wall

The attack on the USSR, on June 22nd 1941, and the unexpected resistance put up by the Red Army, forced the German command to dangerously weaken the Western Front by drawing off increasing numbers of troops. In December 1941, the entry of the United States into the war increased the fear of an Allied landing. In that same month, it persuaded Hitler to strengthen his defences by ordering the construction of the Atlantic Wall. This gigantic undertaking, entrusted to the Todt Organisation, began in 1942. It was still not fully completed in 1944, despite the efforts made by Field Marshal Rommel, who, from the end of 1943 had been given responsibility for the entire sector from the Low Countries to the Loire. It involved building 15,000 structures along the entire coast of the North Sea, the Channel and the Atlantic – an operation that needed 450,000 workers, 11 million tons of concrete, and 1 million tons of steel reinforcements. Contrary to the impression created by German propaganda, the “Wall” was not a continuous barrier. In essence, it consisted of four elements: fortresses, coastal artillery batteries, defensive works close to the beaches and obstacles on beaches themselves, as well as inland. Numerous vestiges of the Atlantic Wall – in various states of preservation – are still visible along the length of the Normandy coast. Behind the “Wall”, more than 700,000 men were massed.

News from D-Day museums and sites

New: Museum to Civilians of War, Falaise – opening on the 8th May 2016

Dedicated to civilian victims of war, both past and present, the main focus of this museum will be on the lives of the Norman people during World War II. Through archive footage, an interactive tablet tour and immersive film, visitors will discover both the tragic and the trivialities of every day life under German occupation, the Allied liberation, subsequent bombings and post-war reconstruction. Located in Falaise where 80% of the town was destroyed during its liberation, the museum pays homage to the 20,000 civilians killed in Normandy during the war. Beyond the stories from Normandy, the museum will address how civilians have been affected by conflict across Europe and the wider world.

Head for the museum’s 2nd floor, where several rooms are dedicated to civilians under the Occupation. Major themes covered here include daily life for the French under the Nazis, the repression of the Normandy Resistance and the persecution of Jews. Then go down to the 1st floor, where the rooms cover civilians during the Liberation, a terribly difficult time for many Normans. Learn about their terrible sufferings and the way they had to flee during bombardments. The tough return to more normal life after the war is also evoked, along with the difficulties of reconstruction.

In a neighbouring building, a projection room made to look like a ruin will show an immersive film plunging you into the heart of the conflict, retracing the various stages in a bombing raid. Experience this bombardment of all the senses either before or after visiting the other parts of the museum.

You can follow the museum trail in 3 languages (French, English and German). This Mémorial also aims to be a high-quality educational centre, geared not just to adults but to schoolchildren as well.

www.memorial-falaise.fr
D-Day & Battle of Normandy

Relive D-Day with the American paratroopers

The D-Day Paratroopers Historical Center (or Centre Historique des Parachutistes du Jour J) occupies a house in the parish of St-Côme-du-Mont located at a highly significant crossroads between Utah Beach and the town of Carentan that became known as Dead Man’s Corner. On 6 June 1944, this bourgeois house was serving as HQ and first-aid post for German paratroopers; it would soon be converted into a command post for American paratroopers. The museum, covering over 2,500m², shines a fascinating light on the history of the D-Day landings, the Dead Man’s Corner Museum retracing events on the German side, the D-Day Experience, events on the American side.

Open to visitors since summer 2015, the D-Day Experience is set in a building constructed in the shape of a period American aircraft hangar. This new extension consists of three spaces, one of which is taken up by a real C47 plane dating back to 1943 and used by American paratroopers on D-Day itself. This plane has known further moments of glory, as it was used in Steven Spielberg’s famous series Band of Brothers, featuring Tom Hanks among others. Visitors can climb into the C47’s cabin and relive the first minutes of D-Day operations thanks to a simulated flight lasting seven minutes and providing highly realistic special effects!

In further areas, visitors can view original equipment used by the crew of the C47 and by the American paratroopers of the 101st airborne division as they fought in the Battle of Carentan (10-15 June 1944). Visitors can also admire the leather jacket worn by US General Eisenhower from February 1943 to December 1944, in the crucial period of World War II during which he became Supreme Allied Commander.

www.paratrooper-museum.org

The Airborne Museum launches its digital app

Located just a few kilometres from Utah Beach (the most westerly of the D-Day beaches), set in the heart of the old Normandy village of Sainte-Mère-Eglise, opposite the church tower from which US paratrooper John Steele so famously remained suspended in mid-air, dangling from his parachute, the Airborne Museum recounts the extraordinary real-life adventure in which the American paratroopers of the 82nd and 101st airborne divisions took part through the night of 5 to 6 June 1944, during Operation Neptune (the codename for the Normandy landings). Since 2014, a building in the shape of a plane’s wing and named after Operation Neptune, has housed rooms offering visitors totally new immersive and sensory experiences by which to learn all about this history. Thanks to the spectacular, realistic presentations within the museum, visitors feel like they are reliving D-Day alongside the US paratroopers on board a real C-47 plane.

From April 2016, the museum will offer visitors a new tool by which to appreciate their visit – the digital app, Airborne Reality. This app will allow you to make the most of a personalised guided tour, accessing innovative technology along the way. So you’ll be able to tailor your visit according to the time at your disposal (choosing either the rapid tour, or the complete tour) and your main centres of interest, with a wide selection of themes to choose from, such as air transport, uniforms, the paratroopers’ equipment, communications and information, vehicles, spoils of war, objects belonging to famous participants in the war, even medicine and religion... Whichever options you choose, you will be encouraged to view close-up unmissable pieces among the collections. At the same time, the essential historical facts will be highlighted so that all can understand how D-Day unfolded in this area.
The app will also allow you to access innovative technology such as augmented reality and 3D-modelling. You will even be able to feel like you are witnessing the D-Day landings of 1944 themselves if you have a smartphone or tablet. Before your eyes, thanks to augmented reality, you can witness the arrival of the first American paratroopers in front of Sainte-Mère-Eglise’s church tower.

Also note the opening, in May 2016, of the Ronald Reagan Franco-American Conference Centre, shaped like a parachute, which will contain a cinema room as well as an exhibition space. This area will be able to double up as a conference and seminar room.

App available in French, English or Dutch.
Download it for free on Google Play and App Store
www.airborne-museum.org

Juno Beach Centre: an exhibition geared to children

The Juno Beach Centre will continue to present the exhibition « Mamie, c’était comment pendant la guerre ? » ("Grandma, what was life like during the war?") up to 31 December 2016. Put together for the 70th anniversary, in 2014, of the D-Day landings and the subsequent Battle of Normandy, this exhibition explains what life was like for Norman and Canadian civilians, especially children, through the Second World War, from France’s occupation to its liberation.

The whole exhibition revolves around children’s viewpoints and how they were subjected to so many upheavals in their daily lives during the period. Symbolic areas, including the classroom, the family kitchen, the corner of a sitting room and a place in ruins, are evoked to enable visitors to get a sense of the scale of the consequences of the war in daily life even for the very young.

Numerous themes are covered this way. From the Norman perspective, shortages, the black market for goods, curfews and being sent away to do enforced work service for the Germans… From the Canadian perspective, learning about events via the radio and newspapers, propaganda, rationing, long absences from loved ones, and so much waiting…

The exhibition uses emblematic objects from those times, accounts from people who lived through them, extracts from diaries, period photos, cartoons and propaganda posters, rationing tickets and even music of the period.

This exhibition offers an excellent way for different generations to interact on the subject of the Second World War. It helps explain to young people today what older generations experienced in their daily lives during the conflict, and allows them to draw comparisons and parallels with their own lives.

www.junobeach.org

Unforgettable visits

Lively educational sites will help better understand this remarkable chapter of history.
Find the whole list of sites and monuments related to the D-Day and Battle of Normandy by downloading the brochure on our website :
www.normandy-dday.com
Food & Drink in Normandy

With 600 kilometres of coastline providing an abundance of fresh seafood and lush green countryside covered with apple orchards, dairy farms and distilleries, Normandy is truly a food lover’s paradise. The region is home to some of France’s most famous products such as Camembert, Calvados and crème fraîche and many of the region’s products have been designated the Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée (A.O.C.) label, recognition of their quality.

Apple and Pears

In addition to the delicious apple tarts that feature in every pâtisserie, the Normans have devised some excellent ways to use their plentiful crops of apples and pears. Normandy is the second major cider region in France and the only region that still produces Poiré (Perry) - a light refreshment made like cider but using pears instead of apples.

Route du Cidre

This 40 kilometre route signposts around 20 producers who will open their cellars and share their production secrets with visitors. Driving through the Pays d’Auge you’ll pass pretty villages, imposing châteaux, manor houses and half-timbered cottages.

Calvados

Calvados is Normandy’s most famous apple spirit and is made from over 200 specially grown varieties of apple that range from sweet to bitter. The fruit is pressed to produce a dry cider which is distilled and then transferred to oak barrels for the ageing process. The ‘trou normand’ is a time-honoured Norman tradition that involves drinking a shot of Calvados between courses to cleanse the palate and stimulate an appetite. Today the ‘trou normand’ often comes in the form of a fresh apple sorbet laced with Calvados.

Cheese and Dairy Produce

Famous for its dairy produce, Normandy is home to four of France’s favourite cheeses, all carrying the prestigious A.O.C. quality-certification: Camembert, Livarot, Neufchâtel and Pont-l’Evêque.

Many farms welcome visitors to sniff out the history and take a tour. For more information on farm visits please visit: www.normandy-tourism.org

The A.O.C. butter and cream produced at Isigny-sur-Mer are renowned for their distinct flavour - the local cream is best known as crème fraîche and is a favourite in Norman cuisine. For those with a sweet tooth, the salted Caramels d’Isigny are a Norman delicacy not to be missed!

Seafood

Normandy’s 600 kilometres of coastline host some of France’s most important fishing ports. From lobster to oysters and from scallops to herring, Normandy’s cuisine is irresistible to any seafood-lover!

Low-tide fishing on foot – Along the miles of sand dunes of the Cotentin Peninsula, low tide reveals great expanses of sand and rock pools where you can find cockles, mussels and crabs in abundance. Join a guided outing and learn how best to fish for your supper!

Local Markets are always fun and colourful and they are the best way to sample the local produce. For a listing of regional market days, please visit the page of the Normandy Tourist Board’s website: bit.ly/normandymarkets

Cooking courses are a great way to learn traditional Norman dishes and impress your friends back home. You’ll find some recommended courses here: bit.ly/cookingcoursescalvados

Did you know?

- It takes 18 kilos of apples to produce one litre of calvados (Normandy’s famous apple brandy, which is 41% proof)!
- It takes 35 days to ripen a camembert cheese!
New: the Chocolaterie du Drakkar opens its doors to visitors

At Nonant, near the city of Bayeux, the Chocolaterie du Drakkar will be opening its doors to visitors for the first time! In the food laboratory here, Olivier, the master-chocolatier, will share his know-how with you and his passion for producing chocolate on a craft scale. How does he work with chocolate? What are the specific machines necessary for making craft chocolate? What are the differences between a praline, a black chocolate and a liqueur chocolate, or even a chocolate infused with tea, say? Head to Olivier’s workshop to discover all about the various manufacturing stages, from grinding the chocolate beans, and preparing and cutting up the chocolate to coating and decorating the chocolates... At the end of your tour, you won’t want to miss the little chocolate tasting!

Workshop tours every Wednesday afternoon, starting 2:30pm. 
www.chocolateriedrakkar.com

Enjoy an extraordinary olfactory experience at the Palais Bénédictine de Fécamp!

The only place in the world where the famed liqueur, Bénédictine, is made, the extravagant Palais Bénédictine de Fécamp can now offer visitors an extraordinarily novel experience thanks to its new olfactory workshops, ‘Essence Bénédictine’.

Accompanied by Corinne MARIE-TOSELLO, a consultant and trainer at the perfume house Fragonard, participants are given an introductory lesson in memorising smells via an olfactory session that goes through some of the ingredients that make up the liqueur. This process also makes it possible for participants to understand the know-how needed to create a perfume, drawing the parallel with the way the main raw ingredients are chosen to make an alcoholic spirit. This olfactory experience is combined with a close tasting of Bénédictine’s expressive elements, for participants to learn to identify the liqueur’s spicy, aromatic and fragrant ingredients. Taking on the role of apprentice chemists during the session, participants are also given the chance to create their own perfumed room spray out of a selection of plant essences and spices that go into the making of Bénédictine liqueur!

Duration: 1h30 - For 12 to 20 adults, in French, English or Italian
Rates: €85 per person (including a tour of the Palais Bénédictine)
Advanced reservation compulsory (for both individuals and groups)
Dates for 2016 on request
www.benedictinedom.com

Cookery courses at the Château de Blavou

In southern Normandy, in the heart of the Parc Régional Normandie Perche, just a few kilometres from the grand Haras du Pin national stud farm, stands the Château de Blavou. This castle, dating mainly from the 15th and 19th centuries, offers guests 5 beautifully decorated rooms with unbeatable views across the estate’s grounds, which stretch over 10 hectares.

The owner, Pascal Senèze, was formerly a ‘professeur de pâtisserie’ (pastry teacher) and cookery teacher in a hotel catering college. He can now show off all his skills in his Normandy château and it is not particularly surprising that his tempting rooms carry the names of classic French desserts, like Macaron ou Tatin! Every morning, guests can tuck in to a delicious breakfast and, by prior reservation, they can also enjoy a tasty dinner here. All the dishes served are prepared using seasonal ingredients. Pascal Senèze can also put on cookery and pastry classes to teach guests to put together some of Normandy’s best culinary specialities. This is a very tasty address to recommend! www.chateaudeblavou.fr
Outdoor activities

Cycling

Normandy offers more than 500 kilometres of designated cycle paths making it an ideal way to soak up the local atmosphere and the great outdoors whilst taking in the sights. Each of the cycle routes have been broken down into sections so you can dip in and out of them and easily find something to suit your interests and ability. [www.normandy-tourism.org/cycling](http://www.normandy-tourism.org/cycling)

Veloscenic - Paris to the Mont-Saint-Michel

With over 600 kilometres of cycle-friendly roads and pathways, the Véloscénie route is the perfect way to take in some of France’s most iconic sites including the Eiffel Tower, Chartres cathedral, the Mont-Saint-Michel and many other hidden gems of the Normandy countryside. The route is accessible to cyclists of all ages and abilities and can be split up into 8 different stages which differ in length and difficulty.

[www.veloscenic.com](http://www.veloscenic.com)

D-Day beaches to the Mont-Saint-Michel

This 225 kilometre cycle route, broken down into six sections, takes you from the world famous D-Day Landing Beaches to the iconic Mont-Saint-Michel. The route alternates between green ways and quiet country roads, making it safe for the whole family to enjoy. Set off from either Utah Beach or Arromanches and retrace the steps of the allied soldiers, and take in the UNESCO heritage sites of the Bayeux Tapestry and the Mont-Saint-Michel.

[www.dday-montsaintmichel-bybike.com](http://www.dday-montsaintmichel-bybike.com)

Good to know…

Look out for the national brand Accueil Vélo for accommodation, tourist offices and rental companies that guarantee cyclists the best possible welcome.
Outdoor activities

L’Avenue Verte – London to Paris

Opened in 2012 to coincide with the Olympic Games, this cycle route was designed to allow cyclists to travel all the way from London to Paris along a secure and signposted 600 kilometre route. Many sections of the route are on traffic-free roads and dedicated green ways so that families, novices and experienced cyclists alike can cycle undisturbed. Setting off from London, cyclists head to Newhaven where they can catch a ferry over to Dieppe. The route then winds through the Normandy countryside, along the Seine Valley and on to Paris, from where it is possible to catch the Eurostar back to London.

www.avenuevertelondonparis.co.uk

Tour de Manche

The European cross-Channel network of cycle routes, Cycle West, proposes two routes that travel through Normandy and three counties in the south west of England: Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. In Normandy, the 225 kilometres of green ways in the Manche will take you through hedgerows and bocage landscape, the Natural Regional Park with its wetlands, the waterfalls at Mortain and finally, to the unmissable medieval landmark of the Mont-Saint-Michel.

en.tourdemanche.com

New: La Vélo Francette Cycle Route

A new cycle route from the ferry port of Ouistreham to the Atlantic Coast of La Rochelle has been inaugurated in June 2015, offering 400-miles of some of France’s most beautiful countryside through Normandy, the Loire Valley and Poitou-Charentes.

www.lavelofrancette.com

The coastal cycle route

This cycle route, which is part of the European EuroVelo 4 route linking Roscoff to Kiev, when completed, will allow you to follow the Norman coastline from the Mont-Saint-Michel to Le Tréport. The coastal cycle route already offers many viewpoints and places to visit along the Alabaster Coast from Le Tréport to Le Havre, as well as along the “mother-of-pearl” and “flowered” coasts between Cabourg and Ouistreham and along the coastline of the Chebourg peninsula from Carentan to Cherbourg continuing a little further inland to Coutances.


Discover the Mont Saint-Michel and its bay via different ways: on foot, by bike, on horseback, or in a canoe

New : La route des chiffonniers en Baie du Mont-Saint-Michel (The rag-and-bone men’s route around the Bay of the Mont Saint-Michel)

This hiking trail allows walkers to discover the paths taken by the rag-and-bone men of centuries past as they transported old sails and cloth from the nearby ports to the mills where they were transformed into paper. Donkeys were the beasts of burden in this trade, transporting the heavy textiles and sails for the rag-and-bone men. Recalling this tradition, it’s possible to try this new hiking route accompanied by a donkey. It’s a concept that is bound to appeal to families. Leaving from the resort of Granville, along the way, hikers can visit the splendid Abbaye de la Lucerne d’Outremer, the bell foundry and copper-making workshops in the town of Villedieu-les-Poêles, and the distinctive heritage villages around the Bay of the Mont Saint-Michel. As of spring 2016, you’ll be able to download the detailed maps covering this hiking route.

Outdoor activities

New: 7 canoeing trails across the Bay of the Mont Saint-Michel

These trails are aimed at all different levels of practitioner, from those new to canoeing to experts, the outings ranging from 3km to 12km in length, accompanied by a guide, or going out by yourself. The pages you can download provide detailed maps plus all sorts of related information, in the manner of France’s well-known hiking Topoguides, including different places from which to head out, safety advice, addresses for accommodation and eating out around the bay, places to see and more.

Our favourite:
This 12km-long canoeing trail guides you around the Chausey Islands, which make up the largest archipelago in France (when the tide is fully out!). The whole area is a protected nature reserve whose landscapes and seascapes change very markedly with the tides. At high tide, there are 52 islands in total, while it’s said that at low tide, some 365 islands and islets are uncovered! During particularly high spring tides, you can admire the extensive plateau on which all these isles stand.
Further canoeing trails, notably on nearby rivers, should be put in place in 2016.

www.manchetourisme.com/fr/syndication/parcours-nautiques-normandie

On foot across the Bay of the Mont Saint-Michel

At low tide, and particularly during exceptional spring tides, the Bay of the Mont Saint-Michel reveals all its secret life, as so much more flora and fauna, and so many more reflections and light effects, can be seen. At these times, you can join organised walking tours across the bay, accompanied by expert, accredited guides who will help you discover much more about the magnificent landscapes and seascapes around the Mont Saint-Michel. For youngsters, look out too for special walks combined with activities to amuse them, allowing them to enjoy the pleasures of all that sand and mud between their toes!

Note carefully that given the danger of the tides and the speed at which the waters come in around the Bay of the Mont Saint-Michel, it is strictly forbidden to try and cross the bay without a guide.

www.cheminsdelabaie.com and www.decouvertebaie.com

On horseback around the Bay of the Mont Saint-Michel

This equestrian trail, which you can follow on horseback or in a horse and carriage, links Bréhal to the Rance Valley, the latter over the regional border, in Brittany. The trail leads you across varied landscapes, including strands, marshes, polders and typical Normandy bocage, with meadows divided up by ancient hedgerows. There’s the possibility of some wonderful gallops along the extensive, fine, sandy beaches of La Manche, enjoying splendid views across the Bay of the Mont Saint-Michel.
At time of writing, this equestrian route is up and running from the Rance Valley in Brittany as far as the resort of Granville. More stretches of the route should open in 2016, linking it to further equestrian trails that have already been set up.

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© Patrick Forget
© Ian Wood
Le Domaine d’Ablon - Pays d’Auge : Self-Catering & B&B

Combining the 5* service of a top hotel with the warmth of a family home, Le Domaine d’Ablon in the Pays d’Auge offers a new take on luxury accommodation. Guests can stay in one of two suites or in a charming 14th century half-timbered cottage which sleeps up to 4. All interiors combine the finest upholstery with choice antiques and tasteful works of art. Chef Jérôme Billochon looks after guests’ culinary needs with à la carte room service while the estate’s 5 hectares invite guests to stroll through the manicured gardens, apple orchard and vast parkland.

The decorations include antiques, fine furnishings, intriguing found objects, works of art and precious tapestries. Here, all has been done to create the atmosphere of a luxuriously comfortable family home.

Le Domaine d’Ablon can offer visitors a wide range of activities within its grounds – pony trekking, bicycle outings, cookery and gardening courses, the discovery of plants and beehives, massages and more. Rates: from €350 per day

www.domainedablon.com

Le Manoir de Surville: a charming country hotel

Set in the midst of a 2-hectare garden, lying not far from the Seine, south of Rouen and just 110 km west of Paris, the 16th-century Manoir de Surville is a listed historic monument that offers 11 elegant, refined hotel rooms. Each room is different, each decorated with characterful old furniture, each with its own unique atmosphere.

The cosier rooms are located under the eaves and reached via two secretive staircases built from fine stone, while the more classic rooms are spread over two buildings. There are also two 1st floor suites, which can furthermore be linked up to a classic room.

The hotel sitting room, with its immense fireplace and comfortable sofas, offers guests a lovely place to relax. In terms of cuisine, chef Magalie prepares seasonal, gourmet food using fare from local producers and from the manor’s own kitchen garden to make dishes that prove a pleasure both to the eye and to the palate.

There’s also a well-being zen area with sauna and hammam where guests can enjoy massages and beauty treatments, provided in partnership with Cinq Mondes.

Room rates: from €180 per night, including access to the well-being area

www.manoirdesurville.com

Aubert’Cail: feel at home in this Saint-Lô oasis of calm

This maison d’hôtes, or smart B&B, run by Anita and Alain, is located in Saint-Lô, offering a green, calm corner in town.

The owners took on a major challenge, to transform their simple farmhouse set in the midst of fields into an elegant maison d’hôtes, or B&B, provided with spa and sauna. Following two years of restoration work, since summer 2015, Aubert’Cail has been able to offer 5 chambres d’hôtes, or B&B rooms. This pretty traditional Norman long farm has been done up making the most of natural stone and wood, cement tiles and restored wrought iron, adding modern comforts and cosiness.

The well-judged, original decoration inside is full of surprises, for example in the family room named ‘Ruben’, with its beds set up in barrels! Love birds will prefer the room called ‘Julie’, with its round bed and its private terrace.

In addition, there’s the well-being area that you can book in advance. Here, you’ll find a jacuzzi, a sauna, a hydromassage shower and a relaxation area.

Rates: from €90 a room / For access to the well-being area: €15 per person for 1 hour

http://aubertcail.wix.com/aubertcail
New Accommodation

La Maison 1833: for a chic, authentic atmosphere in the Normandy countryside

In the heart of the southern Normandy countryside of the Orne département, with its distinctive bocage fields and hedgerows, a few minutes from Domfront, a charming medieval hilltop fortified town, la Maison 1833 offers 2 charming chambres d’hôtes, or B&B rooms.

Here, a grand family home built in 1833 has been renovated to combine historic elements with contemporary ones, bringing out to the full the charms of a traditional grand dwelling of the Domfront area. As to the interior decorations, you’ll find a mix of objects brought back from the four corners of the world alongside many items gleaned here and there in Norman antiques shops and fairs.

The Chambre du Ponant (‘Western Room’) is done out in a classically chic, subtle style, with light colours, notably taupe and blue, enhancing the relaxing atmosphere. In the Chambre du Levant (‘Eastern Room’), wood and warm colours predominate; here, visitors sleep in peace, in a bed with columns made from teak and brought back from India.

The garden extends across 4,000m², containing many flowers and trees and offering visitors a lovely place to relax.

This cozy cocoon, offering satisfying country breakfasts, can also provide cycling tourists with a calm stop as they tackle La Vélo Francette, a new cycle route taking riders through traditional, gentle ‘douce France’, along tracks linking the Normandy ferry port of Ouistreham above Caen to the Atlantic port of La Rochelle.

Room rates: €90 per night for 2 people sharing, breakfast included
www.lamaison1833.com

Hôtel Littéraire Gustave Flaubert: a literary hotel in central Rouen

The Best Western Hôtel Littéraire Gustave Flaubert can boast of being the first literary hotel in Normandy. It pays homage to the great 19th-century Norman writer, Flaubert, in the very city in which he was born and where he spent most of his life. This 4-star establishment aims to help visitors discover more about the man and his works. The interiors combine modernity and comfort, as well as offering literary diversions for guests who have the time to dream and to read.

The hotel’s different storeys are organised on the theme of travel, something so dear to the author. Each of the hotel’s 51 rooms has been personalised to reflect one of Flaubert’s characters, close friends, or a place he loved, including the likes of Bovary, Moreau, Maupassant and Megara.

Some of the headboards on the beds are decorated with a well-known quotation from one of Flaubert’s greatest works, L’Éducation sentimentale (Sentimental Education), recalling the book’s main character, Frédéric Moreau.

As you enter the hotel, do admire the collection of original editions of Flaubert’s works on display, making up a precious ensemble that includes the author’s most famous creations but also much rarer titles of his. The Hôtel Littéraire Gustave Flaubert also boasts a library containing over 500 volumes, in many different languages.

Located in Rouen’s historic centre, the Hôtel Littéraire Gustave Flaubert enables you to set out with ease on a fascinating pilgrimage in Flaubert’s footsteps, taking in such significant places as Notre-Dame Cathedral, the Musée Flaubert et d’Histoire de la Médecine (Flaubert’s father was a surgeon who lived in this historic central hospital with his family), or the Lycée Corneille, the secondary school Flaubert attended.

Room rates: from €69 per night
www.hotelgustaveflaubert.com
What’s on in 2016

5th – 9th February: Granville Carnival - Granville
Normandy’s longest running street carnival

19th – 21st March: Annual Black Pudding Festival – Mortagne-au-Perche
Black pudding competition, eating contests, cooking demonstrations and art exhibition
foireauboudin.free.fr/

25th March - 3rd July: Gustave Caillebotte, Painter and Gardener - Musée des Impressionnismes, Giverny
This exhibition is part of the Normandy Impressionist Festival.
www.mdig.fr

April: Tulip Festival, Château de Vendeuvre - Vendeuvre
Marvel at more than 30,000 tulips, grape hyacinths and narcissi
www.vendeuvre.com

16th April - 26th September: Scenes of Impressionist Life - Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen
This exhibition is part of the Normandy Impressionist Festival.
www.mbarouen.fr

16th April - 26th September: Eugène Boudin. Craftsman in light. - MuMa André Malraux Museum of Modern Art, Le Havre
This exhibition is part of the Normandy Impressionist Festival.
www.muma-lehavre.fr

16th April - 26th September: Frits Thaulow (1847 - 1906), Landscapist by Nature - Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen
This exhibition is part of the Normandy Impressionist Festival.
www.mba.caen.fr

23rd April – 7th May: Deauville Music Festival
Festival de Pâques’ with nine classical music concerts
http://musiqueadeauville.com

30th April – 1st May: Les Rencontres de Cambremer
Festival celebrating Normandy’s AOC quality certified products
www.lesrencontresdecambremer.fr

30th April – 7th May: Jazz sous les Pommiers – Coutances
The biggest Jazz Festival in Western France with over a hundred concerts featuring international artists
www.jazzsouslespommiers.com

28th May – 12th June: D-Day Festival Normandy Bessin – throughout Lower Normandy
Selection of celebrations around 6th June including firework displays and parades
www.ddayfestival.com/?lang=uk

From 28th May until September 2017: Gothic Rouen exhibition - Panorama XXL, Rouen
A painting of Rouen in the Middle-Ages with Joan of Arc as the central theme in this unique site in France
www.panoramaxxl.com/en
What’s on in 2016

3rd June - 25th September: **Sound and light show on Rouen Cathedral (at dusk)**
Twofold show with the creations Impressionism and The Vikings
www.rouen-tourisme.com

18th – 19th June: **Open Air Opera - Château du Champ-de-Bataille - Le Neubourg**
The courtyard of honour at this 17th century château is a magnificent setting for summer opera
www.chateauduchampdebutaille.com

25th June - 3rd October: **Being Young at the Time of the Impressionists (1860 - 1910) - Musée Eugène Boudin, Honfleur**
This exhibition is part of the Normandy Impressionist Festival.
www.ot-honfleur.fr

Weekly shows with displays of dressage and show-jumping in the Colbert Courtyard of this national stud farm

July – August: **Le Mont-Saint-Michel by night**
Night-time tours, musical concerts and light shows throughout the summer
www.ot-mont-saint-michel.com

30th June – 3rd July: **Beauregard Festival – Hérouville-Saint-Clair**
Music festival previously pulling in big names such as The Smashing Pumpkins, The Pixies, Damon Albarn, Seasick Steve and Blondie
www.festivalbeauregard.com

24th June – 3rd July: **Medieval Festival – Bayeux**
Medieval market, concerts, parades, exhibitions, workshops and performers will fill the streets for the 30th anniversary of this festival
www.mairie-bayeux.fr/index.php?id=fetesmedievales

26th June - 4th July: **Tour de France Grand Départ from the Mont-Saint-Michel**
Many cycling events + stage 1 (2nd July): the Mont-Saint-Michel - Utah beach; stage 2 (3rd July): Saint-Lô - Cherbourg along the Côte des Isles; stage 3 (4th July) will set off from Granville
www.tourdefrance-manche.co.uk

12th July - 27th August: **Rendez-vous à la Cathédrale, sound and light show - Bayeux**
Sound and light show around the cathedral, at dusk, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays
www.bayeux-bessin-tourisme.com/en

14th July - 6th November: **Sorolla and the Paris Years - Musée des Impressionnismes, Giverny**
This exhibition is part of the Normandy Impressionist Festival. www.mdig.fr

10th – 22nd August: **Les Traversées Tatihou - Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue**
This annual folk music festival is scheduled over days of low tide when the island of Tatihou can be accessed by foot
www.manche.fr/culture/traversees-tatihou.aspx
What's on in 2016

2nd – 11th September: American Film Festival – Deauville
Première screenings of the latest US film releases, this festival pulls in big name stars such as Orlando Bloom, Keanu Reeves and Ian McKellen
www.festival-deauville.com

10th - 18th September: International Kite Festival - Dieppe
www.dieppe-cerf-volant.org/ukaccueil.html

8th- 9th Oct: Fête de la Crevette - Honfleur
Shrimp festival with sea shanty, shrimp peeling competitions,...

15th – 16th October: Fête du Ventre - Rouen
A farmer’s market on a massive scale with 140 stalls and producers from across the region, cooking demonstrations and street entertainment
http://feteduventre.com

12th - 13th November: 'Festival Le Goût du Large' in Port-en-Bessin-Huppain
"A taste for the open sea" scallop and seafood festival
http://bayeux-bessin-tourisme.com
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Press trips
In partnership with the Atout France office in Scandinavia, the Normandy Regional Tourist Board can organise individual press trips for Scandinavian journalists on request, subject to availability. Don’t hesitate to contact us with requests you may have for press trips to Normandy.

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