

Touring holidays of France

Expressions



Normandy Coast and the Loire Valley self-drive holiday



Normandy Coast and the Loire Valley self-drive holiday

8 NIGHTS / 9 DAYS

Honfleur

Normandy coast

Angers

Amboise and Loire Valley



This 8-night self-drive touring holiday takes you on a leisurely but evocative journey along the Normandy coast, staying near Honfleur for two nights and then between Bayeux and the coast for two nights, before delving south to the Loire Valley, where you also stay in two slightly different areas, but both rich in history, events, sights and activities. From Calais you drive south, crossing the Seine river on the spectacular Pont de Normandie to arrive at Honfleur. This was a favourite amongst the illustrious names of the Impressionist movement, such as Courbet, Boudin and the master himself, Claude Monet, who came to capture on canvas the beautiful vistas offered by Honfleur and the Normandy coastline. There is time to explore the chic resorts of Cabourg and Deauville before continuing to the historic Normandy landing beaches, memorials and museums. Your second stop in Normandy is not far from the coast north of Bayeux and this allows for visiting Bayeux itself as well as more historic monuments on the coast. En route to the Loire Valley, your next region, you'll drive past the lace-making town of Alençon and then Le Mans, famous for its 24-hour road race, both of which deserve a brief stop. At Le Mans, you can also visit the old mediaeval town and Musée de l'Automobile. Drive on to Briollay north of Angers from where you can visit the city itself, its citadel, local castles and the Anjou vineyards. Your second stop in the Loire Valley is at Amboise, on the River Loire and at the heart of Chateau-country. There are numerous visits and activities to fill your time here including the world-famous chateaux of Villandry, Chenonceau and Azay-le-Rideau. You return from Amboise to Calais for the return Channel crossing. If you prefer, we can organise ferry crossings from Portsmouth to Caen or Cherbourg instead of Eurotunnel.

PRICES

From £1,880 per person

Based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

DATES

This self-drive holiday can be arranged for any departure date subject to availability.

TOUR CODE

FRSD08

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Eurotunnel crossing from Folkestone to Calais for car and passengers
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Classic double room at the Auberge de la Source near Honfleur
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Classic double room at La Cheneviere near Port-en-Bessin
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Manor House double room at the Château de Noireux near Angers
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Tradition double room at the Choiseul in Amboise
- Concierge service and Expressions Holidays regional helpful hints

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Early check-in or late check-out at any hotels (although we can arrange this on request at additional cost)
- Any other services not mentioned above, such as transfers and meals except breakfast at hotels
- Personal holiday insurance. This is essential and cover should be in place from when you book the holiday.
- Local tourist tax, usually between Euros 1 and 3 per person per night, and payable locally to the hotel

Day one Calais to Honfleur

After arriving in Calais via the Eurotunnel, begin your drive through Pas-de-Calais and into the varied and dramatic landscape of the Normandy, crossing the mighty Seine by the Pont de Normandie. Your stop for two nights is in the countryside near Honfleur.

Day two Honfleur

Honfleur itself is perhaps best recognised for its tall, colourful French townhouses that line the harbour, and overlook the Seine Estuary, and, of course, its artistic connections. The nearby Trouville-sur-Mer is an equally 'arty' town and gathering place for contemporary and modernist authors, with its quirky architecture and vibrant lifestyle. Popular names associated with this town include Marguerite Duras, Marcel Proust, Claude Monet, and Gustave Flaubert, all of whom chose to either live or stay in Trouville. Exhibitions are regularly held at the Villa Montebello, the former residence of Napoleon. Across La Touques, and accessible by boat or train from Trouville, is the chic resort of Deauville, a town still beautifully traditional in appearance, but with the ambience and reputation of a modern, designer town. A favourite haunt of Napoleon and Coco Chanel, Deauville is, like its counterpart across the water, a popular and prestigious town in Normandy. As well as being home to the Deauville Film Festival, Deauville is a hub for sports such as horse-racing and polo. After a day at the races, or looking around the many boutiques of Place Marny, perhaps take a relaxing stroll down the Promenade des Planches. Visit Deauville on a Tuesday, Friday, or Saturday, to catch the market in the Place du Marché and purchase some of the speciality cider and camembert. Just half an hour inland will bring you to the winding waterways of Pont-Audemer, and Pont-l'Évêque, both quintessentially picturesque Normandy towns, and at the heart of the Calvados region.

Day three Honfleur to Bayeux area

Today it's worth having a day of the historic Normandy landing beaches along the coast. The first point you reach is the famous Pegasus Bridge, where you should have a drink at the Café Gondree on the bridge, the first house in France to be liberated. The museum nearby gives illuminating background to the D-Day landings and the feats of the troops landing at Pegasus Bridge. Cross the river and then head to the north and the start of the landing beaches with Sword, Juno and Gold in that order. The area has military cemeteries and memorials well-worth pausing to contemplate. At Arromanches you will see the remains of the Mulberry harbours



Honfleur houses

and another fine museum. From here it's a short drive to your hotel for the next two nights.

Day four Bayeux area

The focus today can be two-fold: Bayeux itself and the remaining landing beaches and their memorials along the coast. Bayeux has plenty to see and do, from its Cathedral, the tapestry and the British cemetery. On the coast, there is the Battery at Longues sur Mer, Omaha Beach and the American memorial and the Pointe du Hoc.

Day five Normandy to Angers region in the Loire Valley

Your journey into the Loire Valley takes you through the rolling green fields of the Parc Naturel Régional de Normandie-Maine and onto the very banks of the Loire itself. You stay to the north of Angers for two nights. the American memorial and the Pointe du Hoc.

Day six In the Angers Region of the Loire Valley

The town of Angers is shaped by its abundant gardens, and its magnificent centrepiece – the Château d'Angers, home of the Apocalypse Tapestry. Many more opportunities arise in Angers for visitors to explore the waterways of France. Perhaps take a traditional river shuttle across the local waters or travel a little further on a Loire de Lumière river cruise that explores the 300km of navigable waterways in the Loire Valley region. Wildlife cruises are available, as well as dinner concerts and cocktail

evenings in the summer months. Head to Trélazé to partake in the unique experience of scuba diving in the slate quarry or drive to Marcé for balloon rides or micro-light rides. Any visit to the Loire Valley, however, insists upon an exploration of the best of the region's châteaux. The Château de Brissac, home to the 13th Duke of Brissac, offers an informative and delightful tour through the Duke's collection of ancient paintings, the private theatre commissioned by the Duchess in the 19th century and dedicated solely to opera, and culminating in a tasting of the wines produced on the Duke's estate in the Duke's own wine cellar. Utilise this visit and perhaps another visit to a nearby château to taste the produce of the Anjou-Saumur vineyards, amidst which Angers sits, such as the Saumur-Champigny reds and Coteaux-de-l'Aubance whites; the Coulée-de-Serrant, a dry white wine, is the most famous of the wines of this area.

Day seven Angers to Amboise

This is really a day to explore the north bank of the River Loire and there is lots of see along the way, from fortified towns with the mediaeval chateaux, such as at Luynes and Langeais, to the vineyards at Bourgueil. This might also be the day to visit the Chateau of Villandry, or even venture into the city of Tours, before arriving in Amboise for two nights.

Day eight In the Amboise region

There are numerous places of importance to visit within a very short drive. Amboise, on the banks of the river Loire, is home to the Chateau d'Amboise, a 15th century residence of Charles VIII and where you will find the tomb of Leonardo da Vinci. Nearby is the Chateau du Clos Lucé where Leonardo Da Vinci lived. In the grounds are displays of working models of this designs. Not far from Amboise is the Château de Chenonceau, known sometimes at the 'Ladies Castle' due to its string of female owners, such as Catherine de Medici and Diane de Poitiers, is not to be missed. This château offers an extensive art gallery and a collection of exquisite Flemish tapestries, as well as wine-tasting opportunities. You can dine in L'Orangerie, the on-site restaurant, or relax in the tea rooms, before exploring the wax museum or enjoying a boat ride. In the warmer summer months of July and August, night strolls around the castle and its grounds are very atmospheric, particularly with the backdrop of music by Arcangelo Corelli. Whilst in Amboise, you may want to visit the capital of the region, Tours. It is an ancient university town and this region purports to speak the 'purest' form of French. The old town is a delight with its narrow streets and tall, gabled, half-timbered houses. The Cathedral of Saint Gatien dates from the 12th century but most of it is obviously flamboyant Gothic, completed about the same time as the Chateau de Chenonceau. In Montlouis-sur-Loire, we recommend visiting the Domaine de la Taille aux Loups to taste the local wine: the dry and fizzy Moelleux wines from this region.

Day nine Amboise to Calais

Return from the Loire Valley today across country through southern Normandy and perhaps crossing the River Seine near Rouen or skirt further to the east, stopping at Monet's garden at Giverny before continuing north to Calais.



Honfleur



Chateau Chenonceau

GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR TOURS

Our tailor-made touring holidays are suggested itineraries which can be adapted in numerous ways. They can be fly-drive (with flight and hire-car included), self-drive (with ferry or Eurotunnel included with your own car) or rail and hire-car.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of your chosen transport and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

The logo for Expressions Holidays, featuring the word "Expressions" in a white, elegant script font on a dark blue rectangular background.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators).

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HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441250

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process.