



La Belle France 2026

Dive into a land of renowned artists and royal crusaders, hilltop monasteries and valley castles – this 10-day journey takes us from France’s dramatic northern shores to its château-sprinkled countryside. Along the way, indulge in fresh seafood and revel in the delights of the Loire’s vineyards. You’ll meander through elegant villages rich with stories of epic battles, curious myths and mighty legends, and pause for a moment of reflection at Normandy’s beaches, where tales of war endure. France’s timeless beauty and captivating history awaits – what memories will you create?





About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

Important: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

Paris @ 18:00

Paris

Paris @ 17:00

Paris



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Tour highlights

- ✓ Feel the cobblestones beneath your feet in Mont Saint-Michel, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- ✓ Step into an Impressionist painting at Claude Monet's vibrant estate in Giverny
- ✓ Savour the flavours of local wines with a tasting session in the romantic Loire Valley

More inclusions

- ✓ 9 breakfasts, 5 dinners
- ✓ 9 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- ✓ Luxury minicoach

Currencies you'll use

- France - EUR



Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

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Your itinerary

Day 1 | Paris (France)

Bienvenue à Paris! The City of Light and love, and the perfect location to kick off our small-group adventure through France's finest. After meeting our fellow travellers at our hotel, we'll get to know one another over a sumptuous welcome dinner at a local restaurant. With traditional French cuisine on the menu that's sure to delight, make sure you leave enough room for dessert. *Bon appétit!*

Included today



Accommodation

Hôtel Paris Lafayette (or similar)



Meals

+ Dinner



Day 2 | Paris – Honfleur

Wake up to the scent of warm coffee and buttery croissants as you get ready for your first full day of our adventure together. As we journey out of Paris, settle into the minicoach and look out for the glistening Champs-Élysées lined with luxury storefronts, as well as the majestic Arc de Triomphe that stands stoic in the centre of swirling Parisian traffic.

Our first stop will be Giverny and the ivy-clad home of Claude Monet, one of the world's most celebrated Impressionist painters. Be transported back in time as you admire your surrounds – where walls are adorned with lemon yellow and eggshell blue paints, gardens erupt in a kaleidoscope of colours and a gentle breeze whispers through the branches of a willow. It's easy to see how Monet spent over four decades here.

With its colourful, half-timbered medieval houses and narrow cobblestone streets, our home for the next two nights will be the charming port town of Honfleur. You may recognise it as the subject of a fair few Impressionist paintings (looking at you, Eugène Boudin!). We'll spend the evening at our leisure, absorbing the rugged maritime atmosphere, before settling down for the night in a characterful 18th-century Norman mansion.

Included today



Accommodation

Hôtel l'Écrin (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

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Day 3 | Honfleur – Normandy – Honfleur

From the buzz of its bustling market to the sailboat-lined 17th-century harbour, this morning, our Tour Leader will help us discover the heart of Honfleur on an orientation tour. After walking up an appetite, we'll have free time for lunch. Why not opt for some fresh seafood for a taste of quintessential local flavours? We hear the *sole meunière* is a particular favourite: expect expertly fried sole served with a butter, lemon and parsley sauce – talk about catch of the day!

Next, we'll trace the Route du Cidre in Normandy in our minicoach, pausing at a local calvados producer to sample the fruits of the region's orchards. From cool, crisp ciders to heady, amber-hued calvados, a treat for the tastebuds awaits. After filling our bags with unique artisanal produce (for a taste of Normandy back home, of course), we'll return to Honfleur. En route, spy the picture-perfect thatched roof cottages that make this region so unique.

Back in Honfleur, we'll have the evening to spend as we wish. Whether it's relaxing by the pool of our thoughtfully selected hotel, walking up to the Panorama du Mont-Joli for sweeping views over the quaint town, or seeking out a local haunt for dinner – your knowledgeable Tour Leader is sure to have plenty of recommendations ready to share.

Included today



Accommodation

Hôtel l'Écrin (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

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Day 4 | Honfleur – Normandy Beaches and Bayeux – Arromanches-les-Bains

Today we'll turn our attention to the windswept shoreline of the Normandy beaches, where we'll explore the sites of the 1944 D-Day landings. There's also the opportunity to pay a poignant visit to the American Cemetery and Memorial at Colleville-sur-Mer, where we can take the time to reflect whilst overlooking the expansive Omaha Beach.

Next, in keeping with this morning's theme, we'll make a stop at the Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy in Bayeux where we'll delve deeper into the details of the D-Day landings. Hear spine-tingling stories from those who lived through the event and get up close to fascinating artefacts used by the soldiers during the battle.

To round off our day, we'll move on to Arromanches-les-Bains – our home for the night. Having settled into our accommodation, a beautifully restored hotel that's moments from the beach, we'll enjoy a dinner with the group, sharing stories and reflections from the day.

Included today



Accommodation

Les Villas d'Arromanches (or similar)



Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



Day 5 | Arromanches-les-Bains – Mont Saint-Michel and Dol-de-Bretagne – Dinan

Tales of a mysterious apparition, the Hundred Years' War and powerful tides await – we're off to the enchanting UNESCO World Heritage Site of Mont Saint-Michel where we'll cross the iconic walkway to wander the buzzing island village. Weave your way up to the magnificent Abbey along La Grande Rue, where timber-clad medieval buildings hug the path and the scent of sizzling crêpes fill the air. The viewpoint from the North Tower is also well worth a visit – feel the wind whip past as the bay stretches out before you, shimmering like reams of satin.

Then, as we make our way to storybook Dinan, we'll stop off for a photo opportunity at Dol-de-Bretagne where we'll see the famous Menhir de Champ-Dolent, a Neolithic megalith. Your Tour Leader is sure to have some intriguing legends about this historical monument up their sleeve!

Did we mention crêpes? Thought so! Tonight, we'll feast on an included dinner at a traditional Breton crêperie. This local delicacy is crafted using buckwheat flour, giving the batter a distinctive, delicious flavour. With savoury and sweet options on the menu, you'll be spoilt for choice. Why not try a classic *crêpe complète* filled with Emmental cheese, ham and an egg? Sign us up!

Included today



Accommodation

Cit'Hotel Hôtel Le Challenge
(or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast
+ Dinner



Day 6 | Dinan

With a whole day to yourself in Dinan, you can really get under the skin of this Gallic gem. Picture ancient ramparts, an assortment of timbered houses, a postcard-pretty quay and a 14th-century castle, and you'll have a pretty good idea of what awaits.

Immerse yourself in Dinan's arts and crafts heritage in the quirky shops and galleries that line the cobblestone streets and swap inspiration with talented artisans (ranging from bookbinders to glassblowers) that ply their trade here. Or, take a moment to pause in the beams of light from the stained-glass windows of the Basilica of Saint-Sauveur, savouring the sound of hushed whispers around you.

You certainly won't be short of things to do in this charming, medieval town.

Included today



Accommodation

Cit'Hotel Hôtel Le Challenge
(or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 7 | Dinan – Angers – Chinon

Plunge deep into fairytale territory today as we board the minicoach towards the Loire Valley. Here, the skyline is peppered with the turrets of ancient castles, vineyards etch their way across green, rolling hills and orchards overflow with an abundance of sun-kissed fruit.

Our first port of call will be Angers, where we'll pay a visit to the city's castle – an imposing structure that dates back to the 9th century. Why not meander through the castle's impressive towers and inhale the fresh fragrance of its garden's herbs? As you explore this formidable site, don't miss the Apocalypse Tapestry – a vast work depicting the story of the apocalypse from the Book of Revelation. Commissioned by Louis I, it is said to be one of the oldest known medieval tapestries and is yours to discover today.

To round off the day, we'll journey on to Chinon – where we'll share a meal together at a local restaurant for dinner. *À demain!*

Included today



Accommodation

Best Western Hôtel de
France (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast
+ Dinner



Day 8 | Chinon – Château de Villandry – Chinon

Rise and shine! Today, we're visiting the mesmerising Château de Villandry. One of the last châteaux built during the Renaissance, it's famous for its impeccably manicured gardens and architectural elegance.

Spy the intricate frescoes and wooden panelling of its majestic interiors. Peek out of an upstairs window for a birds-eye view of the parterre planting. Meander through the myriad gardens, where rich colours and textures will ignite your imagination.

Taking in so much beauty is thirsty work, so on our way back to Chinon we'll enjoy a detour at a local winery, whose 12th-century cellars are nestled beneath Chinon's medieval fortress. Did you know, the Loire is famous for its white wines, crafted by the likes of luscious Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc grapes? Linger over a delicious glass (or two!) of the region's finest and let their fresh flavours and fruity aromas enchant as you raise a toast with the group to another wonderful day. *Santé!*

Included today



Accommodation

Best Western Hôtel de
France (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 9 | Chinon – Château de Chenonceau and Amboise – Montlouis-sur-Loire

Fuel up on golden croissants and fresh orange juice, we've got another day of exploring on the cards. One of the Loire Valley's precious jewels awaits: Château de Chenonceau. Built in the early 1500s, this spectacular château was later expanded to include a five-arched bridge that spans across the River Cher. On a still, clear day, don't miss the chance to see the water reflect the iconic château like a mirror.

Cast yourself back to medieval times, cooking in the wooden-beamed, limestone-walled kitchens, or imagine yourself at a royal reception in the Grand Gallery where a chessboard-patterned floor stretches before you. As we round off our visit, we'll take some time to stroll through the idyllic gardens – where tulips dance in the breeze, manicured hedges stand steadfast and elegant water features babble.

On our way back to Paris, we'll make a brief stop in Amboise, the town where Leonardo da Vinci lived out the last years of his life. Then, it's off to our very own château for the night where we turn into lords and ladies of the manor! Our final French feast as a group awaits for dinner and it's the perfect chance to reminisce on the soul-stirring experiences we've shared together.

Included today



Accommodation

Château de la Bourdaisière
(or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast
+ Dinner

Day 10 | Montlouis-sur-Loire – Chartres – Paris

Listen to the gentle ripple of the Eure River, the hum of the local market and the chime of ancient bells as we pay a visit to the medieval city of Chartres. We'll call upon the city's celebrated cathedral – said to be one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in France, no less! Its soaring spires and ornate 13th-century stained-glass windows are a sight to behold. As we part ways back in Paris, we may be saying *au revoir* to France but the memories of its charm and beauty are sure to last a lifetime.

Included today



Meals

+ Breakfast



Travel advice

Finances

Changing money

Cash: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

Credit cards: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

Cash machines: ATMS are widely available.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain



countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

Please note: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).



Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

Clothing

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Sun hat | ✓ Long-sleeved tops | ✓ Light jacket |
| ✓ Sunglasses | ✓ Short-sleeved tops | ✓ Waterproof jacket |
| ✓ Sleepwear | ✓ Shorts/skirts | ✓ Trousers |
| ✓ Warm jacket | ✓ Socks | ✓ Swimwear |
| ✓ Underwear | ✓ Smart casual evening wear | ✓ Walking/comfortable shoes |

Other essentials

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| ✓ Multi-use adapter plug | ✓ Toiletries | ✓ Camera |
| ✓ Batteries | ✓ Sunscreen | ✓ Towel |
| ✓ Umbrella | ✓ Reusable water bottle | ✓ Insect repellent |
| ✓ Any personal medication | ✓ Basic medical kit (paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc) | |

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How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

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FAQs

Which type of hotels will we stay in?

Our thoughtfully selected accommodation is full of charm and historic details – expect elegant country inns, grand town centre hotels and even the odd castle! For this reason, rooms vary in size, and most hotels don't have lifts – meaning you'll likely need to access your room via stairs. Porterage will be included wherever possible.

Although air conditioning is mostly unavailable in historic buildings, fans will be provided during hot spells. Most hotels have bathtubs with overhead showers (rather than walk-in showers), so you'll be able to enjoy a soak at the end of the day.

What's breakfast like in France?

A typical French breakfast spread is simple but wholesome. It usually includes a range of cold meats, cheeses and bread, buttery homemade pastries, freshly squeezed juices and a hot drink of your choice. If you have any dietary requirements, we'll ask about these before you begin your tour and accommodate them whenever we can.

That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.

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