



NORMANDY, BRITTANY, AND THE LOIRE

ADVENTURES IN NORTHWEST FRANCE

SEPTEMBER 3RD - 12TH 2020

This week marks the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, with the final surrender of Japanese forces, it seems appropriate to mark the event by visiting the place that saw the beginning of that end. We'll pay tribute to the men that made it happen with visits to the memorials at Arromanches and Pointe du Hoc.

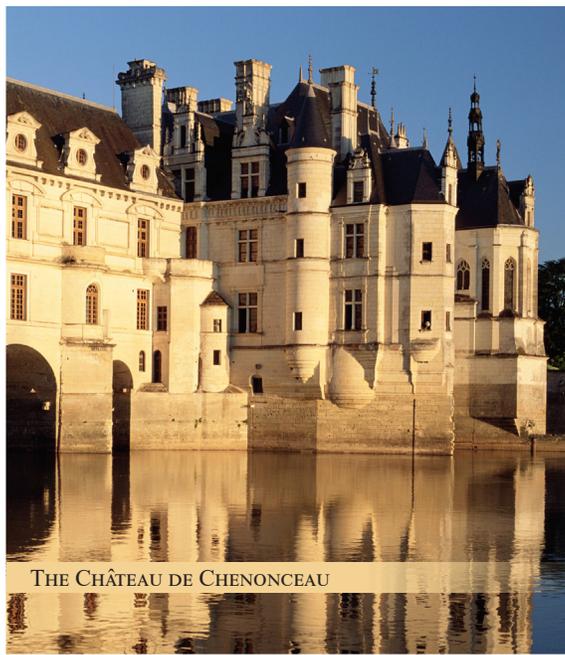
Today, however, the rolling beaches and apple orchards of Normandy and the lush beauty of chateau country present an ever-changing panorama which unfolds as we travel through some of the loveliest regions of northwest France.

Bypassing Paris, we'll rest up from the overnight flight in a chateau surrounded by beautiful parkland just to the north of the city. From here, we'll spend a day with the Impressionists - we'll visit Monet's Giverny, lunch at the riverside restaurant made famous by Renoir, and tour the local Museum of Impressionism. Moving on into Normandy, we'll explore the D-Day Beaches and view the extraordinary tapestry at Bayeux. A brief detour into Brittany allows us to marvel at magnificent Mont St. Michel, one of the wonders of the western world.

Continuing on to the Loire Valley, we'll sample a selection of stunning medieval and Renaissance chateaux, scattered around the countryside. From the romance of Chenonceau arching across the Cher River, to the staggering grandeur of Chambord, a Renaissance masterpiece, all set in the staggering beauty of the "Garden of France" – the Loire Valley. You will begin to understand why this region became the playground of the kings of France.



MONT SAINT-MICHEL



THE CHATEAU DE CHENONCEAU

We end our tour at the epitome of luxurious opulence – Versailles. This fall join Discover Europe on a truly memorable adventure in northwest France.

THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED): **\$4580**
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: **\$ 950**

Airfares are available from many U.S. cities. Please call for details.

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

- HOTELS:** 8 nights' accommodation in first-class hotels and châteaux, including all hotel taxes and service charges
- COACHING:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- MEALS:** Breakfast daily, 1 lunch, 5 dinners
- GUIDES:** DISCOVER EUROPE tour guide throughout
- EXPENSES:** Porterage of one large suitcase per person
- ENTRANCES:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour. Insurance information will be mailed on receipt of deposit.

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD - Departure from your chosen US gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4TH - Your arrival at Paris, Charles de Gaulle Airport, will be met for the transfer to our country hotel set in the “Parc Naturel Régional de Vexin Français,” just north of the city. After checking in, there will be time to unpack, relax and begin enjoying your surroundings. We’ll gather this evening for a welcome dinner. **(D) OVERNIGHT: VEXIN**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5TH - It’s a short drive this morning from our hotel to Giverny, where we’ll experience Monet’s garden paradise - his home for 43 years. Water gardens, bridges, roses—all create breathtakingly gorgeous tableaux recognizable in some of the most famous paintings in the world. After time to visit the gardens and house, we follow the course of the river Seine southeast to the Île des Impressionistes in Chatou. We’ll have a late lunch in the very restaurant (La Maison Fournaise) used in Renoir’s famous painting *Déjeuner des Canotiers* (Luncheon of the Boating Party). Our final stop of the day is at the Château d’Auvers-sur-Oise, where we’ll visit the fabulous “Impressionist Vision” exhibition – an immersive, sensory experience that plunges the visitor into the world of impressionist painting. We’ll return to our hotel for a free evening. **(B, L) OVERNIGHT: VEXIN**



MONET'S HOUSE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6TH - Driving through the heart of Normandy, we’ll stop first in Lisieux, the capital of the Calvados region. We’ll stop and marvel at the immense Basilica of Saint Thérèse, a major pilgrimage site of the 20th century and only finished in 1951. We continue to Bayeux, where we’ll check in to our hotel and have time for lunch. After lunch we meet up to view the extraordinary 231-foot-long Bayeux tapestry dating from 1077 and commemorating the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings. The rest of the afternoon is free to explore this delightful town before we meet again for dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: BAYEUX**

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH - This morning we drive to visit the D-Day Beaches at Normandy, where the deadliest fighting and largest amphibious assault in WWII began just over 75 years ago, on June 6, 1944. We’ll begin at the Ranger’s Memorial at Pointe de Hoche and then visit the Normandy American Cemetery where seemingly endless rows of white crosses stretch across the cliff top overlooking Omaha beach. Next stop will be the nearby Overlord Museum. We’ll break for lunch in the town of Arromanches before visiting the renowned 360° Cinema. Set on a hill with the best view of the surrounding beaches, the 360° Cinema shows archival footage of the actual D-Day landings. The evening is free to sample a local restaurant when we return to our hotel. **(B) OVERNIGHT: BAYEUX**

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH - Our morning will be spent at nearby Mont St. Michel, the astonishing 11th-century abbey perched on a 264-foot-high rock formation. During the highest tides, the island is surrounded by water, which can rush in at incredible speeds. During low tide, the flats provide food for the world’s only herd of salt-water-plant-eating sheep. We’ll explore the island, abbey, main streets and shops, and have time for lunch before continuing on to the Loire Valley, where we’ll check in to our hotel in Amboise with time to freshen up and relax before dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: AMBOISE**



OMAHA BEACH

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH - With its delicate light and mild climate, the Loire Valley is often considered the most quintessentially French of all regions. Medieval and Renaissance châteaux are scattered across the countryside, and we begin our day with a visit to the jewel of Amboise, the 15th-century Chapelle St. Hubert, that allegedly contains the tomb where Leonardo da Vinci is buried. From here, we’ll tour the nearby Château du Clos Lucé, where Leonardo lived for the last three years of his life. The rest of the day is free to sit back and enjoy this charming town on the banks of the Loire. **(B) OVERNIGHT: AMBOISE**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH - This morning, we’ll visit the Château de Chenonceau, arguably the most romantic chateau in France. Built by women for women, this gem of Renaissance architecture spans the Cher River on a series of graceful arches. In the afternoon, we visit the largest and most dramatic of the Loire châteaux, Chambord is a Renaissance masterpiece on a grand scale—440 rooms, a fireplace for every day of the year, intertwined staircases, and a project that demanded the labor of almost 2,000 workmen. Time permitting, we’ll return to our hotel via the exceptionally pretty town of Blois, and have a chance to wander its steeply winding streets lined with half-timbered medieval buildings. We return to our hotel in Amboise and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: AMBOISE**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH - Heading back towards Paris, we’ll stop first for the ultimate Gothic experience—Chartres Cathedral. Here, the transcendent beauty of medieval stained glass combines with soaring archways to create one of the great mystical experiences of the middle ages. We’ll arrive at our hotel in Versailles in time to visit the palace before we gather for a farewell dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: VERSAILLES**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH - Morning transport to Charles de Gaulle Airport for returning flights to the U.S. **(B) OVERNIGHT: HOME**

Key to include meals: **B** - breakfast, **L** - lunch, **D** - dinner