



## France - Normandy and Brittany Trip Notes June 1 – 15, 2016

### **Highlights**

- This is an area we haven't spent much time in since the 1970s though we were in Rouen a couple years ago.
- Mont St Michelle has always been a top spot in my travel memory bank.
- I thought our first town on the tour, Honfleur, was the most photographed spot in France (see above) but we're told it is Mont St Michelle.
- Tom rented a Jaguar – from Tom: Actually, the Jaguar is fancy in name only. This is probably the cheapest one they make (it's called an XF I think) and really, just a car. Nice riding and to drive but certainly not fancy. It's also a diesel so gets very good mileage (a big consideration here as you know). And it's an automatic.
- A Michelin 3-star restaurant. Here's Tom's note: The pre-sale lamb chops were delicious and, the sauce was a full 10. I'm not invited to tonight's private home dinner so I'm eating here for tonight's dinner. Tough life. (Pre-sale = lamb grazed on grass in salty soil take on salt and it shows up in the meat ergo: pray salay or pre salted.)
- Rouen is a city we really enjoy so we had three nights pre-tour. Small enough to feel comfortable, old enough to appreciate, with lots of tourist sites, a favorite restaurant, and this time a glorious hotel.
- La Couronne Tavern in Rouen is from year 1345 and is the oldest auberge in France. We have enjoyed it three times now.

### **Oddities**

- Tom was able to join the Country Walkers dinners - though on our last trip (Spain in May) we were advised that this trip and our upcoming Tyrol/Bavaria trip (previously negotiated) would be the last.
- The Garmin purchased in Madrid had a mind of its own and gave Tom some extra driving and entertainment by having to ask locals for directions. One man got in the car with him and took him to the hotel. Kindness of strangers made up for Stupid Sally of Garmin Fame.
- Paris is again striking and maybe that's why the line at CDG took at least an hour to get through passport control.

### **The Group**

We were a bunch of old folks. It was the wimpiest trip I've taken with Country Walkers who have become Country Eaters, then Country Strollers, and now (as you'll learn later) Country Mud Dabbers.



The pictures above are the group at dinner, then a picture from our last evening of the tour with our friends from Kentucky who we met on the Basque trip: Rudy and Donna.

**Our leaders** were terrific! Arnaud who is a noted photographer and gifted us with a huge generous book of his Mont St Michelle pictures, and Claire who is a mountaineer who leads hikes around Mont Blanc. She is so French (which is really good!) and looks like Christine Lagarde of the International Monetary Fund, but prettier.

**Eating** – there was a lot of it and some in a Michelin three-star. We didn't walk enough to work off one dessert let alone the "one of each" shown next. We did eat enough to send me home with a couple extra pounds. Then there was the pre-sale (salted) lamp (comes from grazing on vegetation when the Mont St Michelle tide is out) and Tom gave it an 8 ½ and a full and rare 10 rating for the sauce. He tried to have it again the next night but the restaurant was sold out. Please don't feel sorry for him – here is his fish dish from lunch.



We were apart on the day that we both just happened to order a Croque Monsieur.

Here we are in Rouen in a favorite old restaurant from the 1300s. We'd been there before. After a lovely and far too big meal, we ordered a calvados and got entertainment. The maître d' poured a bit of calvados in the bottom of an inverted wine glass, lighted it (lit it??), warmed the brandy glass in the flame, then poured the calvados (apple brandy or distilled cider?? We would drink lots more calvados during the week and have tasting after tasting. At one of the tastings I purchased a very old bottle for Tom.

### **Notes home**

From Diana at start of the trip: We are in Rouen as you will see by Tom's photos. Yesterday was our first partial day having landed in the morning, got thru our usual car negotiation and ended up with a jaguar, surprise NOT, and then drove a couple hours to the Normandy region.

I had a moment of panic that turned out apparently OK when Tom fell in the rental car parking garage and bloodied his knee and arm. But he never complains and just cleaned it up and went on and doesn't seem to be limping.

As you will see our hotel is a converted palace, right in the middle of the town and is really fabulous despite our having a small room.

The picture of restaurant is the oldest known inn and restaurant in France from 1300s. It was a renewal of acquaintance for us as we have been to Rouen and to this restaurant at least two times prior and we enjoyed it every bit as much. We ate fois gras, a big lobster and risotto dish, everything we could think of, and finished with an old calvados and the elegant pictured dessert.

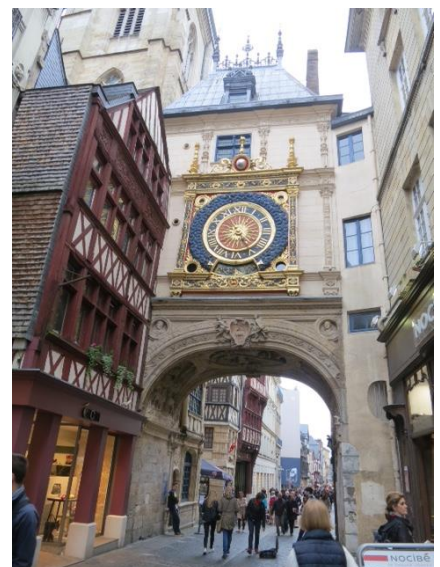
Today included shopping for a French phone SIM card, walking the tourist route which included the famous timbered houses, the huge gothic cathedral, and still more churches. Of course we took in a patisserie, more calvados, more French dessert, and even a jet lag nap.

I don't believe in naps for me, and try to convert immediately to local time, but they work for Tom so I joined him and now its 1am and I can't sleep. Such is the retiree life. And on that, I'll switch off with a bit more JW and hope to wake in time for the elegant and lush breakfast buffet.

Sunday starts my wimpy walking tour. Its focus is eating to include a Michelin three-star but not enough walking to avoid more poundage. More of the retiree life.

That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

The clock is Rouen's famous horloge.





The hotel in Rouen city center, our view from our room, and the room with a portion of a Klimt picture I'd recently read about.



In Rouen: at our favorite restaurant for dinner

From Tom at our last hotel: We're now in the Hilton at CDG in Paris and have access to the Executive Lounge where we'll probably have dinner in the form of hot hors d'oeuvres and maybe even something to drink (he says as he sips on a JW Red with a touch of water),

Unfortunately, Diana is suffering from a cold contracted on her next to last day which left her coughing pretty much non-stop for a couple of days. I visited a French pharmacy in Bayeux and got a couple of things that helped and she's had a couple of periods today without coughing full time and we just hope she can at least get airborne before they hear her and kick her off the plane. Stay tuned.

### Hotels

The first hotel of the tour was in Honfleur. Right at the famous water frontage and center town. It was NOT quiet but its redeeming qualities were the location and having two bathrooms. Honfleur is thought to be one of the prettiest towns in France and that's saying a lot.





The second hotel was the smallest and I believe the tour took up the entire hotel. I'm told that the normal room (Tom works an upgrade long before we arrive) found their luggage taking up the entire room and one even resorted to putting the suitcase in the shower. We allegedly had their River Deluxe . . . . When Tom saw it, he tried to reserve another room but they were sold out. Its redeeming factor was location, location, location. Plus the gardens and the sea view.



Chateau Richieu – From Tom: We're in this fabulous chateau hotel that were it not for the fog we could see Mont Saint Michel. In fact, Diana's hiking group is on the Mont for a tour all day then having dinner in a private home this evening. I have to settle for dinner here where the chef has three Michelin stars. Poor me! The group (including me) had a wonderful meal here last night and I had lunch again today.



Still from Tom: They tell me we will see water covering this beach by 8:30 tonight. Only one overused word to describe the tide - AMAZING. On a clear day you can see Mont Saint Michel. Rain expected for the next couple of days. Google Mont Saint Michel and click on images.

This hotel Chateau Richeu - has a three star (Michelin) chef and we're dining here tonight. Stay tuned.

The last hotel, and the priciest, the next to best – in Bayeux for three nights post tour. I don't think we've ever paid this much for a room or an apartment.



Note the picture frame around the TVs - cool idea

Miscellaneous pictures from Diana's camera (only used during the hike/walk time), and hoping that Tom does his usual trip photo show which can eventually be found on [www.TomsKoi.com](http://www.TomsKoi.com).



We had a calvados tasting the first day and I couldn't resist purchasing a 22 year old special bottle for Tom. It was followed by a hike through the woods, high up over the village, and into Honfleur, our first hotel stop. Tom met me there and had arranged for an upgraded suite. The next day brought in the not-too-unusual fog and at times visibility was very low. The cliffs were high like Ireland's Cliffs of Mohr, but of an entirely different type of rock, as explained by our geologist guide.



Still walking along the cliffs, being warned not to go too close to the edge, and finally seeing the "hole" that's a favorite photography spot. The next day we would meet Lucie our local guide and specialist on the Normandy Invasion who explained to us the many landing areas, by different countries, and then how the supply ships would function.



Lots of this day I could have readily done without, especially the tear jerker of how many people were lost. I left the American cemetery where there were thousands of crosses as far as the eye could see and got into the museum and finally the infinity pool just over the seaside.



On another day we toured an old farm area where there were (again, like at our calvados distillery) displays of Arnaud's pictures. He specializes in the combination of Iceland and the Nordic and Normandy area. The picture of pilgrims and Mont St Michelle in the background is one of his posters. We would be given a big book about Mont St Michelle as a parting gift. Most of us purchased a few of his books prior. [www.ArnaudGuerin.com](http://www.ArnaudGuerin.com)



Our guides Arnaud and Claire had reason to be proud of their picnics. Here are two of the French food spreads which were not only gourmet foods, but lessons in French cheeses and meats too.



Pilgrims came to Mont St Michelle as early as the 1100s and their last bit of trek was across the salt flats. We would take the same route which required a local specialist guide as much because of the extreme tides but also because of the quicksand. The day prior the Mont was said to have been socked in by fog. It was pretty hazy for us.



It was sticky and slimy and many times our feet went in deep enough to be mid-calf but usually not more than ankle deep.

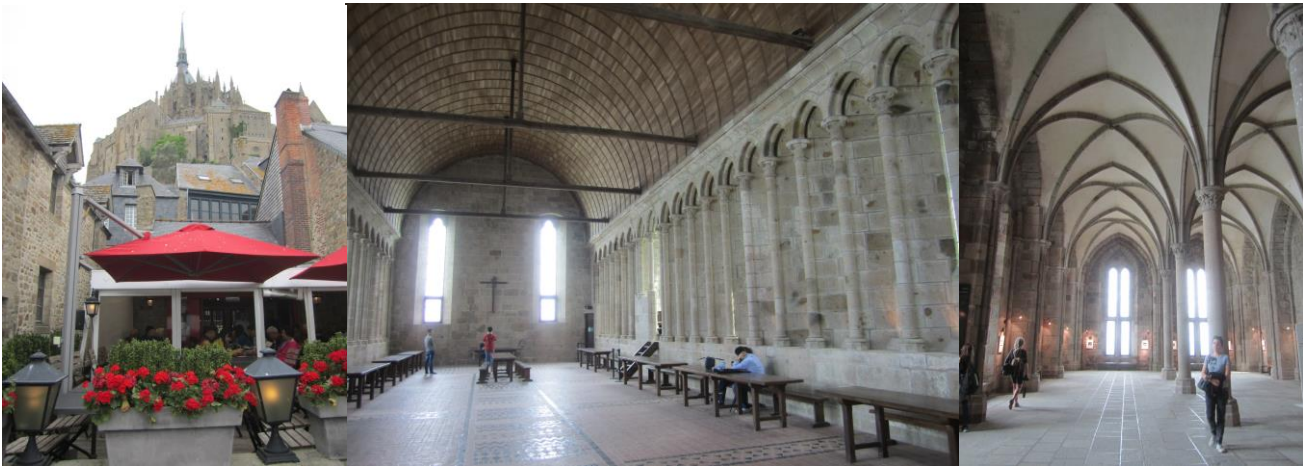


Still another day we actually went TO and ONTO Mont St Michelle, not just the pilgrim's route. It was in the mid-1970s that Tom and I stayed at Mere Poulard on the Mont and where we had a private guided tour as far up as into the flying buttresses. Those areas are not now available to the public. We stayed on the Mont, we ate the famous fluffy omelets of Mere Poulard, and without having known it would happen, we experienced the huge tide surf that comes in waves. We were there during the Equinox so saw the most dramatic waves and tides. It was a sight that would stay with me for years and probably the main reason for taking this tour.

The little restaurant and hotel of the 1970s has now grown into an adjoining boutique, another café, a terrace restaurant, and who knows what else. But the tiny hotel remains right alongside of the original restaurant. It is still known for the restaurant and the click-click-clicking of the eggs in copper pans and it still has an open fireplace for cooking these omelets. The price is considerably higher.



We were given some free time for lunch, and as usual I ate a sandwich while walking and saw much more. Lucie would meet us and tour us through the mass complex that started in the 1100s.



The sheep graze on the salted land around Mont St Michelle and thus one finds the famous 'pre-sale' or 'pre-salted' lamb on menus. The lamb dish would be Tom's favorite of the trip; it was prepared by a Michelin 3-star chef housed in an ancient but 5-star chateau where we not only had our best meal (though some liked the smaller hotel's dinner better and I understood why) but we also had the best room with a view of the seaside and high and low tides. Every room was suite sized.



We moved onto Bayeux for the last day where the famous 270 foot long historical Bayeux Tapestry is housed in this charming old village. The war damage somehow missed Bayeux; some of it reminded us of Bruges. The Cathedral is its second tourist point. After lunch it was an afternoon goodbye to our new found friends; Tom and I would stay on three nights in center city in an especially elegant hotel on the edge of the canal. Some of our tourist plans were interrupted by my new and extreme cough which stayed with me for those three days plus nearly a week after arriving home.

## ***Itinerary***

### **Wed Jun 1**

6:20pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#57

### **Thu Jun 2**

7:45am Arrive Charles deGaulle CDG

Car SIXT car

Hotel Hotel Bourgtheroulde, a Marriott – 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 nights  
15 Place de la Pucelle, 76000 Rouen, France Tele 011 33 235 145 050  
Email: [info@hotelsparouen.com](mailto:info@hotelsparouen.com) [www.hotelsparouen.com](http://www.hotelsparouen.com)  
WiFi with Marriott Gold, coffee service yes, Mini bar yes

Tourist: Tourist office has a self-guided 5 euro audio guide. Adrienne Leeds has “Wearing Pants in Rouen” at

<https://adrianleeds.com/parler-paris-nouvellettre/parler-paris-past-issues/archive/view/listid-1-mailinglist/mailid-874-pp28-12-15>

**Overview of hike** by [www.CountryWalkers.com](http://www.CountryWalkers.com) - This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep in to the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.

A long history, ancient culture and customs, and coastal scenery are interwoven on France's northern coast, along the border between Normandy and Brittany—and highlight a bucolic itinerary of walking, dining, and exploring. Over a thousand years of history have unfolded along these sandy beaches, pebbled coves, and dramatic cliffs—from Romans to Vikings to their descendants, the Normans, whose name derived from these conquering “Norsemen” who arrived on Normandy's shores in the 9th century. Meeting in Rouen's historic center, you follow in the steps of Impressionist painters to the coast of the English Channel, and walk along the D-Day beaches of World War II. Iconic Mont St. Michel is one of your first views on a path along Brittany's rocky shore, overlooking protected islands for migratory birds. Circling back to Normandy, the tour concludes in Bayeux with a visit to the famous Bayeux Tapestry, a depiction of the events leading up to the Norman conquest of England. Normandy's lush pastures produce some of France's best-known cheeses, such as Camembert, but the region is equally known for its apples, cider, and Calvados liqueur. Meals include fresh seafood—oysters and scallops are specialties—as well as sweet and savory crêpes, galettes, and apple tarte tatin (cake). Sophisticated and comfortable, three hotels showcase each locale and include a converted 16th-century townhouse, a harbor-side hotel, and an original 1920s mansion perched above the Atlantic with views of Mont St. Michel.

### **Sun Jun 5 - DAY 1 of hike**

Transfer from Rouen to the Honfleur area. Apreval to Honfleur; 3-4 miles, easy to moderate

9:00am Hotel Mercure Rouen Centre Cathedrale – meeting point  
7, rue croix de Fer, 76012 Rouen Cedex 1, France Tele: 011 33 235 526 938  
Later given tele: 011 33 235 526 952 email [H1301@accor.com](mailto:H1301@accor.com) [www.mercure.com](http://www.mercure.com)

Hotel Mercure Rouen is a 5-6 Euros taxi ride from Hotel de Bourgtheroulde.

Gathering in Rouen's historic center, you meet your guides and set off for the picturesque port of Honfleur, driving along the Routes des Fruits—as its name implies, a region brimming with orchards. Upon reaching Jumièges, you drive onto a small car ferry crossing the River Seine, and continue through the countryside to the lovely Manoir d'Apréval, a family-owned estate surrounded by an abundant apple orchard, specializing in cider and Calvados liqueur, and cultivating a total of 17 varieties of apples. At harvest time, a restored press is used to make cider, which eventually also becomes Calvados after ageing in oak barrels.

After a tour of the estate and a buffet lunch, you embark on your first walk, which begins at the Manoir d'Apréval through the small village of Pennedepie, entering the Bois du Breuil, a nature reserve. Here you walk along a forest trail with views down to the Seine Estuary on your left. This route also involves walking along country lanes and through oak forest, and you are frequently surrounded by apple trees. About one mile from Honfleur, you reach the charming Notre Dame de Grâce Chapel, a pilgrimage site for local fishermen, with ceilings and walls adorned with message plaques from sailors and their families. You begin your descent into Honfleur, marveling at the broad views that extend over the River Seine as it flows out to sea, and the magnificent Normandy Bridge, which links Honfleur with the port of Le Havre. Many of these views were depicted by late 19th-century painters, such as Monet and Gustave Courbet.

As you walk down the lovely streets of Honfleur, passing typical slate-shingled houses, you reach your enchanting hotel in the center of town. Later, dinner is in a charming local bistro, where the food reflects the fertile countryside and nearby coast. Monks in Normandy began developing its famous cheeses as early as the 11th century, and dinner may conclude with a rich Pont l'Évêque, Livarot, or, the best known, Camembert.

Hotel            Les Maisons de Léa, Honfleur – 1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights – upgraded  
Place Saint Catherine, Honfleur, 14600 France Tele 011 33 231 144 949  
Email: contact @lesmaisonsdelea.com [www.lesmaisonsdelea.com](http://www.lesmaisonsdelea.com)  
WiFi, hair dryers and laundry available; yes coffee; Refrig?

A charming hotel in the heart of Honfleur composed of a restored salt warehouse and three 16th-century houses, with individually decorated rooms, and a “hammam”-type steam room.

### **Mon Jun 6 - DAY 2 of hike**

Cliffs of Étretat; 4 miles, easy to moderate

After awakening in the comfort of your historic hotel and enjoying a copious breakfast with fresh fruit and homemade baked goods and jams, your first stop is a small neighborhood store just around the corner from the hotel specializing in local, organic produce and regional delicacies. Here you assist the guide in choosing the contents of today's picnic lunch—perhaps crusty fresh breads, tempting cheeses, and local cider. You then drive through the beautiful countryside of Pays de Caux, to the start of the day's walk along a trail that gently descends through an oak forest, and then into an open landscape of low bushes and gorse. Here you have your first glimpse of “La Manche”—the English Channel—and also begin to get your first views of the towering cliffs and rock formations of Étretat, a favorite subject of the Impressionist painter Monet.

Walk along the trail that takes you on the top of the cliffs and towards the famous Manneporte rock arch, the Porte d'Aval, and the Aiguille or “needle.” The 19th-century French author Guy de Maupassant spent a good part of his childhood in the small fishing and resort town of Étretat. Here you rest and enjoy your hand-picked picnic lunch before returning on the cliffside path next to the oldest golf course in France.

Upon reaching your hotel, you have time to relax, perhaps even indulge in a spa treatment or hammam on site before a **dinner on your own** in Honfleur. There are plenty of restaurants to choose from. Perhaps you may choose a gourmet meal, or you may simply wish to eat in a local crêperie.

Hotel            Les Maisons de Léa, Honfleur – 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 nights

### **Tue Jun 7 - DAY 3 of hike**

Arromanches to cliff top; 1 mile, easy. Omaha Beach Walk; 1.5 miles, easy

As the day's main focus is visiting the D-Day beaches and the American Military Cemetery, there is minimal walking. You first drive to a view over Arromanches, a resort town with a sandy beach but no natural harbor, which became one of the world's busiest ports in June 1944. It was here that Winston Churchill's idea of using prefabricated floating ports was implemented in order to store supplies and ammunition for the Battle of Normandy, until the existing ports could be liberated from the Germans.

You walk along a very short, grassy trail overlooking the remains of the artificial harbor, which was originally over five miles long, stretching from Tracy-sur-Mer to Asnelles-sur-Mer. After transferring in your private van to the town of Arromanches, you walk along a short stretch of beach up to the cliffs on the west side of the town as your guide begins the discussion of the D-Day landings. Once at the top of the cliffs, you board your van once again and arrive at the site of the German bunkers and original guns situated on the 200-foot-high cliffs that were used to defend the coast against the Allied Navy. These guns were designed to hit targets over 15 miles away, Omaha Beach among them. After lunch in a local restaurant, you walk along the sands of Omaha Beach to the American Military Cemetery, where 9,387 American soldiers are buried, each marked with a white cross or Star of David—the first American World War II cemetery on European soil. Your guide provides context about the battle, explaining why the casualties along Omaha Beach were far worse than at other locations along the D-Day beaches, here where Allied soldiers ran inland toward the German positions on the nearby ridge.

After an extremely moving visit to the American Military Cemetery, you then transfer to the remote Cotentin Peninsula, which traces its name to the 4th-century Roman Emperor Constantius Chlorus, an enchanting area with unspoiled stretches of rocky coastline, sheltering tranquil bays, and quaint villages. You are warmly welcomed in your charming seaside hotel in the town of Barneville-Carteret, two coastal resort towns separated by a river estuary, with the British island of Jersey just off the coast.

Hotel            Hôtel les Ormes, Barneville-Carteret – 1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights –upgrade to Rivage Luxe  
Promenade Barbey d'Aurevilly, Barneville-Carteret 50270 Tele 011 33 233 522 350  
Email [hoteldesormes@wanadoo.fr](mailto:hoteldesormes@wanadoo.fr) <http://www.hotel-restaurant-les-ormes.fr/>  
Wireless Internet free; hair dryers available; no laundry service

A charming historic home renovated into an intimate hotel with individually decorated rooms, seating areas and garden, and dining room, an easy walk to the port and center of the quaint town of Barneville-Carteret.

### **Wed Jun 8 - DAY 4 of hike**

La Hague Coastal Trail; 5 miles, easy to moderate

This morning you wake to the sound of seabirds and the smell of the salty air. The hotel's harbor-side location permits a stroll on your own before breakfast. Today, a short drive brings you to La Hague, meaning "high cape" in French, the Cotentin Peninsula's westernmost point. This area of Normandy is a picturesque place with granite cliffs, small coves, and green fields. Setting off on a bracing walk along a coastal trail lined with wildflowers, you are graced with views of the British isle of Alderney,

the closest Channel Island to the French coast. After a picnic lunch of local cured meats, cheeses, breads, and pastries, you continue walking and soon arrive to the small harbor of Goury, where the seas have some of the strongest currents in Europe. Built in 1834, the Phare de Goury, Goury's lighthouse, signals this local one which is called the Raz Blanchel. This evening you are free to explore the charming port town of Barneville-Carteret with its several restaurants to choose from.

Hotel            Hôtel des Ormes, Barneville-Carteret – 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 nights

### **Thu Jun 9 - DAY 5 of hike**

Le Bec d'Andaine to Tomberlaine Island to Le Bec d'Andaine; 6 miles, easy to moderate

The itinerary today takes you from Normandy into Brittany, starting with a drive to the Baie du Mont St. Michel, known for its extreme tides.

\*\*\*Please note that today's walk is tide dependent and thus the start time can vary greatly. Depending on the lunar pull, the difference between low and high tide can be as much as 50 feet—the third largest tide in the world. \*\*\*

A short stop en route provides a panoramic view of the bay and the pyramid-shaped island monastery of Mont St. Michel, before you arrive at Le Bec d'Andaine and meet your official local guide, who, because of the tides, is required to accompany you over the bay. You step through sand dunes, in the springtime, full of beautiful orchids. With broad views over salt marshes, you gradually cross the three rivers of the bay: the Selune, the See, and the Couesnon; the latter is the official border between Normandy and Brittany. The goal of the first part of the walk is Tomberlaine Island, a protected sanctuary for nesting shell ducks, marine and brown seagulls, and white egrets. From here there are great views of Mont St. Michel, and you may see a group of pilgrims walking along the sands, holding large wooden crosses.

After a simple picnic lunch and on completing the walk, you drive over the border into Brittany (although you have already been in Brittany once on foot today). Your lovely hotel overlooks Cancale Bay, with spectacular views of Mont St. Michel. Dinner tonight at the hotel is a true gastronomic experience—the hotel's chef is the celebrated Olivier Roellinger, one of only a few French chefs to have earned three Michelin stars. Using all local and in-season produce, Olivier is also known for meticulously incorporating spices from all over the world in his stellar cuisine. The wood-paneled dining room is both casually elegant, reflecting your hosts' passion for good food and hospitality. Dinner may start with oysters, either plain or some delicately seasoned, and followed by a main course of lamb that grazed in the nearby salt meadows, or scallop "brochettes" simply seasoned with virgin olive oil and mild chili pepper.

Hotel            Château Richeux, Saint Méloir des Ondes – 1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights  
Le Buot, Saint Meloir des Ondes 35350 (zip 35114 per website), France  
Tele 011 33 299 896 476 (and Tele 33 2 99 89 25 25 per website)  
Email: [info@maisons-de-bricourt.com](mailto:info@maisons-de-bricourt.com) [www.maisons-de-bricourt.com](http://www.maisons-de-bricourt.com)  
A Relais et Chateaux Hotel and Table "Le Coquillage"  
Wi Fi, hair dryers, laundry; coffee? Refrig? Free parking

This Relais & Chateaux property is a luxurious 1920s villa with antique and original furnishings, directly overlooking the water with views of Mont St. Michel. Experience beautiful guestrooms, warm and elegant common rooms, and a renowned restaurant featuring the cuisine of a three-star Michelin chef.

### **Fri Jun 10 - DAY 6 of hike**

Guided walk of Mont St. Michel; 2-3 miles, easy to moderate

Today you explore Mont St. Michel, one of the most impressive constructions of the Middle Ages—a quintessential image of northern France and also a UNESCO World Heritage site. Your transfer takes you across a causeway to a small island just a half mile off the coast, where your guide leads you through the narrow back streets, winding your way to the top of the mount at the door of the Benedictine Abbey, dating from the 8th century. The majority of the buildings here were built, however, in the 11th century, with the church's main façade dating from the 12th century. You learn about the lives of medieval monks and village life, with a particular emphasis on the island's extraordinarily preserved architecture.

Later you gather for a sumptuous **meal in a home** to toast your exploration of France's enchanting northern coast. Your private chef chooses the freshest selection of the day, perhaps starting with hors d'oeuvres of delicate Normandy cheese or fresh seafood from the Cotentin Peninsula.

Hotel Château Richeux, Saint Méloir des Ondes – 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 nights

### **Sat Jun 11 - DAY 7 of hike**

Bayeux Tapestry visit.

After another delicious breakfast, you transfer to the charming town of Bayeux arriving mid-morning. A settlement since the 1st century B.C., Bayeux has remained an important town in the Normandy region and was virtually untouched during the Battle of Normandy. Here, you visit the fabulous Bayeux Tapestry, which was probably commissioned in the 1070s and commemorated the 1066 Norman conquest of England. The tapestry shows, scene by scene, the story of William the Conqueror and Harold, Earl of Wessex, the men who led the Norman and Saxon armies in 1066. William's defeat of Harold at the Battle of Hastings ensured the success of the Norman invasion of England. Surprisingly, this priceless treasure is not a true tapestry, but rather a 230-foot-long embroidered cloth.

Strolling through the charming streets of Bayeux, you enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, a final taste of the bounty of this enchanting region. After lunch, a short transfer to the Bayeux train station is provided where you bid farewell to your newfound friends before your onward travels.

2:00pm End of hike at Bayeux train station

Hotel Hotel Villa Lara – 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 nights in suite  
6 Place de Quebec, 14400 Bayeux Tele 011 33 231 920 055  
Tele per website – for local calls: 02 31 92 00 55  
Email [info@hotel-villalara.com](mailto:info@hotel-villalara.com) [www.hotel-villalara.com](http://www.hotel-villalara.com)  
Wi Fi free; Coffee yes; Refrig yes; Parking?

### **Tue Jun 14**

pm Travel to Paris, turn in car around 4pm, stay at airport

Hotel Hilton Paris Charles De Gaulle – 1 night  
Roissypole, Rue de Rome, BP16461, Roissy CDG, Cedex, 95708 Tele 33 14919 7777

### **Wed Jun 15**

9:45am Depart Paris CDG via UA#56  
12:00pm Arrive Newark EWR

## **Participants**

Julie Harris, New York, NY

Frederic and Judith Schubert, Portsmouth, NH

Daniel Wolk and Ann Carmel, New York, NY

Alan and Janet Rosenfeld, Wilmette, IL

Robert and Melanie Moore, Fairhope, AL

Jane Lyons, Fort Myers, FL (sisters)

Gail Schilly, Fort Myers, FL

Jean Perreault, Stoneham, MA

Leslie Lake, Saugus, MA

Rudolph (Rudy) Landry Jr and Donna Boden, Bowling Green, KY (from Basque hike)

Danya and Edward Goerig, Houston, TX

Diana Burton, Middletown, NJ

## **Guides**

Arnaud Guerin, Caen, France - born and raised in Normandy, is a geologist, specializing in volcanology and the environment. He is also a professional photographer, and an author of photography and nature books. He has been a guide for the past 12 years and in his free time likes to go sea-kayaking, mountain biking, and sailing. He also likes to cook.

Claire Thiolere, Chamonix, France – a native of the world-renowned alpine resort of Chamonix, Claire spent months during her youth vacationing in Normandy thanks to her parents' passion for the local history of Honfleur, Mont Saint-Michel, and the Cotentin Peninsula. She also traveled extensively in her youth throughout Africa before returning to France where she received her Master's degree in Geography and Geomorphology. She is a certified guide who has been leading people throughout the Alps for more than 25 years and has also led groups along the Norman coast when not sailing the same coast herself. An avid hiker and skier, Claire's enthusiasm extends to the impressionist painters whose artistic movement was born in Le Havre, as well as French literature, architecture, and gastronomy.

Emergency: [mail@oncallinternational.com](mailto:mail@oncallinternational.com) Text 603 838 3169 Tele 800 555 9095 or

Tele collect to 800 555 9095 or 603 894 4710

Signed up with embassy at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) - American Embassy, 2, Avenue Gabriel, Paris 8<sup>th</sup>

Tele 01 43 12 22 22

## **Links:**

Mont-Saint-Michel statue removed for restoration

<http://www.usatoday.com/videos/travel/2016/03/15/81811340/?csp=travel>

## ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

## RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Here's just one example that highlights our sustainable practices:

Home Grown: Close to the lovely port of Honfleur, lunch is enjoyed at the Manoir d'Apreval, a family-owned estate surrounded by a magnificent apple orchard. The estate specializes in cider and Calvados, blending 17 different varieties of apples in a restored press to produce their signature cider. With the addition of time and oak barrel storage, Pommeau and Calvados are equally celebrated.

## Tour Itinerary Overview

### TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Hôtel Mercure Rouen Centre Cathedrale, Rouen, France, 9:00 a.m.  
7, rue Croix de Fer, 76012 Rouen Cedex 1, France, Tel 011 33 235 526 938

### NIGHTS 1 & 2

Les Maisons de Léa  
Honfleur, France, Tel 011 33 231 144 949  
Email [contact@lesmaisonsdelea.com](mailto:contact@lesmaisonsdelea.com) [www.lesmaisonsdelea.com](http://www.lesmaisonsdelea.com)  
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

### NIGHTS 3 & 4

Hôtel de la Marine  
Barneville-Carteret, France Tel 011 33 233 538 331  
Email [infos@hotelmachine.com](mailto:infos@hotelmachine.com) [www.hotelmachine.com](http://www.hotelmachine.com)  
Wireless Internet, and laundry service available.

### NIGHTS 5 & 6

Château Richeux  
Saint Méloir des Ondes, France Tel 011 33 299 896 476  
Email [info@maisons-de-bricourt.com](mailto:info@maisons-de-bricourt.com) [www.maisons-de-bricourt.com](http://www.maisons-de-bricourt.com)  
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

### TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Bayeux Train Station, Bayeux, France, 2:00 p.m.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT

One Call International  
Email [mail@oncallinternational.com](mailto:mail@oncallinternational.com)

If communicating from within the US: Text 603.838.3169 Tel 800.555.9095



If calling from outside the US: Tel 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710

When calling from outside the USA, you will need to dial the access code for the country you are calling from (a complete list of access codes, provided by AT&T, can be found on the Country Walkers website under Travel Tips and Travel Resources: International Access Codes).

In the unlikely event you are unable to connect by phone with One Call, or the region you are calling from does not have an access code, you should speak with a live international operator and ask them to place a collect call to 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710.

#### Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH - 7 days, 6 nights

DEPARTURE DATE - June 5-11, 2016

SCHEDULED GROUP PRICE, TOUR ONLY- \$4,698 (Single +\$748)

If you are interested in reserving the optional Flight + Tour Combo and pre- or post-tour extensions for our scheduled group departures, please refer to the attached itinerary for tour length, dates, pricing, and inclusions.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME - Hôtel Mercure Rouen Centre Cathedrale, Rouen, France, 9:00 a.m.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME - Bayeux Train Station, Bayeux, France, 2:00 p.m.

ACTIVITY LEVEL - This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 3 to 5 miles per day. Walks are along grassy trails, atop cliffs overlooking the sea, and over sand dunes. The terrain is smooth with few rocks or roots to negotiate, although there could be mud in some places after rain. Please note that on Day 5, the walk in the Bay of Mont St. Michel is on tidal flats and entails wading across a few narrow channels of water (maximum of 100 feet in width), therefore you are required to walk barefoot and to wear shorts (the water will be no higher than mid-thigh). On this day, we recommend sport sandals (such as Tevas or something similar) to wear before and after the walk. Please note that on Day 3, the mileage is minimal as the main focus is the D-Day beaches and the American Military Cemetery. The itinerary presents a mixture of lovely seaside and rural landscapes, as well as birdlife, and focuses on the landing beaches of World War II and their accompanying history, the Viking and Norse invasions of the 9th century, medieval architecture and history, and the traditional customs and food of both Normandy and Brittany.

#### INCLUSIONS

- » Two expert, local guides (for groups of 8 or more), with you 24/7
- » All meals except for one lunch and two dinners; local wine or beer included with dinners
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » Destination information (weather, visa requirements, etc.) and other travel assistance available 24/7 provided by One Call International

- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN - Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Guest Acknowledgment of Risk and you will receive:

- » Luggage tags
- » List of travel companions and guide biographies

GRATUITIES - Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers. Should you wish to tip your Country Walkers guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per guide, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per guide, per day), and can be paid in USD or local currency.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME - Hôtel Mercure Rouen Centre Cathedrale, Rouen, France, 9:00 a.m.

Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT - Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG), Paris

aeroportsdeparis.fr or paris-cdg.com

**GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT** - Taxi from Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport to center of Paris (Gare St. Lazare train station): approximately 1¼ hours and 55 euros (approximately \$75 USD), depending on the time of day and the traffic.

Train from Gare St. Lazare train station to Rouen: Trains leave approximately every hour and the journey takes between 1 and 1½ hours, depending on whether the train is direct. Be sure to validate your ticket in the little orange machines located on the platform prior to boarding, or you may be assessed a large fine.

For further rail information, including reservations, schedules, and up-to-date fares, please call Rail Europe at 877.257.2887 or consult their website: [raileurope.com](http://raileurope.com). Or you may consult the French rail website: [voyages-sncf.com](http://voyages-sncf.com).

Rouen: A short taxi ride from the Rouen train station to the meeting-point hotel costs between 5 and 10 euros (\$7 to \$14 USD).

Private transfers: Another option is to take a private car from Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport, either to Paris Gare St. Lazare or to Rouen. You can get a quote and reserve a transfer service on-line through Paris City Line ([paris-city-line.com](http://paris-city-line.com)).

**PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS** - If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to stay in Rouen, at our meeting point hotel, which is conveniently located just a two-minute walk away from the cathedral. Quieter rooms are located on the upper floors of the hotel.

Hôtel Mercure Rouen Centre Cathedrale, 7, rue Croix de Fer, 76012 Rouen Cedex 1, France

Tel 011 33 235 526 952 Email [H1301@accor.com](mailto:H1301@accor.com) [www.mercure.com](http://www.mercure.com)

Double "Privilege" room rates (one double bed, balcony, cathedral views) start around \$190 USD per night. To make a reservation, please contact the hotel directly or through their website.

If you wish to stay somewhere more luxurious we recommend the following hotel, which is a short taxi ride (approximately 5 to 6 euros or \$7 to \$8 USD) from the meeting point hotel, and about the same distance away from the Rouen train station.

Hôtel de Bourgtheroulde, 15 Place de la Pucelle, 76000 Rouen, France, Tel 011 33 235 145 050

Email [info@hotelsparouen.com](mailto:info@hotelsparouen.com) [www.hotelsparouen.com](http://www.hotelsparouen.com)

Double room rates start around 230 euros per night (approximately \$260 USD). Please contact the hotel directly to make this reservation.

If you arrive in Rouen with time to spare before the beginning of the tour, we recommend going to the Rouen Tourist Office, which is located on 25 Place du Cathedrale and within a short walking distance from the meeting point hotel. It is open daily from 9:30-12:30 and 1:30-6:00. Here you can rent audio headphones, which will take you on a walking tour of Rouen, at a cost of approximately 5 euros per person (approximately \$7 USD). This will give you a good general overview of the city.

**DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS** - If you are delayed or miss the scheduled group meeting point for any reason, we kindly request that you contact our emergency assistance provider, One Call International. This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to assist you with any type of travel delay. Please refer to the Emergency Contact details on your Tour Itinerary Overview page for One Call International contact details.

**TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME** - Bayeux Train Station, Bayeux, France, 2:00 p.m.

The most convenient way to travel from Bayeux to Paris is by train. There are trains leaving for Paris several times a day. The train from Bayeux to Paris takes approximately two hours and 15 minutes. Please see information above about Rail Europe.

**POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS** - If you wish to extend your stay in Bayeux, below are two hotels in the heart of the historic town: a four-star boutique hotel and a three-star hotel. Please contact them directly or reserve via their website.

Hotel Villa Lara, 6 Place de Québec, 14400 Bayeux, Tel 011 33 231 920 055

Email [info@hotel-villalara.com](mailto:info@hotel-villalara.com) [www.hotel-villalara.com](http://www.hotel-villalara.com)

Rates for classic double rooms start at approximately 290 euros (approximately \$325 USD).

Hotel Churchill, 14-16 Rue Saint Jean, 14400 Bayeux, Tel 011 33 231 213 180

Email [info@hotel-churchill.fr](mailto:info@hotel-churchill.fr) [www.hotel-churchill.fr](http://www.hotel-churchill.fr)

Rates for standard double room start at 110 euros (approximately \$150 USD).

If you wish to stay in an alternate hotel, you will find more listed on the following website: [normandie-tourisme.fr](http://normandie-tourisme.fr)

**GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES** - Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

**CANCELLATION POLICY** - Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost\*. Please notify us in writing.

\*One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE** - We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

**TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS** - Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or [bettertravel@madriver.com](mailto:bettertravel@madriver.com)), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.

#### France at a Glance

**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS** - U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

**Travel Tip** - Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some euros in small denominations.

**CURRENCY** - France uses the euro (EUR). For up-to-date exchange rates, see [oanda.com](http://oanda.com).

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

**TIME ZONE** - France is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus six hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see [worldtimezone.com](http://worldtimezone.com).

**PHONE & INTERNET** - France country code: +33

Cell phone coverage throughout France is extensive but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to [countrywalkers.com/phones](http://countrywalkers.com/phones).

Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary

**FOOD & DRINK** - French cuisine has great regional variation and, thus, is based on fresh and local ingredients from each area. In France's northern tier, the rich butter- and cream-based classics originated—and the creamy cow's milk cheeses of Normandy such as camembert. Fresh seafood, especially oysters, is served in Brittany. In the Alps, hearty mountain fare includes cheese fondue and grilled raclette cheese over steamed potatoes. The cuisine of southern France is quintessentially Mediterranean, with olive oil, herbs, fresh vegetables, and goat cheeses. Common to all regions, of course, are crusty breads, buttery croissants, and exquisite desserts, from fine pastries to rustic fruit tarts.

A meal in France—lunch or dinner—typically consists of three courses, starting with an entrée (appetizer), followed by a plat principal (main dish), and finishing with a dessert or cheese plate. First brought to Narbonne in the south by the Romans, the wines of France mirror the variation and excellence of its cuisine. Menus feature a region's local wines, as well as those from other regions. For example, In Provence, red Rhône or rosé wines pair perfectly with the cuisine. In Normandy and Brittany, local hard cider is served with crepes and Calvados, apple brandy, as an after-dinner digestif.

Tipping - Gratuities in restaurants and bars are included in the total bill (service compris); however it is customary to leave 5 to 10 percent of the total, or to round up the total. Taxi drivers are tipped 10 to 15 percent of the total. For luggage assistance, a tip of 1 to 2 euros per bag is appropriate.