

## France: Normandy & Brittany

### Bike Vacation + Air Package

Can't decide if you'd rather cycle the historic coast of Normandy or Brittany's charming seaside villages? On this VBT cycling vacation, you get it all! With six full nights to explore the region, you'll enjoy a well-paced journey—unpacking for three nights in each authentic, French hotel. Explore scenic Bayeux—renowned for its tapestry depicting the Norman Conquest. Dive into history when a local historian walks you through the D-day invasion during a guided tour of Omaha Beach and the American Cemetery. Pedaling along the sea-swept coast of Brittany with your French VBT trip leaders, you'll discover the ancient walled city of Dinan and the seaside village of Cancale—where you can sample fresh local oysters. A guided tour of the glorious Benedictine abbey at Mont Saint-Michel is a highlight you'll remember for a lifetime.

### Cultural Highlights

- Visualize the dramatic events of D-day as you tour the American Cemetery and Omaha Beach with our expert local guide.
- Discover a former Benedictine monastery in Longues-sur-Mer on a private tour followed by a picnic lunch featuring regional specialties.
- Delight in *al fresco* cider and oyster tastings.
- Stroll a fairytale setting of ramparts, half-timbered houses, and harbor views on a guided tour of the Breton town of Dinan.
- Visit the Arromanches D-day Landing museum and learn about the construction of the Mulberry B artificial harbor, the remains of which can still be seen outside the museum.
- Enjoy a night on your own in Bayeux and in Saint-Malo where you will find authentic *creperies* to savor the paper-thin-style pancake, a specialty of Brittany and Normandy.
- Visit spectacular Mont Saint-Michel, the medieval island-village crowned by its well-preserved Benedictine abbey.

### What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of easy terrain mixed with moderate hills. Our VBT support vehicle is available for those who would like assistance. There will be sections of dedicated bike paths where the VBT support vehicle is not able to access. Ideal for beginning and experienced cyclists.

**Tour Duration:** 10 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 9-28 miles

**Average Cycling Time:** 2-4.5 hours

**Group size:** 20 max

## Climate Information

### **Average High/Low Temperature (°F)**

April 57°/43°, May 63°/46°, June 68°/52°, July 72°/55°, August 70°/55°, September 68°/52°, October 61°/46°

### **Average Rainfall (in.)**

April 1.8, May 2.4, June 1.9, July 1.9, August 2.1, September 2.8, October 2.7

## FLIGHT DAY: Depart for Your Vacation

Your vacation is about to begin! Spend your first night aloft and arrive ready for an unforgettable trip.

## ARRIVAL DAY: Arrive in Paris / Pre-Tour Hotel Night: Paris

A VBT representative will greet you at the airport to start your first day in Paris off right. A complimentary car service will whisk you to your centrally located hotel. From here, you are perfectly positioned to explore this charming city at your leisure.

## DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Travel to Bayeux / Warm-Up Ride

After an included breakfast, meet in the hotel lobby at 8:30 a.m. to join private coach transportation to Bayeux, departing at 9:00 a.m. If you're using your own pedals or saddle, please pack them in your carry-on luggage for easy access. The journey takes approximately 3.5 hours, depending on traffic.

Upon arrival in Bayeux, meet your VBT trip leaders and enjoy a light lunch at your hotel before a safety and bike-fitting session.

Your biking adventure begins with a relaxed warm-up ride from your hotel into the lush Norman countryside.

Note: For tours staying at Château Saint-Gilles in Guéron, the warm-up ride will take place in the

surrounding countryside.

This evening, gather with your fellow travelers for a welcome reception, followed by dinner at the hotel.

### Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Warm-Up Ride — 12 km (8 miles)

### What to Expect:

Your warm-up ride loops into the surrounding countryside, following a combination of quiet roads and dedicated bike lanes.

Cumulative Distance Range: 12 km (8 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 2: Ride to Port-en-Bessin / Abbey of Longues-sur-Mer / German Batteries / Bayeux**

Pedal out of Bayeux into rural Normandy for an up-close look at its celebrated fertile pasturelands, dotted with grazing cows and half-timbered country manors. Continue to Port-en-Bessin, the region's top fishing port, renowned for its delicious scallops, which bear the prestigious *Label Rouge* quality mark.

Next, cycle to the Abbey of Longues-sur-Mer for a private guided tour of this former Benedictine abbey. Enjoy a stroll through its peaceful gardens before a picnic lunch featuring local delicacies, including apple cider and juice. Since the 1600s, Normandy has been famous for its exceptional apples and the beverages they produce—most notably cider and Calvados, the region's signature apple brandy.

After lunch, you may continue cycling toward the German batteries of Longues-sur-Mer to view World War II coastal fortifications perched on a headland overlooking the English Channel, before returning to Bayeux.

The remainder of the afternoon is free for independent exploration in Bayeux. You may wish to visit the museum housing the intricate 11th-century Bayeux Tapestry—a treasured, 220-foot-long embroidered cloth that depicts the Battle of Hastings and William the Conqueror's victory over the English. In

pedestrian-friendly Bayeux, you might also choose to walk to the Battle of Normandy Memorial Museum.

Note: The Bayeux Tapestry Museum will close on September 1, 2025. The tapestry will be relocated to a new section of the museum, scheduled to reopen in 2027.

Tonight, enjoy dinner on your own in town.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Bayeux to Port-en-Bessin and Abbey — 20 km (12 miles)

Afternoon: Abbey to Bayeux — 8 km (5 miles) | Abbey to German Batteries and Bayeux — 13 km (8 miles)

### What to Expect:

Cycle out of Bayeux along bike lanes and quiet country roads to the charming port town of Port-en-Bessin, a former 19th-century port of refuge that became Normandy's leading fishing harbor with the opening of its fish market in the 1970s. Watch the boats unload their catch at the quayside and browse the town's quaint shops before continuing uphill to Longues-sur-Mer for a private guided tour of its historic abbey, followed by a generous picnic lunch. Afterward, choose between two cycling routes back to Bayeux—one featuring a stop at the German coastal batteries overlooking the English Channel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 8 – 33 km (5 – 20 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 3: Cycle to Arromanches

After breakfast, cycle through rolling farmlands and timeless country villages en route to the coastal town of Arromanches, which played a crucial role in the D-Day landings. Here, the Allies constructed one of the famous Mulberry harbors—portable, temporary structures used to transfer troops and supplies.

Remnants of the harbor are still visible at low tide. Learn more about its significance during an included audio-guided visit to the D-Day Museum. For an additional independent discovery, consider visiting Arromanches 360, a circular theater presenting a compelling film about D-Day and its aftermath, blending wartime footage with modern images. Enjoy lunch on your own in Arromanches—and perhaps even take a dip in the Channel!

Afterward, you may either cycle or shuttle back to the hotel. This afternoon, consider visiting Bayeux's magnificent cathedral, consecrated in 1077 in the presence of William the Conqueror.

Later, regroup with your fellow travelers for dinner at the hotel.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Bayeux to Arromanches — 22 km (14 miles)

Afternoon: Arromanches to Bayeux — 12 km (7 miles) OR Arromanches to Bayeux PLUS — 19 km (12 miles)

### What to Expect:

This morning's route leads through the rural Norman countryside, passing traditional farms and villages on the way to the coastal town of Arromanches, where you'll enjoy views of the historic artificial harbor. In the afternoon, if you choose to continue cycling, you can select from shorter or longer routes back to the hotel. The rest of the day is free for independent exploration in Bayeux before regrouping at the hotel for dinner.

Cumulative Distance Range: 12 – 41 km (7-26 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 4: Guided Visit: American Cemetery & Omaha Beach / Travel to Saint-Malo**

This morning, cycle through verdant countryside and fragrant orchards, passing old stone farmhouses on your way to the American Cemetery—a 170-acre (69-hectare), meticulously landscaped memorial overlooking Omaha Beach and the English Channel. Here, you'll meet your passionate local guide, a World War II expert, who will share insight into this powerful site, where 9,387 white crosses and Stars of David mark the graves of American servicemen and women who gave their lives during World War II.

Next, cycle a short distance to Omaha Beach, perhaps the most well-known D-Day landing site. Rejoin your guide for a walk along the shore, learning about the events of June 6, 1944, when Operation Overlord—the largest military operation in history—began. Conclude your guided visit with an included

lunch.

Afterward, take time to reflect or opt to visit the small, family-owned D-Day Omaha Museum, or continue cycling to Pointe du Hoc via the scenic seaside bike path.

From here, travel by coach to Saint-Malo, a stunning medieval fortified city along Brittany's coast and legendary home of French corsairs, or privateers. Your hotel is located directly on the broad sandy beach and the wide seaside promenade leading into the walled Old Town. During your stay, you'll have access to spa and therapy facilities, including an indoor seawater pool (Aquatonic). This evening, gather for dinner at a nearby restaurant.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Bayeux to American Cemetery — 28 km (18 miles) | American Cemetery to Omaha Beach — 9 km (6 miles)

Afternoon: Omaha Beach to Pointe du Hoc — 9 km (5 miles)

#### What to Expect:

Today's ride begins with city streets and bike lanes leading out of Bayeux and into the Normandy countryside, where you'll pass meadows and apple orchards along quiet, narrow roads en route to the American Cemetery for a guided visit. The ride continues with a short but steep descent to Omaha Beach, where the guided visit concludes before an included lunch. In the afternoon, cycle along a scenic gravel path by the sea to Pointe du Hoc, where you may choose to visit the visitor center. From there, travel by coach to Saint-Malo, arriving around 6:45 p.m. After check-in and time to freshen up, gather for dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Cumulative Distance Range: 9 – 46 km (5 – 29 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 5: Visit Dinan / Saint-Suliac

After breakfast, take a 40-minute shuttle to Dinan, a fairytale walled city perched high on a hill at the edge of Brittany. There, you'll join a local guide for a walk through the narrow cobblestone streets of its

medieval center, where a splendid Gothic church awaits.

Following some free time for lunch, reunite with your bike at the town's riverside port and set off on a scenic ride along the River Rance. You'll pause to explore Saint-Suliac, a charming village known for its quintessential granite homes adorned with fishing nets. Later this afternoon, enjoy time at your hotel to relax, take a swim in the ocean (weather permitting), or stroll along the seaside promenade. Your trip leaders will offer recommendations for dinner on your own this evening.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Dinan to Saint-Suliac — 26 km (16 miles) | Saint-Suliac to Saint-Malo — 19 km (12 miles)

#### What to Expect:

After a tour and time to explore Dinan's market, begin your ride from this beautifully preserved Breton town along a gentle, designated bike route that follows the Rance River. The path includes a few miles of hard-packed gravel before reaching the charming fishing port of Saint-Suliac. For those choosing the longer option, the ride continues from Saint-Suliac along quiet country roads before transitioning to the slightly busier streets leading into Saint-Malo.

Cumulative Distance Range: 19 – 45 km (12 – 28 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

## DAY 6: Cancale / Saint-Malo / Farewell Dinner

Today's ride follows the beautifully rugged Brittany coast. Your first stop is the Jacques Cartier Manor House. In 1534, Cartier crossed the Atlantic and sailed up the St. Lawrence River as far as present-day Montreal. After his explorations—and after naming the land "Canada"—he settled in this manor house, located between Saint-Malo and Cancale. Enjoy a visit and a short film about this native Breton explorer.

Continue cycling along the coast, taking in sweeping views from Pointe du Grouin before arriving in the picturesque fishing port of Cancale, renowned for its exceptional *huîtres*, or oysters. King Louis XIV was reportedly so fond of these local delicacies that he had them delivered daily from Cancale to Versailles. During a visit to the oyster market, you'll have the chance to sample them yourself, shoulder to shoulder with the locals.

After lunch on your own, loop back to Saint-Malo via another scenic route. Spend the remainder of the afternoon exploring Saint-Malo or unwinding in the hotel's Aquatonic Course.

This evening, gather for an apéritif at the hotel before a special farewell dinner.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Saint-Malo to Cancale — 24 km (15 miles)

Afternoon: Cancale to Saint-Malo — 13 km (8 miles)

#### What to Expect:

Admire sweeping views as you ride along the rugged Brittany coastline to Cancale this morning. In the afternoon, extend your ride inland through a fertile agricultural region known for its diverse vegetable crops.

Cumulative Distance Range: 13 – 37 km (8 – 23 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 7: Travel to Versailles via Mont Saint-Michel / Your VBT Vacation Ends / Post-Tour Hotel Night: Versailles**

After breakfast, say goodbye to your VBT trip leaders and depart for Paris, stopping en route at one of France's most iconic landmarks: Mont Saint-Michel. Upon arrival, meet your local guide in the Mont Saint-Michel parking area, then accompany them across the causeway through the Gulf of Saint-Malo to the island village.

A UNESCO World Heritage site, the cone-shaped island is renowned for its spectacular and well-preserved 13th-century Benedictine abbey, which rises roughly 240 feet (73 meters) above sea level. Your guide will lead you through the narrow medieval streets that spiral upward to the Gothic monastic buildings at the summit.

Afterward, enjoy free time for lunch and to explore the shops and atmospheric alleyways on your own. Then rejoin the coach for the journey to your hotel, Le Louis Versailles Château, in Versailles



(approximately 5.5 hours, depending on traffic). The remainder of the evening is yours to relax, dine at the hotel's restaurant, or explore nearby dining options in Versailles.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **DEPARTURE DAY: Departure**

After an included breakfast this morning, complimentary transportation will be provided to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport—a drive of approximately 60 to 90 minutes, depending on traffic—for your departing flight.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **Accommodations**

May vary depending on departure date.

### **Hotel Rochester (Arrival Day)**

This 4-star hotel is located a few steps from the Champs-Élysées and the Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré, in one of Paris' most elegant and well-known quarters. It is a very easy and safe base for exploring, shopping, and taking evening strolls. Small and family-run, it exudes an ambiance of elegance, charm, and Old World traditions. Relax in the hotel spa and in your room, which is decorated in a Louis XV style. Enjoy its modern amenities, including air conditioning (April to October), cable satellite TV, free wireless Internet service, in-room safe, and minibar.

### **Le Lion d'Or (Days 1-3)**

This 4-star boutique hotel has a long tradition of hospitality, as it is a renovated 18th-century coaching inn. Located in the historic heart of Bayeux, it is tucked into an inner private courtyard just steps away from the famed Tapestry Museum. Individually decorated rooms are light-filled, with modern tones and fabrics paired with classic furnishings. A welcoming bar and lounge at the entrance are near the fine-dining restaurant.

### **Grand Hotel des Thermes (Days 4-6)**

Overlooking the Gulf of Saint-Malo, the 5-star Grand Hotel des Thermes offers a luxurious end to a day of biking. Since 1881, as a vacation retreat for European royalty, it continues that tradition of excellence today. As a guest, you'll enjoy free access to the swimming pool, sauna, hammam (Turkish-style bath), and fitness area. The hotel also boasts a popular spa with a selection of treatments, a bar, and three restaurants. All rooms have a private balcony.

### **Hotel Le Louis Versailles Chateau (Day 7)**

This MGallery Collection boutique hotel—Hotel Le Louis Versailles Chateau—is a few steps from the famous Château de Versailles, perfect for discovering this grand palace. The hotel now holds the label Accueil Vélo and is committed to providing a welcome and services adapted to cyclists! Air-conditioned guest rooms feature interior design by the Sundukovy Sisters. L'Alcôve Bar and Restaurant, with glass roof and terrace, invite you to savor classic French dishes. And relax in the fitness center with hammam, sauna, and sensorial shower.