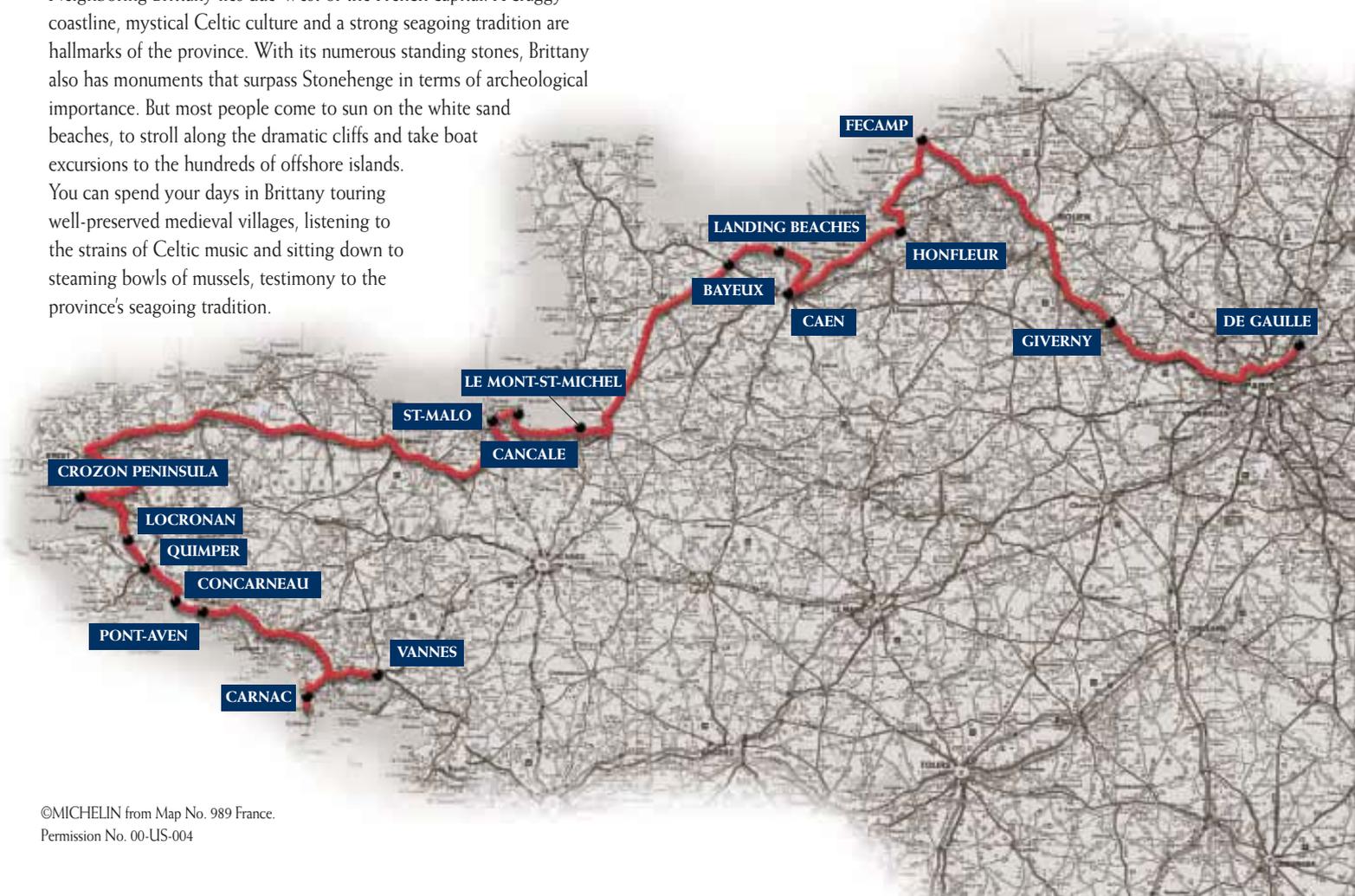


NORMANDY LIES NORTHWEST OF PARIS, a visually splendid combination of rolling agricultural land, sandy beaches and classic French port towns. Between the cathedral at Bayeux and Monet's garden at Giverny, the back roads of Normandy are ideal for exploring, a place where you're apt to spy ancient half-timbered houses. The land of Calvados and Camembert, of classic French cuisine, Normandy is a place where your manor house hotel overlooking a 19th century seaside boardwalk provides a more telling glimpse into French culture than any museum can.

## NORMANDY & BRITTANY

Neighboring Brittany lies due West of the French capital. A craggy coastline, mystical Celtic culture and a strong seagoing tradition are hallmarks of the province. With its numerous standing stones, Brittany also has monuments that surpass Stonehenge in terms of archeological importance. But most people come to sun on the white sand beaches, to stroll along the dramatic cliffs and take boat excursions to the hundreds of offshore islands. You can spend your days in Brittany touring well-preserved medieval villages, listening to the strains of Celtic music and sitting down to steaming bowls of mussels, testimony to the province's seagoing tradition.



## NORMANDY & BRITTANY

(Mileage is estimated from each preceding city or site. Before you begin your trip, please note: For space reasons, we could not provide the most detailed map with this brochure. We recommend the use of **Michelin Map No. 231 Normandie & Michelin Map No. 230 Bretagne** in conjunction with this guide.) To order Michelin maps call: 1-800-223-0987

### CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT

The major gateway to Paris and the rest of France, the airport lies northeast of Paris and is a fine starting point for an exploration of nearby Normandy and Brittany.

58 Miles

**GIVERNY** The water lilies, the carpet of nasturtiums, the rhododendrons and the wisteria are memorable attractions in the gardens that surround the house where painter Claude Monet lived from 1883 until his death in 1926. You can stroll through the large studio where he painted his water lily canvases, and then step into the house, with its famously bright yellow kitchen. The works on display are reproductions, but it matters not, because you still get a true sense of how it was when Monet lived, painted and planted here. The gardens may well be his greatest masterpiece.

83 Miles

**FÉCAMP** This town is a fine example of a classic French fishing port, but in truth, the Benedictine Distillery that can be found here is the larger draw, with a small museum to tour and a tasting to follow. The church of la Trinité is the other attraction here, with its medieval nave and carved screens that date from the Renaissance.

30 Miles

**HONFLEUR** This town is the best-preserved port on the coast of Normandy. Near the Vieux Bassin, or old docks, there are slate-fronted 16th and 17th century houses that appear to have come from a children's book. Stop at the Musée de la Marine, housed in the church of St. Etienne, which features model ships and antique furnishings. There are painters and galleries galore in Honfleur, due in part to native son Eugene Boudin, a forerunner of Impressionism and a teacher to the young Monet. The Musée Eugene Boudin shows much of his work, with additional paintings by Monet, Dufy and others.

41 Miles

**CAEN** Despite a severe bombardment during the War, there are some marvelous ruins remaining in Caen. Start with the ramparts of William the Conqueror's château. Within those walls is a Beaux-Arts museum, which houses work by Rembrandt, Durer, Monet and Bonnard. Be sure to visit the Abbaye aux Hommes, and the church of St. Etienne, a Romanesque structure designed to hold the tomb of William the Conqueror. The matching site is the Abbaye aux Dames, which was commissioned by Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror. At its heart is the church of la Trinité.

16 Miles

**LANDING BEACHES** The gentle dunes and grasses along the beaches of Normandy make it rather difficult to conjure up the scenario that began here on D-Day, June 6, 1944. On that day, the Allies landed along the coast between the river Orne and the Dunes de Varneville in their attempt to change the course of the War. The placid beaches are still best known by their wartime code names, such as Omaha, Utah and Juno. There are monuments placed along the 60 mile stretch of sand, and seemingly every town has its own war museum. At the St-Laurent-sur-Mer cemetery, you'll find the final resting place of thousands of Americans.

10 Miles

**BAYEUX** One of the gems of Normandy, Bayeux offers a glimpse into the Middle Ages. Of paramount interest is the justly famed Bayeux Tapestry, a 70-meter embroidered linen artifact recounting the Norman Conquest of Britain, now housed in the Centre Guillaume-le-Conquérant. Be sure to visit the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, which once housed the tapestry, and still bears traces of a Romanesque layout. The Musée de la Bataille de Normandie is also well worth a visit.

91 Miles

**MONT-ST-MICHEL** This is truly one of the most wondrous and most visited sites in all of France. The site of Medieval pilgrimages, the island still retains its magic despite an influx of tourists. The abbey, which includes the archangel-topped church and the Gothic buildings that are known as the Merveille, or the marvel, is indeed awe-inspiring. But simply getting to Mont-St-Michel is half the fun, thanks to the dramatic causeway that connects it to the mainland. Once you're there, walk around the narrow streets on the base of the rock, with its jumble of medieval houses, and get away from the crowds to explore on your own. If time permits, go to the North Tower to watch the tide rush in across the bay, a site that's most dramatic during March and September.

30 Miles

**CANCALE** This town is for anyone who adores oysters. Evidence of Cancale's obsession with the bivalve can be found by stepping into the church of St-Meen, which houses the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires. So delectable are the oysters from this town that Cancale shells have been found in the camps of Julius Caesar. They were eaten by Louis XIV at Versailles and accompanied Napoleon to Moscow. Even today, the shells litter the beach and the rocks along the shore glisten as if made of mother-of-pearl.

9 Miles

**ST-MALO** Walk the ramparts in the walled city and then stop at the Musée de la Ville for a St-Malo history lesson. The Musée International du Long Cours Cap-Hornier is housed in a 14th century château. It's devoted to those who sailed around Cape Horn, from the 17th to 20th centuries, and it's a trove of nautical memorabilia. Like nearby Mont-St-Michel, this is an area of dramatic tides, and at low water, you can walk out to the Ile de Grand Bé, the burial place of the writer Chateaubriand. But watch the tide, or you'll have to wait at least six hours before returning.

205 Miles

**THE CROZON PENINSULA** Finistère, or Land's End, is that part of Brittany that extends farthest west into the Atlantic, the Brittany of dramatic cliffs and wild scenery. One way to get to the essence of this most famous bit of Brittany is by driving around the rocky Crozon peninsula. Visit the remnants of Brittany's oldest abbey at Landvennec. Pause at the town of Morgat, with its lovely crescent-shaped beach and a delightful harbor. Take a brief boat trip out to the Grottes, spectacularly colored caves in the cliffs that can only be seen via boat. Then continue on to Camaret, a charming little seaside vacation town, for an afternoon or an evening.





53 Miles

**LOCRONAN** This wonderfully preserved medieval town was long a center of sail-making. Nowadays, its primary attraction, apart from its splendid architecture, are the dozens of artisans' shops filled with crafts from local artists.

11 Miles

**QUIMPER** Quimper, which has been beautifully preserved, is the major city of Finistère and the heart of Breton culture. You can listen to the Breton-speaking populace, stroll along the quays of the river Odet and look at the houses along the Rue Keroon and Place au Beurre. You should also make a point of climbing Mont Frugy, which is not an especially difficult walk along the switchback Promenade de Mont Frugy, for a panoramic view of Quimper. You can get a crash course in the culture of Brittany at the Musée Départemental Breton, a bastion of costumes, artifacts and crafts. Since the 17th century, Quimper has been famous for "faïence," glazed earthenware. So pause at the Musée de la Faïence and then visit the Faïenceries HB Henriot to see the most renowned factory that still makes Quimper ware today. If you're here during the last week of July, the Festival de Cornouaille is the province's foremost celebration of Breton culture and music.

14 Miles

**CONCARNEAU** This working fishing town sits on the aptly named Porte de Pêche. The gem here is the Ville Close, a walled city on a tiny island that's connected by a bridge to the mainland. Shops and galleries fill the period houses and you can walk along the ramparts. The Musée de la Pêche houses an aquarium and can tell you virtually everything you ever wanted to know about the fishing industry. The town is also a jump-off for a day trip to the Iles de Glénan, a group of nine islands that lie about 11 miles across the coast.

11 Miles

**PONT-AVEN** The numerous art galleries in Pont-Aven are testimony to the town's best-known artistic resident, painter Paul Gauguin. He came in the 1880s, living and painting here before leaving for Tahiti. The work he did in Pont-Aven, however, is considered some of his finest painting and it inspired many other artists, including Emile Bernard. Take a walk along the Promenade Xavier-Grall, which gives you a bird's eye view of some of the town's more imposing mansions. A stroll of an hour or so will bring you into the Bois d'Amour, a wood that has inspired legions of painters and poets.

44 Miles

**CARNAC** Megaliths are the reason you should come to Carnac. These stones include menhirs, upright stones which may weigh as much as 20 tons, and dolmens, which are stone burial chambers. There's a large concentration of them around Carnac, most dramatically in the "alignements," parallel lines of menhirs that can run for several miles. The exact meaning of the megaliths is still unclear, with speculation about astronomical and religious significance highest on the list of probabilities.

27 Miles

**VANNES** A wonderful seacoast town, made livelier yet by students from the University of Rennes. The section of town known as Vieux Vannes is a maze of streets that surround the cathedral, with ramparts and walled gardens. Inside La Cohue, you'll find the Musée de Vannes, which contains a Beaux Arts museum. Better yet is the nearby Musée d'Archeologie, with a world-class collection of megalithic artifacts and medieval treasures. On a different note, the Aquarium lays claim to having the best collection of tropical fish in Europe. From the harbor, you have views across the Gulf of Morbihan, where tradition had it that there were 365 islands. The number is uncertain, although what is certain is that French celebrities own many of them as fashionable retreats. A boat tour around them is delightful, and thought-provoking, dotted as they are with megalithic ruins.

## HOTELS

**Château d'Audrieu.** Set among formal gardens and acres of parkland, this 18th century château is a protected historical monument. The original architecture has been preserved by owners Gérard and Irène Livry-Level. Caen. Tel: 3302 31 80 21 52; Fax: 33 02 31 80 24 73. For reservations in the U.S.: 800-735-2478.

**La Chaumière.** You're at the point where the Seine meets the sea at the foot of this magnificent half-timbered "chaumière," which is typical of the Normandy region. There are oak-beamed ceilings and just eight guest rooms. The garden terrace is the best spot for sampling traditional Norman cuisine prepared with fresh ingredients from the sea and the surrounding countryside. Route du Littoral, 14600 Honfleur-Vasouy. Tel: 33 02 31 81 63 20; Fax: 33 02 31 89 59 23. For reservations in the U.S.: 800-735-2478.

**La Bretagne et sa Residence.** This ivy-clad manor house is in the picturesque town of Questembert. It's a fine place to try Breton seafood specialties. 13, rue Saint Michel, 56230 Questembert, (Morbihan). Tel: 33 02 97 26 11 12; Fax: 33 02 97 26 12 37. For reservations in the U.S.: 800-735-2478.

**Hôtel de la Plage.** The perfect place to contemplate a Breton sunset is probably from this hotel, which has been welcoming guests since the 1920s. Sample Breton seafood, enjoy it with Loire wines, and then take a walk along the strand before retiring. Sainte-Anne-la-Palud, 29550 Plonevez-Porzay (Finistère). Tel: (33) 02 98 92 50 12; Fax: (33) 02 98 92 56 54; For reservations in the U.S.: 800-735-2478.

**La Ferme St-Siméon.** This restored farm was a retreat for 19th-century painters such as Monet, Sisley and Courbet, who were attracted by the coastal light. The rooms are tastefully decorated, and the menu is a paean to the rich Normandy cuisine. Rue Adolphe-Marais, 14600 Honfleur. Tel: (33) 02 31 81 78 00; Fax: 33 02 31 89 48 48. For reservations in the U.S.: 800-735-2478.

## RESTAURANT

**Le Coquillage** overlooks the bay of Mont-St-Michel and is part of a small hotel complex called Maisons de Bricourt. Here in the heart of oyster country, seafood naturally enough dominates the menu. 1, rue Duguesclin, 35260 Cancale. Tel: 33 02 99 89 64 76; Fax: 33 02 99 89 88 47. For reservations in the U.S.: 800-735-2478.

