

SINCLAIR DIRECT



# City Guides

For your cruise



# Contents

## CAEN CITY GUIDE 3

### Top Attractions

Caen Memorial	3
Caen Castle	3
The Abbaye aux Hommes and Abbaye-aux-Dames	3
Festyland	3
Markets	3
Nearby	4

### Eating & Drinking 4

## ST MALO CITY GUIDE 5

### Top Attractions

Château de St Malo	5
Ramparts	5
St Malo's Cathédrale	5
The Grand Aquarium	5
Corniche d'Aleth	5
Ile du Grand Bé	6
Shopping	6
Dinan and Dinard	6

### Eating & Drinking 6

## CHERBOURG CITY GUIDE 7

### Attractions

The Cité de la Mer	7
Fort du Roule	7
Shopping	7
Ravalet Château	7
Nearby	7

### Eating & Drinking 8

## ROSCOFF CITY GUIDE 9

### Top Attractions

Museum of the 'Onion Johnnies'	9
Thalassotherapy	9
Jardin Exotique	9
Notre Dame de Croatz Batz	10
Ile de Batz	10

### Eating and Drinking 10



## **Caen City Guide**

The capital of lower Normandy is a bustling industrial and cultural centre, with a wealth of medieval abbeys and a magnificent castle. William the Conqueror founded the city in the 11th century, and was laid to rest here, although after the plundering of his coffin in the 16th century only one of his thighbones remained in the city, and this was then stolen during the French Revolution. Fortunately William's legacy still remains in nearby Bayeux, and its fabulous tapestry.

Caen was heavily bombed during the Second World War, and the war is commemorated in the moving Caen Memorial museum. The city's beautiful 11th century abbeys and the castle's art collection, which includes Rubens and Monet, escaped the bombing and are a must-see for any visitor. After the devastation of the war, the local limestone was used to restore much of the town to its former glory. Stroll through the streets and squares, such as the rue Ecuyère, rue Froide and rue Saint Martin, to explore hidden courtyards and medieval, narrow streets. Most of the main historical buildings are located on the left bank of the River Orne, which passes through the city centre.

### ***Top Attractions***

#### **Caen Memorial**

This peace memorial is the second most popular museum in France, after the Louvre, and a must-see for any visitor to Normandy. It is a moving, emotionally-charged museum, giving you an hour-by-hour account of D-Day. The museum also organises tours of the landing beaches, battlefields, and graveyards, of the Second World War.

#### **Caen Castle**

The castle is one of the largest medieval fortresses of Western Europe, and was built by William the Conqueror in around 1060. It is beautifully preserved, and gives fantastic views of the city. It is famous for its large round towers, and houses the Musée des Beaux-Arts, with one of the world's finest collections of European Art.

#### **The Abbaye-aux-Hommes and Abbaye-aux-Dames**

William and his wife Mathilde built these two beautiful abbeys to atone for the "sin" of their marriage. The Pope had excommunicated them for their marriage because they were distant cousins. Their tombs are located in their respective churches, although William's coffin and remains were plundered.

#### **Festyland**

This theme park is a short drive from Caen, and has over 30 attractions to keep the kids entertained.

#### **Markets**

There is a Friday market on the Fosse St-Julien, and a Sunday market at Place Courtonne. Stock up on local specialities, such as Calvados, and cheeses.



## **Nearby**

Two of France's unmissable attractions are a short drive from Caen. The famous Bayeux Tapestry, situated 16 miles west-northwest of Caen, is a stunning piece of work from the 11th century, depicting the Battle of Hastings. Mont St Michel is a World Heritage site, and its Benedictine Abbey is an exquisite and magical sight, perched on the top of a rocky islet rising dramatically out of the sea. Image depicting A lady holding a wine glass

## ***Eating & Drinking***

Normandy dishes are rich and tasty, usually involving lots of cream, butter and cheese. Oysters from Utah Beach are reputed to be superb and have a distinct hazelnut flavour. Normandy is also famous for its cheese and cider.

In Caen, the Vaugueux quarter has a number of excellent restaurants. L'Insolité, Le bouchon du Vaugueux and La Bourride are highly recommended. La Petite Auberge specialises in inexpensive Normandy dishes.

Further from the centre, Pressoir is a Michelin-starred restaurant. The restaurant has a rustic décor and its renowned chef, Yvan Vautier, has modernised traditional Norman cuisine. The food is quite pricey but delicious and specialties include scallops and fresh oven-preserved tomatoes.



## **St Malo City Guide**

Built on a granite island on the Emerald Coast of Brittany, the beautiful city of St Malo rises up from the rock and curves around a natural harbour. Its ancient citadel, the Cathédrale St Vincent, dominates the skyline, and sailing into the port early in the morning best captures the romance of the town.

Founded in the 6th century by Welsh monks, in the 12th century, Bishop Jean de Chatillon also transferred his bishopric to the town. But the town's murkier past is illustrated by its nickname as the City of Corsairs, so-called after its pirates, who routinely preyed upon English ships crossing the channel in the 18th and 19th centuries.

St Malo's heart is the old walled town, known as Intra-Muros or 'within these walls'. Visitors can walk round the ramparts of the city's 20-foot thick walls for one mile to get splendid views of the town and the harbour. Lower down, the city's winding streets, reminds one of a medieval maze, where you can stumble upon quaint shops, bars and restaurants. There are sandy beaches near the town, which stretch along the Northern Brittany Coast.

### ***Top Attractions***

#### **Château de St Malo**

Called the Bastille of the West, the Chateau was first the symbol of ducal power and then Royal power. It has barrack facades, now the town hall, a reservoir, a large keep and a castelet. Its towers house the Musée de l'Histoire de St Malo, where you can discover the city's fascinating past, and find souvenirs of the famous pirates Duguay-Trouin and Surcouf.

#### **Ramparts**

Head for the 15th century Porte St-Vincent to access the magnificent ramparts. The 12-foot wide walls were built over several centuries, some dating from the 12th century, and offer fantastic views of the old town's houses, the bay and the islets at the mouth of the Rance. Most of the ramparts had to be rebuilt after the Second World War.

#### **St Malo's Cathédrale**

The cathedral elegantly marks the transition between Romanesque and Gothic, and is famous for its 1160 nave vault. Admission is free, and it's open daily from 8am to 7pm.

#### **The Grand Aquarium**

The entrance fee includes a fantastic underwater ride on the Nautibus, past wrecks and a lost city.

#### **Corniche d'Aleth**

This lovely walk offers magnificent views of the city of St-Malo, the islands of Petit Bé and Grand Bé, and Cézembre. If the tide is low, consider walking along the stone-flagged path to Grand Bé islet..



## **Ile du Grand Bé**

At low tide, this 25-minute walk will take you to Chateaubriand's tomb, marked by a simple cross. From the Ile you can get great views of the main coastline.

## **Shopping**

There is a hypermarket, just outside the city.

## **Dinan and Dinard**

Take a short boat trip or the Bus de Mer, to Dinard to experience its quaint mansions, casino and beaches. Alternatively drive or take bus 10 to the medieval walled town of Dinan, 20 miles south of St Malo.

## ***Eating & Drinking***

À la Duchesse Anne is one of the town's best restaurants. It is built into the city walls, and has mahogany panelling and summer dining under a canopy. Try the seafood specialties including lobster in a rich brandy sauce and Cancale oysters. The gourmet menu includes five courses and a glass of champagne. The Bistro de Jean is a cosy bistro offering a very reasonably priced menu. L'Univers is great value for money, and has delicious fish soup and fresh oysters. For drinks, head for The Nautilus, which is very like a pub in decor. Expect lots of atmosphere and merriment.



## **Cherbourg City Guide**

Located at the tip of the Cotentin Peninsula, the busy town of Cherbourg has been an important naval base since Napoleonic times, and is a popular gateway to the magnificent region of Normandy. It is a military, fishing and commercial port, with a yachting marina, and boasts the largest artificial harbour in the world. Normandy has a spectacular coastline and plenty of sandy beaches, with dramatic cliffs rising up near Cherbourg.

The old part of Cherbourg is centred around the old fishing port, and from the fortress Fort du Roule, there is a panoramic view over the city. Cherbourg itself is not the prettiest of Norman towns, but it has a number of attractions, including an impressive new aquarium, and peace memorials commemorating the Second World War.

During the summer, festivals are held in the Plage Verte park, the entrance of which is marked by the Napoleon Monument.

### ***Attractions***

#### **The Cité de la Mer**

The Cité de la Mer is a fantastic aquarium, housed in the restored trans-Atlantic terminal. Visitors can explore an ocean diving area and a former nuclear submarine.

#### **Fort du Roule**

Walk or drive to the Fort du Roule, which provides a commanding view of the port. This also houses the Musée de la Libération, commemorating D-Day and the liberation of Cherbourg in the Second World War.

#### **Shopping**

The lively Cherbourg market is held in front of the theatre every Thursday. For those wanting to stock up, there are also several supermarkets on the edge of town.

#### **Ravalet Château**

Ravalet Château in Tourlaville is a wonderful example of the Renaissance style. Nestled in a small valley, the Château is set in a huge park with ponds.

#### **Nearby**

Two of France's unmissable attractions are a short drive from Cherbourg. The famous Bayeux Tapestry is a stunning piece of work from the 11th century, depicting the Battle of Hastings. Mont St Michel is a World Heritage site, and its Benedictine Abbey is an exquisite and magical sight, perched on the top of a rocky islet rising dramatically out of the sea.



## ***Eating & Drinking***

Many of Cherbourg's best restaurants are situated portside, while nice cafés can be found on the Place de Verdun. For tea try the Café Pompon to savour delicious desserts such as coffee parfait. For lunch or dinner, head for the Brasserie Du Commerce , which has excellent service, very good food, and generous portions. Le Cotentin, on the Quay de Caligny, overlooks the Avant Port, also has delicious dishes and a great view from its first floor restaurant. The Grandgousier is a little pricey but highly recommended for its superb food.



## **Roscoff City Guide**

Roscoff is a charming, small Breton fishing village that provides the perfect gateway to the delights of Brittany. The seaside town is clustered around a small bay, with 16th-century granite houses, little shops, and bars and restaurants, hugging the shoreline. The old harbour is the best place to while away the hours while enjoying a drink with sea views, or alternatively you can take a boat trip from here to the Ile de Batz (pronounced Ba).

The town's tourist attractions include its tropical gardens, an aquarium, a beautiful church, and a stunning coastline. Brittany's sea is also renowned for its healing properties, and one of the region's oldest thalassotherapy centres was opened in Roscoff in 1899 and is definitely worth visiting for a pampering treat.

The deep-water port at Roscoff was opened in 1973, but its harbour has been an important arrival point through the ages. Mary Queen of Scots landed here in 1548 on her way to Paris to be engaged to François, the son and heir of Henri II, and Bonnie Prince Charlie, arrived here in 1746 after his defeat at Culloden.

Thanks to the Gulf Stream the town benefits from a mild climate, and it is also shielded by the Ile de Batz, making it a perfect holiday destination all year round.

### ***Top Attractions***

#### **Museum of the 'Onion Johnnies'**

Britain's stereotypical image of Frenchmen wearing stripy t-shirts and carrying onions on wobbly bikes, began after visits to England by the menfolk of Roscoff. Henri Olivier first took onions from Roscoff to England in 1828 and until the 1930s 'Johnnies' would load up their boats with local produce and sail to England, where they delivered their goods to local markets on their bicycles. They used to carry up to 100 kilos, hence the wobbles, and some Johnnies would travel as far as Cornwall and Scotland for work. The Museum has recently opened to celebrate this lovely tradition.

#### **Thalassotherapy**

An excellent way to begin or end a holiday is to try a half-day "taster" course at the century-old Thalassotherapy Institute, costing around €79. Treatments include seawater and seaweed therapies, to stimulate healing and relaxation.

#### **Jardin Exotique**

This extraordinary garden boasts over 3,000 species of tropical plants, from all over the world, including South Africa, Chile and Australia. It has spectacular rockeries, and it is worth climbing up the highest 18-metre high rock, to get a superb view of the bay of Morlaix, Roscoff, Carantec and the Château du Taureau.



### **Notre Dame de Croatz Batz**

This beautifully restored church dominates the town's skyline and is a fantastic example of 16th century gothic architecture. Its rows of bells resemble a tiered cake.

### **Ile de Batz**

A 15-minute boat trip from the harbour will take you to the charming and car-free Ile de Batz, with its impressive lighthouse and lovely gardens, giving you a great view of the mainland.

### ***Eating and Drinking***

In Roscoff, you can savour delicious French cuisine, in particular seafood such as nutty-flavoured mussels, and traditional Breton crepes. Around the old port you'll find many charming places to eat.

Our top Roscoff dining tips include the Michelin-starred Temps de Vivre, a fantastic restaurant housed in a beautiful 16th century building. Its chef is one of the most celebrated in Brittany and creates special dishes such as cabbage stuffed with crab and prawns. L'Ecume des Jours is situated in the centre of the old port, opposite the sea, near the townhouse. Its decor is charming and rustic, reflecting the history of the old Breton house and their prices are very reasonable. Le Surcouf, situated between the church and the fishing port, is also popular and specialises in meat and fish dishes.