

How to Cycle in Normandy, France

TRAVEL TIPS(/)

Nannie Kate, Demand Media



The Church of St. Ouen in Rouen, Normandy, is one of the sites you can see on a bicycle tour of Normandy.

Normandy lies in the northwest corner of France on the Atlantic Ocean, about 200 miles from Paris. The region is divided into two parts: Basse-Normandy and Haute-Normandy. The capital of Basse-Normandie is Caen, and the capital of Haute-Normandy is Rouen.

Normandy is an area rich in history, from the invasion of the Vikings in 800s A.D. to the Allied invasion to free France from the clutches of Hitler's Germany. Explore the countryside of Normandy on a bicycle tour, where you will see the land and its landmarks up close and personal.

Items you will need

Brochures

Maps

Cycling equipment

Foods and beverages

Money

Weather-appropriate clothing

Step 1

Study brochures and maps to familiarize yourself with Normandy, its sights and its terrain. If you want to see the beaches where the allied forces landed, the Peace Memorial Museum and lots of beautiful pastureland, plan to cycle through Basse-Normandy. To see ancient ruins of castles and abbeys and to cycle through picture-perfect fishing villages, or to taste fine cheese on your route, choose a tour through Haute Normandy.

Step 2

Decide if you want to take a guided or self-guided tour. If you are an independent traveler and a fair cyclist, you might want to strike out on your own. One advantage of a guided tour is that a tour guide offers information about the areas through which you will be riding.

Step 3

Consider whether a one-day tour is what you want or if you would enjoy a multi-day tour that includes staying overnight along the way. Your overnight choices include camping, hostels, country inns or hotels. Discover France Adventures (discoverfrance.com) hosts

tours that last for several days with overnight stays in local hotels.

Step 4

Locate the equipment you need. Commercial tours provide bicycles and helmets, but if you have decided to cycle on your own, you will need to find a bike rental company. An online company such as Freewheeling France (freewheelingfrance.com) can help you locate a bike rental in the area where you will be cycling.

Step 5

For your safety and for the safety of others, familiarize yourself with the rules of the road for cycling in Normandy. France does not require that bicycle riders wear helmets but encourages their use. Bikes must meet certain standards to be street worthy, and riders must obey all traffic signs.

Step 6

Finalize your plans as soon as possible to ensure yourself a slot on a tour before it gets filled up. If you are traveling alone, secure your rental equipment ahead of time so that it is available to you when you need it.

Step 7

Plan to stop along the way for meals and snacks or pack your own food. Select high-energy foods such as trail mix to keep you fueled up on your trip. Include plenty of liquids in your food pack or make sure there are places along your route to buy more.

Step 8

Take some cash with you in addition to a credit card. Credit cards are accepted in many places, but not all. Learn the value of your French money so that you will know how much you are spending.

Step 9

Dress according to the weather on the day or days of your tour. Carry a small rain poncho just in case. If the weather is cool, layer your clothing so that you can adjust for your comfort.

Step 10

Determine if there are charges for canceled tours. Whether it's necessary because of the weather or a personal emergency, find out the company's refund policy.

Step 11

Arrive a little early for your tour to ensure you have time to get your equipment and start the tour on time. Tour companies often specify how early they need you to arrive.

TIP

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Avoid becoming saddle sore. If you are a veteran cyclist this should not be a problem, but

for newbies, it can make for a miserable time when soreness sets in. To avoid getting saddle sore, take a short tour at first and stop frequently to walk around. Cycle standing up at times. Also, make sure the bicycle is a good fit for you, particularly the saddle. Discuss your concerns with the tour company or your rental dealer.

REFERENCES

[Discover France Adventures: Normandy Regional Info](http://www.discoverfrance.com/regions/normandy.html)(<http://www.discoverfrance.com/regions/normandy.html>)

[Discover France Adventures: Normandy Bicycle Tours](http://www.discoverfrance.com/regions/normandy_biking_tour.php)(http://www.discoverfrance.com/regions/normandy_biking_tour.php)

[Freewheeling France: Bike Hire in Normandy](http://www.freewheelingfrance.com/188)(<http://www.freewheelingfrance.com/188>)

[About--France.com: France - a Cycle-Friendly Country](http://about-france.com/tourism/cycling-holidays.htm)(<http://about-france.com/tourism/cycling-holidays.htm>)

[Road Bike Rider: How To Solve Saddle Sores](http://www.roadbikerider.com/injuries/how-solve-saddle-sores)(<http://www.roadbikerider.com/injuries/how-solve-saddle-sores>)

RESOURCES

[Lonely Planet: Normandy History](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/france/normandy/history)(<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/france/normandy/history>)

[Normandy Regional Tourist Board: Normandy](http://www.normandie-tourisme.fr/normandy-tourism-109-2.html)(<http://www.normandie-tourisme.fr/normandy-tourism-109-2.html>)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In 2007 Nannie Kate discovered that the words she had been writing all her life had an actual cash value. She's been writing professionally through brokers ever since. With an English major background she creates articles and ebooks on a wide variety of subjects.

PHOTO CREDITS

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