

Normandy & Brittany
April 6 – 9 (Easter weekend)

This trip was a combination of spending time with expat friends, meeting new French friends and exploring new corners of Normandy and Brittany. Our itinerary was in part dictated by where our friends were located. I would not necessarily recommend following this itinerary exactly, but rather pick bits and pieces of it or split it into one Normandy weekend and one Brittany weekend. Alternatively, you could combine the Normandy leg with my St.-Malo or Morlaix itinerary and combine the Brittany leg with my Morbihan, my La Roche-Bernard or my Morlaix itinerary, or even with one of my Loire Valley itineraries. Mix and match away!

Date	To	Flight/Hotel/Car Details	Cost	Comments
Fri, April 6	Drive to Agon- Coutainville (Cherbourg Peninsula)	<i>Hotel & dinner:</i> Manoir de Coutainville 2 rue de La Maugerie 50230 Agon-Coutainville France 33 (0)2 33 47 05 90 33 (0)6 07 55 29 77 http://www.manoir-de-coutainville.com/home.html E-mail: Sophie-Veron@Manoir-de-Coutainville.com http://Manoir-de-Coutainville.com (Owner: Sophie Véron)	€160 for Prairie room (3 single beds, breakfast included) €48 per person for dinner (includes wine)	Agon-Coutainville is about a 4 hour drive from Paris, but more like 5 hours if you hit Caen at rush hour. I did not include rental car information as we had a friend's car this weekend, but in general, I find that Autoescape.com from Gare Montparnasse offers the cheapest and most convenient rentals in Paris. As we were the only guests at the Manoir that evening, we were "upgraded" to the stunning Seigneurie room (see website) and adjoining Valet room (which should have been €260 not €160). The house is incredible, with parts dating back to the 15 th century. I would highly recommend a visit even as a trip on its own. It would be a fantastic spot to hold a small wedding as well! You could not ask for a better host than Sophie. She is welcoming and fun and an amazing cook. She goes out of her way to make you feel at home without being intrusive. Be sure to reserve dinner at Sophie's as well . As with the breakfasts, she uses fresh, local products and offers a variety of courses and flavors. We were lucky in that Sophie also invited a few of her friends for dinner that evening as well. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet new friends and to truly relax, while feeling that we were guests an old friend's home and not just at a hotel.
Sat, April 7	Cancale, Josselin & Erdeven, Gulf of Morbihan	<i>Hotel:</i> Auberge du Sous-Bois, 56410 ERDEVEN – Tél. 02.97.55.66.10 http://www.auberge-erdeven.fr	€49 (single)	We had a wonderful seafood lunch in the pretty seaside town of Cancale right on the main street along the promenade at Le Surcouf (7 Quai Gambetta, 35260 Cancale, Tel.: 02 99 89 61 75). The oysters and cod were delicious. The sun came out just as we were finishing and we watched as the people who had been gathering oysters on the mud flats of low tide made their way back to shore before the tide came in. I then drove via Josselin (visiting friends) to Erdeven , not far from Auray and the southern coast of Brittany in the Morbihan. I chose Erdeven because it is centrally located for exploring the gulf and surrounding areas and the price was right! The hotel is nothing special, but the rooms are quiet and clean, with new bathrooms, and the staff is very friendly and helpful. I recommend getting the buffet continental breakfast for just €7 extra.

Sun, April 8	Gulf of Morbihan	<i>Hotel:</i> Auberge du Sous-Bois, 56410 ERDEVEN – Tél. 02.97.55.66.10 http://www.auberge-erdeven.fr	€57 (single)	<p>All day Sunday I roamed around the Gulf of Morbihan in the car, visiting some new spots and going back to a number of places I had visited before and loved. My favorite spots (from East to West) are Guérande (medieval walled city famous for sea salts – I recommend the Salon Celadon tea room by the main church at 3, rue des Lauriers, Tel. 02 40 11 13 11, salon.celadon@organge.fr), La Roche-Bernard (medieval town perched on a cliff above La Vilaine river, great walks; see separate itinerary), Larmor-Baden (small seaside town, along GR34 for coastal hikes), Le Bono (on the banks of the Auray River and GR34), Auray's St. Goustan (old medieval port), Locmariaquer (small seaside town), Carnac (prehistoric sites, pleasant town center, village of St. Colomaban), Saint-Cado (adorable small island in the Etel River connected to mainland by stone bridge, coastal paths).</p> <p>In the early evening, I walked west from Saint-Cado along the GR34 (coastal path) for about 2 hours and then back to Saint-Cado on the roads as it was starting to get dark. On my next trip to the area, I hope to spend more time exploring the Etel River area. The western side in particular seems a bit wilder and less inhabited than the parts of the Morbihan right around the gulf.</p>
Mon, April 9	Gulf of Morbihan; drive back to Paris (via Josselin & Rennes)	--		<p>On Monday I visited Pont-Aven and Concarneau in Finistère. I didn't see what the big draw to Pont-Aven ("city of painters") is, but Concarneau and its medieval walled town jutting into the bay was well worth a stop. I returned to Josselin through the Blavet Valley, stopping at the picturesque but unpretentious thatched-roof village of Lanvaudan.</p> <p>Josselin, about 1 hour southwest of Rennes, is a small medieval city with an impressive castle and makes for a good stop along the way. We then drove back to Paris via Rennes and Chartres (for a dinner stop by the cathedral).</p>