

Normandy

This “weekend” in Normandy was the start of my aunt and uncle’s two weeks in France. It was their first time in France and a great way to start out—in a region that truly welcomes Americans and away from the hustle and bustle of Paris. (We saved Paris for the end!)

Date	To	Flight/Train/Hotel Details	Comments
Wed, July 24	Vouilly, Normandy	<p><i>Flight info:</i></p> <p>Air France Flight AF027 Departs Dulles 9:50 PM Arrives Charles de Gaulle 11:25 AM</p> <p><i>Lunch:</i> Honfleur <i>Hotel in Vouilly:</i> Château de Vouilly (check-in between 16h and 19h)</p> <p>2 rooms: 95€ + 110€ (breakfast and taxes included per night)</p> <p>Marie Josée and James Hamel www.chateau-vouilly.com VOUILLY 14230 ISIGNY SUR MER TEL:02 31 22 08 59 chateau.vouilly@wanadoo.fr</p>	<p>We drive directly from the airport (CDG) to Honfleur, one of the most scenic towns you will find in Normandy, and had lunch along the harbor.</p> <p>From Honfleur, we drove to Vouilly, to a B&B I had stayed in back in 1999. It was just as wonderful as I remembered it! Set on a beautiful piece of property and working far, this chateau B&B is run by the very friendly and knowledgeable James Hamel. But this is more than just a B&B, it’s a historic landmark and a virtual museum dedicated to the events that took place here. During D-Day, the chateau (where James lived with his family) was transformed into a war correspondents’ office. These correspondents included Ernie Pyle, Walter Cronkite, Andy Rooney and even Ernest Hemingway. The room where these 50 or so journalists worked is now the breakfast room. It would really be a shame to stay in a hotel by the Normandy beaches when you could stay at this guesthouse that is part of the history, and quite reasonably priced too!</p> <p>We had dinner on the coast, in Grandcamp-Maisy. The restaurants there are not too exciting, but it was a nice first glimpse of the coast.</p>
Thurs, July 25	Vouilly, Normandy	Château de Vouilly	<p>Thursday was a history-packed day and I would highly recommend all of the following (and in this order works well—starting in the east and working your way west back to the B&B):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le Cambe German Cemetery http://www.volksbund.de/en/volksbund.html • Arromanches, site of the Mulberry harbors constructed by the Allies and of Arromanches 360 http://www.arromanches360.com/en/, the circular theater with a film that serves as a great introduction to the D-Day beaches • Longues-sur-Mer German battery: see the remnants of the bunkers • Omaha Beach & the American Cemetery: I definitely recommend parking down by the beach, walking along the beach, then taking the steps up to the cemetery • Pointe du Hoc: Allied rangers climbed up the 300+ foot cliffs here on D-Day <p>We drove down to Saint-Lô for dinner. Saint-Lô Was almost completely destroyed in WWII and there’s still not much left that’s worth seeing. We did have a very nice dinner at the cozy inn La Grignotiere (Saint-Pierre-De-Semilly town center, 02 33 57 83 84) but I wouldn’t recommend it if you want to be in and out in fewer than 3 hours!</p>

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Fri, July 26	Vouilly, Normandy	Château de Vouilly	<p>Friday, we spent most of the day at the D-Day Museum (<i>Musée du débarquement</i>) at Utah beach: http://www.utah-beach.com/?lang=en. There are a number of smaller museums with collections of varying sophistication, but if you want to pick one museum to visit, this is probably the best from everything I've heard. The exhibits are very well designed, well maintained and extensive.</p> <p>We then spent some time in the nearby town of Sainte-Marie-du-Mont, which has a great set of historic plaques that send you on a little walking tour and each tell a personal story of what happened there on June 6, 1944.</p> <p>Next, we visited Sainte-Mère-Église, made famous when paratrooper John Steele's parachute got caught on the spire of church, as later depicted in the movie <i>The Longest Day</i>. We then visited the Phare de Gatteville (lighthouse) and had dinner in Barfleur, on the coast on the eastern side of the Cherbourg Peninsula. Barfleur has been designated one of the prettiest villages in France. Barfleur is famous for its mussels. We had an excellent version at Comptoir de la Presqu'île (Quai Henri Chardon).</p>
Sat, July 27	Baden, Brittany	Drive to Baden via Mont Saint-Michel, Saint-Suliac, Saint-Malo, Dinan	<p>On Saturday, we woke up, spent some time walking around the gorgeous grounds of the B&B, and also spent some time getting to know the various residents of the guesthouse (100s of young calves belonging to the dairy farm; we also counted no fewer than 12 cats). We then took off for Mont Saint-Michel and Brittany!</p>