

Tour  
Information



# Brittany by Rail





## Travel

### Passports

Please ensure your 10 year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to France.

### Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

French consulate: PO Box 57, 6A Cromwell Place, London SW7 2EW; Tel (020) 7838 2000/1. Information Service: Tel (0891) 887 733, Fax: (020) 7838 2046. Opening hours: 0900-1130 (and 1600-1630 for visa collection only) Mon-Fri (except British and French national holidays).



### Tickets

You will be issued with return train tickets.

Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate. Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Standard Premier on Eurostar tickets is indicated by two asterisks in the class type section in the top right hand corner. A light meal will be served to passengers travelling Standard Premier on Eurostar. Standard class Eurostar tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although there is a buffet car serving drinks and snacks.

TGV tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although a buffet car is available.

### Train Seats

On all legs of the journey you have reserved seat and carriage numbers which are shown clearly on your ticket.



## Baggage

As with most trains, passengers are responsible for carrying baggage onto and off the train. Baggage can be stored on overhead shelves or at the entrance to the carriages. Trolleys are available at St Pancras and Paris, but bags do need to be carried on to the platform. Porters are sometimes but not always available at St Pancras.

Travel Editions recommends a luggage delivery service called **thebaggageman**, where your suitcase can be picked up from your home before departure and delivered straight to your hotel; therefore removing the worry about carrying your cases onto and off the trains.

For further information:

<http://www.thebaggageman.com>

### Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

### Transfers

On arrival in Rennes, transfer by coach to the Mercure Rennes Centre Parlement.

### Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



## Accommodation

### Mercure Rennes Centre Parlement

Housed in the old printworks of the Ouest France newspaper, the four-star hotel Mercure is well-located on a quiet street in the very heart of Rennes, just a few minutes' walk from both the train station and the pedestrianized streets of the city's historic centre with their excellent choice of restaurants and shops. The bright bedrooms are reasonably spacious and elegantly decorated, offering a private bathroom with bath and hairdryer, air-conditioning, TV, wi-fi and minibar. The hotel also has a breakfast room and a bar that serves light meals.

Unfortunately, rooms at the Mercure Rennes Centre Parlement do not include coffee/tea making facilities, so we recommend you bring a travel kettle if required.

For more information visit the hotel's website:

<http://www.mercure.com/gb/hotel-1056-mercure-rennes-centre-parlement-hotel/index.shtml>



## Food

Brittany's coastal location means plenty of delicious quality products from fresh fishes to typical seafood platters and traditional shellfish dishes. Typical to the region are *Moules Marinières* (mussels cooked in white wine with shallots and parsley), *palourdes* (baked clams stuffed with garlic and shallots and cooked in white wine), *coquilles Saint Jacques* (scallops), *huîtres* (oysters), *Breton cotriade* (Breton *bouillabaisse* or fish stew), and *pot au feu de homard* (lobster stew).

Other specialities of the area are salt marsh raised lamb, generally served with gorgeous fresh vegetables (cauliflower, artichoke, white beans) and a sumptuous French sauce, and *Andouille de Guémené* (a typical Breton sausage).

But Brittany's best known speciality has to be the famous *crêpes* and *galettes*. Made of wheat (*crêpe*) or buckwheat (*galette*) flour and filled with sweet or savoury ingredients, the world renowned French pancakes are an absolute delight.

Breton sweets include *Far Breton* (flan like pudding filled with prunes), *Kouign Amann* (butter cake, made with brioche dough, butter and sugar), and *Caramel au beurre salé* (salted butter caramel).

Coffee is served after the meal and will be black, in small cups, unless a *café au lait* (or *crème*) is requested.

Almost all restaurants offer two types of meals: *à la carte* (extensive choice for each course, generally more expensive) and *le menu* (a set meal at a fixed price). The bill (*l'addition*) will not be presented until it is asked for, even if clients sit and talk for half an hour after finishing their meal. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required.

Generally speaking, mealtimes in France are strictly observed. Lunch is as a rule served from noon to 1330, dinner usually from 2000-2130, but the larger the city, the later the dining hour.



## Drink

Wine is by far the most popular alcoholic beverage in France, and the choice will vary according to region. Brittany's *Muscadet* vineyards produce a delightful fresh white wine, full of flavour – perfect to accompany the local seafood dishes.

The abundance of apples in central Brittany influences the region's beverage production, which includes cider (*brut* or *doux*), and excellent freshly prepared apple juice.

As an *aperitif* enjoy a *Ricard* (aniseed liqueur), a *Kir Breton* (blackcurrant syrup with cider), or a traditional *Kir* (blackcurrant syrup with *Muscadet*). *Chouchenn*, a sweet honey based spirit, is another local favourite.

### Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

**Breakfast** – daily



## Destination

Occupying an isolated peninsular jutting out into the Atlantic, Brittany is culturally and geographically distinct from the rest of France and so offers a glimpse of unique customs and traditions, along with a blend of glorious coastal scenery, quaint towns and mysterious pre-historic sites.

From the languid countryside and ancient monoliths of Carnac, to typical stone villages, spectacular fortified abbeys and majestic castles, Brittany is a delight.

### Places of interest included in your tour:

#### Rennes

Our base for the tour is the regional capital, Rennes, a likeable, lively town with plenty of restaurants and bars in its largely pedestrianised historic centre. Though much of the town was rebuilt in the 1720's following a devastating fire, some medieval gems remain amongst the grand 18<sup>th</sup> century replacements. For an excellent overview of life in Brittany since prehistoric times visit the *Musée de Bretagne*, whilst the *Musée des Beaux Arts* is notable for its paintings and drawings collection. Other sights include the medieval *Église Saint Germain* and the 17<sup>th</sup> century *Palais de Justice*.

For more information about Rennes:

<http://www.tourisme-rennes.com/en/home.aspx>

#### Dinan & Dinard

Sitting on a hilltop overlooking the River Rance, medieval *Dinan* has a beautiful old town with well-kept half-timbered houses and a lively market. Some of its historical buildings date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the city walls are excellent for a stroll that will lead you to the *Château de Dinan*. Highlights here include the 15<sup>th</sup> century *Tour d'Horloge* (clocktower) and *Basilique de St-Sauveur* and ruins of the *Abbaye St-Magloire*.

Charming Belle Époque villas and stunning sandy beaches made *Dinard* France's top seaside resort until the 1930's and attracted many famous names including Picasso, Debussy and Winston Churchill.

For more information about Dinan:

<http://www.dinan-tourisme.com/>

For more information about Dinard:

<http://www.ot-dinard.com/>

#### Saint-Malo

Best viewed from the ramparts that encircle it, the walled port city of *Saint-Malo* was once notorious for its piracy. Today the only treasure you will find here is the elegant, old architecture, particularly the superb citadel at the city's heart, the *Château de St Malo*, the 17<sup>th</sup> century *National Fort* and the *Cathédrale de Saint Vincent*.

For more information about Saint-Malo:

<http://www.saint-malo-tourisme.co.uk/>

#### Carnac

Mysterious Carnac is one of the world's great prehistoric sights, in use since 5700BC. Almost 3,000 menhirs (megalithic stones) stand in parallel rows north of the delightful town, where you will also find an exceptional *Musée de Préhistoire*. Its long, sandy beach also makes Carnac a popular seaside resort.

For more information about Carnac:

<http://www.ot-carnac.fr/> (French only)

#### Vannes

Pass through the gateway *Porte Saint-Vincente* of Vannes' walled and well-preserved old town and you enter a stroller's paradise of lively squares, winding streets overhung by timber fronted houses and charming gardens. The capital of Brittany in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Vannes has a well preserved medieval quarter, which features the 16<sup>th</sup> century *Places des Lices*, the 13<sup>th</sup> century *Cathedrale St-Pierre* and an interesting archaeological museum, housed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century *Chateau Gaillard*. Busy, modern Vannes has plenty of grand public buildings and fascinating museums.

For more information about Vannes:

<http://en.tourisme-vannes.com/>

## Mont Saint-Michel & Fougères

Awe-inspiring *Mont-Saint-Michel* is undoubtedly worth a quick sojourn into Normandy. Set on an island now linked to the mainland by a causeway, it has been the seat of a monastery since the 8<sup>th</sup> century though it was at its most influential in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, when pilgrims travelled from afar to honour Saint Michael. The *abbey*, protected by high walls and unchanged for centuries, crowns the island, the village at its foot full of shops and restaurants serving the 850,000 visitors annually. Highlights within include the *Église* and a group of buildings known as *La Merveille*, which include the Guests' Hall, Cloisters, Knights' Hall and Refectory.

The interesting fortress town of *Fougères*, protected by ramparts, is home to an impressive *château*, comprising 13 towers and walls over 3m thick.

For more information about Mont Saint-Michel:

<http://www.ot-montsaintmichel.com/index.htm>

For more information about Fougères:

<http://www.ot-fougeres.fr/welcome>

## Côte de Granit Rose

### Paimpol

The picturesque coast between Paimpol and Tréburden is known as the Côte du Granit Rose due to its reddish-pink granite cliffs, the stone that has also been used for many of the area's buildings. Paimpol is a charming Breton fishing port with cobbled streets and a Quartier Latin, whilst the delightful coastline makes the region a popular holiday destination.

For more information about the Cote de Granit Rose:

<http://www.cotedegranitrose.fr/?lang=en>

## Recommended reading

**Graham Robb, *The Discovery of France*.**

A general introduction to French culture, landscape and history, it also features an excellent insight into the distinctive character of France's regions.

**Wendy Mewes, *Discovering the History of Brittany & Brittany: A Cultural History*.**

Two interesting and informative studies of the history, landscape, culture, legends and complexity of the region.

**George East, *French Impressions – Brittany*.**

Entertaining and full of humour, George East relates his *impressions* of living in Brittany.

**Charles Richard Weld, *A Vacation in Brittany, 1856*.**

The historian Charles Richard Weld wrote a series of "Vacation Tours", of which the account of his travels to Brittany.

**Gustave Flaubert, *Over Strand and Field: A Record of Travel through Brittany, 1881 (translated 1904)*.**

The view of a native Frenchman travelling in Brittany at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

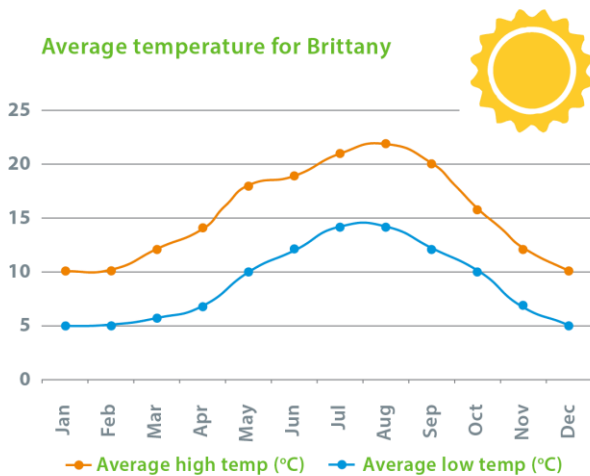
## Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.



## The Basics

**Climate** – The weather in Brittany at this time of year is likely to be similar to the UK – unpredictable and the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.



**Time** – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

**Language** – French.

**Religion** – Roman Catholic.

**National holidays** – New Year's day (01 Jan); Easter Monday; Labour day (01 May); Victory in Europe day (08 May); Ascension day; Whit Sunday; Whit Monday; National day (14 Jul); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' day (01 Nov); Armistice day (11 Nov); Christmas day (25 Dec).

**Currency** – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

**Banks** – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

**Credit cards** – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior

to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

**Electricity** – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

**Drinking water** – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

**Shops and museums** – Department stores are open 0900-1830 Monday to Saturday. Most shops are closed between 1200-1430. Some food shops (particularly bakers) are open Sunday mornings, in which case they will probably close Monday. Many shops close all day or half-day Monday. Please note that most museums are closed on Mondays.

**Clothes & shoes** – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

**Camera** – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

**Bath plugs** – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

**Telephones/mobiles** – You should be able to use your mobile phone in France, depending on your operator and contract.

**Tipping** – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



## Health

### Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

**Keep receipts for insurance claims.**



### Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

**Keep receipts for insurance claims.**

### General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

### Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

### Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



## Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

### European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



## Emergencies

**Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:**

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079

**PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.**

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

Consular services Paris

16 rue d'Anjou

75008 Paris

France

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 51 31 00

Fax: +33 (0)1 44 51 31 27

Open Mon-Fri 0930-1230. Outside these hours a consular Emergency Service is in operation and can be contacted on +33 (0)1 44 51 31 00.

Travel Editions

3 Young's Buildings, London EC1V 9DB

Tel: 020 7251 0045

Email: [tours@traveleditions.co.uk](mailto:tours@traveleditions.co.uk) [www.traveleditions.co.uk](http://www.traveleditions.co.uk)

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