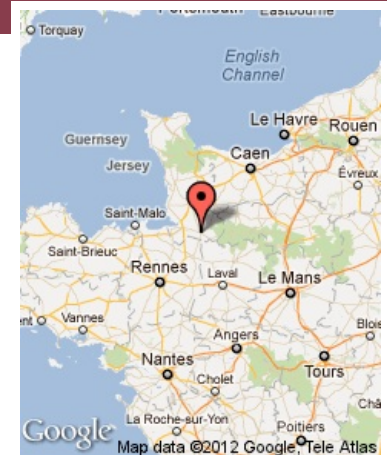


Cycling in Normandy



Highlights

This trip has been dubbed "Apples and Pears" as you will be cycling through bountiful apple and pear orchards in Normandy. Don't race through this gorgeous slice of Europe, complete with green rolling hills and charming rustic buildings, rather enjoy the scenery and a carefree holiday...

Saint-Hilaire-du-Harcouet is a typical town of Normandy where the residents spend their free time by the river, or going to the market in the centre of town to buy their weekly food. Saint-Hilaire-du-Harcouet's skyline is dominated by its 19th century church with its double spires. Unbelievably, the church was unharmed during World War II even though the town centre was completely destroyed.

Imagine a flexible and relaxed way to see the parts of France that are truly beautiful. This tour is a great way to experience "hidden France" away from Paris and other popular tourist destinations. You will see the charms of rural France; verdant hillsides, abundant woodland, river valleys, lush meadows, orchards and a sense of fresh country air. You will be biking a circular route each day of between 30 and 50 miles. The routes have been carefully chosen to be relaxing so you can really savour all the sites, smells and sounds of Normandy. To complete the feeling of being far away from the real world, you will be staying in a 17th century converted farmhouse full of rural French charm.

Is it for me?

The perfect candidates for this tour are those who want to enjoy a few days of activity on their holiday; anyone who wants the guidance of a tour but being able to travel at your own pace, either with friends, family or like minded people; those who want a rural experience who don't like crowds; families looking for a holiday that is interesting, relaxing, and one that will get the kids moving too; people who truly want to experience a different way of life in a foreign country. The cycle routes are mostly on country lanes with virtually no traffic, so that you can really appreciate the countryside and all that it has to offer.

Accommodation

You will be staying for the duration of the trip in a village close to the town of Saint Hilaire-du-Harcouet. The stone farmhouse has been completely renovated inside, so although the outside dates back to the 17th century, the inside has every modern convenience and comfort you will need, whilst retaining many period features. The gite also provides storage for your bikes and an ample garden where you can relax. Your hosts are English so you needn't worry about brushing up on your French!

The accommodation is self-catering so you will be responsible for all of your meals. But since Saint-Hilaire-du-Harcouet is a market town this gives you a great opportunity to take advantage of that market and prepare yourself healthy but enticing meals made from fresh and regional ingredients, just like the locals do it.

Itinerary

Each morning guides from Brittany Borders Bicycling will meet you and go over the easy-to-read maps they provide, just to make sure you are completely clear on your route. Once you return from your circular ride, the guides will be at the farmhouse to greet you and go over anything you need. Brittany Borders Bicycling is also available while you're on the road in case you have a problem with your bike or if you get lost (which rarely

Prices from

449 GBP (7 days) per person

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happens).

It is suggested that tours go from Sunday to Saturday but can be easily extended or shortened to fit your needs. Most regular week-long tours are made up of four cycle trips and two free days where you can do anything you like from relaxing in town, to going to the beach or even an extra bike trip if you want.

Details

Getting there

Your best bet from the UK and Ireland is to take a ferry and then drive to Saint-Hilaire-du-Harcouet. The ports of Cherbourg, St. Malo, Caen and Le Havre are the most convenient. Flights are also available to airports at Dinard and Rennes'

Price includes

Four bike rides, maps and back-up support, and gite accommodation for up to 12 people.

Available

Jan—Dec

Typical Duration

1 week

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed