

DISCOVER THE ART OF FRENCH CHEESEMAKING NORMANDY TOUR ITINERARY

13 April 2026 to 20 April 2026

You are invited to immerse yourself in the culture of the Normandy region in France on this 8-day gourmet cheesemaking tour. This is a very special opportunity to discover the mysteries of some of the world's greatest cheeses and cheesemaking traditions.

The itinerary for this trip is unique, these visits have been negotiated over several years and are not available to the public. You will have exclusive entry and guidance offered by small artisan cheese makers who are passionate about the cheese they make but also enjoy our curiosity about their cheese. There will be some early starts to ensure we get to the fromageries in time to see the milking and the cheesemaking process.

The French Normandy region is in the northwest of France, taking in the Guernsey and Jersey islands to the north, the Paris region to the south and Brittany to the west. Normandy is famous for the D-Day landings, Mont Saint-Michel Abbey, Monets Garden, apple ciders, brandy, fresh seafood, crepes and its soft and iconic cheeses such as Camembert de Normandie, Carré de Bray, Livarot, Pont-L'Eveque, Bûchette Basilou, *Petit-Suisse* and Neufchatel-en-Brey, to name just a few,



You will see close-up, artisan cheesemakers applying their techniques to various styles of

cheeses. This will include Faisselle, yoghurt, fresh and aged lactic acid cheese, Camembert, Tommes and various washed rind cheeses. You will also see the milking of cows, sheep and goats. You will see cheeses being made from cows and goat milk. We will also see how these artisan fromageries carry out their cheeses' affinage (ripening).



Is this tour for you?

- If you are interested in the art of cheesemaking or just love cheese, this trip will present opportunities for you to visit artisan cheesemakers as they make and mature their cheeses.
- Through Graham Redhead, from Cheesemaking, you will have exclusive access to cheesemaking farms and fromageries that are not normally accessible to the public.
- On this tour will be accompanied by Emilie, our French interpreter (and a cheesemaker), who will assist with all aspects of the trip, including conversations with the cheesemakers and all other queries you may have. We will also be joined by Marine as our tour guide and driver
- This tour will start in Rouen and then take you away from the larger city and into the French countryside and the picturesque seaside port of

Honfleur and finally conclude in the small city of Lisieux.

- We will visit a wide range of places along the route, including small French towns, farmers' markets, D-D beaches, cideries, wineries, medieval towns, castles, Bayeux Tapestries, the White Cliffs of Etretat and other local sights.
- There will be at least two picnic lunches (weather permitting) where we will enjoy the produce of the region, including bread, cheeses, cideries, charcuterie, crepes, pâtés, fruits and French wine.
- Accommodation on this trip will be in a hotel. Twin-share, double and single-room supplement options will be available on this tour. An additional charge of \$750 applies for the single supplement.

Start and finish: Rouen

Day 1 (Monday 13 April) begins at 8.00 am therefore, it is recommended that you arrive at least a day prior to the commencement of the tour.

Drop off at Lisieux Rail Station on Day 8 (Monday 20 April) will be before 10.00 am.

Group size: strictly maximum 10 persons (excluding three staff)

PRE TOUR ACTIVITIES

There are several tourist avenues available to participants if you arrive ahead of the start of the Tour. Rouen has a wonderful mixed market including farm produce that operates several days a week, including Saturday and Sunday. This market is a short walk from our accommodation. There are additional activities, including guided and self-guided tours, that can be undertaken. Cheesemaking can provide you with contact details. Cheesemaking is not formally arranging any pre-tour activities. On the evening of 12 April, there will be a brief to meet our fellow travelers and to discuss the tour agenda.

DAY 1

Welcome to Rouen! Today, we will visit our first cheese factory. This organic factory produces yoghurts (plain and flavoured), fresh cheese, cottage cheese, raw cream, butter, lactic cheese, camembert, Tomme cheese and raw milk. We will not know until 2026 which products will be produced on the day we visit.

For dinner, we set out to prepare our three-course meal as we sip wine and become chefs for the night

under the guidance of French Chef Gersende, at her cooking school, before returning to Rouen in preparation for an early start the next day.

DAY 2

Today, we will visit an artisan fromagerie making AOP Neufchâtel from raw cow's milk. We will hear about the origin of this heart-shaped cheese and watch as several styles of bloomy rinded cheese are produced, each cheese going through five stages of manufacture. The last stage is the growth of the outer layer of white mould. Once the cheese is completed, we will enjoy tasting a range of fresh and matured cheeses made by this cheesemaker.

Weather permitting, we then head off for our first picnic for the tour.

This afternoon, we will visit a goat farm to visit the goats and watch fresh goat milk being made into fresh and aged cheeses in a variety of forms such as log, pyramid and crottin shapes. Tonight, we head off to a local restaurant in Rouen.

DAY 3

Today, we get an early start to depart Rouen and head to the beautiful Channel-Atlantic seaside town of Honfleur.

On our cheese factory visit today, we get to see the iconic Camembert-de-Normandie being made. We see the cows being milked and the manufacturing steps leading up to the unique moulding process for this cheese. We then see the exacting process of the different stages that are required to ripen this cheese. We learn about the ideals of the farmer/cheesemaker/cheesemaking family and their care for the land, the staff, the cows, the product and the customers. We will learn the specific standards set to ensure the cheese takes in the different characteristics and diversity that each season's milk provides.



Lunch is at a café and a casual walk around one of the small local villages.

This afternoon, we check into our accommodation overlooking the harbour, in the heart of Honfleur. There is some free time to walk around the picturesque streets of this coastal town, traditional buildings, art galleries, museums, churches and

monuments. Or just sit in one of the many cafés lining the waterfront and watch the gates to the loch open and close as boats come and go.

DAY 4

Today, we visit the manufacturer of the famous washed rind cheese, Livarot. A washed rind cheese with PDO accreditation made with milk from Normandy cows, then wrapped in 5 strips of reed. We find out why it needs to be wrapped in reed and the conditions needed to get the wash rind cultures to grow and produce that distinctive colour and flavour. Later today, we will visit the Musée du Camembert. We see the evolution of the equipment and techniques used in the manufacture of Camembert over the ages, its history and the history of Marie Harel, the collection of milk, through to its renneting, moulding and affinage.



Today is our second picnic lunch.

This afternoon, we visit the site of the D-Day landings, Omaha Museum, Omaha Beach and the Cemetery of Colleville sur Mer.

DAY 5

Today, we visit an artisan Fromagerie to have a full 8 hours or more immersion in cheesemaking. This is a family-run farm with a manufacturing establishment built from scratch 20 years ago. Expect a very busy and hands-on day, probably the most involved day of any of the tours. The visit starts with turning and washing the previous day's cheeses, followed by the manufacture of a mix of white moulded cheeses, soft and pressed cheeses, and fresh products such as yoghurt, cottage cheese, fresh dairy desserts, butter, and cream. All under the guidance of their head cheesemaker.



DAY 6

Today, we depart Honfleur and head towards our accommodation in Lisieux. Our cheese visit today is the manufacture of Livarot and Pont-l'Évêque, two of Normandy's oldest surviving cheeses. Due to legislation requirements, we will discover the various stages of manufacture through glass-protected galleries. We see the manufacturing as well as the washing, and sometimes no washing of this cheese.

Lunch is our second picnic of the tour. After lunch, we will visit a factory producing a range of ciders, including Pays d'Auge and Calvados

DAY 7

Today we visit a sheep cheese factory making fresh cheeses and Tomme, using hands-on artisan techniques and milk from a herd of 40 sheep. We then travel from this to our factory visit, a very small organic Camembert and cream artisan manufacturer. The owner and cheesemaker established this factory only five years ago. They will provide a very detailed technical presentation on all aspects of Camembert de Normandie AOP farm milk production, the environment, animal welfare, and then onto their cheeses' manufacturing processes and ripening. On this visit, we will see the manufacture through bay windows with the owner/cheesemaker providing details of the full manufacturing process.



Lunch will be at a café and a gentle stroll through a local village.

This afternoon, we will visit a cidery to see Cider, Pear cider and Calvados manufactured from Normandy apples and pears.

DAY 8

Following a leisurely breakfast in our hotel in Lisieux, we make our way to the train station at Lisieux, only a short drive away, and arrive before 10 am. We bid you farewell as you continue the remainder of your journey, whether home or on new adventures.

What is included?

Meals

- full French breakfast each day (days 2 to 8)
- at least 2 picnic lunches (weather permitting)
- complimentary pre-dinner drinks each evening, time permitting
- restaurant dinner each night including complimentary wine and tea or coffee

Transport

- 2 x 9-seater air-conditioned vans

Accommodation

- Hotel in accommodation for 7 nights

Activities

Entry to the activities below is complimentary:

- French 3 course cooking class
- visit a range of artisan cheesemakers and their affinage facilities to observe cheese production methods using either sheep, goat and cow milk, including lactic acid cheeses, fresh, white mould and washed rind as well as aged cheeses.
- entry to the Cidery/distillery and calvados and cider tasting
- entry to the Omaha Museum

What is not included

- Accommodation on 20 April and breakfast on 21 April
- International airfares, domestic train fares

- Passport and visa fees
- Travel insurance
- Sightseeing and general expenses not specified in the 'Activities'
- Morning and afternoon tea and café lunches

Testimonials

'I cannot recommend this tour highly enough ... you get to experience authentic artisan cheesemaking, visit villages and have experiences that you won't have any other way.'
– Melanie

'I was to learn far more than I ever anticipated. The tour was extensive ... exceptional value ... and in the process met a group of cheese enthusiasts with the same desire to learn more and share their ideas.' – Jan

'The French cheesemaking tour far exceeded my expectations ... I loved the flexibility of activities and the fact that it was so much more than cheesemaking.' – Sara

'Graham, what a great concept this is – a unique experience for the home cheesemaker ... the small group provided a wonderful opportunity to meet and establish new friendships with fellow enthusiasts.' – Rod and Linda

'The other aspects of the tour were brilliant also, the countryside in that region of France is so beautiful and the food was great. There were plenty of interesting non-cheesemaking activities too.' – Kelly

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