

C204-ST Swiss Normandy



Situated in the south of Normandy, the region of Swiss Normandy – despite its name – has no relation with Switzerland! The region was dug out of the Armorican Massif by the Orne River. The playful meandering of the river is boarded by sheer slopes topped with rocky masses, and from these heights you will discover Normandy and its famous undulating “bocage”, grasslands criss-crossed by hedges, trees, paths and brooks. This lush and peaceful hike will bring you a cleansing breath of fresh air, and a discovery of Norman cuisine!



Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival at PUTANGES PONT ECREPIN, a small city formed by the union of two ancient villages located on opposite banks of the Orne River. A walk through the city will reveal wonderful old residences and the famous bell-tower reflecting in the river. *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel near the Orne River.*

Day 2 - LE MESNIL-VIN - PUTANGES (23 km). Escort by taxi to the hamlet of Le Mesnil-Vin, or to La Forêt Auvray (19 km). You will walk down to the Saint Aubert gorges and then up to the charming village of La Forêt Auvray, only to descend again to the medieval village of Saint Aubert. Next to a ford on the Orne bank, you will see the only preserved remains of the village church. You will arrive at the Ragondanges Dam and make your way along the Orne bank and the highlands to Putanges. *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in the same two-star hotel.*

Day 3 - LA FORET AUVRAY – PONT D’OUILLY (18 km). Escort by taxi to La Forêt Auvray, a little Norman village built around its church and two symmetric covered-markets. You will leave the village and, crossing through the Normandy countryside, arrive at La Roche d’Oêtre (the Oêtre Rock), a marvellous site overlooking the winding and particularly wild Gorges of la Rouvre. You will then make your way along the Meandre du Rouvrou (le Rouvrou loop) before regaining and following the Orne River to Pont d’Ouilly, traversing Le Mesnil Hubert - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel in the city center.*

Day 4 - PONT D’OUILLY – CLECY (19 km). Throughout the day, you will follow along the Orne River and its meanderings, keeping along banks or climbing to the surrounding heights, and will cross little hamlets and characteristic villages. Towards the end of the day, you will climb the Roches des Parcs (Parcs Rocks), a rocky bar which overlooks the Orne Valley, and descend again towards Clecy, destination of this stage - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel in the city center.*



Day 5 - CLECY – THURY-HARCOURT (23 km). You will cross the Orne River once again and the pleasant village of Vey to climb the Rochers de la Houle (La Houle Rocks) and the Pain de Sucre hill. From the path running along the crests, you will have gorgeous views of the Orne Valley and, further on, the Norman *bocage*. You will then descend to the banks of the Orne and make your way, along the banks and through the countryside, to the village of Saint Martin de Sallen and the Saint Joseph Chapel. Finally, you will reach Thury-Harcourt and its château. The most courageous of you might do the bouche de Hom, one of the Orne's loops which closes in on itself - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a three-star hotel.*

Day 6 - THURY HARCOURT. Tour ends after breakfast.

Season

From middle of April to end of October but be careful this area is very crowded in summer time and we recommend you (if you can) to come outside this period. Nevertheless this area attracts a lot of tourists and you have to reserve earlier to get the best rooms.

What's included?

- ✓ 5 nights' accommodation in selected 2 and 3-star hotels
- ✓ 5 breakfasts – 5 dinners
- ✓ Hotel to hotel luggage transfer along the trail.
- ✓ Taxi transfers
- ✓ A set of maps (1/25 000 scale) with the route marked on and detailed route notes describing the trail.
- ✓ A daily itinerary together with information about facilities and places of interest along the trail.
- ✓ Emergency assistance.

Visa fees - transportation fees to and from the walk area - Insurance (strongly recommended on all trips) - Transfers except those mentioned above – Drinks - Additional meals – Entrance fees - Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls,... are not included

Walk difficulty

Grade 2 : walks of 4 to 6 hours a day. Some stages could be more 20 km (13/15 miles) and rolling uplands, ascents mainly gradual than steep of up to 500 m. Reasonable level of fitness required

Getting there and away

By train : The nearest station is that of Argentan, with several trains each day from the Paris St Lazare station. Taxi escort to Putanges. To return, there is a connection on the Thury-Caen line.

By car : Take the West motorway from Paris (A 12) to join route RN12. In Verneuil-sur-Avre, take route N26 to Argentan, then route D15 to Putanges. To return, a taxi will bring you from Thury Harcourt to Putanges.

Where to park : Parking on a square closed to the hotel in Putanges.

From UK : Ferries from Portsmouth to Caen and a 40 mile–drive to Putanges

