

Daily Itinerary

Day 1: Afternoon departure from Toronto to Paris. (D,B on board)

Day 2: We will arrive at Charles De Gaulle airport during the early morning and travel north to the Somme Battlefields North East of Amiens. Our first stop will be late morning at Longnager crater at La Boisselle. This is the largest mine crater on the Western Front, detonated by the British Army on the first day of the battle of the Somme. We will then tour a section of the Somme battlefield located at Beaumont Hamel. Here we will visit the interpretive center and learn about the heroic exploits of the soldiers of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment who were decimated on the first morning of the Battle of the Somme. You will have an opportunity to walk through the original trench systems that remain as a lasting memorial to one of the greatest slaughters of World War One. We will also stop at the site of the first use of tanks in history. During the day we will also have an explanation by an expert regarding the significance of the battle of the Somme. Overnight Arras. hotel (D)

Day 3: Today we will visit the Wellington Caves in Arras and then travel to Vimy Ridge about 15 kilometers from our hotel. On the way we will make a stop at Neuville St Vaast Soldatenfriedhof. This is the largest German Military Cemetery in France with 44,833 burials. Following our arrival at Vimy Ridge we will first visit the interpretive center and view a map and video presentation and learn about the capture of Vimy Ridge in 1917 by the Canadian Army. Following this we will examine the battlefield and inspect the memorial. This is the largest World War One memorial in Europe. Our last stop at the site will be a tour of the underground tunnels constructed by the Canadians before their assault against the German positions dug in along the ridge. We will also have an opportunity to stop and inspect some interesting memorials and cemeteries off the beaten path. In the afternoon we will drive to Ypres in the district of Flanders in Belgium. Overnight Ypres hotel (B,L,D)

Day 4: We will begin with an overview of what took place in the Ypres salient during the war. We will spend most of the day examining the main sites throughout the Ypres Salient. Our first stop will be at Essex Farm Cemetery. Here we will inspect the medical bunkers where John McCrae wrote 'In Flanders Fields'. Next we will stop at Langemark German Cemetery. This is the only German cemetery in the salient and contains the remains of over 43,000 German soldiers, most buried in mass graves. We will proceed to Vancouver Corner and the memorial to the Canadian soldiers who withstood the first gas attack of the war. We will then have a **lunch stop** and a visit at Varlet Farm guesthouse. Here we will meet Charlotte Descamps and she will show us the many relics of war that her family has recovered from their farm fields that were once the front lines in the salient. We will then visit two memorials to the Canadian Army in the town of Passchendaele and learn about their role in capturing the town in 1917. Following this we will visit Tyne Cot Cemetery. This is the largest allied cemetery in the Salient and occupies the high ground held by the Germans for three years. German bunkers are still visible on the site. Tonight we will walk to the Menin Gate for the Last Post ceremonies at 8:00pm. After this ceremony you will be treated to the tastes of some of the finest chocolate that Ypres has to offer at the Leonidis chocolate shop. Overnight Ypres hotel (B,L,D)

Day 5: This morning we will leave Ypres and travel to Brugge. During the afternoon we will visit the Canadian war museum in Adegem and then travel to the village of Moerkerke. Here we will learn about the first attempts by the Canadians to cross the Leopold Canal in the first phase of the Battle of the Scheldt. Dudzele hostel near Brugge. (B,L,D)

Day 6: After breakfast we will spend the morning in historic Brugge. We will then travel to the area around Calais and begin a tour of some of the major remains of portions of the Atlantic Wall captured by the Canadians in September 1944. We will stop at the Gun Battery Todt in the village of Audinghen. This was one of the many hardened positions captured by the Canadian 3rd Division during the late summer and early autumn of 1944. After an inspection of this site we will make a stop at the grave of John McCrae in Wimereux and continue on to the neighbouring port city of Boulogne-sur-mer and check into our hostel. Overnight Boulogne Sur mer hostel (B,L,D)

Day 7: This morning we will drive to the village of Wizernes. After 1hour we will arrive at La Coupole V-2 launch facility. Here we will visit the best-preserved V-2 rocket assembly and launch sites in Europe. This museum will introduce us through the use of films and working models to the secret rocket weapons that Hitler unleashed against England during 1944/45. After lunch we will drive to Dieppe and check into our hotel along the seafront. After our arrival you will have time to explore this port town or just relax enjoying the sea air. Overnight Dieppe hotel (B,L,D)

Day 8: After breakfast we will gather along the seafront to learn about the Dieppe raid in 1942. We will then travel to Pourville and Puy to examine the two flank landings that took place during the raid. There are many bunkers that remain and we will recount some of the heroic exploits endured by the Canadians on these beaches. Our last stop will be at the Dieppe Canadian War cemetery. After lunch in Dieppe we will drive to Bayeux where we will check into our hostel in the heart of this Norman town and prepare for our exploration of the Normandy landing zones in the morning. Overnight Bayeux hotel (B,L,D)

Day 9: Today we will focus on the eastern approaches of the Normandy landing beaches. We will start with a visit to the Merville battery and then visit the Ranville Airborne Cemetery. We will then visit the new Pegasus Bridge museum that profiles the airborne operations of the British 6th Airborne Division along the Orne Canal. A museum video and model presentation as well as an outdoor lecture will bring to life one of the most heroic airborne operations of the war. We will follow a route along the Juno landing sector and make stops to examine the bunkers that the Canadians breached on June 6, 1944 and the memorials to their actions and stop at Beny-sur-mer Canadian War Cemetery that overlooks the Juno Beach landing sector. Next we will visit the the remains of the Mulberry Harbour at Arromanche. Our last stop will be at the coastal battery at Longues, a site popularized in the epic film 'The Longest Day'. By late afternoon we will return to Bayeux. Overnight Bayeux hotel (B,L,D)

Day 10: Today we will confine our sites to the western sectors of the Normandy landing zone. Our first short stop will be at the German military cemetery at La Cambe and after we will continue onto Ste. Mere-Eglise. It was in this town and the surrounding countryside that the U.S. airborne forces fought to secure the western approaches to Normandy. You will have an option of visiting two museums in this town both dedicated to the airborne and their exploits. Our tour continues to the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach. This is the largest U.S. cemetery in Europe and contains 9,286 burials. By late afternoon we will return to Bayeux. Overnight Bayeux hotel (B,L,D)

Day 11: This morning you will have time to pack and spend a few hours on your own in the town centre of Bayeux. I suggest a visit to Bayeux Cathedral only a ten minute walk from our accommodations and visit the Bayeux Tapestry. Maybe just visit some shops and pick up a few items to bring back home with you. At noon we will begin our trip back to Paris and make a few stops along the way in the towns of St. Lambert sur Dives and Vimoutiers. The route selected will be scenic and we will take our time today driving back to Paris. Overnight Paris airport hotel (B,L,D)

Day 12: After breakfast we will be taken directly to the airport for our departure back to Toronto. (B,L)