



**Liberation  
Route  
Europe**



TOUR & TRAVEL GUIDE  
**FRANCE**

Key events & commemorations

Last Sunday of April  
National day of Remembrance of the victims and the heroes of the Deportation

8<sup>th</sup> of May  
Commemoration of the Victory

27<sup>th</sup> of May  
National day of the Resistance

6<sup>th</sup> of June  
D-Day landings commemoration - Normandy

18<sup>th</sup> of June  
National day of Remembrance of General De Gaulle's Appeal to Resistance

16<sup>th</sup> of July, if on a Sunday, or the following Sunday  
National Day of the memory of the victims of racist and anti-Semitic crimes of the French State and Homage to the "Righteous" of France

15<sup>th</sup> of August  
Provence Landing commemoration

25<sup>th</sup> of August  
Paris Liberation commemoration

## History



Belgian troops in Normandy

In 1940 Nazi Germany invaded and occupied France.

This marked the beginning of four years of oppression in which a large part of the Jewish population was deported. In June 1944, the Allied invasion of Western Europe began and one of the largest battles of the war was fought in Normandy. During these fights, tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians lost their lives. France emerged from the war as one of the major powers and played an important role in the shaping of post-war Europe.

**La Nueve**  
THE SPANISH LIBERATORS OF PARIS



Truck with Spanish names in Paris

The Ninth Company – in Spanish La Nueve – was part of the French 2nd Armoured Division and consisted of 160 men, most of whom were Spanish Republicans.

After the end of the Spanish Civil War, many Spanish Republicans took refuge in France and in French possessions in North Africa. There, some of them joined the Free French Forces and took part in the liberation of France. La Nueve played a key role in the liberation of Paris, as they were among the first to enter the capital on 24 August 1944. Only in recent years has the city of Paris paid tribute to its Spanish liberators, with several events and commemorative plaques throughout the city.



Guadalupe

**The Artists' camp**  
CAMP DES MILLES



Camp des Milles Memorial, Aix-en-Provence ©Jacqueline Poggi

Camp des Milles was used between 1939 and 1942 as a transit and internment camp under the Vichy Régime.

A unique feature of the Camp is the artworks produced by the interned. More than 400 art pieces were created by prisoners of the camp. Many persecuted artists and intellectuals channeled their will to resist persecution and dehumanisation through art. These include, among others, Max Ernst, Hans Bellmer, and Lion Feuchtwanger. The painting gallery, situated in the guards' canteen, displays impressive murals painted by interned artists in 1940-1941.

*“More than 400 art pieces were created by prisoners of the camp”*

**The French First Army**  
ARMY B



Belfort liberation

The French Army B (Armée B), which later became the French First Army, was the largest French formation to take part in the liberation of France.

Led by General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, it landed on the coast of Provence in August 1944, during Operation Dragoon, and liberated the city of Marseille. Along with the American 7th Army, it chased the German forces up to Lorraine and liquidated the Colmar Pocket. In the final Allied offensive on Germany, de Lattre's troops advanced to the Danube. The French First Army was mainly composed of North African troops, and some of its elements had already taken part in the liberation of Italy and Corsica.



Jean de Lattre de Tassigny (1946)

**The civilian suffering**  
NORMANDY



The battle for Caen

While information on the military efforts in the Battle of Normandy is extensive, a lesser-known part of the Battle is its toll on the civilian population.

The heavy fighting and the aerial bombing of the cities between June and September 1944 caused a total of 20,000 deaths among the civilians – a similar number to the losses that the U.S. Army had to face in that period. Large cities saw thousands of deaths: in Caen, which was heavily bombed for six weeks, 30,000 Anglo-Canadian soldiers and 3,000 civilians lost their lives. The suffering of the population of Normandy was huge, because it was often caught in the crossfire or surprised by bombings. In Falaise, a memorial and museum is completely dedicated to the civilians in war.



Refugees of Caen in the convent of the abbey, 13 July 1944 © Mémorial de Caen

## Normandy and D-Day

On 6 June 1944 one of the largest fleets ever assembled crossed the English Channel towards France.

The Allied invasion of Europe had begun. After the storming and capturing of the beaches, a fierce battle broke out that was to last for two months. In these bloody fights, many soldiers and civilians lost their lives, and the Normandy countryside was left completely devastated.



Omaha - Into the Jaws of Death



Liberation of Paris Champs-Élysées

## Liberation of Paris

After the Allied forces broke out of Normandy, they headed north in pursuit of the retreating German Army.

Paris was not a priority for the Allies since they did not want to risk damaging the city. This changed when the Parisians started a revolt on 19 August 1944. The Allies quickly sent the French and American forces to liberate the city. The first units reached Paris on the 24th. The next day, French and American soldiers were welcomed by the Parisians.



Provence landings - National Archives

## Operation Dragoon

After the Allied armies landed in North Africa in November 1942, the German troops occupied all of Southern France including Provence.

Despite being governed by the collaborationist Vichy regime, Provence had an active resistance movement. The region was liberated in August 1944 when Allied forces, including several French units, landed between Nice and Marseille during Operation Dragoon, as from 15 August. With the help of the French resistance movement, the German forces in Provence were quickly overpowered.



Colmar liberated

## Battle of Alsace

The liberation of Alsace lasted from November 1942 to March 1945.

Arriving from Belfort, the 1st French Army liberated Mulhouse on 21 November 1944, while the 2nd French Armoured Division liberated Strasbourg two days later. The German Army, however, put up a robust defence in the so-called Colmar Pocket, and launched a strong counter-offensive, Operation Nordwind, in January 1945. General de Lattre de Tassigny led the French offensive, which culminated in the liberation of Colmar on 2 February and in the clearing of the whole pocket by 9 February. Northern Alsace was ultimately liberated in March 1945.

**D-Day festival in Normandy**  
JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup> COMMEMORATIONS



D-DAY-FESTIVAL - Juin 2018, Cornemuse - Maison des Canadiens - Juno Beach © Mathilde Lelandais

The D-Day Festival is a unique set of remembrance events that takes place in the Normandy Region since 2007.

Every year around 6 June, the anniversary of the landings in Normandy, several cities, villages and sites along the Normandy coast host remembrance events of any kind. The events include parades, reenactments, concerts, fireworks, special exhibitions, parachute jumps, which turn the whole Normandy coast into a single special place for commemoration. The festival celebrates solidarity, international brotherhood and the memory of the many who fought and fell in this huge operation, as well as for the Liberation of Europe. The presence of D-Day veterans is what makes the D-Day Festival a unique experience for young and old.



Défilé véhicules militaires - Seconde Guerre Mondiale - Journée vintage - Douvres la Divracade




**LIBERATION ROUTE EUROPE**

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The Liberation Route Europe has been a "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" since 2019

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## D-Day - Normandy



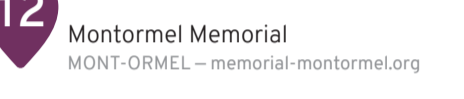
1 La Cambe Military Cemetery  
LA CAMBE – volksbund.de



5 The Pegasus Memorial and Bridge  
RANVILLE – memorial-pegasus.org



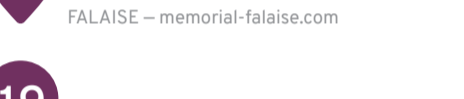
9 360 Circular Cinema  
ARROMANCHES – arromanches360.com



12 Montormel Memorial  
MONT-ORMEL – memorial-montormel.org



15 The Battle of Normandy Museum  
BAYEUX – bayeuxmuseum.com



17 Civilians in Wartime Memorial Falaise  
FALAISE – memorial-falaise.com



19 Merville Battery Museum  
MERVILLE FRANCEVILLE – www.batterie-merville.com



2 D-Day Museum Arromanches  
ARROMANCHES – musee-arromanches.fr



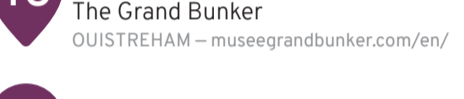
6 Normandy American Cemetery  
COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER – abmc.gov



10 German Gun Battery  
LONGUES-SUR-MER – bayeux-bessin-tourisme.com



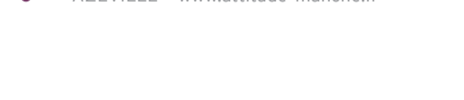
13 Overlord Museum  
COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER – overlordmuseum.com



16 Atlantic Wall Museum - The Grand Bunker  
OUISTREHAM – musee-grandbunker.com/en/



18 Bayeux War Cemetery  
BAYEUX – cwgc.org



20 Azeville Battery  
AZEVILLE – www.attitude-manche.fr



3 Utah Beach Museum  
SAINTE-MARIE-DU-MONT – utah-beach.com



7 Pointe du Hoc  
CRICQUEVILLE-EN-BESSIN – abmc.gov



11 Airborne Museum  
SAINTE-MÈRE-EGLISE – airborne-museum.org



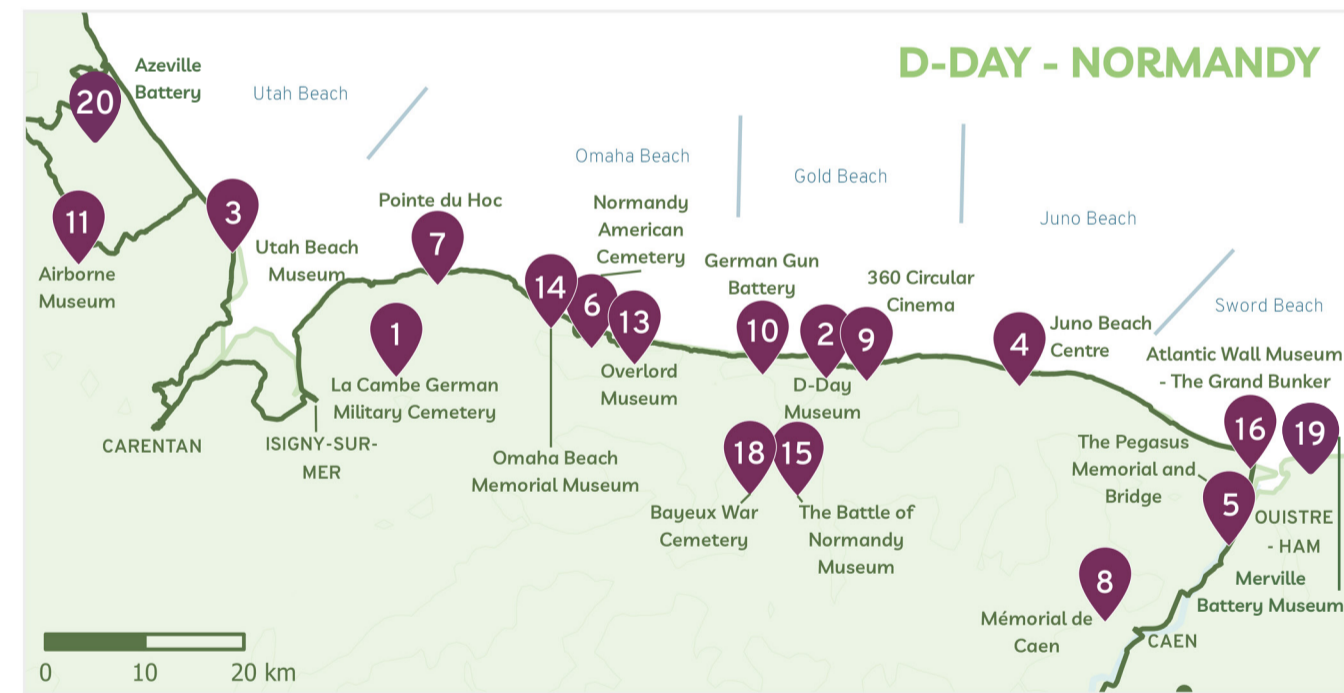
14 Omaha Beach Memorial Museum  
SAINT-LAURENT-SUR-MER – musee-memorial-omaha.com



4 Juno Beach Centre  
COURSEULLES-SUR-MER – junobeach.org



8 Memorial of Caen  
CAEN – memorial-caen.fr



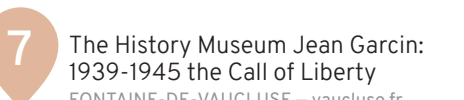
## Operation Dragoon - Provence



1 Memorial of the landing in Provence, Mount Faron  
TOULON – cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr



4 The Rhone American Cemetery and Memorial  
DRAGUIGNAN – abmc.gov



7 The History Museum Jean Garcin: 1939-1945 the Call of Liberty  
FONTAINE-DE-VAUCLUSE – vaucluse.fr



2 Camp des Milles Memorial  
AIX-EN-PROVENCE – campdesmilles.org



5 National Necropolis of Boulouris  
BOULOURIS



3 National Museum of the Marine  
TOULON – musee-marine.fr/toulon



6 National Necropolis of Luynes  
LUYNES

○ Capital — Hiking Trail  
● City — River

0 75 150 km



## Paris



1 Museum of the Order of the Liberation  
PARIS – ordredelaliberation.fr



3 Museum of Liberation of Paris - General Leclerc Museum - Jean Moulin Museum  
PARIS – museeliberation-leclerc-moulin.paris.fr



5 Mémorial des Martyrs de la Déportation  
PARIS – freedommuseum.com



7 De Gaulle Statue Champs-Élysées Liberation Parade  
PARIS



2 Historial Charles de Gaulle  
PARIS – charles-de-gaulle.org



4 The Army Museum  
PARIS – musee-armee.fr



6 Shoah Memorial Le Marais  
PARIS – memorialdelashoah.org

## Northern France



1 Calais War Museum  
CALAIS – calais.fr



3 Fort des Dunes  
LEFFRINCOUCHE – fort-des-dunes.fr



2 Dynamo Dunkirk 1940 Museum  
DUNKIRK – dynamo-dunkerque.com



4 La Coupole History Centre  
WIZERNES – lacoupole-france.com/

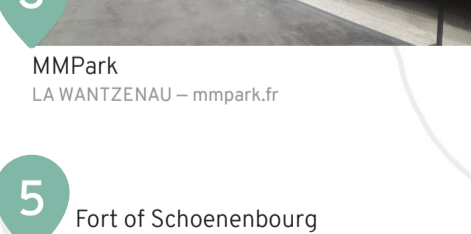
## Alsace



1 Concentration camp Natzweiler - Struthof  
NATZWILLER – struthof.fr



3 MMPark  
LA WANTZENAU – mmpark.fr



5 Fort of Schoenenbourg  
SCHÖENENBURG – lignemagnot.com



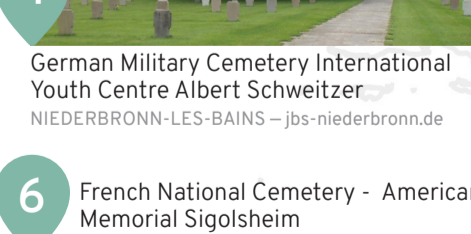
7 Memorial Museum of the Colmar Pocket Battle Winter 1944-45  
TURCKHEIM – musee.turckheim-alsace.com/en/



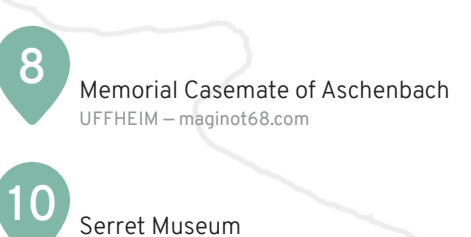
2 Alsace-Moselle Memorial  
SCHIRMECK – memorial-alsace-moselle.com



4 German Military Cemetery International Youth Centre Albert Schweitzer  
NIEDERBRONN-LES-BAINS – jbs-niederbronn.de



6 French National Cemetery - American Memorial Sigolsheim  
SIGOLSHEIM – necropole-sigolsheim.eu



8 Memorial Casemate of Aschenbach  
UFFHEIM – magnot68.com



10 Serret Museum  
SAINT-AMARIN – museeserret.fr

0 75 150 km

0 20 40 km

OPERATION DRAGON

CORSICA