Gardens of Picardy



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Rail Adventures	France & Europe	1	164kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Join a horticultural expert on a journey through Picardy, where flower-filled villages, inspired planting techniques and impressive private gardens reveal northern France's rich horticultural heritage. Stroll through André van Beek's living works of art, admire the colourful borders of Digeon and Valérianes, and the imaginative designs of Valloires and Séricourt. Be wowed by Impressionist painter Henri Le Sidaner's romantic terraces and explore gorgeous Gerberoy as well as Maizicourt's remarkable garden rooms. Top it all with a barge cruise through Amiens' floating market gardens. You'll gain fascinating insights into the planting and design of each garden, returning each evening to a stylish hotel overlooking Amiens Cathedral.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Learning about the history of French horticulture from an expert
- Sailing through the tranquil waterways of Les Hortillonnages, Amiens' unique floating gardens.
- Exploring the romantic gardens created by Impressionist painter Henri Le Sidaner
- Enjoying the beauty of Jardin Moulin Ventin, a picturesque garden blending water, flowers and thoughtful design

- Wandering through the flower-filled streets of Gerberoy

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Fully escorted travel by rail and excursions with a Horticultural Specialist Tour Manager
- 6 nights at the 4-star Hôtel Mercure Amiens Cathedrale
- 6 breakfasts & 6 dinners
- All entrance fees and visits as per the itinerary
- All transport to and from sites of interest

ITINERARY - ITINERARY

Day 1 By rail to Amiens

We depart from London St Pancras International on the morning Eurostar service to Lille Europe. From here, it's a 7-minute walk to Lille-Flandres station, where we board a regional train to Amiens. On arrival, we continue to our hotel, our base for the week. We reconvene later for dinner together.

Day 2 Floral Gardens of Digeon and Jardin de Valérianes

Today we visit two exceptional French gardens, beginning with the Floral Gardens of Digeon. Set in peaceful countryside, its carefully designed borders, mature trees and landscaped spaces offer an inspiring combination of colour, texture and seasonal planting.

Later, we continue to Jardin de Valérianes, a true gardener's paradise created with an artist's eye for colour and composition. Imaginative planting combines flowers and foliage with the garden's natural surroundings, while winding pathways lead through intimate garden rooms and ever-changing seasonal displays.

Day 3 Les Jardins de Valloires and Jardin de Séricourt

Today we visit two of the Hauts-de-France region's most celebrated gardens, each offering a very different horticultural experience.

Set in the picturesque Authie Valley beside a magnificent Cistercian abbey, Les Jardins de Valloires is one of France's most remarkable botanical gardens. Designed by acclaimed landscape architect Gilles Clément, its eight hectares are home to more than 5,000 species and varieties, creating a rich tapestry of colour, texture and fragrance.

We then continue to Jardin de Séricourt, created by landscape designers Yves and Guillaume Gosse de Gorre. Imaginative garden rooms combine sculptural topiary, dramatic perspectives, rose-filled spaces, peaceful water features and contemporary landscape design. Highlights include the Cathedral of Roses, the Warrior Garden and the celebrated topiary garden.

Day 4 Jardin du Moulin Ventin and the gardens of André van Beek

Today celebrates water, colour and artistic inspiration as we visit two enchanting gardens in the Oise region.

Set around a restored 19th-century mill, Jardin du Moulin Ventin is a two-hectare garden shaped by water. Cascades, ponds and streams flow through a series of garden rooms and landscaped vistas. Look out for an impressive collection of trees and shrubs, alongside traditional roses, ornamental grasses and seasonal perennials.

Later, we visit the extraordinary garden of Dutch-born painter André van Beek. Designed as a living canvas and a source of inspiration for his work, the garden features sweeping displays of dahlias, hydrangeas and water lilies. Wander across picturesque bridges and admire colourful reflections in the peaceful ponds.

Day 5 Gerberoy and the Gardens of Henri Le Sidaner

Today we step into Gerberoy, one of France's most beautiful villages. Cobbled lanes, half-timbered houses and cascades of roses create a scene straight from a painting. There's time to wander among its flower-filled streets, browse the artisan shops or relax in one of its cafés.

In 1901, painter Henri Le Sidaner fell in love with Gerberoy and transformed a hillside above the village into an enchanting series of garden rooms. We visit his beautifully restored gardens, where fragrant roses, romantic terraces, clipped topiary and leafy pergolas lead to peaceful viewpoints across the surrounding countryside.

Day 6 Les Hortillonnages and the Gardens of Maizicourt

This morning, we visit Les Hortillonnages d'Amiens, a remarkable network of floating market gardens spread across a maze of peaceful waterways. Travelling by traditional flat-bottomed boat, we glide past flower-filled islands, vegetable plots and abundant wildlife. Cultivated by generations of market gardeners, this unique landscape offers a fascinating glimpse into a way of life that has shaped Amiens for centuries.

We then continue to the Gardens of Maizicourt, one of France's most celebrated private gardens. Set around an elegant château, the grounds combine formal structure with romantic planting, including colourful borders, clipped topiary, ornamental grasses and charming water features.

Day 7 Departure Day

After breakfast, we transfer to Amiens rail station to begin our journey home.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Gentle walking grade 1

Short, easy walks on level paths with no stiles. Ideal for relaxed walking and active sightseeing. Typically, 2-3 miles (3-5km) or less, with little if any ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

Hôtel Mercure Amiens Cathedrale

Overlooking the magnificent Notre-Dame d'Amiens Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Mercure Amiens Cathédrale enjoys an enviable location in the heart of Amiens. Situated within easy walking distance of the city's historic centre, picturesque canals and vibrant restaurants, the hotel provides an excellent base for exploring this charming city.

The hotel offers contemporary, comfortable guestrooms, many featuring views towards the cathedral feature tea and coffee making facilities, minibar, satellite TV and air conditioning. Guests can relax in the hotel's restaurant and bar, which showcase regional cuisine and local specialities, or enjoy the lively surroundings of the nearby St Leu district.

VACCINATIONS & HEALTH

Vaccinations & health information

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see whether any health precautions are needed for your trip. Health advice and requirements can change, so we recommend doing this in good time before travel.

As a general rule, travellers should ensure they are up to date with routine UK vaccinations and boosters, including, for example, MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Some countries may require you to have specific vaccinations such as Malaria, Rabies and Yellow Fever. Please check with your GP if you are unsure.

Please note that the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is restricted or banned in certain countries. If you will be carrying medication, you should check with the relevant embassy or consulate before travelling. As an extra precaution, we recommend keeping medication in its original packaging, carrying a copy of your prescription, and, where possible, asking your pharmacist to provide the medication name in the language of the country you are visiting.

For further country-specific health advice, visit www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk. If you are travelling from outside the UK, please consult your own doctor and check local entry requirements.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passport & Visa information

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

Passport Requirements

This information applies to travellers holding a full British Citizen passport. Entry requirements vary by destination and can change at short notice. For most EU and worldwide destinations, passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay. Some countries also require a minimum period of validity remaining on your passport (often up to 6 months beyond your return date), even if you are not staying that long.
We strongly recommend ensuring your passport has at least six months' validity remaining at the time of travel to avoid any issues.

If you hold a different type of British passport or a passport issued by another country, you must check the requirements with the relevant embassy, consulate, or official government website.

Visa Requirements

Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling.
British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website:
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

Weather conditions can vary throughout the day. Use the following list as a guide when preparing for your holiday.

Essentials

- Sturdy footwear with good grip for spending much of the day on your feet
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Sun hat
- Rucksack
- Water bottle with a capacity of at least 1 litre
- Sunscreen
- Mobile phone
- UV-protective sunglasses
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC; formerly EHIC)

Recommended

- First aid kit, including plasters
- Sit mat
- Waterproof pouch for valuables
- Rubbish bags
- Wallet or purse
- Camera
- Durable lunch box
- Plug adaptor

USEFUL INFORMATION

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so before you travel.

For more information about healthcare and its costs, please visit: https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/

Drinking Water

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Standards for drinking water vary widely around the world. In many destinations, tap water may not be safe to drink, brush your teeth with, or use for making ice. Where advised, you should drink only bottled or treated water and ensure that bottle seals are intact before use. If bottled water is unavailable, water should be boiled or filtered.

Staying well hydrated is particularly important in hot climates and during active holidays. Carry water with you and drink regularly.

If you are unsure about local water safety, check official country-specific health advice before travel, or ask your accommodation or local guides for guidance once you arrive.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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