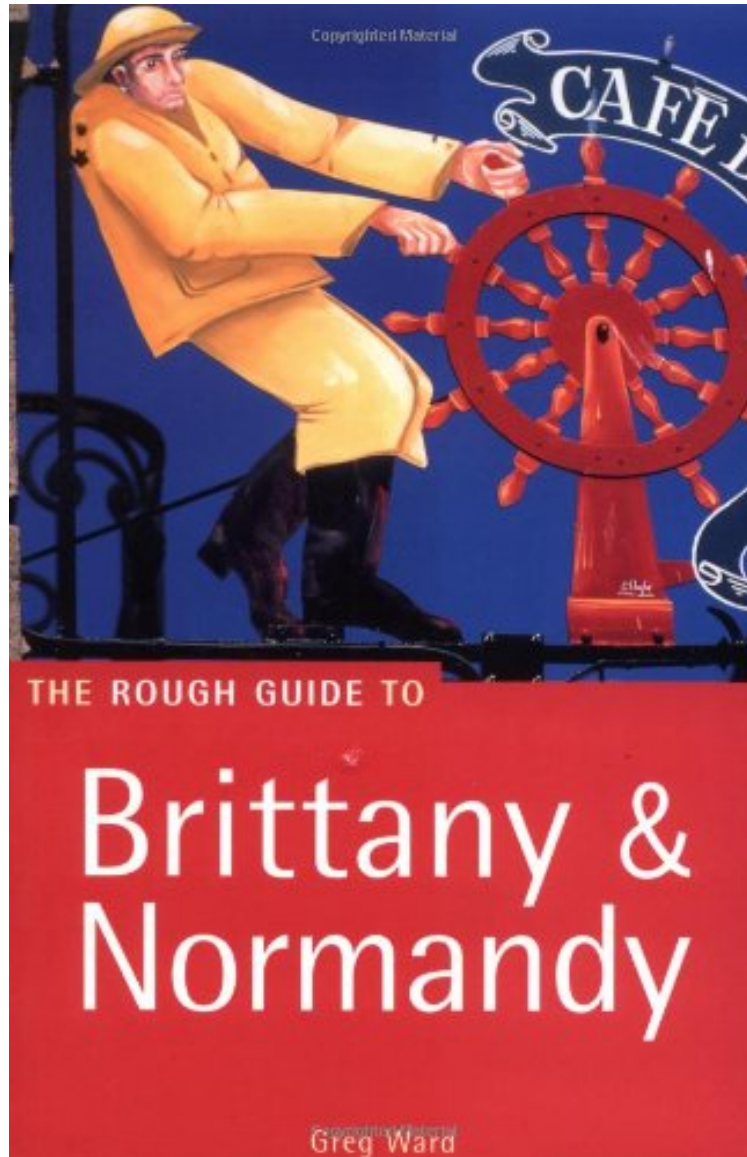


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The Rough Guide to Brittany and Normandy

Greg Ward

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Greg Ward : The Rough Guide to Brittany and Normandy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rough Guide to Brittany and Normandy:

Easily accessible from Paris, Brittany and Normandy remain among France's most enduringly fascinating regions. From early Celtic rites and King Arthur's tournaments to Monet's paintings at Giverny and the D-Day landings, these

shores resound with living history. Whether you're racing the tides of Mont-St-Michel or catching rays on the Norman Riviera, The Rough Guide gives you the inside track on an unforgettable trip.

About the Author Greg Ward has authored or contributed to many Rough Guides, including, Hawaii, USA, China, Mexico and Spain. He visits Brittany and Normandy several times each year, touring by car or bicycle. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. ROUTES Individual highlights in each region are detailed in the chapter introductions throughout this book. Although hard-and-fast itineraries aren't given – much of the fun in both provinces consists in rambling off on side roads – the text is structured as logically as possible in continuous routes or definable areas. Ways to get around are set out on p.27 onwards. If you read this before you decide how to travel, consider cycling; both provinces are ideal, with short distances between each town and the next. Otherwise, a car is probably the best alternative. Unless you plan to stay within a limited area, public transport can be frustrating. CLIMATE AND TIME OF YEAR Every French town or district eagerly promotes its own "micro-climat", maintaining that some meteorological freak makes it milder or drier or balmy than its neighbours. On the whole, however, the bulk of Normandy and Brittany follows a fairly set pattern. A genuine summer, more reliable than in Britain, begins around mid-June and lasts, in a good year, through to mid-October. Spring and autumn are mild but sporadically wet. If you come for a week in April or November, it could be spoilt by rain; the rainy spells seldom last more than a couple of days, however, so a fortnight should yield better luck. Winter is not too severe, though in western Brittany especially it can be damp and very misty on the coast. Sea temperatures are not Mediterranean, and any greater warmth felt in the Channel waters off the Norman coast as opposed to the south of England is probably more psychological than real. The south coast of Brittany is a different matter – consistently warm through the summer months, with no need for you to brace yourself before going into the sea. The other factor that may affect planning is the tourist season. On the coast, this gets going properly around July, reaches a peak during the first two weeks of August and then fades quite swiftly – but try to avoid the great rentrée at the end of the month, when the roads are jammed with cars returning to Paris. Inland, the season is less defined; highlights such as Monet's gardens at Giverny and parts of the Nantes–Brest canal can be crowded out in midsummer but, in August at any rate, some smaller hotels close to enable their owners to take their own holidays by the sea. Conversely, those seaside resorts that have grown up without really being attached to a genuine town take on a distinctly ghostlike appearance during the winter months, when they can often be entirely devoid of facilities.