



DRIVE TO DISCOVER FRANCE

A SELF-DRIVE HISTORY TOUR OF FRANCE





Road Trip Drive	Distance	Driving Time
Paris to Château de Blérancourt	53 miles	1 hour 8 minutes
Château de Blérancourt to The Chemin Des Dames	31 miles	48 minutes
The Chemin Des Dames to Reims	28 miles	38 minutes
Reims to Romagne-Sous-Montfaucon	80 miles	1 hour 26 minutes
Romagne-Sous-Montfaucon to Verdun	24 miles	40 minutes
Verdun to Metz	49 miles	54 minutes
Metz to Montsec	39 miles	1 hour
Montsec to Paris	198 miles	3 hours 12 minutes
Total Distance Covered:	503 miles	

Take a trip through history with this educational road trip guide to exploring WWI France. With this itinerary, you will visit four of the nine remembrance sites that commemorate US activities along the Western Front of The Great War. You will also visit main sites of remembrance with the option to explore more if your schedule allows.

This self-drive history tour of France is not only a WWI Centennial guide but also a culinary guide. Take a break from learning about the Great War and visit a few of the area's most historic campaign houses, food manufacturers, and cooking schools along the way.

TO/FROM: Paris, France

In this road trip guide, you'll begin and end your journey at Charles de Gaulle Airport.

1. Château de Blérancourt

The first stop on your journey is the elegant seventeenth-century château witnessed the ravages of the French Revolution and the 'Great War' [World War I]. Anne Morgan, daughter of a wealthy American, organized at Blérancourt a group of American women volunteers who delivered medical and social services to the local French population which had been severely traumatized by the war. In 1931, Blérancourt became a French national museum on Franco-American Cooperation. The unique collection informs visitors of the American participation in the Great War.

2. The Chemin des Dames & Caverne du Dragon

The Chemin des Dames is a ridge that acted as a frontline position where violent fighting took place during the Great War. Beneath the ridge is Caverne du Dragon "The Dragon's Lair" an underground quarry that became army barracks which was used by both the French & German forces, sometimes simultaneously, as a first-aid station, command post & chapel. Visitors can follow in the footsteps of WWI soldiers to understand the significance of the area.

3. Reims

Once you reach Reims, explore the town center & cathedral which are both designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites. During WWI, Reims was 80% destroyed. On September 19th, 1914, Germany fired shells at the cathedral causing it to catch fire which resulted in massive damages. Thanks to American donation, that monument was restored after the war.

4. American Cemetery at Romagne-Sous-Montfaucon

After relaxing in Reims, you will make your way to the American cemetery at Romagne sous Montfaucon. With its 14,246 crosses, the Romagne Memorial is the largest American graveyard in Europe. The Sammies (American soldiers) who fell during the battle to liberate the Meuse-Argonne area rest in peace here. Its layout and architecture make this an essential part of any tour aiming to show what Americans mean when they say, "We shall never forget".

5. Verdun Battlefield

Next on the battlefield tour itinerary is the Verdun Battlefield which saw 300 days and 300 nights of unbroken fighting. More than 300,000 dead and missing, 400,000 French and German wounded. This battle in 1916 was the most deadly head-on clash between France and Germany in history. A visit to this location is necessary to truly grasp the profound horror of the Great War and understand the sacrifice of a whole generation. In the heart of the Battlefield, the Verdun Memorial, which first opened in 1967 under the patronage of French Academician and war veteran Maurice Genevoix, is one of the most important Great War museums in Europe.

6. Metz

Metz, only an hour's drive from Luxembourg, is a great place to visit year round. There's always something new to see or do like the summer Mirabelle Festival with its outdoor concerts, the annual flea market in the Outre Seille quarter or the renowned Christmas Markets. The mix of lively shopping streets and riverside walks makes Metz ideal for pedestrians and cyclists. Family-friendly parks and gardens abound, see the swans on the river Moselle or the eco-gardens along the river Seille, or just enjoy a stroll along the old ramparts from the Germans Gateway to the Cathedral.

7. Montsec American Monument

To finish off your tour of WWI remembrance sites, you will visit the Montsec American Memorial built by the United States in 1932 on the Butte de Montsec hill. This was constructed to commemorate the significant role that the U.S. Air Force played in the battle of Saint-Mihiel. Built of Euville stone, it consists of a circular colonnade in the manner of a Greek temple, with a bronze relief map at its center showing the American units that fought at the Saint-Mihiel Salient. It offers a magnificent panoramic view of the Lac de Madine and the Meuse hills.