

Visit the memorial sites of the 1914-1918 war & Visit Champagne Pommery



1914-1918 war memorial sites: a journey through history

The First World War (1914-1918) had a profound impact on the landscapes and memories of many French territories. This tour allows you to discover emblematic places where particularly violent fighting took place, and to understand the living conditions of the soldiers.

The Chemin des Dames and the Dragon's Cave

Located in the Aisne department, the Chemin des Dames is one of the most striking sites of the war. Before the war, this plateau overlooking the valley was a peaceful place, named after Louis XV's daughters, Adélaïde and Victoire.

But from 1914, this territory became a major strategic challenge. German forces occupied the heights and took up residence in the underground quarries, notably in the Hurtebise creuse, which was quickly transformed into a veritable military base.

This gallery, converted into an underground barracks, includes :

- dormitories and rest areas
- kitchens and water points
- a command post
- medical facilities

Called the "Dragon's Cave" (Drachenhöhle) by the Germans, in reference to the flamethrowers used during the fighting, it became a strategically contested location for the duration of the conflict.

On April 16, 1917, General Nivelle's offensive marked a tragic turning point. The assault was a failure, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of soldiers in just a few days. Subsequently, the French regained partial control of the site, before the front stabilized.

Today, a visit to the Caverne du Dragon (Dragon's Cave) allows visitors to discover this underground world and better understand the reality of the fighting. A timeline also retraces the reconstruction of the destroyed villages.

The Butte de Vauquois, symbol of the mine war

The Butte de Vauquois is another major site of the 14-18 war. This village, located on a strategic point, was totally destroyed by the fighting.

Between 1914 and 1918, the French and German armies fought an underground war, digging galleries and using mines to try and destroy opposing positions.

Today, the site still features :

- numerous explosion craters
- underground galleries
- the remains of the vanished village

The visit allows visitors to appreciate the violence of the confrontations and to understand the techniques of mine warfare.

Verdun and the Douaumont Ossuary, places of remembrance not to be missed

The tour continues to Verdun, symbol of the First World War. The battle of 1916 remains one of the longest and deadliest of the conflict.

The Verdun Memorial provides an insight into the fighting and living conditions of the soldiers, thanks to modern, immersive displays.

Nearby, the Douaumont ossuary is a major place of remembrance. This impressive monument houses the remains of over 130,000 unknown soldiers.

Opposite the ossuary, the military cemetery contains over 16,000 graves, a reminder of the scale of human losses.

These places offer a deeply moving experience, combining history, emotion and the duty of remembrance.

Champagne: an exceptional terroir after the duty of remembrance

After this immersion in history, the day continues with the discovery of Champagne, bringing a more convivial and cultural dimension to the excursion.

Vranken-Pommery, an exceptional heritage

In Reims, a visit to a major champagne house, such as Vranken-Pommery, is an opportunity to discover world-renowned expertise.

The history of the company is closely linked to Jeanne-Alexandrine Pommery, who took over the family business after the death of her husband and contributed to its development.

In 1874, she created brut champagne, a major innovation that met with international success.

Over the years, she expanded the estate to more than 65 hectares of vineyards, laying the foundations for a sustainable heritage.

Spectacular know-how and cellars

The tour includes :

- cellars dug into the chalk
- the champagne-making process
- galleries and works of art
- the different vintages

This immersion in the world of champagne gives a better understanding of the work in the vineyard and the production of this emblematic product.

It also offers a convivial moment to round off a day rich in discoveries.

A complete excursion between memory and art of living

This day combines two complementary dimensions:

- the duty to remember through the sites of the 1914-1918 war
- discover Champagne's heritage and know-how

This alternation makes for a well-balanced tour that's rewarding, moving and enjoyable.

Why choose this tour

- discover the major sites of the 14-18 war
- understand the historical stakes of the conflict
- visit places of remembrance that cannot be ignored
- explore the Champagne region
- offer a rich and varied group outing

Request your personalized itinerary

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What memorial sites can be discovered on an excursion about the 1914-1918 war?

This tour takes in several emblematic sites of the First World War, including the Caverne du Dragon on the Chemin des Dames, the Butte de Vauquois, the Mémorial de Verdun and the Ossuaire de Douaumont. These sites bear witness to the violence of the fighting, military strategies and soldiers' living conditions. They offer a complete immersion in the history of the conflict through authentic relics and places of memory.

Why link the 14-18 war memorial sites with the Champagne region?

Visiting memorial sites as a group is a powerful way of sharing the experience of remembrance. On-site explanations make it easier to understand historical events and the issues at stake in the conflict. This collective approach fosters exchanges and enables a more concrete approach to history, by discovering the very places where the fighting took place.

What can you discover when you visit a champagne house like Vranken-Pommery?

A visit to a champagne house like Vranken-Pommery reveals the chalk-cut cellars, ornate galleries and different stages of champagne production. Visitors learn about the work of the vines, the elaboration of the cuvées and the history of this emblematic house. The experience offers a glimpse of Champagne's world-renowned expertise.

More remembrance and history experiences

This experience is part of our Remembrance tourism collection.

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Discover this experience

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