



ILLE-ET-VILAINE

3 PERFECT DAYS

♥ DAY 1 // THE CORSAIRE CITY

Kick off in the walled city of St-Malo (opposite). Explore the backstreets, visit the rebuilt cathedral (opposite) and the château's museum (p38) before climbing the tower for 360-degree views. Treat yourself to a sea cruise (p39) followed by tea and cake at Timothy (p43), or a stellar supper at Le Chalut or Bouche En Folie (p42).

♥ DAY 2 // STYLE BY THE SEA

Catch the ferry over to delightful Dinard (p45), still one of France's most sophisticated seaside getaways. Bag a beach tent on the Plage de l'Écluse (p47), or stroll the Pointe du Moulinet (p47) and the Promenade du Claire de Lune (p47). Check into the old-fashioned Hôtel Printania (p290) or the stylish Hôtel de la Reine-Hortense (p290), and indulge in a twilight supper at L'Escalé à Corto (p49) or Didier Méril (p48).

♥ DAY 3 // INLAND ILLE-ET-VILAINE

Day three is devoted to exploring the region's inner charms. Arrange your itinerary around visits to the châteaux of Combourg (p49), Fougères or Vitré (p56), factoring in an expedition to the safari park of Bourbansais (p50) if you've got the kids in tow. Alternatively, you could devote the whole day to Brittany's historic capital city, Rennes (p50). If you do, round things off with a meal at Rachel Gesbert's fantastic restaurant, Fontaine aux Perles (p54).

ST-MALO

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pop 52,700

Jutting from the Channel waters like a honey-stoned super-tanker, the walled city of St-Malo cuts one of northern France's most unforgettable silhouettes. Often referred to as the 'City of Corsaires' – a nod to its pirate heritage – St-Malo was first settled by a Welsh monk by the name of MacLow in the 6th century, and served for centuries as a fishing harbour before establishing itself as one of the country's most important ports during the 17th and 18th centuries.

St-Malo became a key base for merchant ships and government-sanctioned pirates (known as privateers), and the city's independent spirit survives to this day in its motto, *'ni français, ni breton, malouin suis'* ('Neither Frenchman, nor Breton, but of St-Malo am I'). To protect the city from reprisals (especially from the hated English), the great military architect Vauban oversaw the construction of the city's defensive walls in the 17th century, one of the few areas of the city to survive WWII almost unscathed. Since its postwar reconstruction, St-Malo has reinvented itself as a Channel port and seaside getaway; visit in high summer and you won't have the streets to yourself.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

EMERGENCIES // Centre Hospitalier

Broussais (Map p38; ☎ 02 99 21 21 21; 1 rue de la Marne); **Police Station** (Map p38; ☎ 02 99 40 02 06; 6 av Franklin Roosevelt)

TOURIST OFFICES // St-Malo Tourist Office (Map p40; ☎ 02 99 56 64 48; www.saint-malo-tourisme.com; Esplanade St-Vincent; ☎ 9am-7.30pm

Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-12.30pm & 1.30-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Sun Apr-Jun & Sep, 9am-12.30pm & 1.30-6pm Mon-Sat Oct-Mar) Has maps, walking leaflets and a St-Malo audioguide (€12), plus makes bookings for boat trips, activities and hotels. It provides useful info on windsurfing, sailing, scuba-diving and fishing options.

ORIENTATION

St-Malo consists of the harbour towns of St-Malo and St-Servan and the modern suburbs of Paramé and Rothéneuf to the east. The walled city of St-Malo is known as Intra-Muros ('within the walls'). From the train station, it's a 20-minute walk west along av Louis Martin.

EXPLORING ST-MALO

📍 **INTRA-MUROS (WALLED CITY) // STROLL THE RAMPARTS AND STREETS OF ST-MALO'S OLD TOWN** St-Malo's tangle of streets (Map p40) are a highlight of a visit to Brittany. Grand merchants' mansions and sea captains' houses line the alleys; one of the smartest residences houses the **Maison de Corsaire** (☎ 02 99 56 09 40; www.demeure-de-corsaire.com; 5 rue d'Asfeld; tours in French adult/child €5.50/4; ☎ 10-11.30am & 2.30-5.30pm summer & school holidays, 3pm Tue-Sun at other times Feb-Nov), built in 1725 by François-Auguste Magon de la Lande, an influential shipowner and director of the East India Trading Company.

It may be hard to believe but St-Malo's old town was almost entirely rebuilt following the ferocious fighting of August 1944, when the battle to unseat the German forces left 80% of the town's buildings in ruins. The **Cathédrale St-Vincent** (place J de Châtillon; ☎ 9.30am-6pm) was particularly badly hit; much of the original structure (including its spire) was reduced

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