

Berridge Programs

Find yourself in France.

Cooking and Culture

Program Structure and Curriculum

Program Structure

The program is led by our live-in chef, Bogdan Silaghi, alongside Directors Andrea Mardon and Chris Gaggia—dedicated cooks and Normandy enthusiasts. It features hands-on cooking sessions, demonstrations, discussions about food memories, and collaborative work on our food anthology project.

Students will prepare at least one meal daily, with some meals prepared for you to allow time for field trips and other enrichment. Meal preparation takes place in teams to ensure a comfortable and engaging experience in our charming French country kitchen.

Cultural excursions include beach days, coastal hikes, visits to French markets, and exploring local towns like Saint-Vaast, Bricquebec, and Cherbourg.

The program includes six lunches and three dinners at a variety of restaurants, culminating in a Michelin-starred lunch at Le Pily in Cherbourg. Two dinners are student-choice (self-funded), while the others feature pre-set menus covered by the program.

DAILY SCHEDULE

8:30: Breakfast

9:30: Community Hour (Two days per week)

10:30: Morning Session (Classes, demos, shopping or lunch prep)

12:30: Lunch

1:30: Afternoon Session (Classes, demos, field trip)

3:30: Food for Thought and/or dinner prep

6:00: Dinner

Community Hour

Twice a week, the whole group participates in Community Hour. Whether you're chopping vegetables in the kitchen, tending to the garden or helping with the shopping, you'll participate in meaningful tasks that support daily life at the chateau.

Food for Thought

The Food for Thought sessions offer an opportunity to reflect on the deeper connections between food and our experiences. Participants engage in discussions about their food stories, exploring what food means to them and processing their time spent in Normandy. These sessions also provide dedicated time to curate and compile the Food Anthology, *Carnet du Culinair*e. Students will select photos, recipes, and personal stories to include in the anthology, creating a meaningful keepsake of their culinary journey.

COOKING AND CULTURE - Curriculum

Day 1 - Orientation

10:00 - Chateau welcome and orientation. Icebreakers and group exploration Our Connection to Food

11:30 - Introduction to Normandy: regional history, culture, and a guided tour of the chateau and grounds

12:30 - Lunch (Chef): Jambon Fromage & Tuscan Bean Soup

2:00 - Kitchen induction and orientation: understanding tools, layout, and expectations

3:00 - Food safety workshop

4:00 - Overview of kitchen schedules, rotas, and team responsibilities

6:30 - Dinner (Chef): Roasted Chicken Dinner (Herb-roasted chicken thighs with mushroom cream sauce, served with dill-roasted new potatoes, garlic butter sautéed green beans, and homemade apple crumble à la mode)

8:00 - Evening walk and orientation to walking trails in the area

Day 2 - Preparing to Cook

9:30 - Community Hour: Introduction

10:30 - Mise en Place: the art of organizing ingredients, understanding weights, measures, and reading recipes

11:00 - Classic Quiche Lorraine preparation

12:30 - Lunch: Quiche Lorraine with simple green salad and vinaigrette dressing
2:00 - Food for Thought: Reflect on how food connects us. Reflect and write on a time you felt or forged a connection through food
3:00 - Introduction to our Food Anthology project
4:30 - Presentation: Exploring the role of French market in culinary traditions
6:00 - Dinner (Chef): Indian Vegetable Coconut Curry with rice pilaf, flat bread, chocolate cake with raspberry coulis

Day 3 - Knife Skills and French Market Visit

9:30 - Knife skills workshop: mastering chopping, dicing, slicing, and julienning
10:30 - FIELD TRIP: Depart for Bricquebec Market. Learn how to select fresh produce, shop for dinner, and capture the market's vibrant energy through photos and notes
12:30 - Lunch: Enjoy local market fare or lunch of own choice
2:30 - Food for Thought: Reflections on the French Market. Share stories, photos, and inspirations from the French Market visit
3:30 - Bakery Tour: All about French bread, croissants, and pastries
4:30 - Dinner prep
6:00 - Dinner: Classic French Ratatouille, Grilled Herbed Sausages, Jasmine Rice with Fresh Fruit Salad and Yoghurt Parfait
8:00 - Film Night: Ratatouille!

Day 4 - Basic Sauces

9:30 - Community Hour: Work in teams to help in the garden, kitchen, or household
10:30 - Making Roux and Béchamel sauce
11:00 - Lunch Preparation: Croque Monsieur - The French Grilled Cheese
12:30 - Lunch: Croque Monsieur and green salad with balsamic vinaigrette dressing
2:00 - Food for Thought: Family Food Traditions. Share recipes and memories of your family meals
3:00 - Demonstration: Preparing a chicken for roasting
4:00 - Presentation: Introduction to the French Cheese Plate
6:00 - Dinner (Chef): Whole roast chicken with lemon, rosemary, and garlic. A selection of grilled root vegetables and roast potatoes. Cheese plate and fruit sorbet for dessert

Day 5 - Stock and Soup

9:30 - How to make stock, making a bouquet garni

11:00 - Homemade Chicken Soup

12:30 - Lunch: Chicken Soup with vegetables and egg noodles

2:00 - FIELD TRIP: Cherbourg, Free time to explore and shop

6:00 - Dinner out: Comptoir Libanais Restaurant: A vibrant selection of classic Lebanese mezza for sharing.

Day 6 - Eggs, Cider Tasting and BBQ Party

9:30 - Community Hour

10:30 - Eggs three ways: Omelet, poaching, frying

12:30 - Lunch: Mediterranean frittata with fennel and orange salad

2:00 - FIELD TRIP: Cider Farm and Cider tasting

4:00 - Preparing for BBQ (making skewers, burgers, lighting coals)

6:00 - Dinner: Classic American BBQ with a French Twist (Hamburgers topped with bacon, Camembert, finished with cornichons and mustard. Served with grilled summer vegetable skewers and a tangy potato salad)

Day 7 - Italian Feast

9:30 - Bolognese and Pesto from scratch

11:00 - Lunch prep: Pesto pasta salad with bowtie pasta, cherry tomatoes on bed of fresh arugula

12:30 - Lunch: Pesto pasta salad

2:00 - Food for Thought: Work session choosing recipes, pictures and stories

3:00 - Dinner prep for Italian Feast

6:00 - Dinner: Charcuterie board, Spaghetti Bolognese, garlic bread, Tiramisu. Making the perfect espresso.

Day 8 - FIELD TRIP Saint Vaast and Tatihou

10:00 - Depart for Saint Vaast Market

11:00 - Oyster tasting in Saint Vaast

12:30 - Lunch: Explore Saint Vaast and choose your lunch

2:00 - Boat trip to Tatihou Island with free time to explore. Document the day's adventures for

the Food Anthology

6:00 - Dinner Out: Michelin-rated Le Panoramique with views over Saint Vaast and the bay

Day 9 - Traditional Sunday Roast Lunch

11:00 - Lunch prep: Roast pork with gravy, roasted vegetables, steamed broccoli, and sticky toffee pudding

2:00 - Lunch: Enjoy a traditional Sunday roast

FREE TIME

Day 10 - Baking Basics

9:30 - Pastry-making workshop

10:30 - Tarte Tatin and English Scones

12:30 - Lunch: Jacket Potatoes buffet with baked beans, cheddar cheese, bacon bits, and fresh green salad

1:30 - Food Anthology Session: Write reflections on baking techniques, recipes, and personal stories about baked goods

4:00 - English Afternoon Tea: A variety of teas served with scones made earlier, raspberry jam, and fresh whipped cream

6:00 - Dinner (Chef): Saucisse and Lentil with French bread, a demonstration of traditional Norman cooking with Bruno Roi. Tarte Tatin for dessert

Day 11 - Traditional Breadmaking Day

8:30 - FIELD TRIP: Depart for the local windmill for a breadmaking workshop. Make bread from scratch, tour of 16th century windmill and bread baking in an ancient oven

12:30 - Lunch Out: Le Cap Carteret Restaurant: Three-course meal of seafood and French classics in an elegant beachside restaurant.

2:30 - Beach explore and swimming at Carteret Beach

3:00 - Maison du Biscuit: Quaint biscuit shop and tea rooms

6:00 - Dinner: French Onion Soup with bread made from the windmill that day

Day 12 - Crepe Making Day

9:30 - Community Hour

10:30 - Galettes making: Savory crepes with a variety of fillings like ham, cheese

12:30 - Lunch: Galettes with green salad

2:00 - Sweet crepe workshop: preparing fillings like lemon sugar and Nutella with whipped

cream, learn how to make caramel sauce

3:30 - Guest Chef demonstration: Crepe Suzette with James Bokee

6:00 - Dinner: TBD

Day 13 - Butcher Visit, Beef Bourguignon and French Picnic

9:00 - Visit a local butcher to select beef and bones

10:30 - Prepare beef stock and season meat for Beef Bourguignon

11:00 - Pack French Picnics for lunch outing

12:30 - FIELD TRIP Lunch: French Picnic at Chateau Ravelet with award-winning exotic gardens

3:00 - Dinner prep

6:00 - Dinner: Beef Bourguignon, mashed potatoes, green beans, cheese plate

Day 14 - Seafood Masterclass

9:00 - Visit the local fish market to select seafood. Learn to choose, clean, and prepare fish and shellfish

10:30 - Filet a whole salmon

11:30 - Lunch prep: Salad Niçoise

12:30 - Lunch: Salad Niçoise

2:00 - Dinner prep: Seafood feast: cooking crab, preparing a seafood platter

4:30 - Food Anthology Session: Write about seafood selection and preparation. Include photos from the fish market and the feast

6:00 - Dinner: Fruits de Mer Platter & Pan-Seared Salmon (Fresh seafood selection with lemon aioli and mignonette, followed by seared salmon with new potatoes, asparagus, and dill lemon beurre blanc)

Day 15 - FIELD TRIP Nez du Jobourg Coastal Hike and Restaurant at the "End of the World"

10:00 - FIELD TRIP: Coastal hike with breathtaking views

2:30 - Lunch out: Lunch at Auberge du Grottes, a restaurant with far-reaching views over the bay

5:00 - Return to chateau

6:00 - Light dinner of soup and salad

Day 16 - Perfect Brunch

10:00 - Brunch prep: Eggs Benedict, hollandaise sauce, and poached eggs

12:30 - Lunch: Brunch

FREE TIME or journaling

6:00 - Dinner: Dinner prepared in-house groups

Day 17 - Pizza Dough and Steak Frites

9:30 - Community Hour

10:30 - Making pizza dough for focaccia bread

12:30 - Lunch: Italian sandwich buffet with focaccia bread

2:00 - Food Anthology Session: Bringing it all together

3:00 - Dinner Prep: Steak Frites

6:00 - Dinner: Steak Frites with béarnaise sauce, frites, and green salad

Day 18 - Starters and Party Food

9:30 - Community Hour

10:30 - Lunch Prep: Variety of starters (Prosciutto Wrapped Melon, Deviled Eggs)

12:30 - Lunch: Starter Buffet

2:00 - Shopping Trip: Make your own Charcuterie Boards

3:30 - Charcuterie Board preparation

4:00 - Dinner Prep: Fondue Party

6:30 - Aperero: Charcuterie boards

7:00 - Dinner: Fondue

Day 19 - Le Pily - Michelin Starred Restaurant Experience

11:30: Lunch out: 6-course tasting menu at Le Pily, a Michelin-starred restaurant in Cherbourg focusing on seafood. Meet the chef Pierre Marion, who brings a fresh and creative touch to the traditional French cuisine of the region.

6:00: Light dinner back at the chateau prepared by our chef

Day 20 - Final Day

Morning: Food Anthology: Bringing it all together, Time to pack and clean

Afternoon: Prep for final dinner: Students' choice

6:30 - Final Dinner

8:00 - Presentation of Food Anthology

Day 21 - Departure Day

FIELD TRIP LIST

Nez du Jobourg Coastal Hike

Embark on a breathtaking hike along the dramatic cliffs of Nez du Jobourg, one of France's most stunning coastal landscapes. Marvel at sweeping views of the English Channel, hidden coves, and windswept heathlands teeming with wildlife. Perfect for nature enthusiasts, this walk combines invigorating hiking with awe-inspiring scenery.

Château Ravalet Gardens

Wander through the enchanting gardens of Château Ravalet, a 16th-century masterpiece surrounded by lush greenery, ornamental ponds, and vibrant flower beds. The peaceful atmosphere invites you to relax and take in the harmonious blend of architecture and nature.

City of Cherbourg

Dive into the vibrant port town of Cherbourg, rich in maritime history and culture. Stroll along the bustling harbor, visit the famous Cité de la Mer museum, or enjoy local seafood in charming restaurants overlooking the water.

Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue and Tatihou Island

Discover the quaint charm of Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue, a picturesque fishing village, and explore Tatihou Island, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The area offers tranquil seaside views, historic fortifications, and unique maritime traditions.

16th-Century Windmill and Breadmaking in Fierville-les-Mines

Step back in time at a beautifully restored 16th-century windmill, where you'll learn the traditional art of breadmaking. Experience the satisfaction of crafting your own loaf and savor the aroma of fresh, oven-baked bread.

Barneville-Carteret Lighthouse and Beach

Climb to the top of the Barneville-Carteret Lighthouse for panoramic views of the coastline before enjoying a leisurely stroll along the golden sands of its pristine beach. A perfect blend of adventure and relaxation.

Bricquebec Market

Experience the lively charm of the Bricquebec market, where locals gather to sell fresh produce, artisanal goods, and regional specialties. Immerse yourself in the authentic flavors and vibrant culture of Normandy.

Saint-Vaast Market

Explore the bustling Saint-Vaast market, filled with stalls offering fresh seafood, cheeses, and other local delicacies. Engage with friendly vendors and soak in the coastal village atmosphere.

Barfleur

Visit the postcard-perfect village of Barfleur, known for its cobblestone streets, granite houses, and scenic harbor. This tranquil gem holds the distinction of being one of "Les Plus Beaux Villages de France" (The Most Beautiful Villages of France).

Gatteville Lighthouse

Scale the iconic Gatteville Lighthouse, one of the tallest in Europe, for breathtaking views of the rugged coastline and the sparkling sea. A must-see for lighthouse enthusiasts and adventure seekers alike.

Local Bakery Tour

Indulge your senses on a tour of a traditional Norman bakery, where the aroma of fresh baguettes and pastries fills the air. Watch artisans at work and enjoy tasting classic French breads and treats.

Cider Making Tour

Discover the craftsmanship behind Normandy's famous ciders with a visit to a local cider house. Learn about the production process, stroll through picturesque orchards, and savor tastings of this beloved regional beverage.

Butcher Tour

Dive into Normandy's culinary traditions with a tour of a local butcher, showcasing techniques honed over generations. Learn about regional cuts, sample cured meats, and gain a deeper appreciation for this artisan trade.

MEALS OUT LIST

Auberge des Grottes, Nez du Jobourg

Nestled in the rugged cliffs of Nez du Jobourg, enjoy a three-course lunch featuring hearty regional dishes, all while taking in breathtaking views of the windswept coastline.

Comptoir Libanais, Cherbourg

Dive into a feast of Middle Eastern flavors at this vibrant eatery in Cherbourg, focusing on colorful mezza selections and generous sharing plates.

Le Cap, Carteret Beach

Enjoy a three-course lunch starring a show-stopping Fruits de Mer platter, paired with stunning ocean views.

Le Panoramique, Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue

Perched above Saint-Vaast, this Michelin-rated restaurant offers exceptional cuisine from Chef

Christophe Bourdet. Having earned the title of Maître Restaurateur for its entirely handmade cuisine, celebrate the flavors of the region in an unforgettable setting.

Le Pily, Cherbourg

Treat yourself to an unforgettable gastronomic experience at this Michelin-starred gem. Chef Philippe Hardy crafts a six-course tasting menu that showcases seasonal, locally-sourced ingredients, blending creativity and tradition.

Café de France, Barfleur

Enjoy lunch at this charming harbor-side café in the heart of Barfleur. Known for its specialty mussels, freshly harvested from local waters, the menu showcases the region's maritime heritage.