

# Exploring



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DOVER - DUNKERQUE FERRIES

# CHAMPAGNE

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## Your guide to Champagne

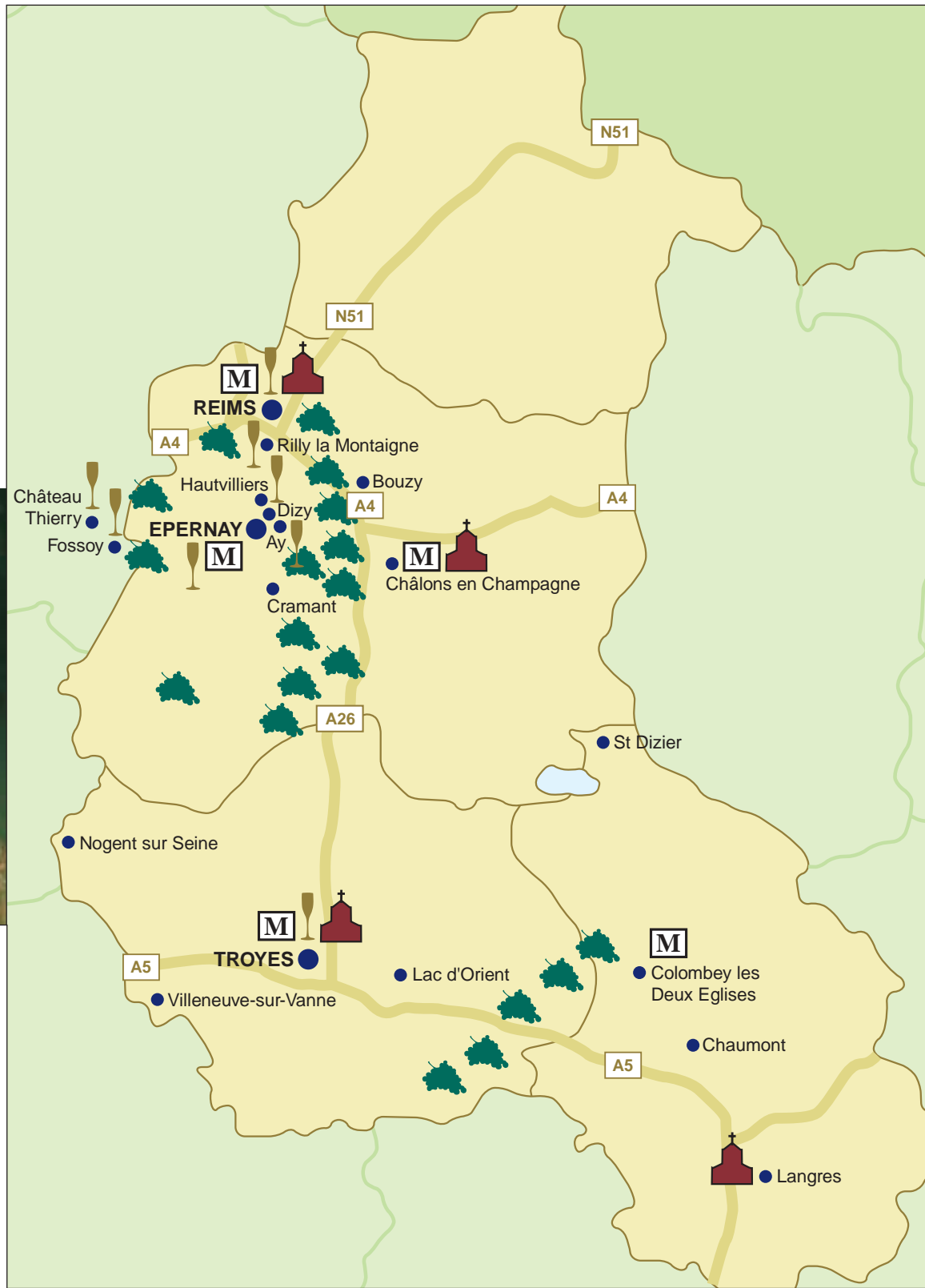
The grapes, the production processes and the Champagne Houses that make this joyous bubbly drink

Reims • Epernay • Troyes

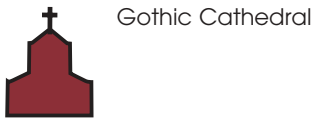
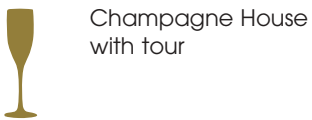




Image: © Jean-Marie Lecomte / Collection CIVIC



## Map Key



Champagne, the wine producing district, is composed of a number of areas within the département Champagne-Ardenne.

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## In celebration of champagne

Of all the great wine producing regions, the most famous, and one of the most compact, is about a two and a half hour drive from Dunkerque. Here you can steep yourself in the history, mystery and joy of champagne!

Whether you choose to stay in one of the main centres, such as Reims or Epernay, or prefer to find a B&B in a small village off the beaten track, the pleasure of learning about this illustrious wine region is a journey beyond compare.

The grapes, the soil, the fermentation processes through to the bottling and, above all, the tasting, combine to make a unique experience. We have prepared this guide to help you in your quest. As with most food and drink production methods going back over the centuries, there are many interpretations of the best way to do things and there are, naturally, many trade secrets never revealed.

Here we have tried to explain simply a complex story in the hope that it will tempt you to discover more, visit some of the producers, sample their wines and fill your vehicle with a case or more of champagne.

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Images: emlyn

### Shopping for champagne

Although champagne production and sampling the various wines at the end of your visit to a cave is both enjoyable and fascinating, the experience would be incomplete without buying some to take home. Champagne producers love nothing more than for you to buy from them at the end of a visit to their caves. Shopping varies in style from sophisticated, back-lit displays, found at the major producers, to simple, rustic shelves in a small family-run set-up.

The biggest saving, compared with buying in the UK, is the duty – which is based on volume – and British VAT which is 17.5% of the retail value including the duty. Expect to save at least £3.00 a bottle which is seriously worthwhile if you are catering for a large party such as a wedding. Nosing around the smaller producers can lead you to some real bargains as their output is too small to reach French supermarkets, let alone make its way across the Channel. The more expensive the wine you buy, the better quality you are getting for your pound as the duty is a fixed figure. Sparkling wine attracts a higher rate of UK duty than still wine, so you're saving even more on champagne.

Above all, the experience of seeing the champagne being carefully nurtured, of sampling various wines and then selecting your favourite to take home adds enormously to the pleasure and enjoyment when you finally get to drink it! If your preference is for a guided tour in English, head for the major brands in Epernay or Reims. If your French is up to it, you'll enjoy the friendliness of the smaller companies, many of whom do have English speakers available – but check first.

# Let's celebrate!

Whether you're seeing in the New Year, launching a liner, toasting the happy couple or spraying the crowd from a Formula One podium, champagne has no equal. This king among wines with thousands of sparkling bubbles says celebration in any language. The scientists claim that the bubbles make the alcohol enter the bloodstream faster - a cracking start to any party. But whether it's popping corks for a major event or a quiet *tête-à-tête*, the romantic touch of a bottle of champagne chilling in a silver bucket, misted with condensation, says celebration!

Image: © Underwood Photo Archives / Superstock



Image: © Michel Jolyot / Collection CIVC

## Sweetness and light

Depending on your personal palate and whether you are accompanying food with your champagne, there are the following classifications of dryness. For most everyday purposes brut is the popular choice.

- Brut nature** This is the driest of the dry champagnes having less than 3 gm of residual sugar per litre.

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- Extra brut** Dry but with less than 6 gm of residual sugar per litre

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- Brut** Dry with between 5-15 gm residual sugar per litre

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- Extra sec** Medium dry with between 12-20 gm residual sugar per litre

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- Sec** Medium sweet with between 17-35 gm residual sugar per litre

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- Demi sec** Sweeter with between 33-50 gm residual sugar per litre

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- Doux** Sweet with 50 or more gm residual sugar per litre

## Bottle sizes



Champagne comes in some exotic bottle sizes but make sure you know which is which before you order ... or it could be more of a party than you bargained for!

Name	Volume	Bottle size
Quarter	18.75 cl	1/4
Half-Bottle	37.5 cl	1/2
Bottle	75 cl	1
Magnum	1.5 litre	2
Jeroboam	3 litres	4
Rehoboam	4.5 litres	6
Methuselah	6 litres	8
Salmanazar	9 litres	12
Balthazar	12 litres	16
Nebuchadnezzar	15 litres	20

Image: © Divers / Collection CIVC



### Flutes and saucers

A champagne flute is a stem glass with a tall, narrow, tulip-shaped bowl. The stem allows you to hold the glass without affecting the temperature of the drink inside it. The bowl is designed to retain the champagne's signature bubbles by reducing the surface area at the opening of the bowl. The flute has now largely replaced the

champagne saucer or coupe, the shape of which dissipates the bubbles even more quickly than a standard wine glass.

The champagne coupe is the saucer-shaped stem glass fashionably used for serving champagne in the 1920s but now used mainly for cocktails. Legend dictates that its shape was modelled on the breast of Marie Antoinette – or Madame de Pompadour – or one of a number of French aristocrats! However, this cannot be true as the first champagne coupe was actually designed in England in 1663 almost a century before these ladies were born!

Image: © Visual Impact / Collection CIVC



### Buck's Fizz

Not just an 80s pop group, this popular drink was invented in 1921 at the Buck's Club in London. Some think it is a travesty to pollute champagne with orange juice but, it certainly adds sparkle to breakfast on Sunday – especially if you have something special to celebrate! It couldn't be easier...

For each person, simply pour one measure of fresh, chilled orange juice and 2 measures of champagne into a frosted glass. Add a dash of grenadine (a concentrated syrup made from pomegranate juice) for an even more exotic twist. Why not spoil yourself?

### Serving champagne

The finest of champagnes may mature for twenty years or more while most vintage wines are at their best between eight and fifteen years.

In order to get the best from your champagne it should be slightly chilled to between 6° C and 10° C. According to connoisseurs, the finer the wine the less chilled it needs to be within that range.

Whether you go for a flute or a saucer, ensure the glass has a stem so that the warmth of your hand doesn't take the chill off the wine.

It was fashionable in the 1950s to disperse the bubbles in champagne with a 'swizzle stick' – a series of about 6 springy silver wires which retracted into a handle. Perhaps the ownership of a swizzle stick, attached to your watch chain, said more about your affection for champagne than anything else! Flat champagne seems such a waste when you think what goes into putting the bubbles there in the first place!

# The Real Thing

Just as multi-nationals, such as Coca-Cola, protect their brands, so the producers of champagne jealously guard their right to the name of those wines produced in their small area of France, east of Paris. Certainly there are sparkling wines made in many countries around the world – even in England – but the name ‘Champagne’ is reserved for the wine from this pocket of exclusive, chalky, French soil. Some quality sparkling wines are made in a similar way and, although described as *Méthode traditionnelle*, champagnes they are not!

Typical Champagne vineyard



Winter pruning

Image: © John Hodder / Collection CIVC



## The life history of champagne

After pruning followed by a dormant period during winter, the vines come to life during the spring and care has to be taken if there are late frosts that might damage the tender buds. The grapes then mature throughout the summer and are harvested in the autumn. Due to the more northerly location, the grapes have a higher degree of acidity, which is necessary for the production of champagne. The harvest is converted into wine in the usual way by fermentation and the individual makers then blend the various grape varieties to suit their preferences.

## Pink champagne

Pink champagne is made by leaving the skins of the Pinot Noir grapes in the vat to slightly tint the wine or by blending in a little of the region’s Coteaux champenois wines, such as the delightfully named Bouzy Rouge.

Image: BerndtF



Pinot Noir grape

Image: © Yvon Monet / Collection CIVC



Lees being removed

## From wine to bottle

In the spring following the harvest, the wines are bottled for a period of secondary fermentation in capped bottles. This is when the wine takes on its sparkle. This secondary fermentation, in fact the *Méthode traditionnelle*, produces carbon dioxide now trapped in a bottle which is thicker, heavier and shaped to be stronger than a conventional wine bottle. Legend has it that the thicker glass wine bottles originated in England and it was found that they survived the higher pressures of the secondary fermentation!

The *lees*, or sediment in the wine, created during this process, are gathered in the necks of the bottles by stacking them at an angle in racks, called *pupitres*.

The laborious and important process of *remuage* then takes place whereby each bottle is regularly turned slightly by hand to ensure all the *lees* sink to the neck. This can take an average of 20 days and a very skilled operator can turn up to 100,000 bottles in just one day!

### Bottles stored neck down

Image: © Fulvio Roiter / Collection CIVC



## Wine and war

During the occupation of France in World War 2 the cavernous wine cellars of Champagne were used to conceal precious vintages hidden in defiance of the German *weinfuhrers* sent to confiscate them.

The cellars also became a shelter for members of the French Resistance, and a sanctuary for families in danger of arrest by the Nazis.

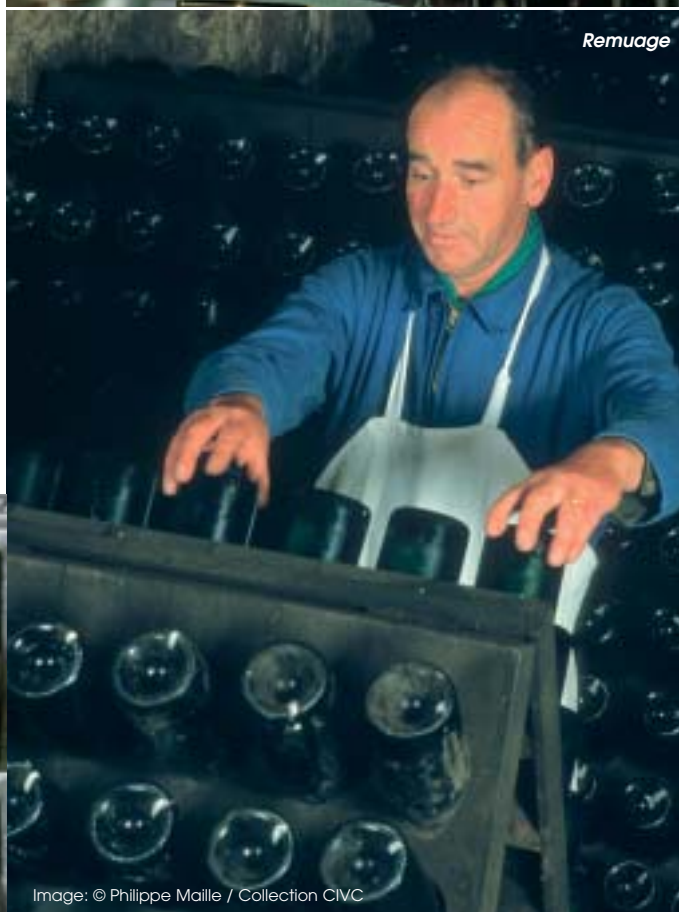
Image: © Alain Cornu / Collection CIVC



Bottles in *pupitres*



Tasting



Remuage

Image: © Philippe Maille / Collection CIVC

## The last stage

After this process, the bottles are stored neck down, each inside the *punt*, or dimple, in the bottle beneath it until such time as they are required. Then the necks of the bottles are frozen and the cap, or cork, removed together with the sediment. At this point the wine may be topped up for volume or sweetness, known as the *dosage*. It is then re-corked creating the traditional mushroom shaped champagne cork with its metal top and the wire muzzle that holds it in place.

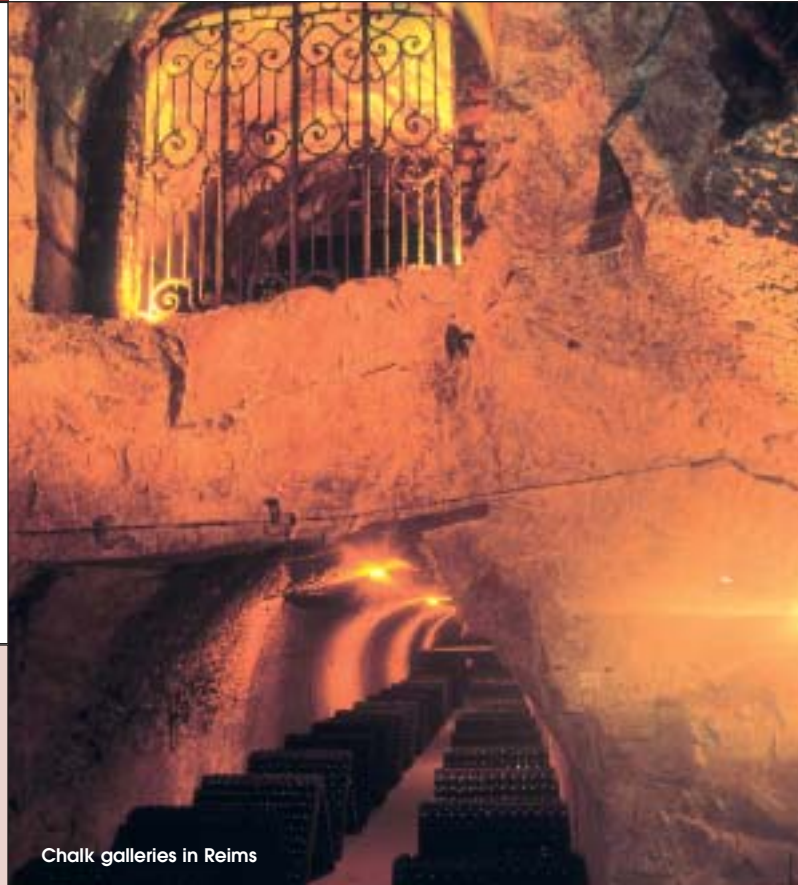
All that needs to be done after that is for the bottle to be *dressed* with its labels and foil capsule before being packed and sold.

**No wonder that our first choice to celebrate special moments and occasions is this precious wine that has had so much time and such infinite care and expertise lavished on its production.**

# Champagne tour suggestions

When you leave Dunkerque, it's just a two and a half hour drive to the Champagne Region.

Why not plan your own itinerary choosing your own route and time scale taking the pick'n'mix approach to sipping and tasting, shopping and sightseeing - not to mention lingering over fine wines and great food? No need to join the crowds on guided tours; take the DIY option but check out visits to Champagne Houses in advance to avoid any disappointment.



Chalk galleries in Reims



## SHORT TOUR (2-3 days)

If time is limited, go no further than Reims, a modest drive from Dunkerque, where there are plenty of world-famous Champagne Houses open for visits, tasting and shopping all within easy reach. Take your pick from G.H Mumm, Taittinger, Pommery, Charles de Cazenove, Lanson and Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin where you can learn about their production. Aim for just two visits a day (see page 8).

If you feel champagne'd out, there is plenty to enjoy before you head for home - the magnificent cathedral, great shopping, fabulous summer concerts (many of them free) as well as every type of eatery from simple *bistros* to the finest dining.

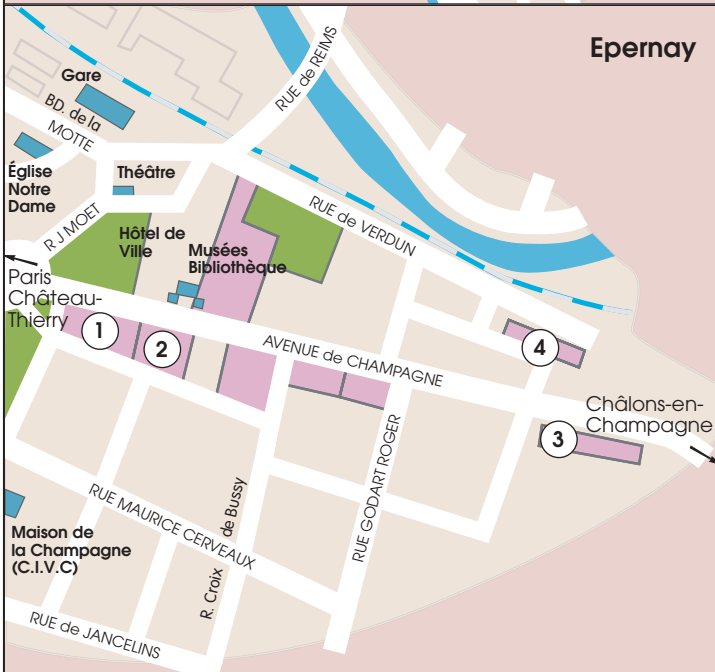


Image: © Fabrice Leseigneur / Collection CIVC

## Map Key

### REIMS

- 1 Pommery
- 2 G.H.Mumm
- 3 Lanson
- 4 Charles de Cazenove
- 5 Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin
- 6 Taittinger

### EPERNAY

- 1 Moët et Chandon
- 2 Perrier-Jouët
- 3 Mercier
- 4 de Castellane



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## MEDIUM TOUR (4-5 days)

If you can spare a little more time, start off in Reims and when you've explored there, head 29km south to Epernay known as the Champagne Capital. It has the largest number of cellars and Houses in the region, mostly situated in the Renaissance style buildings on the Avenue de Champagne. Among the 16 Champagne Houses are the celebrated Moët, Castellane, Perrier-Jouët and Mercier (see page 10).

You can explore the miles of cellars carved out of the chalk where the wine is stored. If you're happy to let someone else do the driving, join one of the trips that set off from the Tourist Office at 09.30 hrs and 14.30 hrs most of the year and last about 3 hours. Check the times on [www.ot-epernay.fr](http://www.ot-epernay.fr) or call +33 (0)3 26 53 33 00. When you leave Epernay, head east and drop into nearby Ay, the home of Bollinger and a host of other producers.



For the best deal on accommodation book on-line at:  
[www.norfolkline.com](http://www.norfolkline.com)



The Marne Valley

## The Grapes of Worth

Champagne produces some of the most expensive grapes in the world as the vines are trained to be short and produce quality before quantity.

**The Reims Mountain** (Montagne de Reims) in the north of Epernay, where the Pinot Noir grapes provide 39% of the total harvest. These black grapes give the wine its strength and body.

**The Marne Valley** in the west of Epernay where the Meunier grapes are cultivated account for 33%. These grapes give the Champagne its roundness and fragrance.

**The Côte des Blancs**, to the south of Epernay, is where the Chardonnay grapes make up the remaining 28%. These grapes provide the wines with their finesse and elegance. The 'Blanc de Blanc' is produced using only these grapes.

## LONGER TOUR (5 days +)

When you have sipped and sampled your way through Reims and Epernay, there is still more to explore! Just 7km north of Epernay is the pretty village of Hautvilliers and legend has it, Benedictine monk, Dom Pérignon, invented champagne at the Abbey there.

If you feel like some gentle exercise to offset the indulgences of eating and drinking, make for the nearby Montagne de Reims Regional Park, separating Epernay from Reims, and set off on two feet or two wheels on the great off-road cycle tracks.

About 115km south of Epernay, through the Chardonnay growing area of Côte des Blancs, you arrive at the historic town of Troyes with its half-timbered buildings, fountains, squares and cobbled streets - another centre from which to discover more of the Champagne region.



For the best deal on accommodation book on-line at:  
[www.norfolkline.com](http://www.norfolkline.com)



## Useful information

However long you can spare and wherever you go, make your first stop in any town the syndicat d'initiative (French Tourist Information Centre) which will be packed with current information on what's on and what to see.

## Where to stay with Norfolkline.com



For the best deals on hotels, go to [www.norfolkline.com](http://www.norfolkline.com) click on **hotels** and key in the town where you want to stay before selecting your dates and hotel.

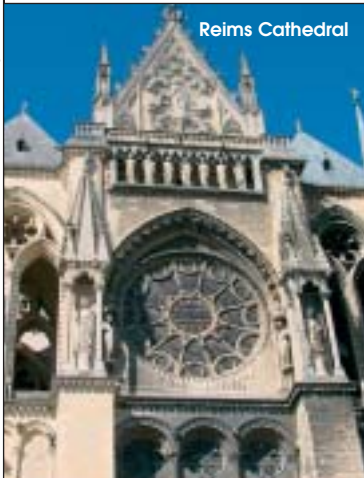
**Our arrangement with Active Hotels means you'll get the best deal around.**

# Reims the city

Famous not only for its champagne but also for its magnificent Gothic cathedral, Reims is an excellent centre as the main Champagne Houses are all within easy distance of the centre. There is usually a charge for visits which include a tour of the cellars, a tasting and an opportunity to buy the merchandise and wines.

As the cellars are cool year round it is advisable to wear warm clothes and sensible shoes. Many steps may be encountered and wheelchair users should check on access in advance. Opening times shown in this guide are as published by the houses in 2008. It is always advisable to check up to date opening times and charges.

Image: Vassil



Reims Cathedral



Pommery cellars

Image: Thomas er CC BY-NC-SA SOME RIGHTS RESERVED

## G.H.Mumm

The company's distinctive label with a diagonal red stripe, the Cordon Rouge, is derived from the French award, the *Légion d'Honneur*. Mumm is recognised everywhere due to a strong marketing policy which means that more than 60% of its production is exported.

34 rue de Champs de Mars, 51053, Reims  
Tel: +33 (0)3 26 49 59 70 [www.mumm.com](http://www.mumm.com)

Opening times:

High season: 1 Mar - 31 Oct; 09.00-11.00 / 14.00-17.00

Low season: 1 Nov - 28 Feb; by appointment weekdays, 09.00 - 11.00 / 14.00-17.00 Saturdays only

Closed: Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Sundays in Low season

e-mail address for booking visits: [guides@mumm.com](mailto:guides@mumm.com)

### Reims Tourist Information

2 Rue Guillaume de Machault, 51100 Reims, France  
Tel: +33 3 26 77 45 00  
[www.reims-tourisme.com](http://www.reims-tourisme.com)

Image: © Pommery

View of Pommery estate



## Pommery

Louise Pommery picked up the reins of Pommery when her husband died in 1858 and was responsible for the building of the elegant Domaine Pommery. She might well have raised an eyebrow at the recent launch of Pommery's POP, a packaging venture in a blue quarter bottle which is blended to be drunk straight from the bottle or through a straw. Whatever next?

5 Place de Général Gourand, 51100 Reims

Tel: +33 (0)3 26 61 62 55

Opening Hours: Daily, 10.00-18.00 Note: Tours last 1 hour.

Pommery cellars

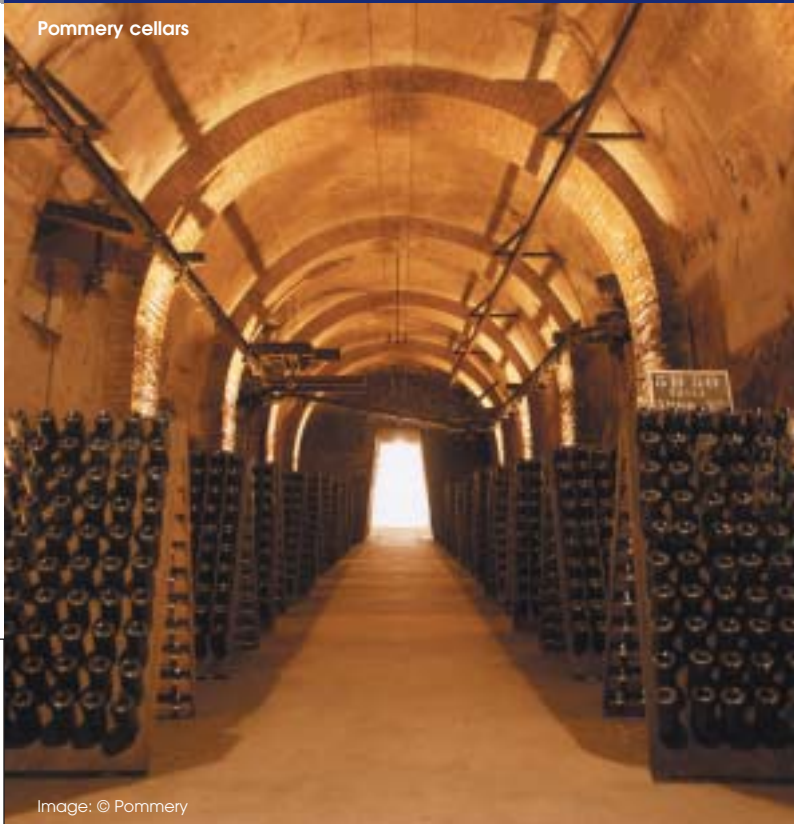


Image: © Pommery

## Lanson

Lanson, one of the larger producers, ships its wines extensively throughout the world and is on the shopping list of the British Royal Family. Lanson owns 800 acres of some of the best vineyards in the district and produces a premium champagne including Black Label which is aimed at a younger market.

66 rue de Courtancy, Reims  
Tel: +33 (0)3 26 78 50 50  
www.lanson.fr

Opening times:  
Monday to Friday, closed weekends and holidays.  
Must book in advance.  
e-mail address for visits:  
info@lanson.fr

Notes: €8 per person.  
Guided tours last 1 hour and are available in French, English and German.



Taittinger

## Taittinger

Taittinger has had a chequered list of owners which at one stage included an American investment group. Thankfully it is now back in the hands of Pierre-Emmanuel Taittinger, grandson of the original founder, and is housed in the building that was once the residence of the Comtes de Champagne.

Located at the Place Saint-Nicaise, the Taittinger cellars are open to the public for guided tours. The oldest parts of the cellars are said to be Gallo-Roman chalk mines, worked during the 4th century to provide raw building materials for the city. During the 13th century the cellars were enlarged by the monks of the Saint Nicaise Abbey for the storage of the champagne that they produced.

9 Place Saint-Nicaise, Reims Tel: +33 (0)3 26 85 84 33  
Opening times: 15 Mar - 15 Nov: every day including Sundays and holidays 09.30-1300 / 14.00-17.30;  
15 Nov - 15 Mar: Monday to Friday 09.30-13.00 / 14.00-17.30  
Note: Visits last one hour and there is a charge.



Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin

## Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin

The name of this prestigious house is derived from the fact that when François Clicquot died in 1805 he left his 27 year old wife Barbe Nicole Ponsardin a widow. A determined lady, she took over the running of the family business and in 1810 Veuve (Widow) Clicquot became the company's official name. Today the female tradition is continued under Cécile Bonfond, Président of Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin.

1 Place des Droits-de-l'Homme, Reims  
Tel: +33 (0)3 26 89 54 41 www.veuve-clicquot-ponsardin.com  
Opening times: 1 Apr - 31 Oct; Monday to Saturday / 2 Nov - 31 Mar; Monday to Friday  
Note: Charge €8.50. Duration 1.5 hours including tasting.

## Charles de Cazenove

Now owned by the Martell group, this smaller house produces a range of well-blended wines which you might well find on board an airline, if travelling first class.

8 Place de la République,  
51100, Reims  
Tel: +33 (0)3 26 88 53 86  
Opening times:  
Every day 10.00-19.00  
except holidays

## Famous Houses not open for public visits

### Louis Roederer

21 Boulevard Lundy,  
51053 Reims

### Krug

5 rue Coquebert,  
51100 Reims

### Louis Roederer

21 Boulevard Lundy,  
51053 Reims

### Ruinart

Currently closed to the public for refurbishment.

Ruinart's chalk caves resemble immense underground cathedrals 30m below ground level. Caves are a constant 11°C and are classified as an historic monument.

4 rue de Crayères,  
51100 Reims



Underground chalk galleries, Reims

# Epernay

Recognised as the Capital of Champagne, Epernay confirms its importance in the region with its Museum of Fine Wine and Champagne and the Renaissance style buildings of the *Avenue de Champagne* housing its many cellars and Houses. As well as being home to some of the most famous names in the world, it is recognised as one of the top earners in the French economy.

Nearby, the Abbey of Hautvilliers is said to be the home of Dom Pérignon and Ay, to the east, is the home of Bollinger.

Moët et Chandon cellars



Dom Pérignon when drinking champagne allegedly said "Come quickly, I am drinking the stars!"



Image: Thomas er  CC SOME RIGHTS RESERVED

## Moët et Chandon

Claude Moët, grandson of the founder, was a friend of Napoleon who regularly stopped off on his way to a war with the Prussians to stock up with Champagne. Legend has it that he failed to go via Epernay on his way to Waterloo! Guided tours in French and English from €13 – €25 per person including a tasting. Reservations recommended.

20 Avenue de Champagne, 51333 Epernay  
Tel: +33 (0)3 26 51 20 20 [www.moet.com](http://www.moet.com)

Opening times: 09.30-11.30 / 14.00-16.30 Monday to Friday:  
1 Jan - 5 Jan / 4 Feb - 17 Mar / 12 Nov - 31 Dec.  
Monday to Sunday: incl Public Holidays, 17 Mar - 11 Nov  
e-mail address for booking visits: [visites@moet.fr](mailto:visites@moet.fr)

## Perrier-Jouët

Perrier-Jouët was founded in 1811 when Pierre-Nicholas-Mari Perrier met, fell in love with and married Adele Jouët. The unique Art Nouveau styled bottle was designed by Emile Galle in 1902, and the anemones are now synonymous with Perrier-Jouët.

26 Avenue de Champagne, 51200 Epernay  
Tel: +33 (0)3 26 53 38 00 [www.perrier-jouet.fr](http://www.perrier-jouet.fr)

Opening times:

Jan, Feb, Mar by appointment only

Apr - Dec 31, Monday - Friday 09.00-11.15 / 14.00-16.15

### Epernay Tourist Information

7 Avenue de Champagne, BP-28-51201 Epernay  
Tel: +33 (0)3 26 53 33 00 Fax: +33 (0)3 26 51 95 22  
[www.ot-epernay.fr](http://www.ot-epernay.fr)  
Closed: Sundays and Bank Holidays



Perrier-Jouët

When asked how she enjoyed a glass of 'Bolly', Lily Bollinger is reputed to have said: "I drink it when I'm happy and when I'm sad. Sometimes I drink it when I'm alone. When I have company I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it when I'm not hungry and drink it when I am. Otherwise I never touch it – unless I am thirsty of course"



de Castellane

### Mercier

Brand leader in France, Mercier operate a seamless visit to their cellars. The lift dives 30m to take you on a mini train journey, lasting 45 minutes, through just some of the 18km of cellars. Tasting included and a spacious shop for buying. Tours in French, English, German and Dutch. €8 per person. Booking only required for groups of 10 or more.

68 Avenue de Champagne, 51200 Epernay  
Tel: +33 (0)3 26 51 22 22 [www.champagnemercier.fr](http://www.champagnemercier.fr)  
Opening times:  
Mid Mar – Mid Nov 09.30-11.30 / 14.00-16.30  
Mid Feb – Mid Mar and Mid Nov – Mid Dec as above but closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays  
Closed: Mid Dec - Mid Feb  
e-mail address for booking visits: [efauchoux@mercier.tm.fr](mailto:efauchoux@mercier.tm.fr)

### de Castellane

The tower at Castellane is 66m high and has 237 steps to the top with a great panoramic view over the vineyards and the Valley of the Marne. Below lie 9km of caves where the champagne is stored. Guided tours in French, English, German, Italian, Dutch. Tasting included.

63 Avenue de Champagne, 51200 Epernay  
Tel: +33 (0)3 26 51 19 19 [www.castellane.com](http://www.castellane.com)  
Opening times:  
High season 1 Apr - 31 Dec: 10.00-12.00 / 14.00-18.00  
Jan – Mar inclusive on request.  
Closed: Christmas Day, New Year's Day  
e-mail address for booking visits:  
[visites@castellane.com](mailto:visites@castellane.com) or call +33 (0)326 51 19 11



### Famous Houses not open for public visits

**Bollinger**  
16 rue Jules Lobet,  
51160 Ay-Champagne

**Pol Roger**  
1 rue Henri Lelarge,  
51206 Epernay



Mercier Cellar Tours

Images: Sand

## Troyes and further afield

Venturing away from the two epicentres of Reims and Epernay, there are treasures to be discovered in the countryside around Troyes. Small, friendly growers and champagne producers welcome visitors and there are diversions in this delightful, historic town which is also known for its stained glass and production of *andouillette*, a local sausage. There's contrast in style to be found in the Musée d'Art Moderne and the Lac et Fôret d'Orient, 25km east, is perfect for sailing, cycling and walking. At the southernmost point of the Champagne district lies Langres, gateway to Burgundy. Surrounded by medieval ramparts and set high on a rocky escarpment, it is a must for anyone interested in period architecture.

Image: KBWEI



Marne Valley

Troyes



### Côte des Bar

A short drive from Troyes is a champagne tour which strips the famous wine of all pretension, and where the local, little-known producers celebrate their product with passion and pride. The Champagne route of the Côte des Bar meanders through a series of picturesque villages, which are home to a collection of independent, family-run Champagne producers.

#### Champagne Drappier

Rue des Vignes, 10200 Urville-France  
Tel: +33 (0)3 25 27 40 15 [www.champagne-drappier.com](http://www.champagne-drappier.com)

#### Champagne Guy de Forez

Route de tonnerre, 10340 Les Riceys  
Tel: +33 (0)3 25 29 98 73 [www.guydeforez-riceys.com](http://www.guydeforez-riceys.com)

### Canard Duchêne

In the 1890s Canard-Duchêne became an internationally recognised champagne, chosen as one of the champagnes supplied to the Russian court of Tsar Nicholas II. Guided tour in French and English. Tasting included.

1 Rue Edmond Canard, Ludes, 51500 Rilly-la-Montagne  
Tel: +33 (0)3 26 61 11 60 [www.canard-duchene.fr](http://www.canard-duchene.fr)  
Opening times: Mid Mar - Mid Dec: 10.45-12.00 / 14.00-16.30  
Monday to Saturday. Closed Sundays and Public Holidays

### Champagne Pannier

Founded in 1899, near Epernay, they have 2km of underground mediaeval cellars which include a rock carving of an archer dating back to 14th century and now the Pannier logo.

23 rue Roger Catillon, 02400 Château-Thierry  
Tel: +33 (0)3 23 69 51 30 [www.champagnepannier.com](http://www.champagnepannier.com)  
Opening times: Monday to Saturday 09.00-12.30 / 14.00-18.30  
Guided tours: Book in advance €6 each

### Champagne Déhu, Père et fils

A family firm committed to sustainable farming, using only organic fertilisers, hand picking and producing only vintage champagne. Small museum on the history of the vine and the wine but ring in advance.

3 rue St Georges, 02650 Fossoy  
Tel: +33 (0)3 23 71 90 47 [www.champagne-dehu.com](http://www.champagne-dehu.com)  
Opening times: Monday to Friday, 09.00-12.00; 14.00-18.00  
Only by appointment

### Champagne Tribaut

Set in 12 hectares of prestigious chalky terrain of 1ère Cru classification this vineyard is family owned and managed from growing the grapes through to labelling. In the cellars the bottles are turned and disgorged in the traditional way.

88 rue d'Eguisheim, 51160 Hautvilliers  
Tel: +33 (0)3 26 59 40 57 [www.champagne.g.tribaut.com](http://www.champagne.g.tribaut.com)  
Opening times: Only by appointment

## The pleasures of the open road

Driving in France is a joy to anyone used to enduring the clogged up roads of Britain. As the kilometers speed by, you pass through an agricultural landscape that hasn't changed in decades. With little effort you can turn on to small side roads to find a shady picnic spot or a town with an inviting restaurant. While the French have embraced modern technology, they have steadfastly refused to let go of their heritage or *patrimoine* and eating well is as important as ever. The autoroutes have resting points called *aires*, where you can pull off to stretch your legs or take a rest. There are conventional service areas as well as the legendary *routiers*, catering mainly for truck drivers with hearty appetites and tight budgets.



### BEFORE YOU GO

Make sure you have all compulsory documents and equipment.

### DOCUMENTS

You may be asked to produce your documents at any time. Be sure that the following are in order and readily available for inspection.

- A valid full driving licence (not provisional), with paper counterpart if you have a photocard licence
- The original vehicle registration document
- Your motor insurance certificate with cover for European travel
- Your passport

### EQUIPMENT

You must make sure that your vehicle is correctly equipped as follows:

- GB sticker (UK registered vehicles displaying Euro-plates (circle of 12 stars above the national identifier on blue background) do not need a GB sticker)
- Warning triangle
- Reflective jacket/waistcoat
- Headlamp adjustment for driving on the right
- Spare bulb kit
- First aid kit and fire extinguisher (not compulsory but recommended)

### SEAT BELTS

Front and rear seat passengers are required to use seat belts, where fitted. Children up to 9 months old may travel in the front seat if in a rear-facing child's seat, except where an airbag is installed. Children under 10 must travel in the rear seats.

### DRIVING ON THE RIGHT

It is advisable to have an external rear view mirror fitted if you do not already have one. Driving on the right needs care and attention particularly at junctions and when negotiating roundabouts. The French rule of 'priority to the right' (*priorité*

*à droite*) is still relevant in towns where, in the absence of any road markings or a yellow lozenge on a signpost, drivers entering the road you are on from your right take precedence. Useful information on travelling in France and Belgium can be obtained from the Automobile Association website:

[www.theaa.com](http://www.theaa.com)

### DRINKING AND DRIVING

France and Belgium have stricter limits than the UK. If the level of alcohol in the bloodstream is 0.5mg/ml or more (0.2mg/ml for bus/coach drivers), severe penalties include fine, imprisonment and/or confiscation of driving licence. The only safe rule is if you drink, don't drive.

### SPEEDING

Both countries have strict limits and radar traps and you can be fined on the spot. In France speeding at 25km/h above the limit can lead to your licence being confiscated. On-the-spot fines or 'deposits' can be severe.

#### FRENCH SPEED LIMITS

<b>Motorways</b>	130 km/h	(81 mph)
	110 km/h wet*	(68 mph)

Some motorways have tolls (*Péage*) and you should keep a handful of euros available, or you can pay by credit card.

<b>Two lane highway</b>	110 km/h	(68 mph)
	100 km/h wet*	(62 mph)

<b>Open road</b>	90 km/h	(56 mph)
	80 km/h wet*	(50 mph)

<b>Towns</b>	50 km/h	(31 mph)
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Town limits may only be defined by the name of the town on a white background with a red border at the start and the same sign with a black diagonal line through it on your exit.

\* Drivers with less than 2 years full licence are subject to wet weather limits.



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