



A Charming Country Cottage in France

G U E S T I N F O R M A T I O N



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www.cottage-in-france.com



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Relax, and unwind in our charming beamed cottage. Set in a small farming village in the beautiful Seven Valleys, our holiday home is within easy reach of historic towns, excellent beaches and many children's attractions.

Only 70 minutes from Calais, it provides a refuge from the hectic pace of English life. Ideally suited for romantic breaks, writer's/artist's retreats, family holidays

Our beautiful house is an 18th century ferme, combining character with a modern kitchen and bathroom. It is at least 200 years old, with part of the house obviously much older, its origin shrouded in mystery. Made of oak and pine timber filled with chalk block, it has two bread ovens.

Though not isolated, it is very peacefully situated on a country road in a picturesque village. The house has a large enclosed

courtyard with a front garden and a field at the back! The views across the rolling countryside and the sounds of gentle farmyard noises create a soothing sanctuary away from the pressure of the city.

Arrive at the house and park on the grassy verge. Climb the steps to the front door and enter. In front of you is the charming, beamed living room with an ornate, cast iron, wood burning stove. From here turn left into the ground floor bedroom or go straight ahead into the dining room with its door to the courtyard. In the courtyard there is a table and chairs and a brick-built barbecue.

From the dining room is the door and stairs leading to the mezzanine bedroom overlooking the sitting room.

The kitchen is straight ahead and is fitted with a modern gas hob and oven. There is a washing machine, microwave, toaster etc.

In the left hand corner of the dining room is the door to the shower and toilet.

The village is perfect for those who enjoy walking, trips to the beach and French rural life with plenty of quiet roads and tracks for cycling or walking along the river or in the nearby woods. Neighbouring villages offer good eating, weekly markets and places of historical interest. It is an ideal base for exploring the region, visiting war memorials and sites, local markets for fresh produce, enjoying fine food and wine and generally just taking it easy.

THE HOUSE

- Parking at the front
- Front Garden
- Sitting room with woodburning fire
- Dining room
- Kitchen
- Shower room and WC
- Downstairs bedroom
- Mezzanine bedroom
- Courtyard with brick bbq



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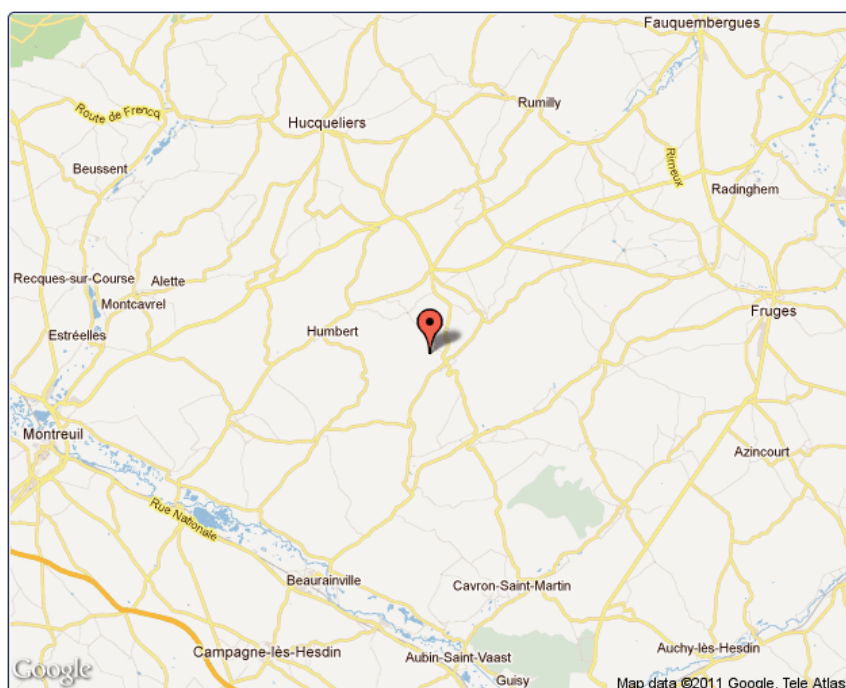
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NORD PAS DE CALAIS is a region much appreciated by the Brits and other northern Europeans. A region of contrasting landscapes, forests and woods, gentle meadows and marshlands, rolling hills dotted

with windmills and a varied coastline that stretches for miles and miles.

The area of the Seven Valleys where our village is situated offers the best of the region. Given its name by the seven rivers it is ideal for fishing. Wide-open spaces of unspoilt countryside make up the Regional Natural Parks and the area also has one of the largest network of waterways for river cruising in Europe. It is also an area with proud traditions where fairs, fêtes and festivals are so much a part of daily life.



Steeped in history, discover its rich heritage proudly displayed by its many monuments and museums and historic cities dating from Roman times to the last World Wars. France is also especially famous for its wonderful gastronomy and the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region is no exception with fine examples of mouth-watering regional specialities as well as numerous locally brewed beers.

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The village is perfect for those who enjoy walking and French rural life with plenty of quiet roads and tracks for cycling or walking along the river or in the nearby woods.

The village spans two sides of the main road from Montreuil to Hesdin that are joined by a pretty stream. Don't miss exploring the ancient church and Mairie. In the Square d'Embryenne there is crazy golf.

The Seven Valleys is an area with proud traditions where fairs, fêtes and festivals are so much a part of daily life.

Many local towns and villages have **markets** that are fascinating to visit. A list of these can be found in the folder at the house.

During the Spring and Summer every village has a yearly **Brocante** on Sunday mornings. These are akin to the British car boot sales and many a bargain is to be found. Again a list of dates and venues is to be found at the house.

There is much to do in the area with plenty to satisfy all ages and interests. Local attractions include: the **Abbaye et Jardins de Valloire**; **La Perle de Groseille**; the **Chocolaterie at Beussent** and **go-carting at Maninghem-au-Mont** and **Agincourt** with its family friendly visitors' centre is about 10 km away. Details of all these are in the folder at the house.

The battlefields of the **Somme** are within easy reach, as is **La Couple**, constructed in 1943 and now a history centre with presentations on the occupation of Northern France. **Paris** (and Disneyland) is just over 2 hours away by car or train making it an ideal day trip. **Bruges** at just over 2 hours away is also worth an excursion.

Aqualaud, is a water land adventure park which is a fun day out for all the family.

Nausicaa is one of France's top attractions. A tour includes a 1.2 million litre shark pool, 11,000 sea animals and exhibits which cover almost every aspect of marine life.

The sandy beaches of the **Cote D'Opale** are 35 mins away and great places to visit in all weathers. The area is known as the 'Opal Coast' after local artists who painted using the colours of the opal stone. The wide sandy beaches are usually very quiet with lots of room for families.

Le Touquet is approx. half an hour away on the coast. Driving into the town you pass through wooded areas with sporting activities, upmarket houses, weekend retreats and a casino. Le Touquet also has traffic free shopping streets. Parking in the town is good as you only pay at the weekend. The town has one of the best beaches in France, long and flat and clean. It has all the usual beach activities, sand yachting, kites etc. **Berck** has a wide sandy beach and is popular for kite flying, sand yachting and horse riding.

Either side of the Somme Bay are the towns of **St Valery Sur Somme** and **Le Crotoy**. Both have many attractions and plenty of restaurants (most specialising in fish and sea food). St.Valery is a medieval town on the hill with spectacular views across the bay. You can take a steam train ride around the bay from either town and boat trips if the tide is high. If you like mussels, there is a great mussel cafe at the Hotel des Pilottes, but get there early as it's very popular.

Beaurainville is the nearest town a short drive or cycle away. With a good supermarket and many other necessary shops such as a boulangerie that is open on Sunday mornings, it is good to take note of where it is situated. There are also opportunities for trout-fishing, horse riding and canoeing and kayaking on the River Canche.

Montreuil Sur Mer is about a 20 minute drive and is a something of an undiscovered beauty, with much to enjoy in the historical streets. The town is on a small hill surrounded by ramparts. A delightful walk around the ramparts gives fine views across the



...➤ surrounding countryside and the river, with the sea in the distance. It is a town that oozes character, with the cobbled streets and old houses linking small squares and being a great pleasure to explore. Be sure not to miss rue Clape-en-Bas, one of the prettiest streets. Once home to Victor Hugo it is the setting for *Les Misérables*, which is acted out around the town during the summer evenings.

Hesdin has an impressive central cobbled 'Grande Place' dominated by the 16th century town hall. Market day is Thursday, but the boutiques, restaurants and bars, its historic church and buildings, and its status as a 3 star 'ville fleuri' (flowered town) make it a town pleasant to visit on any day. The town also has a wide range of shops and several supermarkets for stocking up on local produce as well as the essential beer and wine. North of Hesdin is the 'Forêt d'Hesdin' extending to over 1000 hectares. 15 km of forest roads and 5 km of one of the national Grande Randonnée footpaths make it ideal for walking, cycling and picnics.

Amiens is an interesting place to visit. The town is best known for the impressive 13th century Amiens cathedral - the largest gothic cathedral in France. The Saint-Leu region, below the cathedral, is a sector of canals lined with small houses and is a pleasant part of Amiens to explore, a popular place to promenade, and one of the busiest places for cafes and restaurants. Other highlights in Amiens include: the curious looking 14th century belfry, the home of Jules Verne has been converted into an extensive museum and the Museum of Picardy has some interesting archaeological items and paintings. There are several interesting parks and gardens in Amiens and a substantial park at the Hortillonnages - a marshy region where numerous canals criss-cross the garden and wildlife intensive landscape.

Arras is an attractive city with an old-town centre, which has been carefully and

attractively restored following the very great damage suffered during the First World War. There are two large open squares in the town. Both are surrounded by Dutch style houses and mansions above arcades at street level. In the smaller of the two squares is the Town Hall, and one of the belfries of France that has now been designated as a World Heritage site. After ascending the belfry you can descend into the subterranean world below – rooms and tunnels carved out of the ground below – and learn the history of the region. The other notable attraction in Arras is the cathedral.

Boulogne-Sur-Mer 45 minutes away, has an important harbour and claims to be the largest fishing base in Europe. An attractive medieval quarter, the 'ville haute', is contained within the old town walls and dominated by a grand, domed cathedral. Amid the newer shopping streets of the ville basse are some of the best food shops in the whole region.

Lille is an attractive town about an hours drive away. The most interesting part of a visit to Lille now is the 'old centre', a substantial district containing two 'squares' and numerous 17th and 18th century townhouses and other buildings, in a regenerated region of the town. Some remnants of the fortifications that once surrounded the old town can still be seen. There is a substantial cathedral in Lille and several interesting museums. Just on the outskirts of town there is a large shopping outlet centre.

Finally, **Etaples** is a small fishing port across the river from Le Touquet on the river Canche. You can buy fresh fish from the boats or the fish market on a Tuesday and Friday. You can go on boat trips in the estuary or visit the Nature Reserve which has over 420 plant species. The town was a training camp in WW1 and has the largest War Commission cemetery in France. The Military Cemetery is to the north of the town and is the final resting place for over 11,000 war dead.

LOCATION

Situated in 'The Seven Valleys' the house is about 50 minutes from Boulogne. The nearest large towns are Hesdin and Montreuil Sur Mer. Montreuil Sur Mer is a pretty walled town. Hesdin is a business centre with banks, supermarkets etc and a beautiful square.

The actual village is situated in a beautiful valley with a stream running through it. Cycling and walking are very good with tracks and paths for both. Many villages in the surrounding area have small cafés that are good for a drink or cheap meal.

THE HOUSE

Is at least 200 years old possibly very much older with its origin shrouded in mystery. It is made of oak and pine timber filled with chalk block that is often used in this area. The walk in cupboard was originally a big bread oven, and there is another one in the bathroom. The original well is filled in at the front.

Please park on the grass verge in front of the house. The drive is not wide enough for modern cars! The steps up to the front door lead into the main living area. The cupboard on the right of the room holds tools. Straight ahead is the dining room leading to the bathroom and kitchen. A door to the courtyard at the side of the property also leads off the dining room. Stairs lead to a mezzanine floor with a second double bedroom. There is a CD player, books and games and a DVD player.

The house has a considerable amount of land including a narrow field at the back that extends about 300 metres on the left side of the house. Once past the nettles there is grass that is quite nice to sit in on a summer's day. We own the field to the hedge at the end.

SHOPPING

The nearest supermarkets are in Hesdin [Carrefour, Intermarche], Attin [Le Clerc] or Beaurainville [Carrefour] and are all about 20 minutes away.

The nearest boulangerie (bakery) is in Beaurainville. There are delivery vans that hoot when near the house most days [usually around midday] these sell bread, groceries and meat. They usually stop at one of the houses either side of us.

There are some essential food items in the cupboards but you will need to take milk, butter and other perishable items with you. Please replace what you use.

ACTIVITIES

There are tourist offices in both Hesdin and Montreuil that are worth a visit and a folder of activities in the bookcase in the house. Please also refer to the details on the website.

- The coast is about 50 minutes away- very flat and sandy, with posh shopping in Le Touquet. The small town and beach at Le Crotoy are well worth a visit. Fort Mahon is a nice holiday type beach.
- There is good bird watching in the Baie de Somme.
- It is possible to go on a day trip to Paris - get the early train from Etaples station that leaves around 7.00, and return in the evening.
- The site of the battle of Agincourt is about 10 miles away with a very good visitors centre.
- There are both World War 1 and 2 museums in the area.

EATING OUT – RESTAURANTS

We have left some brochures in the bookcase. Please note most close on Mondays.

Cheap

Many villages have a café that do cheap snack meals. These are usually called Le Plat du Jour [Dish of the Day].

If you turn right out of the house and follow the road to Hesmond there is a small café that sells simple meals [Plat du Jour] that are good value.



...➤ Medium

The Mississipi is about 3 miles away on the road to Montreuil, it does a range of popular food. In Beaurainville there is a pizza restaurant (in the main road through the town), and another one in Hesdin.

The Old Forge (closed on Tuesdays) has a good menu and the staff are very helpful – go through Beaurainville to the roundabout by the supermarket take the first exit and it is about 800 yards or so on the left (park on the right).

La Belle Epoque in Hesdin is a typical small family run restaurant and worth a visit.

Expensive

Les Trois Fontaine in Marconne near Hesdin is really good. It is very good French cooking. If you want something really special the Auberge d'Inxent at Inxent is well worth a visit but you will need to book first. Details are in the folder in the house.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

You are welcome to arrive at the house from 3pm onwards. You must vacate the house before 11 am on your day of departure.

FACILITIES IN THE HOUSE**Keys**

These will be posted to you and need to be left on the kitchen table when you leave. There are two adult bikes available and a bike lock key under the electricity box in the dining room.

Bedding

You will need to bring all bedding and towels with you. The double bed is king size and there are two single beds. All have quilts and pillows. The house sleeps four but it is easy to bring an extra bed.

Kitchen equipment

There is:

- An electric oven
- A gas hob

- A microwave
- A washing machine
- A fridge with a freezer compartment
- An electric filter coffee machine
- A 4 slice toaster
- Cutlery and crockery for at least 5
- Pots and pans
- Corkscrew!
- Barbecue equipment
- Tea towels
- Basic food eg sugar, salt, tins, tea, pasta etc [Please replace what you use].

The instructions and keys for most appliances are in the kitchen drawer.

Bathroom

- A heated towel rail in the bathroom

Toilets/ drainage

There is a septic tank (fosse septique). Please be careful with what goes down the system - no chemicals, bleach etc and no objects (apart from the obvious) down the toilet. It could block very easily and is bad for the environment.

Courtyard equipment

- There is a washing line in the courtyard and in the kitchen (for wet days)
- A brick barbecue
- Large table with four plastic chairs
- Small table with two matching chairs
- Sun lounger
- Lawn mower

Barbecue

There is a brick barbecue in the courtyard. The grill for it is in the walk in cupboard and the tools in the kitchen drawer.

Essential clothing

The weather is similar to southern England although autumn can be much warmer. It can be cold in the evenings and there are tiled floors, so bring warm clothing and slippers.



...➔ Bikes

Please use these if you wish – there is a pump for the tyres in the walk in cupboard, and an allen key to adjust the saddle in the kitchen drawer.

Woodburning stove

There should be firewood either in the house or in the outbuilding under cover. There is kindling in the old rabbit hutches and an axe in the walk in cupboard. Please leave the same amount as you find.

Electricity

The main switch for the house is situated in the alcove to the right of the fireplace. It is a white box with a dial. Turn to 1 for on, 0 to turn off. There is a fuse box in the dining room for the kitchen and heating.

Water

You will find the water turned off – the main taps are at the back of the cupboard to the left of the fireplace.

Gas

Cooking is by gas from our gas tank. The gas burners do not behave the same as British natural gas burners – they can be quite fierce.

There is a gas tap just below the boiler in the bathroom, and one in the kitchen by the hob. They are on when the red arrows line up with the pipe.

Central heating

There is gas central heating with a gas tank buried at the side of the house. This has proved horrendously expensive so try and be economical. When you arrive set the dial to winter (*hiver*) that works the radiators and heats the water or summer (*ete*) that just heats the water. Switch off the boiler at night (dial to 0). The other dials are for radiator temperature and water temperature – leave these alone. In the front room there is a programmable room thermostat, you can either leave as it is or press the middle top

button to override the system if you get cold in the day (hand appears). There is a small instruction book in the kitchen drawer if you want more information.

Do not sit on any of the radiators – it damages the joints and makes them leak!

In the summer, only use the central heating for water – use the wood burning stove if you are cold in the evenings.

There is a gas tap behind the boiler that needs to be on (in line with the pipe) and one that controls the hob which works the same way. The needle on the boiler pressure needs to be in the green area if it is too low there is a blue drain screw that you undo until the pressure increases then tighten.

Rubbish/ recycling

Please use the boxes at the front of the house, and when you leave put them at the bottom of the step to be collected. The small green box takes glass and the large grey bin recyclable plastic, cardboard, paper etc.

Please leave your rubbish in a black sack and put it on top of the grey bin when you leave.

Neighbours

Neighbours both sides are very friendly but only speak French. The farmhouse diagonally opposite is owned by English people who are there at weekends.

Leaving the house

When you leave please ensure the following:

- Lock all doors and windows.
- Leave the key on the dining room table.

We would be grateful if you could leave the house as you find it. Cleaning materials are under the sink and in the walk in cupboard.

Have a good time!

Mike and Ruth