

## Sark Itinerary

August 22-25

Never heard of Sark (or Sercq, as the French say)? You are probably not alone. Most people, even those living in France or the UK, have never heard of this small island in the English Channel off the Normandy coast. Although it boasts a status of 4th largest island in the Channel Islands, it is only about 2.1 square miles, with a year-rounds population of just 600.

Sark draws visitors not just for its geography and its landscapes: it's a relatively flat island, once you're there, but first you have to scale (by tractor-bus most likely, not by foot) the steep cliffs that rise from the often rough seas below. Sark intrigues its relatively few annual visitors with its prohibition on cars; you'll see only bikes, horse-drawn carriages, authorized tractors, and of course foot traffic. It is a designated Dark Sky Community (there are no streetlights!), a stargazer's paradise. And last but not least, Sark also has a unique history and modern-day form of government: the island is a fiefdom, led by a Seigneur, and it has its own parliament and laws based in Norman Law. It's a bit confusing—I'm still not 100% clear on Sark's status. It's an independent state yet part of the UK. It's considered Europe's last feudal state and yet it's more or less a democracy. What is certain is that all of these contradictions and twists of history make it a fascinating place.

Despite being a remote civilization in so many ways, Sark has a number of fine dining options and several very high-end hotels (with credit or blame—a very controversial topic—owed to the Barclay Brothers whose claim to fame is a net worth of U.S.\$3.7 billion: <http://www.bornrich.com/david-frederick-barclay.html>).

You can find the official visitor's guide to Sark here: [http://www.sark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Sark-Brochure-2014\\_Download.pdf](http://www.sark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Sark-Brochure-2014_Download.pdf).

We used Saint-Malo, Brittany, as our jumping off point for Sark. I highly recommend a visit to this beautiful walled city, almost entirely yet very tastefully rebuilt after extensive WWII bombing, either separately or in conjunction with a visit to Sark.

Date	To	Flight/Hotel/Car Details	Cost	Comments
Friday, August 22	<b>Paris-CDG to Saint-Malo</b>	<p>Mom arrives CDG @ 9:25am on Air France</p> <p><i>Rental car:</i> Europcar from Gare de Lyon (August 21<sup>st</sup>)</p> <p><i>Hotel in Saint-Malo:</i> HOTEL QUIC EN GROIGNE 8, rue d'Estrées - Intra Muros 35400 ST MALO (FRANCE) Tél. : +33 (0) 2.99.20.22.20 <a href="http://www.quic-en-groigne.com/">http://www.quic-en-groigne.com/</a></p>	<p><i>Car:</i> \$160.48 (for 10 days, <a href="http://www.autoeurope.com">www.autoeurope.com</a>)</p> <p>Note that autoeurope.com seems to always give the best rental car prices. Just be careful as lately there's often a glitch on the website where you can't always see the "without added insurance" rates.</p> <p><i>Hotel:</i> €119 (includes parking)</p>	<p>Lunch in Honfleur; stop in Saint-Suliac I was already in France and met my mom who flew in to Paris on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. We repeated our 1999 route and had lunch in the beautiful port town of <b>Honfleur</b> (<a href="http://en.normandie-tourisme.fr/articles/honfleur-278-2.html">http://en.normandie-tourisme.fr/articles/honfleur-278-2.html</a>), which also makes a great day trip from Paris if the traffic cooperates, then stopped for just a short walk and a few photos in the charming Plus Beaux Villages de France's <b>Saint-Suliac</b> (<a href="http://www.les-plus-beaux-villages-de-france.org/en/saint-suliac">http://www.les-plus-beaux-villages-de-france.org/en/saint-suliac</a>), just a few km south of Saint-Malo.</p> <p><i>Dinner in Saint-Malo (7pm):</i> Le Borgnefesse 10, rue Puits aux Braies 02 99 40 05 05 <a href="http://www.tripadvisor.fr/Restaurant_Review-g187104-d2211048-Reviews-Le_Borgnefesse-Saint_Malo_Ile_et_Vilaine_Brittany.html">http://www.tripadvisor.fr/Restaurant_Review-g187104-d2211048-Reviews-Le_Borgnefesse-Saint_Malo_Ile_et_Vilaine_Brittany.html</a> I had eaten at Le Borgnefesse years ago and it was just as wonderful as I remembered it. I had a delicious risotto with scallops (special). Be sure to reserve in advance.</p> <p>I had also stayed at the Quic en Groigne years ago and was happy to return for the ideal intra-muros location. What I was not expecting is that the hotel has been completely renovated and yet is still a reasonable price. Breakfast is worth its price for the glassed-in courtyard breakfast room alone. The owners are extremely friendly (and especially friendly to Americans!) Don't miss the historical photos in the lobby of the city post-WWII bombings.</p>

<p>Saturday, August 23</p>	<p><b>Saint-Malo – Guernsey – Sark</b></p>	<p><i>Ferry Saint-Malo to Guernsey:</i> (must arrive 60 minutes ahead—<b>ha ha, sort of a lie</b>)  Depart: Sat 23 Aug @ 12:00  Arrive: Sat 23 Aug @ 13:00</p> <p><i>Ferry Guernsey to Sark:</i> (must arrive 30 minutes ahead)  14:00 23/08/2014</p> <p><i>Hotel on Sark:</i>  The Aval du Creux  Sark, GY10  1SB, Channel Islands, Great Britain.  +44 (0) 1481 832036  <a href="mailto:reception@avalducreux.com">reception@avalducreux.com</a>  <a href="http://www.avalducreux.com">www.avalducreux.com</a></p> <p>We got an incredible deal at the Aval du Creux because the restaurant was being renovated. It seems standard on Sark (in part because of the lack of streetlights, I imagine) that hotels come with restaurants. Because Aval du Creux had no restaurant in Summer 2014, we had to walk a ways to eat. But we actually enjoyed it. We were able to try out different hotels in the same network for (free) breakfasts and there were plenty of options for lunch and dinner even a 5-minute walk away. I imagine it will be just as pricey as all the others once the restaurant reopens though. It's quite a nice hotel though, and in a very convenient location right by the tractor-bus stop for the ferry and only a 5-minute walk to the town center. It's relatively modern (most of the other hotels in more historic buildings).</p>	<p><i>Round trip ferry:</i>  €156.84 (Saint-Malo-Guernsey) + £55.60 (= €70) (Guernsey-Sark)</p> <p><i>Hotel:</i> £178 (= €224) for 2 nights</p>	<p>Direct Ferries Reference: DFP7995736  Ferry Operator Reference: 6337495  Map of Saint-Malo port:  <a href="http://www.directferries.fr/st_malo.htm">http://www.directferries.fr/st_malo.htm</a>. There's easy parking by the ferry terminal, subsidized at only €5/day when you show your ferry ticket.  Map of Guernsey port:  <a href="http://www.condorferries.co.uk/destinations/guernsey-port.aspx">http://www.condorferries.co.uk/destinations/guernsey-port.aspx</a>. The two ferries are right near each other, quite easy to find.  Call with ferry questions: 01481724059  <i>Ferries depart from The Inter Island Quay at St Peter Port Harbour</i>  Our Saint-Malo to Guernsey ferry was delayed, but the Sark ferry company let us delay to a later Sark ferry with no hassle whatsoever. It worked out well in the end because it allowed us a couple of hours to explore St Peter's Port. I'm sure there's more on Guernsey worth seeing, but after those two hours in Guernsey's "prettiest" town and the wonderful experience we had on Sark, I'm not so anxious to get back to Guernsey.</p> <p><i>Dinner in Sark (7pm):</i>  Beau Séjour  Rue la Seignuerie  07781446437  <a href="http://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g186231-d4259709-Reviews-Beau_Sejour_Sark-Sark_Channel_Islands.html">http://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g186231-d4259709-Reviews-Beau_Sejour_Sark-Sark_Channel_Islands.html</a>  Beau Séjour is an incredible dining experience—for the local food, the friendliness of the staff and the setting in an historic home. It's not cheap but really not overly expensive for what it is. Definitely reserve well in advance. Remember that Sark has no streetlights—bring a flashlight with you to dinner or you'll find it very tricky finding your way back to the hotel after! And if you're even slightly afraid of the dark, it's best to dine at your own hotel!</p> <p>For hotels, assuming Aval du Creux is no longer a good deal, I'd probably try The Stocks Hotel, La Moinerie or La Sablonnerie (a bit more remote, on Little Sark). But from what I saw, it would be hard to go wrong. All the hotels we saw and ate at on the island were beautiful. There are some cheaper (but not cheap) B&amp;B options as well. The hotels will ask what ferry you're on and arrange for your luggage to be transported by tractor up from sea level to your hotel. You pay the tractor-bus a minimal amount to take you up to the town level.</p>
----------------------------	--------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Sunday, August 24</p>	<p><b>Sark</b></p>	<p><i>Hotel on Sark: The Aval du Creux</i></p>	<p><b>Explore Sark</b>  We had a nice breakfast at Time &amp; Tide (with our Aval du Creux voucher) then set out on foot to explore the island. We started by heading to the iconic La Coupée, a narrow strip of land with 300-foot cliffs on each side that connects Big Sark to Little Sark—yes, Sark is actually composed of two islands. We walked around Little Sark, then back to Big Sark and covered pretty much all the roads (all dirt) on the islands and some of smaller paths as well. There aren't really coastal paths on Sark—the cliffs are too steep to allow access to sea level except in a few select places.</p> <p>In the afternoon, we visited the gardens of the Seigneurerie (<a href="http://www.laseigneuriegardens.com/">http://www.laseigneuriegardens.com/</a>), where the Seigneur (benevolent dictator?) of the island resides. We had a very nice lunch at Hathaway's at the entrance to the gardens.</p> <p>If you're a strong walker or want to rent a bike, one full day is enough time to explore Sark. Though that's not to say you couldn't spend a very nice few days or even week on Sark if your main objective is to unplug and relax. What we did not have time for was a visit to the Barclay brother's private island of Brecqhou, whose gardens are open only to those staying at Barclay-owned hotels. Given the history of the Barclay's influence on the island, I'm not sure we would have visited even had we had time.</p> <p>We had dinner at the Hugo's Bar &amp; Bistro at the Dixcart Hotel—the food was not the best but the live music made it fun nonetheless.</p>
<p>Monday, August 25</p>	<p><b>Sark – Guernsey – Saint-Malo</b></p>	<p><i>Ferry Sark to Guernsey:</i> 11:00 25/08/2014</p> <p><i>Ferry Guernsey to Saint-Malo:</i> Depart: Mon 25 Aug @ 13:30 Arrive: Mon 25 Aug @ 16:30</p>	<p>We had breakfast at La Moinerie (again, with our voucher) as we wanted to see La Moinerie. We walked around the grounds a bit after breakfast—they have started growing grapes on Sark for wine, but the wine won't be ready for a few more years.</p> <p>One note about the ferries: the ferries between Guernsey and Sark are not frequent, so book those tickets first and then work backwards, buying the Saint-Malo-Guernsey tickets second. Remember that Sark is on UK time, an hour behind France.</p>