

# **HIDDEN GEMS**

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# FRANCE

## Eating Like a Local in Honfleur

*Barbara Hopkins*

The pretty Normandy port of **Honfleur**, about an hour from Paris by train and then a short bus ride, is a beautifully preserved historic town famous for its artistic heritage.

The *Vieux Bassin*—the old port—is the center of activity and the harbor is lined with restaurants whose over-priced and uninspired menus served by bored staff are strictly for the tourists. The only good thing is the view.

Yet try walking just a few hundred yards away from the port and you'll find narrow cobbled streets lined with typically Norman half-timbered houses. Here are the restaurants where the locals eat.

**Restaurant La Tortue** is typical—charming and homely, but refined. The timber-framed building has exposed beams inside, the tables laid with fresh linen tablecloths and napkins.

The region is famed for its produce, especially cheeses, apples and Calvados (apple brandy), all of which are featured on the menus, priced between \$22 and \$45. Proprietor Yves Gobbe is keen to remain faithful to traditional regional dishes, while also introducing some new tastes and textures.



With its abundance of flowers and window boxes, Honfleur is a pretty town that has inspired artists such as Monet and Cézanne

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Dishes such as duck marinated in apple cider or red mullet with tomato coulis are sure to please and, unusually for France, there is a separate menu for vegetarians featuring a delicious dish of seasonal vegetables in filo pastry.

The restaurant serves desserts including local apples cooked in cinnamon with Calvados cream and regional cheeses to round off the experience. Savor the ambience and forget the harbor view—this is local dining at its best. For more information, see: [En.ot-honfleur.fr](http://En.ot-honfleur.fr).