The Great War Trails in the Ypres Salient

Sample Itinerary for Secondary Education: Keystage 3

Three day itinerary:
The below sample itinerary for a two day trip to the battlefields of the Great War is possible from **109 EUR per person onwards** (based on 50 paying participants, including all meals, museum entries and overnight stay except the first lunch and transport costs). The suggested tour is allows teachers or guides to roughly explain the history of the Salient chronological. Itineraries can be custom made and tailored to your background, local and age group. Tours to the Somme or Arras Battlefields are also possible from the Peace Village. Please get in touch for more information. In purple, we have outlined some alternatives (not included in the costs).

Day 1
- Arrival in the local area in the late afternoon using own transport
- Check-in & warm meal at the Peace Village
- **Evening activity** at the Peace Village
  - March of the Phoenix: interactive remembrance walk in Messines. A century after the Great War ended, we look back and reflect on the meaning and relevance of remembrance. Who, how and why do we remember? Just as the early pilgrims, today’s visitors to the battlefields of Flanders bring their own costumes and rituals to commemorate their loved ones. We visit some recently added headstones at a local military cemetery and bring a traditional Maori ceremony at the New Zealand Memorial Park. The off the beaten track trail brings us to the beautiful lit Island of Ireland Peace Park with its magnificent round tower.
  - Select a different evening activity from our **offer** or enjoy a relaxing evening at the Peace Village. Our sport facilities include basketball, hockey, football, ping pong, badminton, pool table, etc.
Day 2

- **MORNING HIGHLIGHTS BATTLEFIELD TOUR (Ypres north)**
  
  - **OPTIONAL:** please get in touch with us if you’d like us to recommend a guide to join you on this trip. Personal stories make the sites and history come alive much more. We try to match the right guide with the right group. Cost: €90 for morning tour of 3 hours.

  - **Stop at Essex Farm Cemetery & John McCrae Site.**
    Today, the concrete shelters of the Advanced Dressing Station illustrate the medical evacuation of the casualties. Although these shelters date from 1917, they are located close to where Canadian Medical Officer and Major John McCrae wrote his famous “In Flanders Fields” poem. The cemetery at Essex Farm holds some 1200 headstones, including that of Pte John Valentine Strudwick (15 years old) and Pte Thomas Barratt VC.

  - **Drive past**
    - The [Carrefour des Roses Memorial](#) for the soldiers from Brittany (France) who were killed here in the first gas attack during the 2nd Battle of Ypres in April 1915.
    - [Francis Ledwidge Memorial](#), dedicated to the famous Irish poet who was killed on these crossroads. A story linked to Irish politics as well as poetry.
    - [National Welsh Memorial Park](#) was inaugurated August 2014 near Hagebos where the Welsh Division got stuck after advancing several miles during the opening day of the 3rd Battle of Ypres on 31/07/1917. A memorial to Welsh poet Hedd Wyn who fell on this spot has also been erected.
    - [Harry Patch Memorial Stone](#) for the Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry. Harry was one of the last veterans of the Great War and had a clear message for youngsters today. Through the Peace Village, we can provide you with some adapted short films on this story to be shown on the coach or at the hostel.

  - **Stop at Langemark German Cemetery.** This cemetery commemorates over 44,000 German soldiers. Over 25,000 of them were buried in a large mass grave at the centre of the cemetery. The contrast between a Commonwealth cemetery and any German cemetery is impressive. This site is also linked to the First Battle of Ypres (autumn 1914) when a German attack was repelled by allied forces. In the incident, a number of young German recruits (former students) were killed which led to the birth of the ‘student
massacre’ myth which Hitler (WWII) gladly used as propaganda during his visit to the cemetery in 1940. The bunkers date from 1916. A small parking and visitor centre are present.

- Stop at Vancouver Corner with the Canadian Brooding Soldier Memorial near St Juliaan. This memorial commemorates the Canadian victims which fell during the 2nd Battle of Ypres.

- Stop at Tyne Cot Cemetery & Memorial. With almost 12,000 headstones, Tyne Cot is the largest Commonwealth Cemetery in the world. The Memorial commemorates 35,000 more missing soldiers, most of whom fell during the 3rd Battle of Ypres, known as Passchendaele. At the back of the cemetery, there’s an interesting visitor centre which not only tells the tale of the Battle of Passchendaele, but also focuses on how the cemetery was constructed and maintained over the past century. There are also (payable) toilets available at this site.

**ALTERNATIVE: Off the beaten track battlefield tour**

- OVERVIEW:
  - Visit the German & French Cemetery at Bousbecque. The communal cemetery of Bousbecque also houses several British & French graves. The way these are positioned and maintained make a stark contrast to the German graves which are located at the back of the cemetery behind a hedgerow. Here the pupils can find out about different ways of remembrance.

  - Polygon Wood: this wood is still today littered with bunkers and some trench lines can still be seen. The NZ memorial to the missing and the Buttes New British Cemetery are key sites to visit. The view from the 5th Australian Division Memorial is stunning.

- WHY GO OFF THE BEATEN TRACK? Most of the above sites receive over half a million visitors every year. This leads to overcrowding and even damages some of the sites. Also, some of the quiet and tranquil atmosphere is lost when several coaches turn up at the same site at once. There are over 160 cemeteries within 30 minutes’ drive
from the Peace Village. All of them have stories to tell and all of them deserve a visit. Trust your guide to bring them alive to the group. Please get in touch for more info.

- LINK THE TOUR TO HOME: supplement these sites with cemeteries, memorials and stories linked to your local area. You can find an overview for every nationality on our website. Please get in touch if you would like us to make a few suggestions based on your local country or country.

- Afternoon visit to the Passchendaele Memorial Museum 1917, a hand’s on & interactive museum which also offers a unique Trench & Dug-out Experience. We find this museum works excellent for Keystage 3 pupils.
  - Enjoy your packed lunch from the Peace Village at the beautiful Chateau grounds. Also pay a visit to the many memorial gardens located here.
  - Visit to the museum with Olly, the educational fictional guide.

- CWRM-workshop: this project aims to remember all 600,000 people who died in Belgium during WW1. The participants are asked to produce a small clay statue in memory of one of them. This workshop is good fun for all ages and is a nice closure of the day. The money raised goes to charities preventing child soldiers today. The workshop runs till March 2018 and is available at the Peace Village and De Kazematten in Ypres. The workshop last one hour.

- Visit to the Menin Gate in Ypres, the largest memorial to the missing in the Ypres Salient with almost 55,000 names of missing soldiers. This is followed by some free time in the town centre.

- Warm meal at the Peace Village

- In the evening, we attend the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres. This daily act of remembrance by the local voluntary fire brigade is a perhaps the most attend WW1 ceremony in the world. It was recently performed for the 30,000 time and remains true to its origins, remembering the missing of the Great War. Please register your attendance on the website at least a month in advance.

  - Alternative: put on your own ceremony at the Messines Memorial to the Missing, a New Zealand memorial with over 800 names of missing NZ soldiers next to the Peace Village. We gladly help you organise this. Or perhaps choose one of our activities at the Peace Village.
Day 3
- **Breakfast** at the Peace Village.

- **MORNING BATTLEFIELD TOUR (Ypres south – Messines Ridge)**
  o **OPTIONAL:** please get in touch with us if you’d like us to recommend a guide to join you on this trip. Personal stories make the sites and history come alive much more. We try to match the right guide with the right group. Cost: €90 for morning tour of 3 hours.

  o **Pool of Peace:** during the Battle of Messines (7 June 1917) 19 mines were detonated. Today, the Pool of Peace is a silent witness and offers an astonishing view of the whole Messines Ridge and battlefield. A good starting point to explain the battle.

  o **Hill 60:** During a walk through the woods, you discover the scars from the war such as cemeteries, craters, bunkers, etc. The old front lines are marked with coloured trees. No-man’s land has never been better visualised. You can walk (or drive) to the famous site of Hill 60 and the Caterpillar. Here you can explore the lunar landscape with two more craters from the 1917 Battle of Messines.

  o **Hooge Crater:** this hamlet along the Menin Road has many sites linked to it which can all be done on foot from here. They include:

    - **Walk on Bellewaerde Ridge:** this walk takes you to Railway Wood RE Cemetery, the smallest cemetery in the Ypres Salient. Also on the way is a memorial to the Liverpool Scottish and a landscape full of craters, untouched since the war. This walk starts from **Entry Point East**, a small visitor centre (free of charge) with an excellent (but rather complicated) movie.

    - **Hooge Crater Museum:** this family run museum offers a more traditional visit with some historic displays and an impressive film. It’s an ideal place for your group to have a rest and look at some of the equipment used during the war. This site also has toilet facilities.

    - **Recreated trenches** at the back of the museum give the pupils an insight of the advantages of high ground and the use of the terrain.

    - **Packed lunch** provided by the Peace Village can be consumed in Hooge Crater Cafeteria. A free drink is included.
- ALTERNATIVE: cycling the Messines Ridge
  An specially designed trail with safe and cycle friendly roads available through the Peace Village which links the same sites as the above coach tour. Possibility to use worksheets or book a guide who can bring the history to life. Bikes can be rented (10 EUR / bike) and delivered or picked up on location. Please get in touch for more info.

- ALTERNATIVE: life behind the lines tour
  o OPTIONAL: please get in touch with us if you’d like us to recommend a guide.

  o Brandhoek New Military Cemetery: a hospital site (Casualty Clearing Stations) and also the final resting place of Captain Noel Chavasse VC & Bar, MC. He’s the highest decorated doctor from Great War. It is a good place to tell the medical story along the evacuation route.

  o Poperinge:
    - Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery: the second largest Commonwealth Cemetery in the world. The site also has a great new visitor centre on medical aid and some facilities.

    - Condemned cells Poperinge: several soldiers spend their final night here in these cells before being executed by their own colleagues the following morning. A very moving site behind the town hall.

    - Talbot House in Poperinge: this Every Man’s Club catered both for soldiers and officers during the war. The unique atmosphere still lives on in the old Concert Hall where groups get an idea of the entertainment from back then. In the old canteen you can still play the 1915 piano or relax in the green garden. Upstairs in the old Chapel, you are reminded how big a part religion played in the life of these men but also that every visit to this chapel, could be their last one. We recommend you to do the Tablet Story Tour designed for especially for this age group on Duchess, the Talbot House cat. School groups are welcome to have their packed lunches on site. Don’t forget to book your cup of tea. No extra charge but a great experience! Extra cost: depends on what is included in above itinerary. Also, 1 EUR reduction if combined with MMP1917.

- Departure
  In case of a three day itinerary, you finish your tour here.
Optional: a four day itinerary

An extra overnight stay in the Peace Village is possible from 28 EUR. With an additional overnight stay, you can attend the famous Last Post ceremony or select another one of the Peace Village evening activities.

The extra day can be spend in Northern France (Loos, Somme, Vimy, etc.) or on the story of life behind the lines (medical, relaxations, executions, camps, refugees, etc.). Below you can find some examples. In **purple** we have noted some interesting alternatives. We are happy to tailor itineraries to the groups age, interests, local area, etc. Please get in touch for extra info.

**Day 4**

- Life Behind the Lines: the above tour can also be done on day 4

- **ALTERNATIVE:** Northern France Battlefields Tour

  - Indian Memorial Neuve Chapelle
    The memorial commemorates some 4742 Indian soldiers with no known grave, who fell in battle while fighting for the British Indian Army during the First World War. The location of the memorial was chosen because of the participation by Indian troops at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle in 1914.

  - Loos Memorial & Dud Corner Cemetery
    Dud Corner Cemetery stands almost on the site of a German strong point, the Lens Road Redoubt, captured by the 15th (Scottish) Division on the first day of the Battle of Loos (September 1915). The Loos Memorial commemorates over 20,000 officers and men who have no known grave. The open landscape offers stunning views and makes it easy to give a historic overview and explication.

  - Vimy Ridge Trenches, memorial
    On the opening day of the Battle of Arras, 9 April 1917, the four divisions of the Canadian Corps, fighting side by side for the first time, scored a huge tactical victory in the capture of the 60 metre high Vimy Ridge. After the war, the highest point of the ridge was chosen as the site of the great memorial to all Canadians who served their country in battle during the First World War, and particularly to the 60,000 who gave their lives in France. It also bears the names of 11,000 Canadian servicemen who died in France - many of them...
in the fight for Vimy Ridge - who have no known grave. The grounds around the memorial are open year-round and contain restored and preserved trenches and tunnels. To view these, it is recommended that visitors pre-book.

- Wellington Quarry:
  It is an underground museum which has been carefully and sensitively created in a section of the many kilometres of tunnels dug by the British Army in the 1914-1918 war. The First World War tunnels connect with original tunnels and quarries dating back to the middle ages and Roman times underneath the city of Arras.