The cabins at Gouville-sur-Mer

manche-tourism.com

THE MONT AND ITS MARVELS
D-DAY, MEMORY AND EMOTION
THE PROMISES OF THE COASTLINE
OF STONES AND CULTURE
LA MANCHE FOR COUPLES AND FAMILIES
“Discover a destination shaped by the elements, surprising, fascinating and full of promises of an unforgettable stay.”
Mont Saint-Michel catches the eye, drawing attention to the vastness of the bay and its treasures, like the setting for a beautiful gem.
THE MONT AND ITS MARVELS

The Bay of Mont Saint-Michel is a landscape in perpetual movement, with a generous natural setting that makes the Mont and its abbey, a true feat of architecture, even more special.

The Bay of Mont Saint-Michel is immense: 575 km² between Cancale and Granville. In this landscape moulded by the ebb and flow of the biggest tides in Europe, the “Wonder of the West” stands proud. The Mont and its abbey, crowned by the Archangel Saint Michael (Archange Saint-Michel), can first be seen from the heights of the continent due to this particular geographical location. For walkers, the cliffs of Carolles and Champeaux offer a particularly impressive view, perched at heights of 60 or even 80 metres. Even the regulars always marvel at this changing landscape, at the confluence of the rivers Sée, Sélune and Couesnon. Spanning this famous river, which has a dam that is also involved in the movements of the bay, is the famous new footbridge which allows visitors to reach Mont Saint-Michel. Of course you can get there faster, thanks to the ferries and maringottes (a type of horse-drawn carriage) that will take you to the Mont from the car parks. But approaching this wonderful place while taking the time to immerse yourself in the landscape is an experience to be enjoyed again and again.

VENTURING ONTO THE SHIFTING SANDS

When the tide is out, you have to be brave to cross the shores as the pilgrims do; this is an unforgettable experience on a site unlike any other, and allows you to approach the Mont in a more private way. For these hikes, you have to be accompanied by certified and experienced guides due to the risks of rising tides and shifting sands. Some trips go via the granite islet of Tombelaine, which is very popular with the many birds that frequent the territory. The bay is a remarkable reservoir of biodiversity, with a variety of fauna and flora. There are no less than 130 species of birds, and about a hundred species of fish.

When venturing onto the sandy benches, visitors may be lucky enough to spot the harbour seals who love to visit the bay. They may also catch sight of the common bottlenose dolphin colony that is well-known in the Norman-Breton Gulf.

MEETING WITH THE MARVEL

Once you arrive at the foot of the rock, the atmosphere changes. This area is more densely populated. Beyond the gates of the Mont Saint-Michel ramparts, the medieval village is full of life. The Centre des monuments nationaux, the body in charge of the abbey, reminds us: “The long history of Mont Saint-Michel began in 708, when Bishop Aubert had the first sanctuary built on Mont-Tombe in honour of the Archangel”.

Benedictines settled there in the 10th century and began to build the abbey, which became “a major pilgrimage site of the Christian West as well as one of the centres for medieval culture where a large number of manuscripts were produced, preserved and studied”. A veritable architectural feat, the abbey has been transformed over the centuries and offers a great variety of forms. Its Merveille (meaning “Marvel”), a structure located to the north of the abbey church, stands as a masterpiece of Norman Gothic art and testifies to the extraordinary expertise of the 13th-century builders.
“In a bay where the sky changes every instant, where colours blend in countless permutations, where the moonlight is the most beautiful in the world, I never tire of admiring the abbey’s magical Romanesque and Gothic architecture. Whether it’s the 1,300 years of history or this exceptional landscape, everything at Mont Saint-Michel amazes me. On the west terrace, I like to contemplate the outline of this unique monument and the incessant play of the tides. The visitor trail always delights me and I feel ever more admiration for the talent and ingenuity of the builders of each room, the crypts, the church and the cloister... Here, dreams come true.”

XAVIER BAILLY
Administrator at Mont Saint-Michel Abbey and Carrouges Castle, Centre des monuments nationaux.
Of course, the duty of remembrance is paramount, but without losing sight of history, another benefit of following the path to freedom is the emotion that it stirs.
D-DAY, MEMORY AND EMOTION

From Utah Beach to Saint-Jean-le-Thomas, “one of the most beautiful panoramas in the world” according to General Eisenhower, all over the department there are are reminders of D-Day and the battles won to liberate the countryside, towns and villages.

At dawn on 6 June 1944, the world’s biggest armada landed on the beaches of Normandy. Thousands of soldiers braved their fear of the unknown, determined to put an end to the five-year reign of a monstrous war machine.

HISTORY IS AN OPEN BOOK

Several museums like the Musée du Débarquement at Utah Beach, the Airborne Museum in Sainte-Mère-Eglise or the D-Day Experience in Saint-Côme-du-Mont will take you on a journey to the heart of history. A host of objects, uniforms, equipment, films and photographs explain in detail the large military challenge that was the D-Day Landings. Fully immersed in D-Day, you can even board a C47 and experience the minutes that preceded the big jump by the parachutists of the 101st Airborne. This very impressive three-dimensional simulation reminds us of the fear that they had to overcome and the courage that the soldiers, who were often very young, had to show. The tributes are in evidence all over the department of La Manche.

The Route du D-Day et de la Bataille de Normandie, and the Normandy Victory Museum in Catz (opening in spring 2017), will also help you to gain an understanding, beyond the strategic scale of the coalition, of the impact on the lives of the local people who found themselves involved in an unthinkable historic event, sometimes unwillingly, which is always a very moving experience for visitors. It’s no surprise that these big
events celebrating the “anniversary” of D-Day and the commemoration ceremonies organised each year are so enthusiastically received. Veterans and World War Two enthusiasts feel the need to meet up in places that are steeped in emotion, such as the American Military Cemetery in Saint-James or the German Military Cemetery in Saint-Mère-Eglise.

OVER HEDGED FARMLAND AND MARSHES

Just imagine the magnitude of Operation Overlord. 150,000 men, more than 20,000 military vehicles and tonnes of equipment descended upon the Normandy beaches in just a few hours. This gigantic landing took place after a stormy night, struggling against the raging waters of the English Channel. The mission of the first soldiers on the four kilometres of Utah Beach, supported by the parachutists who landed at dawn after the battle of the hedgerows, the capturing of the batteries at Crisbecq and Azeville, the recapturing of Fort du Roule, the liberation of Carentan, the entrance into Saint-Lô, the prefectural town that was entirely destroyed by bombing, and the famous Operation Cobra, followed by the Arrachnes Breakthrough, were all among the obstacles to winning the challenge of the Liberation. Thanks to the commitment, determination, and mental and strategic strength of the famous generals and majors, Leclerc, Patton, Howie (who died for Saint-Lô), Bradley, Collins and Johnson, to name but a few, and their valiant soldiers, the feat was accomplished. These great military figures will forever be part of world history and particularly the history of La Manche and Normandy. Here, in this part of France, there is surely not a single family that is not in some way linked to this universal event, a symbol of solidarity between the nations.

THE DUTY OF REMEMBRANCE

If, during your stay in Normandy, you have the chance to hear the stories of local residents who lived through the occupation and the D-Day landings, you will immediately notice the strength of feeling that persists to this day. The people of Manche, who were in most cases very young children at the time, remember the deafening sound of the thousands of planes, the bombs falling, the astounding arrival of the first GIs in the isolated rural areas, the hundreds of tanks and vehicles that looked unlike those of the occupying forces, the military camps set up in just a few hours, and the extremely deadly than expected. The hell of the battle of the hedgerows, the capturing of Cherbourg, Saint-Michel, and all the surrounding towns and countryside. Although D-Day itself had fewer military casualties than had been feared, the troops’ advance across the lands of La Manche proved more complicated and deadlier than expected. The hall of the Cotentin and Bassin marshland, the battle of the hedgerows, the capturing of the batteries at Crisbecq and Azeville, the recapturing of Fort du Roule, the liberation of Carentan, the entrance into Saint-Lô, the prefectural town that was entirely destroyed by bombing, and the famous Operation Cobra, followed by the Arrachnes Breakthrough, were all among the obstacles to winning the challenge of the Liberation. Thanks to the commitment, determination, and mental and strategic strength of the famous generals and majors, Leclerc, Patton, Howie (who died for Saint-Lô), Bradley, Collins and Johnson, to name but a few, and their valiant soldiers, the feat was accomplished. These great military figures will forever be part of world history and particularly the history of La Manche and Normandy. Here, in this part of France, there is surely not a single family that is not in some way linked to this universal event, a symbol of solidarity between the nations.

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THE PROMISES OF THE COASTLINE

The coastline of La Manche is a microcosm of all the seashores. This peninsula, with its unique outline, lives and breathes to the rhythm of some of Europe’s most impressive tides. They come and go twice per twenty-four-hour period and offer maritime scenes in perpetual motion for us to gaze upon.

At the very end of this oblong territory, the artificial harbour of Cherbourg-en-Cotentin, the second biggest of its kind in the world, proudly displays its gigantic framework. On a clear day, a deep blue sea appears. The long descent is an opportunity to admire the unique fortified architecture of this maritime conurbation that contains four types of port: marina, commercial, fishing and military. Before exploring the historic town centre and its monuments, before entering the Gare Maritime Transatlantique station, you should take the time to stroll along the seaside in order to get an idea of all the space it occupies.

TOWARDS THE LEVANT

Next it’s time to make a choice. Head to the East Coast or discover the West Coast? You will need to come back regardless. One day is not enough to explore and make the most of the 360 kilometres of coastline that form the outline of the department.

To its left, the Gatteville lighthouse stands majestic and proud. From its great height, it watches over the sea squalls and currents, which are extremely strong and unruly at the Raz du Barfleur. Of course, the 365 steps may leave you short of breath but it’s well worth the effort, as the view is untrammelled and the light is stunning. As the sea air can give you quite an appetite, you may want to head to the docks of Barfleur and Saint-Vaast la-Hougue, two authentic fishing villages, for a meal. Here and there, the cries of the gulls accompany the song of the sailboats, and the departures and arrivals of the trawling nets, depending on the time of the tide. Tide allowing, it will then be time for you to walk or take an amphibious vehicle to the island of Tatihou, with its bird sanctuary, gardens and Vauban tower. A detour via Jonville beach to the Pointe de Saire will make for an enchanting day out. Kilometres of golden sand stretch out in front of the flower-adorned villas that steadfastly face the sea.
THE PROMISES OF THE COASTLINE

Not far from those scenic villages loved by holidaymakers, just 40 kilometres along the coast, Utah Beach and its D-Day museums keep the right to remembrance alive in a most pleasant way. Everywhere along the coasts of the department of La Manche, natural sites are protected from any construction schemes that might spoil the area. This sensation is even more striking when you reach the Baie des Veys. This large and uniquely beautiful estuary, into which flow the four rivers that irrigate the Cotentin and Bessin Marshland Regional Natural Park, is a well-known spot among rockpoolers.

LA HAGUE, AN IRISH AIR

Yet at this stage of your open-air exploration, the other coast will still not have revealed its treasures to you.

So, if you feel like heading north-west, don’t miss the detour to Racine harbour, the smallest in France. In a setting with a very Irish air about it, the place is like something from a novel...

Following the path past the brightly coloured hulls of the tiny boats moored at the pontoons, you may have decided to stop at Landemer, or Omonville-la-Rogue, attracted by the side streets with their unique houses, and by the sails of the catamarans further afield. The Nez de Jobourg, way up at the Cap de la Hague, clearly knows how to attract visitors. We warned you, this wild coastline loves to keep leading you a little further along...

From these cliffs which culminate at 128 metres, some of the tallest in Europe, you will enjoy views of the Baie d’Écalgrain, where the mauve and dazzling yellow of the flowers vie with the blue-green of the sea in an infinite panorama.

Further down, the peaceful cows make the most of the salty- aired countryside. The low walls divide the geometric plots of lush grass, which stretches all the way to the water. The foam of the Raz Blanchard surrounds Goury lighthouse, the other guardian of the Manche coasts. Here, lifeguards are especially careful when the winds pick up.

In La Hague, the Customs Path is a joy for walkers and admirers of beautiful landscapes. Surfers, windsurfers and swimmers in search of thrills will be drawn to the beaches that prolong the coastline south of the Cap de la Hague. Sciotot, Le Rozel, Siouville-Hague and Surtainville offer some amazing waves when the tide comes in.

FROM CAPES TO HARBOURS...

Then, opposite the Channel Islands, Cap de Carteret, a promontory located on the Côte des Îles, offers an exceptional panoramic view of the Hatainville dunes on one side, and the Côte des Havres on the other. The seaside resort of Barneville-Carteret boasts an array of beautiful seaside villas, and offers a full range of watersports. Meanwhile, the municipality of Portbail keeps watch over the advancing sea, which comes all the way to the foundation of its church on spring tide days.

Then there’s the road to the harbours of Blainville, Régnéville and La Vanlée, wonderful natural beauty spots that are very popular with watercolour artists and make for a pleasant wander.

Also in this coastal area, you can give your taste buds a treat with oysters, lobsters and bouchot mussels. Adorned with cosy houses, the very long seawall at Agon-Coutainville is an established meeting point and you can be sure that this varied walk through countryside and seaside will win you over, too.
The dune landscape, so typical of the West Coast, stretches all the way to Saint-Martin-de-Bréhal. Just before Donville les Bains and Granville, the ultimate corsair town, pop up to surprise you. The promenade at the Platif Gouset, Haute Ville and the Pointe du Roc seem to gaze lovingly at the Chausey islands. It’s fun to watch the constant waltz of the sailboats while waiting for your turn to board.

In Chausey, a change of scene is guaranteed, as this archipelago of 365 islets at low tide and 52 at high tide offers a new landscape every 6 hours. Here, there’s hardly any traffic, just nature in the raw, like stepping into another world…

A little bit Norman yet distinctly British, the islands of Jersey, Guernesey, Sercq, Herm and Aurigny can be seen on the horizon. Treat yourself to an excursion to the Channel Islands, departing from the harbours of La Manche (information p.49).

A little further south, the resorts of Jullouville, Saint-Pair-sur-Mer and Carolles, the first ever sea bathing destinations, enjoy the mild climate of the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel. Horse-riders and sand yachts provide an interesting spectacle.

And tucked behind the colourful cliffs of Champeaux, at the very end of this unique coastline that traces the outline of the department from east to west, the “Wonder of the West” finally makes its appearance.

THE MONT ON THE HORIZON

The coastline of La Manche is for me one of the most beautiful natural spaces imaginable from a photographic point of view. An immense playground covering 360 km, full of treasures and untouched landscapes. Controlled urbanisation offers us vast, wild expanses that are ideal for photography. The sea light reveals a palette of infinite colours and breathtaking shades, changing to the rhythm of the tides. There I find inspiration, a gentle pace of life and permanent visual renewal.

My favourite activity: walking along the customs path, flying over the coastline in a paramotor and discovering yet more new photographic gems…

“...”

THE PROMISES OF THE COASTLINE

In the eyes of... JÉRÔME HOUYYET
Photographer

Find photographs by Jérôme Houyvet at the Lumières Marines Gallery at Barfleur harbour, lumieresmarines.com and Facebook: facebook.com/lumieresmarines

So, are you ready to go?

- Find all the visitor attractions and leisure activities available on the coast on manche-tourism.com (At the seaside section)
- Harbours and marinas on manche-tourism.com (Harbours and Marinas in Normandy section)
- Watersports outings, trails and treks, for families with or without a guide, on manche-tourism.com (Cruises and excursions section)
- and at the tourist offices (list page 50)
GET AWAY FROM IT ALL ON THE PATHS OF LA MANCHE

Everyone has their own way of rambling around the peninsula, getting to know the area, meeting new people and enjoying a change of scene, over hills and vales.
ne of the defining characteristics of the department of La Manche is its mosaic of landscapes. There are the beaches of fine sand, the granite cliffs, the hedged farmland, the marshes… This diversity means that anyone who wants to experience its greatest treasures has to take their time. Fortunately, the territory offers many paths and roads for exploring these landscapes: on foot, on horseback, by bike. Not forgetting the canoe that gives access to places that only the network of streams, rivers and waterways can reach.

When it comes to hiking, the most famous itinerary is the GR 223. Spanning 436 kilometres, it provides a way to explore the whole coastline of La Manche - in one go or in sections - from the Bay of Veys to Mont Saint-Michel. It goes via the Cotentin marshes, the Val de Saire, the balconies of Cherbourg, the cliffs of La Hague, the Côte des Havres, and the Coutances hedged farmland (Coutances area), before continuing towards Granville and the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel.

Covering many kilometres, the GR 223 follows the customs path that was once used to survey the coasts and fight smuggling with the Channel Islands.

To take a break from the hectic pace of everyday life, it feels good to enjoy the invigorating fresh air and authentic landscapes of La Manche, following its itineraries for hikes and all kinds of sightseeing.

ON FOOT

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Covering many kilometres, the GR 223 follows the customs path that was once used to survey the coasts and fight smuggling with the Channel Islands. Yet at times it also ventures inland, where visitors can find accommodation and refreshments along the way. Inherited from centuries of pilgrimage to Mont Saint-Michel, the Saint-Michel Paths form a network of two itineraries through La Manche: the Cherbourg paths and the Barfleur paths. The first (202 kilometres, nine stages) goes from Cherbourg to the Côte des Havres, Coutances and its cathedral, and leads to the Mont and its bay. The second (192 kilometres, eight stages) starts from Barfleur, crosses the Cotentin and Bessin Marshland Regional Nature Park, and also goes via Coutances before heading towards the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel.

ON HORSEBACK

La Manche is horse-breeding country and has many great itineraries for riders to enjoy. Between Cerisy-la-Foret and Mont Saint-Michel, an equestrian adventure trail spanning 155 kilometres – The Abbeys Road – offers a variety of paths and landscapes to discover Norman religious art, and the Romanesque, Cistercian and Benedictine abbeys. This walk also includes the National Stud Farm of Saint-Lô, the Roches de Ham overlooking the Vire and a crossing of the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel.

The road is connected to the Voie Verte greenways, many local circuits and the “Bay of Mont Saint-Michel equestrian heritage” itinerary. This 148-kilometre horse ride goes via the coastline and inland for an exploration of some remarkable sites: the Vanlée harbour, the hollow paths of the hedged farmland, the Champeaux cliffs… Along the way, the riders and their steeds will come across the various abbeys, fortifications and monuments of the region.
Dragsey-Ronthon racehorse training centre, where tomorrow’s champions learn their trade.

BY BIKE

Among the wide array of options for cyclists, there are three main itineraries. Covering over 450 kilometres, the Véloscénic connects two of France’s most famous monuments: Notre-Dame-de-Paris and Mont Saint-Michel. The journey between these two sacred sites is divided into 25 stages (5 in La Manche) where visitors can see many fine examples of the nation’s heritage. The other cycle route combines the charms of South-West England, North Brittany and La Manche, areas that have a great deal in common. This is the Tour de Manche, covering 1,200 kilometres with 50 stages (15 in La Manche). Cyclists have to take cross-channel ferries to reach Dorset and Devon. And because the history and heritage of La Manche provide plenty of ideas for outings, cycling fans can set off on the Véloroute cycle path from the D-Day Beaches to Mont Saint-Michel. This trail is 250 kilometres long and has 10 stages on which to explore Normandy’s natural, historical and cultural heritage.

The Tatihou - Mont Saint-Michel mountain bike trail, with its 285 kilometres and 5 stages, offers an immersion in the diversity of the territory. It combines sporting sensations with heritage sightseeing by crossing La Manche from north to south, from Val de Saire to the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel. Follow this itinerary to admire the Normandy coasts, cross the marshes of Sangsnière and Adrienniere, set off across the hedged farmland, take the submersible road from La Vanlée harbour among the sheep of the salt marshes, and get away from it all on Tatihou island and the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel. Along the way, you should also take the time to stop and visit the varied and numerous buildings, viewpoints and museums.

So, are you ready to go?

Find all the information, maps and practical guides for the great hiking itineraries on manche-tourism.com (Walks, rambles and rides section)

The tourist offices in La Manche (see list p. 50) offer practical guides for families to enjoy local walks, cycle rides and horse rides.

GET AWAY FROM IT ALL
ON THE PATHS OF LA MANCHE

A geologist with a DESS qualification in the Environment, Arnaud Guérin became a professional photographer in order to build a bridge between science and the general public. Telling the story of Earth and nature is what drives him. arnaudguerin.com

“In all around the world there are legendary paths: Milford track in New Zealand, Laugavegur in Iceland, the Tour du Mont Blanc in France, Italy and Switzerland… Our customs path is one of those. This coastal circuit where we all have a favourite section is actually an awesome trekking itinerary, around 400 kilometres long with a change in altitude of around 7,000 metres, that connects the D-Day Beaches to Mont Saint-Michel no less, via the Val de Saire, La Hague and the Côte des Isles. Along the way, being the trekker that I am, I go from one marvel to another, collecting gems during the course of my journey. At the end of the trip, the resulting necklace is one of the most beautiful adornments that you could possibly offer inquisitive travellers who love sustainable, local tourism. So put on your boots and set off on the path of marvels.”

In the eyes of... ARNAUD GUÉRIN
OF STONES AND CULTURE

The immeasurable heritage of La Manche transcends time and passing fads, engraved in the stones as if in the genes of all those who care enough to share it.
OF STONES AND CULTURE

La Manche takes care of its architectural gems just as it takes care to preserve its landscapes and pass on its skills and traditions, the cornerstones of its identity and a remarkable legacy to share.

La Manche’s heritage has earned it many certifications, including the status of UNESCO World Heritage Site. First, Mont Saint-Michel and its bay were added to this list in 1979. In 2008, the Tours Vauban at La Hougue and Tatihou were listed among twelve fortifications built by the military architect Vauban (17th century). In November 2016, Granville carnival was added to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list. A popular celebration organised around Shrove Tuesday – with parades, a confetti battle and intrigues – it has run for over 140 years. The first carnivals were held to give the sailors a few carefree hours before heading off to fish for cod on the Banks of Newfoundland.

NATURAL HERITAGE
The sea, hedged farmland and marshes are the main components of La Manche’s landscape, and the area is particularly committed to preserving its environment. In fact, 26 “Sensitive Natural Areas” offer guided tours, as do many remarkable natural sites. As well as these sites, there are two regional nature parks: the Cotentin and Bassin Marshland Regional Nature Park, a vast area of marshes and hedged farmland that is home to exceptional flora and fauna and can be visited all year round, and the Normandie-Maine Regional Nature Park, an ideal place for outings and relaxation in the craggy vales of the Mortainais.

SKILLS AND TRADITIONS
The local craftspeople have no need of advertising. Thousands of visitors flock to see them every year, for example visiting the bell foundry at Villedieu-les-Poêles, which also built its reputation on copperwork. Villedieu has earned the Ville et Métiers d’Art label.

The La Manche peninsula has plenty to appeal to architecture enthusiasts, too. The territory has been shaped by the monuments that testify to its devotion to religion in the Middle Ages. This era was also the time when conquerors, like the sons of Tancred who became the kings of Sicily, opened Normandy up to Eastern inspirations, which has since become intertwined with Norman art. This is also the origin of the leopards.
OF STONES AND CULTURES

CERTIFIED LANDS OF ART AND HISTORY

La Manche contains two areas that are certified Pays d'art et d'histoire (Lands of art and history). In the Coutances area, there are many treasures that provide evidence of the local area’s rich history.

The buildings in particular: Coutances cathedral, the lime kilns of Regnéville-sur-Mer, Gratot castle and Pirou castle, the abbeys of Hambye and Lessay, the manor farms... You should also be sure to explore the Clos du Cotentin, further north.

This land includes three remarkable settlements: the old Gaulish village of Alauna that is now Valognes, the fiefdom of the 17th-century aristocracy who built many mansions there, Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, birthplace of the writer Jules Barbey d’Aurevilly, and Bricquebec, which boasts three castles and the Abbey of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, whose community of Cistercian monks makes the famous Trappe de Bricquebec cheese.

So, are you ready to go?

Find all the information about UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and certified Pays d’art et d’histoire and Ville et métiers d’art, on manche-tourism.com

(Places to visit section)

The Regional Nature Parks offer places to enjoy sightseeing and many different activities in the Maisons du Parc visitor centres:

Maison du Parc de la Côte des Havres and La Pernelle in Val-de-Saire
parc-naturel-normandie-maine.fr

Maison du Parc Cotentin-Bessin Marshlands in Saint-Côme-du-Mont
parc-cotentin-bessin.fr/

A list of nature outings and visitor centres is available on manche-tourism.com

(Places to visit section)
**Thalassotherapy**
Get together in a pampering bubble, just the two of you at a spa in La Manche, and treat yourselves to some relaxing moments by the sea.
For all your relaxation, fitness and pampering needs, there are many spas and wellness centres offering saunas, hammams, swimming pools, hot tubs... you just need to pick one!

previthal.com
manche-tourism.com/wellbeing-normandy

**Cookery workshops**
Working in a small team at a hands-on workshop, learn to cook like a chef! Find out the tips and tricks that make all the difference, and learn a special recipe by a top chef from La Manche or a traditional recipe from Cotentin during your stay in La Manche.

la-ferme-des-mares.com
wildekitchen.net
ateliersdecuisine-yannickleflot.fr

**Discover the caves of Jobourg**
Standing 130 metres tall, the Nez de Jobourg towers over the jagged coasts of La Hague opposite the Channel Islands. With experienced guides, venture into the secret caves on the trail of the smugglers who used to haunt these secluded natural hiding places.

exspen.com
aladecouvertedelahague.fr

**Perfect your swing**
Golfers will find courses in La Manche located between land and sea, with great technical challenges and amazing viewpoints guaranteed! Granville has one of the region’s most highly prized golf courses. The 27 holes on gently rolling ground amid the wild sand dunes make it one of France’s most famous links.

manche-tourism.com/golf-normandy

**LA MANCHE for families**

La Cité de la Mer
in Cherbourg-en-Cotentin
Here you can visit the submarine Le Redoutable, get close to the famous submarine exploration craft and an extraordinary abyssal aquarium, walk under the sea or relive the Titanic’s crossing!

citedelamer.com

Fun for all at “Famille Plus” resorts
Three seaside resorts, Agon-Coutainville, Barneville-Carteret and Hauteville-sur-Mer, and one countryside resort, Saint-Hilaire-du-Harcouët, have been awarded the “Famille Plus” label. They offer a range of facilities and activities for children and grown-ups alike: handicraft workshops, marble contests, police investigations, and introductions to sand yachting, skateboard and many more!

manche-tourism.com/family-plus-label
See the list of tourist offices on page 50

citedelamer.com

Adventure for all the family
Looking for fun activities to share with the family? Discover the many leisure parks in La Manche: zoos and animal parks to meet wildlife, as well as treetop rope courses, ziplines, laser tag, etc. for the greatest adventurers!

manche-tourism.com/families-in-normandy

On foot, by bike, by canoe...
At your own pace, on foot, by bike and by canoe, discover our selection of walks all over La Manche. Choose your circuit depending on your mode of transport, timing, distance and level of difficulty, then set off in total freedom.

Route guides available at the tourist offices. See the list of tourist offices page 50

**LA MANCHE for couples**

**The château lifestyle**
Feel like a getaway just for two? Experience “the château lifestyle” for a weekend in one of the many manors, castles and charming period houses in La Manche.

gites-de-france-manche.com/locations-de-vacances-d-exception.html

**Cookery workshops**
Working in a small team at a hands-on workshop, learn to cook like a chef! Find out the tips and tricks that make all the difference, and learn a special recipe by a top chef from La Manche or a traditional recipe from Cotentin during your stay in La Manche.

la-ferme-des-mares.com
wildekitchen.net
ateliersdecuisine-yannickleflot.fr

**Perfect your swing**
Golfers will find courses in La Manche located between land and sea, with great technical challenges and amazing viewpoints guaranteed! Granville has one of the region’s most highly prized golf courses. The 27 holes on gently rolling ground amid the wild sand dunes make it one of France’s most famous links.

manche-tourism.com/golf-normandy

**Discover the caves of Jobourg**
Standing 130 metres tall, the Nez de Jobourg towers over the jagged coasts of La Hague opposite the Channel Islands. With experienced guides, venture into the secret caves on the trail of the smugglers who used to haunt these secluded natural hiding places.

exspen.com
aladecouvertedelahague.fr
In La Manche the weather is changeable - and that’s one thing that will never change! How could it be otherwise, since the Cotentin peninsula has three particularities, or you might say three qualities. A narrow outline, the sea all around and tides that chase away the clouds... well, sometimes. It’s Mother Nature who decides, and that’s what makes the place so charming.

Here, three white mantles make for a peaceful winter. From one end of the department to the other, the frosty mornings make the rolling countryside look magical, sparkling in the gentle rays of the rising sun. At the centre of the territory, the immense Cotentin and Bessin Marshland Regional Nature Park is filled with fertile water. This natural phenomenon called “white marshes” makes the landscape look like a mirror that stretches as far as the eye can see, reflecting the polar blue of the winter sky and thousands of migrant birds. If by chance, the first season of the year decides to be generous, snow may even fall on the coastline. The spectacle of the snow covering the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel is simply magical. Of course, as the locals say, “fait pas chaud!” (“it’s not warm!”), but never mind. If you don your pea coat or a reefer jacket made in La Manche, you’ll be ready to face the sea spray and enjoy the exceptional light in January. It’s no surprise that the area attracts photographers, who fall in love with Cotentin’s naturally photogenic scenery.

To provide some fireworks and fanfare, and because La Manche loves to celebrate the seasons in its own way, a
A PENINSULA FOR ALL FOUR SEASONS

festival full of colour and human warmth comes to break up the whiteness of winter, the Granville carnival. And because the sky likes to have fun too, it sometimes provides unusually sunny days for the thousands of carnival-goers.

SPRING

Spring first makes an appearance along the wayside and in the middle of the fields. The primroses and golden daffodils are the first to come and warm up the cold land, even though a few spring frosts may still be in waiting. April brings the delicate apple blossom into bloom. The marshes around Carentan have turned greener than ever. Up at Vauville, the tropical-looking flora defies the clichés. At sea, the whelk harvest replaces the sea bass fishing campaign. Carrots from Créances, mange-tout peas, cress and shallots appear on the market stalls. The spring tides invite rockpoolers to their favourite playground. If you are amazed by the sight of the sea disappearing into the distance, you are sure to enjoy gathering prawns and hunting for cockles and clams. But watch out! To make the most of the day and come back “tired and happy” with a bucketful of treasure, it’s best to be accompanied by a local who knows all about the rising tide.

When the clocks go forward in the summer, the days are longer for night owls and a walk to the Pointe d’Agon seems very appealing. Sometimes a squall, as unexpected as it is short, brings out the yellow sou’westers, like bouquets of sunshine dotted about the sand. Make sure you bring some rainwear options in your bags and baskets. Long sleeves and short sleeves, sandals and Wellington boots.

SUMMER

In Granville and Barneville-Carteret, wise skippers take advantage of the winter to restore their boats. They will set off again with the wind in their sails, as soon as the first sun rays shine, towards the Chausey archipelago and the Channel Islands. The scent of summer, and the famous mussels and chips from Blainville and Barfleur, fills the air. The mercury can rise as high as thirty degrees. Really! You just have to come and see it to believe it. Visitors flock to the seafront terraces and sun loungers, bathers wait for high tide, and beach volleyball players have plenty of room to knock the ball about. Further along, on the wet sand, impromptu pétanque games take place, undisturbed by the sand yachts rushing by. Tatihou island gets ready to welcome world musicians for an audience of spectators and walkers, while further south, pilgrims from all over the world cross other shores.

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La Manche is a discreet region. Yet when we look more closely, we realise that its edible treasures form the basis of gastronomy all over the world.
#Dairy Products

Raw milk plays a major role in gastronomy. It gives us butter, cream, and cheese! A world of flavours, in other words. This milk, which is natural as it has not undergone any heat treatment, is therefore much creamier and is a flavour enhancer for our favourite recipes. Conveniently, La Manche meets all the conditions to produce excellent milk: a wild territory made up of fields and farmlands and a mild, humid climate - it’s the ideal place for it. Thus our butters and creams are acclaimed for their quality among chefs all around the world.

#Salt Marsh Lamb

Another example? Try salt marsh lamb from La Manche! Its aromatic, fragrant flavour is obtained by the lambs frolicking for three months on our coastal pastures, which are covered by the spring tides once or twice a month. For the lamb will travel for many kilometres along our coasts, which influences the subtle taste of its flesh. Its meat is enough in itself to cook it, forget about garlic and thyme and just add fleur de sel; for the salt marsh lamb from La Manche should be enjoyed as a simple dish.

*Excessive alcohol consumption is bad for your health. Enjoy responsibly.*

#Apples & Cider

Looking for a delicious drink to accompany our local specialities? Indulge in our ciders* and apple juices, which go wonderfully with dishes such as seafood and cheese from La Manche. These are Normandy’s trademark beverages, and owe their authentic flavour to the quality of the apples from our orchards and their natural, artisanal production methods. The skills have been passed on down the generations, since local varieties are used to make these quality products. So it’s no surprise that our still and unpasteurised ciders* earned the Controlled Designation of Origin (AOC) last June, under the name “Cidre Cotentin”.

#Seafood

Can you imagine a party without oysters? A summer without a plate of mussels and chips? All over France and the world, our oysters are known for their flavour and quality, to the point that some oyster farms in France rear oysters from our region in their oyster tanks. Our mussels, whether they are wild from Barfleur or farmed on ropes (bouchot), are not to be outdone. What makes this flavour so special? The richness of our coasts, which are brimming with plankton! They are farmed at sea and pummelled by the strong tides, the strongest in Europe, which gives them their incomparable taste!
Souvenirs made in LA MANCHE

Are you on holiday and want to bring back a little souvenir, a local speciality or a typical product from Normandy? We’ve selected 10 ideas for products “Made in La Manche”.

Discover great contemporary gift ideas, created in La Manche!

Give them as a gift or bring them home to make your holiday in Normandy last a bit longer!

Seafood rillettes
L’Atelier du Poissonnier
Agon-Coutainville
Rillettes, terrines, soups… Excellent products in attractive jars! A little souvenir from La Manche to delight the taste buds. L’Atelier du Poissonnier also offers gift sets. Buy them directly at the Atelier du Poissonnier in Agon-Coutainville. atelierdupoissonnier.com

Infusions and teas
La Cotentine Moderne
Saint-Germain-sur-Ây
La Cotentine Moderne is the story of a born again country woman who decided to leave the rat race in order to farm salt marsh lambs in Saint-Germain-sur-Ây harbour. Not content with saving an old local breed of sheep, she has also created teas and herbal teas with delicious aromas from our coasts. Bring some of La Manche’s fresh air back with you and make your holiday last a bit longer while sampling her infusions!
lacotentinemoderne.fr

Biscuits
La Maison du biscuit - Sortosville-en-Beaumont
Artisan-made. Established in 1903, Burnouf sells pure butter biscuits… A real treat! There’s something for every taste: financiers, cookies, doigts de dames, congolos, rochers coco, brownies, amandines, sables diamants. Why not try the tasting assortment, which includes 8 house specialties. maisondubiscuit.fr

“Le p’tit zef” aperitif
Cidres Lemasson
Cametours
Le p’tit zef “is a punch-style aperitif. A subtle blend of calvados AOC®, orange juice and cane syrup. Not too sweet and not too sour, this aperitif is mainly made from organic ingredients”. cidre-lemasson.fr

Craft beer
La Croix des grèves
Courtis
Trained at the French Institute of Brewing and Malting, Christophe prepares a wide range of beers*, each one more characterful than the one before it. The brewery is open to beer enthusiasts, who can visit and taste a few varieties of the world’s oldest fermented drink.
brasseriedelasbaie.com

Milk jam
Lait Douceur de Normandie
Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte
Invented and made in Cherbourg. Quality, security and authenticity are the best words to describe this wonderful gift! Sport Auto, Windproof, Milady… The range is extensive. Just pick the model that suits you best.
parapluiedecherbourg.com

AOC Cotentin cider
The producers of Cidre Cotentin* are committed to preserving their terroir and expertise, resulting in a quality product. Its character and flavour balance are mainly obtained from a selection of local varieties. 100% pure juice and naturally sparkling, Cidre Cotentin* is not pasteurised. This cider stands out from the crowd - it is full bodied and its bitter, tangy notes prevail over the sweet ones. Cider Cotentin* also comes in an extra-dry version called Extra Brut.
cidrecotentin.fr

A Manche Box
The gift “made in Normandy”
6 box sets to discover, ranging from £29 to 159: a cruise to the islands, a microlight flight, a night in a tepee, a relaxation session at a spa, or dinner for 2… over 200 ideas for breaks or activities in La Manche, to give as a gift or treat yourself!

*Excessive alcohol consumption is bad for your health. Enjoy responsibly.
EVENTS IN 2017: LONG LIVE LA MANCHE!

Information up-to-date on 15 December 2016 with information supplied by the event organisers.

ALL YEAR ROUND

FAIRS AND MARKETS, A TRADITION IN LA MANCHE

La Manche has over 200 traditional fairs and markets. Six fairs, some of which are apparently a thousand years old, attract thousands of visitors every year. Each week, many towns have their own markets. On the menu: treats for the taste buds, meetings with local producers and a friendly atmosphere!

The towns of Saint-Lô and Cherbourg-en-Cotentin host the biggest markets on Saturdays with over 150 stalls.

manche-tourism.com/markets-normandy

MUSEE DIOR GRANVILLE

musee-dior-granville.com

GRANVILLE - CHILDHOOD HOME

The house was founded. marking 70 years since his fashion work of the great fashion designer, from 8 April to 24 September 2017

AND HAUTE COUTURE "GRANVILLE - CHILDHOOD HOME"

GRANVILLE - CHILDHOOD HOME

APRIL

FÉVRIER

GRANVILLE CARNIVAL

From 24 to 28 February 2017

There has been a carnival in Granville every year for 143 years! This Norman institution is now on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list.

carnavaldegranville.fr

MAY

JAZZ SOUS LES POMMIERS

Coutances

From 20 to 27 May 2017

Every year in Coutances, the festival puts on "jazz for a diverse audience" (jazz, blues, soul, funk, latino-jazz, electro, gospel, klezmer, swing, etc.).

jazzsouslespommiers.com

BAY OF MONT SAINT-MICHEL MARATHON

From 26 to 28 May 2017

An awe-inspiring natural setting in the bay, amazing routes and the exceptional site of Mont Saint-Michel as the final destination. In 2017, there will be a solo and duo marathon, a trail race, a half-marathon, a 10 km race, etc.

marathondumontsaintmichel.com/fr

JUNE

FESTIVAL PAPILLONS DE NUIT #17

Saint-Laurent-de-Cuves

From 2 to 4 June 2017

P2N is a festival that celebrates all styles of music for a varied audience during three days of festivities.

papillonsdenuit.com

73e ANNIVERSARY OF THE D-DAY LANDINGS

Around 6 June 2017

Each year, the Liberation is commemorated with a series of ceremonies, reconstructions of American military camps, historic marches, militia markets, historic parachute drops, exhibitions and military vehicle parades.

ot-baieducotentin.fr/d-day-1944/73e-anniversaire-du-debarquement-programme-juin-2017

JULY

SORTIES DE BAIN

STREET ARTS FESTIVAL

Granville

From 6 to 9 July 2017

The street arts festival starts the season in Granville with over 50 live performances.

sortiesdebain.com

archipel-granville.com

AUGUST

JAZZ EN BAIE FESTIVAL

From 2 to 13 August 2017

A jazz and improvised music gathering, the Jazz en Baie festival is an event that combines tourism, music and heritage.

culture.manche.fr

NORMANDIE HORSE SHOW

Saint-Lô

From 4 to 13 August 2017

The year’s big equestrian event. Sport, horse-breeding and shows, with free admission. A great day out for the whole family.

normandiehorseshow.com

STAGE OF THE TOUR DE FRANCE À LA VOILE

Jullouville - 13 and 14 July 2017

Jullouville is hosting a stage of this sailing race for the first time, with a coastal raid in the bay of the Mont which everyone will be able to see from the beaches and promontories.

tourville.fr

LES HEURES MUSICALES FESTIVAL AT LESSAY ABBEY

From 18 July to 18 August 2017

For twenty-three years, Les Heures Musicales has been putting on the world’s leading Baroque ensembles, in the enchanting setting of the Romanesque Lessay Abbey.

heuresmusicalesdlessay.com

BARNEVILLE-CARTERET GLISS’ FESTIVAL - 22 and 23 July 2017

Founded two years ago, this board sports festival lasts two days and draws around 20,000 festival-goers from all over La Manche and the whole of western France, to watch shows and take part in demonstrations all free of charge!

bcglissfestival.com

SEPTMBER

SAINTE CROIX THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD FAIR

Lessay - From 8 to 10 September 2017

Normandy’s biggest fair. A “thousand-year-old” institution with its traditional horse sales, markets, agricultural equipment and roast meat stands...

“You’ll find it all here!”

canton-lessay.com

NOVEMBER

LES RENDEZ-VOUS SONIQUES FESTIVAL

Saint-Lô - From 8 to 12 November 2017

The autumn festival of Les Rendez-Vous Soniques offers a challenging, eclectic line-up featuring big names, new discoveries and up-and-coming local talents.

lesrendezvoussoniques.com

FÊTE DE LA PECHE À PIED

Bay of Mont Saint-Michel

30 September and 1 October 2017

A big, educational popular celebration of local trades and seafood, and the gastronomic treasures of the area.

ouestnormandie.cci.fr

MANGE TA SOUPE ! FESTIVAL

Carentan

From 20 to 22 October 2017

A multi-disciplinary festival about the environment, health, solidarity, sociability and eco-awareness.

mangetasoupe.eu

OCTOBER

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mangetasoupe.eu

EVENTS IN 2017: LONG LIVE LA MANCHE!

Discover traditional rockpooling in the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel, with activities and rockpooling outings for the whole family.

patrimoine.manche.fr
LA MANCHE
IN A NUTSHELI

POPULATION
Manchs or Manchais? You choose!
517,998 inhabitants (2012) (i.e. 84 inhab. per km²)

cherbourg-en-Cotentin
81,000
Saint-Lô (prefecture)
20,000
Granville
13,100
Coutances
9,000
Avranches
8,600
(source: INSEE 2013)

GEOGRAPHY
La Manche is the westernmost department of the Normandy region. To the south, La Manche adjoins Brittany with Ille-et-Villéaine, and the Pays de la Loire with Mayenne. The department is essentially made up of the Cotentin peninsula to the north, as well as part of Normandy's hedged farmland. It forms the eastern part of the Armorican massif except for the Carentan marshes, which are part of the Parisian basin, as is most of the west and centre of Normandy. Nearly three times longer than it is wide, the department stretches for 138 km from north to south and 59 km from east to west.

Surface area: 5,938 km²
360 km of coasts
Islands: Mont Saint-Michel, Tombelaine, Chausey, Tatihou, Saint-Marcouf and Île Pelée.

THE CHANELL ISLANDS

EXCURSIONS TO THE ISLANDS

Car-free crossings on “Joly France I”, “Joly France II” and “Douce France”. The company runs a year-round service. Sea cruises and trips around the island. In July, a new Chausey-Jersey line will be opening. Booking required.

TO STAY IN

Find a place to stay in La Manche
Plan your seaside or country holiday in La Manche by selecting and booking your rental, hotel, B&B, campsite, holiday village or unusual accommodation at manche-tourisme.com

TO ENGLAND

Crossings to the Channel Islands of Jersey, Guernsey, Aurigny and Sark, departing from ports in Cherbourg-Octeville and Barneville-Carteret.

TO IRELAND

The ferry company offers a choice of transfers to Aurigny on a one-way or return trip basis. Crossings to Guernsey available on request.

LA MANCHE: GRANVILLE, Barneville-Carteret and Décélette.

TO ENGLAND & IRELAND

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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The cabins at Gouville-sur-Mer

La Manche
NORMANDY PENINSULA

THE MONT AND ITS MARVELS
D-DAY, MEMORY AND EMOTION
THE PROMISES OF THE COASTLINE
OF STONES AND CULTURE
LA MANCHE FOR COUPLES AND FAMILIES

manche-tourism.com