

Le Havre

Le Havre is a port city at the mouth of the Seine, on the English Channel or in French "la manche".

Le Havre is French for "the harbour". Historically, Le Havre has always been the harbour for Paris, with goods transferring there between ocean-going vessels and barges that go to Paris via the Seine.

Le Havre was heavily bombed during the Battle of Normandy. The reconstruction of the town was undertaken by August Perret using reinforced concrete. This project has led to the city being added to the [UNESCO World Heritage List](#).

Get in

- Trains run to/from Paris regularly, taking about 2 hours: most stop at Rouen en route. TGV to/from Marseille once a day.
- Ferries run to Portsmouth and Newhaven in southern England daily. This service is provided by LD lines. <http://www.ldlines.com/>
- Airport, Le Havre has a small airport with services running to Lyon, Amsterdam and Brighton. You can make many connections for European destinations in Lyon and more than 200 all over the world via Amsterdam

Get around

The centre of town is easily covered on foot. A local bus service runs regularly around town. The ferry port and train station are a short walk out from the centre of town and buses run on these routes. Rent a bike for a few euros at the tourist office or at the bus parked along the beach during the season.

See

- **St Joseph's Church** was a key project designed by August Perret in the rebuilding of the city. Its tall tower is lined with colored glass lending the interior a unique tranquility.
- **Hotel de Ville** (*Town Hall*) is situated on one of the largest squares in France. The interior has information on the city. It is possible to climb the tower for view of the lay out of the city.

- **Showflat**, designed by city designer August Perret, is now open for public viewing.
- **Malraux Museum**, houses the largest Impressionist collection in France outside of Paris.
- **Cultural Centre** (the Volcano) designed by leading architect Oscar Neimeyer is located in the centre of town.
- **Maison de l'Armateur** (opposite the ferries) One of the few old houses, which were not destroyed during World War II! A magnificent house of 5 floors, nicely decorated and furnished in the style of its construction (18th century), when it belonged to rich families. A very interesting visit especially if you also visit Auguste Perret's showflat in City Hall Square showing what was life was like in the 50's ... You will understand the complex history of the city ...
- **Museum d'histoire naturelle** ... in an old building which miraculously survived the terrible bombings on September 5th, 1944. Interesting museum (free!) a lot of activities for children!
- Near it, **Cathédrale Notre Dame**. Visit it and walk around it. You'll get a striking contrast between the 15th century cathedral and the buildings constructed in the 50's and 60's around it. The foundations of the cathedral are lower than the other buildings because they were built on the ruins of the old town ! (
- **The view of the port** (*bassin du commerce*) with its lovely bridge and both the Volcano and steeple of St Joseph's church in the background. Nice both in the day or at night. On the north quay ... the Casino (gambling, fine restaurants, hotel, spa !)
- **St Vincent district** is an old district near the beach, which didn't suffer too much from the terrible bombings that flattened the city in 1944. 5,000 people died in the ruins in a few hours). The little church and the square around it evoke a village atmosphere in southern France. Every month, during the season, some painters gather on the square and give an impression of "Montmartre".
- Every year on the **first Sunday** after August 15th a traditional parade is organized in the city. Flowered carriages, people in costumes, floral floats, music, etc.
- Every second year (the first one took place in 2006), Le Havre is home to a **Contemporary Art Exhibition** in the casino and everywhere in the streets of the city centre.
- Every year on the first weekend of September Le Havre holds a "**Fishermen's Festival**"
- In May is "**Fest Yves**" a traditional festival from Brittany in quartier St François.
- Every July 14th, traditional fireworks on the beach (at 11pm).

Do

- Climb the tower of **Hotel de Ville** for an overview of August Perret's planned city. Beautiful!
- **Enjoy the beach** in good weather (restaurants, bars, night life)
- Relax in the glow of the unique **St Joseph's Church**
- **Drive over the River Seine** on the gorgeous bridge "Pont de Normandie" Then you will be in Honfleur, one of Normandy's prettiest places.

- **Enjoy a walk** in the posh residential area of Ste Adresse overlooking the Le Havre bay and enjoy nice views of the bay and the city
- **Visit the port** (whether on a boat or by bike: more information in many languages from the tourist office situated along the beach)
- **Rent a bike** at the tourist office for a couple of euros and enjoy the seafront and the city centre at its best. You can also ride to Harfleur (eastern suburb), which is a lovely medieval town! Montivilliers, a few miles away is also worth a visit. Nice abbey and town center.
- After the beach, enjoy a forest in the middle of the city "**forêt de Montgeon**"
- **Les jardins suspendus** (fort de Sainte Adresse). Lovely walled garden and greenhouse in an old fort overlooking the city and the sea. Nice views! A nice walk on the walls!

Buy

- Normandy is famous for its **cider** and its **cheese**. Go to "Les Halles" (south of the city centre near pedestrian area and Volcano) A covered market where you will find a selection of little shops selling excellent products (vegetables, cheese, meat, bakeries, wine, cider ... and a small supermarket)
- You can buy **local products** in one of the seasonal sheds along the beach and at the tourist office
- **Chocolates** "la tour" (the tower) Chocolaterie Auzou (near Espace Coty - Coty Mall)
- **Fresh fish** from the fishermen (fish market) Opposite the ferry, in front of "maison de l'armateur" on "quai de l'île" (island quay)

Eat

- **Quartier St-François** offers a great selection of different restaurants (style, nationality and prices). A lot of "crêperies" (French pancakes).
- A selection of fine restaurants is to be found everywhere in the city (**The casino** is one of the best "Le Havre des sens"). More information at the tourist office
- **Big typical market** every Thursday morning in Montivilliers and in Harfleur every Sunday morning

Drink

- Quartier St-François is also home to several bars
- In the city centre ... and the beach.

Sleep

Cheap and nice B&B under brown beams. Phone: (00 33) (0)2 76 89 31 65 leave message and number if no answer.

All sorts of hotels are to be found like in an other French big city. The cheapest are outside the city - Formule 1 in Gonfreville l'orcher - B&B hotel in Harfleur - Etap Hotel in Le Havre (quartier de l'Eure)

3 or 4 stars hotels - The Casino (4 stars with nice spa) - Vent d'Ouest (opposite St Joseph's church) - Les voiles (near Ste Adresse - the beach) - Novotel (the station) - Mercure (between the station and the city center overlooking "bassin du commerce") - Art Hotel (opposite the Volcano in the pedestrian area)

Many other affordable hotels around the station

Get out

Ideally situated in Normandy, you can reach from Le Havre any part of the region in any direction in less than two hours including the famous Mont Saint-Michel

TO THE NORTH:

- **Etretat** and its exceptional natural site (beautiful white cliffs) 25km to the North
- **Fecamp** and its "Bénédictine Palace" where the famous liquor is made. It is also a nice little town with a long beach and a little port. (40km)
- **Veules les Roses**. Charming village along the shortest river in France. Lovely houses and a nice beach (65km)
- **Dieppe**, an important fishing port and a lovely seaside resort (100km)

TO THE SOUTH OR WEST

- The little 17th century harbor of **Honfleur** (25 km south)
- **Beuvron en Auge** lovely picturesque village (35km)
- **Lisieux**: cathedral and basilica (55km to the south)
- **Caen** and its WWII memorial (90km to the West)
- **Bayeux** and its medieval tapestry (115km to the West) Near it ... the famous landing beaches.

TO THE EAST

- **Harfleur and Montivilliers** (eastern suburb of Le Havre)
- **Marais Vernier** (village of thatched cottages) a few km south of "Tancarville bridge"
- **Pont Audemer** 50km Nice little town with canals

For more info see: www.wikipedia.org

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