



# BEST OF CÔTE D'OPALE





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# WELCOME TO CÔTE D'OPALE!

The Opal coast is the most northerly coast of France, and its name "Côte d'Opale" is already an invitation to contemplation. It isn't what you expect when you imagine the North and the Pas-de-Calais! And yet... The coastline offers diverse and wild landscapes, from the Belgian border to the coast of Picardy with its millenary dunes, its hinterland with green valleys in the Boulonnais and flat country in the maritime Flanders. A maritime territory, Côte d'Opale is renowned for its expanses of fine sand and its sea that changes color according to the seasons and daylight. The main spots of this coast, and the most spectacular ones, are the capes Gris-Nez and Blanc-Nez. It is impossible to remain insensitive to the views they offer, regardless of the weather conditions. There will always be beauty to capture in Côte d'Opale, and although you won't find warm weather you will surely find the locals warm and friendly. They will be very proud to tell you about their region and remind you of the sufferings this region went through during the Second World War, of which it still bears the stigma. The Opal coast continues to have an impact on French economy: Dunkirk is the 3rd largest merchant port in France, Boulogne the first fishing port and the largest seafood processing center. As for Calais, its port welcomes 10 million passengers every year! A nature destination, a cultural crossroads, an area of innovation (Channel Tunnel), Côte d'Opale knows how to rely on its assets. Nausicaa is a perfect example. With the opening of its new basin in spring 2018, the aquarium has become the largest in Europe. Malo-les-Bains, the most beautiful beach in the North, has regained a second wind. Le Touquet, the historic "Paris-Plage", attracts even more curious tourists, due to the presidential villa! The beaches of Côte d'Opale are now holiday destinations, and each seaside resort is rich with particularities and is the starting point for invigorating walks and activities, some of which were born on the Côte d'Opale, such as running along the coast (to be tested absolutely!) or kitesurfing for those who love thrills. The coast is also a territory of feelings. The feeling we sometimes have when we say we have not taken enough time to discover the Côte d'Opale, whose name given in the 20th century by painter Édouard Lévêque, has never been challenged because it is so well deserved. Around a good beer and a good local cheese, we promise that if it is your first visit, it will certainly not be the last!



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## THE ENGLISH CHANNEL

Côte d'Opale







*Le Touquet-Paris-Plage.*

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# DISCOVER CÔTE D'OPALE AND THE BAY OF THE SOMME





*Wissant beach and its visitors.*



*Beach cabins in Dunkerque.*



*"Statue Suger", representing the abbot Suger (1081-1151) in front of the ruins of the benedictine abbey of Saint-Bertin, in Saint-Omer.*



*Boulogne-sur-Mer city centre.*

# MUST-SEES

## Belfries, World Heritage sites

► **The two Dunkirk belfries.** Dunkirk is the only city in France to have two belfries classified as UNESCO World Heritage. The Saint-Eloi belfry and the city hall belfry. The first, built in 1440 to serve as a steeple at the church dedicated to Saint Eloi, is a massive square tower of a height of 58 meters. It houses a carillon of 50 bells, whose great bell, called Jean-Bart, weighs 7 tons. The second, that of the city hall, was built by the architect Louis-Marie Cordonnier (1901) and culminates at 75 meters. A large stained glass window, representing the triumphant return of the corsary Jean Bart after his victory at the Battle of Texel (1694), illuminates the inner base of the tower.

► **The Bergues belfry.** The Bergues' belfry... a whole story on its own! Successfully destroyed by a fire (May 30, 1940) and dynamited (September 16, 1944) by the Germans, it was reconstructed identically in 1961. Now, it houses the carillon or the tourist office, it stands on the grand-place and wisely waits for visitors to want to confront its 193 steps to better discover the panorama. Classified in 2004 as a world heritage of Unesco, it is one of the pride of the city. A carillon concert is given every Monday, market day.

► **The belfry of Gravelines.** 27 meters high, the Gravelines belfry is located in the center of the citadel. Its particularity lies in the simplicity of its architecture with a lantern covered with slates as a unique decoration. Built in 1608, the belfry was renovated in the early 19th century and was beautifully decorated with wind vane in 1903.

► **The belfry of Aire-sur-la-Lys.** The belfry of Aire-sur-la-Lys is built in the 13th century and symbolizes the freedom of the civil power. Originally it was made of wood but following the fires of 1372 and 1405, it will be restored in bricks and stones in 1447 before collapsing in 1708. The architect Heroguel will build a second between 1717 and 1724 behind the city hall. Solid, this one goes through the times to join us today. Culminating at 45 meters high, it has a turret on the north side as well as a four quadrants carillon. The brave will have to climb 236 steps before reaching its peak!

► **The belfry of the Hôtel de Ville de Calais.** Classified as a world heritage site of UNESCO since 2005, the Belfry of the Calais town hall was renovated, a century after the first stone was laid. After repair or replacement of siding, roof and woodwork, stained glass windows and gilding of knights' statues, it is now open to the general public for the first time in its history. Enter, and take the elevator specially designed for visits and going up (by lift) to 75 meters high on the round path. A stunning view of the city, the harbor and the English coast await you.

► **The belfry of Boulogne-sur-Mer.** It is one of the oldest belfries in the region, having never been destroyed. The base dates from the end of the 12th century, the

middle part of 13th and the upper, in octagonal form, brings us back to the 17th century. At the beginning of the 13th century, this former dungeon of the first Comtal castle was handed over to the city's bourgeois who made it their belfry, a symbol of communal freedoms. It was classified in 2005 as a World Heritage of UNESCO.

► **The belfry of Hesdin.** Rebuilt between 1875 and 1879 thanks to a bequest of 12,000 francs from the son of the mayor at the time, the belfry of Hesdin was a square tower of three floors in which there were three superposed dungeons that now used as a municipal museum. The fourth floor is surmounted by a balustrade made for the path of guard. The same floor houses a two-ton bell above which the belfry summit completes the structure by a terrace and a dome that were once used to shelter the watcher.

## Fortified cities

Throughout the time exposed to invasions, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region inherited a military history still very present in the architecture of its cities. On the Opal Coast, several fortified cities offer bricks, stones, geometrical shapes and ramparts preserved over the centuries to passengers. The famous Vauban left an almost indelible footprint and continues to impress the history enthusiasts. All the cities once fortified did not keep their ramparts and several of them have dismantled their walls over the centuries. Nevertheless, some beads remain. Bergues, kept the entire fortified enclosure. The ramparts of Gravelines, built by the Count of Flanders Thierry d'Alsace and reinforced later by Vauban, are now admired on board a boat. Even further, the 3,400 meters of Montreuil-sur-Mer walls remained intact.

## Upscale seaside resorts

► **Le Touquet-Paris-Plage.** It is nicknamed the Pearl of Côte d'Opale, the North Arcachon or the Garden of the Channel. The reputation of the seaside resort Le Touquet-Paris-Plage is already well established and the golden years are for something. At that time, we lived the most beautiful years of the station. The most upper class (kings, presidents, maharajas and stars) had used to frequent its places, its casinos, its hotels, its hippodrome, golf and tennis, its beach, its forest... As a luxury and leisure destination par excellence, it is undeniably the flagship station of the Côte d'Opale. Memories of umbrellas, canoes and golden youth of the beautiful time are always floating in mind as immortal thing. The chic rue Saint-Jean and its first signs faithfully set up, its gourmet treats and beautiful boutiques confirm the Touquet's posh character. The year 2012 marked the centenary of the station, the opportunity to trace and celebrate its stunning ascension since its creation in 1912 thanks to the French Jean-Baptiste Daloz and the British John Whitley.



## Route 62

Along the route 62, several unmissable tourist sites await you, whether you are visiting for a weekend or intend to stay a while. On the whole, 16 partners, among which La Coupole, Centre Médiéval d'Azincourt, Rando-Rail, but also guesthouses, amusement parks, inns and hotels, historic centers and restaurants inviting you to discover the region at a reduced price: with the Benefits Card, you enjoy exclusive discounts. On route 62!

► **Information:** [www.route-62.fr](http://www.route-62.fr)

► **Hardelot.** It is an English, in love with France but especially owner of the Château d'Hardelot, who is at the origin of the seaside resort that we know today. We are at the beginning of the twentieth century and Sir John Whitley surrounds one of the best architects of the region, Louis Cordonnier, to build a hundred villas between forest and dune landscape. Despite the two world wars, some ancient villas stood proudly. Now, the seaside resort of Hardelot is successful between Le Touquet-Paris-Plage and Wimereux. Its sweetness of life, sports activities, beach and forest make it a popular destination.

► **Wimereux.** A chic seaside resort, located in the heart of the regional natural park of the Pas and Marais d'Opale, Wimereux was in the Belle Epoque the resort of Lille inhabitants and wealthy Parisians. You can still see on the seafont beautiful villas dating from the beginning of the century. Sports activities and numerous events, including the very cheerful mussel festival.

### Fishing villages

► **Wissant.** Nestled between Gray-Nez and Blanc-Nez, Wissant was, from antiquity to the beginning of the Renaissance, an important port of travellers and trade. Its maritime power weakened after to the benefit of Calais. Following a violent sand storm that destroyed the entire village in the 19th century, the plantation of beach grasses (perennial plants growing in sandy terrain) was decreed to protect the commune of another disaster. The economic activity of the time was the fishing on board a flobart, large paunchy barks, now lowered with tractors, which runs aground to the beach when the fishing is done. At the end of August, a party is even dedicated to it. With one of the most beautiful beaches of Europe, bathers and water sports fans are not left behind, even the sky is grey provided there is wind. The municipality enjoys international reputation for sea sports such as kayaking, speed sailing, but also SUP surfing and land sailing. Wissant benefits from the label Station Kid which shows its dynamism to welcome and entertain children. The village, with its traditional houses and more modern buildings, offers a soft living in the heart of nature. The wild beauty of the place and the luminosity, which the sky and the sea give it, have charmed and continue to charmed artists.

► **Audresselles.** Nicknamed North Brittany, Audresselles is the most typical of the fishing villages on the coast, also one of the most respectful of its traditions. A walk is enough to immerse yourself into the past. Traditional houses have been kept in good condition, and many are now home to restaurants, cottages or secondary homes.

Also, the flobart, the work tool of yesteryear, is still used by some local or is exposed in various points of the commune. In the heart of the village, the Fisherman's trail, punctuated with informative panels, tells the story of local fishing and the lives of these men and women who lived on this seafont for centuries.

► **Ambleteuse.** Located between Boulogne-sur-Mer and Calais, Ambleteuse is a small fishing village typical of Côte d'Opale. The houses of the early 20th century, nestled in trees or on the seafont, close the traditional fishermen's houses. Here, at the mouth of the Slack river, there's no vast stretch of sand but a beach of pebbles and rocks. This is the ideal playground for young (and less young) amateurs of the foreshore world. On the dam, there are no restaurants, or bars or shops. We come here mainly to relax and enjoy the calm and authenticity of the décor. In summer, it's still possible to taste ice-cream or to unwind with street vendors installed on the dam for the season. At the exit of the village; go to Boulogne, the Pointe aux Oies makes the fishermen happy, provided they know how to balance on the rocks!

### Nausicaa

■ **NAUSICAA – CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA MER** ★★★★★  
Boulevard Sainte-Beuve  
BOULOGNE-SUR-MER ☎ +33 3 21 30 98 98  
[www.nausicaa.fr](http://www.nausicaa.fr)



*Closed in January. On December 25th. Open every day from 9.30am to 6.30pm. Closed at 7.30pm in July and August. Check the website schedule of the nourissage of the various species. Adult: €19. Child (from 3 to 12 years old): €12.35. Student discount, seniors and billetterie Internet. Tourism label & Disability. Tour adapted to the disabled guests: €10.40. Children welcome. Guided tour (audioguide): €3.50. Catering facilities.*

2018 is the Nausicaa year! On May 19, the Centre National de la Mer invites you to an unforgettable sea trip. Now an exceptional 10,000 m<sup>3</sup> basin will take you to discover you to discover the high seas, its resources, its wonders and its fragilities. With this extension, Nausicaa acts more as an unmissable place for building awareness of the seas and oceans and their ecosystems. From beaches to sea beds, lagoons to submerged forests, the center tells one of the most beautiful and ancient stories of the planet. A moment to live, especially with children, who will love attractions such as animal feeds and shark dives.



## The Carnival of Dunkerque

### ■ CARNAVAL DE DUNKERQUE DUNKERQUE

*From beginning of January to mid-April.*

Unlike the image it portrays, the Carnaval de Dunkerque is not a joyful mess. On the contrary, there are codes and it is important to know how it works before into jumping into the big bath! We respect the lines, the musicians, and we sing. By the way, before going there, it's better to know the songs of the repertoire to enjoy ourselves with the Dunkirk inhabitants. You must also wear appropriate shoes to beat the pavement where the band passes. The Carnaval de Dunkerque cannot be explained, it is lived. And the Dunkirk inhabitants are happy to share their so friendly and warm tradition provided we respect the rules and values. Victim of its success, the Carnaval de Dunkerque is not, as some imagine, a disguised evening outdoor. This success renewed every year would find its origin in the 18th century when, on the eve of their departure in Iceland, fishermen gathered to celebrate, with this furious desire to entertain themselves as if it was the last time. It is the birth of Visscherbende, "the band of fishermen". The campaigns to Iceland were often fatal. The event pays tribute to these fishermen in Iceland who were leaving at sea several months before spring, and returning a little before the winter. These fishermen never lived spring or summer. The great hero of the carnival remains the Dunkirk's pirate Jean Bart, famous for his warrior exploits alongside Louis XIV. Even now, it is part of

the collective memory of the carnival when, at the end of the "rigodon", they sing to their knees "La Cantate à Jean Bart": "Jean Bart, Jean Bart, the voice of the homeland reiterates your glory and immortal name". The Carnaval de Dunkerque has three highlights: Les Trois Joyeuses. Sunday, the fisherman's band in Dunkirk; Monday, the band La Citadelle, in the maritime district; And finally, the Rosendael band on Shrove Tuesday. If Les Trois Joyeuses is a key moment, there are bands and carnival balls in the towns and the surrounding villages from the beginning of January to mid-April.

## Bagatelle



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*Open from April to September. Low season. Full price: €23.90. Child from 1 m to 1.45 m: €19.90. Child of less than 1 m: free if accompanied by a person paying the individual full price. Senior (60 years and +): €19.90. Disabled person: €17.50. High season. Full price: €24.50. Child of 1m with 1m45: €19.90. Child of less than 1m: free if accompanied by a person paying the individual full price. Senior (60 years and +): €19.90. Disabled person: €17.50. BaggyPass, unlimited access. Adults: €65. Children: €59. Holiday voucher. Children welcome. Catering. Shop. Activities.*



**ALWAYS NEWS!**

**parcbagatelle.com**

**Bagatelle**

A16 exit N ° 25 between Berk / Sea and Le Touquet-Paris-Plage



*The site of Deux Caps houses two hundred and fifty bird species, Escalles.*

Located between Berck and Le Touquet, on 26 ha of nature, Bagatelle offers more than 40 surprising attractions, which promise to share with family or friends convivial moments in a warm atmosphere.

The Baggy Land for kids, with its small train, its small wheel or its bubble bath. For families, Baggy Family offers 18 attractions and a show combining sensations, relaxation and amusement. Note that the brand new carousel, in which children will love to pilot planes and rockets. Finally, the reckless ones will love the Baggy Fun and its 9 attractions that stumble the heart back and forth! In Bagatelle, there are something for all tastes, ages and the day!

## Grand Site des deux Caps

The site of Deux caps is the only site classified as Grand Site de France in Northern France. It is the only witness

to a confrontation between two geological periods. 150 Million years ago, during the jurassic era, the sea has deposited marls and clays, creating the cape Gris-Nez. Some 100 million years later, in the sea is added the chalk that composed the cape Blanc-Nez. These two fraternal inseparable twins and whose reputation with tourists needs no introduction, are now the subject of a vast plan of protection. Victim of its success, the site of Deux-caps is over-frequented. Today, the authorities are trying to better balance tourism flows between the seafront and the inland, and encourage the modes of soft transport between the different towns of the Deux caps.

► **The cape Blanc-Nez.** The cape Blanc-Nez is located in the town of Escalles, small village nestled in a beautiful valley, situated 10 kilometers south of Calais and 23 kilometers north of Boulogne-sur-Mer. The site impresses with its stunning views of endless beaches overhung by cliffs reaching 133 meters. These chalky cliffs and hills have preserved a grassy moorland particularly related to salt spray transported by strong winds from the north and west. The grassy lawns coexist with cultures and craters of bombs of the Second World War. The site is characterized by a varied flora. It is indeed the only limestone hillside in coastline of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region. This originality results in halophytic plants on the cliff: the sea kale (ancestor of cultivated cabbage) is certainly the most representative. Lovers of fresh air can follow the signposted route along the cliffs to Dover Patrol, the highest point of the cape.

► **The cape Gris-Nez.** This wild site remarkably preserved (protection area about 10 kilometers around the cape), windswept overlooks the sea. A lighthouse overlooks the cape, facing England which is only 28 kilometers away (shortest distance to France-England). The narrowness of the corridor and the force of the currents make navigation difficult. To this is added the low depth, 64 m maximum, which reveals at low tide stretches of sand sometimes very important. This point of land also marks the boundary between the Mer du Nord and La Manche. Many paths to be made on foot allow you to reach the top of cliffs. Everyone can discover a remarkable panorama but also the notches, these places where the streams flow into the sea. They are really numerous, one almost requests where does all that water come from? The site owes its name "Gris-Nez" to the clay rock which forms the cliffs.

## Identity card

- **Population:** 686 000 inhabitants
- **Density:** 221 habitants/km<sup>2</sup>
- **Surface:** 4 100 km<sup>2</sup> – 145 km of coastline
- **Number of communes:** 337
- **Part of the region:** Hauts-de-France
- **Highest point:** 133 m
- **Main water course:** L'Aa, l'Authie, la Canche, la Liane, le Wimereux

# NATURE

## GEOGRAPHY

The Côte d'Opale has three departments: the Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Picardie, and the least we can say is that each one has its environmental charm. From North to South, the traveller will discover the Flemish dunes, capes and cliffs of Calaisis-Boulonnais, and finally the Picardie maritime plain and the three estuaries of Canche, Authie and Somme. Spread over 223 kilometers of marine shorelines, the coast is made of a wide range of protected natural areas: the Parc naturel régional des Caps et Marais d'Opale, or the Parc naturel marin des estuaires picards. According to your desires, you will spend in privileged place: sandy bays, cliffs vivid of sandstone and clay or chalk, wooded dunes, marshes and ponds. Environmental diversity is quite visible on the coast. The tacit agreement between sea and countryside becomes fascinating, especially since you are here at the crossroads of the Mer du Nord and La Manche.

### Climate

- **Average temperatures.** The annual average temperature on the Côte d'Opale is about 12°C. The winter is mild, with temperatures between 2°C and 4°C, rarely below 0°C. There are on average twenty frost days on the coastline. However, the winters are characterized as difficult because of frequent rains. As for the summer season, the temperature timidly surpasses 20°C on average.
- **Sunshine.** The weather is often nebulous. This is explained by the weakness of sunshine per year: less than 1 700 hours of sunshine per year.
- **Rainfall.** They are regular throughout the year (541 mm per year on average).

- **Wind.** The winds from the west and Southwest often bring humidity.

- **Natural phenomena.** The thermal amplitude is low. This is due to the presence of the sea which protects the region from the strong depressions.

### Relief

#### Rivers and valleys

- **The Aa.** This small coastal river, dear to crossword puzzle enthusiasts, has its source at high altitude on the small valley of Bourthes-les-Hameaux. It encompasses almost the entire Audomarois, crosses and drains its marsh before flowing into the North Sea, in Gravelines. Its name comes from the Germanic word *aha* which means "water".
- **The Authie.** Authie, a long river of 103 kilometers, has its source in Coigneux in the Somme and flows into the Channel near Grosffliers. Its course, parallel to that of the Canche, passes through a hardly industrialized valley where agriculture is much present. This river is known for its bucolic appearance, its biodiversity, but also for the old buildings that border it.
- **The Canch.** Faithful neighbor of the Authie, the Canche runs over 88 kilometers. It takes its source in Gouy-en-Ternois and passes through Frévent, Hesdin and Montreuil-sur-Mer before going into the Channel between Etaples and Le Touquet-Paris-Plage. People fish fario trout there and kayaking enthusiasts can practice this sport as much as they want.



© OLIVER LECLERCQ

*The cliffs of cape Blanc-Nez.*

## Weather point

Known for its freshness and its gloomy weather, it is a surprise to anyone to say that the climate is rather rich in water on the coastline. The sea and the prevailing westerly winds from the west frequently bring lots of moist air. Consequently, the rain is abundant. Humidity is present in every season. During your excursions so remember to take your anorak systematically!

► **The Liane.** This small river of the Boulonnais has its source in Quesques and flows into the Channel in Boulogne-sur-Mer. The Liane is 36.7 kilometers long. It was heavily polluted by industrial discharges in the 1980-1990's, which deteriorated the quality of its water. In recent years, a fishermen's association has been trying to restore the image of the river. It is true that in some places, the Liane is a very nice watercourse and full of fish.

► **The Wimereux.** Small coastal river, it is named, as you may have guessed, after the lovely opaline seaside resort. It flows over twenty kilometers, has its source in Colembert, passes through Belle-et-Houllefort, Conteville-lès-Boulogne, Pernes, Pittefaux and Wimille before flowing into the Channel, of course in Wimereux!

### Pays des 7 vallées

Pays des 7 vallées stretches over an area of 670 km<sup>2</sup>. It has 38,000 inhabitants spread out on 94 communes, that is 4 communities of municipalities: Hesdinois, Canton of Fruges, Le Val de Canche Authie, the Canche Ternoise. This wooded area, surrounded by meadows and hills, is a privileged place for those who like to relax along a river or a trail.

► **Forests and wood.** If you are fascinated by the immense beaches of Côte d'Opale, its forests, when it comes to them, have nothing to envy. Real windows opening onto greenery, the fauna and flora capital is definitely well preserved in the region. The forests of the posh ski resorts of Touquet-Paris-Plage or Hardelot delight hikers. Further inland, those of Guînes and of course Saint-Omer (Clairmarais) promise beautiful walks and a privileged encounter with nature. Do not hesitate to get lost and give yourself a true break with urban life.

### Marhes

► **Marais Audomarois.** Marais audomarois is a swampy basin of 3,600 hectares spread over 14 communes. Ponds, meadows, small vegetable plots and ditches blend into an intimate mixture of land and water to form incomparable landscapes. This exceptional mosaic is the result of man's work over the centuries. At the very beginning of its existence, the province of "Morins" is a landscape of wild swamps, a desert and uncultivated island between rivers and sea. In the 8th century, Benedictine monks set up a monastery, the abbey of Saint-Bertin. They sought to develop trade through water and had a first canal to the sea dug. The first cultivable marshes were formed in the north and in the east of the city of Saint-Omer in the 12th century. From the 15th to the 19th century, the development of the marshes continued thanks to

the reclamation technique imported from Holland. Potatoes, turnip, yellow and red onion, leek, celery, artichoke, cabbage, strawberries or endive are cultivated there. Specialization on cauliflower, culture particularly adapted to the marsh, began in the 18th century. But marsh is not only an agricultural area, it is also an extraordinary living space for walkers or boat riders, fishermen... It is inhabited by outstanding fauna and flora. Wonderful picturesque villages are to be discovered. Salperwick, Tilques, Serques, Moulle and Houle. There is a popular myth: that of the witch Marie Graulette who haunts the marshes and watercourses to take children away from these dangerous places. Represented with the "Groët" (pitchfork with four or five curved tines). The town of Arques honored this witch by creating a jacquemart to her effigy which has a pride of place on the city hall. In 2013, Marais Audomarois obtained the Man and Biosphere label awarded by the UNESCO.

► **Balaçon's marsh.** Located between Cucq and Berck, it is a wetland classified as "priority". Its waters and lands intertwine and form a fragile meshing that man tries to maintain in good condition. If you are a discreet observer, you will perceive a particularly interesting animal life during your walks.

► **Réserve Naturelle Régionale du Marais de Condette.** The site stretches around the castle of Hardelot and has an environmental mix composed of meadows, marshy areas and woodlands. The Condette marshes provide ecological links between the forest massifs of Ecault and Hardelot. It has 345 plant species, 81 bird species, 7 species of amphibians and several species of mammals.

## Coastline

### Sea, oceans

► **The Mer du Nord.** Located northwest of Europe, the Mer du Nord covers 575 000 km<sup>2</sup>. It borders eight countries (the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Norway), communicates with the Manche by the Pas-de-Calais, with Baltic sea by the Kiel Canal and with the Atlantic Ocean to the north. Zone with a large volume of maritime transit traffic, of oil exploitation and fishing, the Mer du Nord is mostly known for its complex system of currents and tides bringing the rich waters of the Atlantic. This phenomenon creates a variety of environments in which evolves a large variety of animals.

► **La Manche.** The piece of clothes in which is dropped the arm lent its name to La Manche, this sea inlet that



separates Britain from Continental Europe. It borders three countries (The United Kingdom, Channel Islands, France), communicates with the Mer du Nord by the Pas-de-Calais, with the Atlantic Ocean by the Celtic sea and runs along the Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Picardie, Haute-Normandie, Basse-Normandie and Brittany. The density of maritime traffic is unique in the world, with nearly 20% of world traffic. To a very dense longitudinal traffic of goods are added numerous transverse movements between the British and French coasts, especially the transport of several tens of thousands of passengers a day between the United Kingdom and France. Thus, 700 to 800 boats (excluding fishing and pleasure) pass daily through the strait of Pas-de-Calais.

► **To cross it and thus reach the English coast**, the craziest ideas have been launched and often made successfully. In January 1785, Jean-Pierre Blanchard and John Jeffries cross it in a gas balloon. In August 1875, Matthew Webb traverses it with the sheer force of his arms, by swimming. A feat even today is regularly raised by many trained amateurs... On July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1909, the great Louis Blériot was the first to fly over it by plane, offering a spectacular landing on the English coast: "the victorious aircraft stopped with a little bent style, a wing leaning familiarly on the English soil". However, the largest ever launched collective challenge is undoubtedly the construction of the tunnel under La Manche in 1990 within which the first crossing in Eurostar will take place six years later. Crossing by electric airship or canoe, regularly, many adventurers launch a new challenge to connect the coasts!

## Beaches

► **The beach of Leffrinckoucke.** Speed sail, land sailing, kitesurfing, paddling, it's mind blowing on the large Leffrinckouckoise beach. Close to the Saint Malo resort, it has preserved a strong and peaceful natural

setting. Only a few buildings were built in the 1990's. In the west, you can watch some remnants of the World War II, nestled in the hollow of the dunes. The beach is heavily frequented by families and fishermen.

► **The beach of Wissant.** Located between the two headlands (Cap Gris-Nez and Cap Blanc-Nez), Wissant offers a wonderful beach of 12 kilometers. Family, it is perfect for children when the tide is low. The shallow tarpaulins are unusual playgrounds and adored by the little ones. As for sport, Wissant is on its way to become an internationally renowned spot for windsurfing and kitesurfing.

► **The beach of Calais.** A seafront surrounded by restaurants, French-fry trucks, ice cream shops and bars, a minigolf course, games for children, sports activities, everything on a beach of fine sand that stretches to the cliff of Cap Gris-Nez. The seaside resort of Calais is also very famous for its old wooden chalets planted in sand since the beginning of the 20th century. The sight of ferries crossing Port of Calais to England is impressive.

► **The beach of Bray-Dunes.** It is the last resort before the Belgian border and the favorite of Lille tourists in summer. Immense, the beach of Bray-Dunes stretches over 10 kilometers and thus encourages the practice of land sailing. Between two dunes, Marchand and Dewulf, it offers its regulars a very enjoyable natural setting.

► **The beach of Audresselles.** It is not a beach but two, which is offered by the authentic fishing village. Separated by the cape called "Côte-de-Fer", the two neighbors are quite different. The southern beach, suitable for bathing, stretches to Ambleteuse. The northern beach, meanwhile, stretches to Gris-Nez and has a much wilder face. Furthermore, it is not monitored and remains unadvisable for swimming. In this site, you may have the chance to watch the departure of flobarts, these fishing boats typical of the coast.



*The gardens of Marais Audomarois are famous, Saint-Omer.*

► **The beach of Wimereux.** Wimereux is a charming seaside resort. There are many summer vacationers who have to travel to search for rest, sports or walks at the heart of the Site des Deux Caps. On the seafront, the villas in Anglo-Norman Victorian style and with timeless charm continue to charm. Half-sand, half-pebble, the beach is the best place to meet with friends or family. Another significant asset, the kite and windsurfing base is one of the most popular in Côte d'Opale.

► **The beach of Ambleteuse.** Here is a beach where bathing is strongly discouraged due to strong currents. One does not preclude the other, the practice of a nautical sport is very enjoyable on the beach of Ambleteuse. The majestic Mahon fort, built in the 17th century by Vauban, continues to watch the sea and puzzles curious walkers as well.

► **The beach of Merlimont.** Authentic family resort, as the inhabitants like to claim, Merlimont beach is located between Berck and Le Touquet-Paris-Plage. The activities offered on the sand are multiple. As for land, tradition is not lost. You can indulge in tennis or boules games in the old-fashioned way. Along beautiful villas of the 1930's, the promenade of the seafront is very pleasant.

► **Malo-les-Bains beach.** Malo-les-Bains, a residential district of Dunkirk, owes its reputation to the beautiful vintage Saint-Malo houses but above all to its lovely friendly dike. Cafés, restaurants and ice cream shops follow one another along the promenade. Now get down on the sand and choose your activity: Balloon games, snowshoes, kite, hide-and-seek between the kiosks, sand castle building contests, walks in the dunes, paddling, kayaking or tanning. The municipality sets up a beach cabin service in season. Beach joys are simple and undying.

► **Berck-sur-Mer beach.** Located next to the Authie Bay, Berck-sur-Mer beach is known for its famous International Meeting of Kites. On its white sand with

fine grain, families peacefully settle there to have a day of leisure and relaxation. Iodized marine air makes this resort known for its specialized hospitals famous. As you walk on the dam, you will enjoy the many shops as much as you want. Sports enthusiasts will be able to indulge in traditional wind sports.

► **The beach of Portel.** Stretching over 1.5 kilometers and sheltered by the bay of Boulogne-sur-Mer, the Portel Beach is known for its conviviality. The resort has the necessary assets for a family stay in a preserved natural setting. Seaside pleasures, promenades, parks and gardens and historic sites, activities abound to recharge your batteries.

► **The beach of Boulogne-sur-Mer.** Located next to Nausicaa, the beach of Boulogne-sur-Mer is just a few steps from the city center. It can be reached on foot or by car. The fine sand beach is equipped with toilets and showers and monitored during summer. You should know that the quality of the water has long been criticized by the Agence de l'Eau Artois-Picardie. Rentals of kiosks, screens and loungers are possible on site. The sportiest among you will be able to practice land sailing, kitesurfing and windsurfing.

► **The Braek Dam in Dunkirk.** Stretching over 6 kilometers, the dam of Braek located between the North Sea and an unloading dock of mineral cargo. For sure, this beach corner bordered by industrial installations is an unprecedented panorama. Access remains very difficult because of the numerous locks to cross. The Braek dam does not offer anything exceptional if not the guarantee of being in the quiet and surrounded by several factories... There's no restaurant, no ice cream shop, no café. For more commotion and life, it is better to walk to its more chic and famous neighbor, the Malo-les-Bains dam. The only downside all the same: for the inhabitants of the region, this dam remains, in the collective memory, the best for the first hours of driving!

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*The flotilla of artisanal fishing, Boulogne-sur-Mer.*

SOUND AND LIGHT SHOW

"Freedom begins where ignorance ends."



# Les Misérables

à Montreuil-sur-Mer

26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> of July  
2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> et 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2019

10:30 p.m. – Citadel

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# Northern France Coast

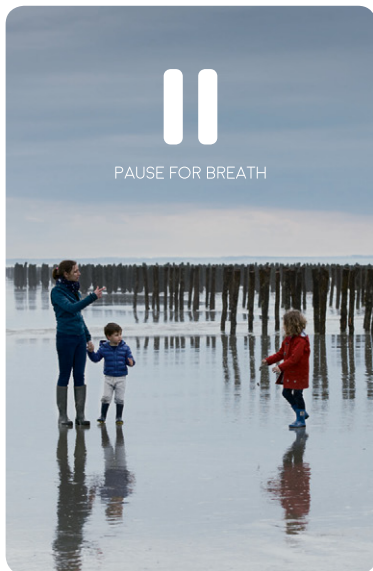
DUNES DE FLANDRE  
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