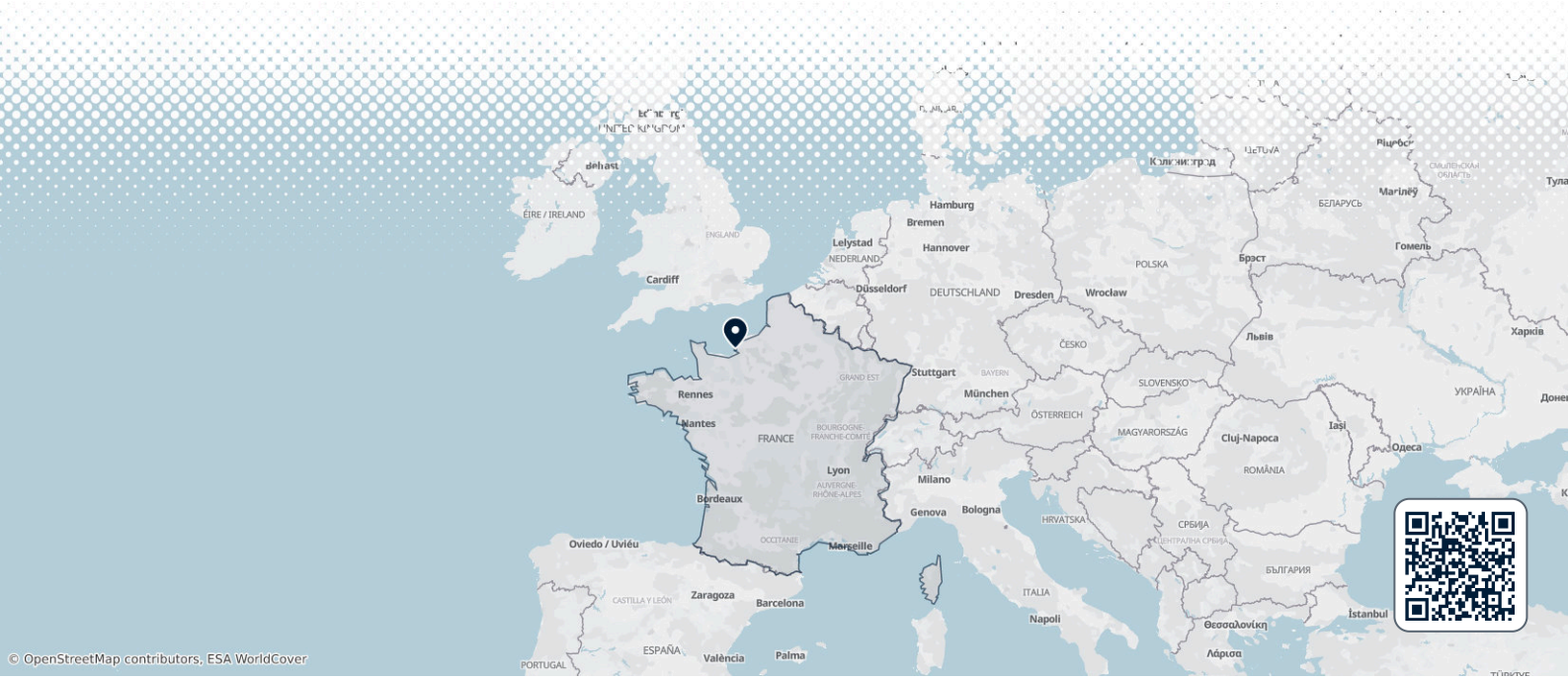


Le Havre

Normandy · France

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Le Havre is a large port city on the Normandy coast, at the mouth of the Seine. Most of the centre was destroyed in 1944 and rebuilt in concrete by the architect *Auguste Perret*. The rebuilt centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city suits visitors who like modern architecture, art and sea air more than old half-timbered streets.

It works well for a short stay of one or two nights. The sights are close together, the beach is in town, and the cliffs of Étretat and the harbour town of Honfleur are an easy trip away. Le Havre is also where Claude Monet painted the picture that gave Impressionism its name.

When to visit

Late spring to early autumn is the best time. Summers are mild, not hot, and the sea wind is constant, so bring a light jacket in any season. Winters are cool, grey and wet, and many days bring rain. Museums and the covered sights are still a good choice then.

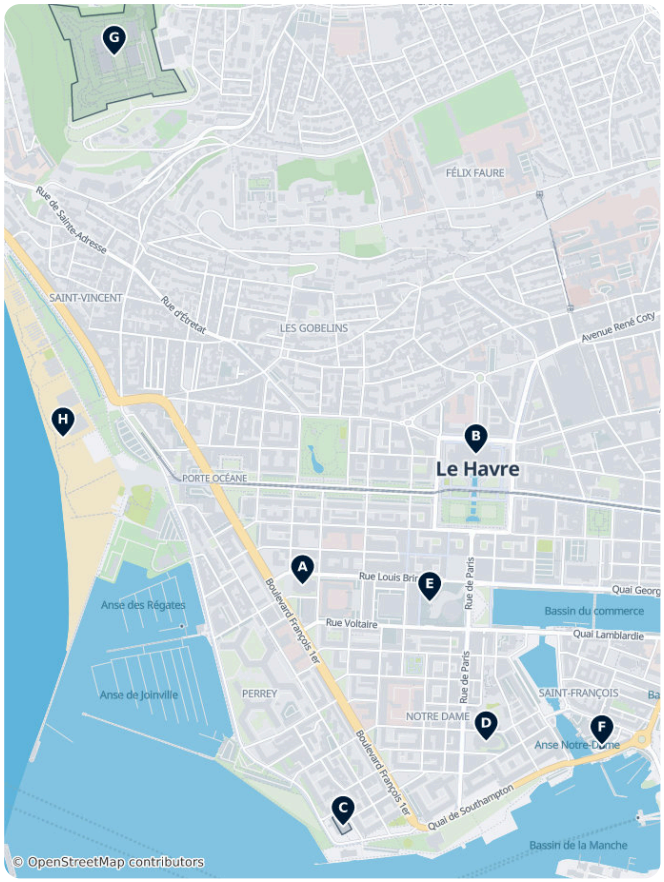
Un Été au Havre is a summer programme of art installations across the city and is a highlight of the local events calendar. Check the dates with the tourist office before you book.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	8° / 13° Feels like 3°	4° / -2°	16 rainy days · Dry air
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	9° / 14° Feels like 4°	4° / -2°	14 rainy days · Dry air
March	Poor Poor for sightseeing	11° / 16° Feels like 6°	5° / 1°	14 rainy days · Dry air
April	Fair Fair for sightseeing	13° / 20° Feels like 10°	7° / 3°	12 rainy days · Dry air
May	Good Good for sightseeing	16° / 22° Feels like 13°	10° / 7°	13 rainy days · Dry air
June	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 26°	13° / 10°	13 rainy days · Dry air
July	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 26°	15° / 12°	13 rainy days
August	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 27°	15° / 13°	14 rainy days
September	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 25°	14° / 10°	13 rainy days · Dry air
October	Fair Fair for sightseeing	16° / 21° Feels like 13°	11° / 6°	16 rainy days · Dry air
November	Poor Poor for sightseeing	11° / 16° Feels like 7°	8° / 2°	18 rainy days · Dry air
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	9° / 13° Feels like 4°	5° / -1°	17 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: July, August

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Église Saint-Joseph is *Perret*'s concrete church. Its tower is about 107 m high and is a landmark across the city. Go inside on a sunny day, when light fills the tower through coloured glass.
- B Hôtel de Ville is another building that *Perret* designed himself. It stands in a large square with gardens, and its tower is about 70 m high.
- C Musée d'Art Moderne André Malraux is the city's art museum, in a glass and steel building by the harbour. Its collection of Impressionist paintings is among the largest in France, with many views of the Normandy coast.
- D Cathédrale Notre-Dame is older than the rebuilt city. Its first stone was laid in 1536, and it was damaged but not destroyed in 1944.
- E Bibliothèque Oscar Niemeyer is a library in a white building by *Oscar Niemeyer*. It is part of his Volcano cultural complex.
- F Maison de l'Armateur is a late 18th-century shipowner's house that survived the war. It shows how rich port families lived.
- G Les Jardins Suspendus are terraced gardens inside an old fort on the hill above the sea. They give wide views over the harbour and the estuary.
- H Le Havre Beach is the city beach. It is a pebble beach with a long promenade, good for a walk at any time of year.

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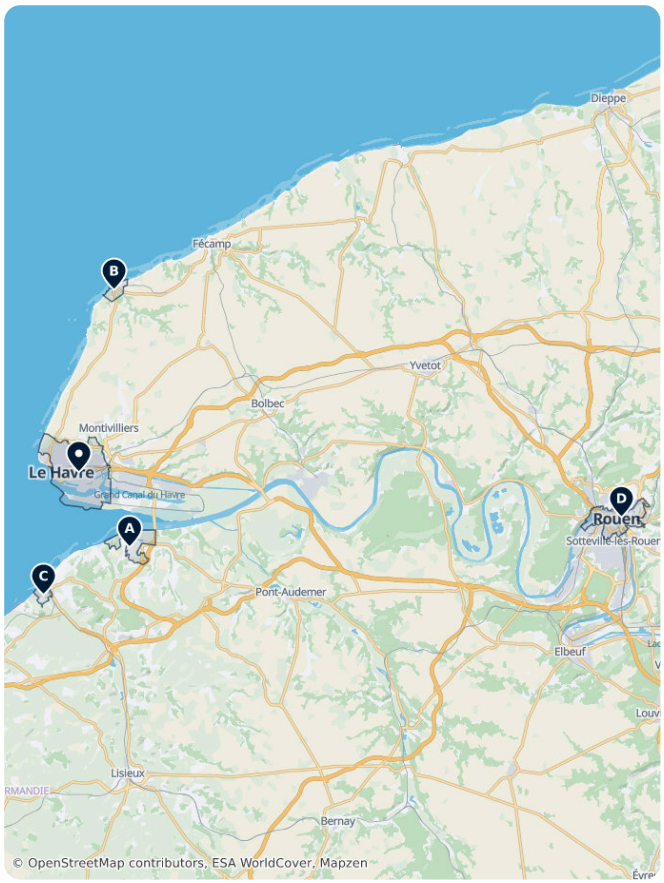
What to experience

- Visit the Perret show apartment, a flat furnished as in the 1950s. It shows what daily life was like in the rebuilt city.
- Walk the seafront promenade at sunset, when ships pass the harbour mouth.
- Ride the funicular to the upper town for views over the port and the roofs of the centre.
- Take the boat to Deauville and Trouville-sur-Mer in season.
- Follow the summer art trail of Un Été au Havre, which places artworks across the city and along the port.

Day trips

- A Honfleur: about 30 minutes by car across the Pont de Normandie. It is a small harbour town with narrow houses around the old port. The wooden church of Sainte-Catherine is the largest wooden church in France. A car is the easiest way to go.
- B Etretat: about 32 km from Le Havre, roughly 40 minutes by car. White chalk cliffs, natural arches and the 70 m rock needle make this one of the best coastal walks in Normandy. Painters including *Monet* worked here. A car is the easiest way to go.
- C Deauville: about 40 minutes by car. It is a seaside resort with a wide beach and a boardwalk. In season a boat also runs from Le Havre to Deauville and Trouville-sur-Mer.
- D Rouen: about 1 hour by train. The city has a famous Gothic cathedral and a large old town, and suits a full day.



Getting there

- **By air**: There is no major international airport at Le Havre. Most visitors fly to Paris, then take a train from Paris Saint-Lazare station.
- **By train**: Direct trains from Paris Saint-Lazare take about 2 hours and stop at Rouen. Le Havre station is the end of the line. The tram stops outside the station. Book at SNCF Connect.
- **By car**: Paris is about 2 hours away by motorway. The Pont de Normandie links Le Havre with Honfleur and Deauville on the other side of the Seine.

Getting around

- **On foot**: The rebuilt centre, the port-side museums and the beach are all within a 20-minute walk of each other.
- **Tram**: Two lines, A and B, share the central route from the beach to the station and then split. Buy tickets at the machine at each stop, or from the bus driver. Validate your ticket when you board. A 1-hour ticket, a 10-trip pack and a day ticket are sold. More information: LiA transport network.
- **Funicular**: A historic funicular, open since 1890, climbs from the town centre to the hill above. It is part of the city transport network.
- **Cycling**: The seafront promenade is flat and good for cycling. The upper town is hilly.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The rebuilt centre, the museums and the beach are close together and mostly flat, so walking works well.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The seafront promenade is flat, but the upper town is hilly.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for the city itself. The tram and your feet cover the centre. A car is useful for Étretat and the Normandy coast.
- **Parking**: Use the car parks near the centre or the town hall, as street parking is limited.
- **Bridge**: The Pont de Normandie is a toll bridge.

Food & drink

Le Havre is a good place for fish and shellfish: mussels, shrimp, sole and oysters from the Normandy coast. Local dairy products such as cream, butter and Camembert appear on many menus. Apple cider and pommeau, an apple drink, are the regional drinks.

For eating, go to the streets of the Saint-François quarter, the old fishermen's area near the harbour, and to the restaurants along the seafront. Fish restaurants fill up at weekends in summer, so book ahead.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Croissant
Buttery, flaky laminated pastry and a classic French breakfast staple.

LUNCH

Ratatouille
A Provençal stewed vegetable dish of eggplant, zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes.

DINNER

Coq au Vin
Chicken braised slowly in red wine with mushrooms, onions, and lardons.

Beef Bourguignon · Bœuf Bourguignon
Beef stewed in red Burgundy wine with carrots, onions, and mushrooms.

Escargot · Escargots de Bourgogne
Snails cooked in garlic and parsley butter, a classic starter.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Baguette
Long, crusty white bread loaf bought fresh daily from the local boulangerie.

Cheese · Fromage
France produces hundreds of cheese varieties, often served as a course before dessert.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Crepes · Crêpes
Thin pancakes served sweet with sugar or jam, or savory as galettes.

Macarons
Delicate almond meringue sandwich cookies in a range of flavors and colors.

DRINKS

Wine · Vin
France's wine regions, including Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne, are among the world's most renowned.

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Safety & health

Le Havre is safe for visitors. It is a large port city, so use normal city care. Keep bags closed in crowded places and on the tram, and do not leave items visible in a parked car. The area around the port and some outer districts are quiet at night, so take a taxi or the tram in the evening.

The sea is cold and the beach is pebbles. Check the tide and the wind before you swim, and follow the flags on the beach.

History

King *François I* founded Le Havre in 1517 as a new port on the Seine estuary. Ships sailed from here across the Atlantic for centuries, and the port grew into the largest container port in France. The late 18th-century house at Maison de l'Armateur shows the wealth that trade brought.

In 1872 *Claude Monet* painted a view of the harbour at sunrise. The title, *Impression, Sunrise*, gave Impressionism its name. The art at Musée d'Art Moderne André Malraux is closely tied to this coast.

In September 1944 bombing destroyed much of the city centre. *Auguste Perret* rebuilt it in precast concrete on a modular grid, and the work lasted into the 1960s. Église Saint-Joseph and Hôtel de Ville are his best-known buildings here. UNESCO listed the rebuilt centre in 2005 as an example of modern city planning.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

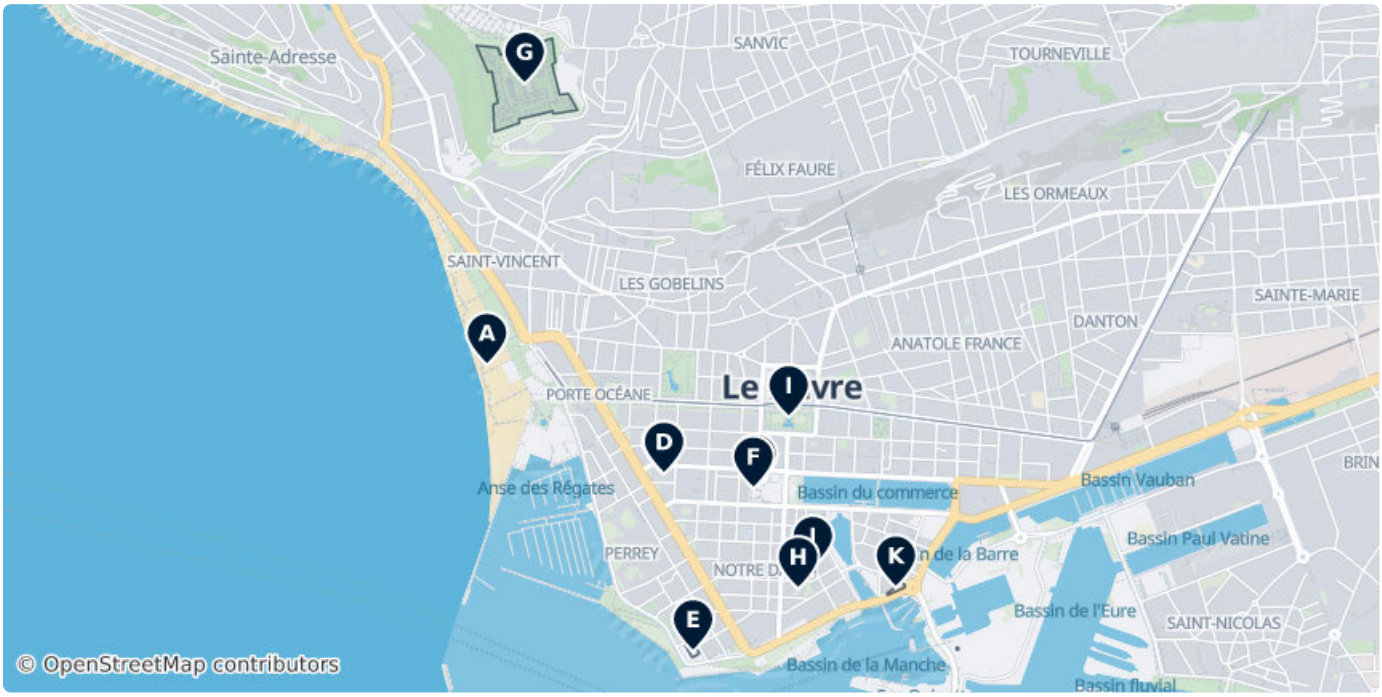
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Le Havre Unmissables

Le Havre is defined by its UNESCO-listed city center, rebuilt by Auguste Perret after WWII using innovative reinforced concrete. The skyline is dominated by the 107-meter octagonal lantern tower of St. Joseph's Church and the futuristic, volcano-shaped curves of Oscar Niemeyer's library. Along the waterfront, the Musée d'art moderne André Malraux (MuMa) houses a significant Impressionist collection, while the Hanging Gardens occupy a 19th-century fortress overlooking the Seine estuary and the city's two-kilometer pebble beach.





A Le Havre Beach

Two-kilometer pebble beach featuring a wide promenade and views of the harbor. It connects the city center to the cliffs of Sainte-Adresse and is lined with seasonal beach huts.

76600, France (49.49471, 0.09187)



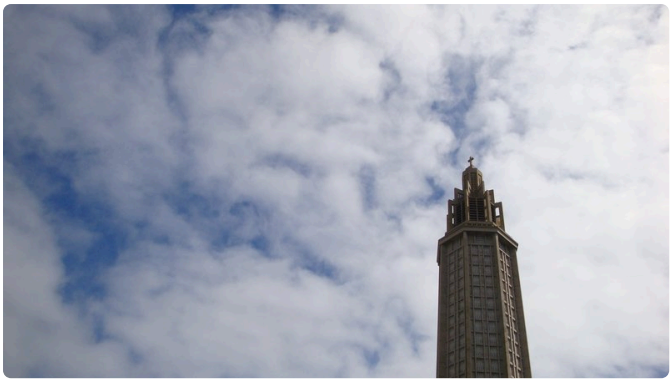
B Bibliothèque Oscar Niemeyer

Housed within 'The Volcano,' a white concrete architectural complex designed by Oscar Niemeyer. The library features a light-filled interior with natural wood elements and a glass ceiling.

Place Oscar Niemeyer, 76600 Le Havre, France (49.49055, 0.10612)

Tu–Su 10:00–19:00

lireauhavre.fr



C St. Joseph's Church, Le Havre

St. Joseph's Church, Le Havre is a Roman Catholic church in Le Havre, France.

4 Rue Gustave Cazavan, Le Havre 76600, France
(49.49098, 0.10118)

lehavre.catholique.fr



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(49.49098, 0.10123)

lehavre.catholique.fr



E Musée Malraux

The Musée d'art moderne André Malraux is a museum in Le Havre, France containing one of the nation's most extensive collections of...

Boulevard Clemenceau 2, 76600 Le Havre
(49.48489, 0.10275)

Mo–Fr	11:00–18:00
Sa–Su	11:00–19:00

muma-lehavre.fr, +33 2 35 19 62 62



F Le Havre, the City Rebuilt by Auguste Perret

A UNESCO World Heritage site recognized for its post-war urban planning and pioneering use of reinforced concrete. The grid-based layout was designed by Auguste Perret to replace the destroyed city center.

Place Oscar Niemeyer, 76600 Le Havre, France
(49.49047, 0.10595)



G Les Jardins Suspendus

A 17-hectare botanical garden located inside a 19th-century military fort. The greenhouses and bastions showcase plants from five continents, organized by the routes of historic explorers.

Le Havre 76620, France (49.50435, 0.09386)

Apr-Sep Mo–Su	10:30–20:00
Oct-Mar Mo–Su	10:30–17:00

lehavre.fr/annuaire/les-jardins-suspendus



H Le Havre Cathedral

Le Havre Cathedral is a Roman Catholic church in Le Havre, France.

21 Rue des Drapiers, Le Havre 76600, France (49.48703, 0.10831)



I Jardins de l'Hôtel de Ville

Formal gardens located at the heart of the Perret reconstruction, featuring geometric flowerbeds and fountains. They are framed by the modernist City Hall and its 72-meter tower.

Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, Le Havre 76600, France (49.49291, 0.10781)



J Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle

Housed in a 1760 former courthouse, this museum features collections of paleontology and zoology, alongside 19th-century scientific drawings by local naturalist Charles-Alexandre Lesueur.

Place du Vieux Marché, 76600 Le Havre (49.48775, 0.10909)

Tu	10:00–12:00, 14:00–18:00
We	10:00–18:00
Th	14:00–18:00
Fr	10:00–12:00, 14:00–18:00
Sa–Su	10:00–18:00

museum-lehavre.fr, +33 2 35 41 37 28

Fish Market

Looking for fresh seafood at a reasonable price? Local fishermen set up their fresh produce every Friday and Saturday right near the docks...

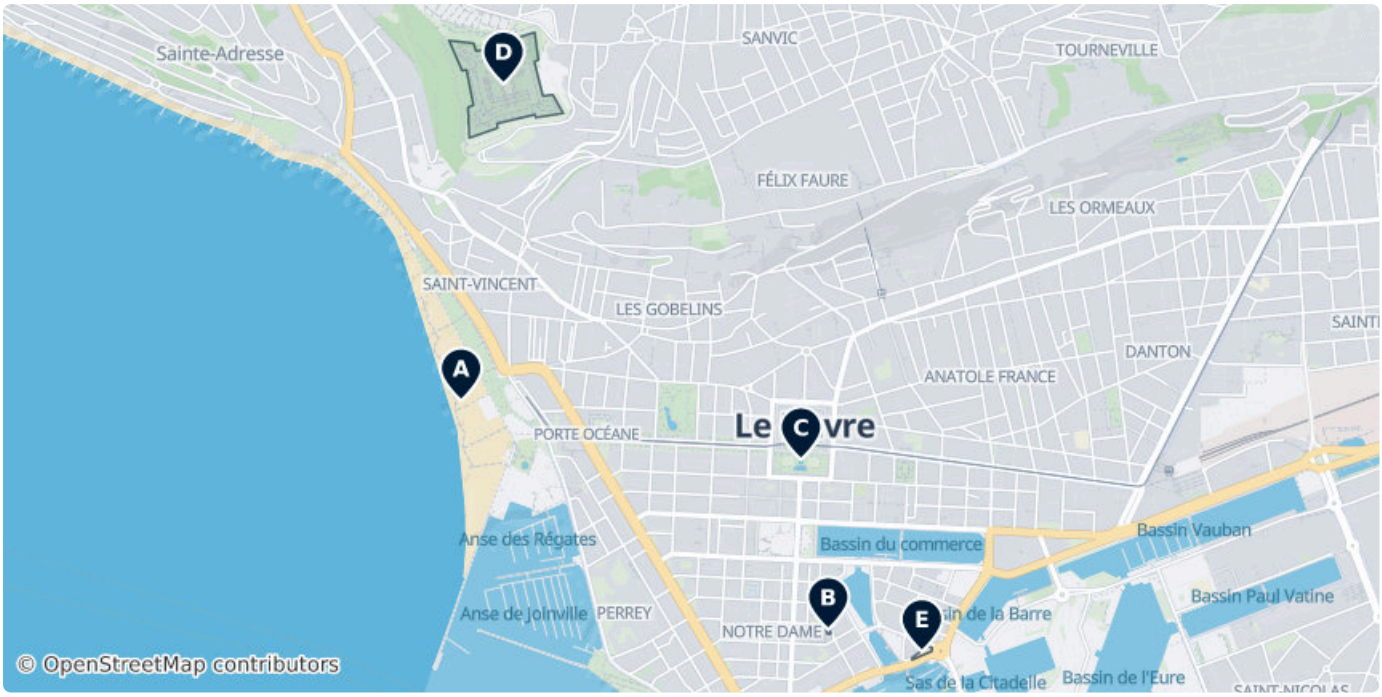
Quai de l'Île 1, 76600 Le Havre (49.48708, 0.11348)

Fr–Sa	09:00–12:30, 15:00–19:00

lemarcheauxpoissons.fr

Editor's Choice: Le Havre Highlights

Le Havre's urban landscape, a UNESCO World Heritage site, features a two-kilometer pebble beach and the geometric Jardins de l'Hôtel de Ville, designed by Auguste Perret. The 19th-century Fort de Sainte-Adresse now houses Les Jardins Suspendus, a 17-hectare botanical garden overlooking the Seine estuary. Cultural highlights include the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, set in an 18th-century courthouse, and the traditional fish market where local fishermen sell fresh catch on Fridays and Saturdays.





A Le Havre Beach

Two kilometers of pebble shoreline featuring a wide promenade and seasonal beach huts. It connects the city center to the sea, offering views of the port and the Perret-designed waterfront.

76600, France (49.49471, 0.09187)



B Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle

Housed in an 18th-century former courthouse, this museum displays extensive zoological and paleontological collections, including thousands of drawings from the 1800-1804 Baudin expedition to Australia.

Place du Vieux Marché, 76600 Le Havre (49.48775, 0.10909)

Tu	10:00–12:00, 14:00–18:00
We	10:00–18:00
Th	14:00–18:00
Fr	10:00–12:00, 14:00–18:00
Sa–Su	10:00–18:00

museum-lehavre.fr, +33 2 35 41 37 28



C Jardins de l'Hôtel de Ville

A central component of Auguste Perret's post-war reconstruction. These geometric gardens feature fountains and seasonal floral displays surrounding the monumental modernist City Hall building.

Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, Le Havre 76600, France (49.49291, 0.10781)



D Les Jardins Suspendus

A 17-hectare botanical garden situated within a restored 19th-century hilltop fort. It features themed greenhouses and outdoor sections showcasing global flora with panoramic views over the estuary.

Le Havre 76620, France (49.50435, 0.09386)

Apr-Sep Mo–Su	10:30–20:00
Oct-Mar Mo–Su	10:30–17:00

lehavre.fr/annuaire/les-jardins-suspendus

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Fr–Sa	09:00–12:30, 15:00–19:00

lemarcheauxpoissons.fr

Le Havre's Architectural Heritage

Following the devastation of World War II, Le Havre was transformed into a landmark of modernist urban planning under the direction of architect Auguste Perret. This UNESCO World Heritage site showcases the innovative use of reinforced concrete across a cohesive grid-based city center. The list highlights the city's architectural evolution, from the 18th-century Maison de l'Armateur to Perret's structural masterpieces and contemporary public art installations that frame the maritime landscape.





A St. Joseph's Church

St. Joseph's Church, Le Havre is a Roman Catholic church in Le Havre, France.

4 Rue Gustave Cazavan, Le Havre 76600, France (49.49098, 0.10123)

lehavre.catholique.fr



B Le Havre Cathedral

Le Havre Cathedral is a Roman Catholic church in Le Havre, France.

21 Rue des Drapiers, Le Havre 76600, France (49.48703, 0.10831)



C Le Havre, the City Rebuilt by Auguste Perret

A UNESCO World Heritage site recognized for its post-war reconstruction between 1945 and 1964. The city center features a cohesive grid layout and innovative use of reinforced concrete, representing a milestone in 20th-century urban planning.

Place Oscar Niemeyer, 76600 Le Havre, France
(49.49047, 0.10595)

D Église Sainte-Jeanne-d'Arc

A modernist Catholic church located in the Sanvic district, constructed with reinforced concrete and featuring contemporary architectural lines typical of the city's post-war expansion.

8 Rue Charles Yvray, Le Havre 76620, France
(49.50551, 0.11749)



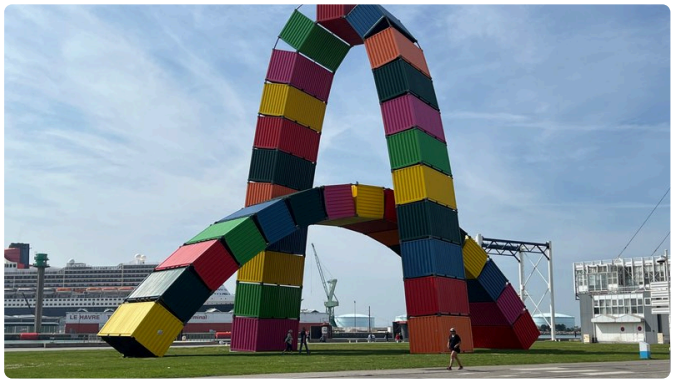
E Maison de l'Armateur

An 18th-century shipowner's house and museum, notable for its unique interior architecture featuring a central octagonal skylight that illuminates five floors of period-furnished rooms.

Quai de l'Île 3, 76600 Le Havre (49.48693, 0.11281)

Mo–Su 10:00–12:30

lehavre.fr/annuaire/maison-de-larmat... , +33 2 35 19 09 85



F Catène de Containers

A monumental public artwork by Vincent Ganivet consisting of two towering arches made from multicolored shipping containers, symbolizing Le Havre's identity as a major international port.

55 Chaussée John Kennedy, Le Havre 76600, France
(49.48496, 0.10736)

G Jusqu’au bout du monde

A contemporary sculpture by artist Fabrice Hyber depicting a figure gazing out toward the horizon, situated at the end of the pier to mark the connection between the city and the sea.

France (49.48773, 0.09275)

H Attrape Nuages

A contemporary sculpture located on the seafront, designed to interact with the coastal light and the changing Normandy sky.

(49.50270, 0.11918)

I Appartement Témoin

A restored 1950s show apartment that demonstrates Auguste Perret’s vision for modern living, featuring original furniture and the standardized architectural layout of the rebuilt city.

(49.49351, 0.09664)

J Ancienne Poste Centrale

A prominent example of the Perret reconstruction style, this former central post office features the characteristic concrete texture and rhythmic window placement found throughout the city center.

(49.49194, 0.11352)



K Porte Océane

A monumental gateway at the western end of Avenue Foch, consisting of two symmetrical residential blocks that frame the view of the sea and symbolize the city's maritime entrance.

2 Avenue Foch, Le Havre 76600, France (49.49349, 0.09661)

DATA SOURCES

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