

C002-CO The Mont St Michel Bay



Tucked between Granville and Cancale lies the Bay of Mont Saint Michel, home to one of the greatest gems of western Christian art. Resolutely flat, at first glance the bay is nothing more than a sandy marsh covered by the sea at high tide. But what a marvelous playground for those who take the time to wander through it and look around! From the top of the granite cliffs of Champeaux you will have a magnificent view of the bay. At the Collines de Saint Jean le Thomas you will walk in the footsteps of ancient and modern



pilgrims, whose journey to the Mount begins here at low tide. Originally, Mont Saint Michel was nothing more than a huge rock of granite. But it was here that great imagination and boldness helped in the construction of the abbey, which was to become so recognized as a masterpiece that it would find itself on the UNESCO's list of the 10 monuments of the world to be protected. Turning your back to the abbey, you will follow the shoreline to the seawall of the Duchesse Anne. This embankment allowed men to conquer the surrounding land to the cliffs of Roz. You will arrive in the oyster port of Cancale where you will be awed and charmed by the tranquil beauty, the wild vegetation unique to the region and by the thousands of birds nesting and gliding across the bay.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival at GRANVILLE. Visit of the old city, a military fortress built on a rocky promontory which ends at the Roc headland. Encircled in ramparts lie a number of granite houses and the austere church of Notre Dame. *Lodging and breakfast in a 4-star hotel*

Day 2 - GRANVILLE – ST. JEAN LE THOMAS (20 km). You will leave Granville by the Herel sailing resort and the Gautier cape. You will follow the coast, crossing the beaches of St. Pair-sur-Mer, Kairou, Jullouville, and Carolles. You will continue along the Champeaux cliffs, the only points of height which dominate the bay and offer splendid views of Mont Saint Michel. You will then descend to St. Jean le Thomas, a very popular seaside resort in summer. Back to Granville by taxi. *Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel in Granville.*

Day 3 - ST. JEAN LE THOMAS – AVRANCHES (18 km). Transfer by taxi from Granville to St Jean le Thomas in the morning. Following the coastal line, you will cross vast beaches and sand dunes, punctuated by sparse vegetation, until – drawing nearer to Mont Saint Michel – you reach Bec d'Andaine. For a pleasant detour, head to the small village of Genêts, where you'll find a beautiful 12th-14th century church, and to the headland of Groin du Sud. You will walk up the mouth of the Sée, which cuts a path through the vegetation. This stretch of grassy land, where sheep graze at low tide, will be covered entirely by the sea at high tide. *Lodging and breakfast in a charming 3-star hotel*

Day 4 - PONTAUBAULT – LE MONT ST. MICHEL (20 km). Transfer by taxi to Pontaubault. You will begin your hike by walking across the bridge of the Sélune, the same bridge that played a strategic role in the advancement of American troops many years ago. You will follow the coast across vast prairies toward the Pointe de Roche Torin. From here, you will see Mont Saint Michel in all its splendor. Once beyond the Pointe de Roche Torin, continue along the seawall which protects the polders and their culture. Here, you will be fascinated by the obsessive beauty, unable to bring your eyes from it.

Lodging and breakfast in a 4-star hotel opposite the Mont St Michel

Day 5 - TOUR OF MONT SAINT MICHEL – CHAPELLE SAINT ANNE – LE VIVIER SUR MER (10 km). The day begins with a tour of Mont Saint Michel and the abbey. The abbey stands as an architectural masterpiece. Technical daring, finesse and elegance combine and make it worthy of its title of "The Wonder of the Western World". The visit of the city holds its own charm with high ramparts, narrow and twisting streets, hidden corners and a small church.



You will enjoy lunch in one of the many restaurants in the village. We recommend trying an omelet at La Mère Poularde, where the recipe and the manner of preparation have been passed down for more than 150 years! Towards the start of the afternoon, a taxi will escort you to the Chapelle Sainte Anne, which sits beside the long Dyke de la Duchesse Anne. The seawall dates to the beginning of the 11th century and has been reinforced many times over to protect the nearby villages and to transform the once-marshy land into a vast zone of fertile soil. A few mills remain, leaving evidence of their vital role in draining the waters from the surrounding earth.
Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel

Day 6 - LE VIVIER SUR MER – CANCALE (18 km). Today you will enjoy a hike full of contrasts. You will start out along long, fine-sand beaches and pass through small villages that specialize in the raising of muscles and oysters, villages such as Hirel, Vildé la Marine, and Saint Benoît des Ondes. Beyond the cape of Château-Richeux, the landscape changes : granite boulders appear, the coastline becomes more jagged, and the coastal path rises and descends all the way to the port of La Houle and Cancale. *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel*

Day 7 - CANCALE –Circular walk around Cancale via the Cape of Grouin (18 km). You will leave the port of Cancale and set off into the hinterlands. You will pass through fields of artichokes, cauliflower and other vegetables and continue on through a shallow wooded valley to arrive at the ocean's waters, and next, to the chapel of Le Verger. You will follow the coastal path to the cape of Grouin, the western extremity of the bay of Mont Saint Michel. You will then return to Cancale, either following the coastal path along the cliffs, or by way of the beaches, highly populated during the summer months. *Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel – dinner not included*

Day 8 - CANCALE. Breakfast. Transfer by taxi to the St Malo rail station.

Season

From middle of April to middle of October but be careful this area is very crowded in summer time and we recommend you (if you can) to come outside this period. Nevertheless this area attracts a lot of tourists and you have to reserve earlier to get the best rooms.

What's included?

- 7 nights' accommodation in selected 3 or 4-star hotels
- 7 breakfasts - 2 gourmet dinners
- Hotel to hotel luggage transfer
- Taxi transfers
- A set of maps (1/25 000 scale) with the route marked on and detailed route notes
- A daily itinerary together with information about facilities and places of interest along the trail.
- Emergency assistance. 24hours/24 – 7days/7



Visa fees - transportation fees to and from the walk area - Insurance (strongly recommended on all trips) - Transfers except those mentioned above - Drinks - Additional meals - Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls,...are not included

Getting there and away

By train : Direct trains from Paris Montparnasse rail station to Granville in less 4 hours. To return, taxi or bus from Cancale to the St Malo train station, where you'll take a train to Paris Montparnasse

By car : From Paris take the Paris-Caen highway (A13). Continue on A8 you leave at Villedieu les Poêles (exit 37) for D924 to Granville.

Where to park : paid guarded car park, available in Granville. Taxi from Cancale to Granville or train from St Malo to Granville with 2 changes (3 hours journey)

Walk difficulty

Grade 2 - walks of 4 to 6 hours a day. Some stages could be more 20 km (13/15 miles) and rolling uplands, ascents mainly gradual than steep of up to 500 m. In some areas you will walk on sand. An average level of fitness or some experience with walking is recommended.