

C006-ST Alabaster coast



From Etretat to Dieppe, a distance of about 100 kilometers, the English Channel is lined by cliffs that make up the last headland of the Pays de Caux. They spread across the coast as a stark chalk plateau. Each year, these cliffs recede an average of one or two meters, and it is this rapid dissolving that creates a milky colored water at their base, thus giving them the name of The Alabaster Coast. Nestled in the valleys between these looming cliffs lie ports, seaside resorts, and “valleuses”, narrow, dry valleys that, because of relentless erosion of the coast, seem suspended over the sea.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival at ETRETAT. Etretat is an incredible spot of natural beauty with its magnificent beach encircled by cliffs. The only remaining evidence of this ancient fishing village is a few semi-detached brick and flint stone homes and, nearer the beach, three straw-covered boats called “caïques”, in which fishermen used to store their gear. Around the 19th century, the village underwent a transformation and became frequented more as a seaside resort known to painters and writers. The slopes are now covered by imposing Anglo-Norman style villas, surrounded by lush gardens. We suggest that you arrive early in the afternoon so to have time for a stroll along the cliffs of Aval and up to the Cap Antifer, passing also by the Aiguille Aval, the Porte Aval and the Manne Porte. *Lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel*

Day 2 - ETRETAT - FECAMP (19 km). At the edge of the beach you'll find a staircase that will lead you to the summit of the Amont cliffs. From Notre Dame de la Garde chapel you will see Etretat. Following the coastal path you will pass through la Porte Amont, the Belval Needle, the *valleuse* du Curé (off limits to visitors because of the risk of landslides) and the depths of Etigue where you gain access to the sea by a large staircase. From here the trail turns inland for a moment and brings you through a field to the village of Vattetot sur Mer, which gives way then to the *valleuse* de Vaucottes. The slopes of Vaucottes shelter sumptuous villas, which stand in testimony of its prestigious past. You will cross next through Yport, a pleasant seaside resort of lovely - and sometimes extravagant! - villas, to arrive in Fécamp. Fécamp is today a city of art and history but was once one of the largest cod-fishing ports in France. *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel*



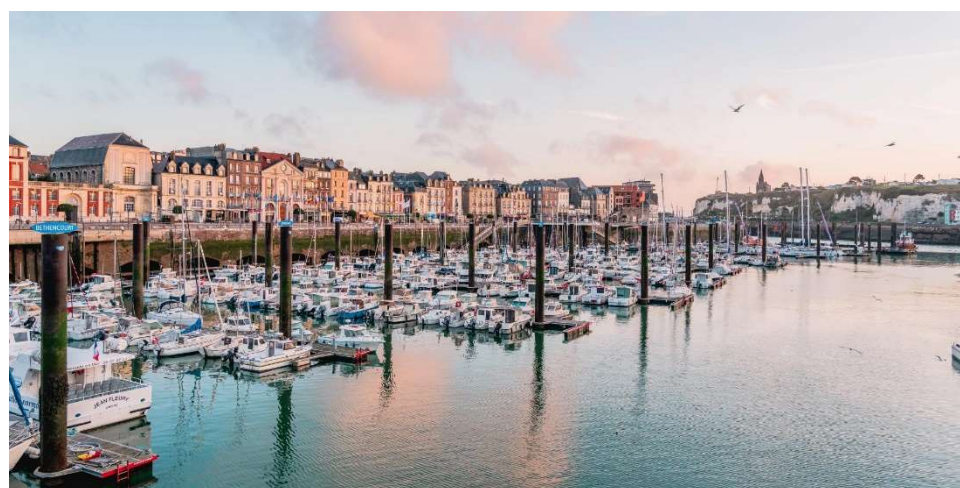
Day 3 - FECAMP - LES GRANDES DALLES (20 km). Give yourself time before beginning your hike to visit the Musée des Terre Neuvas, the Trinity abbey, the Palais Bénédictine, and the distillery, famous for its liquor. When you are ready to leave, make your way towards Notre Dame du Salut by the tiny, upward sloping streets of the city.

Take the trail which follows – at a respectable distance! – the cliffs’ edge. It will cross the village of Senneville, and bring you towards the sea through the Val d’Ausson and the *valleuse* d’Eletot. You will continue on the same path into Eletot and the small harbor of Saint Pierre en Port, where you might rest on its intimate familial beach. In 1850, the receding cliff line forced the residents of the village to dismantle the 13th century Saint Pierre church and to rebuild it further up the plateau! You will follow the cliffs to the *valleuse* des Grandes Dalles where you will find yourself in the midst of lovely 19th century villas, and nearby, a small pebble beach. You will then arrive at Sassetot le Mauconduit. *Back to Fecamp by taxi - Dinner, lodging and breakfast in the same hotel*

Day 4 – LES GRANDES DALLES – SAINT VALÉRY EN CAUX (24 km). *Transfer by taxi From Fécamp to Les Grandes Dalles.* From this village, you walk to les Petites Dalles, passing through a narrow, wooded valley with hillsides decorated by picturesque homes of sandstone and flint stone. On the beach the homes change in style to white wood cabins. You will leave the seaside behind for the moment and pass through the village of Saint Martin aux Buneaux. You will arrive at the seaside resort of Veulettes sur Mer and pick up your hike along the coast. You will pass through Conteville, skirt around the Le Paluel power-station, and follow the cliff-line to Saint Valéry en Caux, a fishing and yachting harbor whose beach becomes quite populated in summer - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel*



Day 5 - VEULES LES ROSES – VARENDEVILLE SUR MER (22 km). *Escort by taxi from Saint Valéry to Veules.* You have found yourself at the source of one of the smallest rivers in France. Follow the Veules to the sea, admiring the lovely estates and old watermills on its banks. You will head across the countryside towards Sotteville sur Mer. You will soon again find yourself at the ocean’s shoreline, but only the most courageous among you will accept the challenge offered by the stairwell before you, which will lead you through the narrow *valleuse* of la Pointue to the cliff’s edge. The path then crosses the hamlets of Mesnil Gaillard, Epineville and Saussemare and brings you to Saint Aubin sur Mer. You will follow the promenade of this seaside resort and continue out of the village to Ramouville, where you will distance yourself from the sea only shortly, to find it again at Quiberville. In Quiberville you will walk along the dike and climb towards Sainte Marguerite sur Mer (gorgeous 12th century church) and then pass through the woods to arrive at the Ailly lighthouse. Taxi transfer to Dieppe at your hotel at the end of the day. *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel*



Day 6 - VARENDEVILLE – DIEPPE (16 km). Taxi transfer to Varengeville in the morning. Varengeville is a wooded seaside resort situated in several hamlets which are linked by hedged walking paths. You begin your morning at the ocean’s shore, arriving there by way of the *valleuse* de Vasterival. On the way, stop and visit the Parc Floral du Bois des Moustiers, where you’ll find a variety of plants arranged in a manner resembling an English garden. Go and see also Varengeville’s church and sailors’

cemetery, situated in a magnificent spot overlooking the ocean. To continue your hike, make your way down into the gorges of Le Petit Ailly. Continue towards Port de Moutiers and, crossing through the woods and hamlets, to the seaside resort of Pourville sur Mer, sitting at the mouth of the Scie river. You will climb along the cliffs of la Cote du Patis to discover Dieppe and the port from the esplanade of the castle. *Lodging and breakfast the same hotel*

Day 7 - DIEPPE. Tour ends after breakfast.

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?

- 6 nights' accommodation in selected 2-star hotels with breakfasts
- 4 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.
- Phone Emergency assistance

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 : The nearest station to Etretat is Breauté that you can reach from Paris St Lazare train station then bus connection to Etretat. To return, many links between Dieppe rail station and Paris St Lazare.

By car : From Paris, take A13 motorway up to the exit Tancarville bridge. Cross the bridge and take D910 road to reach Etretat. From North of France take A29 motorway to Bolbec then D910 road to go to Etretat

Where to park : Several free unguarded parkings in Etretat. Return to Breauté by train via Rouen rive droite (between 1.45 and 2.45 journey) and taxi to Etretat

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. You often will walk in flat ground but some steep ascents when you walk up a cliff or some never-ending flight of stairs when leaving beaches. An average level of fitness or some experience with walking is recommended