

# 2023: A nautical year in Normandy

With its 370 miles of coastline, Normandy is the ideal setting for nautical events. 2023 will be the year to celebrate the region's nautical heritage in style, with three international events: the Arrival of the 50th Rolex Fastnet Race in Cherbourg, the 30th Anniversary of the Transat Jacques Vabre in Le Havre, and the Armada in Rouen. A trio of challenging world-class races for competitors and truly beautiful shows for spectators, all in a festive atmosphere. The race villages will be open to the public with a range of free activities, family friendly entertainment, live music and food stalls.

## • The Rouen Armada – 8 to 18 June 2023

Organised every five years on the quays of the Seine, The Rouen Armada is one of the largest gathering of sailing boats, ships and military boats in the world, attracting millions of visitors and sailing enthusiasts to the capital city of Normandy for 10 days. This key event in the international sailing calendar brings together visitors from near and far with thousands of French and foreign sailors. Alongside the tall ships and sailing ships, modern warships, training sailboats, old rigs and other exceptional boats from various countries will dock on the lively waterfront in the heart of the city. The fleet will include the mythological ship l'Hermione, a reconstructed 18th century frigate, Le Belem, the last French three-masted square-rigger afloat, the Cisne Branco from Brazil, the second largest sailing ship in the world, the Krusenstern and the British aptly-named Tenacious, a three-master, constructed to be sailed by a mixed ability crew, with access throughout for crew members with disabilities. The celebrations will end with the parade along the River Seine, which will see the fine ships head downstream towards the estuary between Honfleur and Le Havre. The Rouen Armada is the only event of its kind in France. In 2019, around 4 million spectators were welcomed and thousands of sailors from across the globe. The event is free for all.

Rouen is Normandy's vibrant, historic and cultural capital. It boasts the second largest number of listed buildings in France after Paris. With its rich cultural heritage, the tallest cathedral in France, many museums to explore and its generous gastronomy, Rouen is fascinating both in history and heritage. The medieval city has plenty to see and do. [armada.org](http://armada.org)

## • Arrival of the 50th Rolex Fastnet Race in Cherbourg – 17 to 29 July 2023

For the second time, the city of Cherbourg-en-Cotentin will host the finish of the world's largest offshore race the Rolex Fastnet Race, celebrating its 50th edition. In 2021, a record breaking-sized fleet of 337 boats from 24 nations took part in the race. The 50th edition of the world's largest offshore race will start from the Royal Yacht Squadron line on Saturday 22nd July, 2023, prior to the annual Cowes Week festivities. A pre-event registration will be held for competitors in Cherbourg, alongside a Race Village and many festivities within the city.

The boats have to complete the 690 nautical mile course from Cowes to Cherbourg-en-Cotentin, via the Fastnet Rock. Starting with the first arrivals which are anticipated to arrive on the 23rd of July until the 28th July with a memorable prizegiving to mark the 50th Anniversary. The first race, simply known as the 'Ocean Race' and held on a course from Ryde to Plymouth via the Fastnet Rock, took place in 1925 with seven starters. Since then, top sailors from all over the world have competed in this famous 690 mile offshore race. Over the last two decades, participation in the Race has skyrocketed, making it the biggest offshore race in the world. The Race will gather a giant fleet spanning sailing clubs, families and charter companies, to the bulk of the fleet, the IRC cruiser-racers and racers; to the most successful privately-owned grand prix race boats from around the world, including the maxi monohulls jockeying for overall line-honour to the impressive and highly competitive French fleets such as the 100ft Ultime trimarans, the IMOCA 60s of the Vendée Globe and Ocean Race and the Class40s.

Cherbourg-en-Cotentin is one of France's most famous channel ports, closely linked to naval history and transatlantic adventures, the Cotentin Coast is also home to many prominent water sports events. [rolexfastnetrace.com](http://rolexfastnetrace.com)

• **30th Anniversary of the Transat Jacques Vabre, Le Havre – Departure on 29 October 2023**

Created in 1993 by the city of Le Havre and the Jacques Vabre coffee brand, The biannual Transat Jacques Vabre Normandie Le Havre has managed to establish itself as the toughest and longest-running two-handed transatlantic race. The original concept is simple: the source of this great race is a historical route, the coffee route. Le Havre and coffee share the same legend, that of the trade which saw the best sailors of their time taking on the Atlantic to bring back to Europe the beans used to extract the precious beverage. Over 60 boats will leave from the famous seaside resort of Le Havre to Fort-de-France Bay, in the West Indies, after 10 days of celebrations taking place through the city of Le Havre. 2023 will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the race. The regatta is the ideal opportunity for visitors to discover this famous sailing competition, for a whole week in the bustling race village, which is traditionally set up around the Bassin Paul Vatine where the boats are moored. The festivities end the day before the departure with a huge party and a spectacular firework display over the basin.

Le Havre is one of France's most famous and important ports. Situated at the mouth of the River Seine, the city was almost completely rebuilt after WWII by visionary architect August Perret. His bold plans resulted in the city centre becoming a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005. Le Havre boasts a huge marina close to its seafront, and hosts many nautical events, such as the Solitaire du Figaro. [transatjacquesvabre.org](http://transatjacquesvabre.org)

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**To download Normandy Tourism's 2023 press pack, visit:** <https://en.normandie-tourisme.fr/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/12/2-press-kit-2023-1.pdf>

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