

Boulogne, usually referred to as Boulogne-sur-Mer to distinguish it from parts of Paris that were named after it (yes it is confusing), is a tourist-friendly fishing port (the country's largest) on the Côte d'Opale. English kings have often had their eyes on the place meaning that it's always been well fortified - and it was where Napoleon stationed himself in 1805 when toying with invading Britain.

The city's 12th-century belfry is recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site (along with other belfries of Belgium and France), while another popular attraction is the marine conservation centre Nausicaa.



## Strolls

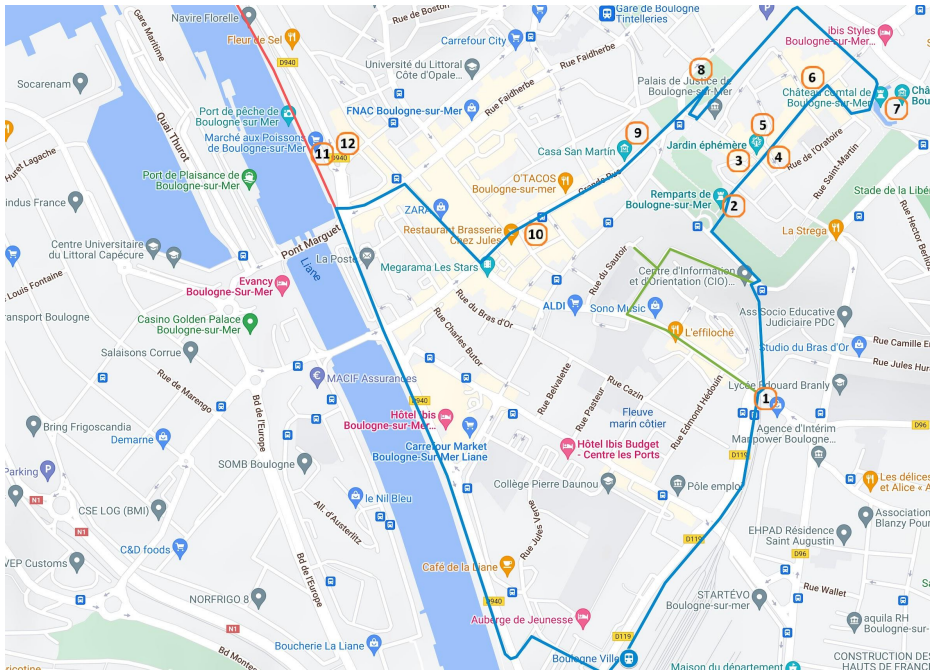
- [A wander around town \(4.3km blue\)](#)
- [Coastal walk to Wimereux \(6k red \(9km including blue route\) \)](#)
- [British War Cemetery and Fort de la Creche \(1.2km black\)](#)

## Interactive Map

Here is a [link to a map](#) that can help you find your bearings.

## A wander around town (4.3km blue)

This walk takes us up to the historic and well-groomed Haute Ville and down into the port and new town that cast itself in a new light after the Second World War.



- ① choose path
- ② Remparts de Boulogne
- ③ Imperial Palace
- ④ Éphémère Garden
- ⑤ Belfroi de l'Hotel de Ville
- ⑥ Crypte de la Basilique
- ⑦ Château de Boulogne-sur-Mer
- ⑧ Monument à Mariette
- ⑨ Casa San Martín
- ⑩ Marché de Boulogne sur mer
- ⑪ Boulogne Fish market
- ⑫ Les Buildings

Leave the station and go right along Bd Voltaire to the end of the road.

Then there are two choices depending on whether you feel happy walking along a rather isolated path (1). If that's OK for you, continue straight on under the railway bridge and then onto the little path by the side of the railway (Rue Tour Française) which leads on to Rue du Mont de Terre all the way to the top.

For the alternative route (marked in green on the map), turn left along Rue National and turn right on to Rue Farinette and then follow the road as it continues to the right all the way to the top. On the first left is a [school museum](#) which has three classrooms at different periods of time 1850-1879, 1879-1950 and 1950s to the present.

At the top, you will see the ramparts of the Haute Ville (2). Follow these to the left until you reach an archway which you can go through.

Continue straight along this street (Rue du Puits d'Amour) and past the grandly titled Imperial Palace (3), which may seem rather modest in size, much like Napoleon who planned his invasion of Britain from here. In the end he decided against the visit and instead took his Grand Army on a trip to Moscow which didn't get a good review from his troops.

Further on is the Hotel de Ville (4) fronted by the Jardin Éphémère with its ever-changing (ephemeral) displays.





*Imperial Palace*



*Jardin Éphémère*

On my last visit there was a collection of musical instruments, before that a bed of ornamental cabbages and on another occasion it was filled with oversized gardening equipment.



*Imperial Palace*



*Beffroi*

Behind the Hotel is the Beffroi (5) which was built during the 12th Century on Roman remains and is one of a collection of 55 UNESCO-listed belfries across Northern France and Belgium which were symbols of civic pride, independence and safety during the middle ages.

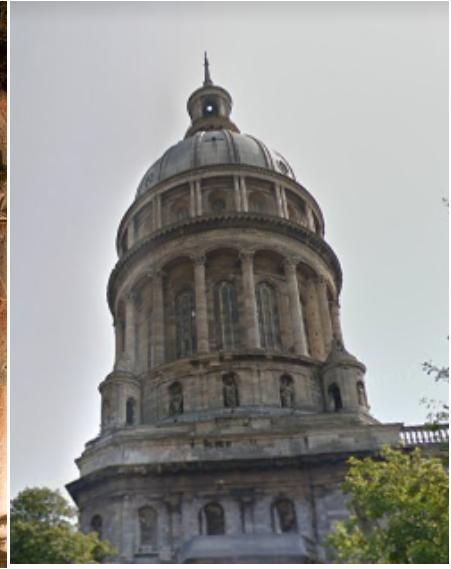
(6) Continue on along Rue de Lille with its various shops, restaurants and tourists looking for knick-knacks and on to the Basilica of Notre-Dame.

The Basilica was built in the 19th Century to replace the original which had been destroyed in the French Revolution but still retains its original crypt in all its colourful glory.





*Crypt - OT Boulogne*



*Basilica - Google*

(7) Turn right down Rue du Chateau which takes you to the Medieval fortified Chateau containing the [city museum](#).

At the front of the Chateau, you can join the path along the ramparts for a superior view of the old town.

(8) On the far side beyond the walls, is an obelisk to and monument to Egyptologist, Auguste Mariette along with a reconstructed galley. We can take a closer look by leaving the ramparts at the Port des Dunes.



*Auguste Mariette*



*reconstructed galley*

From there, take the Grand Rue back down the hill into the lower town passing Casa San Martin (9) - a museum to Argentine liberation hero [José San Martin](#) and further down, Place Dalton, where the market is set up on Saturdays (10).

(11) Near the bottom of the hill, turn right on to Rue Victor Hugo for more shopping opportunities and left on the Rue Faidherbe where we can see the docks and stop to check out the seafood.



*Fish market*

The market's watched over by Batisse and Zabelle - Boulogne's favourite fisherman and his wife who for a hundred years have been appearing in the town's processions.



*Batisse*



*Zabelle*

The four blocks of flats behind you are 'Les Buildings' (12) which were part of the rebuild of the port area after it was heavily damaged during the Second World War. [Brutalist](#) buildings like these have mostly met with the wrecking ball across Europe, but here they still take pride of place.



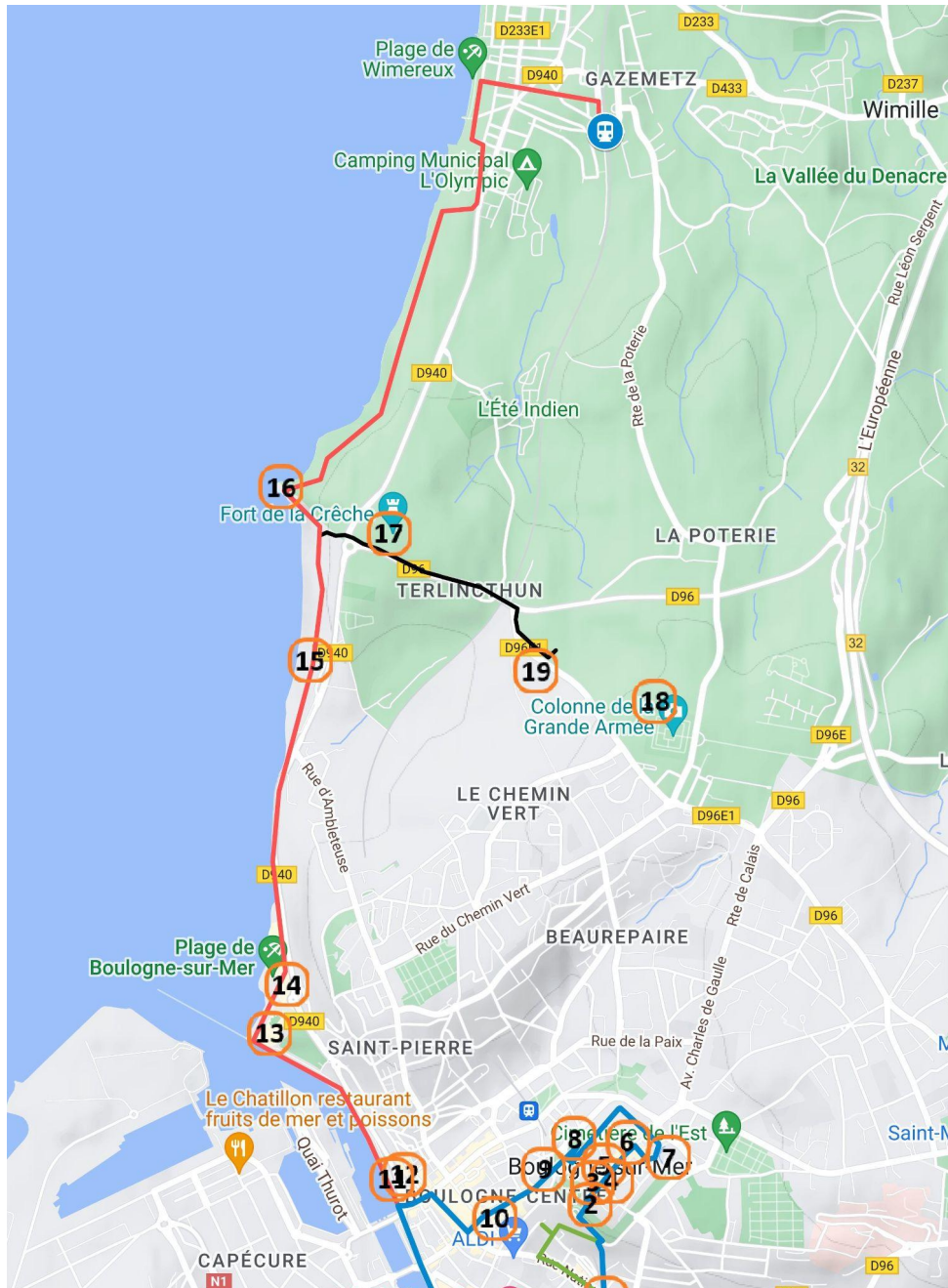


Time to walk back to the station, however if you have a spring in your step, you might fancy walking along the coastal path to Wimereux (see red route below).

Otherwise, walk back along the quayside Boulevard François Mitterrand and Boulevard Diderot and at the next set of four brutalist blocks of flats, cut through the car park and on to Rue Ferdinand Buisson which leads back to the station.

## Coastal walk to Wimereux (6km red (9km including blue route) )

This walk takes us along the ups and downs of the Côte d'Opale coastal path to the neighbouring resort of Wimereux and pretty much guarantees great views and a bracing breeze.



- 13 Nausicaá
- 14 Statue General San Martín
- 15 Vue panoramique
- 16 La Pointe de la Crèche
- 18 Column of the Grande Armée
- 17 Fort de la Crèche

Continue along the seafront past the seafood stalls and along the front past the yachts and on to the sealife centre [Nausicaa](#) (13).

From here we get our first view of the large sweep of sand with little beach huts and experience the fulsome gusts of wind which makes it ideal for char-a-voile (sand yachting).





If you fancy a go yourself, you can find out more [here](#).

There's also a grand statue of José San Martín - the guy who helped liberate Argentina who's museum we passed coming from the Haute Ville (14).

There are plenty of cafes and restaurants appealing to French Belgian and English speaking tourists offering french classics like crepes, Belgian staples of moules frites and a British dish that they have taken to their heart - Welsh, or rather Welsh rarebit.

(15) As we climb up the hill, don't forget to look back to see the full sweep of the beach, harbour and bracing coastline that make up the Côte d'Opale including sea birds and the odd German pillbox that's tumbled into the sea.



Near the top, a path leads back to the road and you could make a detour to visit the British Wartime Cemetery of Terlincthun (see black route below).

(16) The coastal path leads up to a high point, the Forteresse de la Pointe de la Crèche and further in land, the [Fort de la Creche](#) (17) containing Second World War bunkers. These in turn



were built on top of 19th Century fortifications - all under the watchful eye of Napoleon (18) who stands on top of a column looking wistfully towards blighty.

From here you can also see the destination of Wimereux below. Follow the path down and after a stroll along the front, turn right on to Avenue de la Mer to reach the train station.

## British War Cemetery and Fort de la Creche (1.2km black)

By following this short diversion we get to visit the British War Cemetery (19). Near the top of the hill, a marked path leads back to the road which has a pavement on the left taking you past Fort de la Creche and on to the British War Cemetery at Terlincthun containing 4,000 graves. Including some that hint at the more complex side of European history than often painted, such as the grave of Private Schwartz of the Russian Imperial Army.



*Terlincthun British War Cemetery - Google*