

History and stories of the island

A site occupied since prehistoric times

The occupation of the site dates from 100 000 years before Christ. Three important periods can be noticed :

- Neanderthal (100 000 years BC) left relics and traces of his passage to Tatihou.
- Bronze age (1800 to 1000 years BC) : some land allotments and traces of agricultural buildings were found.
- In the IXth century, the Vikings settling on the coasts of Normandy, named the island « Tatihou » (« hou » = land surrounded by water and « tat » = Scandinavian proper name).

The Battle of la Hougue

The battle of Barfleur-La Hougue took place from May 30th to June 2nd, 1692.

In 1692, the island only had a few redoubts protected by earth walls that were built following an inspection of Vauban in 1688.

The battle of Barfleur-La Hougue confront the France and an Anglo-Dutch coalition. At the end of the battle, eleven French vessels commanded by Admiral Tourville were beached and burned between Tatihou and the pointe of La Hougue.

As early as 1694, in order to defend the Bay against new attacks, Tatihou and la Hougue towers were built by Benjamin de Combes, a Vauban engineer. Since 2008, they are listed World Heritage of the UNESCO. Vauban notes in 1699 that the « La Hougue harbour is the best in France ».

The fortifications went on until the XXth century with the construction of a fort and sizeable powder magazines then elements of the Atlantic Wall.

Lazaret, scientific laboratory and more recently, center for children

In order to avoid spreading the plague of Marseille in 1720, the King decided to create a lazaret on Tatihou. During « quarantines », goods and crews received fumigations with heaths, juniper berries, and old leather, etc. This medical unit functioned until the 1860's.

In 1887, the Museum of natural history based in Paris occupied the buildings of the lazaret. Researchers set up a marine laboratory with a sea water tower to study seaweed, plankton and experiment turbot farming.

In 1922, this laboratory moved to Saint-Servan then to Dinard. In 1926, children became the occupants of the island. This outdoor school of health education stayed on the island until the war.

In 1948, the educationalist Camille Belliard, settled on the island and catered to young people in difficulty. These teenagers were in judicial or family placement and benefited from the vocational building industry training until 1984.

Heritage, protection and development

During several years, this island was deserted until its assignment to the « Conservatoire de l'espace littoral », a public corporation charged with protecting the natural coasts of France.

In 1990 a management agreement entrusts the County Council of La Manche for development, management and cultural activities of the island.

On June 5th 1992, on the occasion of the tercentenary of the Battle of La Hougue, Tatihou island and its maritime museum opened to the public.

Services provided :

- Thematic shop and restaurant
- Discovery center (52 beds), run by the local educational authority, day-long educational activities and documents for teachers.
- Seminar centre for companies and individual accommodation (52 beds).

Good Behaviour Code

Please, help us to preserve this fragile area :

- Do not throw any waste on the island or on the beaches. To promote responsible behavior, no dustbins are provided. So please take away your rubbish.
- Smoking friends, it takes 10 years for cigarette butts to degrade, so please pick them up.
- Camping is not allowed.

Tatihou Partners

- District of Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue
- Groupe Ornithologique Normand (bird protection in Normandy).
- Ministries for culture (DRAC), Ecology (DREAL) and State Education.


- Every year, in August, the « Traversées de Tatihou », a festival of traditional music from around the world.
- Thematic weekends, family workshops sessions and activity booklets. Ask for a programm.

- Dogs are not allowed on the island, even on a lead, because they can disturb the seabirds (municipal by-law of 2004).
- Respect the tranquility of birds, especially during nesting period (mid-March to mid-July)
- Do not pick wild plants and flowers of gardens. Leave them for the pleasure of all.

- Conservatoire de l'espace littoral (coastline conservation authority).
- Restoration work have benefited from the financial support of the regional council of Basse-Normandie and the European Union.

Informations

Tatihou island is a part of the network of sites and museums managed by the County Council of la Manche.



SITES
&
MUSÉES
Département
de la Manche

Tatihou reception

Tickets and individual reservation


Quai Vauban
50550 Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue
T. 02 33 54 33 33


patrimoine.manche.fr

Ile Tatihou


(groups/accommodation)

BP3 - 50550 Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue
France
T. 02 33 54 33 33 - fax 02 33 54 33 47
resa.tatihou@manche.fr

 Patrimoine et musées de la Manche



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de la Manche

Tatihou Island

Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue

Manche

Welcome to Tatihou

Please follow the instructions given to you by the ticket office as to where and when to board and the exact time, depending on the tide, to go to the appropriate boarding area to await the boat.



Enjoy your visit !



Crossing on the Tatihou II boat

Boarding at Green Light Pier « Jetée feu vert » : sailing to the island !

The boat « Tatihou II » is unique. This boat was inspired by shell industry barges of the Cancale bay. This amphibious boat operates by hydraulic propulsion which moves propellers and wheels. Therefore, the boat is equipped with a steering wheel for driving and boating. The boat sails over the oyster beds and close to the site of the shipwrecks of the Battle of La Hougue . On the horizon, towards the south, you can see the fortified St-Marcouf islands

Boarding on the beach at « la Cale » : driving to the island !

The « Tatihou II » crosses the Rhun, which is covered with every tide . This area is used by oyster-farmers, who have oyster beds set up on 250 hectares in the shallow tidal areas, « l'estran ». Saint- Vaast is the oldest oyster basin of La Manche. This oyster is characterized by its hazelnut taste linked to the quality of the water and to the oyster-farming techniques using tables and pouches. The yearly production is about 6500 tons.

Crossings on foot

At the low tide, it is possible to reach Tatihou. Be carefull, you have to walk the round trip. Ask us before your departure in order to know the tide table.

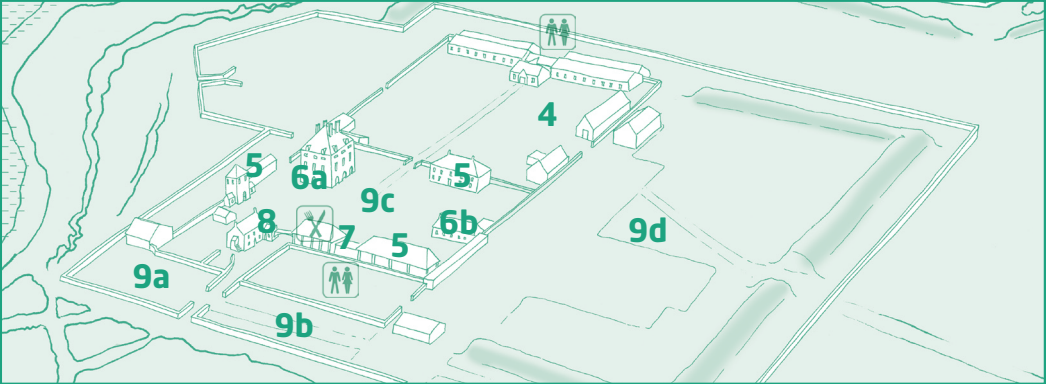
Visitor's guide book

patrimoine.manche.fr



Map of the island

For a chronological coherence, we advise you to start the visit with the fort and to finish with the discovery of the museum and the lazaret.



1 - The harbour

2 - The customs house

This is the starting point of the guided tours.

3 - The lazaret

4 - The maritime museum of Tatihou

Permanent collections display

- Flottes et fracas, les épaves de La Hougue, 1692 (The Navy of Louis XIV).
- Sagas de Tatihou, histoire d'une île (Stories and the history of the island).
- The natural history gallery (discovery of the natural habitats between the dune and the open sea).
- The boat-shed (traditional fishing boats and pleasure craft from the coastline of La Manche and Calvados).
- A boat house for the longliner «Sainte-Thérèse-Souvenez-Vous» which is an emblematic fishing boat in le Val de Saïre

Temporary exhibitions

- In «Le seigneur» room, temporary exhibitions about history, fine arts and marine ethnology.

Reception of groups and accommodation

5 - Accommodation is available for groups and individual visitors

6 - Meeting rooms : 6a - la salle des chercheurs; 6b - La salle des équipages.

7 - Restaurant for groups and individual visitors for one stay overnight

8 - Reception and administration office

Gardens

9a - The Moroccan garden - It has the shape of mediterranean gardens. Its species come mainly from Morocco.

9b - The Discovery garden - This botanical garden grows freely and gathers the local coastal plants.

9c - The Acclimatisation garden - This garden shows unexpected vegetation from the four corners of the world, indicating the mild and oceanic climate of Tatihou.

9d - The Large maritime garden - In a contemporary set, native flora is presented in thematic gardens: kitchen garden, gardens of the fumigations but also the reed beds, the moors, the reconstituted dunes and the mounds of heathers.

The natural environment

10 - The plain

Nesting area followed by the "Groupe Ornithologique Normand". About 150 species of birds (migrating, nesting or occasional visitors) attend the island and its surroundings. Respect their tranquility. Managed by the « Syndicat Mixte des espaces littoraux de la Manche », the plain is maintained by a flock of sheep.

11 - The Islet fort

Nesting area

Unauthorized access by municipal by-law.

12 - The foreshore and marine environment

The fort

Here, three hundred years of fortification can be observed.

13 - The Vauban tower, XVIIth century

Built in 1694 to defend the natural harbour of Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue.

14 - The chapel

15 - The powder magazines , XIXth century

16 - The barrack 7, XIXth century

17 - The consolidated remains of the former fortified farm buildings

18 - Fortifications of the Second World War

19 - The bird observatory

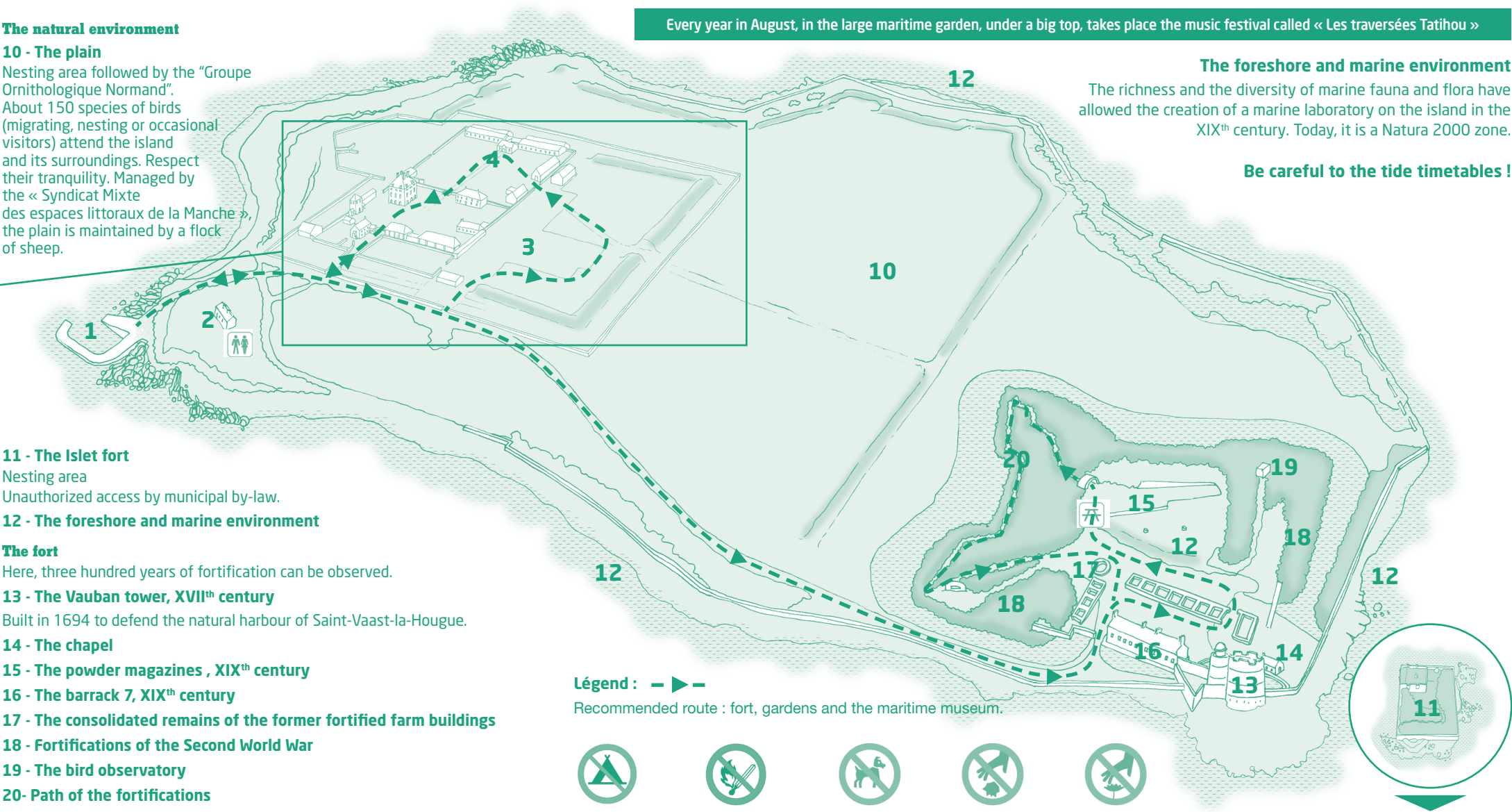
20- Path of the fortifications

Every year in August, in the large maritime garden, under a big top, takes place the music festival called « Les traversées Tatihou »

The foreshore and marine environment

The richness and the diversity of marine fauna and flora have allowed the creation of a marine laboratory on the island in the XIXth century. Today, it is a Natura 2000 zone.

Be careful to the tide timetables !



Légend : — ► —

Recommended route : fort, gardens and the maritime museum.

