

PRESS KIT

**4 DAYS
TO CELEBRATE
THE WORLD'S
FINEST TALL SHIPS!**

VOILES & LEGENDE

FROM JULY 10 TO 13 2025 - DUNKIRK

FREE

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EDITORIAL



Sail Training International

Sail Training International is a global charity that provides experience-based learning through sail training and is also the organiser of the world-renowned Tall Ships Races (TSR).

For nearly 70 years, we've been the international voice of sail training, providing truly unique, life-changing opportunities for young people aged 15 to 25 from around the world, fostering confidence, resilience and giving them the chance to experience the adventure of life at sea.

The Tall Ships Races will be coming to France for the first time since 2012, in July 2025, and 200 young people will have the chance to set sail between Le Havre and Dunkirk, and between Dunkirk and Aberdeen in Scotland.

"We're truly honoured that Dunkirk will be a host port for the 2025 edition."



Hosting a leg of the world's most famous sail training tall ships race in Dunkirk makes perfect sense to us.

Through these four days of celebration and the historic gathering of 2000 sailors around the quays of the Citadel, we're celebrating the maritime identity of our city and our region. We're all very proud of this. It sums up our values of community, courage and openness to the world.

The second dimension of this "Legendary Sailing Ships" event, just as important in my view, is young people! Creating vocations, opening up new horizons, passing on knowledge... this has been one of the main objectives of SAIL TRAINING INTERNATIONAL since the race was created, and the public policies we've been operating in Dunkirk for the past 10 years.

I personally wanted the 200 young apprentice sailors from Dunkirk who'll be setting sail in the TALL SHIPS RACE this year to be fully supported by our community. To make this exceptional experience truly accessible to all young people in our region. Along with these four days of seafaring celebration, discoveries and shows, which are entirely free.

From 10 to 13 July, come along and join the legend with us!

Patrice Vergriete

Former Minister,

Mayor of Dunkirk

President of the Urban Community.



FROM 10 TO 13 JULY 2025, the world's most beautiful sailing ships will be stopping off in Dunkirk

From 10 to 13 July 2025, Dunkirk will host the second leg of the Tall Ships Races 2025 - the famous international race for tall ship training vessels, organised by the Sail Training International association. To mark the occasion, no fewer than **40 outstanding sailboats and nearly 2000 sailors from around the world** will stop in the corsair city, in its commercial port, for four days of festivities and free activities open to all, centred on maritime heritage and the spirit of the sea.

The event, dubbed “**Legendary Sailing Ships Dunkirk 2025**”, offers an opportunity to discover, with family or friends, some of the world's most beautiful sailing ships, such as the Belem, Christian Radich, Pascual Flores, Morgenster and Dar Mlodziezy - one of the largest sailing ships in existence.

Throughout their stopover, the public will also be invited to get involved and enjoy a rich cultural and festive programme. **Visitors will have free access to the boats and can take part in a wide range of activities**, including concerts, workshops and two major evening events.

They can also attend two major highlights: the crew parade and the great departure of the ships.

With nearly **600 000** visitors expected to attend, the event promises to be a highlight of the summer. More than 650 volunteers will be on hand to welcome the public and bring this incredible maritime event to life.

Designed to encourage international friendship and training for young people in the art of sailing, the “**Tall Ships Races**” have the defining characteristic of featuring competitions between sailboats, more than half of whose crews are made up of young people aged 15 to 25. In Dunkirk, **nearly 200 young people from the region will experience this maritime odyssey as trainee sailors.**

Combining heritage, culture and a spirit of adventure, the **Legendary Sailing Ships Dunkirk 2025** promises to be **a unique event not to be missed this summer.**



KEY FIGURES

650
VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED

+50
SAILING BOATS FROM
AROUND THE WORLD

2 000
SAILORS TAKING PART

200
YOUNG APPRENTICE SAILORS FROM
THE DUNKIRK AREA

600 000
VISITORS EXPECTED

4
DAYS
OF FESTIVITIES

THE TALL SHIPS RACES: the most famous international race for tall ship training vessels since 1956

Sail Training International: a school of life on the ocean waves

Sail Training International is an international charity behind the Tall Ships Races, designed to introduce young people to sailing. **For nearly 70 years, it has worked for the personal development and education of young people aged 15 to 25**, offering them a unique experience at sea aboard majestic sailing ships both old and modern from around the world.

Beyond sailing, Sail Training International offers hands-on learning based on cooperation, selfdiscovery, empowerment and self-confidence. **Its programmes and scholarships provide thousands of young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with lifechanging opportunities:** developing their potential, strengthening their resilience and experiencing an extraordinary human adventure.

The Tall Ships Races 2025: a first for Dunkirk!

For the first time since its creation in 1956, **the Tall Ships Races 2025 will be stopping over in Dunkirk.** The fleet of tall ships will cross the English Channel and North Sea, connecting five iconic port cities: Le Havre, Dunkirk, Aberdeen (Scotland - UK), Kristiansand (Norway) and Esbjerg (Denmark). The event will take place from Friday 4 July to Saturday 9 August, alternating between spectacular regattas and flotilla cruises.

This international event, considered one of the most prestigious of all tall ship races, brings together dozens of vessels from around the world each year. More than just regattas, the Tall Ships Races train young people in sailing in a multicultural environment, fostering openness to the world.

Each event is carefully prepared four years in advance by **Sail Training International**, which selects a European maritime zone before opening a call for applications from the region's ports. Dunkirk was selected as part of this process, thanks to its **commitment to young people, the quality of its port infrastructure, its cultural dynamism and strong potential for hosting the event.** By hosting this iconic stage, Dunkirk will join the history of the race, **confirming its place among the major European seaports.**

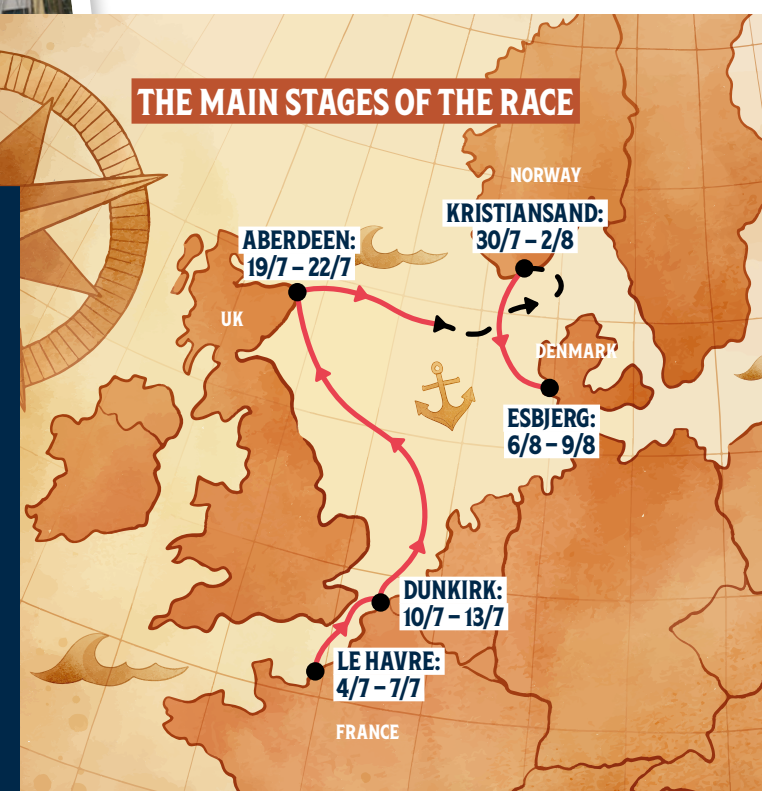
200 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DUNKIRK SET OFF ON AN ODYSSEY 100% FUNDED BY THE DUC

As part of the Tall Ships Races 2025, the Dunkirk Urban Community (DUC) has a **strong ambition:** to enable 200 young people from the region, aged 15 to 25, to enjoy the unique experience of sailing on some amazing tall ships. Two options have been put forward: a three-day voyage between Le Havre and Dunkirk, open to all, and a six-day crossing from Dunkirk to Aberdeen (Scotland), reserved for those over 18 years of age with prior sailing experience.

The DUC is the first local authority to fully fund the participation of its young people, as part of an inclusive, supportive approach, open to all with no distinction. Participants will include young people from all backgrounds - middle school, high school and university students, as well as young people supported by the École de la Deuxième Chance and Entreprendre Ensemble collective, and young people with mild disabilities compatible with sailing. **Everyone will have the opportunity to get involved in this unique adventure, which is both human, maritime and educational.**

Spread across twelve sailboats, the young people are prepared in advance through team-building sessions designed to create real team spirit. Each crew is accompanied by three ambassadors who have already taken part in a previous year's event and are responsible for guiding new recruits. During the voyage, the apprentice sailors will be fully involved in life on board: manoeuvres, cooking, boat maintenance, teamwork, etc. **The experience involves total immersion in the daily life of the crew**, ideal for learning, self-discovery and creating lasting memories.

Taking part in the Tall Ships Races is an intense human experience that helps young people develop essential skills such as self-confidence, communication, a sense of responsibility and the ability to really push themselves. Faced with daily challenges, they learn to step outside their comfort zone, manage stress and show resilience and courage. They also acquire technical skills, better understanding of the marine environment, and open up to other cultures by experiencing an international adventure. **A true personal and professional springboard.**



LEGENDARY SAILING SHIPS DUNKIRK 2025:

a stopover to discover the world's most beautiful tall ships and celebrate maritime culture!

Much more than just a competition at sea, the Tall Ships Races are also a celebration of maritime heritage and the seafaring spirit. Each stopover is an invitation to discover the culture and identity of the host ports amid a festive, welcoming atmosphere.

As the second leg of the race, Dunkirk promises four days of celebration from 10 to 13 July. The city will weigh anchor with an exceptional programme in store: workshops, boat tours, awards presentations, live shows, concerts and non-stop cultural events, spread across various themed villages. It's all 100% free and accessible to everyone!

Two highlights are also planned during the stopover:

- The crew parade (11 July)
- The great departure of the ships (13 July), when the sailing ships leave port one by one and set sail for Scotland



Hosting the Tall Ships Race 2025 is a symbolic event for the corsair city. Combining history, maritime heritage, contemporary art and authentic landscapes, Dunkirk is poised to attract more than 600 000 visitors from around the world.

Through this fabulous event, the city hopes to:

- blend tradition and modernity by bringing together the sailing boats of yesterday, today and tomorrow,
- strengthen the region's maritime identity,
- open up the world of sailing to as many people as possible,
- and mobilise local economic and community stakeholders for an inclusive, unifying event.

THOMAS RUYANT, SPECIAL SPONSOR OF THE LEGENDARY SAILING SHIPS DUNKIRK 2025

To support this amazing and highly symbolic event for the region, the "Legendary Sailing Ships Dunkirk 2025" will have sailor Thomas Ruyant as its sponsor. Known as "the king of transatlantic races", this Dunkirk sailor, born in 1981 in Saint-Pol-sur-Mer, has made a name for himself by winning numerous transatlantic races: Mini-Transat 2009, Route du Rhum in Class 40 in 2010, IMOCA in 2022, Transat Jacques Vabre with Morgan Lagravière in 2021 and 2023, and Transat AG2R La Mondiale with Adrien Hardy in 2018.

Having finished 6th in the 2020 Vendée Globe and 7th in the 2024-2025 Vendée Globe, Thomas also held the record in 2024 for the longest distance covered in 24 hours solo in a monohull.

Throughout his career, Thomas has embodied local maritime excellence, providing a true source of inspiration for the youth of Dunkirk. He will support the young sailors during the four days of festivities across a range of highlights.

VULNERABLE

FREE SHIP TOURS,
WITH CULTURAL AND
MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT
THROUGHOUT
THE EVENT

PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, 10 JULY

from 10.00am to 9.00pm

The village opens and festivities get underway, docking of the last sailboats.

FRIDAY, 11 JULY

from 10.00am to 11.00pm

Crew parade in the Citadel, awards ceremony and maritime creative evening "Le Palais Des Eaux" (Water Palace) on the quays of the Citadel and Quai des Hollandais in Dunkirk.

SATURDAY, 12 JULY

from 10.00am to 11.00pm

Crew change day (the 150 apprentice sailors arriving from Le Havre will disembark the ships while the 50 apprentice sailors leaving for Scotland come on board and closing evening with its "drone show".

SUNDAY, 13 JULY

from 10.00am to 6.00pm

The great departure of the ships. The sailing ships leave Dunkirk for Aberdeen, Scotland.

4 days to celebrate the world's most beautiful sailing ships

During the four days of festivities, some twenty sailing ships, among the 40 exceptional vessels present, will be offering free tours and receptions along the quays of the historic port of Dunkirk. Among the magnificent sailing ships you can visit are:

DAR MŁODZIEŻY

Class: A
Nationality: Pologne
Year of construction: 1982
Home port: Gdynia
Height: 44,49 m
Total length: 108,82 m

Crew on board: 32 members. The Dar Młodzieży, built in 1982 for the Maritime Academy in Gdynia, is the successor to the Dar Pomorza and has inspired four sister ships. A renowned sail training vessel, it's taken part in the Tall Ships Races for 25 years and has completed several circumnavigations, including the one for the Australian bicentenary in 1988.



CHRISTIAN RADISH

Class: A
Nationality: Norvège
Year of construction: 1937
Home port: Oslo
Height: 37,7 m
Total length: 73 m

Crew on board: 25 members. One of Norway's most iconic sailing ships, it continues training naval students in winter. In summer, it offers trips for schools, companies and private parties, and takes part in tall ships races. With its 1360 m² of sails, 9000 metres of rigging and a 37.7-metre main mast, the Christian Radich is a formidable competitor in regattas and a popular entertainment venue in harbours.



BELEM

Class: A
Nationality: France
Year of construction: 1896
Home port: Brest
Height: 28,99 m
Total length: 58 m

Crew on board: 16 members. Over 120 years old, it started life as a cargo ship, transporting goods from the West Indies, Brazil and French Guiana to Nantes. It then became the Duke of Westminster's private yacht, renamed Fantome II, before sailing under the ownership of Sir Arthur Guinness. The Belem accompanied the Olympic flame on its journey to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, symbolising the union of history and sport, as it crossed France.

THE MORGENSTER

Class: A
Nationality: Netherlands
Year of construction: 1919
Home port: Den Helder
Height: 25 m
Total length: 38 m

Crew on board: Up to 44 people on board, including crew and trainees. Built in 1919 as the herring lugger Vrouw Maria SCH 324 for the fishing company den Dulk, and restored in 2008. The Morgenster is a Dutch sail training ship of the brig type. It is designed to host a crew made up of professionals and trainees learning traditional sailing.



THE DUNKIRK COASTLINE,

a land of sailors with its many different facets



Jean Bart, a hero of Dunkirk

Jean Bart, born in 1650 in Dunkirk, perfectly embodies the spirit of the corsair city and its maritime heritage. At the age of 12, he became a cabin boy and learned his trade on a brigantine. His exploits at sea, particularly as a privateer captain, quickly raised him to the rank of national hero. Nicknamed the “Sun King’s corsair”, Jean Bart distinguished himself through his bravery and strategic thinking, particularly during his spectacular escape from captivity in England and decisive victory at the Battle of Texel, which saved France from famine.

The people of Dunkirk honour his memory with a statue unveiled in 1845, and still sing an anthem dedicated to him during carnival. **Proud of its naval past**, the city keeps alive the memory of this great sailor, whose legend remains inseparable from Dunkirk’s maritime history.



Dunkirk, a land of sailors

Since its very early days as a small fishing village in the year 800, Dunkirk has always been linked to maritime activity. **The city is proud of its maritime heritage. As France’s third-largest port**, it’s a true crossroads of naval history.

Visitors can immerse themselves in this universe by exploring iconic sites, such as the Tourville Space, where the construction of the Jean Bart ship pays tribute to the great navy of Louis XIV, or the Maritime and Port Museum, which traces the history of Dunkirk through collections and historical ships, including the Duchesse Anne. The latter, the largest three-masted ship in France and a true jewel of Dunkirk’s maritime heritage, is undergoing a complete restoration this year, faithfully restoring it to its original state, led by the Dunkirk Urban Community. The Dunkirk Port Centre, meanwhile, provides an interactive experience to understand the port’s current challenges.

The treasures of western France, such as the Petit-Fort-Philippe lighthouse and Vauban’s fortifications, also bear witness to the city’s strategic importance. **The people of Dunkirk have long sailed the world’s seas**, and their maritime expertise continues today through activities such as fishing, shipbuilding and maritime tourism. Dunkirk is a true land of sailors where history, culture and the spirit of the sea come together to offer visitors an unforgettable experience.



Dunkirk’s coastline: the tourist revival

Long neglected due to its industrial character, the Dunkirk coastline has been experiencing a real revival for several years and is now playing its **multifaceted seaside tourism card**: natural landscapes, seafaring activities, yachting, arts, architecture, and maritime and historical heritage. **Both natural and raw, urban and rejuvenating, the destination has something for everyone**: its towns, dunes and port, its six beaches, as well as its history and countless initiatives offer a whole range of things to discover.

Please note: the seafront of the seaside resort Malo-les-Bains, which has been fully renovated in recent years, offers a wide promenade lined with lookout points and terraces, perfect for enjoying an ice cream or taking a stroll with family or friends.

INFORMATION USEFUL

HOW TO GET TO DUNKIRK?

Less than three hours from five major European capitals (London, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam and Luxembourg), Dunkirk is an easily accessible destination by road, train or even by boat.

BY ROAD



- From Lille, take the A25.
- From Paris, take the A1.
- From Belgium, take the A16.
- From Boulogne-Calais, take the A16

BY TRAIN



- Arras → Hazebrouck → Dunkerque/Calais – Line 6
 - Dunkerque → Hazebrouck → Armentières → Lille – Line 8
 - Calais → Dunkerque – Line 9
- For information, call SNCF 36 35, visit www.voyages-sncf.com or www.ter-sncf.com/hautes-de-france

(From Belgium: To Adinkerke-De Panne station, then take the free DKBus to Dunkirk)

BY SEA



Dover-Dunkirk by DFDS ferry.
For more information, call +33 2 32 14 68 50 or email resapaxdetroit@dfds.com
www.dfdsseaways.fr
Tickets on sale at the Dunkirk Tourist Office.

BY PLANE



Aéroport de Lille-Lesquin is 85 km away.
Information is available on the website: www.lille.aeroport.fr
Aéroport de Bruxelles (Zaventem) is 160 km away.
Information is available on the website: www.brusselsairport.be

Please note: the Dunkirk area has a totally free public transport network, 7 days a week.
For information about the network: www.dkbuss.com



WHERE TO STAY IN DUNKIRK?

Hotels, guesthouses, holiday rentals and furnished accommodation, tourist residences, campsites, group accommodation ... several options are available to visitors. More information. **More information at**: <https://www.dunkirk-tourism.com/prepare-your-stay/places-to-stay/>

SECURE SITE ENTRANCES:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| A Trystram Lock Road | Event perimeter | Main Stage |
| B Minck | Quay closed to the public | Second Stage |
| C Estacade Quay | Moored sailing ships/vessels | SNCF station |
| D Florence Arthaud entrance | Pedestrian zone | Bike park |
| E Chaussée des darses | | |





You'll find all the information

about the Legendary Sailing Ships Dunkirk 2025 event
on the website: voilesdelegende.fr

Press contact

Agence Oxygen

voilesdelegende@oxygen-rp.com

Sophie Robert-Beys - +33 (0)6.34.99.94.10

Capucine Wacogne - +33 (0)6.59.67.65.92



**VOILES
LEGENDE**
Dunkerque 2025

DUNKERQUE
PORT

