

Topic Page: [Cherbourg](#)

Definition: **Cherbourg** from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate(R) Dictionary*

 [pronunciation](#)

city & port NW France on Cotentin Peninsula on English Channel pop 25,337

Summary Article: **Cherbourg**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

French port and naval station at the northern end of the Cotentin peninsula, in Manche *département*; population (2005 est) 40,500. There is an institute for studies in nuclear warfare, and the town's dry-docks house some of the largest shipbuilding yards in France. Other industries include the manufacture of hosiery and engineering goods. Transatlantic maritime trade has declined greatly.

During World War II, Cherbourg was captured in June 1944 by US troops, who thus gained their first large port of entry into France. Both the commercial and naval ports, which are quite distinct from each other, were heavily damaged and the naval arsenal completely destroyed; restoration of the harbour was only completed in 1952. A nuclear processing plant is situated at nearby Cap de la Hague. There are ferry links to Portsmouth, Southampton and Poole in England, and Rosslare in Ireland.

Naval importance Cherbourg is the headquarters of one of the eight naval districts of France, and possesses a naval school. The bay is sheltered to the north, 4 km/2.5 mi from the harbour, by a huge breakwater over 3 km/1.8 mi long, 198 m/650 ft wide at its base and 9 m/30 ft high. A series of coastal redoubts and large fortifications has historically rendered Cherbourg almost impregnable from the sea. A War and Liberation Museum is sited in the Fort du Roule, situated on a hill overlooking the harbour and once a German stronghold.

History It is commonly supposed that Cherbourg occupies the site of the Roman station of **Coriallum**, and the name Cherbourg was long regarded as a corruption of **Caesaris Burgus**. In 1686 the military engineer Vauban planned the harbour works, which were continued under Napoleon I but not finally completed until 1856.

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