

Le site de Caen est habité depuis l'époque gallo-romaine mais nous n'avons pas beaucoup d'informations sur la ville avant le 11^e siècle. On compte plusieurs **paroisses*** : Saint-Martin, Saint-Julien, Saint-Pierre, Saint-Jean, Saint-Étienne, Saint-Sauveur, Saint-Georges, Saint-Gilles et probablement Saint-Michel-de-Vaucelles.

En 1025, Caen est mentionnée pour la première fois dans la **Charte*** de l'abbaye de Fécamp :

« *La ville qui s'appelle Cathim (Caen), sur la rivière Orne, de part et d'autre, avec ses églises, ses vignes, ses prés, ses moulins, avec le marché, le tonlieu* et le port, et toutes ses dépendances* ».

Vers 1050 Guillaume de Normandie décide d'y construire un château. Puis il fonde l'Abbaye-aux-Hommes et l'Abbaye-aux-Dames. Ainsi la ville se dessine avec le château sur l'éperon rocheux qui surplombe le bourg ducal entouré de remparts avec à l'est le bourg l'Abbesse et à l'ouest le bourg l'Abbé avec chacun son abbaye. Au sud du bourg ducal se situe la paroisse Saint-Jean.



Un florissant commerce maritime va naître après la conquête de l'Angleterre grâce à l'Orne qui donne accès à la mer.

Plan de Caen au 11^e et 12^e siècles
« Caen...20 siècles d'histoire » -
Editions Association Le Mois - 1982

POUR ALLER PLUS LOIN

Découvrez un exemple de charte !
[Cliquez ici](#)

BD : Caen Tome 1, *De Guillaume le Conquérant à la guerre de Cent ans*.
Editions Petit à petit, 2018

LEXIQUE

Charte = titre de propriété, de vente, de privilège accordé par un seigneur.

Paroisse = village ou quartier avec une église formant le territoire dont s'occupe un curé.

Tonlieu = impôt ou taxe que l'on percevait au Moyen Âge sur les marchandises transportées.



Cases F8 à J8, et F8 à F11

CAEN in the 11th century

Caen has been inhabited since Gallo-Roman times, but we have little information on the town before the 11th century. There were several **parishes***: Saint-Martin, Saint-Julien, Saint-Pierre, Saint-Jean, Saint-Étienne, Saint-Sauveur, Saint-Georges, Saint-Gilles and probably Saint-Michel-de-Vaucelles.

In 1025, Caen is mentioned for the first time in the **Charter*** of the Abbey of Fécamp:

“*The town called Cathim (Caen), on the river Orne, on both sides, with its churches, vineyards, meadows, mills, market, tonlieu* and port, and all its outbuildings*”.

Around 1050, William of Normandy decided to build a castle here. He then founded the Abbaye-aux-Hommes and the Abbaye-aux-Dames. The town thus took shape, with the castle on a rocky outcrop overlooking the walled ducal town, with the Abbesse and Abbé towns to the east and west respectively, each with its own abbey. To the south of the ducal town lies the parish of Saint-Jean.

After the conquest of England, a flourishing maritime trade was born, thanks to the Orne's access to the sea.

LEXICON

Charter = title of ownership, sale or privilege granted by a lord.

Parish = village or district with a church forming the territory under the care of a parish priest.

Tonlieu = tax levied in the Middle Ages on transported merchandise.



1000 years, 1000 children, is a project that was started in 2024 with the aim of having all pupils in Caen study the history and heritage of their town.

45 classes have worked on creating 53 fact sheets about Caen (William & Mathilde, the Castle, the Abbeys...). *You can see here the example of a fact sheet in French about Caen in the 11th century.*

11 quiz nights took place afterwards with 1000 pupils being able to test their knowledge about Caen.



CAEN CASTLE

Built around 1060 by William the Conqueror, the ducal castle became a favourite residence of the dukes of Normandy, kings of England, who transformed it into one of Europe's largest fortified enclosures, covering 5 hectares. Over the centuries, Caen Castle has been transformed into a royal fortress, a conscript barracks and now a museum campus housing the Fine Arts Museum and the Normandy Museum.

For the past 2 years, the interior spaces of the castle have been redeveloped to create a large city-centre park. This project's inauguration, from 20th to 22nd March 2025, will launch the Millennium celebrations.

MAJOR EVENTS IN 2025

Inauguration - Thursday 20 March

Brass bands will accompany the public from Place Saint-Sauveur, the Port and the Abbaye aux Dames to the Castle to start the festivities and play all evening.

Monumental Mural - B959

Screening on the walls of the castle from Thursday 20 to Saturday 29 March
From 7.50 pm to 11.00 pm – 6 minutes projection, shown every 30 minutes.

“Incandescences”, fire and

pyrotechnics show - La Machine

Thursday 20 to Saturday 22 March
7.50pm to 11.00pm – parade on the castle grounds

A Dive into Caen's 1000 years

Immersive show telling the story of the city through 360° images in the castle.

All year round from March - Free



CAEN HARBOUR

In the Middle Ages, the harbour was located at the head of the Saint-Pierre church, near the Leroy tower. Little Venice, the city was built on marshy land with several rivers: Orne, Small Orne, Great Odon, Small Odon and many canals. Water ditches were built as fortifications, waterways were used for commercial purposes and the town saw the installation of tanneries, dye works and mills who exported their products along with the famous Caen stone* throughout Europe and mostly to England.

**Caen stone was used in many English constructions such as the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Winchester Cathedral...*

Today, far from its original purpose, the Bassin Saint-Pierre or Caen harbour is a major hub of Caen life. On Sunday mornings, one of the region's biggest markets is held here. In summer, bars set up temporary terraces along the quays.

MAJOR EVENTS IN 2025

Maritime Weekend

27 to 29 June

48 ships will gather at the harbour for 3 days of maritime discovery ending with a grand maritime parade.

Over the weekend, 4 monumental works, such as a floating bridge, will be built by Olivier Grossetête and the public using cardboard.



“Débord(i)ons” – Presqu’île créative

27 June to end of August

Art-science-society trail dedicated to the importance of water.

“Aquanauts” – Cirkus Cirkör

19 to 21 September – 9.00 pm

Spectacular aquatic and aerial ballet with 40 performers



CAEN STREETS

Caen is a great place to visit. The city has lived and evolved with the times. The rivers that once encircled the city center have given way to a dynamic urban life. Devastated by the Second World War, the town has rebuilt around its rich history, must-see heritage sites and distinctive architecture, such as the Rue Saint-Pierre with its medieval timber-framed houses.

Markets, festivals, shows, sports and even a carnival... Caen has a lot to offer and is a wonderful town to explore!

MAJOR EVENTS IN 2025

Operatic Parade

9 May – 7.30 pm

4 floats accompanied by circus performers, dancers, musicians and over 1,000 participants will take to the streets of Caen to celebrate its heritage and its people.

Outdoor artworks

During the summer

50 works of art installed in the streets of Caen and its suburbs.

1000 plates banquet

30 & 31 August

Large gathering inviting participants to share a festive meal.

1001 voices for Peace

7 June – Zénith de Caen

More than 300 singers and musicians perform Karl Jenkins' Mass for Peace on the day after the D-Day ceremonies.