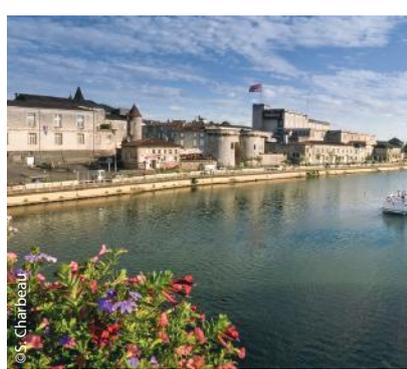


FRENCH  
ATLANTIC  
C O A S T

COGNAC  
COUNTRY

# PRESS KIT 2018



CHARENTES  
T O U R I S M

# WELCOME...

## ...TO THE PREMIER TOURIST DESTINATION IN FRANCE FOR FRENCH TRAVELLERS !

Welcome to the **premier tourist destination in France** for French travellers.

Situated on the Atlantic Coast between Nantes and Bordeaux, **the Charentes** area is the new name of the Charente-Maritime and Charente departments and is particularly well known thanks to certain destinations:

- **La Rochelle – Ile de Ré**,
- The Coast (**Ile d'Oléron**, **Royan**, Rochefort, Ile d'Aix, Ile Madame)
- Cognac country
- The **Marais Poitevin** (Green Venice)
- The **river Charente** with its beautiful countryside



## HOW TO GET HERE ?

### BY ROAD



#### A10 Paris :

450km to Angoulême | 430 km to La Rochelle

#### A10 Bordeaux :

115km to Angoulême | 190 km to La Rochelle

#### A83 / N137 Nantes :

250 km to Angoulême | 140 km to La Rochelle

### BY RAIL



#### TGV Atlantique

Direct rail links with Paris (2 hours to Angoulême - 2 hours 30 to La Rochelle), Bordeaux (40 minutes to Angoulême - 2 hours 10 to La Rochelle)

[uk.voyages-sncf.com/en/#/](http://uk.voyages-sncf.com/en/#/)

### BY AIR



La Rochelle - Ile de Ré Airport  
Phone : 33(0)5 46 42 86 70

[www.larochelle.aeroport.fr/en/](http://www.larochelle.aeroport.fr/en/)

Several regular airlines operate flights from Europe and France to La Rochelle - Ile de Ré airport : London (Stansted\* et Gatwick), Southampton, Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol, Dublin, Geneva, Porto, Bruxelles - Charleroi, Ajaccio, Lyon\*

**NEW : Leeds Bradford with Jet2.com**

# LES CHARENTES

## FEEL ITS INFINITE ENERGY

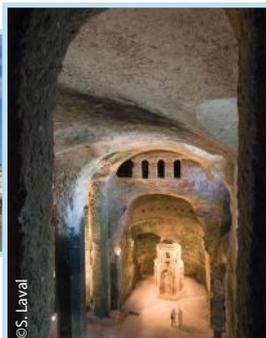
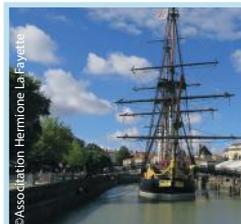
Charentes, cradle of adventures, discoveries and emotions ...

A long coastline, a distinctive light and warm climate, a countryside of contrasts and **beautiful colours**, preserved villages with their Romanesque churches, chapels, abbeys and other monuments, fine golden sands, **the islands** with their singular charm (**Ré**, Oléron, Aix et Madame), undulating hills; the natural wonder of the **Marais Poitevin** with its boats, the elegant towns, **notably Angoulême and La Rochelle** with its Old Port; the vineyards of **Cognac**...all these exceptional places entertain many visitors every year visiting or revisiting the area.

**#charentes**

## SUMMARY

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## LA ROCHELLE

The **three famous towers of La Rochelle** – Saint Nicholas, de la Chaine and de la Lanterne lighthouse are the most famous vestiges of the medieval, maritime fortifications of the town and from where there are magnificent views over to Fort Boyard, the old Port and the islands. The Lantern Tower is the oldest on the Atlantic Coast, rising to a height of 70 metres and it has always served as both a lighthouse and a prison. After years of renovation, the tower was re-opened to visitors in 2016.

## THE ARSENAL OF ROCHEFORT

Build, make fast and refit the ships. The arsenal has maintained close to 550 vessels for three centuries. Today, emblematic sites like the Corderie Royale, the Garden of the Returnees, the Marine Museum, and, more recently, Hermione, have been enjoyed by old and young alike, recounting the history of the sea and of the area.

## THE MARAIS POITEVIN

**Grand Site de France, the Marais Poitevin** AKA the Green Venice, **unveils her verdant countryside** : the ferns, the willows, and above all the canals that inspire you to take a leisurely boat tour to discover the fauna and flora of the destination.



## ANGOULÊME

Angoulême is the capital of the cartoon with its International Festival in January, the dedicated museum of the 'ninth art' and the circuit of its painted murals. This Ville d'Art et d'Histoire offers the visitor a journey through the rich culture of the town, from St Peter's Cathedral, a jewel of Romanesque architecture to the nineteenth century covered market. Perched on a promontory and surrounded by ramparts, the town looks over the Charente River which can be explored by electric boat.

## ROYAN – HISTORIC SEASIDE TOWN

Villas line the shore dating from the Belle-Epoque, rubbing shoulders with classic 1950's buildings, all geometry and colour. **The architecture of the city is unique**; the Church of Notre Dame is central for the inhabitants thanks to its style. It has five beautiful beaches and its pleasure port is one of the most important on the Atlantic Coast. Picasso lived here for a year. An unforgettable place for all the family to enjoy.



# CHARENTES |

## THE WATERS OF CHARENTE RIVER

The **Charente River** has its source in the Haute-Vienne and meets the ocean at Rochefort. It **winds through 35 villages** as well as the charming town of Saintes, a 'Ville d'art & d'histoire', that is intriguing because of the abundance of its history dating back to antiquity. A 'gabare' is used to navigate the river – a traditional flat-bottomed boat that used to transport merchandise to market when the town had a thriving port. The Gallo-Roman amphitheatre and the Abbaye aux Dames are also a must in Saintes. In Sireuil, Jarnac or Cognac, boats accommodating 2-12 people can be rented with no license for a week or longer. For the pleasure of being out on the water, canoeing is the perfect escape for family and friends.



## VIGNOBLE DE COGNAC

**Cognac is first and foremost a town renowned for its art and history** (Ville d'Art et d'Histoire). There are great places to explore - such as the castle, and to savour – such as the Cognac Houses. In the heart of the Charentes, the vineyards stretch right from the coast to the south of Angoulême producing cognac and Pineau des Charentes. In summer under the heat of the sun or in winter in the warmth of the distilleries, meet the winemakers who will convey their passion for their craft whether in Cognac, a royal town, birthplace of François 1er, or in Jarnac where the negociant houses open their doors to unveil the mysteries of cognac.

## THE REFINED NATURE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE : AUBETERRE

**Aubeterre-sur-Dronne has all the charm of one of the Plus Beaux Village de France** - a central shaded square where one can laze on the terrace, stroll past the many craft shops on the tiny, winding streets, visit the church of Saint-Jacques with its eighteen metre Romanesque façade or paddle in the little river. On the very border of Périgord, this Petite Cité de Caractère has a magnificent subterranean church of vertiginous proportions.



## RÉ AND OLÉRON ISLANDS

There are 10 picturesque preserved villages on **Ré island**. As it is so flat it is an ideal place to cycle on more than 100 kilometres of cycling tracks that lead to many of the unforgettable sites of 'Ré –the White'. The magnificent beaches of Ile de Ré seduce all fans of wide-open spaces.

**Oléron** is the second biggest island in France after Corsica. This is a unique experience for the visitor – multi-coloured cabins around the ports, flotillas of barges, fishing boats... Immerse yourself in the world of traditional oyster production; the Marennes-Oléron oyster is the only one in France to have a Red Label.



# WHAT'S NEW ?



## HOTEL CHAIS MONNET, LUXURY URBAN RESORT IN COGNAC

An innovative design combines sophisticated classicism and contemporary chic in this sublime new establishment: 92 luxurious rooms and suites, 14 apartments, 2 restaurants (1 gastronomic) and 2 bars, a spa, in and outdoor swimming pool, a children learning and play centre, boutiques. **Opening Summer 2018.**

**Sébastien Broda, 1 Michelin star, will be the chef of the 2 restaurants.**

[chaismonnethotel.com](http://chaismonnethotel.com)

## MARTELL FOUNDATION

The Foundation, situated in Cognac, has just opened the Martell de Selgas-Cano, a first in France of these Spanish architects. The enterprise is dedicated to the discovery and learning about all things brandy – from the local to international level. The building has been constructed over 5,000 square metres and five floors. The ground floor and roof terrace (with a bar) will open to the public in spring 2018 followed by the different floors as they are finished.

[www.fondationentreprisemartell.com](http://www.fondationentreprisemartell.com)

## LA FLOW VÉLO – ATLANTIQUE, CHARENTES, PÉRIGORD...

An appropriate name for a new way of travelling by bike - in the 'slow tourism' fashion.

A new cycle route will open in March 2018: La Flow Vélo®. This national track will link the Ile d'Aix with Thiviers in the Dordogne - about 290 km - but a gentle ride, nothing dramatic, that will allow the cyclist to explore a France of natural history, gastronomy and much more – from the estuary of the Charentes River to Rochefort, Saintes, capital of Aquitaine in the first century, the archeological site of Angeac-Charente, Cognac, Angoulême then Thiviers, the capital of foie gras in Périgord vert.

There will be interconnexions with La Vélodyssée® and the Scandibérique®

[bit.ly/FlowVélo](http://bit.ly/FlowVélo)



## A WORLD FIRST : SO'OOH AROMATIC OYSTERS

Joffrey Dubault, a young 29 year old oyster cultivator from Marennes, has launched a brand new business of oysters marinated in lemon, shallots, muscatel or truffle. After a 'So ?' the curious say 'ooh !'

[bit.ly/AROMATIC](http://bit.ly/AROMATIC)



## DID YOU KNOW ?

City pass La Rochelle : a great way to explore the town at a reasonable price ! Practical and economical, the La Rochelle City Pass is the passport to discovery of the town – unforgettable sites but also a way to access the transport system. Validity of 24h, 48h or 72h.



# STORY ANGLES |

## COGNAC : GETTING OUT FROM THE BEATEN PATH

Take a lovely cruise in a typical 'gabare' (local boat) to Jarnac and the Maison THOMAS HINE & CO that sits on the Charente river bank. This is the only official supplier of cognac to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Otherwise head for the Château de Beaulon and meet Monsieur Thomas, the owner, who has a magnificent garden with blue fountains that are really something to be seen. He is passionate about his wine too.

[www.hinecognac.com](http://www.hinecognac.com) / [www.chateau-de-beaulon.fr](http://www.chateau-de-beaulon.fr)

## HÔTEL LA FABRIQUE, ZEN IN THE HEART OF LA ROCHELLE

Opened in summer 2017, this new hotel in the heart of the town near to the Old Port and town hall has used old stones to construct a modern, characterful boutique hotel in the «industrielo-vintage» style. There are metallic orange balconies and a cosy bar.

[www.hotellafabrique.com](http://www.hotellafabrique.com)

## CHEF'S SECRET

With a 1,000 hectares of woods, clear pools and winding lanes, the castle and farms are widely spread over the surrounding seemingly endless grounds. The five star hotel Domaine des Etangs in Massignac is intimate enough for couples and comfortable for families. The Dyades restaurant has a new chef in 2018.

[www.domainedesetangs.com](http://www.domainedesetangs.com)

## PIERRE GAGNAIRE OPENS HIS RESTAURANT ON THE SEASHORE

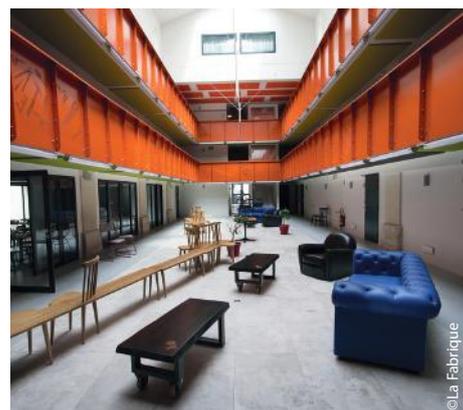
The new restaurant of Michelin starred chef Pierre Gagnaire Le Gaya opened in summer 2017. The refined, gastronomic cuisine uses local products and is very well-priced. The stunning scenery includes views over the islands of Aix, Oléron and Ré from the resort of Châtelailon-Plage. In the UK, Pierre Gagnaire is better known as the chef-patron of sketch.

The hotel MGallery by SOFITEL has 72 rooms and suites, a SPA Nuxe and is where you can lay your head after your meal !

**Opening in spring 2018 : the new thalassotherapy centre «Spa marin» on the same site.**

[www.la-grande-terrasse.com](http://www.la-grande-terrasse.com)

MORE INFORMATIONS ABOUT  
THE COGNAC CULTURE :  
[bit.ly/CognacCharentes](http://bit.ly/CognacCharentes)





## LA ROCHELLE TOWERS

The three famous towers of La Rochelle – Saint Nicholas, de la Chaine and de la Lantern lighthouse are the most famous vestiges of the medieval , maritime fortifications of the town and from where the views are magnificent – Fort Boyard, the Old Port and the islands. The Lantern Tower is the oldest on the Atlantic Coast rising to a height of 70 metres and has always served as a lighthouse and prison. After years of renovation, the tower reopened to visitors last year.

[www.tours-la-rochelle.fr](http://www.tours-la-rochelle.fr)

## ERNEST COGNACQ MUSEUM ST.MARTIN-DE-RÉ

Ernest Cognacq was founder of the large Parisian department store, Samaritaine. His house, Hotel Clerjotte - built in the fifteenth century, is now a museum to the retail trade with visits, events and so on.

[www.musee-ernest-cognacq.fr](http://www.musee-ernest-cognacq.fr)

## PHARE DES BALEINES

In June 2016 the last two lighthouse keepers employed by the French state retired and now one has turned his hand to being a tour guide, showing the public around the Baleines Lighthouse. Baptiste Mestayere Schmitt explains the work of the keeper and recounts anecdotes from his life. [www.lepharedesbaleines.fr](http://www.lepharedesbaleines.fr)

## ABBEY AUX DAMES, SAINTES

Patrimony and innovation combines with the launch of the 3D visit of the Abbey aux Dames, Musicaventure - a treasure chest of architecture, in words and music. It is just like being at the concerts themselves. New tours will be created over the next three years.

The building is a jewel of Romanesque architecture built in the eleventh century. Every year the Abbey holds a series of classical concerts – thirty in nine days. The Young Orchestra of the Abbey is unique in playing pieces on original instruments o the period.

NEW in March 2018 – The Carrousel – for adults and children alike.

[www.abbayeauxdames.org](http://www.abbayeauxdames.org)

## ROYAL ABBEY OF SAINT-JEAN D'ANGÉLY

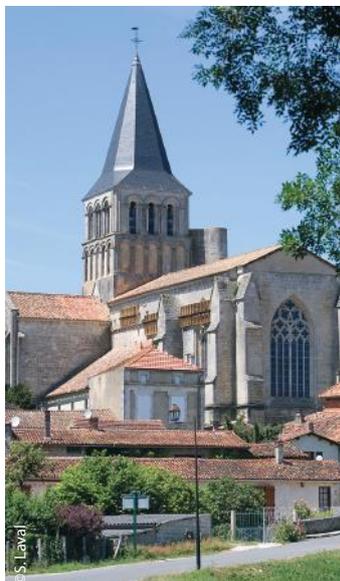
Built in the seventh century, destroyed then rebuilt, the Abbey celebrated 1,200 years in 2017. It is recognised by UNESCO as part of the Saint Jacques de Compostella road, is an Historic Monument and houses the European Cultural Centre that organises different public events year round.

[www.abbaye-royale-angely.com](http://www.abbaye-royale-angely.com)

## ABBEY OF SAINT-AMANT-DE-BOIXE

One of the oldest monastic centres in Charente, the Abbey founded in the 11th century houses nowadays a Romanesque architecture centre. An audioguide helps visitors understand this impressive heritage : 12th century church, abbatial buildings, crypt and 14th century wall paintings.

[abbayesaintamantdeboixe.fr](http://abbayesaintamantdeboixe.fr)



## THE MOST BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES OF FRANCE

Five of these are to be found in the area :

**Ars-en-Ré** is known for the bell tower of its church that sports a black and white arrow that is used as a point of reference for mariners.

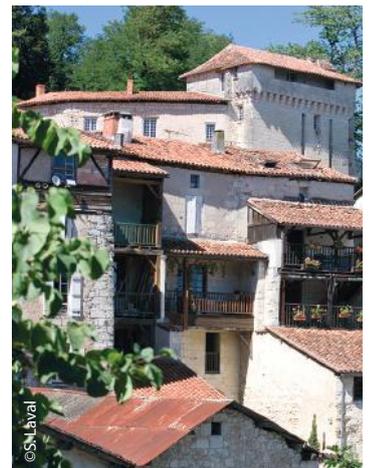
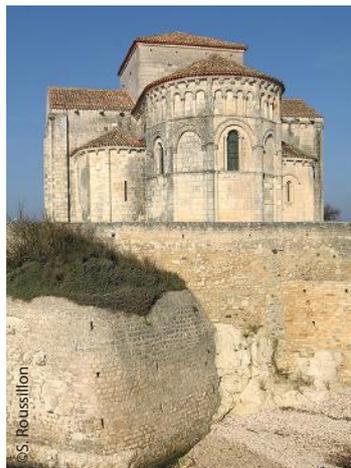
**La Flotte-en-Ré** is an extremely pretty fishing and pleasure port that sways to the rhythm of the boats in the harbour.

**Mornac-sur-Seudre** is an old commercial port that now concentrates on oyster and salt production and is an artisan's paradise.

**Talmont-sur-Gironde** was founded in 1284 by Edward 1st of Aquitaine on a rocky promontory overlooking the Gironde Estuary, just 15 kilometres south of Royan.

**Aubeterre-sur-Dronne**, situated on the way to Santiago de Compostela, it has an important religious heritage: the monolithic church of Saint Jean, the roman church of Saint Jacques, chapels and convents.

[www.les-plus-beaux-villages-de-france.org](http://www.les-plus-beaux-villages-de-france.org)



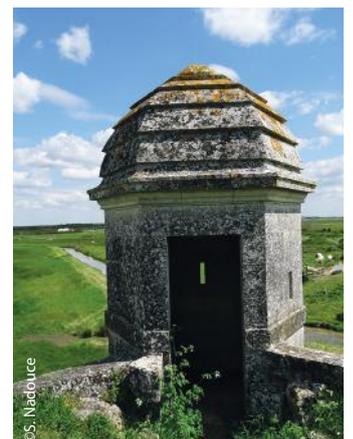
### PETITES CITÉS DE CARACTÈRE

There are eight such sites in Charentes that can be rural or urban as long as they have a population of less than 5,000 and a rich cultural history : Aubeterre-sur-Dronne, Confolens, Nanteuil-en-Vallée, Saint-Savinien-sur-Charente, Saint-Sauvant, Talmont-sur-Gironde, Verteuil-sur-Charente and Villebois-Lavalette.

### DID YOU KNOW ?

The fortified square of Brouage has just rejoined 'Les plus beaux villages de France' is situated between the île d'Oléron and Rochefort, this fortified site in the Marais was an important commercial port in the Middle Ages trading with the rest of France and northern Europe. These days the ramparts are home to craft shops and the like.

[brouage-tourisme.fr](http://brouage-tourisme.fr)



# FAMILY SPOTS

## THE AQUARIUM OF LA ROCHELLE

One of the most beautiful Aquariums in Europe. Still new: the Gallery of Lights – a magical journey to the great depths of the oceans to reveal the sea creatures that light up their world with the most vibrant colours. New services will be available in 2018 !

[www.aquarium-larochelle.com](http://www.aquarium-larochelle.com)

## CASSINOMAGUS IN CHASSENON

A unique place to visit, these Gallo-Romans thermal baths are some of the best-preserved antique monuments in Europe. Cassinomagus is a vast archeological park to be enjoyed with the kids: guided tours, antique garden, Gallo-Roman games, archeological digs, excavations squares for children...

[www.cassinomagus.fr](http://www.cassinomagus.fr)



## FORT BOYARD – FUN FOR THE KIDS

Built to protect the estuary of the Charente River in the nineteenth century, one may not land but one may sail around Fort Boyard ... and the kids will love it. They will enjoy the catamaran journey and the adventure of being at sea.

[www.ileouailecatamaran.fr](http://www.ileouailecatamaran.fr)

## PALMYRE ZOO – UNMISSABLE

Created in 1966, the Zoo celebrated its golden anniversary last year. There are 1600 animals in the zoo with 115 different species represented. It is one of the most visited private zoos in France with over 700,000 visitors per annum. It is very important in the world of conservation too with 200-300 births a year of endangered species.

[www.zoo-palmyre.fr](http://www.zoo-palmyre.fr)



## 'GEO-CACHING' IN CHARENTES

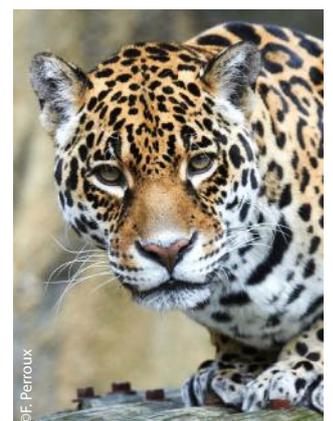
Terra Aventura. Experience the thrill of an amazing treasure hunt, a relaxing tour using a GPS, geo-caching brings sport and culture together, allowing families to explore tourist attractions, villages, countryside...

[www.terra-aventura.fr](http://www.terra-aventura.fr)

## CHÂTEAU DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD

For over a thousand years, this property has belonged to one of France's most illustrious families. The La Rochefoucauld chateau is an anthology of seven centuries of architecture. Visit the monumental stairway, the Renaissance galleries, Marguerite de Valois' boudoir... Kids can dress up too using the various costumes and accessories on hand.

[www.chateau-la-rochefoucauld.com](http://www.chateau-la-rochefoucauld.com)



# NATURAL & ACTIVE

## THE « PÔLES NATURE »

A network of 14 natural sites of the Marais – such as Vitezey, Asinerie du Baudet du Poitou (famous for their donkeys), forests, the old stone quarries of Crazanne - landscapes to learn about through museums, exhibitions and guided tours.

[www.la.charente-maritime.fr/poles-nature/14-poles-nature](http://www.la.charente-maritime.fr/poles-nature/14-poles-nature)

## THE LAKES OF HAUTE CHARENTE 100% NATURE

In Charente Limousine, two large lakes, Lavaud and Mas Chaban, are where freshwater sports can be enjoyed: swimming, water skiing, wind-surfing, canoeing plus there are lots of cycling tracks and horseriding and hiking are popular, as is bird-watching.

## THE CHARENTE ESTUARY | ROCHEFORT ARSENAL

The enormous area of the Charente Estuary and the Arsenal of Rochefort has been officially classified as a Grand Site de France since 2013. This is a classification developed by the Ministry of Ecology to reward places that are ecologically sound inasmuch as they develop durable energy.

[grandsiterochefort](http://grandsiterochefort)

## LA TREMBLADE AND THE COUBRE FOREST

More than 5,000 hectares unmissable for nature lovers whether mountain bikers, horseriders, walkers, hikers ...or beach bums! Smell the pines, listen to the ocean, lie on a carpet of sand.

[www.la-tremblade.com](http://www.la-tremblade.com)

### DID YOU KNOW ?

The Gironde Estuary is the wildest and largest natural river estuary in Europe. Astonishing views whether from natural viewpoints such as Régulus and Matata at Meschers-sur-Gironde or manmade ones like the observation tower at Saint-Georges-de-Didonne.

[www.estuaire-gironde.fr](http://www.estuaire-gironde.fr)

### DID YOU KNOW ?

A new integrated biological Réserve has just been opened in Oléron. 158 hectares of the St Trojan-les-Bains Forest has thus been dedicated and is the largest on the Atlantic coast.



## THE LPO

The equivalent of the RSPB of the UK, has had its headquarters in Rochefort since 2012. In the local area, they protect the lagoon area of Rochefort, the Moëze-Oléron Reserve and the Yves Reserve. An extremely important area for migratory birds flying from southern Europe to Siberia, Canada, and northern Europe.

[www.lpo.fr](http://www.lpo.fr)

## AIGUILLON BAY – WILD NATURE

This is a magical place – a bridge between the land and the sea in the north part of Charentes, its a haven for migratory birds from Siberia, Europe and Canada. There are also 300 km of mussel beds where 120 professionals produce the famous local variety known as the 'charron'.

[bit.ly/baieaiguillon](http://bit.ly/baieaiguillon)



## A PLATEFUL OF STARS !

### CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU, RELAIS ET CHÂTEAUX LA ROCHELLE - 2 MICHELIN STARS

The gastronomic reference point on the Atlantic Coast, the 'fisher chef' is always inventive and simply gets better and better.

[www.coutanceaularochelle.com](http://www.coutanceaularochelle.com)



### LA RIBAUDIÈRE - BOURG-CHARENTE – 1 MICHELIN STAR

Thierry Verrat, the chef, has held Michelin stars for over twenty years.

[www.laribaudiere.com](http://www.laribaudiere.com)

### L'AQUARELLE - BREUILLET - 1 MICHELIN STAR

Xavier Taffart, a Michelin starred chef since 2010. He has an intimate, discreet boutique hotel with just three rooms.

[www.laquarelle.net](http://www.laquarelle.net)



### LA SUITE – LA ROCHELLE - MEILLEUR OUVRIER DE FRANCE

Johan Leclerc was born in La Rochelle into a fishing dynasty and learnt his skills from the very best - Ducasse, Gagnaire, TroisGros.

[www.lasuite.co](http://www.lasuite.co)

## COOKERY CLASSES WITH A CHEF

Michelin starred chef **Thierry Verrat**, from the restaurant **La Ribaudière** in Bourg-Charente, runs classes and cookery clinics. [www.laribaudiere.com](http://www.laribaudiere.com)

**Ludovic Merle**, from the **Château** restaurant in Jarnac, shares his savoir-faire with amateur cooks and chooses his menu depending on the season and available local produce.

[www.restaurant-du-chateau.com](http://www.restaurant-du-chateau.com)



## COGNAC A DRINK AND A TOWN !

Cognac is the result of eaux de vie de vin aged in oak barrels and once bottled, distributed throughout the world. Try one of the best cocktails : [www.cognacsummit.com](http://www.cognacsummit.com)

Cognac is also an historic town situated between Saintes and Angoulême on the Charente River. It is an impressive sight and where the most famous cognacs are housed: CAMUS, COURVOISIER, HENNESSY, MARTELL, OTARD, REMY MARTIN, MEUKOW. More than 200 professionnels come together to welcome visitors...wine growers, distillers... [www.cognacetapes.com](http://www.cognacetapes.com)

## OYSTERS IN ALL THEIR GLORY

**The Atlantic's precious 'stones'**, Marennes Oléron oysters are unique in France as they are alone in attaining the coveted Red Label (Fine de claire verte variety). Also classified Géographique Protégée are the Fine de claire or Spéciale de claire. [www.huitresmarennesoleron.info](http://www.huitresmarennesoleron.info)

**Charente-Maritime's wonderful oysters** are the result of the perfect marriage of nature and the know-how of the professionals. [www.huitrescharentemaritime.com](http://www.huitrescharentemaritime.com)

**NEW BBQ OYSTER** – the BBQ OYSTER XXL (200g/each) can be eaten warm all year round from the BBQ of course, steamed or heated in the oven. [www.huitres-fonteneau.fr](http://www.huitres-fonteneau.fr)

**24h oysters from the** Oyster farmers Brigitte et Tony Berthelot from « L'Huîtrière de Ré » on the Ile de Ré, have made oysters available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year from their vending machine in Ars-en-Ré ! [www.huitrieredere.com](http://www.huitrieredere.com)

In Marennes-Oléron, la **Maison Gillardeau** installed their first vending machine in 2010, which also provides baskets, cutlery and tablecloths. [www.speciales-gillardeau.fr/en/accueil](http://www.speciales-gillardeau.fr/en/accueil)



### A TRIP FOR THE SENSES !

La Maison de la Vigne et des Saveurs in Archiac offers courses in oenotourism dedicated to Cognac and Pineau des Charentes. There are culinary workshops, tastings and vineyard tours.

[www.maisondelavigneetdessaveurs.com](http://www.maisondelavigneetdessaveurs.com)

**UNFORGETTABLE MARKETS** : The market of La Rochelle is open 365 days a year, the market by Les Halles in Angoulême, the medieval market of La Flotte en Ré or the central market of the '50's monument are all not to be missed.

### CAVIAR, A LUXURY PRODUCT

The sturgeon is one of the most ancient species of fish still living today. It has always been appreciated for the flavour of its caviar – a very refined product that, as eaten, gives a delightful taste of the sea.

[www.caviaromanov.fr](http://www.caviaromanov.fr)

[bit.ly/MoulinGensac](http://bit.ly/MoulinGensac)

### PINEAU DES CHARENTES : SINGULARLY PLURAL !

Pineau des Charentes, a fortified wine made from a blend of grape juice and Cognac was awarded AOC status in 1945. The harvested grapes are pressed and the cognac from the previous year is added, then it is stored in oak barrels for a long time to give it the distinctive taste, whether white, red or rosé pineau. Idea of cocktails also : the Pineaujito.

[www.pineau.fr](http://www.pineau.fr)

### IDEAS WITH FIZZ !

The beer from marais poitevin, la « **Rieuse** » is fresh and tasty. [bit.ly/ProducteursAMP](http://bit.ly/ProducteursAMP)

La **XO Beer**, beer infused with cognac. [www.xobeer.com](http://www.xobeer.com)

La **Débauche** : la brasserie offers around 30 different brews aged in barrels or in the hopfields. [www.brasserie-ladebauche.com](http://www.brasserie-ladebauche.com)

## > JANUARY

### **45th International Comic Book Festival | 25th - 28th January 2018 | Angoulême**

Second largest comic book festival in Europe, Angoulême confirms its position as the world capital of comic books! Each year more than 200,000 visitors participate finding new comics from all over the world. 2,000 authors and 24 countries are represented.

[www.bdangouleme.com](http://www.bdangouleme.com)

## > FEBRUARY

### **Mimosa Festival | 16th – 18th February 2018 | Saint-Trojan-les-Bains**

The mimosa has lit up the winter streets since 1959!

[www.lafetedumimosa.com](http://www.lafetedumimosa.com)



## > APRIL

### **Wind and Wind-Surfing Festival | Châtelailon-Plage | 31st March - 2nd April 2018**

A relaxing family affair that opens the tourist season every year at Easter.

[www.chatelailon-plage-tourisme.fr](http://www.chatelailon-plage-tourisme.fr)



## > MAY

### **Storks Festival**

**25th - 26th May 2018 | La Gripperie-Saint-Symphorien**  
Theatre, dance, music, stories, illuminations and other arts...

[www.agglo-rochefortocean.fr](http://www.agglo-rochefortocean.fr)

### **10th International Chamber Music Festival | 5th May – 3rd June 2018 | Chalais - La Rochefoucauld - Barbezieux**

Begun in 2008, this festival is entirely dedicated to the rich repertoire of chamber music

[www.chalaismusique.com](http://www.chalaismusique.com)



## > JUNE

### **Musiques Métisses | 1st – 3rd June 2018 | Angoulême**

Emblematic festival celebrating world music, returns for the 42nd time to Angoulême! The diverse selection of music is multi-cultural, fun and great for all the family.

This year, one of the star attractions will be Goran Bregovic, a rock star from the Balkans.

[www.musiques-metisses.com](http://www.musiques-metisses.com)

# HOLIDAYS |

## > JULY

### **Cognac Blues Passion | 3rd – 7th July 2018 | Cognac**

For a quarter of a century, since 1994, the organisers of Cognac Blues Passions have offered the public amazing Afro-American music in a convivial setting. This year will be no different. [www.bluespassions.com](http://www.bluespassions.com)

### **Les Francofolies | 11th – 15th July 2018 | La Rochelle**

Annual celebration of French music – one of the most famous festivals in Europe. [www.francofolies.fr](http://www.francofolies.fr)

### **Classical Music Festival | 13th – 21st July 2018 | Saintes**

46th Festival de Saintes. Always offering something innovative yet keeping the traditions of classical repertoires.

[www.abbayeauxdames.org/festival-de-saintes](http://www.abbayeauxdames.org/festival-de-saintes)

### **Un violon sur le sable | 21st – 28th July 2018 | Royan**

Classical music concerts on the beach - magical !

[www.violonsurlesable.com](http://www.violonsurlesable.com)



## EVENT !

### **Fête du Cognac | 26th – 28th July 2018 | Cognac**

Concerts by renowned artists and celebration of local delicacies such as cognac, Charentais melon, snails... [www.lafeteducognac.fr](http://www.lafeteducognac.fr)



## > AUGUST

### **French Language Film Festival | 21st – 26th August 2018 | Angoulême**

Now one of the most important film occasions for French cinema, it attracts the big names of the industry – ‘the 7th Art’. [www.filmfrancophone.fr](http://www.filmfrancophone.fr)

### **Summer Sound Festival | 2nd – 5th August 2018 | Rochefort**

The third edition of the Summer Sound Festival takes place in the prestigious surroundings of Corderie Royale and will also showcases the first Grand West 100% Electro Festival. [summersound.fr](http://summersound.fr)

## > SEPTEMBER

### **International Circuit of the Ramparts | 14th – 16th September 2018 | Angoulême**

This international race has been staged here since 1939 and attracts drivers of the finest classic cars racing around the town's ramparts. Unique in France, it features Aston Martin, MG, Bugatti, Porsche, Lotus and more.

[www.circuit-des-remparts.com](http://www.circuit-des-remparts.com)



# | FESTIVE HOLIDAYS |

## > OCTOBER

### Jazz Between Two Towers Festival | October 2018 | La Rochelle

The Atlantic Coast vibrates to the sound of glorious jazz.

[www.jazzentrelesdeuxtours.fr](http://www.jazzentrelesdeuxtours.fr)

## > DECEMBER

### Distilleries en Fête

During the distillation period, there are different entertainments taking place throughout the vineyards.

[www.cognacetapes.com](http://www.cognacetapes.com)

## > NOVEMBER

### Les Gastronomades | 23rd-25th November 2018 | Angoulême

Every year the Gastronomades welcomes the great and good of French and international cuisine with many Michelin starred chefs sharing their passion with the public.

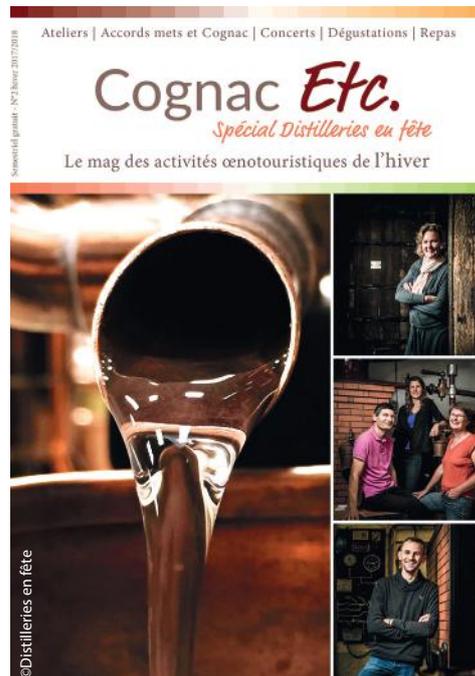
[www.gastronomades.fr](http://www.gastronomades.fr)

All the festivals can be  
found on

[www.france-atlantic.com](http://www.france-atlantic.com)

and

[bit.ly/CharenteGB](https://bit.ly/CharenteGB)



# | FACTS & FIGURES |

## AREA

PART OF THE BIGGEST REGION IN FRANCE:  
NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE !

- 12,820 square kilometers
- 460 km of coastline with four islands
- 42 pleasure ports
- 10 wellness centres
- More than 600 roman churches
- 42,201 hectares of Green Venice (Marais Poitevin)
- Population : 992,942 inhabitants

## TOURISTS

- 81% of tourists are French
- Internationally the British are the largest group, then Dutch, German, Belgian and most are in families or couples (75% of the total)
- Average stay is 7.1 days

# FACTS & FIGURES

## MAIN ATTRACTIONS

**1st destination of France for wellness** with six thalassotherapy centres (Ars en Ré, Ste-Marie de Ré, La Flotte en Ré, Chatelaillon-Plage, Royan, Ile d'Oléron) and three thermal resorts (Rochefort, Saujon, Jonzac).



**1st destination of France for disabled facilities** – 524 different places are branded with the 'Tourism & Handicap' label.

**2nd recognised cycling destination in France** with La Vélodyssée® ( best cycle route award 2017), La Vélo Francette®, Le Canal des 2 mers®, La Scandibérique® and the new cycling route La Flow Vélo® along the Charente River.



**Cruises** : there are 31 different boat companies that carried 49,000 passengers in 2017.



There are **five UNESCO Heritage Sites** :

- La **Citadelle de Saint-Martin de Ré**
- **Church of Saint-Pierre d'Aulnay**
- **Royal Abbey of Saint-Jean-d'Angély**
- The **Pilgrimage Hospital at Pons**
- The **church of Saint-Eutrope in Saintes** (on the Saint-Jacques de Compostella Route).



The **Aquarium of La Rochelle** and **the Zoo of La Palmyre** are two of the top ten provincial tourist attractions in France.

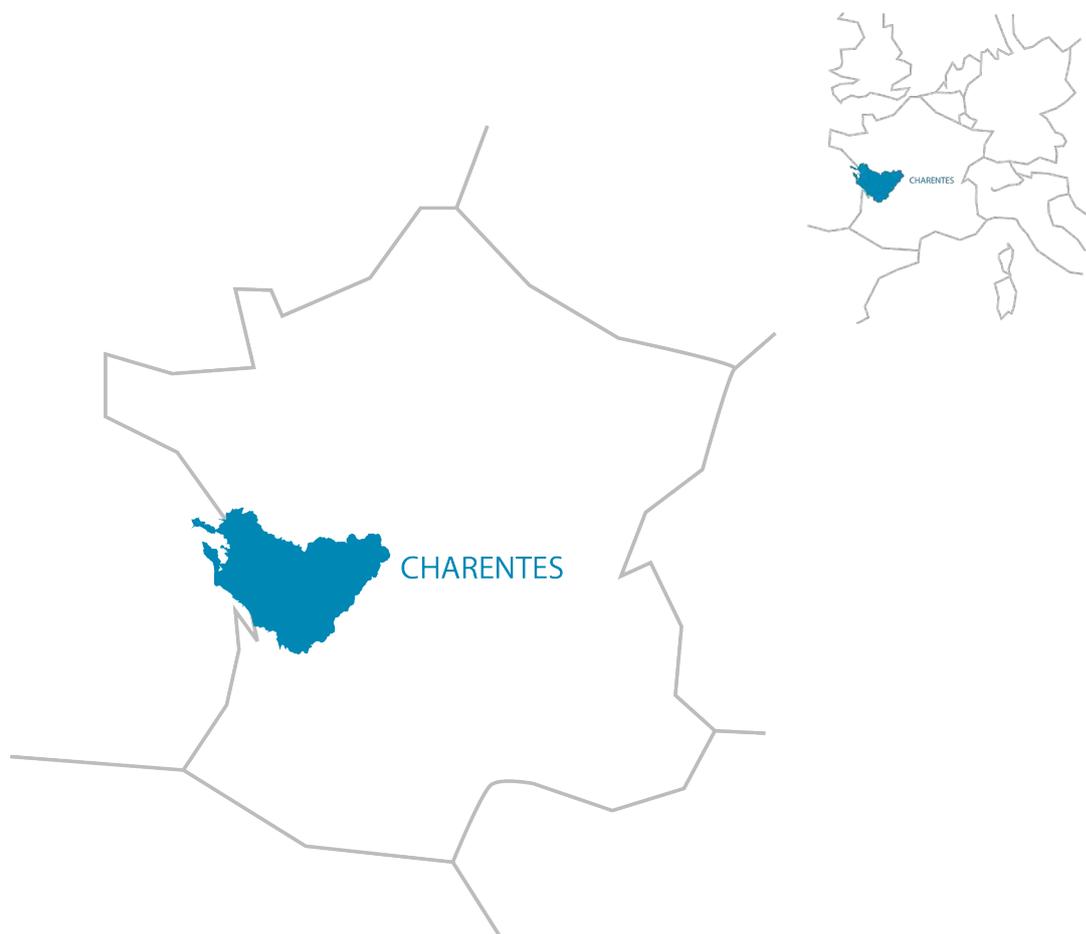


**The Francofolies** is the third most important music festival in France with 130,000 spectators.

**Le Grand Pavois** – Top of the 5th most important nautical show in the world and most important in France that has been going for 44 years.

## GASTRONOMY « MUST TASTE »

- **Cognac**, an « AOC » or PDO brandy
- **Charron mussels**, tender, fleshy, golden orange and flavoursome
- **Oysters** of Marennes Oléron
- **Pineau des Charentes «AOC»**, a fortified wine made from a blend of grape juice and Cognac
- **Fleur de sel** gourmet sea salt from the Ile de Ré
- **Butter « Charentes Poitou » « AOP »**
- **Ile de Ré potatoes « AOP »**, grown in the salty earth of the Île de Ré



## Press contacts

### Magellan PR Gillian GREEN

gillian@magellan-pr.com  
Tél. +44 7515 283 287



**Cécile VISCHETTI**

c.vischetti@charentestourisme.com  
Tél. +33 5 45 69 06 68  
Port. +33 6 68 17 20 96



**Stéphane MORAND**

s.morand@charentestourisme.com  
Tél. +33 5 46 31 71 77  
Port. +33 6 73 69 50 65



**Marie-Claire CHÉNÉ**

mc.chene@charentestourisme.com  
Tél. +33 5 46 31 71 88



@PresseCMT @cecile.vischetti.54



stephane.morandpro



smorand.presse



fr.linkedin.com/in/smorandRP

## Charentes Tourism

### La Rochelle

Conseil Départemental  
85, bd de la République  
17076 LA ROCHELLE CEDEX 9

### Angoulême

21, rue d'Iéna  
CS 82407  
16024 ANGOULEME CEDEX

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