



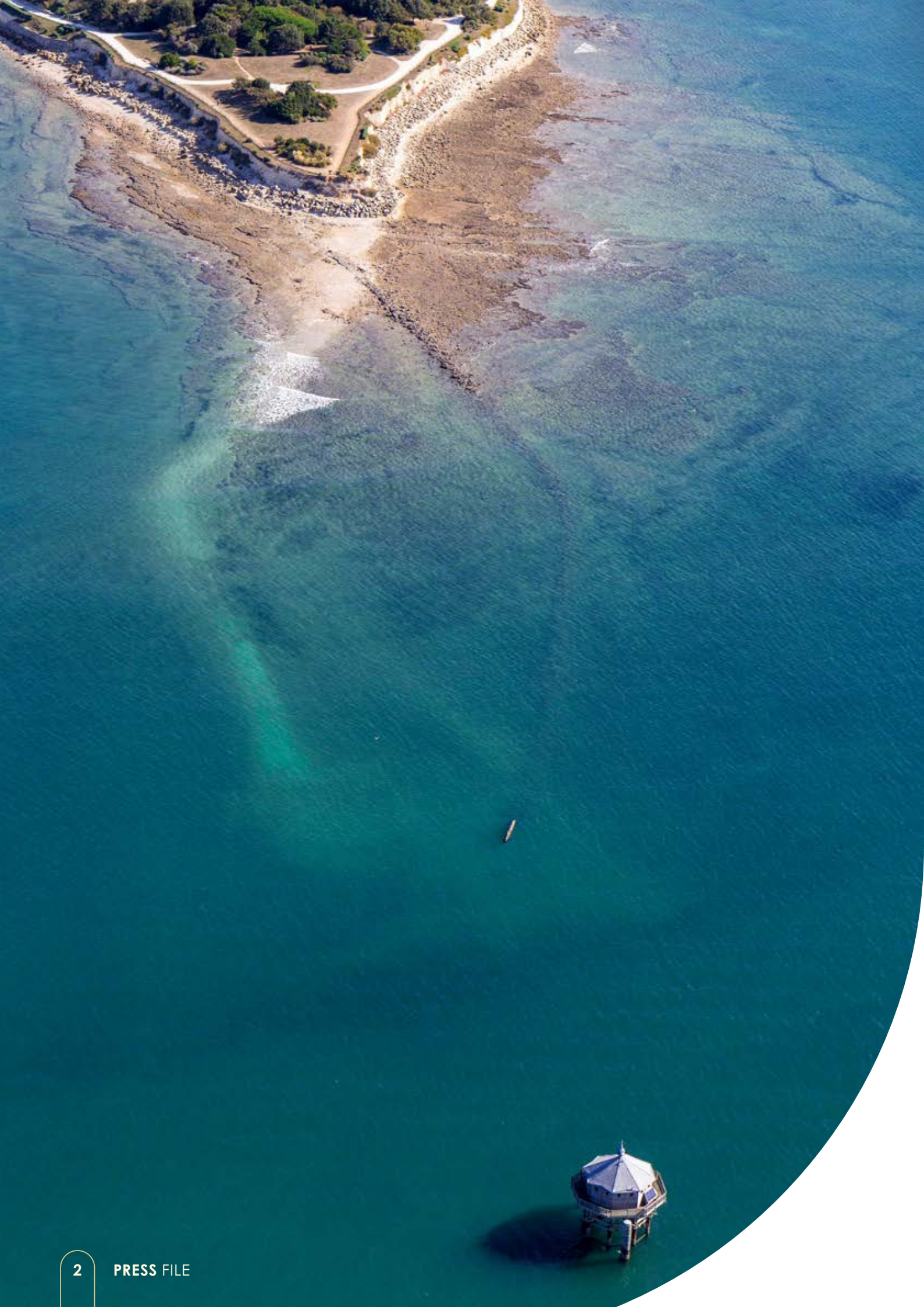
la rochelle the must-see and the inspirational

press
file



nous
la rochelle

OFFICE DE TOURISME



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La Rochelle a green city brimming with character between ocean and marshland

La Rochelle sits between land and sea on the Atlantic coast and is a paradise for sport enthusiasts and visitors alike. Here, you can breathe in the **fresh sea air**, explore amazing **heritage sites**, enjoy **unspoiled nature**, and embrace a **laid-back lifestyle**. A destination on a human scale that remains open to visitors and buzzes all year round!





Located on the Atlantic coast, just 2½ hours by train from Paris, and midway between Nantes and Bordeaux, La Rochelle and its surrounding area can be discovered in all seasons. **The White City** serves as a perfect base for visiting nearby destinations such as the Vendée, the Marais Poitevin, Rochefort, the islands of Ré, Oléron and Aix.

You just need to wander around the **Old Port** or the historic city centre to admire its renowned architectural heritage, its **famous towers**, and other treasures waiting to be discovered.

A city on a human scale where you can simply go with the flow and enjoy a unique, vibrant and enticing atmosphere. Local produce and specialities overflow on its market stalls and can also be found in all of its fine eateries, including some specialising in haute cuisine.

Just a few days in La Rochelle reveal how vibrant the city truly is.

It hosts a series of major events dotted throughout the year, such as the Grand Pavois, Francofolies and the International Film Festival.

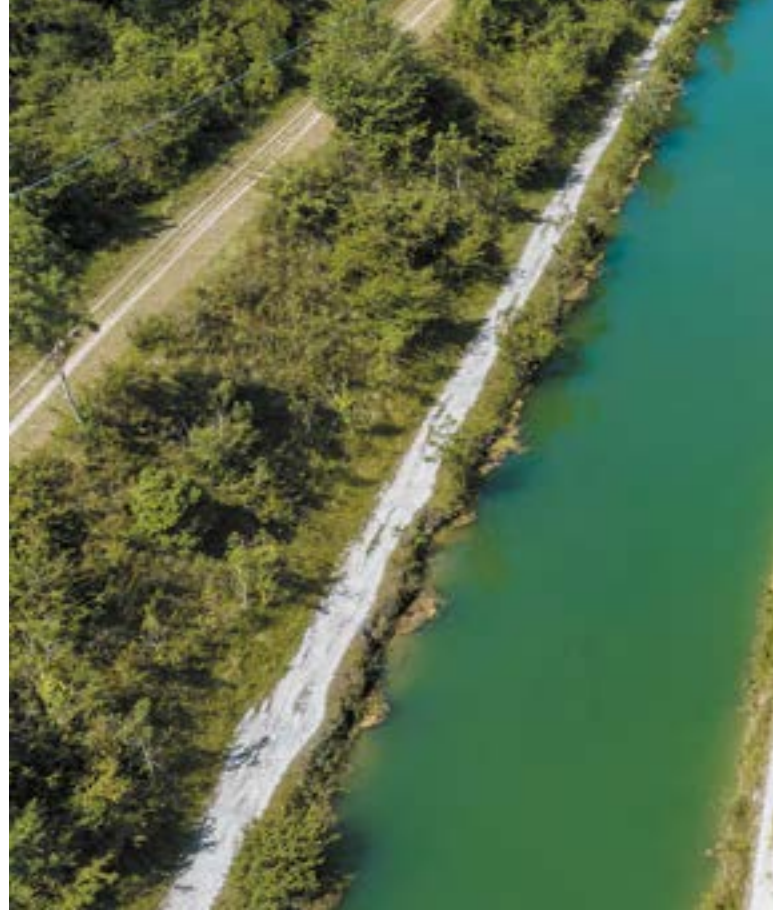


A dynamic and sport-friendly destination !

A pioneering cycling city with its bike-share service, this destination hosts the **biggest marina** on the Atlantic coast, along with its sailors. Moreover, the city is home to one of the most important marathons in France, not to mention Stade Rochelais, the two-time European rugby champions. In fact, in La Rochelle, everyone has their own favourite sport!

Beyond the city boundaries, a whole host of tranquil villages can be discovered on foot or by bike, thanks to the famous yellow bikes and some **230 kilometres of cycle paths**. Routes that criss-cross the city, run along the coast, or pass through Charente landscapes, marshlands and the **4 nature reserves** of the region that protect hundreds of species.

The maritime city boasts **4 ports and 3 beaches within its limits**, offering numerous opportunities to enjoy water sports or stop over at **Fort Boyard or on the islands** which surround it and which promise all kinds of discoveries.



The residents of La Rochelle are tuned in to this exceptional environment. Since the 1970s, the city has focused **on protecting the environment and promoting sustainability**. A pioneer in **urban ecology**, La Rochelle values the quality of life in both the city and the region. Today, it aims to become the first French urban region to achieve carbon neutrality by **2040**. Many local stakeholders have been committed for years to responsible and sustainable tourism, so visitors can discover it in the best possible way while preserving its exceptional character.



Anne, who moved to Charente Maritime more than 35 years ago, is passionate about the city, with its remarkable history and architecture.

She has been working as a guide in La Rochelle for over 20 years and will be sharing her favourite places and secrets in this travail journal about the destination...

follow your guide



5 good reasons to stop over in La Rochelle

1 AN EXCEPTIONAL HISTORICAL HERITAGE

A truly ancient city, La Rochelle and the surrounding towns boast a rich and diverse heritage, bearing witness to their history...

A veritable open-air museum from its Old Port, framed by iconic towers, through to its city centre featuring cobbled streets, arcades, half-timbered and slate-roofed houses, decorative 16th-century sculpted stone facades, austere 17th-century residences and grand 18th-century shipowners' mansions, etc.

2 OCÉAN & NATURE IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

Nestled in a bay, this destination offers exceptional natural landscapes to explore while enjoying the fresh air from the sea or the Charente marshlands.

An ideal environment for **those who enjoy taking long walks along the coast or chilling out on the beach** but also for **experienced sailors** or **contemplative passengers** looking to enjoy moments at sea or protected reserves.



3 AN APPETISING DESTINATION

From the market stalls to its many restaurants, seafood and local produce can be enjoyed in bistros and oyster bars, in both classic and gastronomic settings!

La Rochelle is a haven for lovers of gastronomy and wine.

A place of inspiration for chefs, including two with Michelin stars: Christopher Coutanceau and Nicolas Durif.



4 THE LAID-BACK LA ROCHELLE LIFESTYLE

La Rochelle stands out for its **innovative mobility strategy**. More than a mere trend, cycling has become second nature for the residents of La Rochelle. A relaxed lifestyle that features the lively docks, a **vibrant arts scene**, exciting nightlife, and a whole host of festivals and performance venues.

5 A CITY THAT'S WELL WORTH A VISIT

To escape from the city, 70 kms of coastline await, dotted with **charming villages, expansive beaches**, Charentais stilted fishing huts and other small oyster ports to explore. Inland, **the marshes** and **four nature reserves** offer both wild scenery to observe and picturesque villages, not to mention natural and archaeological sites or chateaux to visit.



**The 6th reason ?
Its exceptional climate !**

follow your guide

urban strolls & heritage

the must-see sites

The Old Port is the go-to place when you first arrive in La Rochelle !

THE EMBLEMATIC OLD PORT

A vibrant hub in the heart of the old town, the port is the maritime city's jewel in the crown. The lively quays invite pedestrians and cyclists to amble in a beautiful setting where eras overlap.

Life here is bustling: bars and terraces along the quays, restaurants at the foot of the towers, a craft market shaded by the trees in the Cour des Dames, the comings and goings of distant cruise boats out on the ocean !



the tower

SAINT-NICOLAS TOWER

An **historic city dungeon and palatial residence** facing the ocean, this military structure symbolises the sheer power and wealth of La Rochelle. Standing 42 metres tall, its architecture is built around a labyrinth of staircases and corridors embedded within the thick walls.

TEMPORARILY CLOSED TO
THE PUBLIC

THE CHAIN TOWER

Gateway to the Old Port, the Chain Tower was used to monitor the movements of ships and other vessels while collecting duties and taxes.

THE LANTERN TOWER

The **last medieval lighthouse** on the Atlantic coast, standing 70 metres high and topped with an octagonal Gothic spire, this tower served as a lighthouse and a prison throughout history.

tours-la-rochelle.fr



THE OLD TOWN, AN OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

Walking around the city centre of La Rochelle feels like taking a step back in time !

From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, from the 17th to the 20th century and right up to the modern day. Churches, cathedrals, temples, arcaded streets, half-timbered houses, grand shipowners' mansions, beautiful bourgeois residences, etc.

The sheer **variety of architecture** in La Rochelle reflects the numerous European and transatlantic cultures that

THE CITY HALL

Considered as **one of the most stunning and oldest buildings of its kind in France** and continually in use since 1298, the La Rochelle City Hall hosts numerous works of art. Behind its Gothic, pseudo-fortified perimeter wall, surmounted by a belfry tower, this emblematic building is filled with memories, including those of the Siege, the Salle des Échevins and the Cabinet of Mayor Jean Guiton.

In 2013, the structure was badly damaged by a fire but all of its treasures were able to be saved and restored by the architect of Historical Monuments Philippe Villeneuve (in charge of the restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris), who designed a modern council chambers with a ceiling of wooden slats in the shape of an inverted boat hull.



follow your guide

My favourite secret walks :
the passage under the houses in the Templar quarter that leads to a small square where the commandery was located. A great shortcut to get around faster in summer, from La rue du palais to the city hall district.



A BUNKER

Just a stone's throw from the market stands a **bunker from the Second World War**. This former headquarters of U-boat officers, built in the heart of the city in utmost secrecy in 1941, is now open to the public!

Explore a site that has remained untouched for 80 years and boasts stunning marine frescoes. Immerse yourself in a world full of history and emotions.

bunkerlarochelle.com



NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

The Natural History Museum offers a fabulous journey into **the heart of the natural history and ethnographic collections** brought back from around the world by famous travelers, collectors, and donors.

Whether you are passionate about nature, love science, or are a traveler in search of distant horizons, the museum will surprise you with its richness and diversity.

museum.larochelle.fr



NEW WORLD MUSEUM

A major port for trade and emigration to the New World since the 16th century, La Rochelle was the departure point for thousands of French people traveling to New France and the West Indies.

Housed in the prestigious 18th-century Fleuriau mansion, the former residence of a La Rochelle family who owned a plantation in Saint-Domingue, **the New World Museum bears witness to the historical links between La Rochelle, France, and the Americas** through a dedicated thematic collection.

museedunouveaumonde.larochelle.fr



GABUT QUARTER, THE HOME OF ROCHELAIS STREET ART

Recognisable by its colourful Scandinavian-style **wooden buildings** set among harbour basins, this former fishing village is renowned for its restaurants, **cafes, art galleries, and bike hire shops**. A spot loved by graffiti artists and **street art enthusiasts**, whose walls display a variety of talents and the distinctive designs of this art form.



THE ATYPICAL SAINT-NICOLAS QUARTER

Something of a village within the city, this old **fishermen's quarter** is much loved by the city's residents. Its cobble streets, tree-lined square, houses nestled under ancient arcades and village atmosphere give it a charm all of its own.

Today, the quarter has a "bohemian" feel with its **thrift shops, art galleries, and bookstores**. You'll also discover designer boutiques, grocery stores, and small restaurants with cosy terraces. This is the perfect spot for a "Made in La Rochelle" shopping stop and a relaxing time-out.



LA ROCHELLE TRAIN STATION

Upon arrival in La Rochelle, visitors are welcomed on the platforms of the train station located in the heart of the city. The building dominates the view to the east of the Old Port with its 45-meter-high bell tower (taller than the towers) and **celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2022**. A building with unique architecture, richly decorated with details and engravings inspired by marine life, reminiscent of the city's architecture, particularly that of the Grosse Horloge.



L'ENCAN, REBIRTH OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD

After 50 years of activity, the Fishing Port, a mere stone's throw from the Gabut, in the current Espace Encan, was relocated from the Chalutiers Basin to new facilities in Chef-de-Baie. The site underwent a transformation as the fish market gave way to spaces for the arts, events and tourism.

A Convention and Exhibition Centre was established within the fully renovated fish market. Artisans moved into the former fishmongers' huts, turning them into workshops and retail spaces for their creations. Additionally, land-based facilities for the Musée Maritime were constructed at the end of the Bassin des Chalutiers. The La Rochelle Aquarium was built on a plot overlooking the Bassin des Grands Yachts in 2000.

MARITIME MUSEUM

"Ships to visit", a maritime heritage worth experiencing! The museum features three areas where visitors can explore the maritime world. On land, beneath the colourful pavilions, La Rochelle's maritime history is displayed in several exhibition rooms.

Following on from the old fish market, a collection of small pleasure boats that is unique in France. On water, visitors can discover a magnificent heritage fleet, including **the iconic France 1**, a former weather frigate. Visitors are invited to step aboard and learn about the history of the different ships and their roles.

museemaritime.larochelle.fr





LA ROCHELLE AQUARIUM

Born from a family passion for the marine world, the La Rochelle Aquarium is one of the largest private aquariums in Europe, hosting over **12,000 marine animals and remarkable biodiversity** from the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Tropics. Today, the 3rd generation has taken up the torch of this local institution that welcomes nearly 800,000 visitors each year, who enable the funding of numerous scientific research projects and the running of public **awareness campaigns** for the preservation of biodiversity. A must-visit destination in La Rochelle for those who want to learn about and understand the sea !

aquarium-larochelle.com

LES MINIMES, A SAILING PARADISE

Located just a 15-minute walk or a quick ride on the electro-solar water bus from the Old Port, the contemporary Minimes district feels like its own vibrant city, **bustling with boating activities**. At its heart, **Europe's leading marina** on the Atlantic coast accommodates more than **5,000 boats**.

It hosts the **Grand Pavois** international boat show every year. The area is well-known for its beach, sailing schools, and coastal promenade.





END OF THE WORLD BACK

Head to Parc des Pères, in the Minimes district of La Rochelle, for a stroll by the sea. A shared **pedestrian path for walkers, cyclists, and joggers crosses the park** offers stunning sea views and a glimpse of Fort Boyard between passing boats. This walk leads to Minimes beach and its **Lighthouse at the End of the World**, a faithful replica of the one off Cape Horn, made famous in Jules Verne's novel, published in 1905.

lephareduboutdumonde.com



Journey to the End of the World

is the sound trail in 12 steps, downloadable to your phone, that guides walkers

from the Port of La Rochelle to the Pointe des Minimes, presenting a fictionalised version of the true story of the Lighthouse at the End of the World

and describing the role of its creator André Bronner.





PORT AND URBAN DISTRICT OF LA PALLICE

La Pallice, west of La Rochelle, is a distinct district known for its urban landscape, vibrant atmosphere, and rich maritime heritage despite its recent transformation. This former working-class neighbourhood borders the **commercial port built in 1890**, which is now one of the most significant in Europe. It was also the area where, before the bridge opened in 1988, you could take the ferry to the Ile de Ré.

In 1994, the fishing boats left the Old Port, and a fishing port with a logistics and commercial platform was established at nearby Chef-de-Baie. The neighbourhood houses a secret location closed to the public: a **submarine base built by the Germans during World War II**. The facility has also served as a film set, notably in the American movie Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark !

Today it's a neighbourhood where locals gather on Sunday mornings to shop at the large market, or enjoy a concert... A grain market dating from the 1920s has been transformed into **La Sirène**, a **contemporary music venue** opened in 2011. This major architectural project was designed by the renowned Construire firm of Patrick Bouchain, Loïc Julienne and Chloé Bodart (architects behind Le Lieu Unique in Nantes etc.).

la-sirene.fr



nature getaways

La Rochelle's oceanfront location offers many opportunities for getaways and activities.

The town boasts 3 sandy beaches, perfect for a relaxing break or water sports :

- **the Concurrence beach** in the heart of the city near the towers and the Old Port ;
- **Minimes beach**, ideal for water sports such as kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding, situated near the marina and the expansive Pères Park, which faces the iconic Lighthouse at the End of the World ;
- **The secluded Chef de Baie beach** adjoining an expansive green space, classified as a Sensitive Natural Area, which protects local animal and plant biodiversity.

70 kms of coastline to cover.

Walking or cycling along the coast from Pointe Saint-Clément, north of La Rochelle, to Baie d'Yves in the south, other secluded beaches are just waiting to be discovered. A white trail runs along the coast, enabling visitors to enjoy the peaceful and varying scenery of the coastal villages.



the coastal towns surrounding the city from north to south

On the coast, nine municipalities lie along the Atlantic Ocean, their activities shaped by the sea's rhythm. Villages that offer an opportunity to retreat from urban environments, enjoy fresh air, and explore expansive landscapes, not to mention the distinctive features of Charente, such as traditional stilted fishing huts and oyster-farming ports.

ESNANDES

A mussel farming village in the heart of breathtaking natural surroundings where **"La Charron" bouchot mussels are cultivated**. A historical expertise to discover at the **Maison de la Baie du Marais Poitevin** and the **Musée de la Mytiliculture**, which is located next to the remarkable **Saint-Martin church**. This imposing-looking building is both a church and a fortress. Built in the 12th century, the structure was subsequently fortified in the 14th century to defend the coastline against English incursions. Located about 2 kilometres from the town, the Pointe Saint-Clément headland offers panoramic views of both the Île de Ré and, more notably, the Baie de l'Aiguillon - a designated nature reserve that attracts hundreds of waterbird species.

MARSILLY

This village is ideal for walkers seeking an authentic experience, combining mussel farming with age-old agricultural traditions. Along the seafront, **the Port de La Pelle** remains unspoiled, with only a few establishments nestled between grain fields and the ocean. Here, you can pause to sample and purchase **mussels and oysters straight from the producer**. All around, stilted fishing huts and their pontoons jut out into the water, serving as fishing equipment and charming symbols of the Charente coastline.

NIEUL-SUR-MER

A quiet and picturesque village where oyster huts, low houses, and former salt marshes converted into oyster refining ponds are intertwined with **stilted fishing huts**.



**My favourite village ?
Marsilly, north of La Rochelle on
the coast, with its magnificent view
of the Bay of Aiguillon and a fortified
church with its listed 15th-century
bell tower.**

follow your guide

L'HOUMEAU

Located just minutes north of La Rochelle, L'Houmeau offers scenic Charente-Maritime landscapes and is perfect for walks year-round. This renowned oyster port, known for its huts, farm, barges, and views of the Île de Ré bridge, is a must-visit site for oyster lovers.

AYTRE

This west coast village features 3.5 kms of coastline, sandy beaches, and a shallow cove, attracting windsurfers and kitesurfers to its shores. Coastal walks reveal the bay's varied scenery, including rocks, dunes, cliffs, and the foreshore visible at low tide.

ANGOULINS-SUR-MER

This small coastal village, lying about ten kilometres south of La Rochelle, is famous for oyster farming and its stilted fishing huts. The area features stunning beaches and a bay sheltered by the Pointe du Chay, which is known for its remarkable coral limestone cliffs.

CHÂTELAILLON-PLAGE

Just along the coast lies one of Charente Maritime's most beautiful seaside resorts, known for its fine sandy beaches, elegant Belle Epoque villas, and a coastal promenade leading to Boucholeurs village. This iconic fishing and oyster-farming community sits between Châtel' and Yves.



YVES

Located at the extreme south of the La Rochelle conurbation, the village is mainly known for its bay and its Marais d'Yves Ornithological Reserve, which constitutes one of the main sanctuaries in France for migratory birds. You can also enjoy its near-deserted beach.



hoist the mainsail



With these four ports, the Atlantic city is an ideal destination for getting away from it all !

There are departures for destinations such as the renowned Fort Boyard or the islands of Aix, Ré, or Oléron on the iconic Old Port or the Minimes marina. Travellers may choose to embark on a cruise boat, **sailboat**, or **catamaran** to reach these locations.

There is a range of water sports to try, including **stand-up paddle**, **yoga paddle**, **flyboarding**, and **kayaking**.

Renowned for its sailing heritage and the home of the 2021 Vendée Globe champion, this destination serves as an exceptional location for stopovers where visitors can deepen their knowledge of navigation, develop their skills in ocean sailing, and engage with a community of passionate enthusiasts. Numerous educational institutions offer internship opportunities that provide students with valuable experiences beyond the traditional classroom setting.



navigation log



KAPALOUEST

Whether you spend your morning discovering the islands, enjoy an afternoon exploring around Fort Boyard, or have dinner at sea as the sun sets, Kapalouest guarantees memorable experiences on the ocean in the **Pertuis Charentais** aboard its impressive **16-metre catamarans**.

kapalouest.com



KELONE

Bertrand, the captain of the sailboat "Kelone" - which he fondly calls the most beautiful boat in the world - enthusiastically shares his love of sailing, whether it's for a **short excursion or a few days at sea**. Harnessing wind power, a clean and renewable energy source, provides an opportunity to (re) discover the pleasure of sailing.

kelone.fr



BALADE CÔTIÈRE EN PADDLE

Located on the edge of Platère beach in Angoulins, the Nautical Centre offers **stand-up paddle trips** along the coast. This facility is ideal for beginners, offering both a sheltered bay on the ocean side and an enclosed basin that provides optimal conditions for paddle stability.

cnangoulins.com



L'ESTRELLA LAB, A SMALL FLOATING LABORATORY OF HUMANITY

Olivia Wattinne continues to take on new challenges aboard l'Estrella Lab, her splendid 18-metre sailboat. An experienced adventurer and traveller, she became paraplegic after an accident yet bravely bounced back by adapting to the new circumstances and continuing to pursue her ambitions. Today, she continues to dream and inspire others aboard her "small floating laboratory of humanity". **completely redesigned for people with disabilities**. L'Estrella Lab aims to promote access to sailing and to allow these individuals to fully experience navigation. From April to September, it offers sea trips in the Pertuis Rochelais. Whether alone or in groups, with or without a disability, she invites all those ready to share her passion for adventure and push their limits.

estrellalab.com



100% FEMALE SAILING

A Cappella Voile provides **beginner sailing courses on liveboard boats**. A tailored course for learning to sail and navigate with an **all-female crew**, exploring the coastline from the sea.

facebook.com/voileacappella



TRIBORD SAILLING LAB

The Tribord Sailing Lab, the **co-design and development centre for Decathlon's sailing sports brand**, has recently relocated to the Minimes marina in La Rochelle, enabling product developers to test and showcase new innovations to the public. An excellent spot for enthusiasts and curious minds to connect and explore.

More information :
conseilsport.decathlon.fr



inland visits

Once you've explored a bustling city or braved rough seas, it's time to unwind in the tranquil countryside - a perfect green getaway, whether you prefer walking, cycling, or canoeing.

The conurbation comprises roughly 20 inland municipalities, featuring unspoiled natural areas alongside charming villages that showcase the region's rich history.

Small towns, natural and archaeological sites, chateaux, churches, marshes and nature reserves can all be found along the various pedestrian or cycling discovery trails.

DEPARTING THE CITY VIA THE ROMPSAY CANAL

The Romsay canal stretches for 24 kms from La Rochelle to Marans, passing through several towns on its way, including Périgny, Dompierre-sur-Mer, Saint-Ouen d'Aunis, and Andilly.

The pleasant, shaded greenway can be appreciated **on foot, by bike or by canoe** to observe a thriving and unspoilt natural environment.





La Rochelle zero carbon territory

Ecology and the environment are deeply rooted in La Rochelle's identity and are key concerns for the region. This pioneering project is progressing along various lines : **mobility, renewable energies, renovation, the circular economy, and carbon capture by natural environments.**

This positioning gives La Rochelle and its surrounding area a **leading role in the "zero carbon" initiative**, supported by an ambitious collaborative development programme aimed at driving unprecedented change by the year 2040.

a sustainable destination to explore at your own pace

follow your guide

Somewhere to visit inland ? In La Jarne, you can explore the Château de Buzay, which features 18th-century architecture and period furniture, then conclude your visit with a stroll through its French-style gardens.



The destination is surrounded by four nature reserves that shelter and protect exceptional fauna and flora. Conservation areas that allow observation of protected environments in all their diversity.

The most recent, the nature reserve of the **Marais de Tasdon** just 10 minutes by bike from the Old Port, is the perfect spot to reconnect with nature. It was inaugurated in late 2021 after development and renaturalisation work, so that it can once again play its ecological role as a “blue carbon sink”. A vast area of 124 hectares, much of which is in a **Natural Zone of Ecological, Faunistic or Floristic Value**, the refuge hosts a diverse range of animals and plants, with over 150 bird species and 330 plant species documented.



guided tour

REBIRTH OF A MARSH IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

More information : nous-laroche.fr

Located furthest north in Esnandes, **Pointe Saint-Clément** is designated as a nature reserve where visitors may witness up to 100,000 birds gathered at once, creating an impressive spectacle.

The nearest, **the Pampin Marsh Regional Nature Reserve** in l'Houmeau, covers 25 hectares along the northern coast of La Rochelle. It offers a pleasant walk where you can encounter various bird species, including shorebirds (sandpipers), wading birds (herons, egrets), and waterfowl (ducks).

The most extensive is **the Yves Marsh National Nature Reserve** which stretches over 192 hectares and is located on a major migration route between La Rochelle and Rochefort. A small stretch of coastline that hosts remarkable biological diversity, including various bird species, fauna, and over 570 different plant species.



THE ÉCOLE DE LA MER ASSOCIATION

Chaired by Isabelle Autissier, the first woman to complete a solo circumnavigation in a competition, the L'ÉCOLE de la mer association aims to promote scientific and technical knowledge about marine biodiversity and coastal regions.

This is achieved through educational activities, talks, and nature outings aimed at a wide audience.

ecoledelamer.com



STUDY AND CARE CENTER FOR MARINE TURTLES

The La Rochelle Aquarium is developing a programme for the observation and protection of sea turtles on the English Channel-Atlantic coast within its Study and Care Centre for Marine Turtles (CESTM). This facility takes in and cares for turtles with the aim of reintroducing them into their natural environment. In addition to providing care, it develops awareness-raising materials for the general public and collaborates with national and international research laboratories to advance scientific knowledge about these protected marine species.

aquarium-larochelle.com



ÉCHO MER & ITS ECO-CITIZEN WALKS

The association is stepping up its initiatives to **protect the oceans and raise awareness of marine environment protection**. In partnership with the La Rochelle Marina, Écho Mer offers free **eco-citizen walks** around the Old Port basin (from April to October). It is also possible to put words into action by joining the team of volunteers to clean the port of its waste using a landing net. The association recycles materials, particularly waste from maritime activities (recycled sailcloth and neoprene, recycled oyster baskets, etc.) to make bags and accessories, which are sold in its store next to the Bassin des Chalutiers.

echo-mer.com





LA FABULEUSE CANTINE

Opposite the Maritime Museum, La Fabuleuse Cantine is an **open-access hybrid living space** located in the former fish market. A 400 sq.m meeting space with a large sunny terrace overlooking the boats bobbing in the water. A great amenity offering **cultural and social events, creative cuisine made with local and organic products, and environmental initiatives to reduce waste.**

la-rochelle.lafabuleusecantine.fr

LES CABANES URBAINES

It all started with a dream: to create a genuine, **unique, and multigenerational collaborative city, committed to social innovation and sustainable development**, intended for all citizens. Various activities are offered, such as **coworking, catering, climbing, yoga, a shared vegetable garden and the hosting of associations, workshops and cultural events.** The aim is to support local resources, foster diversity and sharing, and help move towards a system with lower carbon emissions.

lescabanessurbaines.fr





Let yourself be guided : La Rochelle Océan Pass

La Rochelle Ocean Pass is a tourist pass that gives access to more than **50 sites or activities** : cruises, historical sites, museums, monuments, and guided tours in La Rochelle and the surrounding areas.

DISCOVER WITHOUT LIMITS

A 2, 3 or 7 day city pass
More than 50 sites, museums,
activities and transportation included!



LA ROCHELLE AND BEYOND

La Rochelle – Rochefort – Marais Poitevin
Vendée – Marennes – Niort – Saintes



The plus point ? This fully digital service gives **you unlimited access to public transport**. Since 2024, it has **also included TER rail lines to Niort, Saintes, and Rochefort**, thanks to an unprecedented partnership with SNCF, a first in France.

larochelleoceanpass.com

freewheeling

Pedal your way through the urban area and along two cycle routes to explore the destination through its 230 km of cycl paths !

The bicycle reigns here, whether you enjoy cycling along the seafront or prefer to get back to nature by cycling up the Rompsay canal.

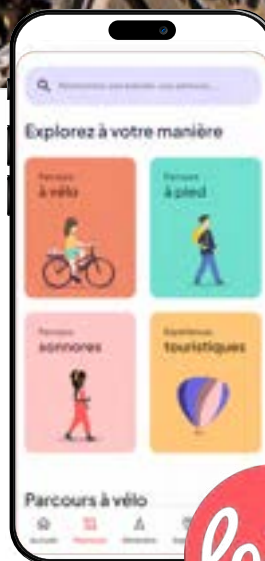


recommended

Loopi is a free app that provides cyclists with multiple routes to explore in the local area.

Once the route is selected, all you have to do is let yourself be guided by an integrated GPS (available offline). The application also features a route planner that recommends the best route while prioritising cycle routes and cycling facilities.

balades.larochelle-tourisme.com



loopi

THE VÉLODYSSÉE®

This cycle route is the French part of EuroVelo route no. 1, running from Norway to Portugal. In Charente-Maritime, its route spans 150 kms. Easy, safe, signposted and dotted with unmissable treasures, it is accessible to everyone regardless of their pace.

lavelodyssee.com

TWO STAGES IN LA ROCHELLE

No. 33 THE COUNTRYSIDE GETAWAY

Entre Marans et La Rochelle

25,5 km - 2h30 - Niveau intermédiaire

Le + : le Canal de Marans, ses écluses et sa végétation penchée sur l'eau.

No. 34 THE FOODY GETAWAY

Between La Rochelle and Châtelaiillon-Plage

14.3 kms - 1h30 - Family level

The pluspoint : the Belle-Epoque villas of Châtelaiillon-Plage, the village of Boucholeurs, seafood tastings, the ocean and its sea air.



THE VÉLOFRANCETTE®

From Caen in Normandy to La Rochelle, this 630-km route connects the English Channel to the Atlantic for a 100% nature journey to discover the tastes of France. It joins the Véloodyssée at the Marans canal and ends its course at the foot of the Towers of La Rochelle.

lavelofrancette.com



follow your guide

My favorite bike ride ? You really have to explore the coastline by bike and continue onwards to the Domaine de la Richardière north of the city in the village of Marsilly, a stunning house once home to Georges Simenon!



gastronomy & know-how

Following these excursions, a culinary and relaxing interlude is highly recommended. With over 350 eateries, including Michelin-starred venues, innovative bistros, street food outlets, and patisseries, La Rochelle offers a wealth of options that highlight ocean-inspired flavours from starters to desserts.

Establishments that are sensitive to short supply chains and that work closely with regional producers to showcase local products and their specialities.



THE FISHING PORT LA ROCHELLE

This is where it all begins. **Every day, fish and shellfish are unloaded onto the pontoons of the fishing port**, en route for the fish market where fishermen, fishmongers, wholesalers and retailers rub shoulders.

These seafood products are then **sent to the many restaurants in La Rochelle or for display on market stalls**.

SUMMER WORKSHOP

"LIKE A FISHMONGER" SUMMER WORKSHOP

Workshop duration : approximately 2 hours 30 minutes

"A MORNING AT THE FISHMARKET" SUMMER WORKSHOPS

Duration of the visit : approximately 1 hours 30 minutes

More information :

port-peche-larochelle.com



CENTRAL MARKET OF LA ROCHELLE

In La Rochelle, the market takes place in the 19th-century market halls, in the heart of the old town. **Wednesdays and Saturdays are the main market days** when the stalls of cheesemongers, florists and greengrocers extend into the surrounding streets. The market is a vibrant hub where some traders, like Chez Mélie, which has expanded its stall since 1891, have worked for generations.

This is the **must-visit place to indulge in local produce** and features an entire aisle dedicated to seafood: sea bass, cuttlefish, sardines, shrimp, oysters, and mussels. A first step before being tempted by one of the eateries serving the produce sourced just a few metres away!



local gastronomic know-how

CRIOLLOS CHOCOLATIER

Located in the heart of the historic centre, the Criollos Chocolatier store is a true La Rochelle institution. Thomas Pontacq is an **artisan member of the “Club of Engaged Chocolate-makers”**, a certification that supports producers and defends a sustainable cocoa industry. It also promotes **short supply chains and local produce** such as cream from Poitou-Charentes and AOC butter from Surgères.

criollos.fr



ANGOULINS SMOKEHOUSE

It was in a former oyster hut, in the heart of the marshes in Angoulins, that Claire and Vincent chose to set up their small artisanal fish-smoking workshop for direct sales and **on-site tasting**. Depending on the season and the catch, the species vary between sea bass, sardines, cuttlefish, and meagre, all from **local and responsible fishing**. They also offer **edible seaweed, hand-harvested** on the Charente coastline.

fumoir-angoulins.fr

the masters of sweet delicacies in La Rochelle

In recent years, La Rochelle has established itself as a playground for outstanding pastry chefs. Among them, Nina Métayer, designated best pastry chef in the world in 2024, and Amaury Lafonta, crowned world pastry champion in 2023. Now back in their home region, these talented individuals are skilfully reimagining the art of confectionery with creativity and style.

Between tradition and modernity, their creativity is breathing new life into the city's culinary scene and placing La Rochelle centre stage on the international pastry scene.



Nina Métayer, Excellence, La Rochelle style

A selection of establishments that makes sense to Nina Métayer... These two outlets belonged to her first apprenticeship master, Denis Baron, with whom she started at Chez Paillat. The two locations embody the perfect fusion of her talents: high-standard pastry and mastery of artisanal baking techniques. The offer features a range of exceptional breads, pastries, and cakes that reflect her unique world.

ninametayer.com

CHEZ PAILLAT, BAKERY AND PASTRY SHOP
170 avenue Carnot, 17000 La Rochelle

LE FOURNIL, BAKERY, PASTRY SHOP AND PRODUCTION WORKSHOP
90 boulevard André Sautel, 17000 La Rochelle





the masters of sweet delicacies in La Rochelle



Amaury Lafonta Pastry Shop, the sweet art of reinvention

2023 World Pastry Champion, Amaury Lafonta enhances fine products with creativity. His signature Tahitian vanilla dessert and revisited pain aux raisins are proof. The pastries, breads and brioches are homemade by Timoté Bourre, Best Apprentice of France 2019. There's also a variety of snacks that are freshly made each morning, featuring seasonal flavours.

68 rue des Merciers, 17000 La Rochelle
amaurylafonta.fr

a wine region

In La Rochelle and the surrounding area, winemaking dates back to the Middle Ages when the city was the main wine-exporting port on the Atlantic coast.

Land of the essential **Pineau des Charentes**, which shares its history with **cognac**. This fortified wine is made by mixing grape must with Cognac brandy, distilled at least a year prior. While most grapevines are used to make cognac and the famous Pineau des Charentes, wine production is on the rise and merits attention.

With nearly **80,000 hectares of vineyards**, Charente wine production is one of the most important in France. The IGP Charentais wines, which cover most of Charente-Maritime and Charente, include nearly **600 winegrowers**.



Just a few kilometres from the maritime city, charming estates await. Whether on the islands or inland, wine lovers will find unique wines and exciting wine tourism options to explore.



COGNAC NORMANDIN MERCIER

At the Domaine de la Péraudière, the Normandier-Mercier family guides visitors through their cellars and distillery, culminating in a chance to **taste various prestigious Pineau des Charentes and Cognacs**, including one made with honey! Since 1872, five generations have followed one another, perpetuating the art of ageing and blending the finest eaux-de-vie from the crus of Grande and Petite Champagne.

normandin-mercier.fr

My favourite specialieasonsty ?
Charentaise mussel stew ! A dish made with bouchot mussels (from Esnandes), saffron and cream (and you can even add a dash of pineau !)

follow your guide

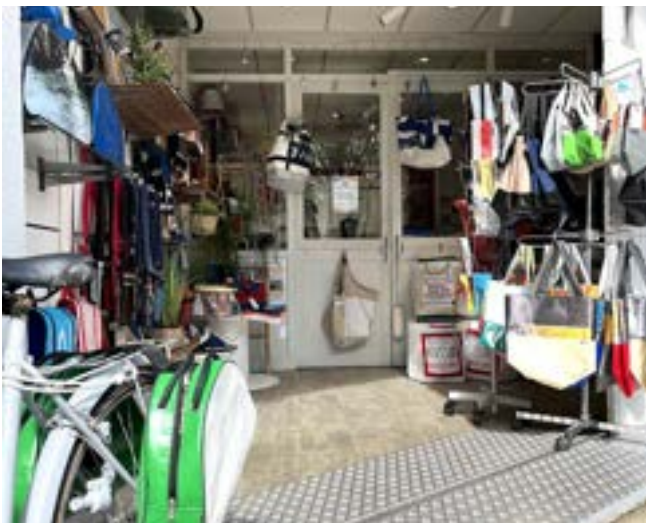
shopping 100% rochelais



MOULES BROTHERS

In the heart of the fishing port at Chef de Baie, you can buy and enjoy **organic seafood, mussels, oysters and also shrimp**. The descendants of four generations of mussel producers in Esnandes, the Durivaud brothers have been raising bouchot mussels for almost 20 years. They are cooked naturally and sprinkled with herbs to enhance their aromas.

[facebook.com/
MoulesDurivaudMoulesBrothers](https://facebook.com/MoulesDurivaudMoulesBrothers)



REMISE À FLOT

At Remise à flot, every creation tells a story. Riding boots become handbags, and boat sails turn into clutch bags. Each item reflects **the history of materials and humanity**. As a professional integration structure, they help the long-term unemployed get back into paid work by training them in skills like sewing, warehouse work, and sales. This way, people can develop a sustainable career.

remiseaflot.com



PANIER MATLAMA

Manufacturing **boldly designed bags and baskets** from unusual and durable materials: **oyster bags, boat sails, swimming pool covers** and more. All of these original designs are created by Marina Richer in La Rochelle and produced in a limited series.

matlama.fr



COUTEAUX FAROL

Handcrafted marine knives since 1996. The company has been awarded the “EPV” label (**Living Heritage Company**) for its unique expertise and innovations in knife making.

farol.fr



ESPRITVOILES

Creation and manufacturing of **bags and accessories in navy canvas**. All models are created and designed in the La Rochelle workshop. **It is an eco-responsible company** with a positive energy ethos, aiming for zero waste.

espritvoiles.fr



follow your guide

Where can I find gift ideas ? The city centre is full of small shops, especially in Rue Saint-Yon, Rue Saint-Sauveur or Rue Saint-Nicolas, where you can stumble upon original items made by our local creators.



La Rochelle's packed events calendar

Numerous events keep the city vibrant throughout the year, and celebrate music, dance, cinema, theatre, travel sport and sailing.





SUNNY SIDE OF THE DOC

A leading global event for financing co-productions and distributing finished programmes.

FEMA LA ROCHELLE CINÉMA FESTIVAL

A major celebration of cinema, FEMA La Rochelle presents around 200 films from the silent era through to contemporary cinema, dedicated to filmmakers who have made their mark on history.

FRANCOFOLIES LA ROCHELLE

Founded in 1985, the Francofolies Festival in La Rochelle has become the premier event for the French-language music scene, characterised by a distinctive identity and a clear editorial direction.

TV FICTION FESTIVAL

The main event of its kind in France and Europe, the Festival de la Fiction is the meeting place for the very best in creation, aimed at both television professionals and the general public.

GRAND PAVOIS LA ROCHELLE

A boat show for all who enjoy boating and nautical activities, running since 1973. The Grand Pavois is an international benchmark among in-water boat shows.

INTERNATIONAL ADVENTURE FILM AND BOOK FESTIVAL

A yearly gathering for adventurers, fans of stunning travel photos, open spaces, and great stories.

LA ROCHELLE MARATHON

Launched in 1991, the La Rochelle marathon, one of the most important in France, was described as “popular, friendly and festive” by its founding president, Serge Vigot.





La Rochelle is a popular destination for conferences, seminars, and corporate events due to its attractive location and amenities.

With an outstanding setting, a substantial hotel capacity across all categories, welcoming restaurants, reception facilities suited for all types of events, and dedicated, specialised service providers, **the destination has everything needed to cater to and impress even the most discerning organisers!**

convention & exhibition facilities

Espace Encan

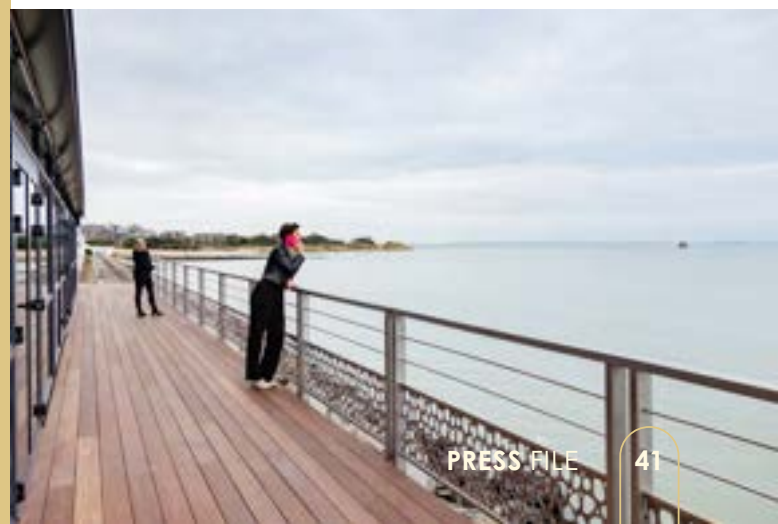
The historic site of the old fish market has been revitalised and now features a **3,000 sq.m modular space beneath a glass roof**. This area opens onto the **Bassin des Grands Yachts**. A facility featuring a **780-seat amphitheatre, 10 meeting rooms, and a terrace offering views** of the Towers of La Rochelle, making it ideal for hosting all types of events.

The Georges Pernoud convention centre

is docked at the **Minimes marina** and ready to set sail for the Lighthouse at the End of the World. Fully renovated after a year of building work, this convention centre can accommodate up to **400 people**. It boasts a **450 sq.m hall, a 410-seat amphitheatre** and 6 meeting rooms.

a destination that brings people together

La Rochelle offers a multitude of opportunities to meet, exchange ideas, negotiate and recharge. With **its two convention centres** (one near the Old Port and the other by the Ocean) and numerous unique meeting and seminar venues (a boat, an aquarium, museums, hotels, etc.), every event can find the right space in La Rochelle.



the best experiences

for stopovers at
La Rochelle as a team

GO BACK IN TIME

by discovering **the history of the mythical Towers** of La Rochelle.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

surrounded by the most beautiful marine species in the heart of one of the largest private aquariums in Europe : **La Rochelle Aquarium**.

EMBARK WITH YOUR CREW

aboard the **Espérance 1** operated by Inter-Island Cruises and extend your **festive or working evenings** in the heart of the Old Port.

GAZE ACROSS THE OCEAN

sipping an aperitif on the typical **Charentais stilted fishing hut of La Grande Terrasse**.

GULP IN THE FRESH AIR

while swinging a club between the ocean and nature on the **golf courses of La Jarne or La Prée**.

STROLL

through **Léa Nature's Biopole vegetable garden** and learn about permaculture as a team.

AWAKEN YOUR SENSES

during a visit to the 150-year-old cognac cellars **owned by the Normandin-Mercier family**.

And much more besides such as regattas, Olympic-style events, treasure hunts, rallies, and games based on Fort Boyard, etc.



Event agencies boast the kind of boundless creativity and local expertise that enable them to craft unique, bespoke experiences !



la rochelle the must-see and the inspirational

press
file

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