

IRISH FERRIES PRACTICAL INFORMATION

LA ROCHELLE

Information: Tourism office

- www.holidays-la-rochelle.co.uk

Attractions

- **Tour Saint-Nicolas:** www.tours-la-rochelle.fr/en/
- **Yélo sea bus:** yelo.agglo-larochelle.fr/services/passeur-bus-de-mer/
- **La Rochelle Aquarium:** Quai Louis Prunier. Book tickets online: www.aquarium-larochelle.com/en/home/

Accommodation

Where to stay? Book with **Irish Ferries** on holidays@irishferries.com for:

- Pierre & Vacances, Résidence Centre, La Rochelle
- Pierre & Vacances, Le Palais des Gouverneurs, Ile de Ré
- Pierre & Vacances, La Fort de la Rade, Ile d'Aix

LA TRANCHE SUR MER

Information: Tourism office

- www.latranchesurmer-tourisme.co.uk/

Attractions

- Adventure Park: **O'Fun Park**, 85540 Moutiers-les-Mauxfaits <https://ofunpark.fr/>
- Waterpark: **O'Gliss Park**, 85560 Le Bernard www.oglisspark.fr/
- La Terriere plage: **Koa Surf School** <https://www.koasurfschool.com/>

Accommodation

Where to stay? Options available from the Tourism office and from:

- Campotel – Le Pin Parasol <https://www.campotel.com/project/le-pin-parasol/>

LES SABLES D'OLONNE

Information: Tourism office

- www.destination-lessablesdolonne.co.uk/

Attractions

- **Chateau de Talmont:** <https://talmont-saint-hilaire.fr/>

Accommodation

Where to stay? Book with **Irish Ferries** on holidays@irishferries.com for:

- Pierre & Vacances, Résidence La Baie des Sables, Les Sables-d'Olonne
- Pierre & Vacances, Les Villas d'Olonne, Les Sables-d'Olonne
- Pierre & Vacances, Le Domaine de Bourgenay, Talmont-Saint-Hilaire

PUY DU FOU

Top tips:

- **Download the app in advance:** You can listen to the shows in English using the easy-to-use app and some earphones.
- **Bring a picnic:** There are lots of picnic areas and benches as well as reasonably priced food outlets.
- **Wear comfortable closed shoes** (i.e. trainers, not sandals): the ground is dusty, and there are a lot of shows to see, so lots of walking!
- **Book in advance** (essential!): Contact **Irish Ferries** on holidays@irishferries.com to book both on site accommodation and park passes

NANTES

Information: Tourism office

- www.levoyageanantes.fr/en/

Attractions

- **Les Machines de l'île de Nantes.** Essential to book in advance: www.lesmachines-nantes.fr/en/

Accommodation

Where to stay? Book these Nantes hotels with **Irish Ferries** on holidays@irishferries.com for:

- Aparthotel Adagio Nantes Centre, 9 All. Commandant Charcot
- Aparthotel Adagio access Nantes Viarme, 42 Rue Russeil
- Mercure Nantes Centre Gare, 50-51 quai Malakoff
- Ibis Nantes Centre Tour Bretagne, 19 rue Jean Jaures

IRISH FERRIES



Family Activities Guide

FAVOURITE PLACES



Cover photo:
Aerial view of La Tranche sur Mer



IRISH FERRIES

Sea travel differently

Family Activities Guide

by a
Mum of three



La Rochelle

Ever since our children were babies, we've been packing the car and heading to France with **Irish Ferries** for our holidays. As they got older, we've ventured further south and settled on the Atlantic Coast around south **Vendée** for the perfect blend of sun, sea, and activities. Here are our tried and tested suggestions for great family days out.

La Rochelle

Strictly speaking, **La Rochelle** is in the **Poitou Charente** region, but is within easy reach of south **Vendée**. Start in the picturesque **Vieux Port** with the 14th century **Tour de Saint-Nicolas** and **Tour de la Chaîne**. A visit of the 37m high **Tour Saint-Nicolas** is recommended, decked out like a house with different rooms, and where mini-Rapunzel's will be in rapture at the vistas at the top of the tower (after 120-odd steps of climbing!).

For fun and the shortest way across the port, take the **Yélo** electric solar-powered sea bus to **les Minimes** and the very impressive **Aquarium of La Rochelle**, with 12,000 marine animals and 600 different species. Prepare to be mesmerised by displays of elegantly dancing sea horses, phosphorescent jellyfish and Nemo like clown fish, and thrilled by the huge shark aquarium the height of the total building.



Aquarium of La Rochelle

Just behind the Aquarium, admire the expensive yachts in the marina, and visit the **Musée Maritime** aboard the **France 1**, a famous weather frigate, and explore areas from the engine room to the commander's bridge. For shopping, you will be spoiled for choice from the market at the harbour to the old town with its cobbled streets and plenty of quirky shops for browsing.

La Tranche sur Mer

Facing towards the **Ile de Ré**, is the pretty small town of **La Tranche sur Mer**, sometimes called "little

California" because of its extensive sunshine and favourable micro-climate. Alongside the typical white painted houses and narrow streets are 13km of fine sandy blue flagged beaches. Our favourite is **la Terriere** beach, perfect for watersports. With 3 surf schools, you'll be spoiled for choice, but all our children learned to surf at **Koa Surf School** with Olivier and his team.



Vendée House



Waterpark

A short drive from La Tranche, are 2 fantastic parks. First up, **O'Gliss Park**, the biggest waterpark in France, with beach areas, sedate lazy as well as crazy rivers, thrill seeker vertical slide drops,

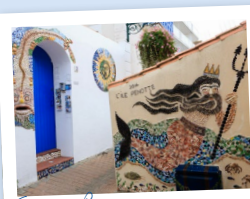
and virtual reality white water rafting – something to please everyone. Just down the road, partner **O'Fun Park** is a forest adventure park with a lovely mix of activities including zip lines, paintball, a fun zone with inflatables, water jumps, pony rides... the list goes on! Also accessible nearby is the **Marais Poitevin** "Green Venice" area where leisurely canal boat trips, bird watching, cycling and fishing are all possible.

Les Sables d'Olonne

Les Sables d'Olonne is a leading seaside resort most famous for the **Vendée Globe** solo round the world yacht race and has a bustling promenade with a lovely 3km long sandy beach at the heart of the town. Just back from the seafloor, check out the charming **"Ile de la Penotie"** area, where beautiful frescoes with intricate detail made only from seashells adorn the houses.



Les Sables d'Olonne



Ile de la Penotie

Nearby, find **rue de l'Enfer**, a street that once held the world record for the narrowest street (40cm at its widest

point). Head on towards the lovely pedestrian shopping streets bordered by the **Notre Dame de Bon Port** church and the covered food market of **Halles Central** dating from 1890.

Close to **Les Sables** is **Talmont Saint Hilaire**, once bordering the sea as a port town, but now inland as the estuary of the **Payre** river silted up. The town is dominated by the ruins of the medieval **Chateau Talmont** dating back to the 11th century, where the walls reveal stones well rounded by the sea's action in days' past. Time a chateau visit for one of the themed events such as the falconry display or the colourful "Richard of Lionheart" night shows.



Chateau Talmont

Puy du Fou & Nantes

No trip to the **Vendée** is complete without a trip to the spectacular historical theme park of **Puy du Fou**, where you will need at least a day to take it all in (but could easily stretch to 2!). The park is split into up to 26 shows, most outdoors, each running for c. 30–40 minutes. And what an experience it is - a history trip back in time with animals and live actors and lots of special effects! Our must-not-miss shows include: the Vikings, the Dance of the Phantom Birds, Richelieu's Musketeer and the most spectacular gladiators and chariots in the Roman amphitheatre in the Sign of Triumph - visit to discover your own family favourites!



Puy du Fou



Puy du Fou

After **Puy du Fou**, head to **Nantes**, where a visit to the **Les Machines de l'Île** on the "isle" of **Nantes** bordered by the **Loire** river is a must. Situated in the old industrial buildings of the former shipyards, the Machines are an ambitious artistic project designed to be a blend of the invented worlds of Jules Verne and the mechanical universe of Leonardo da Vinci. You can visit the Gallery of the Machines, but best of all for us is a ride (c. 30 mins) in the 12m high Grand Elephant,



Nantes



Nantes

Nantes



IRISH FERRIES

Puy du Fou



Puy du Fou

VENDEE

Les Sables-d'Olonne

La Tranche sur Mer

MARAIS POITEVIN

La Rochelle

especially when the driver turns the trunk inward and sprays water on

the occupants! The project is constantly evolving – the perfect excuse for a return visit to see what wonderful things are next!

All in all, its symbolic of the whole area for us – full of ever evolving nature, action, culture and interesting sights, all ready to be enjoyed with a healthy dose of sunshine!