

What to do on the Vendée coast? Our ideas for towns, islands  
and wellness getaways



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By Floriane

The Vendée coast is clearly one of those places you come back to time and time again. From the island of Oléron, we like to make little getaways, for a weekend or even a day, when we feel the need for a slightly different ocean.

Between lively seaside resorts, authentic fishing ports and unspoilt islands, the Vendée coast offers the ideal playground to unwind.

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## **Les Sables-d'Olonne: a must-see on the Vendée coast**

It's hard not to start with Les Sables-d'Olonne. It's a mythical place for sailing enthusiasts, since it's here that the famous Vendée Globe, the single-handed round-

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the-world race, gets underway. As we live on [the Ile d'Oléron](#) and it was our daughter's class project, we took the opportunity to witness the excitement of the start of the 2024-2025 edition, marked by Charlie Dalin's victory. It's an experience we'd definitely recommend at least once, as the atmosphere is so unique. Even outside the event, you can still feel the strong maritime culture, especially when strolling around the port.

For our part, we like to stroll through the center of town and take the time to get away from the embankment. The Chaume district offers a more authentic atmosphere, with its narrow streets and village-like feel. It's the perfect place for a more leisurely stroll, where you can discover another facet of Sables-d'Olonne.

Then, on the ocean side, it's impossible to miss the [Puits d'Enfer](#) located to the south of the town. This natural rift in the rock is particularly impressive, especially when the sea is rough and the tide is high. The waves rush in with force, offering a spectacle as powerful as it is fascinating. It's a slightly wilder spot, in stark contrast to the classic image of a seaside resort.

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## **Treat yourself to a wellness break**

We've come to realize that the Vendée coast is also the perfect place to slow down and take care of yourself.

After a day of walking on the beach or pedaling, we really appreciate a wellness break. Seawater, naturally rich in minerals and trace elements, has immediate effects on the body: you release tension, recover faster and feel truly soothed.

For a short getaway, you can easily find [all-inclusive thalasso weekend deals](#) that let you enjoy all this without having to organize much at all.

## **Noirmoutier Island: between nature and wide open spaces**

The island of Noirmoutier is clearly one of our favorite spots on the Vendée coast, and we're not the only ones. Every time we go there, we feel like we've changed the whole atmosphere in just a few minutes. Just **crossing the Gois** sets the tone: crossing this submersible road at the rhythm of the tides is an experience in itself.

For our part, we particularly like to come out of season, when the island is at its quietest. That's when we take the time to discover it by bike, without any specific objective in mind, just letting ourselves be guided between salt marshes, pine forests and quiet little roads. It's really the best way to soak up the scenery.

We're also partial to the wilder beaches of Barbâtre and L'Épine, where you can walk for a long time without seeing many people. The atmosphere here is much more raw, almost soothing, with just the sound of wind and waves in the background.

And then there are the little details that make it all happen: the oyster huts, the discreet harbors, the local markets... A true natural interlude, in perfect contrast to the busier resorts along the coast.

□ [\*Where to stay in Noirmoutier? Hôtel Les Prateaux, a charming address\*](#)

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## **Saint-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie: a more authentic atmosphere**

A little further north, the change of atmosphere is immediate. Saint-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie is a destination we often recommend for its gentler, more local feel. Here, the fishing port sets the tone and you can sense that life is still very much organized around the sea.

You'll enjoy wandering through the narrow streets, stopping off at the market and sampling the local produce. It's the kind of place where you naturally slow down, without even realizing it. And frankly, it feels good.

But what we also particularly appreciate in the area is the Corniche Vendéenne, which links Saint-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie to Sion-sur-l'Océan. It's a walk we take almost every time we go by. Between rocks, small coves and views of the Atlantic, the

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landscape changes completely and offers a wilder side. Whether on foot or by bike, this is a must-do if you want to enjoy the coastline to the full.

If you're looking for a lively spot without the hustle and bustle of the big resorts, this is clearly a great option.

[▢ \*Where to sleep in Saint-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie: Le Ceitya, right in the center of town\*](#)

## Practical tips for organizing your stay on the Vendée coast

- **When to visit the Vendée coast?** Summer remains the ideal time to enjoy the beaches and entertainment, but it's also the busiest. For our part, we have a real weakness for spring and the off-season. The temperatures are still very pleasant, the scenery is superb and, above all, you can enjoy the area in much greater tranquillity.
- **How long will you be gone?** As for duration, it all depends on what you want to do. A weekend is enough to discover a resort like Les Sables-d'Olonne or Saint-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie. On the other hand, if you want to explore more of the coast, via Noirmoutier for example, we recommend 3 to 4 days. This allows you

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to take your time, without running.

Finally, a few little tips that we apply every time: **give priority to cycling** whenever possible, especially on the islands, book accommodation in advance in summer and don't hesitate to stray slightly from the most touristy areas to discover much quieter corners. That's where the best surprises often lie.

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