

le boat

Who's on board?


THE RIVER CHARENTE

Region guide



10 Maximum speed allowed on waterways in km/h (6km/h in some places)

3 Maximum speed allowed in ports/marinas in km/h

 Pass oncoming boats on the right-hand side



River Charente		Approx time		No. of locks	
Rochefort	50 min	4 hr	0	1	
Tonnay-Charente	3hr 10min		1		
St-Savinien	1hr	10 hr 30 min	0	5	
Port d'Envaux	20 min		0		
Taillebourg	1 hr 40 min		0		
Saintes	1 hr 25 min		0		
Chaniers	1 hr 10 min		1		
Dompierre-sur-Charente	2 hr 20 min		1		
Cognac	1hr		1		
St-Brice	50 min		1		
Bourg-Charente	45 min		1		
Jarnac	1 hr 40 min		8 hr 50 min		3
Graves	30 min	1			
St-Simon	1 hr	1			
Châteauneuf-sur-Charente	55 min	2			
St-Simeux	1 hr 30 min	3			
L'Angle	55 min	1			
Trois-Palis	2 hr 20 min	4			
Angoulême					

Times are an approximation only and are calculated on the basis of an average speed of 7.5km/h and an average time of 12 minutes to pass through a lock. Your speed, the flow of the water and the time it takes to go through locks will all affect your progress.





ROCHEFORT

Rochefort is a smart and elegant looking town, not very far from the Atlantic Ocean - so the fish and shellfish here are as fresh as they can be. The town developed around Louis XIV's naval base in the 17th century - the restored arsenal can be visited to learn about the town's ship building heritage. Nearby is the Corderie Royale which houses the Musée de la Marine, with its collection of sailing and steam-boat models. Pierre Loti, the 19th century French author who wrote books about his life at sea, lived in Rochefort. His house is now a museum and houses many of his oriental souvenirs from his travels.

Recommended restaurant: La Goule Benaise - Quai de la Louisiane

Amenities: There are plenty of shops, supermarkets and restaurants in this big town

Market: Tues, Thu and Sat (am) - Avenue Charles de Gaulle and Les Halles



Once you reach Rochefort, you may not go any further by boat. However, the river west of St Savinien Lock is tidal and only suitable for experienced boaters and sailors. To see Rochefort, we would recommend mooring in St. Savinien and taking a 30minute train ride to Rochefort.





Corderie Royale, Rochefort



Port Miniature, St. Savinien

ST. SAVINIEN

Walk downtown to discover the church and its square lined up with statues of saints. The island of La Grenouillette offers many leisure activities including: fishing, mini-golf, swimming, tennis and there's also a large lake, home to Port Miniature, where the kids can captain their own small-scale model ships. Right next door there's also a small farmhouse.

Recommended restaurant: Le Bec Fin - on La Grenouillette
Amenities: Bakeries, butcher, grocery store (Vival), supermarkets, several restaurants
Covered market: Tue and Sat (am)



Château de Panloy

PORT D'ENVAUX

Along the Rue des Armateurs, some magnificent residences attest to the importance of this small village. You can visit the 13th century Château de Panloy (900m from the mooring) and take a guided tour to view its tapestries, its wood panelling and its hunting gallery. By the river there's a sandy play area which has a safe area for swimming, as well as refreshments and kayak hire – a nice place for a lunchtime picnic and to while away the afternoon. And if you're feeling fit, it's worth taking a walk or a cycle to Les Lapidiales, an old quarry located just 1km out of town. Sculptors from all around the world have carved effigies out of the rock.

Recommended restaurant:

Auberge de la Charente

Amenities: Grocery store, a very nice bakery/patisserie and a few restaurants

Market: Thu (am) - Place des Halles

CHANIERES

A pleasant town, although there's not much to do here other than stock up with provisions. 1km to the east however, on the island, beside the Baine lock, we would recommend lunch or dinner in the former water mill, which once supplied wheat and barley flour to the royal navy based in Rochefort in the 17th century.

Recommended restaurant: The Moulin de la Baine (10min walk from the mooring in Chaniers)

Amenities: Bakery, butcher, several shops, some restaurants

Market: Wed and Sat - next to the bakery | Sun (am) – oyster market

CHEZ LANDART

Moor at PK1. Mr Babinot will be happy to open his doors and welcome you to taste his Cognac and Pineau des Charentes (local aperitif made with grape must and Cognac). You'll also be able to walk up to the old mill where you'll enjoy a stunning view of the Charente valley.

Germanicus Arch



SAINTES

A city of art and history, Saintes conceals a beautiful archaeological and monumental patrimony. The Charente River flows at the foot of the iconic Germanicus Arch (dating from 18- 19 AD). Explore this historic city and find the Gallo-Roman arena that would once seat 15,000 people, the Abbaye aux Dames and the St. Eutrope Church, all masterpieces of Romanesque art. If you don't feel like walking, jump on board the little tourist train to tour the city. They depart from the Tourist Office (2min away from the mooring).

Recommended restaurant: Les Saveurs de l'Abbaye – next to the Abbaye aux Dames

Amenities: Butcher, bakeries, a supermarket, several cafés and many restaurants

Market: Tue to Sun (am)



Roman Amphitheatre, Saintes

COGNAC

Cognac is known internationally for its Cognac production. The facades and roofs covered with a light black fungus resulting from the evaporation of alcohol into the air, poetically called 'the angels taking their share'. Near the marina, several big Cognac trading houses offer visits and tastings. We recommend a visit and tour around Baron Otard distillery, housed inside the Château de Cognac, where François I was born. Elsewhere in Cognac, discover salt merchants houses, the magnificently renovated Récollets Convent and, nearby, the 12th century church with its Romanesque façade, punctuated with a flamboyant rose, stained-glass window. Visit the excellent tourist office for a variety of ways to explore the town. They have a booklet called 'Laissez-vous conter Cognac' (Discover the world of Cognac) which contains a programme of six visits to attractions, each with its own unique appeal.



Baron Otard, Château de Cognac

Recommended restaurant:

La Courtine - with its own pontoon

Amenities: Supermarket, restaurants, bakeries, butchers, bar, cafés

Covered market: Tue to Sun (am)



Récollets Convent, Cognac



BOURG-CHARENTE

The city has a beautiful Romanesque church from the 12th century and has several castles, including the house of Marnier Lapostolle, who produces the famous Grand Marnier. At Domaine Pautier (2km south of the mooring) you can take a guided tour of the vineyards, the distillery and the cellars, finished off with a tasting of course! (By appointment only: +33 (0) 5 45 81 24 89). If you are a golf lover, you must stop in Bourg-Charente. 2.5km away from the mooring there's the Golf du Cognac with its 18-hole course through vineyards and woods with water obstacles.

Recommended restaurant: La Ribaudière, right by the river. There's a mooring pontoon next to the road bridge.

Amenities: Grocery store and a bakery



JARNAC

Evidence of Jarnac's prosperous past can be seen by the elegant, white houses that border the quays of the Charente River. Two large Cognac trading houses have settled in this city and you can visit the Courvoisier one near the bridge. On a tour, which takes just over an hour, you'll learn all about the distillation, the work in the vineyard, the cellars, barrel-making and ageing of the liquor of the Gods'. Jarnac is also the city of former French President, François Mitterrand, and his childhood home is open to the public in his honour. It displays the gifts offered to the president by Heads of State from around the world. There is also a complex of outdoor pools and a recreation area at Ile Madame, if you fancy a lazy day of relaxation.



Recommended restaurant: Le Verre y Table – a 15 minute walk from the Le Boat base

Amenities: Supermarkets, bakeries, butcher, cafés and restaurants

Covered market: Tue to Sun (am) - Rue Banvin





Gabarre from the bridge of Juac, Saint-Simon



Maison des Gabarriers



GRAVES

Moor at the pontoon, and visit the cellars of Maison Brillet, producer of Cognac and fine Pineau des Charentes for generations – visits are free, although to purchase a few bottles of something would be greatly appreciated. (Visits by appointment only – call ahead on +33 (0) 5 45 97 05 06.) They can also give you the keys to the church that has been overlooking the village since the 12th century.

ST. SIMON

St. Simon was an important barge-building village where three shipyards were once established, building distinctive flat-bottomed boats (called Gabarre) that carried spirits, stones and salt. You can learn about this history and the lives of the ship-builders, carpenters and sailors who lived and worked here at the 'Maison des Gabarriers'. As you explore the village, stop by the church and find the 'graffiti' that the sailors carved into the stone long ago. Further along the river, at the small marina of Juac (PK34), you'll pass by the 'La Renaissance', a perfect replica of a 19th century-barge.

Recommended restaurant: La Chabourne

CHÂTEAUNEUF-SUR-CHARENTE

Contrary to what its name suggests, Châteauneuf (which means 'New Castle' in English) is very old. You'll be able to admire St. Pierre church, which is one of the jewels of Romanesque art in the Charente region. You can also enjoy the safe bathing area and beach "Le Bain des Dames" opposite the small island (île Mattard) where you can also rent canoes.

Recommended restaurant: Graine et Garenne - Place de la Mairie

Amenities: Grocery store (Intermarché), bakeries, restaurants

Covered market: Tue, Thu & Sat (am)



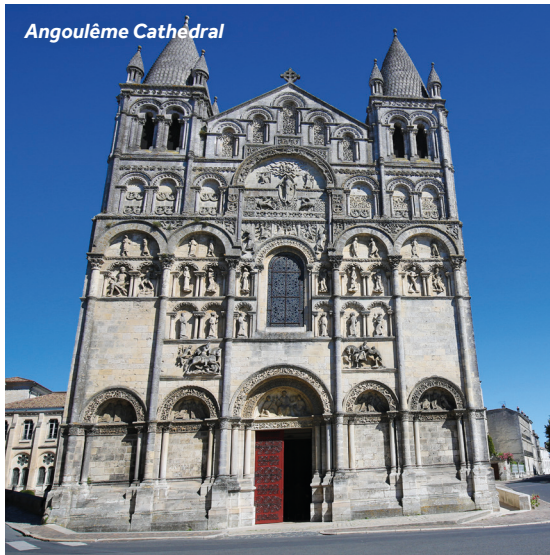
TROIS-PALIS

You must stop in Trois-Palis. This charming village, with its small church and impressive bell tower that can be seen from miles around, is well-known for its chocolate factory and its sophisticated cakes. Chocolaterie Letuffe invites you to visit its workshops and to taste its sweets. You can also book an hour-long 'masterclass' (chocolaterie.letuffe@gmail.com - +33 5 45 91 05 21) to learn the art of chocolate work, and make your own 'marguerites d'Angoulême'.

Amenities: There is not much here in the way of shops and restaurants – but enjoy the chocolate!



Angoulême Cathedral



ANGOULÊME

Once entrenched behind thick, high walls, Angoulême is now famous for its comic strip museum and festival. Known as the 'international capital of the comic strip', look out for the brightly painted walls that are dotted all over the city. Houmeau Port marks the beginning of the navigable Charente River from Angoulême to the Atlantic Ocean. The port grew in the 13th century thanks to the trade of salt, brandy, paper... and cannons for warships! 1km away from the moorings, the Paper Museum offers an interesting insight into how paper was made in the past and how it was used. They organise treasure hunts and childrens' workshops, too. While exploring the city, be sure to walk along the ramparts, which will lead you to the 12th century cathedral with its extravagantly sculpted façade. Stroll through the narrow streets of the old town, admire the old houses and enjoy a coffee on the terraces. You can also discover the city on a Segway tour (+33 6 01 07 02 87) or on the little tourist train, which departs from Place Bouillaud next to the Town Hall. Golf enthusiasts can practice at the Golf de l'Hirondelle, not far from the city centre (golf license required).

Recommended restaurant: Quai n°8 - on the riverside

Amenities: Supermarkets, bakeries, patisserie (try the macarons at 'La Biscuiterie Lolmède'), butcher, restaurants, cafés

Covered market: Tue to Sun (am) - in the old town

Angoulême



THE MARITIME SECTION

The section of river downstream of St. Savinien to the coast is tidal and not recommended for beginners. The current can be strong, there are limited moorings and you will share the waterway with commercial vessels and cargo ships. If you are experienced and decide to navigate here, you should take advice at the Rochefort port office or at St. Savinien Lock and get a copy of the local tide tables before you set out.

LOCKS

Most of the locks on the Charente River are manual and user-operated, and can be used between sunrise and sunset. Set a crew member ashore before the lock so they can operate the gates and sluices. The crew member should always be ready to close the sluices in case of emergencies. The locks at St. Savinien and Chaniers are open between 8am-12pm & 2pm-6pm. They are both electric and are usually operated by a lock keeper. Only enter the lock when a single green traffic light is showing. If a lock keeper is not present, a crew member should go ashore before the lock and should always stay next to the control panel while the lock is in operation, ready to push the red stop button in case of emergencies. Please refer to the onboard Boat and Navigation Manual for more information about how to operate and pass through locks.

MOORING

Between St. Savinien and Angoulême, you can generally find mooring spaces along the towpath. Tie up only where you can safely access the back and use the mooring pins provided on board. Please refer to your waterways map for exact locations and please don't moor if there is a sign indicating to the contrary, you are on a bend or you are less than 50m from a structure such as a bridge. Do not moor at waiting pontoons on either side of a lock. Most small villages have free moorings with bollards or rings to tie up to. In larger towns, there is usually a fee (€10 - €20), although they'll usually have water refill points and electric hook-up facilities (not available on all boats).

WATER

You will need to fill up your water tank once or twice during the course of a week. Water is free at the Le Boat base in Jarnac, otherwise, there are several ports/marinas that will allow you to fill your tank for a fee (or included with overnight moorings).



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