


C011-CO Belle Ile en Mer

To the traveller who arrives from the mainland, Belle Ile welcomes him with its beautiful east coast. Sheltered from the wind, the eastern coast of the island opens itself in lush variety of inlets and beaches, flowered hills, charming villages and intimate ports. The western coast, of a wilder, more violent beauty, is torn apart by the constantly raging wind. The jagged coast and piles of rough rocks that withstand the incessant assault of the ocean's waves are offset by the quietness of the many valleys, the small inlets, and the fine-sand beaches that border the sand dunes. All along the coastal path that loops the island you will find a remarkable pallet of colour and contrast.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival by boat at LE PALAIS. Towering above Le Palais is the Citadel, a military fortress built in the 18th century to alert of and prevent any (British) landing on the continent. As Belle Isle was able to serve as a base of operations, Le Palais was encircled by a fortified wall between 1803 and 1870. The wall still stands today, but now serves as a pleasant promenade - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 4-star hotel in Vauban fort*

Day 2 - LE PALAIS – SAUZON (13 km). The morning will begin with a visit of the Citadel, overlooking the port and the city of Le Palais. You will discover what military life was like on the island : the parade grounds, the dungeons, the ammunitions room. You will also visit the museum, for a more thorough introduction to the past of Belle-Ile. Leaving the city you will follow the coast path through Taillefer signal-station, the beaches of Port Fouquet and Port Jean, the cape of Kerzo and the Port Blanc inlet to arrive finally at Sauzon. *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel*

Day 3 - STROLL AROUND SAUZON (13 km). Take the coastal path across the cape of Le Cardinal and that of Les Poulains. The wild landscape fills with the clattering sound of rocks being tossed in the waves, and from here rises a lighthouse holding strong against the devastating forces that surround it. Only a few steps away, protected by a small group of sickly trees, lies the little cabin bought by the famous actress Sarah Bernhardt, where she would often come to escape the rushed and hurried life of Paris ! You will then follow the western coast, more rough and wild, to Bortifaouen beach. Crossing through the countryside, you will return to Sauzon and to the relaxing refuge of your hotel - *Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel*



Day 4 - SAUZON – GOULPHAR (19 km). You'll go back to Bortifaoen Beach. Taking up the coastal path, you will discover the wild, ravaged western coast at the Pointe du Vieux chateau (headland), the Apothicairerie caves, the vast Donnant beach, the Pointe du Grand Guet, Les Aiguilles de Port Coton, and finally, Port Goulphar - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel*

Day 5 - LOCMARIA – GOULPHAR (24 km). Transfer by taxi to the Port Maria just outside the seaside village of Locmaria. You will again follow the coastal path to Goulphar, this time passing through the Arzic and Le Skeul capes, the Port Lost Kah, Puldon and Saint Marc capes, the beaches of Baluden and Kérel, and the Pointe du Talus. This is a beautiful hike, though somewhat strenuous, where you will constantly rise and fall with the landscape, climbing from beach or stream mouth to the summit of a cliff's edge, only to descend again a couple hundred meters into the earth's depths. But the panoramas are gorgeous, bending constantly to the will of the light and the waves.

Dinner, lodging and breakfast in the same hotel

Day 6 - LOCMARIA – LE PALAIS (17.5 km). Transfer by taxi to Locmaria. After taking a moment to visit the South-American-style church, you will head to the sea to continue your trek around the island. This eastern coast, sheltered from the winds, is, above all, agricultural. It holds vast beaches protected by the jutting capes and alternates with high, jagged cliffs and shadowy valleys. We recommend you walk down to the beautiful fountain built by Vauban. This fountain once allowed boats to rejuvenate themselves in fresh water - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 4-star hotel*



Day 7 - LE PALAIS. Tour ends after breakfast.

Season

From beginning of April to end of October but be careful this area is very crowded in summer time and we recommend you (if you can) to come outside this period. Nevertheless this area attracts a lot of tourists and you have to reserve earlier to get the best rooms.

What's included?

- 6 night's accommodation in selected 3 & 4-star hotels with breakfasts
- 5 gourmet dinners
- Hotel to hotel luggage transfer
- Taxi transfers
- A set of maps (1/25 000 scale) with the route marked on and detailed route notes describing the trail.
- A daily itinerary together with information about facilities and places of interest along the trail.
- Phone emergency assistance.

Visa fees - transportation fees to and from the walk area - Insurance (strongly recommended on all trips) - Transfers except those mentioned above - Drinks - Additional meals - Entrance fees - Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls... are not included

Getting there and away

You have to go to the harbour station of Quiberon and catch the boat to Belle-Ile

By train : TGV trains from Paris to Auray, then trains to Quiberon in July and August, buses the rest of the year

By car : You join the speed way Nantes-Brest (national road RN 165). You leave it at Auray and take D768 road to reach Quiberon

Where to park : Several parkings at Quiberon. We recommend you to park your car in the pay guarded Semaphore park with 1300 places

Walk difficulty

Grade 3 : walks of between 5 and 8 hours a day with total ascents up to 700 m. Some hiking experience is advisable. A reasonable level of fitness and some stamina are required for these walks. You may cover long distances in remote countryside or along rugged coastline and the terrain will be rough underfoot. You will encounter some short but steep ascents and descents