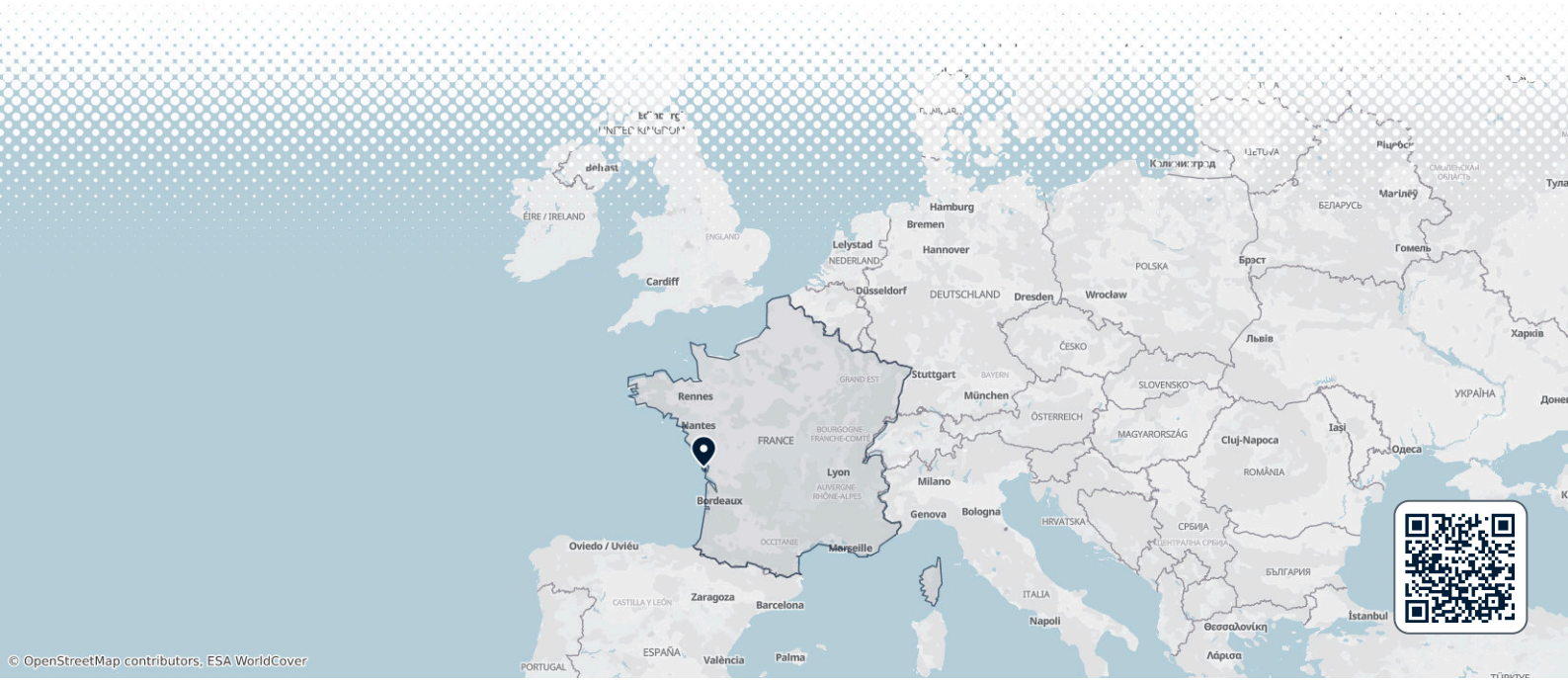


Oleron Island

New Aquitaine · France

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Île d'Oléron is the largest island on the French Atlantic coast. It is about 30 km long and up to 8 km wide, with around 22,000 residents. A free bridge links it to the mainland.

The island suits a relaxed beach and cycling trip. Pine forest and wide sandy beaches lie on the Atlantic side, and oyster farms and salt marshes lie on the sheltered east side. Visit for the Chassiron lighthouse, the citadel of Le Château-d'Oléron, colourful oyster huts and views of Fort Boyard. It works for a few days or a full week.

When to visit

June to September is the best time for swimming and long days, and July and August are the busiest months. Late spring and early autumn are quieter and still mild. Winter is wet and windy, and many small businesses close.

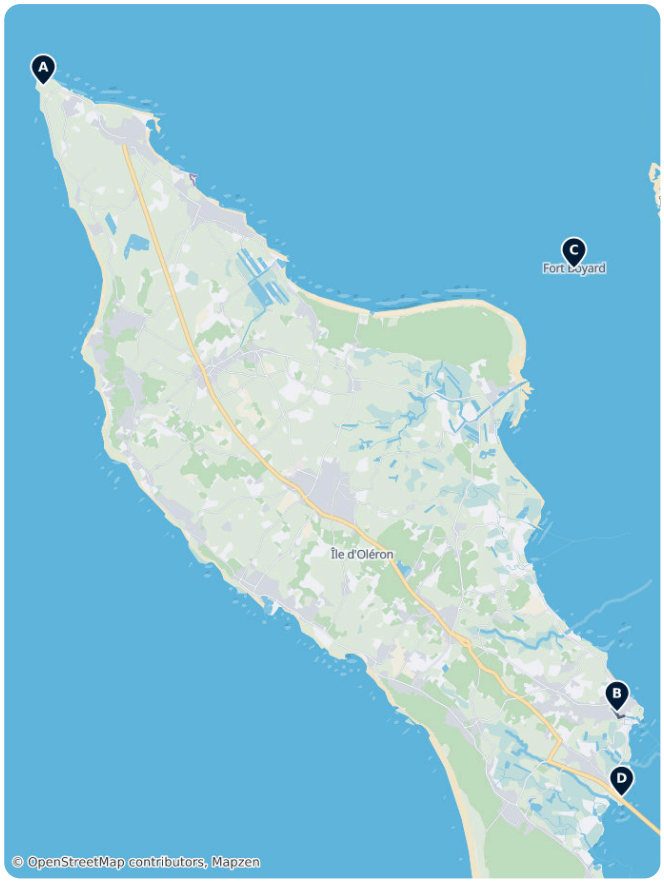
The Atlantic side can be windy even in summer, so bring a light jacket for evenings.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for cycling	10° / 14° Feels like 6°	4° / -3°	13 rainy days · Dry air
February	Fair Fair for cycling	11° / 16° Feels like 7°	4° / -2°	Dry air
March	Good Good for cycling	14° / 20° Feels like 10°	6° / 0°	12 rainy days · Dry air
April	Good Good for cycling	16° / 23° Feels like 13°	8° / 4°	Dry air
May	Good Good for cycling	19° / 27°	12° / 7°	13 rainy days · Dry air
June	Great Great for cycling	23° / 31°	15° / 11°	
July	Great Great for cycling	25° / 32°	17° / 13°	
August	Great Great for cycling	25° / 33°	17° / 13°	
September	Great Great for cycling	23° / 30°	14° / 10°	Dry air
October	Good Good for cycling	19° / 25°	12° / 5°	12 rainy days · Dry air
November	Fair Fair for cycling	13° / 18° Feels like 10°	8° / 1°	14 rainy days · Dry air
December	Poor Poor for cycling	11° / 15° Feels like 7°	5° / -2°	13 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: June, July, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Phare de Chassiron stands at the northern tip of the island. The striped tower is 46 m high, was built in 1834 and first lit in 1836, and 224 steps lead to the top. A museum and a garden are on the site.
- B Citadelle et fortifications in Le Château-d'Oléron was begun in 1630 on the orders of Cardinal *Richelieu*. *Vauban* later improved it. You can walk the ramparts and visit its exhibitions.
- C Fort Boyard is a sea fort between Oléron and Île d'Aix, built from 1801 to 1857. It is known worldwide from a TV game show. Boat trips from the island sail past it.
- **The oyster huts** at the port of Le Château-d'Oléron are painted in bright colours. Many now house artists and craft workshops.
- D Dolmen d'Ors dit la Piare is a Neolithic stone tomb near Le Château-d'Oléron. It is a short stop on a bike ride.
- **Saint-Trojan-les-Bains** is a seaside village on the south of the island. Next to it is a pine forest of about 2,000 hectares, and a small tourist train runs to the southern beaches in season.
- **Saint-Pierre-d'Oléron** is the main town of the island. Its centre has a lantern of the dead, a stone tower from the Middle Ages, and a covered market.

Oleron Island – Plan Your Trip

Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.

3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning

App Store · Google Play

Scan to download the app

What to experience

- **Cycle across the island**: Follow the paths through pine forest, salt marshes and villages. The west coast ride from Saint-Trojan to Chassiron is a full day.
- **Ride the tourist train at Saint-Trojan**: The small train runs from the village through the forest to the southern beaches, from April to September.
- **Take a boat trip to Fort Boyard**: Short cruises leave from Boyardville and Saint-Denis in season and pass the fort.
- **Visit an oyster farm**: Many oyster farmers along the east coast welcome visitors and show how oysters are raised. Ask the tourist office for tours.
- **Walk the foreshore at low tide**: Tides are strong here, so check the tide table first.

Day trips

Most of these places are on the mainland, close to the bridge.

- **Marennes** and **Brouage** are about 20 to 30 min by car. Marennes is the centre of the oyster basin. Brouage is a small walled town with its original ramparts.
- **Rochefort** is about 40 min by car. It is a historic naval town with a rope factory and a replica frigate.
- A La Rochelle is about 1 hour by car. A seasonal boat from Boyardville and a bus line also run to the city. It has an old harbour with medieval towers and an aquarium.
- **Royan** is about 1 hour by car. It is a beach resort rebuilt after the Second World War in a modern style.



Where to explore

More places near Île d'Oléron:

- La Rochelle is the large port city to the north, with trains from Paris and Bordeaux.
- Nouvelle-Aquitaine is the wider region, with Atlantic beaches, wine areas and historic towns.

Getting there

- **By air**: The island has no airport with scheduled flights. The nearest airports are La Rochelle and Bordeaux, and most visitors continue by train or car.
- **By train**: No trains reach the island. Take a train to Rochefort, Surgères, Saintes or La Rochelle, then continue by bus or car. Book on SNCF Connect.
- **By bus**: Regional line 154 runs all year from Rochefort to Saint-Pierre-d'Oléron and Saint-Denis-d'Oléron. Line 155 links La Rochelle and Saint-Denis from April to September. See the tourist office for timetables.
- **By car**: A bridge links the island to the mainland near Marennes. It is free to cross, but queues are common on summer weekends.
- **By boat**: A fast boat runs from La Rochelle to Boyardville in about 50 min, from April to late September.

Getting around

- **Cycling**: The island is flat and has about 140 km of cycle paths. Bike hire is easy to find in every village, and electric bikes are common.
- **Bus**: Regional lines serve the main towns, but service is limited and changes by season. See the tourist office for routes.
- **Car**: A car gives the most freedom for the north and the Atlantic beaches.
- **On foot**: Each village centre is small and easy to walk. Distances between villages are best covered by bike or car.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

Village centres are compact and easy to walk, but the villages are far apart.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

The island is flat and has about 140 km of cycle paths.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: For a stay of several days, a bike covers most needs. A car helps with the far north, with luggage and with day trips to the mainland.
- **Bridge**: The bridge is free. Expect queues on busy summer weekends, so cross early.
- **Parking**: Car parks sit at the edge of busy villages such as Le Château-d'Oléron and Saint-Trojan. Spaces are limited in summer.

Food & drink

Oléron is oyster country. The island and the nearby Marennes basin form one of the main oyster areas of France. Eat them fresh at small oyster huts and farms, often with only bread and butter. Fresh fish from the port of La Cotinière, mussels and local salt are also common.

For a meal, go to the ports of Le Château-d'Oléron and La Cotinière, where fish restaurants cluster. Village markets are good for cheese, fruit and picnic food. Book a table in July and August.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Croissant
Buttery, flaky laminated pastry and a classic French breakfast staple.

LUNCH

Ratatouille
A Provençal stewed vegetable dish of eggplant, zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes.

DINNER

Coq au Vin
Chicken braised slowly in red wine with mushrooms, onions, and lardons.

Beef Bourguignon · Bœuf Bourguignon
Beef stewed in red Burgundy wine with carrots, onions, and mushrooms.

Escargot · Escargots de Bourgogne
Snails cooked in garlic and parsley butter, a classic starter.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Baguette
Long, crusty white bread loaf bought fresh daily from the local boulangerie.

Cheese · Fromage
France produces hundreds of cheese varieties, often served as a course before dessert.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Crepes · Crêpes
Thin pancakes served sweet with sugar or jam, or savory as galettes.

Macarons
Delicate almond meringue sandwich cookies in a range of flavors and colors.

DRINKS

Wine · Vin
France's wine regions, including Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne, are among the world's most renowned.

Oleron Island – Plan Your Trip
Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.
3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning
App Store · Google Play
Scan to download the app

Safety & health

Île d'Oléron is a safe place for visitors. The main risks are petty theft, sun and the sea.

- Lock your bike, even for a short stop.
- Keep valuables out of sight when you park.
- Swim only on beaches with lifeguards in summer. Currents are strong on the Atlantic side.
- Check tide times before you walk on the foreshore.
- Use sun protection. The island is open and has little shade.
- Tap water is safe to drink.

History

Oléron has been inhabited since ancient times, and the Neolithic Dolmen d'Ors dit la Piare is one of the oldest signs. In the Middle Ages the island belonged to the Duchy of Aquitaine. *Eleanor of Aquitaine* is linked to the Rolls of Oléron, early rules for sea trade.

After the fall of La Rochelle in 1628, Richelieu ordered new defences on the coast. The result was the Citadelle et fortifications, later improved by *Vauban*. In the 19th century Fort Boyard was built to guard the same sea approach. German forces fortified the island in the Second World War, and it was freed in April 1945. The bridge opened in 1966 and changed the island into a holiday place.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

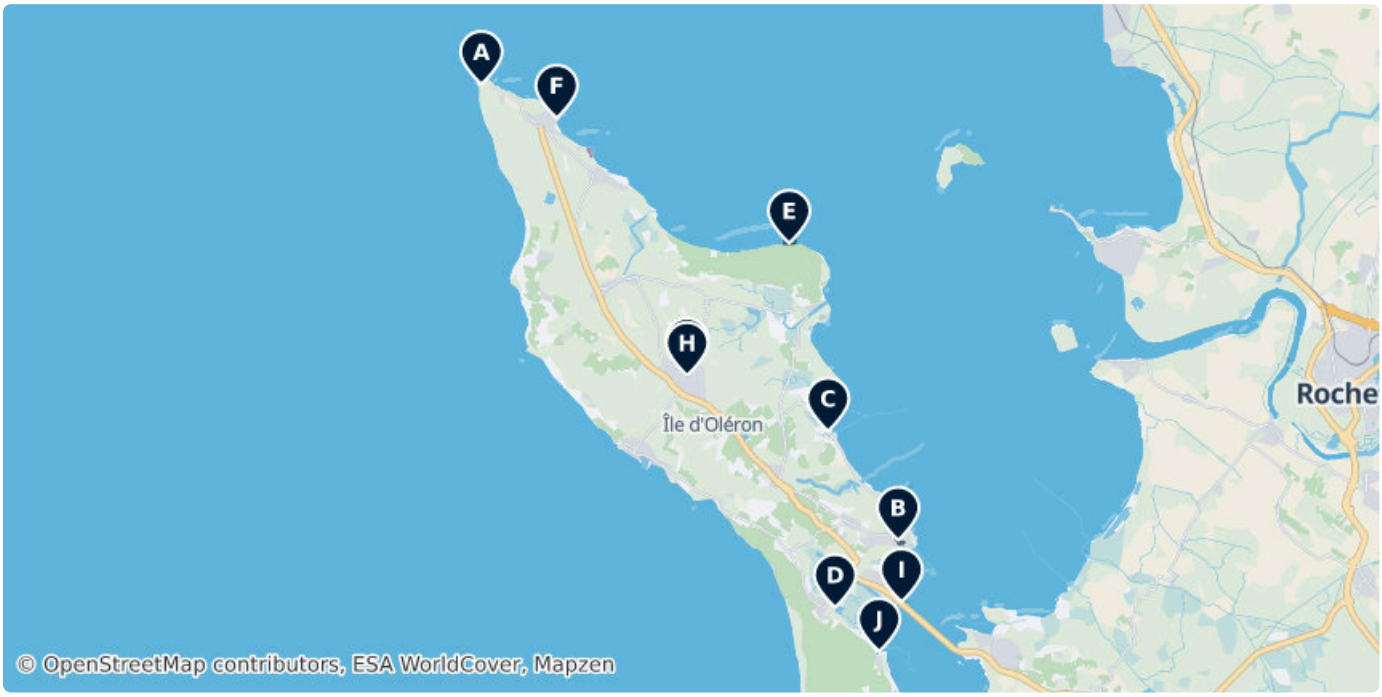
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Île d'Oléron Essentials

Île d'Oléron, France's second-largest island, is defined by its maritime history and diverse landscapes. This selection spans from the 17th-century Vauban citadel at Le Château-d'Oléron to the iconic black-and-white stripes of Chassiron lighthouse. Visitors can explore the island's oyster-farming heritage through the vibrant huts of Baudissière and the salt marshes of Port des Salines, or visit medieval landmarks like the Lanterne des Morts. Natural highlights include the forest-lined Saumonards beach and the prehistoric Dolmen d'Ors.





A Phare de Chassiron

Distinctive black-and-white striped lighthouse built in 1834. Located on the island's northernmost point, it stands 46 meters tall and features a museum about traditional fishing and local navigation.

(Unnamed Road), 17650, France (46.04669, -1.41027)

Oct-Mar Mo–Su	10:00–12:30, 14:00–17:00
Apr-Jun Mo–Su	10:00–19:00
Jul-Aug Mo–Su	10:00–20:00

chassiron.jimdo.com, +33 5 46 75 18 62



B Citadelle et fortifications

A 17th-century military fortification designed by Vauban to protect the mouth of the Charente. The complex includes bastions, a parade ground, and historic barracks now housing artist workshops.

11 Rue Jean Hay, Le Château-d'Oléron 17480, France (45.88544, -1.19805)

C Cabanes de Baudissière - colorful oyster farmer huts

A row of former oyster farmer huts transformed into a hub for local artisans and craftspeople. These brightly painted wooden structures line the coastal road near Boyardville.

(45.92407, -1.23379)

D Le port des salines

An eco-museum and active salt production site. It features salt marshes, a discovery trail, and guided tours demonstrating traditional harvesting techniques used in the region for centuries.

(45.86158, -1.23018)

E Saumonards beach

A sandy stretch bordered by a dense pine forest. It offers direct views of Fort Boyard and is known for its wild landscape and sheltered waters.

(45.99051, -1.25356)

ile-oleron-marennes.com/preparer-me... , +33 5 46 76 51 02

F Colorful beach cabins

Located on the Plage de la Boirie, these historic wooden huts are painted in various bright patterns and colors. They represent a long-standing local seaside tradition at Saint-Denis-d'Oléron.

(46.03472, -1.37198)

G La Lanterne des Morts

A 12th-century octagonal stone tower standing nearly 30 meters high. It is the tallest lantern of the dead in France, originally built to guide funeral processions.

5 Place Camille Mémain, Saint-Pierre-d'Oléron 17310, France (45.94527, -1.30562)

H Église Saint-Pierre

This 17th-century parish church features a prominent square bell tower that historically served as a navigational landmark for mariners in the Pertuis d'Antioche.

70 Rue de la République, Saint-Pierre-d'Oléron 17310, France (45.94374, -1.30550)



I Dolmen d'Ors dit la Piare

A Neolithic megalithic tomb located near the marshes of Ors. It is one of the few remaining prehistoric monuments on the island, dating back over 4,000 years.

(Unnamed Road), 17480, France (45.86356, -1.19634)

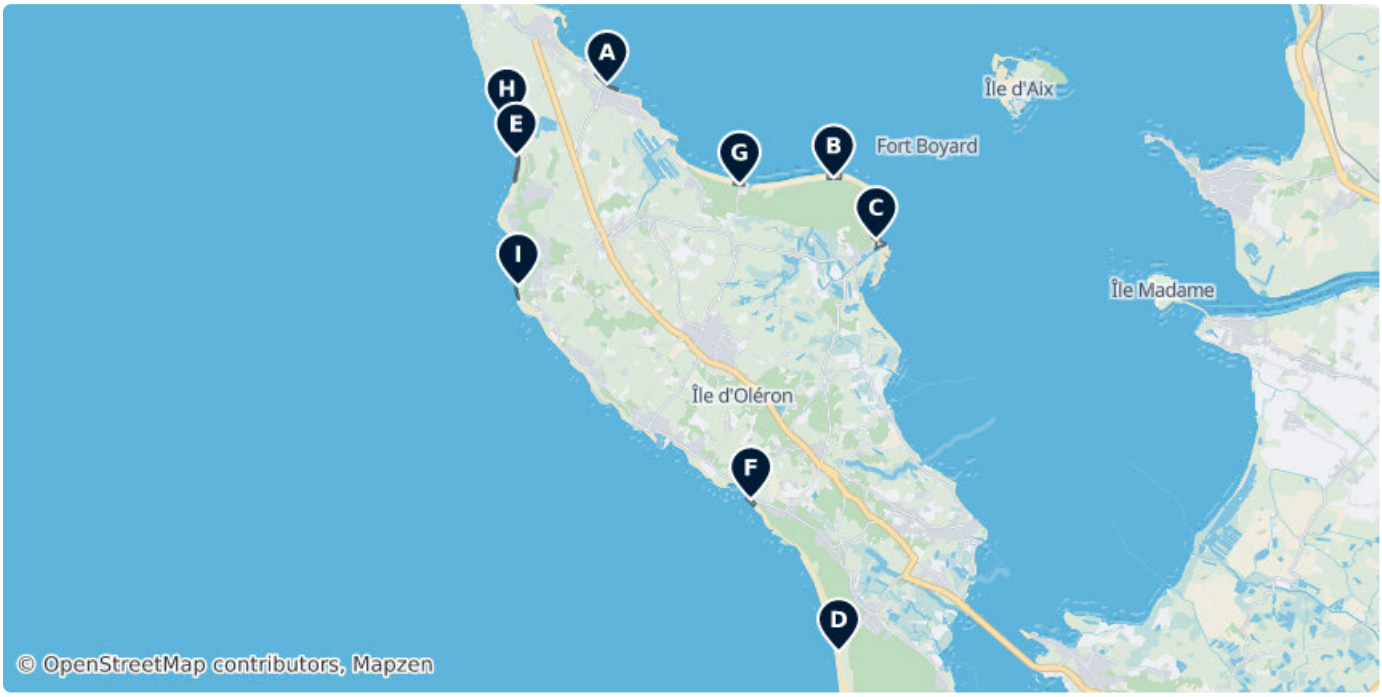
J Port de Saint-Trojan

A traditional oyster port characterized by wooden sheds and a fleet of flat-bottomed boats. It marks the departure point for the island's historic narrow-gauge railway.

(45.84593, -1.20770)

Best Beaches on Oléron

Île d'Oléron's coastline offers a variety of environments, from the sheltered, calm waters of the eastern shore to the Atlantic swells of the west coast. The island features expansive dunes at La Giraudière, pine-fringed stretches like Les Saumonards, and unique vantage points for viewing Fort Boyard. Many locations, such as La Rémigeasse and Boyardville, provide shallow entries and lifeguard services during summer months, while Les Huttes serves as a hub for windsurfing and kiteboarding.



A Plage de La-Brée-les-Bains

Located at the northern tip, this beach features calm waters and traditional colorful huts. During low tide, the rocky foreshore is a common site for shore fishing and exploring tide pools.

Allée de la Digue, 17840, France (46.01817, -1.34975)

ile-oleron-marennes.com/preparer-me... , +33 5 46 76 51 02

B Saumonards beach

Fringed by a dense pine forest, this stretch offers views of Fort Boyard and the Île d'Aix. It includes a designated area for naturism and is accessible via forest trails.

(45.99051, -1.25356)

ile-oleron-marennes.com/preparer-me... , +33 5 46 76 51 02

C Plage de Boyardville

Situated next to the Saumonards forest, this sandy stretch provides clear views of Fort Boyard. The shallow, sheltered waters are characteristic of this part of the eastern coast.

(45.97231, -1.23553)

ile-oleron-marennes.com/preparer-me... , +33 5 46 76 51 02

D The Giraudière beach

A wide Atlantic beach known for its extensive dune system and strong waves. It is a designated 'Pavillon Bleu' site and a primary location for surfing and bodyboarding.

(45.85064, -1.25136)

E Plage des Seulières

A west-coast beach characterized by a mix of sand and rocky outcrops. It is used for surfing and shore fishing when the tide recedes.

(45.99701, -1.38829)

ile-oleron-marennes.com/preparer-me... , +33 5 46 76 51 02

F Plage de la Rémigeasse

A broad sandy expanse on the southwestern coast. It features lifeguard stations in the summer and facilities for visitors with reduced mobility.

(45.89559, -1.28871)

ile-oleron-marennes.com/preparer-me... , +33 5 46 76 51 02

G Plage de la Gautrelle

Located on the northeastern coast, this area offers calm swimming conditions and views of the mainland bridge. It is bordered by the Saumonards forest.

(45.98856, -1.29352)

ile-oleron-marennes.com/preparer-me... , +33 5 46 76 51 02

H Plage des Huttes

A large, windy stretch on the northwestern coast. It is a major spot for watersports, including surfing, windsurfing, and kitesurfing, due to consistent Atlantic swells.

(46.00732, -1.39231)

ile-oleron-marennes.com/preparer-me... , +33 5 46 76 51 02

I Plage des Sables Vignier

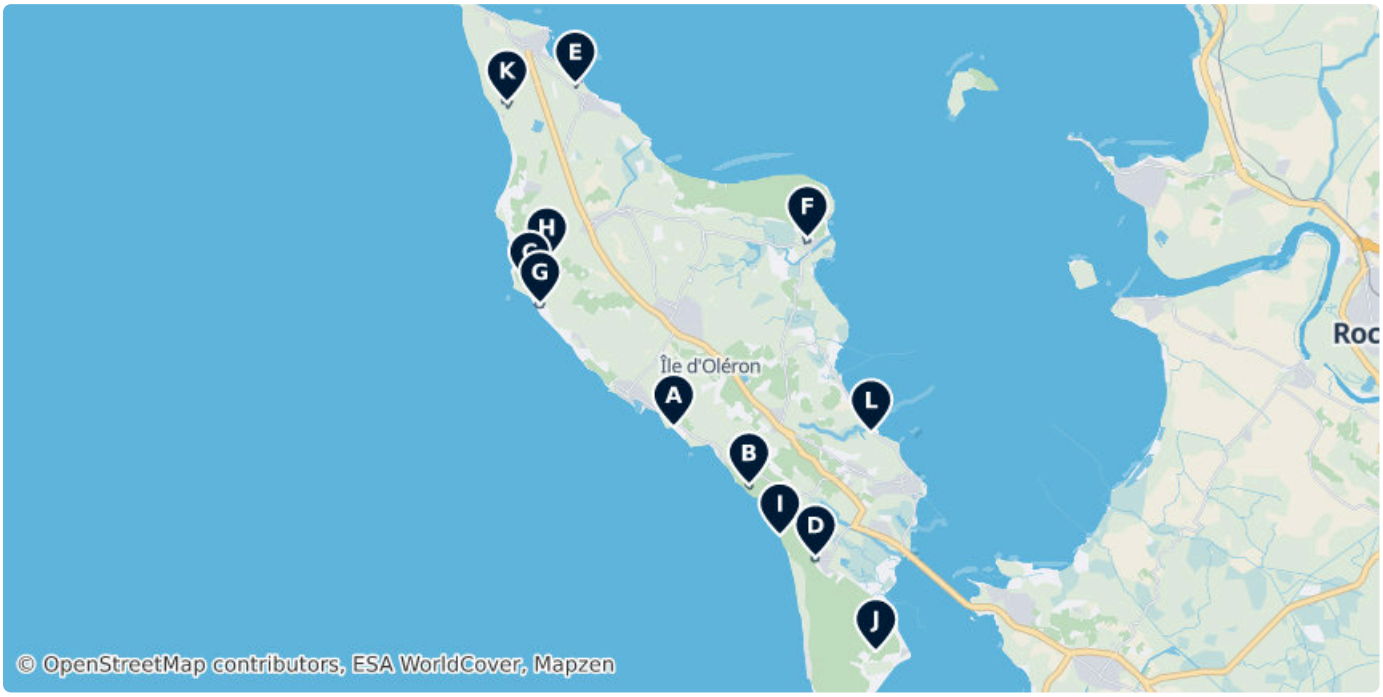
A family-oriented area on the western coast backed by dunes. The landscape shifts between sandy stretches and rocky areas depending on the tide.

17190, France (45.95860, -1.38749)

ile-oleron-marennes.com/preparer-me... , +33 5 46 76 51 02

Best Campsites on Oléron

Île d'Oléron offers a range of outdoor stays, from beachfront sites near Saint-Georges-d'Oléron to pine forest retreats in Saint-Trojan-les-Bains. This selection includes traditional tent pitches, caravan sites, and cabin rentals. Many locations provide direct access to the Atlantic coast, proximity to the island's extensive cycle path network, and facilities such as surf schools or salt-water pools. Notable spots include sites near the Antioche rocks and the wilder southern dunes.



A Camping La Perroche Plage

Coastal site with direct access to La Perroche Bay. Offers pitches for tents and caravans.

17310, France (45.90595, -1.31005)

B Oléron Les Chênes Verts

Wooded site set among holm oaks, located 50 meters from the beach. Features canvas-and-wood tent rentals.

Passe de l'Ecuissière 9, 17550 Dolus-d'Oléron (45.88658, -1.27389)

Mo–Su 07:00–23:00

europe.huttopia.com/nl/site/oleron-les..., +33 5 46 75 32 88

C Camping Les Gros Joncs

Five-star facility near the dunes of Saint-Georges-d'Oléron. Includes a spa, indoor pool, and proximity to the Atlantic shoreline.

(45.95369, -1.37927)

camping-les-gros-joncs.com, +33 546765229

D Les pins d'Oléron

Campsite located in Grand-Village-Plage, bordered by the island's southern pine forests.

Allée des Pins 17 (45.86248, -1.24194)

lespinsdoleron.com, +33 5 46 47 50 13

E Camping Antioche d'Oléron

Situated at the northern tip of the island. Provides access to shore fishing spots and the Antioche rocks.

Gaterat, La Brée-les-Bains 17840, France (46.02037, -1.35735)

camping-antiochedoleron.com, +33546479200

F Camping Signol

Five-star campsite set within a 10-hectare forest. Overlooks the Boyardville harbor and offers views toward Fort Boyard.

(45.96893, -1.24589)

olela.fr/campings/camping-signol, +33 2 51204194

G Camping-Park Le Suroit

Coastal site with direct beach access and a heated indoor swimming pool.

(45.94700, -1.37429)

camping-lesuroit.com, +33 546 470725

H Camping Les Grosses Pierres

Large-scale campsite featuring an on-site water park and proximity to the western beaches of the island.

Route de l'Hermitage (45.96176, -1.37099)

camping-vagues-oceanes.com, +335 46 76 52 31

I Take Off Surf

Surf-focused accommodation offering wooden cabins and sports facilities near the Vert-Bois beach.

(45.86968, -1.25908)

J Huttopia Les Pins

Located in a maritime pine forest at the southern tip of the island, featuring wood cabins and proximity to Gatseau beach.

Le Martinet, Saint-Trojan-les-Bains 17370, France (45.83096, -1.21293)

europe.huttopia.com/site/camping-ole... , +33 5 46 76 02 39

K Camping Les Huttes

Situated 400 meters from the coast in Saint-Denis-d'Oléron, close to the Chassiron lighthouse.

(46.01420, -1.39012)

L La Brande

Located 300 meters from the beach, featuring a covered pool and proximity to the Château-d'Oléron oyster beds.

(Unnamed Road), 17480, France (45.90417, -1.21528)

DATA SOURCES

Map data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, ESA WorldCover, Mapzen
Data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, Wikidata, Wikipedia, Tripomatic, Official websites

IMAGE CREDITS

- Phare de Chassiron — "Jardin du phare de chassiron" by Dimimis, CC BY-SA 3.0
- Citadelle et fortifications — "Fronton de la Porte Royale de la Citadelle de Château-d'Oléron Blason à trois..." by Amage9, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Dolmen d'Ors dit la Piare — "Vue rapprochée." by Simon de l'Ouest, CC BY-SA 4.0

A free travel guide — not for sale. Travel guide generated with AI on November 22, 2026. Text and layout by Tripomatic, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the ODbL. Photos are under their own licences, as credited on this page.