



THE BANKS OF THE VILAINE Férel - La Roche-Bernard



15 km  3 hours 45

Variants: Intermediate: 10 km / 2 hours 30 - Short: 6.5 km / 1 hour 45

 Parking de la Voûte, La Roche-Bernard

Access

in La Roche-Bernard, go to the old port at the foot of the town



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THE VILAINE MARITIME


The Vilaine river originates in Juvigné in Mayenne and flows for some 225 km before flowing into the Atlantic Ocean between Pénestin and Billiers. The Vilaine maritime refers to the geographical area stretching from Redon to the mouth of the river. Upstream of the Arzal-Camoël dam, this area, which is now a vast body of fresh water, was once subjected to the tides. The construction of the dam in 1970 changed the landscape considerably. From Redon to Nivillac, the banks of the Vilaine, once marshy, are now meadows reclaimed by agricultural activities, and as you approach La Roche-Bernard and up to Camoël, the river narrows between the steep banks. As far as navigation is concerned, recreational boats have taken over from coasters and barges. Until the beginning of the 20th century, these boats took turns in the ports of La Roche-Bernard and Redon to distribute their cargoes to the Atlantic coast or inland.

LA ROCHE-BERNARD, 'PETITE CITÉ DE CARACTÈRE' (CHARMING LITTLE TOWN)

Perched on a rocky headland overlooking the Vilaine, the town has always been destined for greatness. Private mansions, old warehouses and salt storehouses all bear witness to this prestigious past and are dotted throughout the town. After a stroll through the old districts that date from the 16th and 17th centuries, don't miss the Promenade du Ruicard and the classified site of the Rocher before returning to the old port. A heritage trail tells the story of the city through 23 episodes.

If you follow this route, you will see that the Vilaine is not so bad after all ('vilaine' = 'awful' in French).

Stendhal, while staying in La Roche-Bernard, even described "one of the most beautiful scenes of nature ever encountered". From the old port, head for the banks of the river before plunging into the hilly undergrowth of Férel. As you explore this wooded area, enjoy the wonderful views of the river. Then carry on exploring the Férelaise countryside before returning to the 'Petite Cité de Caractère'. You can choose to cover the whole loop or one of the 6.5 and 10 km alternative routes.

 Behind the start (départ) sign, take the path that runs along the banks of the Vilaine and the marina anchorings, then heads towards a wooded area. On the way, don't hesitate to use the wooden planking as the area can be wet if it's been raining.

- 1 At the top of the path, turn right and follow the route towards Le Rosquet. When you reach the hamlet, turn right and then right again after the farm, a path will lead you back to the Vilaine. At the next crossroads, to the left, the signposts will suggest an alternative route: a short 6.5 km loop will take you back to the departure point.
- 2 Continue along the Vilaine, enjoying the views through the trees. Cross a footbridge. Pass near the village of Kernéolo and continue to the village of l'Isle. Halfway along, to the left, the signposts will suggest another alternative route, a 10-km loop which will allow those who wish to do so to shorten their walk.
- 3 Take the Route du Courtil du Coq. Please note, a connecting route to your right leads to Camoël (see sheet n° 4 - Camoël - Férel connecting route). Continue straight ahead to stay on this trail.
- 4 As you leave the village, head to the left and then take the path to the right. At the end, take the path to the left and then at the next junction, go right. Continue to the road.
- 5 At the junction, go along the track opposite and turn left, go through the village of Tréguet and continue along the road for 350m before taking a track on the right.
- 6 At the end of the path, turn left and then immediately right onto a road, follow this road for about 100 m to take the 2nd left towards the woods. At the 2nd intersection in the woods, turn right. At the next junction, turn right.
- 7 At the end of the path, cross the RD 34 and then go right onto the consolidation road, then immediately left at the junction.
- 8 At the crossroads of four paths, go left, then left again until you reach the RD 34.
- 9 Cross the road, turn right and follow the RD 34 for about 150 m and then take the 2nd left. At the next intersection, go downhill to the right.
- 10 At the Fontaine au Beurres, take the road to the right and then the path immediately to the left. At the intersection, head for the stone bridge on your right and then start the uphill climb. Please note, it is quite a steep climb.
- 11 After catching your breath at the top, take the path to the right and then continue along the road for just over 100 m, then go right between the houses.
- 12 At the end of the path, cross the road and take the Route de la Fontaine au Beurres which leads up to the left, continue until you reach the RD 34. Follow the RD 34 along the left-hand shoulder for 50 m, then take the first path on the left.
- 13 At the crossroads, turn right and carry on until you reach the Route de La Roche-Bernard. On the other side of the road, head slightly right another path which leads to the village of La Châtaignière.
- 14 In the village, head left onto Rue des Jardins, then at the crossroads turn right onto Rue des Chênes until you reach the Route de La Roche-Bernard.
- 15 Turn right and walk along this road to the marina, then turn left before the bridge to get back to the departure car park.

TO SEE ON THE WAY...

- the marina
- the banks of the Vilaine



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LA BAULE
PRESQU'ÎLE DE
GUÉRENDE
TOURISME



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Legend:

- Yellow line: Circuit
- Orange line: Route Short
- Red triangle: Main road crossings
- Green circle: 1, 4
- Red triangle: sections