



Camping les Biches,

La Fenêtre, Chemin de Petite Baisse
85270 St Hilaire de Riez, France

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GPS co-ordinates

Latitude: 46.7397

Longitude: -1.945



Campsite Information

Camping les Biches, St. Hilaire

Camping les Biches is rather special. It offers emplacements scattered amidst the fragrant pine woodland- a haven in this lively and popular coastline. The campsite lies a mile inland from St Hilaire-de-Riez and three miles north of the village of St Gilles both with a choice of bars, restaurants, and shops.

Arriving at Camping les Biches

On arrival go to the Canvas reception, your Canvas couriers will be here to meet you between 16.00 and 20.00. The couriers will put a security sticker on your windscreen, which must be displayed at all times. You will be issued with a barrier card to access the campsite gates.

Early/Late Arrivals

Please note if you arrive before 16.00, your accommodation may not be ready. If you arrive between 20.00 and 22.00, you will find directions to your courier and/or accommodation at the Canvas reception. Arrivals after 22.00 cannot be accepted on site. Please note that if you do arrive late and cannot be admitted onto the campsite, you have full responsibility for finding alternative off-site accommodation. A Canvas courier will be available on site from 09.00 the following day. If possible please telephone your couriers to inform them if you know you are going to be late.

Reception

Reception is open from 09.00 to 12.00 and from 14.00 to 19.00 in low season. It is open all day from 08.00 to 22.00 in high season.

Barrier

The barrier is closed between 23.00 and 08.00. If you wish to depart early in the morning, please leave your car outside the barrier.

Currency Exchange

Currency can be exchanged on site. There is a small commission fee for this service.

Safety Deposit Boxes

These are available to rent from reception, please check with your couriers or campsite staff for prices.

Telephone

There are five card-operated phones on site and phone cards are on sale from vending machines in the games room and at the bar.

Web/Email Access

This is available on site and is accessible with a French phone card. WiFi access is available in the bar on site.

Shopping

The on-site shop is open from 08.30 to 12.00 and 15.00 to 20.00 in low season, and non stop from 08.00 until 20.00 in high season. A range of basic groceries and produce is available as well as fresh bread and international newspapers. A 24-hour film developing service is also provided.

Washing and Toilet Facilities

Washing machine and tumble dryer (tokens are on sale at reception), free hot showers, baby bath, baby room and standard toilets. You can also borrow an iron, which is free of charge but will require a €3 deposit.

Post

There is a post-box on site and mail can be franked at the campsite reception. No stamps are on sale.

Eating and Drinking

Bar: The bar has satellite television and is open from 14.00 until 00.00 in low season. It is open from 09.00 until 00.00 in high season. Snacks are available at the bar. In the evenings, the bar tends to become

quite lively as it is the venue for all of the evening entertainment that takes place in high season.

Takeaway: Open from 17.00 to 19.30 in May, from 13.30 to 20.00 in September and from 10.00 to 22.00 in July and August. Generous portions of dishes such as lasagne, boeuf bourguignon are available at reasonable prices.

Restaurant: The small, modern restaurant is open daily from 12.00 to 15.00 and 18.00 to 23.00. In low season these hours may be shorter. The menu includes meat and fish dishes, pizzas and vegetarian dishes. A Childrens menu is available for only €8.

Entertainment

The site offers a programme of entertainment during high season. Events include live music, karaoke, disco, quizzes and bingo nights as well as sports competitions. Please ask your couriers for an up to date animations programme.

Recreation

Swimming: The pool complex is impressive and has two swimming pools (one covered), a children's pool, fun pool, water slide and a jacuzzi. The pools are surrounded by spacious sun terraces with sun loungers and the complex is overlooked by the bar terrace. The complex is open daily from 08.00 to 20.00. The pools are supervised in June from 14.00 until 20.00 and in July and August from 09.00 until 20.00.

Tennis: Courts are available for hire and can be booked at the campsite reception.

Mini Golf: Mini golf is available all season.

Cycling: Bicycles are available for hire on site and cost €16 per day and €36 for two days.

Aqua aerobics: Aqua aerobics is available for free throughout the season.

Games Room: The games room is equipped with pinball, video games, pool tables and driving games.



Fishing: Available free of charge at the private campsite lake, 1.5km from site.

There are also facilities on site for table tennis, boules and basketball and there are areas where volleyball and football can be played.

Canvas Active

Canvas Active is available at Camping les Biches. Canvas customers have researched cycle rides and golf courses in the local area. For further details please see the activities booklet, available to download from the Canvas Holidays website.

Disabled Facilities

This site meets the Canvas "Recommended for the Disabled" criteria.

Rules and Regulations

- Silence on site between 22.00 and 08.00.
- There is a 10km/h speed limit on site.
- No driving on site between 23.00 and 08.00.
- You are not permitted to walk through bushes and shrubs or across other emplacements.
- Alcohol is strictly forbidden in public areas of the site and will not be sold to under 18's in the bar.
- There will be no diving or shoes permitted in the pool area.
- The age limit for the waterslide in the pool is 5 years old.

Local Information

Beaches

The nearest beach is Sion sur l'Océan, just 4.5km from the site. It is a mixture of pebbles, rocks and sand and safe for swimming. The beaches of St-Jean-de-Monts are superb; wide, sandy, safe and ideal for water sports. The Grand Plage north of St. Gilles Croix de Vie is extremely popular with surfers and the long, sandy beaches of Les Sables d'Olonne are also within easy reach by car.

Shopping

Supermarket: The nearest supermarket is Super U in St. Hilaire de Riez. This is open Monday to Saturday between 09.00 to 12.00 and 14.30 to 19.30. In July and August, it is open all day. There is also a branch of E. Leclerc in St. Gilles Croix de Vie.

Souvenirs: You will find a range of shops in St. Gilles Croix de Vie and in St-Jean-de-Monts, which also has street stalls in the evenings.

Local Markets

Monday: Les Marines, Jard sur mer and Ile d'Yeu and Merlin Plage.

Tuesday: Challans, Clisson, Sion, Ile d'Yeu, Noirmoutier, La Tranche sur mer, Mortagne sur Sevre, Les Sables d'Olonne, La Roche sur Yon, L'Aiguillon sur mer and St. Gilles Croix de Vie.

Wednesday: Croix de Vie, Les Sables d'Olonne, St. Jean de Monts, Clisson, Ile d'Yeu, Barbâtre, Commequiens and Luçon.

Thursday: Brétignolles sur Mer, Talmont St Hilaire, St. Hilaire, St. Gilles Croix de Vie, Les Sables d'Olonne, La Roche sur Yon and Ile d'Yeu.

Friday: Brem sur Mer, Challans, Clisson, Sion, Les Sables d'Olonne, L'Aiguillon sur mer and Noirmoutier.

Saturday: Coëx, Croix de Vie, Les Sables d'Olonne, St. Jean de Monts, Commequiens, Challans, La Roche sur Yon Talmont St Hilaire, La Tranche sur mer and Luçon.

Sunday: Brétignolles sur Mer, St. Hilaire, Les Sables d'Olonne, Olonne sur mer, Notre Dame de Monts and St. Gilles Croix de Vie

Facilities

Petrol: There is an Elf and a Total garage near the campsite, but fuel is cheaper at Super U, open the same hours as the supermarket.

Chemist: There are two chemists in St Hilaire de Riez; Pharmacie Morineau and Pharmacie Collect.

Bank: There are branches of Crédit Agricole in St. Hilaire de Riez and St. Gilles Croix de Vie. There is a cash dispenser next to Super U in St. Hilaire de Riez.

Post Office: The Post Office in St. Hilaire de Riez is open from Monday to Saturday from 09.00 to 12.00. A cash dispenser and currency exchange facilities are also available here.

Tourist Information: There is a tourist office at 21 Place Gaston Plateau in St. Hilaire de Riez and another, larger one, at Forum Port de Vie in St. Gilles Croix de Vie. There is also one at the Palais de Congress, 67 Esplanade de la Mer (the seafront) in St-Jean-de-Monts.

Distances

St Gilles Croix de Vie:	6km (4 miles)
St-Jean-de-Monts:	12km (7.5 miles)
Challans:	13km (8 miles)
Les Sables d'Olonne:	38km (24 miles)

Local Transport

There are train stations in Challans and St. Gilles Croix de Vie with regular services to Nantes. There is a bus stop in St Jean de Monts with services to local towns.

Doctor

Cabinet Medical with 5 doctors,
62 Rue de la Touche.
Tel: 02 51 54 32 60.

Dentist

There is a dental surgery at 51 Rue Georges Clémenceau in St. Hilaire de Riez.
Tel: 02 51 54 34 35.

Emergency Services

There is a two-digit phone number for emergency services:

Police	17
Fire	18
Ambulance	15

Eating and Drinking

You may like to try these restaurants and bars, which have been recommended by Canvas customers and couriers in previous years,

Chez Tante Paulette: On Rue Neuve in St-Jean-de-Monts. This small, family-friendly restaurant

specialises in fresh seafood dishes at reasonable prices.

La Guillaume Tell: On Avenue de la Plage in St-Jean-de-Monts. Local people flock to this informal brasserie, especially at lunchtime, for the tasty, good value set menu.

Crêperie Vendéenne: 28, Esplanade de la Mer in St-Jean-de-Monts. Children are made welcome at this friendly crêperie which also serves fresh mussels and a range of grilled food.

L'Alambic: Ave de la Mer in St-Jean-de-Monts.

TexMex food, burgers and great salads are on offer at this lively, informal eatery with wide screen television and pool tables.

Auberge la Chaumière: In Orouet. You can choose to eat indoors or out in a woodland setting at this restaurant. Tasty regional cuisine with set menus available.

La Cloche d'Or: In St-Jean-de-Monts. The shellfish, especially crab, are particularly recommended. Both indoor and outdoor seating is available and the set menus are extremely good value.

Activities

Water sports are the principal activity in this area. Windsurfs and pedaloes can be rented at St. Jean de Monts beach, and canoes are available for hire a little further along at Notre Dame.

Keen golfers will find a range of golf courses in the area - see the Canvas Golf Activity guides for details.

Nearby

St. Gilles Croix de Vie • An attractive, busy port renowned for sardines and anchovies. The Maison du Pêcheur is furnished with items from a typical local fisherman's home in the 1920's (*A). There are several festivals during July and August. Check with the local Tourist Information Office for details.

Sallertaine • Near Challans, this is a pretty village full of arts and crafts shops. The well-preserved 12th century church stages exhibitions showing local life past and present. Rent a canoe and spend a peaceful afternoon exploring the surrounding canals.

St-Philbert-de-Grand-Lieu • One of the oldest churches in France is situated in this picturesque village. The Abbatale St-Philbert was built in 815, to hold the relics of their saint by monks from Noirmoutier fleeing the Norman invasion. St. Philbert's sarcophagus can be seen in the crypt. At the Maison de l'Avifaune du Lac you can learn about the birds that use the wetland habitat to the north (*A).



Regional Information

Vendée

The Vendée makes an ideal holiday destination, with over 140km of wide, sandy beaches and over two thousand hours of sunshine each year. Beaches are often backed by sand-dunes and pine forests, which act as a natural windbreak. The wide shallow shores are safe for bathing and water sports. Inland you will find marshes, plains and wooded hills, rich in legend and history. To the south of the region lies the Gironde and the vineyards around Bordeaux.

Eating & Drinking – Regional Specialities

Vendéen regional fare tends to be simple and hearty. With such a long coastline, there is a wealth of fish and shellfish; especially good are the mussels, sardines and sole. Don't leave without trying the moules marinière (mussels in a white wine and onion sauce or with cream). The Vendée is famous for its brioche (sweet bread) with each village having its own recipe. The region produces three kinds of Muscadet, a dry white wine particularly good with seafood. There is an even drier wine called Gros-Plant. Red, white and rosé wine is marketed under the Fiefs Vendéen label.

Things to do and see

*A • an admission charge is payable for these attractions.

Family Fun

Leisure Parks

Futuroscope • Futuroscope is Europe's first park devoted to technology. Attractions include a Kinemax cinema with a 600m² screen, a 3-D cinema, a "dynamic" cinema with simulated seating, a rotating tower, an "enchanted lake", bumper boats, remote controlled cars, adventure playgrounds, a water maze and a Lego exhibition. 80km to the east of Vendée just outside Poitiers, exit 28 off A10 (open daily, *A).

Atlantic Toboggan • A family water park with huge pools and lots of water chutes. 7km northwest of St Hilaire de Riez (open daily, *A).

Chateau de la Guignardiere • Chateau de la Guignardiere is a castle with a twist. Take the whole family around an adventure trail in the castle grounds to discover the chamber of chests and win prizes. Explore the castle fully furnished in a renaissance style including a free guided tour; meet the animals in the grounds and visit the menhirs also with a guided archaeological tour in high season

Parc d'Attractions des Dunes • This park has attractions for young and older children; roundabouts, go karts, toboggans, mini-golf and more. In Brem-sur-Mer (open daily, *A).

Parc Floral • A beautiful flower garden with seasonal exhibitions based around plants, art and the senses. Children can play Rigole aux Fleurs, a cross between mini-golf and snakes and ladders. In Coëx. (open daily, *A).

Le Puy Du Fou • Visit a reconstructed 18th century Vendéen village with a wide programme of events, including jousting and juggling (*A). La Cinéscénie is an incredible open-air, night time show re-enacting the history of Vendée, accompanied by fireworks, lasers and fountains, with the Château le Puy du Fou and the lake providing a beautiful backdrop. Book early as there are only about 20 performances a year - enquire at the local Tourist Information Office in the Puy du Fou, Les Épesses.

Wildlife Attractions

Planète Sauvage • This great wildlife park has over 1500 animals. It is situated to the north of the Vendée. Thatched mud huts add to the African atmosphere. In Port Saint-Père (open daily, *A).

Zoo de Sables • In this tree-filled zoo you can see a collection of monkeys, exotic birds, big cats and other animals. In Sables d'Olonne (open daily, *A).

Boat Trips

You can rent a flat-bottomed boat to explore La Venise Vert from several villages in the area, including Maillezais, Coulon, Le Mazeau, Damvix and La Garette. At St-Jean-de-Monts you can take a guided tour in a canoe through the marshes. From La Rochelle you can take a boat trip to the islands of Ré, Aix and Oléron, and to Fort Boyard.

Places of Interest

North Vendée

Apremont • A picturesque village in the valley of La Vie, crowned with the remains of a Renaissance castle. Two towers and a chapel remain of Château d'Apremont, built in 1534 (open daily, *A). Take a ticket for the castle and the 80m high water tower, which gives a fabulous view of the area. Apremont also has a delightful lake where you can hire dinghies, pedaloes, windsurfs and rowing boats.

Ile d'Yeu • Boat crossings leave St. Gilles Croix de Vie and Fromentine each day. Once on the island it's a good idea to hire a bicycle to explore. Perhaps the most spectacular part of the island is the rocky, wild Côte Sauvage on the west. The imposing ruins of the old Château overlook the pretty fishing harbour of Port-de-la-Meule. The Fête du Thon (tuna fishing festival) is held in early August.

Nantes • To the north of Vendée, this is the largest town in the area. An attractive city of art, an industrial centre and a busy port. The Château des Ducs de Bretagne is a well-preserved fortress, now home to several museums. Opposite the castle, the highlight of the Cathédrale-St-Pierre is the tomb of Duke François II and his wife (*A). The Musée des Beaux-Arts contains a fine collection of Renaissance paintings (*A).

St-Étienne-du-Bois • Spared from the ravages of war, this small village has a charming collection of Renaissance houses clustered around a church. Stroll around the narrow lanes and along the banks of the river Boulogne.

Ile de Noirmoutier • You can access this island by bridge from Fromentine. However, it is more fun to use the Passage du Gois, a 5.5km causeway open at low tide. A blue sign posted 'Route de l'Île'

guides cyclists and motorists on a 40km tour of the island with its attractive villages such as Le Vieil, La Blanche, Bois de la Chaise and the smart, bustling capital Noirmoutier-en-l'Île - a pretty place with an impressive Château at its centre.

Tiffauges • The Château de Gilles de Rais towers over this little town. Joan of Arc's companion in arms, Gilles de Rais (known as Blue-Beard in legend) retired to Tiffauges before being executed at the age of 36. A tour of the castle includes the crypt, dungeons and creepy corridors leading to a reconstructed laboratory of alchemy. You can also see reconstructions of 15th century siege machinery (giant cross-bows, catapults and cannons) operated by soldiers in medieval costume. Be careful or you may be put in the stocks! (*A).

South Vendée

Fontenay-Le-Comte • Formerly the capital of the Vendée, this ancient town was once the haunt of poets, scientists and philosophers. Stroll through the town admiring the half-timbered and stone houses or take a horse-drawn carriage tour. The Musée Vendéen displays prehistoric artefacts, 19th century furniture, local bird life and work by local artists (*A). You can tour the beautifully furnished rooms of a fairytale castle at Château de Terre-Neuve (Open daily).

Les Sables d'Olonne • A busy fishing port with a lovely beach and a zoo (see Family Fun). The 17th century Abbaye Sainte-Croix now houses an art gallery and a costume museum (*A). There is a festival held here in mid August.

Talmont-St-Hilaire • A charming former port overlooked by the ruins of Richard the Lionheart's Château de Talmont. You can explore this impressive medieval castle. From the top of the keep there are wonderful views of the area. The Musée Automobile de Vendée displays vehicles dating from 1885 to the 1960's.

Every effort has been made to ensure the information contained within this guide, to the best of our knowledge, is both helpful and correct at time of going to press (March 2010). Canvas Holidays cannot accept responsibility for inaccuracies contained herein.

