

Nantes, Saint-Nazaire,
Rennes, Saint-Malo,
and Mont-Saint-Michel

A MODERN JOURNEY THROUGH AN OLD LAND

This unique route, resulting from an unprecedented collaboration between four towns in the west of France, takes in historical heritage as well as contemporary, artistic, gastronomic, architectural and natural highlights. It is an ode to roaming free, to the joys of being a nomad for a while and of discovering the unexpected at each new stop. From the Atlantic Ocean to the Channel coast, between land and sea, A Modern Journey Through an Old Land reveals little-known treasures, secret beaches, natural landscapes, and excellent spots to eat and rest, allowing you to experience the region like never before.

FOUR TOWNS ONE DESIRE TO INNOVATE = ONE ECLECTIC & POETIC ROUTE

What is that Nantes, Saint-Nazaire, Rennes and Saint-Malo have in common today? Of course, they share history, since they all belonged to the Marches of Brittany*, as well as a temperate – and slightly wet – year-round climate. But, most of all, they share the same audacity. They want both domestic and international visitors to discover their region in a new way, which is why they created A Modern Journey Through an Old Land. This circuit blending dream-like realities and contemporary perspectives comprises 13 stages between Nantes and Mont-Saint-Michel.

The selection combines site-seeing and cultural attractions, like the Château des ducs de Bretagne and the ramparts of Saint-Malo, with lesser-known yet just as surprising sites, such as the Le Mabilay building in Rennes and the 11 locks in Hédé-Bazouges.

This journey is the opportunity to experience the urban and artistic creativity of Rennes and Nantes, see a variety of landscapes up close (the polders in Mont-Saint-Michel Bay, the marshes of Brière and the salt flats of Guérande), and rediscover the illustrious history of places like Saint-Malo, famous for its privateers, and La Baule with its Belle Epoque architecture. It's an invitation to admire beauty and enjoy thrilling sights, like the giants of the seas built in the shipyards of Saint-Nazaire and the day setting at Mont-Saint-Michel

*From the 10th to the 16th century, the old battle line between the Duchy of Brittany and the Kingdom of the Franks stretched from Nantes to Mont-Saint-Michel.

NEW IN 2020 : READY FOR A LAID-BACK ADVENTURE BY BIKE BETWEEN NANTES AND MONT-SAINT-MICHEL?

From this year, A Modern Journey Through an Old Land can also be travelled by bike! With the collaboration of a cycling holiday travel writer from the Guide du Routard, a new itinerary has been created, making it possible to ride from Nantes to the Mont-Saint-Michel. The route is easy on the whole and is accessible to all, over the duration of a week. It follows well-designed and waymarked cycle paths and car-free trails for 80 kilometres of the route. Connections with the regional TER train network make it possible to cycle only some of the stages if preferred.

Bike-friendly facilities, including hotels, guest houses and restaurants, can be found all along the way.

Divided into five stages, the route covers a total of 395 kilometres along parts of some well-established cycle routes, like the Loire à Vélo, Vélodyssée, Voie 2 de Bretagne and Vélomaritime.

NANTES <> SAINT-NAZAIRE, FROM THE LOIRE TO THE OCEAN

After an electrifying visit of Nantes with its island full of weird machines, it's onto the estuary's former river ports and the bucolic Canal de la Martinière. Here the extraordinary light and wide-open natural spaces provide stunning views. The area is also home to an array of artworks belonging to the Estuaire arts route.

SAINT-NAZAIRE <> REDON, FROM THE OCEAN TO THE VILAINE RIVER

From the striking 'Ville-Port' of Saint-Nazaire with its giants of the seas, A Modern Journey Through an Old Land visits Brière to discover the islands and unique scenery of this natural marshland area. It's then onto some astonishing lookout points offering sweeping views of the Breton countryside, before 'landing' at the former maritime port of Redon

REDON <> RENNES, THROUGH THE OLD BRETON PROVINCE ALONG THE RIVER VILAINE

Redon harbour sets the tone of this cycling adventure which works its way upstream along the Vilaine river with its long maritime and river shipping history. Nearing Rennes, the route makes its way between shale cliffs bordered by steep wooded banks. On the way, there are a thousand and one inviting places to stop, for guaranteed moments of authenticity and good food.

RENNES <> SAINT-MALO VIA THE CANAL D'ILLE-ET-RANCE

From the capital of Brittany to the Emerald Coast winds a bucolic, car-free trail. It works its way along the Canal d'Ille-et-Rance then the magnificent Rance Estuary. At the highest point, you have the eleven locks of Hédé-Bazouges and an incredible hydraulic machine which feeds the canal.

SAINT-MALO <> MONT-SAINT-MICHEL, FROM THE EMERALD COAST TO THE 'MERVEILLE'

After crossing the Rance by boat to Saint Malo, the 'city of privateers', the route journeys along the coast, where Cancale is the first stop.

Then, finally, sitting in the middle of the polders of Mont-Saint-Michel Bay is the route's culminating point. The abbey and its 'Merveille' stand unperturbed nearly 150 metres above a bay swept by the biggest tides in Europe.

All useful information, including GPX tracks, can be found on the cycle touring page on:

WWW.VOYAGE-EN-BRETAGNE.COM