

Places to See in Brittany

These are probably some of the highlights but there are many more to see depending on your interests. For simplicity, I have started just south of Brest and worked in an anti-clockwise direction. Most places mentioned are within just over an hours drive from Carhaix.

Abbey de Daoulas – mediaeval abbey just south of Brest with lovely garden specialising in medicinal herbs and usually an interesting exhibition. Opens mid-May to October.

The Crozon Peninsular – a wonderful mix of rocky headlands and sandy coves, with the picturesque fishing port of Camaret. Great walking along the coastal paths and a spectacular view out over the sea and surrounding countryside from Menez Hom, the highest hill in the area.

Locronon – One of the prettiest villages in Finistère. It has been maintained and restored to its 16th /17th century architectural glory. In its heyday it was the main sailmaking town for the ports of Brest, Douarnenez, Concarneau and Lorient. Very busy in the summer, but wonderful buildings and architecture.

Quimper – One of the major towns in SW Brittany, it has a lovely historic centre dating back to medieval times, an impressive cathedral and good museums and shops.

Concarneau – Once a thriving port, it still maintains its seafaring traditions as one of the busiest sardine and tuna fishing ports on the south coast of Brittany. The old fortified island, with its enclosed town, dates back to the 14th Century and was reinforced by the great French military architect Vauban in the 18th Century.

Pont Aven – An quaint artist retreat at the top of an estuary, where the French artist, Paul Gauguin set up a painting school. Good walks towards the sea along the estuary.

Carnac – The site of 7000 year old standing stone alignments, dolmens and menhirs, it is steeped in history and legends and is one of France's key prehistoric sites. There is an interesting museum there and a whale research centre nearby.

Auray – A magnificent estuary port dating back to medieval times and a good staging post to explore the inland ‘Gulf of Morbihan’.

Vannes – Another fabulous fortified medieval city with small chic restaurants and boutiques. Well worth a visit!

Pontivy and Josselin - Pontivy was the capital of the Duchy of Rohan and both towns sport impressive Rohan castles (open to the public) and medieval centres, which reflect their prosperous period between the 14th and 18th Centuries.

Abbey de Bon Repos – A Cistercian abbey near Gouarec and Lac Guerlédan, dating back to the 12th Century, which is in the process of being renovated. A lovely peaceful setting with some good walks nearby.

Abbey de Beauport – Another beautiful abbey partially renovated on the sea’s edge on the north coast near Paimpol. Lovely gardens.

Chateau la Roche Jagu – A very impressive château, overlooking the estuary, just SW of Paimpol. It has very interesting medieval gardens and some good walks.

The Pink Granite Coast – Perros Guirec north of Lanion wonderful cliff formations carved out of the rock by the weather and the sea and secluded beaches.

Offshore islands – Numerous small islands have ferries of sightseeing boats visiting regularly through the summer. The best being; **Ile de Bréhat**, just off Paimpol, impressive scenery, chapel on hill, thatched tidal mill, swathes of Agapanthas. **Les Sept Iles** – north of Perros Guirec, bird watching tours around the gannet colonies. **Ile de Batz** – Just off the coast from Roscoff, it is famous for its tropical garden created by the passionate plant lover George Delaselles in 1897.

Nearer Carhaix

Circuit d'Enclos – A trail around a series of extremely ornate medieval 15th/16th Century churches just south of Morlaix.

Huelgoat – A quaint little village with a lake, in wooded hills steeped in history and legend. Huge rounded moss covered granite boulders and ancient trees provide a wonderful setting for numerous good walks in the area.

Valley of the Saints – A new site celebrating some of the roughly 1000 saints in Brittany, with 3-4 metre high sculptures in local granite, arranged around an old feudal motte, near the village of Carnoet.

The Nantes to Brest Canal passes just a few kilometres south of Carhaix and offers numerous scenic and peaceful walks. The banks are lined with yellow irises in May and you will often come across herons, kingfishers and otters, to name but a few.

Roman Aqueduct – Carhaix (Vorgium) was for several centuries, the Roman capital of the American peninsular, now Brittany. It was an important strategic site on a hill and deemed important enough for the Romans to build an aqueduct some 37 kms long to supply fresh water to the town. It contours around the hills mainly underground and has been excavated in several places to publicise this amazing engineering feat. It now has an interactive museum, Vorgium, on the site of the ruins of a roman villa.

Chateau de Trevarez – An ornate, almost gothic style chateau, just south of Chateauneuf du Fou. It has a continuous art exhibition in the old stables, usually on a garden/plant theme as well as extensive parkland and very interesting gardens.

Carhaix – Within Carhaix there are lots of facilities which can be enjoyed:

- Public swimming pool, with water chutes and children's pools
- Tennis courts – free to use but need to be reserved
- Adrenalin Park – Tree climbing routes (6 standards) with harnesses Plus ariel runway and games park
- Horse Riding school – with lessons and balades
- Mini golf course – 6 holes plus driving range
- Bicycle hire
- Fishing school – by the canal
- Cinema and Theatre with good programmes of entertainment