

France's Stonehenge in Brittany Joins the UNESCO World Heritage List



The Megaliths of Carnac and the Shores of Morbihan have become the first site in Brittany to be added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. This megalithic landscape has no equivalent in the world for its richness, scale, and diversity.

A Global Recognition

This prestigious designation celebrates a unique cultural landscape, shaped more than 7,000 years ago by Neolithic societies whose ingenuity still fascinates and puzzles us today – adding to the mystery of the place. With this recognition, the Megaliths of Carnac and the Morbihan coastline now stand as a cultural landmark of the megalithic world, alongside other iconic sites such as Stonehenge and the Orkney Islands.

An Ancient Heritage

Southern Brittany's Morbihan area is home to an extraordinary treasure: the world's largest concentration of megalithic monuments in a single region. Its 550 sites are unparalleled for their close connection to the maritime landscape, the richness of the engravings found there, and the monumental scale of their construction.

Visitors can explore the sites at a gentle pace thanks to hiking trails and facilities designed to preserve both the integrity of the monuments and the peacefulness of the surroundings.



The Carnac Megaliths

The most complete and impressive alignments are found in Carnac, extending all the way to La Trinité-sur-Mer. Altogether, 3,000 menhirs stand in 10 to 13 rows over a distance of 4 kilometres, divided into four main groups: Le Ménec, Kermario, Kerlescan, and Petit Ménec. These stones, perfectly aligned, were deliberately erected during the Neolithic era. Their exact purpose remains a mystery, sparking endless fascination. To learn more, visit the discovery centre, the Maison des Mégalithes, where exhibitions, films, and interactive displays explain the many aspects of these stones. Guided tours help visitors appreciate the complexity of the site, and children can join in fun role-playing activities.

>>> www.menhirs-carnac.fr/en



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Locmariaquer: A Giant Fallen Menhir

One of the most striking stones is the great Er Grah Broken Menhir at Locmariaquer. Although it now lies on the ground in four pieces, it originally stood an astonishing 20 metres tall and weighed 300 tonnes. Imagining how it was transported and erected is truly mind-boggling – and the same goes for the other 18 monumental stones at the site, that have now disappeared, but whose location remains visible.

>>> www.site-megalithique-locmariaquer.fr



© Emmanuel Berthier

The Gavrinis Tumulus

Even more moving and spectacular is the cairn of Gavrinis, located on an island in the Gulf of Morbihan. When it was built, its hilltop location made it highly visible, though today it is surrounded by pine trees and only accessible by boat. Inside, visitors are greeted by the remarkable beauty of carved stelae – ancient gravestones. A visit here feels like stepping out of time, offering a profound lesson in prehistory in a serene, pastoral setting.

>>> www.cairndegavrinis.com/en/home

🚗 Road Trip Itinerary: Seven Days in Southern Brittany

If you have a week to explore, here's a scenic road trip to soak up the atmosphere of southern Brittany – a perfect mix of culture, coastline, and countryside.

Day 1: Arrival in Carnac

Arrive in Carnac and settle into your hotel. Spend the afternoon visiting the famous Carnac alignments and the Maison des Mégalithes discovery centre. Enjoy dinner in one of Carnac's seafood or crêpe restaurants.

Day 2: Locmariaquer & Auray

In the morning, head to Locmariaquer to see the incredible Broken Menhir and tumulus. Have lunch by the water, then drive to the charming town of Auray and stroll through its historic port of Saint-Goustan. Overnight in Carnac.

Day 3: Gavrinis & the Gulf of Morbihan

Take a boat trip to Gavrinis Island to explore the spectacular cairn. Spend the afternoon touring the Gulf of Morbihan, stopping at some of its small islands or enjoying a coastal walk. Overnight in Vannes, a beautiful walled city nearby.

Day 4: Vannes & Rochefort-en-Terre

Explore Vannes' medieval streets, colourful markets, and marina. Then drive inland to Rochefort-en-Terre, a fairy-tale village voted one of the most beautiful in France. Overnight in Rochefort-en-Terre or return to Vannes.

Day 5: Quiberon Peninsula

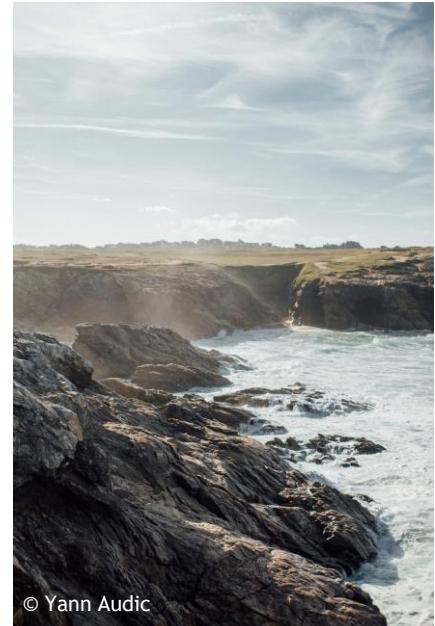
Drive to the Quiberon Peninsula and follow the rugged Côte Sauvage (Wild Coast). Enjoy the beaches, cliffs, and postcard-worthy villages. Sample local delicacies in Quiberon town. Overnight in Quiberon or Carnac.

Day 6: Belle-Île-en-Mer

Take the ferry from Quiberon to Belle-Île-en-Mer, Brittany's largest island, for a full day of walking, cycling, and soaking in its unspoilt landscapes. Return to the mainland for the night.

Day 7: Departure or Extension

Spend your last morning relaxing on one of Carnac's beaches, or stop at a local market to pick up Breton specialities before heading home.



© Yann Audic



Where to Stay in Carnac

Le Celtique & Spa****

Located just 50 m from the beach and close to the megalithic sites, this stylish 4-star hotel combines modern comfort with classic Breton charm. Great for couples and families alike.

- Heated indoor pool & spa (sauna, hammam, treatments)
- Bistro-style restaurant with seasonal local dishes
- Spacious rooms and suites, some with sea views
- Excellent base for exploring the area

From €160/night for a double room.

>>><https://www.hotelsone.com/carnac-hotels-fr/le-celtique-spa.html>

Best Time to Visit

The best time to visit is from April to September, when the weather is mild and sunny, perfect for exploring the sites and enjoying the beaches. July and August are peak tourist months, so if you prefer fewer crowds, opt for May-June or early September. Autumn also has its charm, with beautiful light and quieter trails.

How to Get There (from the UK)

Getting to Carnac from the UK is easy, with several convenient options:

By air: There are direct flights from London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, and other UK airports to Nantes, Rennes, and Lorient (seasonal).

- Nantes Atlantique Airport: ~1.5 hours' drive to Carnac.
- Rennes Airport: ~2 hours' drive.
- Lorient Airport (smaller, seasonal flights): ~45 minutes' drive.

By ferry & car: For those who prefer to bring their own car, several ferry routes connect the UK to Brittany and nearby ports. Ferries are operated by Brittany Ferries and offer daytime and overnight sailings.

- Portsmouth → St Malo: ~2.5 hours' drive to Carnac.
- Plymouth → Roscoff: ~3.5 hours' drive.
- Portsmouth → Caen: ~4 hours' drive.
- Portsmouth → Cherbourg: ~5 hours' drive.

By train (via Paris): Eurostar from London St Pancras to Paris Gare du Nord (~2h 20m), then transfer to Gare Montparnasse for a TGV (high-speed train) to Auray (~3 hours). From Auray, Carnac is about 20 minutes by taxi or local bus.

Note to the editors: photos are available upon request @Celine Thoumazeau. Alternatively, please have a look at our partners photolibrary:

- OT Golfe du Morbihan Vannes Tourisme - <https://lightroom.adobe.com/gallery/60a05a452a1e4b12a22d9eec8a9b974c/albums/61a786ebc47045e1975b6db70ad3405a/assets>
- OT Baie de Quiberon - <https://www.baiedequiberon.bzh/photothque>
- OT Carnac - <https://www.baiedequiberon.bzh/photothque>
- Morbihan Tourisme - <https://www.morbihan-pro.com/nos-services/la-photothque/>
- Tourisme Bretagne - <https://www.tourismebrabant-photos.com/>