

Marais Poitevin, La Rochelle, Ile-de-Ré

This 4-night weekend was part of a longer trip but could easily be done by car or by train + car from Paris. Combining the Marais Poitevin, La Rochelle and Ile-de-Ré makes for a great variety of countryside and city and various landscapes and architectures. For those of you not yet familiar with the Marais Poitevin (“The Green Venice” or *la Venise Verte*), it’s an area of marshland a short drive inland from La Rochelle accessible by an intricate network of canals that can be explored only by rowboats.

Date	To	Cost**	Flight/Train/Hotel Details	Notes
Wed, June 19	Coulon, Marais Poitevin	<i>Hotel:</i> €110	<i>Hotel in Coulon:</i> Hotel Au Marais 46 48 Quai Louis Tardy Coulon, 79510 +33549359043 / information@hotel- aumarais.com	I had been to the Marais Poitevin once before (http://parisweekender.com/2012/06/the-marais-poitevin-and-angles-sur-langlin/) and stayed at a fabulous guest house, Le logis de la Mélissière (http://www2.marais-poitevin.com/heberg-ch/logis-de-la-melissiere/gite_la-maison-de-margot.html). It was a tough decision not to stay there again, but on this visit given limited time, we wanted to stay right in Coulon, to maximize our time by the canals. The Hotel Au Marais was a great pick, right on the main canal in the picturesque town of Coulon.
Thurs, June 20	La Rochelle	<i>Hotel:</i> €106	<i>Hotel in La Rochelle:</i> Hotel Trianon et de la Plage 6 Rue de la Monnaie La Rochelle, 17000 +33546412135 trianonlarochelle@wanado o.fr	In the morning, we visited the town of Brouage, south of La Rochelle, the birthplace of Samuel de Champlain. It’s a bit off the usual tourist track but well worth a visit not just for the history but for the extremely well-preserved ramparts that circle the former key port city. Now, the city no longer serves as a port because the water around it has dried up. The Hotel Trianon is very central and welcoming and yet much less expensive than many of the other hotels in the area. We had dinner at Le Comptoir des Voyages (http://www.lecomptoirdesvoyages.com/), an excellent restaurant that selects its specials each month based on a new country’s cuisine.
Fri - Sat, June 21-22	Ile-de-Ré	<i>Hotel:</i> €210 (2 nights)	<i>Hotel in Ile-de-Ré:</i> Hotel Le Clocher 14 Place Carnot Ars-en-Ré, 17590 +33546294120 hotel.leclocher@gmail.co m	Our hotel was in the very center of Ars-en-Ré, perhaps the most scenic of the island’s towns. Ars-en-Ré’s office of tourism can give you maps of walking tours—many exploring the nearby salt marshes. We also hiked from the town of La Flotte along the coast to the ruin of the Abbey of Châteliers. Due to the weather, we did not end up renting bikes, but that seems to be the thing to do on this almost perfectly flat island. We had dinner Friday evening at Ô de Mer (http://www.odembistrotgourmand.fr/) and all agreed it was one of the best meals we’ve had. The food, the service and atmosphere were all perfect.

****Note:** costs are for triple rooms.