

La Chapelle sur Erdre - Nantes (St-Jacques de Pirmil)

STAGE PROFILE: 16.5 km 4h10

Two stages of the St James of Compostela Way 'chemin de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle' begin and end in NANTES in the department of Loire-Atlantique, being Nort sur Erdre – Nantes and also Nantes- Clisson.

In earlier times, all of the St James Ways of Brittany led to Nantes, where the pilgrims found hospitals, hospices and chaplaincies to welcome them. They could venerate the renowned relics, such as a nail from the crucifixion in the cathedral, or, at the hospital of Saint Jean des Hospitalier, stones from the rock where Jesus sat when he rose again.... Pilgrims crossed the famous line of bridges over the Loire called the « pons Nannetes » or « Nannetis » leading towards the priory of Saint-Jacques de Pirmil. Here they benefited from a very welcome halt before travelling on towards one of the embarkation harbours such as Bourgneuf or Talmond, or by land towards Parthenay (via Clisson), Saintes or Saint Jean d'Angely.

Today, the Way uses the GR 3 to get to Nantes. It follows the river Erdre to pass by the Cathedral of Saints Pierre and Paul, the château of the Ducs de Bretagne, the Lu Tower, the Marcel Saupin stadium, and going through the island of Beaulieu with its Carmelite chapel, to arrive in the district of Saint-Jacques de Pirmil where the chapel of the same name is to be found.

DIRECTIONS:

00.0 - ... La Chapelle sur Erdre ; going down the steps of the church, take a left between the bus stops, continue onto rue Martin Luther King for 100m, then left onto rue de l'Erdre. Cross the bridge over the railway. Take rue du Bois Fleuri on your right, then rue Jean V. On the bend, in front of house No.8, continue straight ahead, then right.

At the exit of Chemin du Bourbon, go opposite to walk alongside the railway. (on your right)

At the level crossing, cross the road and follow the railway.

At the tram-train station "Erdre Active", go over the level crossing, then take the path on the left alongside the level crossing operator's house, which leads to the D39.

- Turn left **going with care (narrow passage)** under the railway bridge, then take a right onto rue de la Gournière. Go alongside the railway as far as the property La Desnerie, which is open to the public.

At the entrance to the Château de la Desnerie, take the path opposite which goes alongside the river Erdre, which leads you to a leisure park (base de loisirs) on the right-hand bank of the Erdre called....

1H15 04.8 ... Port Barbe. You rejoin the GR3, which goes alongside the Erdre and brings you

to the city centre of Nantes (cathedral-château ...) all the way keeping to the right bank of the Erdre, passing the Jonelière sports centre (where Nantes F.C. trains), passing under the bridge of Beaujoire then a railway bridge, going alongside the harbour of La Jonelière, crossing the stream of Cens to arrive, 800m further...

2H05 08.4 -... at Pont de la Tortière. You leave the right bank to go onto the left bank of the Erdre by taking the steps on your right before the bridge. Go over the bridge and take the path to follow the path with the Erdre to your right.

Pass under the bridge **Pont Gal Motte Rouge**. On your right, the island of Versailles

A little further go under the Pont Saint Mihiel and go up from the towpath to go along the Square du Marquis de Saffré. Go along Ceneray quay and past le **monument aux Morts (war memorial)**, then reach courtyard Cours St André.

Take the steps to get to Cours Saint André, which you go through to get to **Place Foch**, also known as Place Louis XVI. On your right, via Rue de l'Evêché, you reach **Cathédrale saint Pierre et Paul**

2H45 10.7 – The cathedral of Saint Pierre et Paul

On the south side of the Cathedral, a little square leads you to La Psalette.

From the forecourt of the Cathedral, take a left onto rue Mathelin Rodier as far as the Place where you find a **statue of Anne de Bretagne**. Continue straight ahead along rue des Etats. You go alongside, to your left, the **château des Ducs de Bretagne** (11km) At 09, on your right, is the **Tourist Office/Office du Tourisme**, (Nantes Tourisme) where a pilgrim stamp is available.

At the end of rue des États, you arrive at the courtyard Cours John Kennedy.

Turn left and go alongside the château (the tram is on your right here) as far as the tram stop named 'duchesse Anne – Chateau'; this is in fact 2 tram stops and one busway stop in the form of a rotunda (busway: a section of road reserved for buses and community transport).

Cross over, going straight ahead between the tramway and busway stops, across the tram rails, the busway track and a section of road for other vehicles. Don't go over the bridge of the rotunda on your right with the Tour Lu in the background.

You arrive above the wide area/ 'plate forme' of the Canal Saint-Félix. Go round by the left, heading towards 3 large trees which are close to one another. There take a little path (GR) which goes down to the Canal Saint-Félix below (the canal is on your right).

Go along the canal (on your right). Pass under the railway bridges as far as a roundabout. Go straight ahead, leaving on your right **Pont Tbilissi**, then bear right on the **Allée Jacques Bergue** to go behind the renovated **stadium of Marcel Saupin**, a part of which has been transformed into dwellings (orange and green buildings)

VARIATION During the two periods when blue-green algae develop in the Erdre – and the end of winter and during the summer months – the passage under the Pont Tbilissi is closed in order to facilitate removal of the algae. Thus you should take a little detour from Pont Tblissi to rejoin Allée Jacques Bergue and the itinerary is as follows :

..... pont Tbilissi, then bend towards the left and go up through the carpark as far as the roundabout, cross the boulevard and go towards the right in the Allée Jacques Bergue (no further changes)

3H05 12.0 - Marcel Saupin Stadium

Having gone round the stadium, continue to your right. Cross the river Loire on the bridge **Pont Willy Brandt**. At the far end, fork left and go along the Loire, passing by the bridge **Pont Eric Tabarly**

3H25 13.3 - as far as **Hôtel de Région**. Turn right onto rue de la Loire, going alongside Hôtel de la Région on your left. At the roundabout, go straight ahead, then turn left to **rue du pré salé** at the end of which is the convent and church of the Carmelites called **Notre Dame des Lumières** (13.9km) (open daily).

Go around this convent to the left in order to rejoin the other bank of the Loire. You will cross the Loire again on the bridge **Pont Léopold Senghor (14.3km)** to get to the other bank (bras de Pirmil). At the far side of the bridge, go right and then alongside the Loire. Pass under the bridge **Pont Georges Clémenceau (15.5km)**.

L'hôpital Saint-Jacques is on your left.

Continue straight ahead as far as a big road junction at **Pont de Pirmil (16.1km)**. Go immediately left **onto rue Saint-Jacques**, which brings you to the chapel of the same name, situated 300m away (worth a visit)

4H10 16.5 – Church of Saint Jacques de Pirmil

To get back onto the path, retrace your steps for 100m, take a left onto **rue E. des Châtelets**, go straight ahead, then **Place de la Rochelle** (bus station, tramway), and go to the left of the commercial centre - **rue H. Sellier** – to arrive at the bank of the **river Sèvre Nantaise** (17.3km). Go up along this by the right bank.

Following this stage, is you continue by taking the GRP du Pays de Sèvre et Maine as far as Clisson ; see A15, Nantes Sud – Clisson.