

## Explore Cognac's summer fun

*Slow down and explore.*

After enjoying National Cognac Day in the US on June 4, it's time to make tracks for this exceptional area of Cognac—a definitive summer wonderland. Between the Atlantic and the expansive vineyards Explore Cognac's perimeter is defined by the Charente and Charente-Maritime counties (departements) of the Nouvelle Aquitaine. Whether a casual picnic of local specialties along the banks of the Charentes river, a stroll through the verdant vineyards while stopping at a Cognac producer or simply taking in the scenery from a rooftop with cocktail in hand, summer is a fantastic time to discover the region and its namesake spirit. In addition to the rich gastronomic heritage, there are numerous slow tourism activities and festivals.

### ROOFTOPS AND CELLARS

When the weather's nice, what better place to be than on a rooftop? Fortunately, there's no shortage of them in Cognac. [Indigo by Martell](#) offers a 360-degree view of the town or opt for the terrace at [Hotel Chais Monnet](#). Prefer your cognac with a side of history? Sip D'Ussé at Le Lys, the rooftop bar of Chateau de Cognac, the birthplace of King Francois the 1<sup>st</sup>.

Another way to stay cool is to get underground and take advantage of the coolness of the cognac cellars. Become a master blender at [Camus](#) or have dinner amidst the barrels in the [Delamain](#) cellars. Taste Baron d'Utard or D'Ussé in the cool [Chateau de Cognac](#)



*Explore Cognac\_credit Aurélien Terrade-BNIC*

### GETTING OUT ON THE WATER

Whether it's cruising or kayaking on the Charentes river or water sports in the Atlantic Ocean, the area offers multiple choices for water aficionados.

#### *Enjoying the Charentes River*

One of the great pleasures of summer in the Charentes counties is the exploration of its eponymous river. There are many ways to experience the Charente River kayaking, renting your own license-free houseboat or taking "La Demoiselle" the silent 100% solar and electric



powered boat that departs from the Hennessy dock in Cognac for a memorable 90-minute sightseeing cruise. [Ouest Charente Outdoor](#) outfitters can plan a multi-day trip through Cognac and Jonzac combining canoeing and biking.

*Photos Charentes Tourisme - BNIC*

For cruises that encompass the region's gastronomic side, consider the barge [Bethanie Péniche](#) that offers tasting lunches and dinners departing from historic Jarnac (home to the great house of Cognac, Courvoisier). Another very original way to discover the region's people and their know-how is [Charentes in Flow](#) offering a variety of themed cruises from a 2-hour cocktail cruise to a 3-day all-inclusive cruise.

## **Atlantic Ocean and Oleron Island**



*Photos Charentes Tourisme surf*

The Charente River flows into the Atlantic Ocean near La Rochelle where visitors can try their hand at [surfing](#) or [stand-up paddling](#). Oleron Island, off the Atlantic Coast, offers numerous activities such as **a scenic bike ride through the vineyards** or a sailing outing with [Ile ou Aile Catamaran](#) that includes stops at the charming island of Aix and the mysterious Fort Boyard.

There's even kite surfing on Oleron Island's white sand beaches. For wellness aficionados, take advantage of thalassotherapy, seawater spas offering massages and ocean views.

## **CYCLING**

A premier cycling destination in France, the Charentes counties are at the crossroads of five national & European cycling routes, giving cyclists access to over 4000 miles of mostly dedicated and signposted trails. For example, over half of the 248 mile-long [La Flow Velo](#) bike route traverses the Charentes linking the inland village of Marthon (at the border of the Périgord) to historic Angoulême. It then follows the Charente River to Cognac and its vineyards and then onto Saintes—a historic stop on the Way of Saint-James and which is also known for its Gallo-Roman Amphitheatre. Looking to incorporate the culinary into a ride? Pedal along the port in the charming city of La Rochelle and even stop for a creative cocktail at [Le Mary Lill](#) or **start your Cognac journey at the family-owned [Normandin Mercier](#) located just outside La Rochelle**. Ride around the oyster shacks and learn more about oyster cultivation at the largest oyster marsh in Europe, the [Cité de l'Huitre](#).



*Photo credits: Aurélien TERRADE*

For those who wish to incorporate the Cognac aspect, [Hennessy](#) and [Remy Martin](#) offer riders a chance to pedal through the vineyards. Need a hand? For those that prefer a

little oomph, [Martell](#) offers electronic scooters to discover their vineyards or check out a family-owned Cognac house thanks to [Trott in Charente](#).

## **SUMMER HAPPENINGS**

Last, but not least, these annual summer festivals invite visitors to enjoy in lovely settings the best that France has to offer. The great European [hot-air balloon meet](#) In Aubeville-en-Charente takes place from August 1 to 4. Over the course of four days, 58 crews from ten different countries will engage in competition across the vineyards of Charentes and Charentes-Maritimes. September 13 to 15 marks the “[Circuits des Remparts](#)” in Angouleme. A delight for vintage car lovers, since 1939 drivers of the world’s finest classic cars (Aston Martin, MG, Bugatti, Porsche, Lotus etc...) race around the town’s ramparts.

**For more information for summer and year-round slow tourism and Cognac related activities in the Charentes, visit the [Explore Cognac website](#)\***

**\*Explore Cognac Press kit available in the “Press area.”**

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