



## THE MERQUEL HEADLAND (LA POINTE DE MERQUEL) Mesquer



10.5 km



3 hours 30

Kercabellec - Rostu connecting route: 2.3 km / 35 min



Slippery sections



Section dependent on the tides



Parking on the Route de la Bôle de Mesquer

### Access

from the town of Mesquer, follow signs for Kercabellec - Pointe de Merquel



### Mesquer-Quimiac Tourist Information Office

Place de l'Orée du Bois - Quimiac  
+33 (0)2 40 24 34 44



### THE MÈS SALT MARSHES

The Mès salt marshes cover 350 hectares in the communes of Mesquer, Saint-Molf and Assérac. They are part of the 2,000 hectares of salt marshes on the Guérande Peninsula.

For nearly 1,500 years, generations of salt workers have created and maintained this unique landscape, which was classified as a 'remarkable natural site' in 1996. Their artisanal production technique respects the environment and contributes to the ecological wealth of the site. A salt marsh is irrigated via an 'étier' (channel), depending on the daily rhythm of the tides.

During the salt season, the salt worker lets the sea water flow into the mudflat through a hatch. From there, thanks to the effect of a slight difference in height, they start the flow of water in the saltworks, through a series of basins built into the clay.

Thanks to the sun and wind, the water heats up, evaporates and the salt content increases: it becomes brine. In the last harvesting pond, called the 'œillet', the salt crystallises. The fine, light crystals floating in large patches on the surface of the water constitute the 'fleur de sel'. The 'coarse salt' or 'grey salt', producing a much more productive harvest, is formed at the bottom of the 'œillet'. Winter and spring are devoted to maintenance work and then to preparing the marsh for the summer harvest, which takes place from June to September. The quality of Guérande salt was awarded the Label Rouge certification in 1991 and the Guérande and Mès marshes have been labelled 'Site Remarquable du Goût' (place of remarkable taste) since 1994.

This trail reflects the motto of Mesquer: "Faithful on land and sea". After passing through the typical village of Kercabellec, you will be exploring the salt marshes and wooded countryside before reaching the ocean. Go along the seafront to the Pointe de Merquel and the ornithological observatory. From there, enjoy the view, it's the ideal place for observing and finding out about the migratory birds that stop here.



From the Place de Kercabellec, go up the wooden steps towards the Route de la Bôle de Mesquer.

- 1 Turn left, then at the crossroads, cross over and turn right onto Rue de Bel Air. Immediately after arriving at the channel, take the path on your right. Beware, at high tide and when there's a high tidal range, this section will be underwater and this path can be slippery when it's been raining. You are entering the Mès salt marshes, this environment is fragile, please stay on the path and respect the work of the salt workers. And don't forget that the salt marshes are private property! Carry on through this unique landscape until you reach the road.
- 2 Return to the Route de Bel-Air and turn left then right onto the Chemin de la Saline au Duc. Continue on, going past any secondary paths you may encounter.
- 3 At the junction with the RD 52, turn right and go along a protected passage for 200 m. Take the path on your right and go alongside the marshes again, staying on the main path.
- 4 After 800 m, turn left onto the Impasse Saint-Pierre. At the crossroads, take the Rue de la Rangée opposite and then at the end on your left, go along Rue du Mousset. At the intersection, cross over and turn right onto Avenue de Praderoi. At the roundabout, turn left onto Rue d'Hoëdic and cross the road. After 150 m, turn right to the green belt. At the intersection with the road, go straight ahead and cross the park to reach the Allée des Barges, turn left and head to the Lanséria beach.
- 5 Facing the sea, turn right and go along the beach of Lanséria.
- 6 After the Pointe de Beaulieu, there are two options:
  - At low tide: continue along the coastal path, past the Pointe de Toulru and then along Carbonnais beach to the Pointe de Sorlock and then the Pointe de Merquel.
  - At high tide: turn right and then immediately left onto Rue du Fort. Take the 2nd right onto Rue de Treyo up until the crossroads with Rue de Lozépienne. Take the small path opposite, the Chemin des Bôles. At the crossroads, turn right. At the next intersection, after passing the houses, turn left, just before the mudflat. Follow the marsh and stay on this path until you reach the road. There, cross the Route de la Bôle de Mesquer, turn left, then take the 1st right. Take the first passage on your left to reach Sorlock Beach. Go along the beach and then return to the Pointe de Merquel along the customs officer's path.
- 7 Take a break to head up to the ornithological observatory. The Atlantic coast is a major migration route for waterbirds in Europe as they head south in autumn and return to the breeding grounds in spring. Indeed, the diversity of the seaside habitats - sea, mud, rocks and coastal marshes - allows them to find the food resources necessary for their long journey. Each of these habitats is home to different species of birds whose presence is determined by the seasons. From mid-autumn to early spring you can watch brent geese and from April to September you can watch common terns with their spectacular fishing techniques. To get back to the departure point, go around the observatory, down the steps and then continue alongside the strait and the anchorages to reach the port of Kercabellec. This dune area is a natural site protected by the Loire-Atlantique Department, please stay on the path.



### TO GO FURTHER...

Another possibility is to explore the Island of Rostu and one of the most beautiful viewpoints in the area. From Kervarin to Rostu, you will be entering a preserved, protected and environmentally friendly area. Here you can find salt marshes, shellfish farmers, remarkable landscapes and exceptional biodiversity. Please stay on the main path and respect those who are working here.



# THE MERQUEL HEADLAND (LA POINTE DE MERQUEL) Mesquer



LA BAULE  
PRESQU'ÎLE DE  
GUÉRENDE  
TOURISME



10.5 km



3 hours 30

