

## Marsac-sur-Don < > Blain

### STAGE PROFILE : 20.1 km - 5h00

After experiencing the sweet charms of the Don valley, today's stage brings you close to the forest of Gâvre – be sure to go into the forest – where you follow the footsteps of the fairy Joyance and the monk Guénaël. You are also in the heart of the moorlands and mystical world of the forest.

The stage brings you to the land of the lords of Clisson and Blain of which the most famous were Olivier IV, then Olivier V, Constable of France.

It is at Blain that the Capitals way (Voie des Capitales) joins up with the Breton ways of St James.

The day could end with a visit to the Château of Blain where the Tour du Connétable (Constable Tower) is linked with the memory of Olivier V of Clisson, who is buried in the basilica of Notre Dame du Roncier at Josselin, or with looking at the beautiful frescoes of the Chapel of Saint Roch.

### DIRECTIONS

**0.0 - Marsac sur Don**, leaving from the church. Take the Vay road (Rue St Léger) ; leave the town to get to an intersection 750m away. Turn right, then keep going straight ahead for a little more than 4.5km, in the direction of **La Pilhourdais**, Launay de Bourgueil, Le Houssay, Coquelin, and Pré Rocher. In doing this you will leave a number of roads and paths to your left and right; go through **La Pilhourdais** ; go to a Y-junction, and head right in the direction of Launay-de-Bourgueil which you pass through ; continue to Le Houssay to a Y-junction (150m away); go right leaving Coquelin on your right, as far as Pré Rocher which you go through. At the far side of this area, leave a road on your right, as well as leaving a path on your left.

Continue straight ahead for 1.2km, after having left a path on your left at 200m, as far as an intersection (and junction with the variation which leaves the Chapel of Lieux-Saints, via the pond L'étang de la Roche – see the stage: Langon to Marsac-sur-Don).

**1h20 5.41 –** Turn left, continue for 350m to **Croix des 4 Contrées**, at the edge of the Forest of Gâvre. Go straight ahead for 2km and – leaving to your left and right a number of paths and roads - and take, 1.5km away at a Y-junction the right-hand fork in the direction of La Gabie which you go through – cross the D2. At this intersection, go straight ahead for 750m. At the junction marked by a Cross, turn left and continue for 3km to Gâvre ; having crossed the stream of Clégreuc, carry on straight ahead leaving some paths and roads to the right and left ; go past by the right hand side of the area of Les Rôtys, then 1.6km further, go past La Génestrie (holiday resort) then a gymnasium. Continue – having noted for a possible visit the beautiful Maison de la Forêt / Benoît museum – to enter by Rue Grande into the town of...

**3h00 12.2 - ... Gâvre.** Continue along Rue Grande to cross to the right, 40m after the hôtel-

restaurant of Croix Blanche at n°19, in keeping with the GRP, through a portal « Passage de l'Octroi ».

Keep to the left, leaving a school to your right, in order to cross a carpark and get to the Route de l'Etang. Fork left here, then go immediately right. Opposite the entrance to the campsite, turn left to go around the pond, keeping left all the way. At the far end of the play area, go out to the left and carry on alongside the D42. Turn right in the hamlet of Anglechais, then 150m further take a left at the near end of the area of La Grée, which you go through for 400m. At a roundabout, go straight ahead for 250m. At a new intersection, go straight ahead and carry on for 800m as far as a T-junction ; take a right for 150m as far as the maisonnette of Mespras.

Above this, bear left on an old disused railway. Carry on towards the maisonnette of Moutonnerie 1.2km away. Cut across the D42, and continue straight ahead for 1.3km towards....

**4h15 17.3 - ... the roundabout of Europe on the D171**, where you take the first exit on the right, Rue de Nozay, towards the centre of Blain ; on reaching Rue du 8 Mai, bear left, cross the Rue du 11 Novembre and, at Rue de Nantes, take a right as far as Place Jean Guihard and the church of Blain (18.7km). To get to the gîte municipal and Quai Surcouf on the Nantes-Brest canal, like the GRP... [Another method to get to Quai Surcouf and the gîte is to take Rue du Château near the Office de Tourisme on Place Guihard, and go straight down for 600m.]... go just behind the church by Rue du Marché and there take a right onto Allée des Tilleuls then go straight across the carpark of a supermarket and Avenue de la République ; take Allée Jacques Prévert which is facing you for 150m. Cross carefully, using the pedestrian walkway Boulevard de la Résistance to continue straight ahead onto Rue Lucie Aubrac and keep right near a roundabout to take, after 100m, in the extension of a pedestrian walkway another avenue. 50m further down, fork right onto a road. Keep left, crossing a little Place/carpark to head left for 50m along a gravelled alley. At the intersection with a road, go left then immediately right onto Chemin des Mariniers to reach, a little less than 100m further, Quai Surcouf which is 750m from the church. Continue left to take the overbridge on the right over the Nantes-Brest canal. Continue along the Promenade Anne de Bretagne and enter the grounds of the Château de La Groulais on the left.

**5h00 20.2 - ...** The gîte municipal of **Blain** is on your right.

**VARIATION to visit Chapel of Saint-Roch from the gîte :**

**There and back / 3.2 km** – Exit the grounds of the **Château de la Groulais** and turn left ; carry on straight ahead as far as the D15. Turn left then keep left on the D42. Pass **Champ Brunet** as far as **Chapelle Saint Roch**, situated on your left (1.6km).

*Constructed in 1450 by Alain IX de Rohan, to ward off the black plague which was rife in the region, this chapel was the seat of the friary of the castle. Built on a megalithic site (le petit roc fou... the little mad rock) like most of the Breton holy places, a druidic sacred place has become a christian one.*

*Beautiful wall paintings. (To visit ask for the key from the Office of Tourism)*

**NOTE:** The older waymarking still exists from the point at which you leave this chapel, as used on the Blain to Nantes stage, passing through the communes of Vigneux-de-Bretagne, Notre-Dame-des-Landes, Treillères and Chapelle-sur-Erdre, via an old railway. This section is no longer maintained and you run the risk of getting lost.