



Welcome to the Salt adventure park



Come and learn about the fabulous history of salt-making, from pre-Roman times to the present day.

PLAN

The Adventure Park





The point 1 to 4

The four elements we need to produce salt

Come and cross the little wood bridge to discover the four elements we need to create salt !

1

Do you know why the salt has a taste of seawater ? It's because the salt crystallizes in

the sea



2

To built the salt marsh the salt worker has to use

« the land of clay »



3

Moreover, the salt developping in the seawater, has to be warm. And what element warms the best ?

The sun



4

The last element is in the air. Do you know which is it ?
It evaporates the seawater in the air :

the wind





The point 5

In the tiers

Meeting with the salt worker

To discover saltmarshes

In front of you, there are salt marshes made up of two parts : a water reserve and clay basins to harvest the salt.

The process of saltmarshes:

With the rising tide, the sea comes up the first channel. After, through the labyrinth of secondary canals, the water will supply the marshes with seawater. Then, the sun and the wind evaporates the water, leaving a progressively stronger concentration of salt.

30 grams per litre of seawater to 300 grams per litre at the point of crystallization

Several types of salt

-In the surface appears a very white salt called « Fleur de sel »

-On the clay bed is formed an other salt used for cooking that we call « coarse salt »

The scientific name of salt is :

« The sodium chloride »



To harvest the « fleur de sel » we use a long-handled called « simouche »



oeillet

ladure

camelle

The salt-making season takes place between June and September



To the point 6 to 9



The Gauls

Audio :

From the beginning of time, there was salt, in the ancient ocean where life began.

In the 4th century B.C the Celtic nation spread out over the whole of Europe, from the Balkans to the British Isles. It was a strongly cultural community which expressed itself through a variety of creative techniques. Several types of kilns have been uncovered at the sites near les Sables, at Bretignolles sur Mer, at Bourgneuf en Retz and around the Poitevin marshes.



The purpose was to reduce a salt substance in terra cotta vases, arranged on oven.



Produce salt all year round



A big consumption of forest wood



During the Neolithic period until the last century, they used the salt to **preserve meat and give it taste.**

Menhir



To the point 9 to 11

Towards the Romans



Good to know

In the same way as a conservator, the salt was also a currency of exchange. Indeed, instead of giving money, the legionnary received a salt ration that we called «salaris». This is where the word salary comes from.

The Roman invasion in France meant important changes for our civilisation, indeed they created some innovations that we use yet nowadays :

- The Latin Language
- The Roofing Tiles
- The Wine
- The paved roads

And the theory of saltmarshes.



A little bit of history (audio)

The first text to mention the salt marshes is the text by St Jean d'Orbestier.

In the Middle Ages, the large abbeys were not so much places of mediation and prayer, as sort of universities, where builders, agriculturists, economists, master vine growers and saltmarsh workers were trained.

Between the tenth and the nineteenth centuries, the spread of salt production contributed of the rising economy and culture in Europe.



La Gabelle, costumes officer's hut

« La Gabelle was the name of the
salt tax »

Come back in a terrible night in Bas Maine,
the country of the great salt tax.



Audio :

The rain fell, worsened by raging gusts of wind. All of sudden, the shriek of an owl seemed to raise the alarm. We stopped. We sensed danger everywhere. The criminals were not far away.

« You are under arrest, give yourselves up ! », shouted one costumes officer, « Stop or I shot ! »

And then it all started. Out of the 70 crooks, only 5 were arrested. Several others who were wounded managed to escape to the woods. That day, 25 horses were captured, and 6 rifles and 147 packets of salt were seized. At this time, however, punishments were seven : fines, branding with the « G » of « Gabelle ».

They say that from 1703 to 1708 salt smugglers made up over a quarter of the prisoners in slave ships.

Oh, what a time of injustice and of revolt !

I remember the lines from the Bas Maine :

« When the holly freezes

And the magpie nests

On top of the Montaudin steeple,



To the point 12 to 13

Following the path towards the fish marsh

A stroll in the fisherman's island, at the discovery of its fishes.



dorade



Anguille



mulet



Bar

Do you know that fishes here come from **the Atlantic Ocean** ? The eels did a long journey to come here in the marshes. Indeed, when the eels are older they cross the Atlantic Ocean to reproduce in the Sargasso Sea and dead there. Then, their eggs will cross again the Ocean during 3 years to live in the continental waters as the marshes. Then, when they grow up, they will do the same journey as their parents.

Some fishing tools



Le Carrelet

Net composed of mussel and sand



La Nasse

Composed of « anchons » to block the fishes



To the point 14

Cod fishing

Inside the boat

1

At home we were 5 children. My dad used to say « You must earn your bread my son ». When I was very young, with my elder brother. I lived in the salt marsh. Our parents were salt farmers for several generations and the salt season inspired our childhood games. But soon, I had to think about work to help the family income. The tasks in the salt marsh became harder and harder. At 8 years old, my brother and I, started to carry the salt. My father taught us to look at the sky and how to understand the weather.

2

My brother was always fascinated by this work. But, I was attracted to the fishing port, I liked quayside life and the sea. Later, I became a fisherman ! When I was 12, I worked on fishing boats all along the coast. Later, at 17, I embarked for the first time on a cod fishing boat bound for Newfoundland. I remember this first departure, certainly the most devastating to my mother.

3

During six-month of trip, I was the ship's boy. My job was to wash the cod. It was simple but thankless. I was always wet, our clothes were sodden. My hands which were numb with cold, and were often painful. I had to drink brandy to warm myself. The first day on sea were difficult, the fishing trip was long and shipboard life was hard.

4

Today, after many years of these 'First' and 'Late' trips. I became a fish cutter : my job is to cut the cod into squares. Shall be sailing on the 'St François' with my friend Victor : He is responsible for salting the cod we catch. This afternoon we have carried the last salt load of the season along the 'Ch'noue' to the port. Victor likes to choose the best quality of salt. This year I am proud, because he choose my father's salt. The load is closely watched

« Ah ! These customs officers !

No chance abag going missing ! ».

The sailors used the salt for the same reason than in the Neolithic : to conserve the food, such as fish.

In marine language, the distance is talk about nautic « mile ». If you want to sail on sea and do the next « Vendée Globe » like the last winner Yannick Bestaven you have to know that :

1 mile = 1852 mètre

« Setting sail »



« Casting off the moorings »



To the point 15 to 18

To the towpath, the birds and the salt marsh's plants.

The Plants



The plants in the marsh are halofilic. It means that they love salt and they need salt to grow.

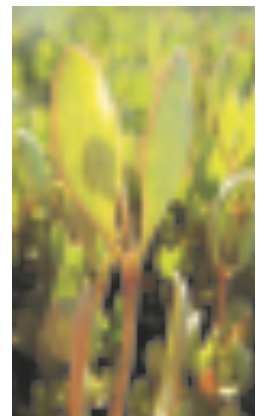
The « soude Maritime » : It's an herbaceous plant, with yellow leafs. It can grow until 1 meter, and its flowers can be eat

The Saline's suggestion : You can eat it like a condiment with salad, crudités or simply with a jot of « fleur de sel ».



L'obione : It's a little shrub which measure 20 cm. These thick leafs have different shades of grey. This edible plant can be eat raw or cooked.

The Saline's suggestion : You can eat the crunchy leafs as crisps.



La salicorne « samphire » : its leafs are composed of two opposite seeds, and there are 30 different species of Salicorne

The Saline's suggestion : raw, its taste looks like pickles. It's a good asortment with crudités or cooked meats.





The Birds



According to the seasons, the birds come and leave.
Indeed, you can admire different types of theme.

During fall and winter

Contrary to us those birds find warm and food during that season in the marsh !

Short-eared owl



Singer swan



Snipe



During spring and summer

The beatiful days are back, those birds too !

Redshank



Stilt white



Black-headed gull



Barn swallow



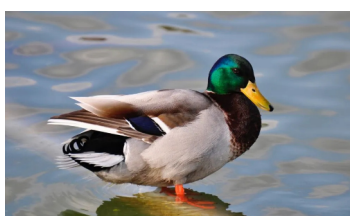
During all the years

The marsh has no secret for those birds, they are here during all seasons !

Avocet



Duck



Grey heron



Marsh harrier



During winter the migratory birds leave and go in Africa !



*If you are lucky and observant you
will be able to see our black sheep
with their little baby named «Cookie»
walking in the park*

Bêêê !



Also, during your visit to Les Salines

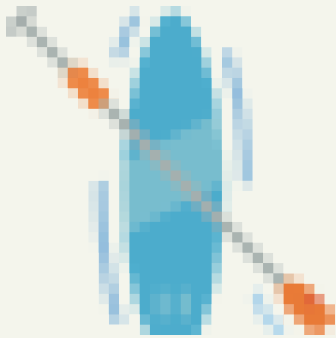
The Boat tour

All aboard ! Destination tranquility and pleasure, for a trip of 1h00. A trip on the Saline's River will allow you to witness, the living traditions that made Olonne one of the great salt-producing regions of the past

(schedules vary according to the tides)



Ahoy there !



You can also rent canoes near
at « La Terrasse des Salines »

Contact

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