

TIMES ONLINE

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The 15 best campsites in France

Whatever kind of site you're after, Jonathan Knight, author of *Cool Camping France*, has been there



Jonathan Knight

Corporate camp sites, Euro-techno discos, communal Agadoo – the list of continental camping faux pas is longer than the Channel tunnel. Yet, contrary to popular belief, France is blessed with an enviable selection of small, characterful places for pitching up: clifftop camps with cracking views, remote farms tucked away in the countryside, lazy, shady riverside hang-outs and a bunch situated right on top of some great places to eat and drink. Just don't forget to leave room in the boot of the car for a case or two of the local wine on the way home.

Unless stated, prices are per night, for pitch/adult/child

[...]

CAMPING LA VENDETTE, Île de Noirmoutier: although it's only just south of Brittany, this island on the Atlantic coast is like a little slice of the Mediterranean, a few hundred miles north of where it should be. Back in the days when Renoir came to paint the shimmering green and purple shade of the pine trees, it was accessible only by boat or a cobbled causeway that was submerged at high tide. If you're feeling adventurous, you can still cross the Passage du Gois, but there's a bridge if you don't want to get the car wet. The site is in an idyllic forest of ilex, pine and mimosa set slap bang on the beach. The town of Noirmoutier is famous for its saltpans, medieval castle and wonderful romanesque church – from a vantage point close to the camp site, you can look across a flat water meadow and a sheltered bay at the town silhouetted against the setting sun.

www.camping-indigo.com; from £9.80/£2.50/£1.20 (ages 2-7)