

WHAT'S ON 2012

One of the best ways to get to know a country is by participating in the regional events and festivals. Whilst there are numerous local fetes, fayres and performances throughout the year, the region also plays host to a number of large annual events that should not be missed.

EVENT	DESCRIPTION	DATES	INFORMATION
Bande Dessinee d'Angouleme	Talks, shows, films and exhibitions relating to comic strip art. Meet the artists.	Jan	http://www.bdangouleme.com
La Fete du Mimosa	St Trojan les Bains Ile D'Oleronne. A weekend festival of events celebrating the arrival of mimosa and spring. Parade with music and decorated floats Sunday afternoon from 2pm	Feb	http://www.lafetedumimosa.com http://www.st-trojan-les-bains.fr
National Open garden days	Regional garden festival when many public and private gardens are opened for visitors. Many also have additional exhibitions and events.	June	http://www.poitou-charentes.culture.gouv.fr
Fete des Plantes et Jardins	Domaine de Pere Prisse La Charriere (North of St Jean D'Angeley). Private house and gardens host the region's largest plant and flower show.	Jun also Oct	
Fete de la Musique et du Silence	A unique outdoor musical evening set in and around an old piano factory and out buildings at la Domaine Music de Petignac. 100s of musicians, professional and amateur alike just sign up for a session on one of the many informal stages on the site and entertain the crowds who simply wander between performances as they wish. Everything from a classical pianist to a teenage rock band, jazz, soul and everything in between. The owner does sell Steinways and the crowds are welcome to sit and try them out	Jun	http://www.fauvin.com/

Fete du Musique	Open to all musicians – professional and amateur this is a national day dedicated to live music. All performances are free and typically take place in the open air – streets, public parks and buildings etc	21 Jun	http://www.tourism-cognac.com
Bordeaux Wine Festival	Set along 2 kms of the quayside this is a 4 day wine festival. Events include wine workshops, barrel rolling, a symphony concert, firework displays and of course just a little bit of tasting!	Jun	http://www.bordeaux-fete-le-vin.com
Fete Medievale	Experience life in mediaeval France in the colourful festival at Dignac. The town is transformed and everyone dresses up. Plenty of jousting, dancing and general merriment	Jul	http://www.fete-medievale.cad-dignac.info/
Fete du Cognac	4 nights of live music (Indi and rock) and food along the quayside in Cognac hosted by the wine equivalent of the young farmers group	Jul	http://www.lafeteducognac.fr
Bastille day	The French National holiday when most towns have some form of celebration. Best in the area is the fireworks along the river in Jarnac after which the town centre turns itself over to dancing and fun	14 th Jul	http://www.jarnac-tourisme.com
Saintes Music Festival	Saintes, home of one of France's most prestigious music festivals which includes concerts in the Abbey or vocal works in the cathedral. Evening concerts are relayed to the foot of the Roman arch on the banks of the river	Jul	http://www.abbayeauxdames.org
Festival International D'Art Pyrotechnique	St Palais sur Mer. International firework competition where each of 3 competing countries tries to out do the other. Now an annual event attracting 40,000 people!	July	http://www.ot-royan.fr

Violons sur le Sable	Hugely popular classical concerts set on the beach at Royan. Pay to sit in the stands or just take a seat or blanket and sit on the sand for free. Each evening has a different performance with a variety of soloists and the evening ends with a firework finale choreographed to the music.	Jul	http://www.violonsurlesable.com
Blues Passions	International music festival that takes over the town for 5 days. There are numerous music venues with ticketed performances by big names although most of the restaurants and bars also turn themselves over to free live music performances.	July	http://www.bluespassions.com
Nuits Romane	A programme of 70 free music, choral and dance events that are staged throughout the summer at and in Romanesque heritage sites	July - Aug	http://www.nuitsromanes.poitou-charentes.fr
Hot Air Balloon European Cup	A bi-annual event based at Mainfonds. There are daily races/flights at points along the Charente river with a large aerial meeting on the Sunday with helicopter and balloon rides, aerial and static displays etc. With over 50 competitors undertaking 7 flights over 5 days including dawn and dusk hovers the event offers some wonderful sights.	Aug	http://www.hotairballooneuropean cup.com
Abbaye Fontdouce	Classical piano recitals, Jazz and swing performances set in the cloisters and the gardens of the beautiful old Abbey. Take a picnic and enjoy the warm evenings.	Aug	http://www.fountdouce.com/festival

Confolens Dance Festival	A street festival that takes over the town bringing together dance troops and musicians from around the globe. (SAfrica, Russia, Peru, Spain, N Zealand, Malaysia and Ireland to name but a few. A scheduled series of shows and parades	Aug	http://www.festivaldeconfolens.org
Pyrosymphonique	Amazing event set on the beach (Plage de la Grande Conche) in Royan. Fireworks are choreographed to music composed for the event as a local fairytale is recounted. Fireworks go up from the beach and also from barges moored at sea to make this a very spectacular evening.	15 th August	http://www.royan-tourisme.com
Course Hippiques	3 Sundays of horse racing at the small picturesque racing track alongside the river Charente at Jarnac. Flat, jumps and trotting races make this a fun afternoon for an entry fee of 5 euros	Last 2 Sundays in August and first Sunday in Sept	http://www.jarnac-tourisme.com
Coupe de Chauffe	A street arts festival that takes over the streets and main park in Cognac. Everything from video installations, puppets, stilt walkers, comedians, magicians, dance and circus. Events start in the early afternoon and run until the early hours of the morning. Bizarre, weird and wonderful	Sept	http://www.avantscene.com/coupe_de_chauffe
La Rochelle Boat Show Grand Pavois	Porte Plaisance de Mimimes. The 5 th largest, on water, boat show in the world brings together manufacturers and salesmen from around the world. Demonstrations, events and fireworks add to the atmosphere throughout the week.	Sept	www.grand-pavois.com

National Open garden days	Regional garden festival when many public and private gardens are opened for visitors. Many also have additional exhibitions and events.	Sept	http://www.poitou-charentes.culture.gouv.fr
Circuits des Remparts	First held in 1939 this is the classic car road race event of Europe. On the Sunday the old cars race through the close streets of Angouleme to cross the start and finish line in front of the cathedral. In addition to the race there is a 200 kms tour of the countryside and on Sat evening a gala event set in the town centre where you can admire the cars and the period customs of the drivers and owners.	Sept	http://www.circuit-des-remparts.com
Cognac/Jarnac Marathon	Increasing in popularity every year our local marathon offers competitive, fun and family runs over a variety of distances. There event also offers a food village, music and a country walk on the Sunday to ease those tired legs.	Nov	http://www.marathonducognac.net
Les Gastronomades Angouleme	Everything foodie as the town worships everything edible. Set in various locations across the town there are exhibitions, demonstrations, the sale of local produce, cooking contests and courses.	Nov	http://www.gastronomades.fr
Bordeaux Christmas Market	Allees de Tourny. Set in the city centre log cabin stalls sleigh rides and of course Santa.	First 3 weeks of December	http://www.bordeaux-tourisme.com