



*Starting from Place du Puits, take Rue des Scourrets, and then, Chemin des Douves, located to your right. Walk along the strongholds and fortifications built during the*

## 1 FORTIFICATIONS

During the 12th century, the castle and city were built on this rocky spur, called “Roche Fort” (large rock). From then on, the place and family were both named “Rochefort”. In the 14th century, the Rochefort family no longer had any heirs and, therefore, married into the Rieux family. The site and feudal castle thus belonged to the Rieux Rocheforts. It was under this family’s reign, especially under Jean IV de Rieux Rochefort, that the city began to thrive. Jean IV, like several other Breton lords, was opposed to the annexation of Brittany by the Kingdom of France. Nonetheless, Charles VIII commanded to destroy all Breton castles, including Rochefort, after winning the battle of St-Aubin-du-Cormier. However, Jean IV was the guardian of Anne of Brittany, who married Charles VIII and became the Queen of France. Therefore, Charles VIII granted Rochefort 100,000 gold coins, which allowed him to rebuild his castle, surround it with strong fortifications and bring canons into the church. The castle was then destroyed during the French Revolution. It was not until the 20th century that the American painter, Alfred Klots, bought the ruins and turned the castle’s old outbuildings into luxurious apartments.

*Continue walking along the fortifications and go down the steps towards the Vieux Bourg (Old Town).*

## 2 VIEUX BOURG (OLD TOWN)

Located below the castle and most “noble” houses, this old artisan town symbolically upholds the social hierarchy: the most important people (clergy,

public figures and knights) lived on higher ground where as the lowly (tanners, potters, etc.) lived in the lower part of the city.

*Climb up to your right to Place Saint Michel. Take a look at Les Grées on your left.*

## 3 VIEW OF LES GRÉES

Hills covered in schist used for building houses and making roof slates. Present in the towns of Pluherlin, Malansac and Rochefort-en-Terre, slate quarries were used from the 13th to early 20th century. There is a great deal of slate located in the village of Rochefort-en-Terre. Today, Les Grées is considered a protected area.

*You will find Saint Michel Chapel at the end of Place Saint Michel.*

## 4 SAINT MICHEL CHAPEL

Saint Michel de la Grêle Chapel dates back to the 17th century. It replaced the old Saint Michel Priory, which belonged to the Benedictine Abbey of Redon. Today, the chapel (renovated in the 20th century) is used to celebrate religious services on the feast day of Notre Dame de la Tronchaye (the Sunday following 15 August).

*Take a few steps back and turn left after the tree-lined alley. Take one of the many small streets of Rochefort. Immediately after, turn left towards Place des Halles.*

## 5 PLACE DES HALLES

As the town’s main square starting from the 17th century, Place des Halles has long been one of the most important places in the city thanks to its economic role (U-shaped covered market used for fairs and markets). It was also used for celebrations and events. To the right of the market is Hôtel Burban, a former 17th century seigniorial prison; to the left, Hôtel Le Pélican, formerly known as Auberge Lecadre, which hosted many

painters including Alfred Klots in the late 19th century. The town hall is located in the front of the hotel and decorated with bicentennial wisteria every summer.

*Go down Rue Candré, located next to the town hall, to Porte de l’Étang.*

## 6 PORTE DE L’ÉTANG

This opening is one of the Rochefort entrances. This north-south road coincides with the salt route: salt arrives from La Vilaine Maritime (La Roche-Bernard and Guérande) and transported inland (throughout Brittany). Therefore, Rue Candré is the main road and called “Grande Rue” (Main Street).

*Go through the Porte de l’Étang and admire the washhouse on your left.*

## 7 WASHHOUSE

This 16th century public washhouse got its water from Le Candré River. A private washhouse is also located nearby.

*Turn around, take Rue de l’Étang and go back up to Place de l’Eglise.*

## 8 NOTRE-DAME-DE-LA-TRONCHAYE CHURCH

Notre-Dame-de-la-Tronchaye Church is oddly located on a slope in the lower part of the city. Legend has it that during the 9th or 10th century, during the Norman invasions, a priest hid a wooden statue of the Virgin Mary breast-feeding her baby in a hollow tree trunk in order to protect it from the pillaging. Two centuries later, a shepherdess found the statue in the tree trunk and the town decided to build a church there. The story is retold on the stained glass windows. A sculpted cross recalling the Passion of the Christ is found in the square in front of the church, where the former Rochefort cemetery was located up until the 19th century.

Upon entering the church, you will be surprised by the pillars that lean due to the landslides towards the south, and then the west. To prevent the church from collapsing, buttresses were built on the southern end, extending the aisles parallel to the nave, and on the western side, lengthening the nave and allowing a tribune to be built. In 1498, Jean IV de Rieux-Rochefort founded a college, thanks to the 100,000 gold coins that he received from Anne of Brittany, for seven canons to pray for the repose of the soul of the lord and his family. In the choir, you can still see their carved stalls. In 1925, Rochefort-en-Terre became dedicated to the Virgin Mary and two new stained glass windows were built in the church: one window in 1926 representing the Holy Family located in the back choir and the second built in 1927 of the shepherdess discovering the statue of the Virgin Mary in the tree trunk.

*Take Rue ND de la Tronchaye, and then Rue Grande Venelle on your right. Go back up Venelle de l’Étang. You will arrive on Rue du Porche.*

## 9 TURRET

Admire this turret with oriel windows on this double house, which remarkably combines Gothic and Breton Renaissance styles.

*Continue towards Place du Puits.*

## 10 PLACE DU PUIITS

Different architectural periods are displayed through the slate and granite houses with oriel windows and half-timbered façades located on Place du Puits. Check out the scale carved above the door of the Tourist Office (built in the 17th century): the building held the seigniorial office. The town’s first covered market was located on Place du Puits, where the guillotine, used in 1793, was also set up for the execution of three people convicted for counter-revolutionary crimes.