Nantes

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Nantes ([nɑ̃t]) (Gallo: *Naunnt* or *Nantt* (pronounced: [nɑ̃t] or [nɑ̃:t]);[1] Breton: *Naoned* (pronounced ['nɑ̃wnət])[2]) is a city in western France, located on the Loire River, 50 km (31 mi) from the Atlantic coast. The city is the sixth largest in France, with almost 300,000 inhabitants within its administrative limits, and an urban area of 600,000 inhabitants. Together with Saint-Nazaire, a seaport located on the Loire estuary, Nantes forms the main metropolis of north-western France.

Nantes is the administrative seat of the Loire-Atlantique *département* and of the Pays de la Loire *région*, one of the 18 regions of France. Historically and culturally, Nantes belongs to Brittany, a region and former duchy and province. The fact that it is not part of the modern administrative region of Brittany is subject to debate.

Nantes appeared during the Antiquity as a port on the Loire. It became the seat of a bishopric at the end of the Roman era, before being conquered by the Breton people in 851. Nantes was the main residence of the dukes of Brittany in the 15th century, but after the Union of Brittany and France in 1532, Rennes imposed itself as the capital of the province. In the 17th century, following the establishment of the French colonial empire, Nantes gradually became the largest harbour in France, and it was responsible for almost half of the French Atlantic slave trade in the 18th century. The French Revolution was a period of turmoil which resulted in an economic decline. Nantes managed to develop a strong industry after 1850, chiefly in ship building and food processing. However, deindustrialisation in the second half of the 20th century pushed the city to reorient its economy towards services.

In 2012, the Globalization and World Cities Research Network ranked Nantes as a *Gamma-* world city. It is the fourth highest ranking city in France after Paris, Lyon and Marseilles. The *Gamma-* category gathers other large cities such as Algiers, Orlando, Porto, Turin and Leipzig.[3] Nantes has often been praised for its quality of life and it was awarded the European Green Capital Award in 2013.[4] The European Commission noted its efforts to reduce air pollution and CO_2 emissions, its high-quality and well-managed public transport system, and its biodiversity with 3,366 hectares of green spaces and several Natura 2000 zones which guarantee protection of nature in the area.[5]

Nantes

From top to bottom, from left to right : river Loire in central Nantes ; Castle of the Dukes of Brittany ; Pommeraye Arcade ; the Isle of Nantes between the two branches of the Loire.

| Flag | Coat of arms |

Motto: Latin: *Favet Neptunus eunti* ("Neptune favours the traveller")

Location within Pays de la Loire region

Contents

Coordinates: 47°13′05″N 1°33′10″W

Country	France
Region	Pays de la Loire
Department	Loire-Atlantique
Arrondissement	Nantes
Canton	Chief city of 11 cantons
Intercommunality	Nantes Métropole
Government	
• **Mayor** (2014–2020)	Johanna Rolland (PS)
Area¹	65.19 km² (25.17 sq mi)
• **Urban** (2008)	537.70 km² (207.61 sq mi)
• **Metro** (2013)	3,302 km² (1,275 sq mi)
Population (2013 census)²	292,718
• **Rank**	6th in France
• **Density**	4,500/km² (12,000/sq mi)
• **Urban** (2013)	612,782
• **Urban density**	1,100/km² (3,000/sq mi)
• **Metro** (2013)	908,815
• **Metro density**	280/km² (710/sq mi)
Time zone	CET (GMT +1) (UTC+1)
• **Summer (DST)**	CEST (UTC+2)
INSEE/Postal code	44109 (http://www.insee.fr /fr/themes /tableau_local.asp?ref_id=POP& millesime=2010& nivgeo=COM&codgeo=44109) / 44000, 44100, 44200 and 44300
Dialling codes	02
Website	nantes.fr (http://en.nantes.fr /home.html)

¹ French Land Register data, which excludes lakes, ponds, glaciers > 1 km² (0.386 sq mi or 247 acres) and river estuaries.

² *Population without double counting*: residents of multiple communes (e.g., students and military personnel) only counted once.

Etymology

Between the end of the 2nd century BC and the beginning of the 1st century BC, the Namnetes, the local Gaulish people, established a settlement on the north bank of the river Loire, near its confluence with the river Erdre. The settlement is mentioned in Ptolemy's *Geography* as Κονδηούινκον (*Kondēoúinkon*) and Κονδιούινκον (*Kondioúinkon*),[6] which might be read as Κονδηούικον (*Kondēoúikon*).[7] During the Gallo-Roman period, this name was latinised and adapted as *Condevincum* (the most common form), *Condevicnum*,[8] *Condivicnum*, *Condivincum*,[9] etc. *Condevincum* seems to be related to the Gaulish word *condate* meaning "confluence".[10]

At the end of the Roman period, Condevincum became known as *Portus Namnetum* ("Port of the Namnetes")[G 1] and *civitas Namnetum* ("City of the Namnetes").[10] This phenomenon (replacing the original name of a town with another one related to the Gaulish tribe) can be observed on most of the ancient cities of France throughout the 4th century. For instance, *Lutecia* became Paris, city of the Parisii, *Darioritum* became Vannes, city of the Veneti.[11] *Portus Namnetum* evolved in *Namnetis* during the Carolingian period,[12][13] and the current name stabilised by the end of the Middle Ages, when French became the official language of France instead of Latin.