

VOYAGE

*Destination*  
**TOURAINNE**

*Where life is an art!*



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# Contents



3

PRESS RELEASE

4

IN TOURS  
CULTURAL TOURAINE

14

FROM AMBOISE TO CHENONCEAU  
RENAISSANCE TOURAINE

8

FROM VOUVRAY TO MONTLOUIS  
THE TENDER HEART OF TOURAINE

16

IN LOCHES  
BOHEMIAN SOUTH TOURAINE

10

FROM CHINON TO AZAY-LE-RIDEAU  
FOOD LOVERS' TOURAINE

20

IN LANGEAIS AND BOURGUEIL  
COUNTRYSIDE CHIC TOURAINE

## Key figures

39 3

châteaux open to visitors Art and History Towns  
TOURS, LOCHES, CHINON



8

gardens with the Remarkable Garden label

12 AOP wines 4

major cycling trails  
(LA LOIRE À VÉLO, L'INDRE À VÉLO, ST-JACQUES À VÉLO, VAL DE CHER À VÉLO)

6 800 KM of hiking trails

# Touraine in the Loire Valley

## WHERE LIFE IS AN ART!

Touraine is blessed by the gods, cherished by kings, celebrated by poets and pampered by Mother Nature. It has that special, charming, typically French touch. From Rabelais to Leonardo da Vinci, from King Francis I to Mick Jagger via Richelieu, Balzac, Ronsard, Joan of Arc and Catherine de' Medici, it has never ceased to attract.

Whether you're a king, a rocker, a bon vivant, a writer or a tourist

At the heart of a passionate love story involving the River Loire and tuffeau stone, with an internationally celebrated architectural heritage, known as the «Garden of France» since the Renaissance, featuring a network of green trails, a favourite region for wine aficionados and a horn of plenty for food lovers: Touraine combines the Good and the Beautiful in a setting listed as part of World Heritage by UNESCO since 2000.

The birthplace of the French way of life, home to the most simple pleasures and a symbol of easy living: like a precious jewel, Touraine has several different facets that have shaped its personality! From **Tours** to the vineyards of **Vouvray** and **Montlouis**, via **Amboise** and **Chenonceau**, **Chinon** and **Azay-le-Rideau**, **Langeais** and **Bourgueil**, all the way south to **Loches**: each area is an invitation to take a journey, with extravagant or intimate experiences to enjoy during an enchanting break.



From the monumental Loire valley to the dazzling countryside, famous vineyards and quiet villages, get ready for 6 great experiences!

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6



### TOURS Cultural TOURAINE

A Town of Art and History, as well as an International City of Gastronomy, the former capital of France sweetly nourishes the body and soul. **Here, the art of living is a state of mind!**



### FROM VOUVRAY TO MONTLOUIS the tender heart of TOURAINE

A 100% mineral region, taking visitors on a voyage between light-filled stones and limestone soils. Immerse yourself in tuffeau stone, **where life really is troglodytic!**



### FROM AMBOISE TO CHENONCEAU Renaissance TOURAINE

500 years ago, the warm breezes of Italy blew over Touraine! In the secrets of the builders and the private lives of great men and women: **this is the epitome of the French lifestyle!**



### FROM CHINON TO AZAY-LE-RIDEAU Food lovers' TOURAINE

The Chinon region is a land of plenty with little-known châteaux, a star wine region and gastronomy made with tender, loving care. **In the land of Rabelais, the art of living comes naturally!**



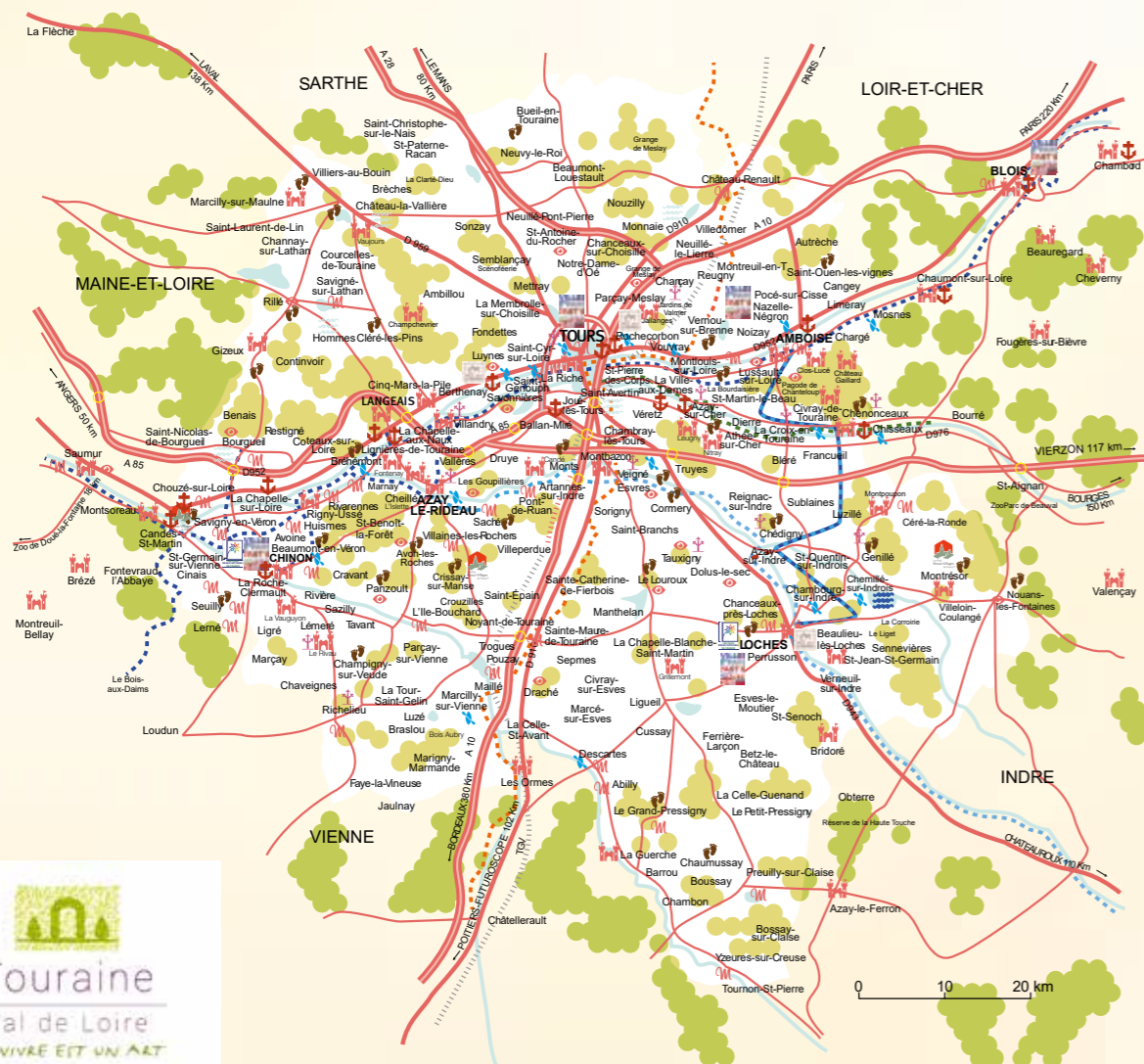
### FROM LANGEAIS TO BOURGUEIL Countryside Chic Touraine

Emerald-green nature, family-owned châteaux, divine wines, country scenery and medieval gems will elegantly flow by. **Here, nature is in haute-couture style!**



### FROM LOCHES TO MONTRÉSOR Bohemian South TOURAINE

With the gently flowing River Indre and the Creuse, country fields and little villages, the Loche region is an invitation to slow down a while. **Enjoy the art of taking it easy in style!**





VOYAGE  
*Journey to Tours*  
**CULTURAL TOURAINE**



A Town of Art and History, and listed as part of a World Heritage landscape by UNESCO, Tours displays its charms in its varied districts and along the royal river. The Charlemagne Tower, Saint-Gatien Cathedral, Rue Colbert with its picturesque shops and traditional houses dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries combine for a perfect match alongside the Fine Arts Museum and the Olivier Debré Centre for Contemporary Creation. Unique cultural sites, a whole host of tasty bistros, a famous square to enjoy a drink with friends, an outstanding indoor market with plenty of local farm produce: the former capital of the kingdom of France sweetly feeds the body and soul.



"Guinguette" by the river Loire in Tours

“Here, the art of living is a state of mind!”

**Want to go up in the world?**

Head for the Charlemagne Tower, at the heart of **Tours old town!**

284 is the number of stairs you need to count before arriving at the top, at a height of 48 metres! On the terrace roof, the reward is well worth the effort: an exceptional 360° view – and up to 20 kilometres away on a clear day! See the town laid out before you and try to spot the Town Hall, Rue Nationale, the Saint Martin Basilica, the Plumereau district, the bridges over the River Loire, the islands and Saint-Gatien Cathedral...



**PLACE PLUM**

*One of the most beautiful squares in France!*

With cafés and bars running around it, Place Plumereau, known to locals as Place Plum, is the meeting point for young people and the centre of night life. The pedestrian-only square is decorated with 15th century timber-framed houses, which are listed as Historic Monuments. Few people know that it was also here that Joan of Arc gathered her army before setting out to free Orleans from the English!



**SAINT-GATIEN CATHEDRAL,**  
*truly flamboyant!*

Built between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries on the remains of the Gallo-Roman site of Caesarodunum, Saint-Gatien Cathedral perfectly embodies the Gothic style. The flamboyant, ornate façade, remarkable glass roofs, elegant design and divine choir – it only takes a ray of light to illuminate the building and for the grace to take hold.

**MUSEUMS IN TOURS**

*A cultural ferment!*



**The Fine Arts Museum,**  
 the crème de la crème

Mantegna, Rubens, Rembrandt, Delacroix, Degas, Monet and Rodin, plus Calder and Ernst: in the former archbishop's palace, which is listed as a Historic Monument, the Tours Fine Arts Museum is home to some of the greatest masters. The museum opens onto a French-style garden shaded by a cedar of Lebanon, listed as a «Remarkable Tree in France». **It has one of France's most important collections of Italian primitives.**



**The Olivier Debré Centre for Contemporary Creation,**  
 a flagship with an elegant design

This exceptional cultural site in the old town centre of Tours aims to introduce visitors to emerging or well-known artists in four large rooms dedicated to contemporary art. The elegant building with its unusual architecture houses the Olivier Debré donation. Debré was a globetrotter, a lyrical abstract and Loire painter whose studio was in Touraine!

Z O O M

**ON THE CHARLEMAGNE TOWER**  
 a survivor of the French Revolution!

Along with the Tour de l'Horloge and the Saint-Martin Cloister, the Charlemagne Tower is one of the few remains of the old Saint-Martin Basilica. Built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it crowned the northern arm of the transept in the collegiate church. It almost disappeared completely when the building was demolished in 1797. After partially collapsing, being closed and renovated over a period of decades, it is now once again the town's towering landmark.



**THE LOIRE IN TOURS**  
*This town is like a long, peaceful river!*

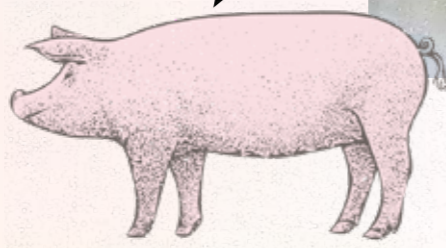
Built on either side of the River Loire, Tours is closely linked to its long, peaceful river. The Loire was used to transport goods until the 19th century and still plays a major role in daily life in Touraine. A river trip to see the fauna and flora, a guinguette café on the river bank, a day out starting from the Wilson, Napoleon or Mirabeau bridges or Île Simon for a great view over the city: **the River Loire has more than one trick up its sleeve!**



**LOCAL SKILLS**

Atelier d'Offard, express your style in wallpaper!

Tartan or flowers, in Art Deco, Art Nouveau, Gothic or Renaissance style: there's no end to the wallpapers designed by François-Xavier Richard, the founder of Atelier d'Offard. The Atelier still uses the block printing techniques found in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries workshops, produces its own colours and even its own glue, made from rabbit skin!



**LOCAL LIP-SMACKING FAVOURITES**

*The best bits!*

**Rillettes de Tours:** pig's brown jam!

The recipe for Rillettes de Tours arose in 15<sup>th</sup> century Touraine. The traditional preparation features local pork from the «Roi Rose de Touraine» pig, a golden colour and a flaky texture. Rillettes have been celebrated in books by Rabelais and Balzac. Touraine rillettes are the only ones with a PGI certification.

**Rillons:**

we use everything but the oink!

Rillons are the epitome of a Touraine speciality. They were originally made on the farms where the pigs were killed. Small cubes are carved out of rindless pork belly and covered in cooking fat, then enjoyed cold with an aperitif or warm with Sainte-Maure de Touraine cheese.

**Tours nougat:**

Leonardo da Vinci's favourite treat

Genuine Tours nougat was first made in Touraine during the Renaissance. It is in fact a kind of cake with a tart base, apricot marmalade sprinkled with candied fruits (known as «épices de chambre» or «room spices» at the Renaissance) and covered with an almond macaronade. And all generously sprinkled with sugar and baked in the oven.



**GASTRONOMY**

*Cooking «Tours»!*

**The belly of Tours**

The Halles Centrales were founded in 1866. This is a market building housing some 40 or so retailers and craftspeople in a down-to-earth atmosphere. Star **cheesemakers** (including Pascal Beillevaire and Rodolphe Le Meunier, a local), meat divas, **charcuterie experts** (Hardouin), **cake makers and bakers:** the creme de la creme of Touraine gastronomy find their home in this gargantuan grocery.

**The town with 30 markets**

Tours is famous for its many warm and friendly open-air markets, open every day or once a week. Traditional or flower markets, crafts and food markets, as well as secondhand goods: there's something for everyone.

**Affordable restaurants and cheeky chefs**

Tours has been the Val de Loire International City of Gastronomy since 2013. A great **many young and talented chefs** have arrived here over the past decade. Food-trucks, tasty little bistros, wine bars and tapas bars: there are many different ways to treat your taste buds to our local produce.



**WRITER'S HOUSE**

*The Priory of St. Cosmas Sweetheart, come let us see the last residence of Ronsard!*

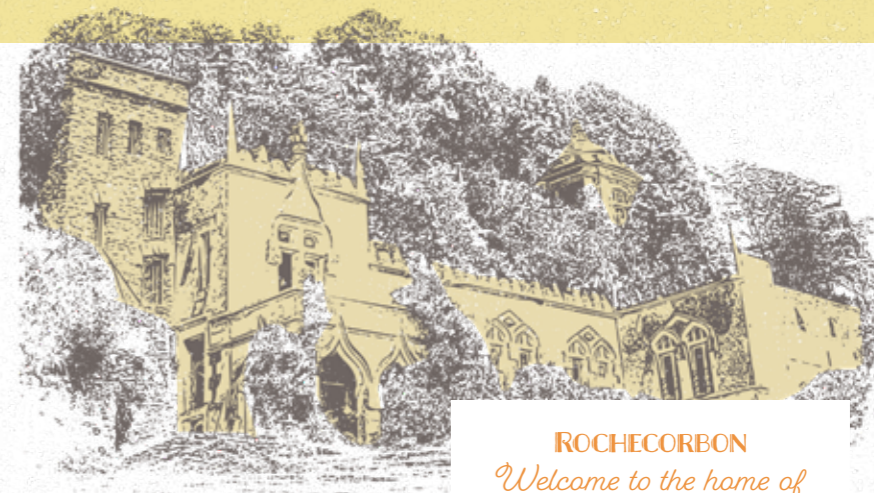
A «heaven on earth» for 12<sup>th</sup> century canons, the **Priory of St Cosmas** welcomed pilgrims on the Way of St James, until it was demolished in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is remarkable for its Romanesque and Gothic remains located in contemporary gardens. The site includes the house and tomb of **Pierre de Ronsard**, who was the prior.



**CHÂTEAU AND GARDENS OF VILLANDRY**

*Keeping it symmetrical!*

Villandry was the last of the great châteaux to be built in the Renaissance. It owes its reputation to the sublime French-style gardens. They were designed by its former owner, Dr Joachim Carvallo, and feature four levels of terraced gardens in perfect harmony with the chateau's architecture.



**ROCHECORBON**

*Welcome to the home of the hobbits!*

Rochecorbon is built on the hillside around a valley formed by the River Bédouire. The caves and troglodyte houses are well worth a visit! Here, inside the tuffeau stone cliffs are countless Hobbit-style houses, as well as incredible, winding tunnels recounting the history of winemaking and mushroom farming. **Something extra: a guinguette café, the biggest in France!**

**SOMETHING DIFFERENT**

**THE MUSÉE DU COMPAGNONNAGE A TOUR OF FRANCE'S CRAFT PROFESSIONS!**

Housed in a former Benedictine abbey, the museum tells the long and wonderful story of the «Compagnons du Tour de France» trade association. Models for house frameworks, secret locks, miniature park gates, chained clogs, a pagoda made of sugar, a manor made of cut slate: in all, over 400 unusual masterpieces to see!





VOYAGE

From Vouvray to Montlouis

THE TENDER HEART OF TOURAINE!



A 100% mineral region, taking visitors on a journey between light-filled stones and limestone soils. The stones were used to enhance the architecture of the Loire valley, listed by UNESCO as a living cultural landscape and part of World Heritage. The soils help to create the delicious Loire wines. What do the builders of yesteryear and today's winemakers have in common? TUFFEAU STONE! This is a porous, soft stone with the original feature of becoming harder and whiter when exposed to the air! Heritage, gardens, vineyards, inside and out, on the water or underground, at the heart of the tuffeau stone or on a fûtreau boat: **here, you can enjoy a real troglodyte lifestyle!**



Cycling through the vineyards in Vouvray

“Here, you can enjoy a real troglodyte lifestyle!”

Want to go up in the world?

Head for the hills! In the Montlouis wine area, the rock helps the wines to mature. The region is bordered by the River Cher and the Loire. The Chemin de Bellevue path provides a real immersion in this highly mineral region and is the number one spot to admire the river below.

TOURAINE'S HERITAGE

*Touraine, troglodyte, tuffeau!*

Touraine's architectural heritage owes its unique prestige to the tuffeau stone quarries. But moving from the visible to the invisible, then a totally different heritage is hiding below the royal gems! Troglodyte houses, underground towns, bed & breakfasts, restaurants and wine cellars: a real hidden world emerges from the darkness.



Troglodyte accommodation "Le Gaimont" in Vouvray

THE VALMER GARDENS

*Bellissimo!!!*

With five hectares of gardens on eight levels of terraces, divided by walls and balustrades with brick archways, the Valmer Gardens irresistibly evoke the layout of an Italian Renaissance villa. The Château de Valmer, the flagship of the Vouvray wine region, was built in 1525. It has 60 hectares of historic forest parks and a one-hectare vintage vegetable garden.



MONTLOUIS-SUR-LOIRE WINES

*Chenin, leading the way between Loire and Cher!*

«There are six leagues from Amboise to Tours. Montlouis is in the middle. Here you can drink some good old wine,» said Rabelais. Bordered by the River Cher and the Loire, the wine region has had AOC status since 1938. It is the only French designation to have 6 types of white wines based solely on the Chenin grape.



CHÂTEAU DE LA BOURDAISIÈRE

*The tomato capital!*

Built by Francis I as a love nest, and later home to Gabrielle d'Estrée – Henry IV's mistress – the Château de la Bourdaisière was turned into a charming hotel by the Broglie family. Its unique feature is that it is home to the National Tomato Conservatory, an internationally unique collection, with 700 varieties brought back from India and Asia, then expanded by collectors and botanical gardens from all over the world! **Something extra: a surprising collection of dahlias with over 200 different varieties.**

ANDOUILLETTE AU VOUVRAY

*AAAAA it's so good!*

Touraine andouillette is made from pork offal. It is cut into long strips, then seasoned with sea salt, pepper and spices according to an ancestral recipe. It is then simmered in a Vouvray-based stock for at least 3 hours. For a taste of the real thing, approved by the «Association Amicale des Amateurs d'Andouillette Authentique» (AAAAA), go to the Maison Hardouin in Vouvray. Here they make 26 tons of it a year.

ZOOM

ON THE VOUVRAY WINE REGION

The kingdom of Chenin!

The history of Vouvray wine dates back to the 4th century. Legend has it that Saint Martin brought back a small vine stock from Hungary in a bird bone, protected by a lion and a donkey bone. Vouvray wines are celebrated for their golden, dazzling colour. They bring out all four facets of the Chenin grape in sparkling white, dry, medium-dry and sweet wines.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

LES GRANDES CAVES SAINT-ROCH

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE EARTH!

Les Grandes Caves Saint-Roch are located on the banks of the Loire in Rochecorbon. They are biggest troglodytes caves in Touraine. They were once tuffeau stone quarries, dug out in the 12th century. The stone was used to build some of the finest royal residences in the Loire valley. During a guided visit, you can explore the endless underground galleries, which are ideal for raising silkworms, growing mushrooms and maturing wine.



ON THE MOVE

A HEALTHY DOSE OF NATURE WITH A BIKE-VINEYARD TANDEM!

A treat of a trail for visitors to Touraine, «Saint-Jacques à Vélo» is a bike ride through the Vouvray vineyards, before heading south towards the Vienne valley. Relatively flat and featuring some great landmarks (the Château de Valmer gardens, Rochecorbon, etc.), the cycling trail has plenty of assets, such as links to the Loire à Vélo and the Cœur de France/Cher à Vélo trails near Tours.



VOYAGE

From Chinon to Azay-le-Rideau  
**FOOD LOVERS' TOURAINE**



When Rabelais wrote the first version of Gargantua in 1534, with the action taking place in the Chinon region, he lay down the foundations of a philosophy of tolerance and the good life. Five centuries later, the spirit of Rabelais still floats over Chinon and the region. A muse for writers, a secret lair for love affairs, a favourite hiding place for Hobbits, a fruitful setting for ogres and giants, a strategic crossroads for kings and queens: the Chinon region is a land of plenty and a top holiday destination for food lovers and bons vivants. Little-known châteaux, a star wine region, gastronomy, peaceful spots and hidden treasures: **here, the French lifestyle is second nature!**



Château of L'Islette

“Here, the French lifestyle is second nature!”

**Want to go up in the world?**

With the Middle Ages as its hour of glory, Chinon and the royal fortress take you to the heart of major events in French history! For a bird's eye view of the River Vienne and the city, take the uphill path to the château. From the top of the hill, you will have a great panorama over the slate roofs, the narrow, winding streets of Chinon, the timber frame houses and the tuffeau-stone mansions.

ZOOM

**ON THE ROYAL FORTRESS OF CHINON**

A timeless getaway from the Middle Ages to the 3rd millennium

A mythical spot overlooking the city, this is the only royal medieval fortress in Val de Loire. Eleanor of Aquitaine, Richard the Lionheart, Charles VII and Joan of Arc: history with a capital H and the VIPs of yesteryear tell their stories in a modern, interactive and fun museum staging.

**WRITERS' HOUSES:**

*When inspiration comes to Chinon!*



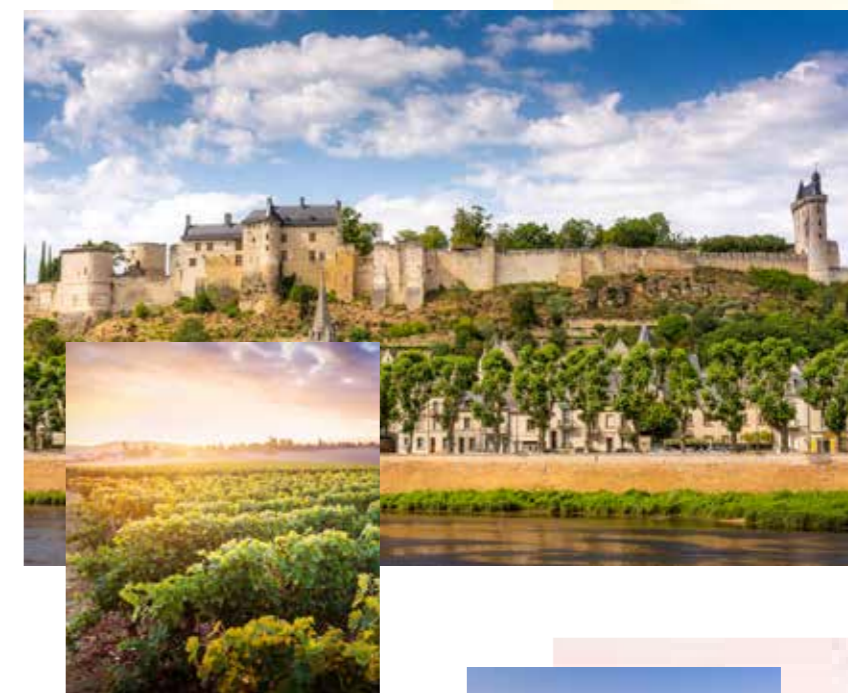
**La Devinière, the epicentre of the Fouace War!**

La Devinière, in its countryside setting, was the **Rabelais'** childhood and the only museum dedicated to his memory. It consists of a 16<sup>th</sup> century main building, a 17<sup>th</sup> century dovecote, troglodyte caves and outbuildings. The museum makes for a great visit, including rare editions, classic engravings, books and portraits.



**Balzac Museum in the Château de Saché: at the source of great literary classics**

A special place of inspiration for Honoré de Balzac between 1825 and 1848, the Château de Saché houses a museum with a collection of almost 2,300 pieces (sculptures, paintings, manuscripts, etc.). **Something extra: the two-hectare park invitation visitors to enjoy a walk in the Indre valley, the setting for Balzac's «The Lily of the Valley».**



**Chinon, a picture postcard filled with vineyards!**

Chinon wines have been famous since they were praised by Rabelais. The wine region extends over 2,300 hectares. This vast amusement park for fans of Cabernet Sauvignon produces smooth, rich and well-balanced wines, and sometimes as robust as the local fortress. To taste Chinon in authentic conditions, head for Les Caves Painctes, former quarries that are now wine cellars, run by the Syndicat des Vins and the Entonneurs Rabelaisiens fraternity.

**Chinon Public Forest one of the oldest in France**

Framed by the River Loire to the north and the River Vienne to the south, Chinon Forest extends over more than 5,000 hectares. This oak paradise also contains a biological reserve, as well as a great many rare plants and protected species. An original feature is that the names of the crossroads recall the famous people linked to the region, such as Francis I, Bayard and Charles the Bold.



**LE RIVAU**

*A château filled with magic!*

The Château du Rivau is 10 km away from Chinon. It combines contemporary art and medieval origins, off-the-wall staging and fantasy gardens. A collection of 43 varieties of gourds and a conservatory with 450 varieties of roses. Here, Mother Nature has deployed all her imagination.

**RICHELIEU**

*A lesson in urban planning from the 17<sup>th</sup> century*

In 1631, a few minutes away from Chinon, the famous Cardinal Richelieu decided to build his ideal town. The town is an architectural gem surrounded by ramparts and moats. It has perfect geometry with a 12-metre-wide avenue, lined with 14 mansions and framed by two symmetrical public squares.



**CHÂTEAU D'AZAY-LE-RIDEAU**

*Diamonds are forever!*

Built on an island in the middle of the River Indre, this is one of the jewels of the French Renaissance. With a slender silhouette, a pure elegance and a French-Italian style reflected in the water surrounding it: 500 years later, Azay-le-Rideau still triggers the «wow» effect.

**A SMALL CHÂTEAU WITH A BIG HISTORY**

*The loveliest hideaways for legendary couples*

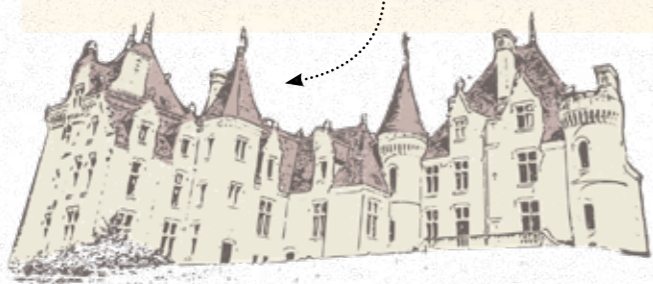
**Château de l'Islette:**  
the love nest of Auguste Rodin and Camille Claudel

Two impressive towers and a wall walk with machicolations, a disused windmill all dressed in green, delicate white tuffeau-stone architecture and the arms of the River Indre to embrace it: in this ultra-romantic setting, the couple of sculptors came to seek privacy and inspiration. **The must? A boat trip on the gently flowing Islette nearby.**

**Château de Candé:**

one of the few witnesses to the wedding of the century!

The Château de Candé is a neo-Gothic masterpiece with an exceptional level of comfort. It made history by hosting the wedding (boycoted by Buckingham Palace) between the former King Edward VIII and the American Wallis Simpson. The building is remarkable for its pointed roofs, as well as its daring interior design, Art Deco bathrooms and incredibly modern amenities.



**CANDES-SAINT-MARTIN**

*A land of simplicity and elegance!*

Sand, tuffeau stone and sunshine: this is the winning combination for one of the «Most Beautiful Villages in France®» located right at the confluence of the Vienne and the Loire. Houses dressed in tuffeau stone, little streets filled with hollyhocks, sandbanks and gabarre boats: this is the ideal spot for a countryside getaway. **The highlight?** The collegiate church, built between 1175 and 1225, and the chapel, a major pilgrimage site along the Way of Saint Martin.



**THE CHINON REGION**

*The home of bons vivants!*

In a land of abundance that forged the style of Rabelais and produced the characters of Gargantua, Pantagruel and Grandgousier, there can only be one guide: your stomach!

**The Rabelaisian fouace:**  
the brioche that got Gargantua into a tight spot!

The fouace is a great local speciality with a recipe thought to date back to the Middle Ages. It really took off in the 16th century, when Rabelais included it in his book, at the centre of the «Picrocholine War». This is a round, fragrant, soft and golden treat. Few can resist its great taste of honey, spices and nuts.

**Sainte-Maure de Touraine:**  
the cheese that won't get your goat!

Legend has it that Moorish women passed on the secret recipe for this cheese with an ash coating to the locals in the 9th century... Taste it with some fouée bread in a troglodyte cave or on toast in a micro-dairy: you'll love the tasty hint of hazelnut!

**Rivarennais beaten pears:**  
no fruit was harmed in making this speciality!

Since 1995, the Maison Hérin has revived the poire tapée dessert, a local speciality that earned locals a living between 1850 and 1931. The recipe? The pears are dried in underground caves, slightly flattened with a special tool, the «platissoire», then soaked in syrup and a touch of nostalgia!

**Les Pêcheries ligériennes:**  
adventures of a fishmonger!

The Chinon region's rivers are great sources of mullet, pike, zander, perch, eels and herring. They really caught the imagination of Romain Gadais, a fisherman and a passionate advocate for responsible and traditional fishing. Fried, in rillettes, in soups, in thick slices, smoked or filleted: the local fish is wonderfully served in a whole host of different ways.



Town of Richelieu



	RICHELIEU	19,5	↑
	LIGRÉ gare	3,5	↑
	Château du Rivau	10,5	↑
	S <sup>te</sup> Chapelle S <sup>t</sup> Louis vitraux XVI <sup>s</sup> .	14	↑



ON THE MOVE

**TAKE YOUR TIME IN RABELAIS LAND!**

The Chinon region is the ideal spot for hiking and cycling. The green way between Chinon and Richelieu, a peaceful, green 20 km carpet combining nature and culture, takes you to the «Loire à Vélo» cycling trail to Candés-Saint-Martin to the west or to the Château d'Ussé to the east and to Touraine's capital. For hikers, the GR3, France's first GR trail, runs alongside the «Loire Sauvage» (the untamed Loire), from its sources to the estuary, with a 61-kilometre section between Tours and Chinon via Azay-le-Rideau.



SOMETHING DIFFERENT

**A MERCENARY AT THE ABBEY DE BOIS-AUBRY**

The 12<sup>th</sup> century Abbey de Bois-Aubry is listed as a Historic Monument. Its guests have included Joan of Arc, Louis XI, Charles VIII, Anne of Brittany and the poet Ronsard. The abbey attracts romantics, but is also a big hit with film fans, since it has been the last resting place of the Hollywood actor Yul Brynner (*The Magnificent Seven*, *The Ten Commandments*, etc.) since the 1980s.



VOYAGE

From Amboise to Chenonceau

RENAISSANCE TOURAINE



In 1495, following the Italian campaigns of the Valois kings, the sunny atmosphere of Italy came to Touraine and with it, the heady perfumes of orange trees and Mediterranean gardens. From then on, any self-respecting sovereign had just one idea in mind: to redesign the architecture and gardens of their castles and give them a little touch of the dolce vita! The home of King Francis I, a real laboratory for the Renaissance and the residence of Leonardo da Vinci, the region can boast some of the finest examples of this artistic period. In the secrecy of the château builders or the privacy of great men and women, by boat or by bike, along the River Cher or the Loire: **the region really epitomises the French lifestyle!**



Royal château of Amboise

“The region really epitomises the French lifestyle!”

Want to go up in the world?

The royal Château d'Amboise is set on a spur standing 25 metres above the town. It has a unique 180° vantage point over the River Loire. From the monumental terraces, the breathtaking view takes in landscapes that are listed as part of World Heritage by UNESCO. Timber framed houses, troglodyte houses and mansions round off the picture in an attractive, harmonious scene.



CHÂTEAU DE CHENONCEAU  
*A favourite with the ladies!*

A mysterious landmark, the Château de Chenonceau is the only residence designed, extended and preserved solely by women, including Catherine de' Medici. This is France's most visited château after Versailles. It has an exceptional and poetic aura with its arches majestically bestriding the River Cher.



CHÂTEAU GAILLARD  
*The most Napolitan French château!*

The Château Gaillard is an Italian palace in Amboise. It was built after Charles VIII's return from his Italian campaign in 1496. The 15-hectare earthly paradise was given as a gift by King Francis I to his beloved Master Gardener, Dom Pacello de Mercoliano, in exchange for a bouquet of orange blossom once a year. It housed the first Limonaia orangery in France with its famous orange-tree boxes.

CHÂTEAU DU CLOS LUCÉ

*Welcome to the home of a genius!*

In 1516, Leonardo da Vinci left Tuscany, carrying the Mona Lisa, and moved to Clos Lucé, at the invitation of King Francis I. This was the artist's last residence and studio. The charming manor built with pink brick and tuffeau stone houses the master's most revolutionary projects and his final works.



RIVER CHER

*Fun on the river!*

Perfect for fans of «a river runs through it» atmospheres, the Cher is ideal for trips along the river banks or on the water. In a canoe with the Canoe Company or in a boat with La Bélandre, trips from 2 hours to a full day are a chance to tame the River Cher or to pass under the arches of the Château de Chenonceau.

**Something extra: the little-known river heritage in the Cher valley, including hydraulic structures, needle dams, canal lock houses and windmills.**

GUINGUETTE CAFÉS

*Moving and grooving on the Loire*

Along France's last untamed river, the many guinguettes (open-air cafés) in Touraine are a chance to enjoy simple pleasures in a natural, authentic and retro setting. In Amboise, «Chez Oscar et Suzette» is the right place to relax on the waterside with a wonderful view over the château. 5 minutes away, Volupia is a 100% locavore bar-restaurant in «French accordion» style looking out over the Loire. The ideal spot to enjoy farmhouse cheeses, traditional charcuterie and local beers! **Want to get even closer to the water?** Local boatmen will take you on a trip along the River Loire for an apéritif or brunch.

ZOOM

ON THE ROYAL CHÂTEAU OF AMBOISE

a Renaissance icon

A perfect expression of luxury and the French lifestyle, the Royal Château d'Amboise was the palace of the kings of France during the Renaissance and King Francis I's favourite château! Closely linked to the history of France, Amboise was the first Loire valley château to incorporate Italian styles.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

THE CHANTELOUP PAGODA

THE DUKE DE CHOISEUL'S ORIENTAL FOLLY!

An extravagant project launched by Louis XV's former first minister, the Pagoda is today one of the few remains of a vast palace that was only equalled by Versailles. Taking inspiration from a Chinese Buddhist temple, but made in pure Louis XVI style, the monument stands at 44 m and enjoys a breathtaking view over its neighbour, the Château d'Amboise!



ON THE MOVE

ON YOUR BIKE ALONG THE VALLEY OF KINGS!

You can follow several different trails to explore the region in all directions, while staying close to the Loire or the Cher. Leaving from Chenonceaux, the **Heart of France by Bike** («Cher à Vélo») trail goes to Tours and Amboise via an off-shoot of the «Loire à Vélo» trail. The famous cycling trail is an invitation to enjoy a special encounter with some of the jewels of French heritage and the royal road to cycle from one château to the next.







VOYAGE

*In Loches*

BOHEMIAN SOUTH TOURAINE



With the River Indre and the Creuse flowing by, fields for as far as the eye can see, little country villages, a royal forest and a totally pastoral atmosphere, the south of Touraine has all the assets you need to unwind and take it easy. A green oasis near the major Touraine towns, the Loche region is home to some real gems in a perfectly Bohemian atmosphere. A medieval stroll in Loches, a retro trip to the Château de Montpoupon, a Slavic journey to Montrésor, a mystical visit to Chemillé-sur-Indrois or getting back to the roots at Le Grand-Pressigny: **here, the art of sightseeing really has style!**



Royal City of Loches

“Here, the art of sightseeing really has style!”

Want to go up in the world?

Nestled in elegant countryside, Loches, a Town of Art and History, provides many different ways to stroll through 1,000 years of history. For a panoramic view over the River Indre, head for the top of the castle keep in the royal city of Loches. The fortress is built on a rocky spur, surrounded by ramparts and enhanced by a medieval garden, a real oasis of peace, inviting visitors to relaxation and contemplation.

ZOOM

ON THE ROYAL CITY OF LOCHES

over 1,000 years engraved in stone!

From the castle keep, a masterpiece of 11<sup>th</sup> century military architecture, to the Logis Royal, a Gothic and Flamboyant-Gothic gem, the impressive Royal City of Loches boasts a permanent scenographic visit with 15 scenes to explore the history of the site and its famous personalities. An enthralling encounter with Agnès Sorel, Anne of Brittany, Joan of Arc, Charles VII, Foulques Nerra and Ludovico Sforza.

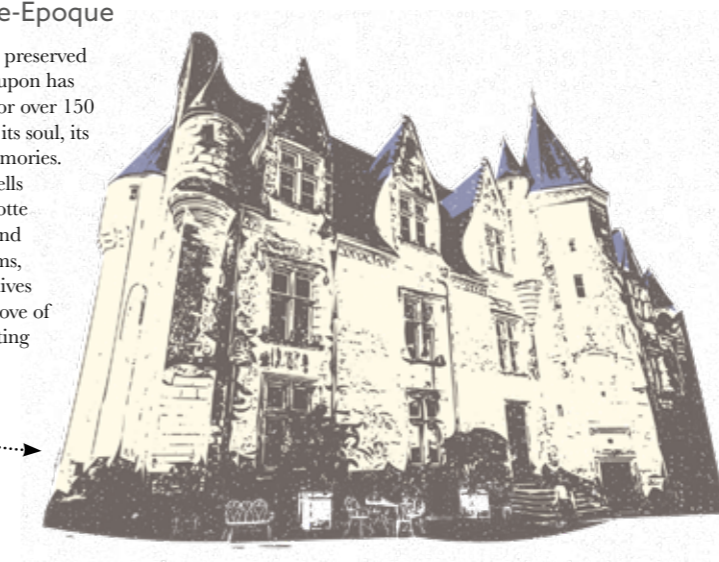


SMALL FAMILY CHÂTEAUX

*History's hidden mirrors*

Château de Montpoupon, the glamour of the Belle-Epoque

The remarkably well preserved Château de Montpoupon has been handed down for over 150 years, without losing its soul, its eccentricity or its memories. Deliciously retro, it tells the tale of the La Motte Saint-Pierre family and their everyday customs, unveils their private lives and highlights their love of horseriding and hunting with hounds.



Château de Montrésor: the most Slavonic Loire château!

The Château de Montrésor was built by Foulques Nerra in one of the wildest parts of Touraine. It owes its reputation to Franciszek Ksawery Branicki, a great collector and Polish nobleman. Intact for over 150 years, with a rich thousand-year history, the château contains an outstanding collection of furniture, great paintings and pieces of fine goldsmithery.



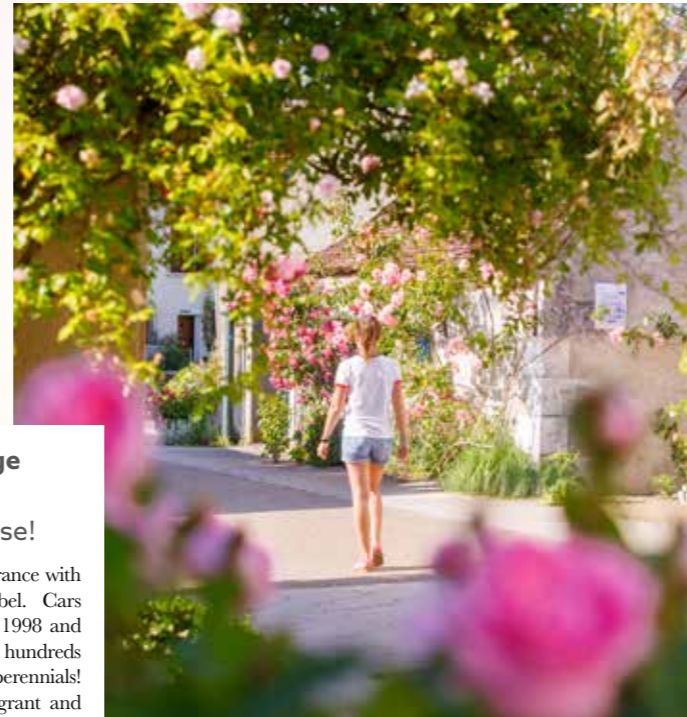
## ROAMING AROUND AND SMALL VILLAGES

*Focus on 3 towns with a small population but a lot of dynamism!*



**Beaulieu-lès-Loches,**  
the former capital of  
southern Touraine!

Beaulieu-lès-Loches boasts the «Petites Cités de Caractères®» label. From its turbulent history, it has preserved an exceptional heritage and an urban layout of medieval origin. The town is encircled by old tuffeau-stone quarries, by the Beaulieu Canal and the «Prairies du Roy». It has some 20 listed buildings or sites, including 12 protected historic monuments. **Something extra: The Viantaises, the former convent vegetable garden, and the guinguette café, «Les Javanaises»**



**The garden village  
of Chédigny:**  
the Lochois paradise!

Chédigny is the only village in France with the «Remarkable Garden» label. Cars and pavements were banned in 1998 and replaced with 800 rose bushes, hundreds of bushes and thousands of perennials! Adding to the charms of a fragrant and enchanting stroll, the village even has a presbytery and a very rare «jardin de curé» (vicar's garden) covering 2,000 m²!



**Montrésor:** Touraine's  
smallest commune!

Montrésor is one of the Most Beautiful Villages in France®. This tiny town covering 98 hectares is on the banks of the River Indre. A true gem of Renaissance architecture, it has no fewer than five buildings listed as Historic Monuments. The town also has picturesque little streets with white tuffeau-stone houses and semi troglodyte dwellings.



**GRAND-PRESSIGNY  
MUSEUM**  
*Meet the flintstones!*

The south of Touraine was at the epicentre of an economic phenomenon between the Paleolithic and the Bronze Age. This was one of the biggest flint-carving sites in western Europe. The collections in the Grand-Pressigny Museum are highly original, plunging visitors into the daily life of master stone-carvers, and inviting them to explore the social, technical and economic aspects of the prehistoric world!



**LOCHES PUBLIC FOREST**  
*One of the most beautiful  
forests in France*

The Loches forest is covered with a network of wide bridle paths and star-shaped roundabouts. 95% of the trees are sessile oak. The forest attracts visitors with its ceremonious and majestic atmosphere. Extending over more than 3,600 hectares south-east of Tours, it stands out through its exceptional biodiversity and very rich soils: the perfect nest for a wide range of protected birds.



**CORMERY MACAROONS**  
*A mystical treat!*

The Cormery macaroon is a typical Touraine treat, easy to recognise with its legendary shape, reminiscent of a belly button. This is one of the oldest cakes in France! It was invented by monks in 781 in the time-honoured abbey of Cormery. The recipe has travelled down the centuries and the generations. You can taste one at **Aux Vrais Macarons**, a bakery and cake shop in the centre of the village.

## SOMETHING DIFFERENT

**TWO PLACES TO ENJOY  
MONASTIC CALM**

**The Liget Charterhouse: the only  
example of the Carthusian order in  
Touraine!**

Built in 1180 by Henry II of England, the site is original due to its layout and architecture, right at the centre of the Loches forest. A cloister, a chapel and a church suggest the abbey's extraordinary prestige for six hundred years.



**The Corroirie château monastery: the  
remnants of an intense religious life**

800 metres away from the Charterhouse, the Corroirie immerses visitors in the life of the Carthusian monks who grew hemp here. A colossal fortified door, a church dating from 1208, a former prison, as well as two windmills and a storeroom round off the medieval decor.

**Something extra: a 5-hectare park  
devoted to biodiversity and vintage  
vegetables is an invitation for visitors  
to enjoy a leisurely stroll.**



## ON THE MOVE

**A BUCOLIC JOURNEY  
IN 3 ACTS**

Linked to the «Loire à Vélo» cycling trail at both ends, the «Indre à Vélo» trail runs from Azay-le-Rideau to Chenonceau via Loches. In all, around 100 kilometres to pedal in peace and quiet in the countryside! Ideal for an environmentally friendly trip, the Loche region provides two links that are a big hit with hikers: the GR46 trail, with 90 km in southern Touraine, and the Chemin des Légendes, a 8.5 km hike to see all the curiosities and mysteries of Montrésor.



VOYAGE

*In Langeais and Bourgueil*

COUNTRYSIDE CHIC TOURAINE



With a refined feudal residence, the «untamed Loire» winding its way through the region, a famous wine area with attractive stone wine estates, hills filled with troglodyte dwellings, numerous thick forests, sensitive nature areas, a handful of gems of local heritage and elegant rustic gastronomy: the western part of Touraine features emerald-green nature enhanced by white tuffeau stone. From Langeais to Bourgueil via Gizeux, Champchevrier or Rillé: family châteaux, divine bottles of wine, bucolic spots and medieval jewels elegantly pass by.



Dining room in the Château de Champchevrier

Want to go up in the world?

Head for the Château de Langeais! After visitors enjoy a walk in the «Year One Thousand» park, between the cedar trees and the sequoias, a belvedere with a long view over the River Loire underlines the Langeais promontory's strategic position! **Something extra:** the medieval charm of the town of Langeais, where a maze of little cobblestoned streets lead either to the 11<sup>th</sup> century church or to houses decorated with pilasters and mansard roofs.

ZOOM

ON THE CHÂTEAU DE LANGEAIS

experience the life of feudal lords in the late Middle Ages

Strong walls, big pointed towers linked to a wall walk with machicolations and a wooden drawbridge: the Langeais fortress seems to come right out of a film! The building is a castle on the town side and a feudal lord's residence on the courtyard side. It has 15 richly decorated rooms and contains a great many secrets, such as the famous wedding between Charles VIII and Anne of Brittany.



FAMILY-OWNED CHÂTEAUX

*Zoom on the family jewels*



Château de Champchevrier, chic and natural!

The Château de Champchevrier was built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, rebuilt at the Renaissance and embellished in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It has been the residence of the same family since 1728. King Louis XI, Louis XII and Louis XIII all stayed at the château. It perfectly illustrates the French way of life, with a kitchen including an impressive range of copper pots, 17<sup>th</sup> century tapestries and early 18<sup>th</sup> century furniture.



Château de Gizeux: a family affair!

The Château de Gizeux was home to the Bellay family for 350 years. Since 1786, it has belonged to the de Laffon family. Today, it is home to three generations and owes its reputation to the exceptional **Galerie des Châteaux**, consisting of huge 17<sup>th</sup> century wall paintings extending over 400m<sup>2</sup>.



LOIRE ANJOU TOURAINE REGIONAL NATURE PARK

*A favourite spot for entomologists!*

Hills covered with vines, troglodyte caves, plains, forest and woodlands: diverse landscapes are a hallmark of the 271,000 hectares in the Loire-Anjou-Touraine regional nature park. This natural area is on a major migratory route, with no fewer than 329 species of butterflies, 52 species of dragonfly and over 200 species of birds listed here. It also has an important architectural heritage, represented by such prestigious châteaux as Azay-le-Rideau and Langeais.

THE VINEYARDS

*Bourgueil and Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil*

The first «breton» vine stock, the local name for Cabernet Franc, was planted by the monks at Bourgueil Abbey. With lands opening onto the River Loire, the two fraternal twin wines were among the first in France to be given AOC status in 1937. You need to taste them to tell them apart: Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil wines are light, fruity and feminine, while Bourgueil wines are full bodied and rich in tannin.



Here, nature is in haute-couture style!



**RILLÉ AND HOMMES**  
*A host of great lakes*

**Lac de Rillé:**  
the size of 350 football pitches!

Lac de Rillé is a lake created in 1977 as a reservoir of water for farmers working downstream. It is a family-friendly and very peaceful site. Here, birds are kings and nature is queen: over 250 species (herons, great crested grebe, waders, ducks) have been listed, making Rillé a unique bird reserve in Touraine. Cycling fans (two bike trails run around the lake with access to neighbouring villages) and weekend fishermen can find what they are looking for, too!

**Lac d'Hommes:**  
a beach in the countryside!

Lac d'Hommes was once a falun quarry and is now an artificial lake. It is the perfect example of a fun holiday spot. Fine sandy beaches, clear water, a footpath winding its way through the vegetation, a guinguette café in summer, a picnic area, volleyball pitch and even a dancefloor, plus fishing and diving areas: a treat for adults and children alike!



**L'ATELIER CABALLERO,**  
*tiles in style!*

L'Atelier Caballero is the region's last manufacturer of enamel and terra cotta tiles. Today, it is the only witness to a rich history of brick-making in Langeais, an industry that was at its height in the 1930s. The clay is taken from the soil nearby and shaped by a family of craftsmen to make fire bricks or floor tiles.

**Something extra:** A visit to the workshop to see the steps involved in manufacturing rustic tiles.



**FARMHOUSE BASKET**

*3 tasty breeds!*

In Touraine, a handful of breeders and poultry farmers rule the roost in the fight to save our food heritage. We head for the farmyard to see the creme de la creme and some well-protected specimens.



**Géline de Touraine:**  
the sentimental hen!

Very popular with food-lovers and family breeders, the Géline de Touraine is a (pure) breed of chicken, listed as honoured members of the top egg-laying club! With a wonderful black plumage and red wattles, the plump and rounded chicken is famous for its white, tasty, fine meat.



**Touraine Goose:**  
what's sauce for the goose!

An immaculate white coat, a slightly ruffled neck and pretty blue eyes: the Touraine Goose is thought to descend from the Sequanian geese raised by the Gauls on the left bank of the River Saone in Roman times. Touraine Geese make for a rare and precious dish, served at royal tables. They were officially recognised as a pure breed in Tours in 1909. The tender meat is all the more precious since very few birds are bred in the region.



**Touraine grey rabbit:**  
a pure breed!

The Touraine Grey Rabbit was first bred in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They were widespread in the region until the 1950s and 60s, and could be found in practically all farms and homes. The Grey Rabbit would have been totally forgotten if a handful of breeders had not found a few rabbits still kept by elderly people in the early 2000s. It was officially recognised as a pure breed in 2013 and even has its own club!



**SOMETHING DIFFERENT**

**ABBAY OF LA CLARTÉ-DIEU**

**A medieval French gem**

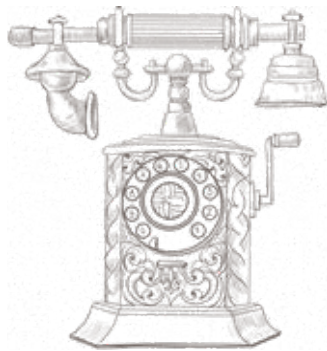
Clarté Dieu Abbey was built from scratch in 1239 at the request of several important local figures. It was badly damaged during the French Revolution and then abandoned. In 2002, a couple of artists bought a pile of old stones buried under the bramble bushes. The church and the monks' building had almost disappeared, but the abbey still had an exceptional lay building with the lay brothers' dormitory. It is remarkable for its frame dating from 1274, and for the old storehouse, which today has been restored.

**ON THE MOVE**

**CYCLING, COUNTRY STYLE**

A perfect tandem for a spot of elegant pedalling, with two trails and two atmospheres for cycling fans. The «Grands Crus et Belles Demeures» trail, a flat route of 34 km between Bourgueil and Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil via Restigné, will take you across hills and vineyard terraces with a chance to see châteaux and manor houses. The 27-km «Entre Forêt et Châteaux» trail runs in the shade of the big, game-rich forest around Gizeux.





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