



Plan your next holiday in **Loiret**, Loire Valley!

Visit:

• www.tourismeloiret.com for all information on leisure activities, accommodation and events in the Loiret

• www.loiret-booking.com to book your stay:

- All-inclusive and à la carte package
- Holiday cottage, hotel, bed and breakfast, campsite,
- Boat rentals
- Golf Pass
- Best offers
- Free brochures

Contact us:
Loiret Tourist Board
8 rue d'Escures - 45 000 Orléans
Information: Tel.: +33 (0) 238 780 404
Booking: Tel.: +33 (0) 238 620 488

WWW.TOURISMELOIRET.COM

LOIRE&ORLEANS

LOIRET 2015

Tourism magazine

ART DE VIVRE

ORLÉANS,
A ROYAL CITY

WELLNESS

BOATING
ON THE LOIRE

TASTE

CELEBRATING
LOCAL PRODUCE

Val de Loire
FRANCE





A remarkable destination, all yearround

Located just one hour from Paris, and nestled in the heart of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Loire Valley, Loiret is synonymous with refinement, elegance and simplicity.

In summer, when the fields of Beauce are basking in the sun, you can enjoy the hustle and bustle of medieval festivals and activities, or embark on a canal cruise. In autumn, the vineyards and deep, mushroom-scented forests of Orléans and Montargis positively sparkle, the squall of the deer echoes, a delicate mist hovers over the ponds in Sologne, and you can enjoy a relaxing stroll in the depths of nature. In winter, the doors of the castles and museums are opened up to you, inviting you to discover their exceptional architecture and collections, before a gourmet break. Spring is heralded by an explosion of colours and hues in various parks and gardens that plant and flower lovers cannot afford to miss. A bird-watcher's paradise, wild and untamed, the Loire Valley is there for you to explore by bicycle at any time of year, as is the royal capital of Orléans, an ideal weekend getaway location.

There won't be enough time to see everything in one stay!

CONTENTS

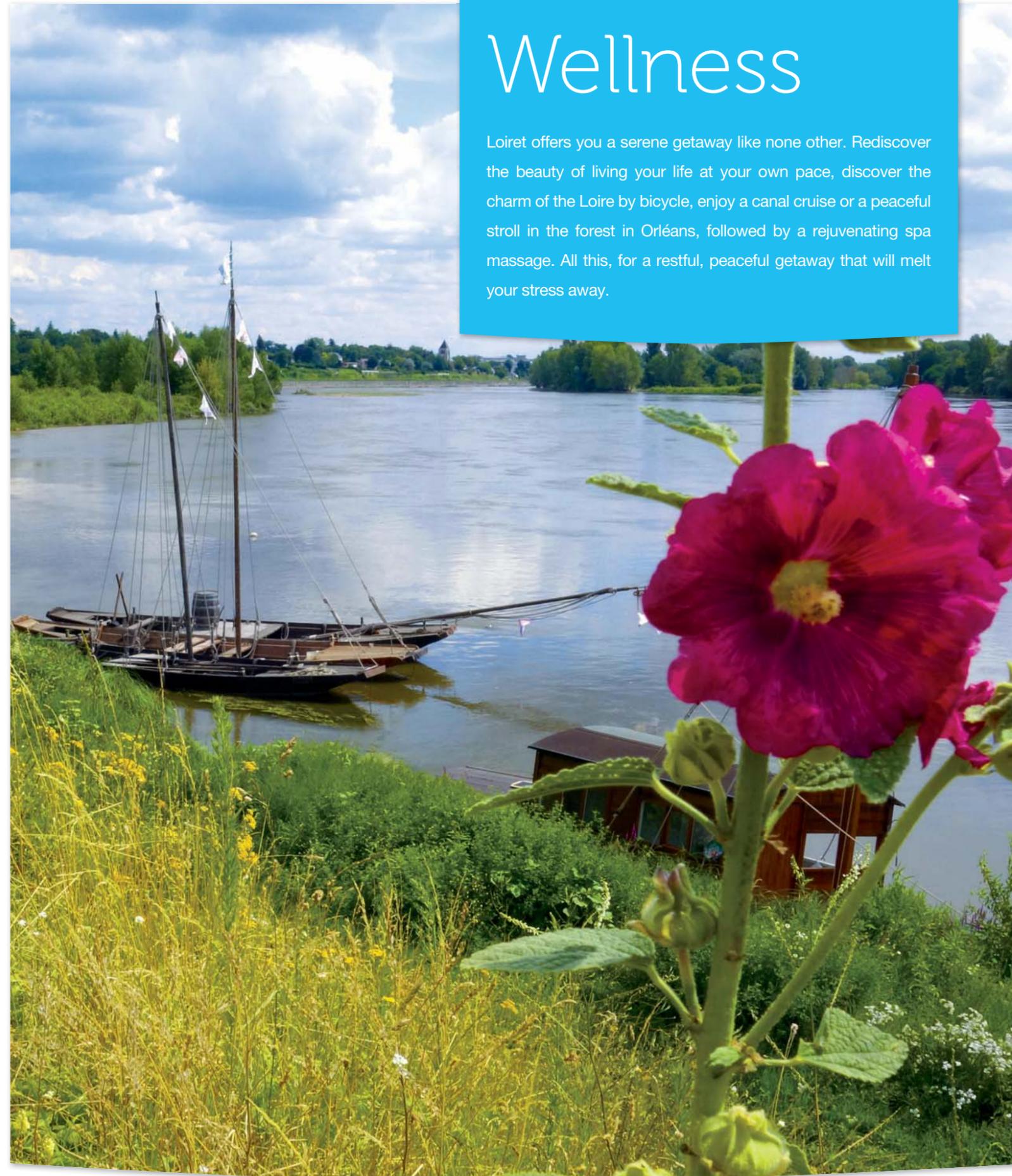
Wellness Rediscover life at your own pace	3
Gardens A garden-lover's Eden	10
City Break Orléans calling	14
Sightseeing Picturesque getaway on the roads of Loiret	16
Lifestyle Refinement and elegance	17
Hidden treasures Mills and mansionstell tales of yesteryear	21
Museums Educational, quirky or fun: fascinating collections to discover	22
Accommodation Something for everyone's budget.	27



Accessibility: throughout the following pages, look out for the sites labelled 'Tourisme Handicap' by the French Ministry of Tourism

Wellness

Loiret offers you a serene getaway like none other. Rediscover the beauty of living your life at your own pace, discover the charm of the Loire by bicycle, enjoy a canal cruise or a peaceful stroll in the forest in Orléans, followed by a rejuvenating spa massage. All this, for a restful, peaceful getaway that will melt your stress away.

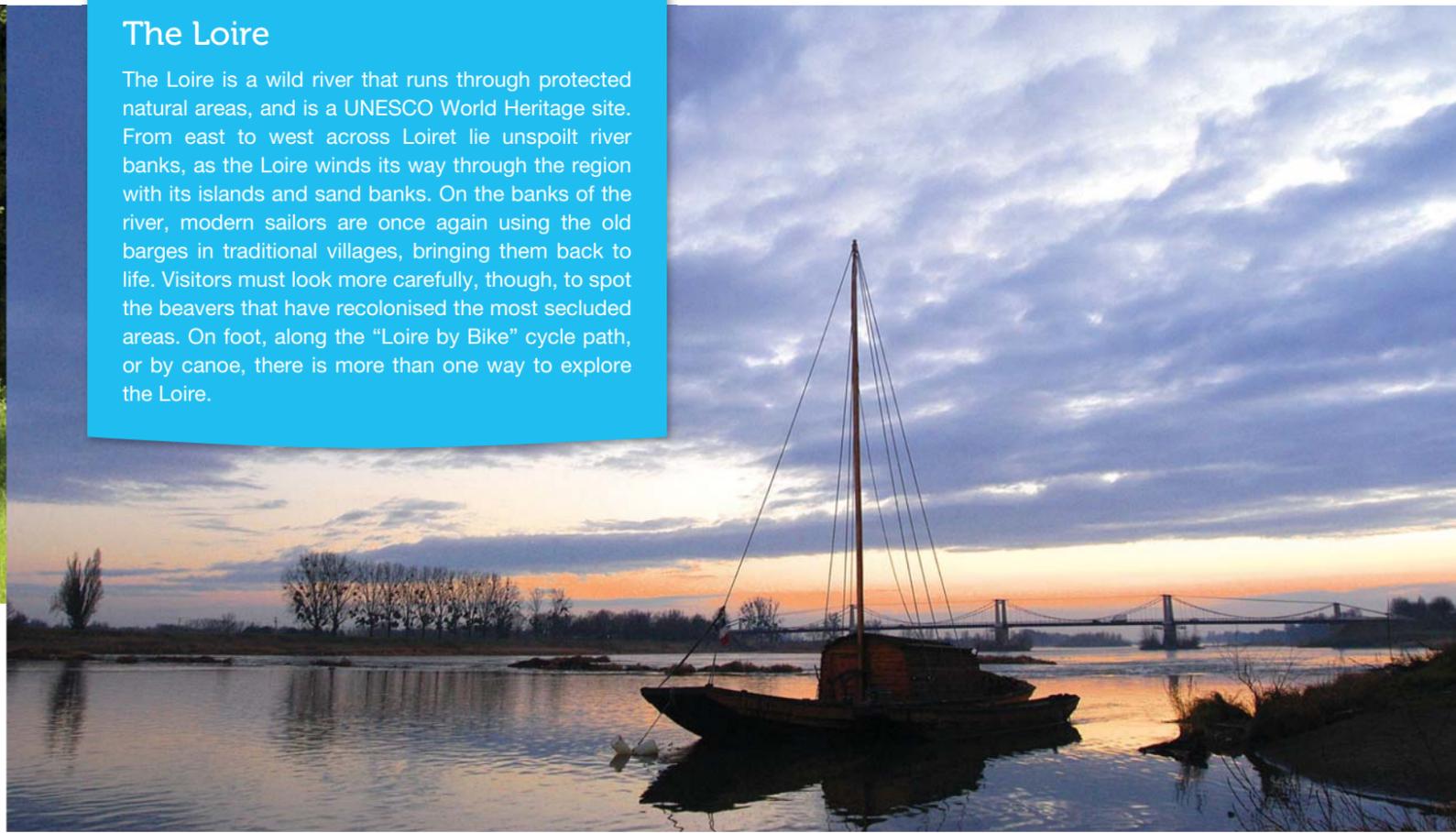


Le Magazine, 2015 issue - Published by Loiret Tourism Committee
8, rue d'Escures - 45000 Orleans - Tel: +33 (0) 238 780 404 +33 (0) 238 770 412 - email: info@tourismeloiret.com - www.tourismeloiret.com
EDITORIAL DESIGN: FLORENCE BEAU GRAPHIC DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT: WWW.GACQUER.FR
PHOTOS: JEAN PUYO, CHRISTIAN BEAUDIN, CHRISTOPHE LÖRSCH, DOMINIQUE CHAUVEAU/CG45, MIR PHOTOS, FRANCIS PEYRAT, PRESTATAIRES, HENRI ROUX/MUSÉE DE CHATILLON-COLIGNY, MASTERFILE ET ISTOCK. PRINTED: IMPRIMERIE PRÉVOST OFFSET À SAINT-JEAN-DE-LA-RUELLE.



The Loire

The Loire is a wild river that runs through protected natural areas, and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. From east to west across Loiret lie unspoilt river banks, as the Loire winds its way through the region with its islands and sand banks. On the banks of the river, modern sailors are once again using the old barges in traditional villages, bringing them back to life. Visitors must look more carefully, though, to spot the beavers that have recolonised the most secluded areas. On foot, along the "Loire by Bike" cycle path, or by canoe, there is more than one way to explore the Loire.



Countryside

As you travel along the Loire, the last remaining wild river in Europe, you will soon discover that the gentle, rolling Loiret landscape is a scene of contrasts. Swathes of water are punctuated by interlacing canals, the 2800 ponds of Sologne brush the untamed woods where the Kings of France would once hunt, as well as the grand state-owned forest of Orléans, the largest of its kind in France. The contrast is striking, with the golden fields of Beauce hidden from view.

Orleans Forest

Once inhabited by the Carnutes tribe in the days of Gaul, Orleans Forest remains the largest state-owned forest in France. To the north of the Loire Valley, the forest covers over 35,000 hectares criss-crossed by 1200km of forest trails. This unique space is paradise for mushroom pickers, large animals (deer and boar) and the magnificent osprey.

Did you know?

Sologne was a favourite place of the French kings. It was where Louis XII lived and François 1st met his future wife. As for Napoleon III, he was a highly generous benefactor of the region, which had been home to his family.

The Loiret spreads outwards from both banks of the Loire as hedgerows, valleys, heaths, woodland, and forests combine for an ever varied landscape. To the north lies Beauce, the "breadbasket of France", whose yellow ears of corn stretch all the way to the horizon and beyond. Orleans Forest impresses with its majestic trees.

To the north-east, the hidden valleys and rivers of the Gâtinais await, while to the east of the Loiret, the Giennois is home to boatmen and potters. To the south of the Loire, a stone's throw from the Orleans Valley, lies the mysterious Sologne that is home to a wide variety of game.

The Loiret has been shaped by the people who inhabit it, and offers visitors endless new experiences.

The Loiret

The Loiret River is a tributary of the Loire and gave its name to the region in 1790. Curious visitors will stop by the source of the river, the "Bouillon" (which translates as "Bubbles" in English), which can be found in the "Parc floral de la Source" Botanical Garden in Orleans and takes its name from the constant bubbling of the source.

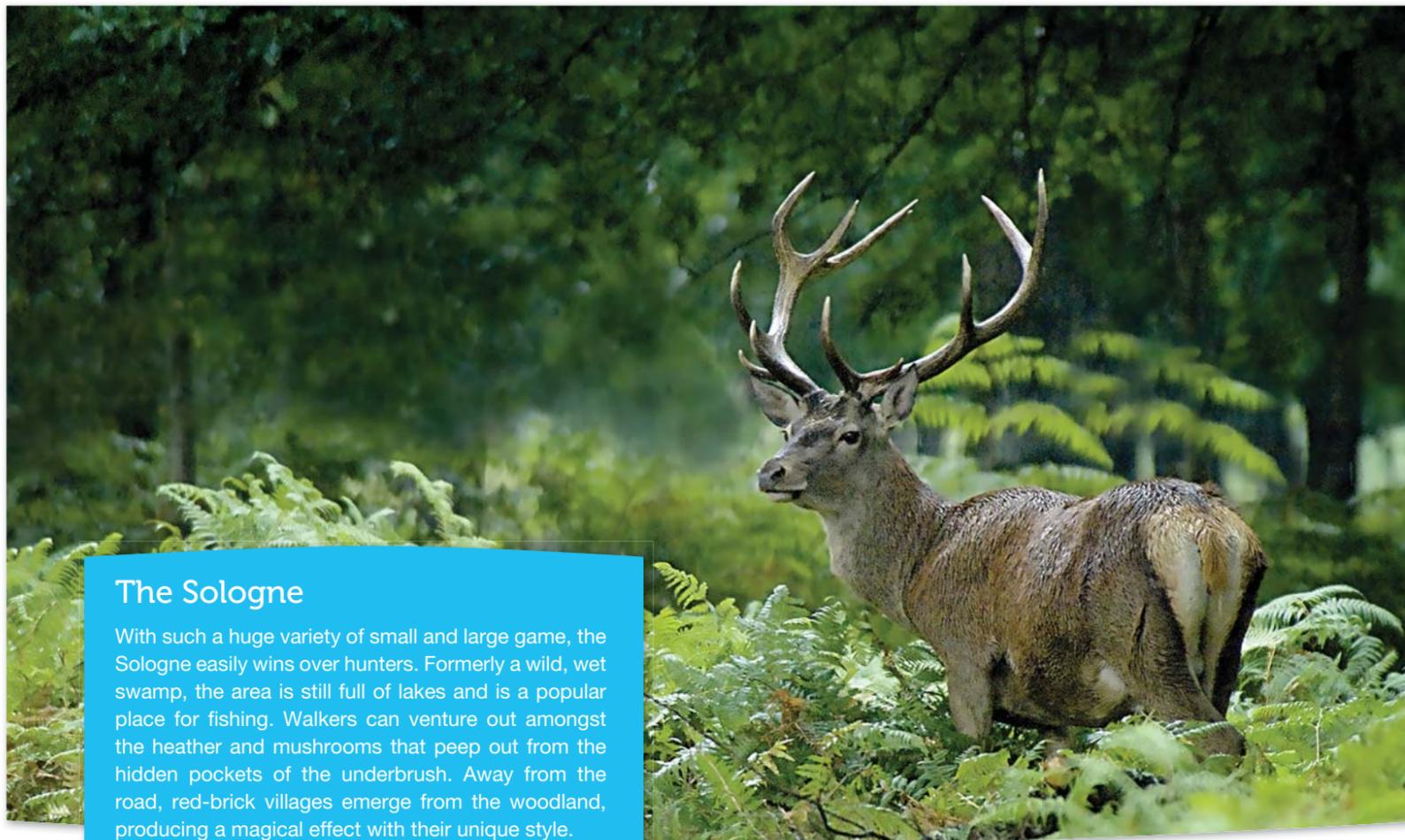
From Olivet to Saint-Hilaire-Saint-Mesmin, visitors are able to follow paths for the length of the water course. The restored windmills, the residences of yesteryear, and the fleets of boats provide an enviable setting for the swans and ducks attracted by the water that teems with fish.

After 13km, at the Pointe de Courpain the Loiret joins the Loire to begin its journey to the sea in this fantastic natural setting.



The Sologne

With such a huge variety of small and large game, the Sologne easily wins over hunters. Formerly a wild, wet swamp, the area is still full of lakes and is a popular place for fishing. Walkers can venture out amongst the heather and mushrooms that peep out from the hidden pockets of the underbrush. Away from the road, red-brick villages emerge from the woodland, producing a magical effect with their unique style.



Loire by bike a royal route!

Taking place between Tavers and Beaulieu-sur-Loire, this route takes in greenways and quiet roads along a 153km trail, following the royal river. A truly unique way of exploring some of the beautiful sites along the UNESCO World Heritage ranked Loire Valley, enjoy this special experience over one or several days.



Did you know?

You can pedal without breaking a sweat!

On your way out of Orléans, stop off at Wheel Free, an 'Accueil vélo' certified bike rental company that hires electrically assisted bicycles for a ride that won't wear you out. Even better, the owner will give you advice on the route to take, depending on how much time you've got and what takes your fancy.

33 rue du Général de Gaulle - 45650 St Jean le Blanc.
Tel: +33 (0) 2 38 44 26 85 or 06 21 82 00 55 - www.wheel-free.fr



Highlights of the route

The route follows the dykes built up over the centuries to contain the sometimes turbulent river. At 5-7m tall, these structures offer a unique vantage point over the Loire, and lead travellers past a number of unmissable sights:

Briare and its canal bridge (see p. 8).

Gien and its kilns founded in 1821 by the Englishman Thomas Hall (see p. 24).

The Sully-sur-Loire château, a unique medieval fortress (see p. 18).

Orléans, named as one of France's historic cities of art, and Loiret's modern capital and major shopping centre (see p. 14).

Meung-sur-Loire and its château (see p. 18).

HANDY TIPS

You can trust companies with the "Accueil Vélo" certificate: these campsites, guest houses, and hotels offer special services such as secure bike storage, hearty meals, repair kits, and other services. For all additional information: www.rando.tourismeloiret.com

As part of your 'Loire à Vélo' (Loire by Bike) itinerary, Bagafrance will look after the transfer of your luggage between overnight stays. The company also offers a rental bike return service and will organise for your vehicle to be delivered to a destination of your choice along the route at any point during your trip. The perfect way to travel light!

Tel: +33 (0) 7 86 38 41 27 - www.bagafrance.com

A route open to all

Whether you are a weekend tourist or bike holiday veteran; out for the day or as part of a longer trip; the route has something for everyone, and can be structured to suit individual tastes and abilities.

7 stage itinerary

- Beaulieu-sur-Loire to Briare (21km – 1.5 hours)
- Briare to Gien (12km – around an hour)
- Gien to Sully-sur-Loire (28km – around 1 hour 45 min)
- Sully-sur-Loire to Châteauneuf-sur-Loire (20km – 1.5 hours)
- Châteauneuf-sur-Loire to Saint-Denis-en-Val (22km – 1.5 hours)
- Saint-Denis-en-Val to Saint-Hilaire-Saint-Mesmin (22km – 1.5 hours)
- Saint-Hilaire-Saint-Mesmin to Tavers (25km – around 1 hour 45 min)

PACKAGE



Loire and Canal by bike from Orleans

Ref : GBV2

From €225/person

Explore the historic heart of Orléans and the quaysides of the Loire by bike, before arriving at the 35-hectare Parc Floral d'Orléans-La-Source, where you will discover the surprising source of the Loiret river. The next day, take a country stroll along the Orléans canal, which once kept Paris supplied, to a gourmet lunch stop. The day ends with a guided canal cruise that includes going through a lock. Return to the hotel by bike (25 km in total).

Length: 2 days/2 nights (with the possibility of extending your stay)

Recommended period: April to October

Accommodation: 2* Hôtel

Price includes: a double room for two nights with breakfast (possibility of extending your stay) • 1 lunch (drinks not included) • Free entry to the Parc Floral • Guided canal cruise (2 hours) • Electric bike hire for 2 days

Booking: Tel: + 33 (0) 2 38 62 04 88 - www.loiret-booking.com



Teeing off

The 8 courses of 18 to 27 holes in Loiret are remarkable in their variation and in their locations in Sologne, Gâtinais, and the Orléans forest. Open to players of all abilities, the courses are conveniently located close to some of the Loire Valley's most captivating sites, for those who choose not to play.

Golf-Pass Package

The "Golf Pass" lets you play for three days on one or more courses on a weekday or weekend, on any of the seven Loiret golf courses (with the Fontenay-sur-Loing course available as an extra). The pass also includes accommodation deals to suit any budget.

Golf courses

Those with a * participate in the Golf Pass scheme.

Les Aisses

LA FERTÉ-SAINT-AUBIN

27 holes

Located at the gateway to Solognot, this natural course is beautifully maintained
www.aissesgolf.com

Golf d'Augerville-la-Rivière*

AUGERVILLE-LA-RIVIÈRE

18 holes

A hilly course punctuated with lakes, at the heart of a 110 hectare estate.
www.golfhotel.com

Domaine de Vaugouard*

FONTENAY-SUR-LOING

18 holes

Tucked away in the state-owned Montargis forest is this hilly, wooded course with additional water hazards.
www.vaugouard.com

Limère-Orléans*

ARDON

18 holes

An international course located between the Loire Valley and Sologne, with bodies of water, greens, and bunkers.
www.portes-desologne.com

Golf de Marcilly*

MARCILLY-EN-VILLETTE

18 holes + 18 hole Pitch and Putt
At the heart of Sologne, a little known golf course with small water hazards.
www.marcilly.com

Orléans-Donnery*

DONNERY

18 holes

This highly varied course is part of the La Touche château estate.
www.golfdonnery.fr

Sully-sur-Loire*

VIGLAIN

27 holes

Three natural courses for different handicaps.
www.golfdesully.com

Golf de Sologne*

LA FERTÉ-SAINT-AUBIN

18 holes

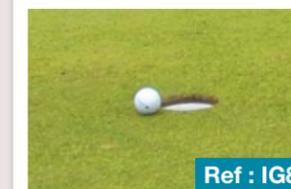
The course is lined with fine 100 year old trees that lead on to a 200 hectare park.
www.golf-de-sologne.com

HANDY TIPS

Golf courses open to all

A range of infrastructures (restaurants, games, leisure, Limère fitness centre, etc.) mean that the golf course is also a great destination for those not out on the fairway.

PACKAGES



Golf Pass 2015

From €100/person
NOVEMBER - MARCH inclusive

From €125/person
APRIL - OCTOBER inclusive

Ref : IG8

Play 3 Green Fees on any of the 7 participating 'Golf Pass' courses.

Length: Valid until 30 December 2015

Recommended period: April-October

Price includes: Three 18-hole games on weekdays and weekends.

Booking: Tel: + 33 (0) 2 38 62 04 88
www.loiret-booking.com



Golf at the château

Enjoy a stay in a château that combines a golf course and a 4-star hotel all in one place. Choose between:

From €399/person The Domaine de Vaugouard, with its wooded, undulating course enhanced by attractive water features, it has preserved all the authenticity of its natural surroundings.

From €385/person The Château d'Augerville-la-Rivière, renowned for the verdant setting of its magnificent golf course and 13th century château.

Length: 2 days/2nights (with the possibility of extending your stay)

Recommended period: April-October

Accommodation: 4* hotel on site

Price includes: 2 nights in a 4* hotel with breakfast and a double room in adjacent buildings • 2 evening meals including one gourmet dinner (drinks not included) • One 18-hole round

Booking: Tel: + 33 (0) 2 38 62 04 88
www.loiret-booking.com

Let's go sailing

For budding river-boaters, there are plenty of places to cast down your anchor in Loiret. On the Loire, tradition reigns, with tow-boats, long boats and barges with quaint white sails brought back to life through the efforts of sailing enthusiasts. On Loiret's four canals, there is room for small barges without permits and for cruise boats that allow you to explore the endless treasures that are dotted along the river's banks.

Captain for a day

Nothing is easier than getting aboard a house boat. A short introduction is all that you require to get started, with no need to sit a test, and you can set off at a top speed of 4mph, along the Loing, Briare, and Loire canals, and beyond if the river calls you towards Burgundy or Paris. Genuine floating homes, these boats can comfortably house an entire family. The kids will love helping the boat through the locks - all hands on deck!

Three water sports centres offer boat rentals in Briare, Châtillon-sur-Loire, and Rogny-les-Sept-Ecluses.

www.loiret-booking.com

Boating on the Loire

In Sigloy, set sail with the "Passeurs de Loire" for trips along the river on a barge. You will witness traditional sailing techniques in action, and discover the islands' wildlife, including the famous beaver.

www.passeursdeloire.fr



HANDY TIPS

Casting a line for perch and gudgeons

With water courses stretching for 760km and covering an area of 780 hectares, the Loire is perfect for even the most demanding fishing enthusiasts. Predatory fish and whitefish abound, and experienced fisherman may encounter the "monster" of the Loire, the brown bullhead.



River cruises

Set off to discover often inaccessible natural wonders aboard a pleasure boat, and take advantage of the setting to have lunch or dinner on board.

Trips set sail from various Loiret towns.

• BEAULIEU-SUR-LOIRE

Boating trips along the Loire canal

• BRIARE

Cruise taking in the canal bridge

www.bateaux-touristiques.com

• CHÂLETTE-SUR-LOING

Cruises along the Briare and Loing canals

www.ville-chalette.fr/Bateau-ville.html

• SIGLOY

Adventure cruises along the Loire on traditional vessels

www.passeursdeloire.fr

• COMBLEUX

Small group trips along the Orleans canal

www.canalorleans.org

• MARDIÉ

Trips along the Orleans canal

www.oussance.net

• ORLÉANS

Boating trips along the canal and the Loire

www.autour-de-leau.fr



Détox

Treat yourself to some nourishing fare thanks to local producers and restaurateurs, grab some fresh air in a protected area, get a good night's sleep in the trees, or pamper yourself at a health centre. Refine the art of detoxing during your stay in Loiret - your body will thank you for it!

Let's head to Ciran - tracking the wildlife of Sologne

Deer, boar, hare, ducks... Sologne's wildlife has free reign. Ciran, in Ménestreaux-Villette, is a real paradise for wildlife photographers and nature lovers alike.

The Domaine du Ciran is the perfect family destination with a range of activities, walks, games, and events on offer for visitors of all ages.

Exhibitions, walking paths, orienteering, word games, hides, videos: a world of opportunities to get closer to nature and its well preserved treasures. The Domaine du Ciran also offers holiday packages for campsites, wooden cabins, and holiday cottages.

www.domaineduciran.com

"Green eating"

In Montargis there one place that is home to three restaurants and three concepts for environmentally responsible dining: Oh Terroir, Pizza Terra, and Pasta Terra (also in Orleans) won the 2012 Responsible Tourism category at the Responsible Tourism Awards, awarded every year by the SNCF, the French national rail operator. In a warm and convivial setting, the chef would like to invite you to enjoy traditional regional cooking for an authentic dining experience. A stylish approach to the environment is top of the owners' agenda - all of the produce has been selected to be as natural as possible, sourced from farmers, wine makers and local producers who are committed to sustainable development for the benefit of all. This way you can treat yourself while taking action to protect the environment!

www.ohterroir.com



We loved: the eco-lodges

Dip your toe in water or lose your head in the clouds? The choice is yours with these eco-lodges. Several different types of accommodation are available for a fun stay that is also environmentally friendly. Cabins, caravans or safari tents are included in the unique, fully equipped accommodation options where comfort has not been ignored.



Les Balnéades

Treat yourself to a moment of pure relaxation in the calm surroundings of this spa. Water jets and waterfalls - find well-being through water before trying out the sauna or hammam, whichever you prefer. If you like to be pampered, indulge in one of the beauty treatments.

www.les-balneades.com

Garden art

Passionate about gardens? Loiret is your Eden, with examples of medieval, Renaissance-inspired, «à la française», «à l'anglaise» and contemporary gardens. Seven have been named as «remarkable gardens», including three arboretums. This quintessential art has earned Loiret the title of «Garden of France», and every season, the gardens open their gates and come to life.



Parc Floral de la Source Botanical Garden, Orleans

Between the Loire and Sologne, the Parc Floral de la Source botanical garden is composed of 35 hectares of outstanding gardens and botanical collections. Irises, roses, dahlias... every flower has its own garden, and each theme its own space, from market gardens to extraordinary tropical gardens. The thousands of trees, some of which are over 100 years old, are not the only cause for wonder; if you cast your eyes down from the canopy you may spot Jojo and Juju, the donkeys, or Diego, the alpaca. While the pink flamingos, cranes, swans and ducks have made the banks of the Loire their home, the pygmy goats, sheep, and chickens are at home in the petting zoo, not to mention the exotic birds from Africa, Oceania, and Asia and the exotic butterflies in the greenhouse. As if that were not enough to keep the children happy, the park also has a mini-golf course, play and picnic areas, and vast lawns - perfect for relaxation or for play.

www.parcfloraldelasource.com

Events

• NOCTURNAL VISITS, THE PARC FLORAL BY THE LIGHT OF PAPER LANTERNS:

from May to September, two Saturdays a month, when the park will stay open until 11 p.m.

• SPECTACUL'AIR,

an open-air performance will take place on Sunday afternoons at 3.30 p.m., from the last Sunday of May through to September.

• MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Orchid sale/show, in february
- Garden Arts Fair, 11 and 12/04: exhibition-sale-conferences
- Easter holiday, 5 and 6/04: event for young people (performance - games - prize draw).
- Painters in the Garden Day, 14/05

www.parcfloraldelasource.com

Grandes Bruyères Arboretum, at the heart of Orleans Forest

The Grandes Bruyères Arboretum was created in 1973 and is home to a wonderful collection of magnolias, oaks, dogwoods, roses, heather and more.

It is spread over 12 hectares where, forty years ago, there grew only brambles and scrub. It leads to a French garden with manicured box trees and yews, and ancient archways of roses and clematis. Then comes an English garden and a woodland garden that in turn lead to the Asian and American arboretums. A maze and kitchen garden complete the selection. A certified "Outstanding Garden", this organic garden is also a bird reserve, and as such a paradise for over 100 species of bird!

www.arboretumdesgrandesbruyeres.fr



HANDY TIPS

Following a 4-year break, the Parc Floral's little train is back in service. It will take you for a ride around its 2.2 km route on newly renovated tracks, with two station stops. All aboard!

Prés-des-Culands Arboretum, in Meung-sur-Loire

Pierre Paris, the former gardener at the Parc Floral de la Source in Orleans, is behind all of the pieces in this arboretum dedicated to holly. Sitting on what was formerly marshland are two hectares of a collection named by the Holly Society of America as part of the "World Collection". 60 species of holly suitable for temperate climates and over 460 hybrids and cultivars are on display in the arboretum. A certified "Outstanding Garden", it is also home to a number of other plants including around 100 maples, rosebushes, hosta, daylilies, and, recently, a national collection of clematis.

<http://perso.orange.fr/houx/>



PACKAGE



Secrets of History in the Loire Valley

Ref : GBP3

From €230/person

Soak up the romanticism of a former coaching inn at Beaugency, just down the road from Orléans, during a stay that brings together the best of the Loire Valley: Meung-sur-Loire, one of the oldest châteaux in the Valley of Kings, a certified 'Outstanding Garden' with an extensive collection of historic varieties of rose, the Sologne area and the appeal of its forestswell-stocked with game, and not forgetting a detour via the vineyards of the winegrowers of Orléans, who were appreciated at the table of the kings of France.

Length: 2 days/3 nights

Recommended period: April to October

Accommodation: 3* Hôtel

Price includes: a double room for 3 nights with breakfast • Free entry to the Château • Free entry to the Jardin de Roquelin • Wine cellar visit with wine tasting and a gift bottle to take away with you

Booking: Tel: + 33 (0) 2 38 62 04 88
www.loiret-booking.com

Les Jardins de Roquelin, in Meung-sur-Loire

The Jardins de Roquelin were certified as an "Outstanding Garden" in 2011, and cover a hectare around an old farm on the banks of the Loire. In this beautiful space are 450 varieties of roses, mostly very old, together with a collection of vibrant plants. In an old sheep barn, the gift shop sells countryside themed decorations, garden accessories, and even some of the roses found in the garden.

www.lesjardinsderoquelin.com



And more...



Arbofolia, the 'Arboretum national des Barres', in Nogent-sur-Vernisson

The Barres National Arboretum covers 35 hectares with over 2500 rare, little known, and majestic species, including one of the world's largest collections of trees.

The arboretum is a certified "Outstanding Garden" and is split into three sections with descriptive names:

- **Continentalis**, or the promise of a journey through space and time: here you will find Spanish pine, the atlas cedar, the ginkgo biloba from Asia, the Arizona cypress, and several other spectacular specimens: 46m Californian redwoods and giant thujas, to name but two.
- **Classifica**, or a journey for the senses: colours, aromas, and shapes change over the seasons. In springtime, the wisteria, magnolias, azaleas, and honeysuckles are in flower; in May it is the turn of the handkerchief tree; and in autumn there are the sweet fragrances of the katsura.
- **Bizarretum**, or the chef's surprise: with the weeping redwood, giant thuja, and beech trees, and the surprising juniper trees.

www.onf.fr/arboretumdesbarres/

Le Jardin des 4 saisons, Bazoches-les-Gallerandes

This garden covers half a hectare with over 1300 varieties of rare plants from the four corners of the globe that come into bloom in each of the four seasons: palm trees, yucca, and agave rub shoulders with roses and shrubbery.

www.le-jardin-des-4-saisons.com

Jardin de roses anciennes André Eve, Morailles

Not far from Pithiviers-le-Vieil, one of the great gardeners, André Eve, has formed a collection of 630 varieties of old and new roses. Within a splendid garden are rosebushes, English roses, shrubs, ground-cover, climbing roses, creepers, botanicals, short- and long-stem roses, and weeping roses.

www.roses-anciennes-eve.com

Les Jardins de la Javelière, Montbarrois

Certified "Outstanding", these gardens near a 17th century manor house include a modern rose garden, a kitchen garden, an orchard and a park. Around the lake grow old roses and collectors' trees, not to mention the "Rosarium"

www.lajaveliere.fr

Herboretum, Saint-Ay

The Herboretum was designed to display and take action in favour of biodiversity. Wandering along the garden paths, visitors discover five organic gardens and five themed gardens, and can take in the sights at one of several wildlife observation points.

www.herboretum.org

Le Jardin de Chantal, Jouy-le-Potier

Designed around two ornamental ponds, almost a thousand species of plants can be found in this romantic garden, which is largely devoted to roses and viburnum.

Tel. : 06 86 50 10 31

City break: Orléans

Its cathedral, old city quarters, the stunning rue Royale and classical architecture have earned Orléans its reputation as the jewel in the crown of the Loire. The city has been imbued with a new lease of life, as attention is focused on its picturesque quays -perfect for a stroll- its contemporary art, and lively pedestrian centre with shops aplenty. It is the ideal recipe for a successful romantic mini-break, or a weekend with the family.



Historic tours

The fully renovated old town is a well preserved, pedestrianised medieval area where you can admire the colourful wooden buildings and the sculpted decorations that give Orleans its charm. The city's beating heart, Place du Martroi, has undergone a complete renovation that has recaptured the beauty and space it once had as a parade ground. It has been enlarged, repaved, planted with trees and re-pedestrianised. The French Ministry of Culture officially recognised the city's heritage by awarding it City of Art and History status.

As you wander through the city streets, you are following in the footsteps of **Joan of Arc**, who broke the English siege of the city on 7 and 8 May 1429. A real national hero, her presence can often be felt in the city, such as on the impressive façade of the **Sainte-Croix Cathedral** whose ornamental gateway was inaugurated in 1829 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the city's liberation. Many French

kings were crowned in this flamboyant Gothic building. While you are here, pop in to the **Hôtel Grosnot** , situated a stone's throw away. This Renaissance masterpiece has been fully restored in recent years and lies within a beautiful park.

You can then stop by the **Fine Art Museum**  that is home to one of the finest state-owned collections in France, and includes French paintings and sculptures from the 17th and 19th centuries, pastels, while Flemish, Dutch, and Italian paintings rub shoulders with a modern art collection.

The only gallery of its kind in Europe, the **Galerie du Lion** is dedicated to wildlife photography and home to unique exhibitions that celebrate biodiversity and the wonders of the natural world.

www.galeriedulion.fr 

Shopping and eating out

Around the cathedral, outdoor terraces offer a range of dining options alongside shop windows, and visitors can sit down to enjoy one of the region's culinary specialities, or shop until they drop.

Indeed, it is a pleasure to live in this city that invites you to linger in its charming streets, and if the sun is out it is the perfect day for strolling the banks of the Loire.



Where design and modernity meet

As Orléans seems to be the place it's all happening these days, the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain (FRAC, the Regional Contemporary Art Fund) has moved into a new building, christened 'Turbulences'. For the first time, it is opening its collections to the general public. Unique in France, these collections are dedicated to architectural experiments from the Fifties to the present day. Welcome to the world of immaterial architecture.

www.frac-centre.fr

More dates for your diary

- Fêtes Johanniques: ceremonies, parades, reconstructions, and more. Orleans goes back to the Middle Ages.

2015 dates: from 29 April to 8 May.

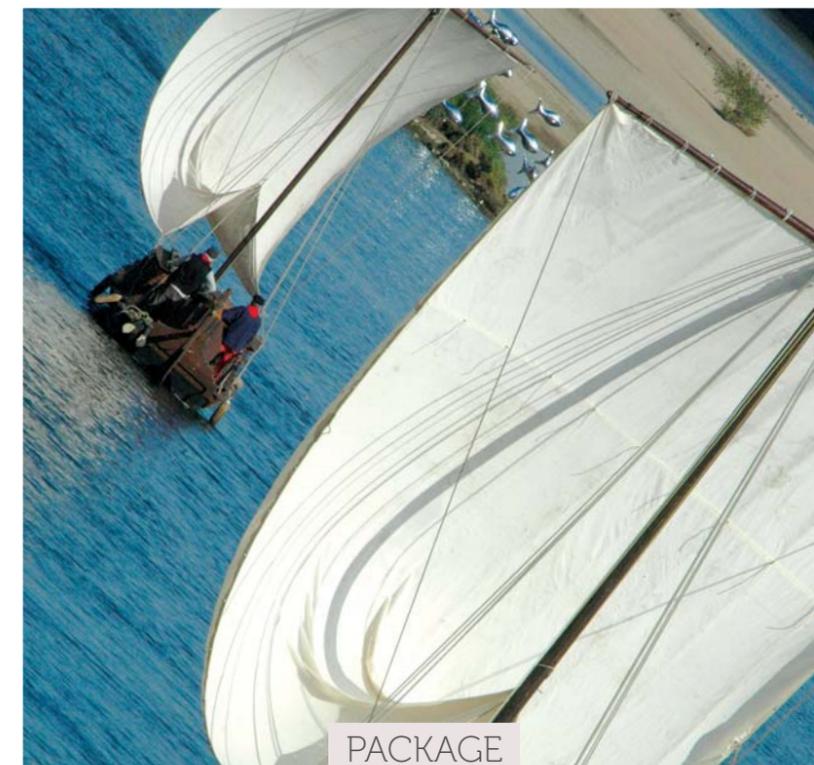
An environmentally friendly city

Upon your arrival in Orleans, the first thing you should do is get your bearings. There are two gentle, quiet ways to see the city for the first time: by tram or by bike. The bright green Vélo+ bicycles will doubtless already have attracted your attention: this bike hire system is quick and easy to use, as are the Bornéo City terminals that are available if you want to charge your phone or camera on the spot using solar power. There is no longer any reason to limit your shots for fear of running out of battery, and you can record all of your best moments in Orleans.

www.orleans.fr

Festival de Loire

Every two years, the Festival de Loire revives the glorious history of the region by celebrating the first French river port, built in the 19th century. 2015's celebrations will take place **from the 16 September to the 20 September**, promising 5 days of festivities along 2km of quays, making for the largest European gathering of river sailing, with 700 sailors and 220 participating. 450 artists and around 100 exhibitors will join them in celebrating the culture of the Loire region through its waterways, gastronomy and other traditions. Every year, from June to September, Orléans' quays come to life around the famous La Sardine tavern, with more than 200 events, such as concerts and boat trips.



PACKAGE



Citybreak in Orleans

Ref : GBV4

From €199/person

Discover Orléans, a 'Town of Art and History' on the banks of the Loire. Explore its historic centre, its cathedral, its culinary delights or follow the course of the Loire by cycling along the royal river's edge. Your accommodation, located in a quiet area just short walk from the city centre, has the atmosphere of a beautiful, spacious family home.

Length: 2 days/2 nights (with the possibility of extending your stay)

Recommended period: April to October

Accommodation: 3* hotel

Price includes: A double bedroom for 2 nightswith breakfast • 1 evening meal, drinks not included • Electric bike hire

Booking: Tel: + 33 (0) 2 38 62 04 88

www.loiret-booking.com

Picturesque getaway

As you travel throughout the département, towns and villages, Roman churches and abbeys, historical monuments and works of art read like a picture book.

Montargis, "Venice of Gâtinais"



Crossed by several water courses that were once lined with windmills and tanneries, Montargis deserves the title "Venice of Gâtinais". Visitors explore the town on foot, following the "water streets" and crossing the no fewer than 131 bridges. But the town's charm does not end there: on land, the turreted or wattle and daub houses, wash houses, and Renaissance hotels take visitors back to the time of the French kings. One such king, François I, lived in the 12th century castle, whose ruins remain visible on the hill.

www.montargis.fr

Ferrières-en-Gâtinais



Arriving in Ferrières, visitors can set off to discover the talented townspeople. Year-round, the Maison des Métiers d'Art opens its doors to artists and craftsmen to display their goods, proof of their skills in arts and crafts. Every summer, more artists bring the Nocturnes de Ferrières event to life: fire and music immerse visitors in the magic of the medieval city. Join in with the dancing but take care: there are witches abroad! 2015 Dates: 19 and 26 July; 2 and 9 August.

www.ferrieresengatinais.fr/

Pray you end up here!

Germigny-des-Prés and its Carolingian oratory



Built in around 800, the oratory was once part of a luxurious villa built by one of Charlemagne's advisors. Its mosaic, a unique masterpiece in France, is worth a look as it is, in effect, a miracle: uncovered in 1820 after spending around thirty years hidden beneath scraps, today its 130,000 glass cubes dazzle visitors.

www.tourisme-loire-foret.com

Cléry-Saint-André and its basilica



Notre-Dame Basilica, the first chapel in this superb white stone building, was built in 1280 on the site where a polychrome Madonna was discovered by local peasants. The church was listed as a Historic Monument in 1840 as an archetype of the flamboyant Gothic style.

Every summer there is a spectacular 'son et lumière', this year devoted to the Renaissance. 18, 19, 25, 26, 27, 31 July and 1st and 2nd August.

www.cleryraconte.com

Beaugency, a fortress on the banks of the Loire



Nobody leaves Beaugency without a particular tune stuck in their head: that of the 15th century bells that ring out three times per day from the Saint-Fermin bell tower. In this ancient fortress that has belonged to the royal estate since 1292, you can also discover the bridge over the Loire, Dunois château, and a number of town houses and medieval homes.

An authentic medieval city, Beaugency has retained both its cultural and natural heritage, on display in the wild garden, "Les Rives de Beaugency".

www.beaugency.fr

If you are visiting at the end of June or the beginning of July, be sure not to miss 'La Pompadour's Secrets' – a 'son et lumière' (sound and light show) inspired by Louis XV's favourite mistress.

27, 28, 29 June and 3, 4 and 5 July 2015.

sonlumbeaugency.canalblog.com

Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire and its abbey



Founded in the year 651, the church is famous for its monumental 11th century gatehouse and its ornamental décor that depicts scenes from the life of Saint Benoit, the Bible and Gospels, as well as from daily life, with amazing characters and animals. Less spiritual but nonetheless curious visitors will still

find something among the town's other curiosities, such as the port hamlet with its low flint buildings.

oti@cc-valdoretforet.com

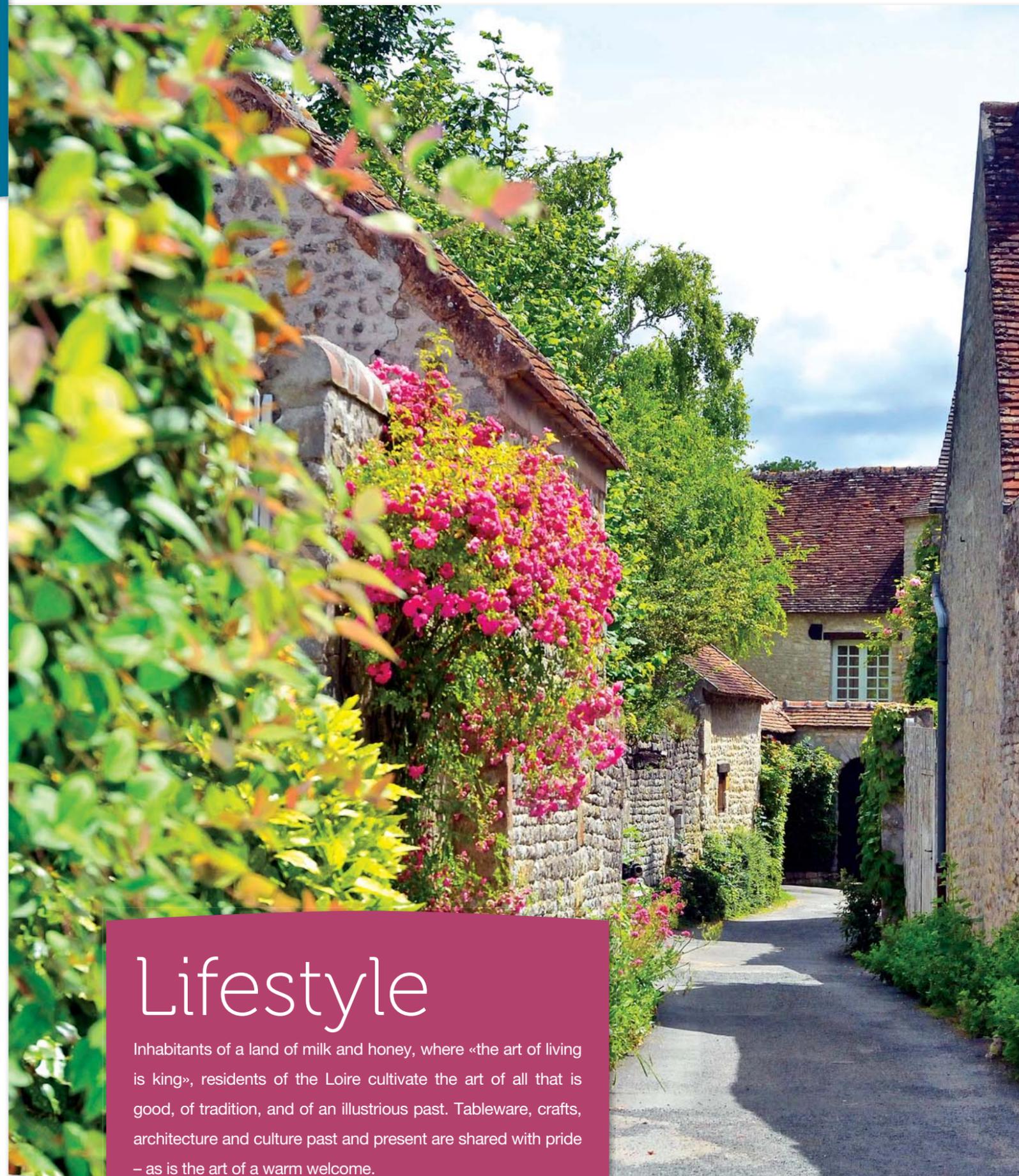
Briare and the aqueduct



Known around the world for its unparalleled technical prowess, the Briare Aqueduct is a piece of art that spans the Loire for 662m, to join the Loire and Briare canals. An official Historic Monument, it was built in 1890 by the Eiffel company, also behind the famous Parisian tower.

Lifestyle

Inhabitants of a land of milk and honey, where «the art of living is king», residents of the Loire cultivate the art of all that is good, of tradition, and of an illustrious past. Tableware, crafts, architecture and culture past and present are shared with pride – as is the art of a warm welcome.



Chateau Life

From deep, dark dungeons to lavish and splendid residences bedecked with glorious gardens, the castles of Loiret offer you the opportunity to connect with the history of France itself. Though they may not be the best-known in the Loire Valley, they distinguish themselves by the friendliness and care shown by their owners in their efforts to restore them to their former glory. Now renovated and refurbished, each one of them is unique. From perfumes to hunting, fishing to medieval warfare, each museum has a story to tell.



Chamerolles, the fragrant castle

A good sense of smell is a must should you visit Chamerolles château. Indeed, the "Perfumed Promenade" will introduce visitors to the history of perfume and hygiene and is the most original point in Chamerolles château. Building work started in 1500, and the château was recently converted into a perfume museum, as a nod to the importance of the cosmetics industry in the Loiret. Fragrances, skills, trinkets: the château sifts through the history of perfume. Visit highlight: a collection of rare bottles from the finest glassmakers.

After the visit, breathe in the fresh air in the Renaissance garden, a garden designed for both practical purposes, decoration, and ceremony, and that has been lovingly restored according to antique records. There are year-round activities for children.

www.chateau-chamerolles.com



Sully-sur-Loire Château, residence of "Grand Sully"

Imposing towers, wide moats, and a strategic site on the Loire: welcome to the home of the First Duke of Sully, a minister under Henri IV. Throughout centuries this fortress commanded one of the rare Loire crossings. And the interior is just as majestic. Worth particular attention are the Tenture de Psyché: a collection of six ornamental 17th century tapestries; the marble tomb of Sully and his second wife; and a 17th century masterpiece: the Duchess' bed lovingly restored in 2011 and installed in a refurbished bedroom. The most exciting news of 2015 is arguably the redevelopment of the Grand Salon, the dining room and the square tower room. With chairs, armchairs from various eras, dining tables, 19th century dressers, vases, pedestal tables and mirrors on loan from the Mobilier National, these items recreate the interior décor at the time of the counts of Béthune - owners of the property for 4 centuries - breathing new life into the soul of the castle. Now, visitors may lift their gaze to see the impressive structure: what is known as "Grand galetas" - a striking girderless pointed barrel attic - standing testament to the skills of carpenters 600 years ago. There are year-round activities for children.

www.chateau-sully.com



Did you know?

Private visits

Let Odyssee guide you on your adventure! Odyssee en Val de Loire offers daily excursions to the best sites that the Loiret has to offer in an eight-seater minibus with a qualified multilingual driver/guide.

Tel: +33 (0) 6 24 79 11 76
www.odyssee-valdeloire.com



New

Château Dunois at Beaugency

In February 2014, Xavier Lelevé, owner of the Château de Meung-sur-Loire, bought the Château Dunois, located at the heart of the town of Beaugency.

"It was Jean de Dunois – a companion-in-arms of Joan of Arc – who had the château built at the site of the old medieval fortress. He maintained the Roman architecture of the Caesar tower that dominates the Loire, yet the Château Dunois is also the epitome of a 15th century stately abode, with its three floors and magnificent antechambers with a spectacular garden view. Every room has been restored and refurbished, including bedrooms, kitchens, drawing rooms, wardrobes and the oratory. Visits to the château are self-guided, with each room equipped with useful information (in English, French and Dutch) that helps evoke everyday life in the château. A visitor's book is also available for children. 3D projection mapping helps to bring the château's décor and former inhabitants to life. We began with knight's clothing. During the school holidays, fencing masters make the château come alive and we will light up Christmas with prince and princess themed celebrations," explains Xavier Lelevé.

http://chateau-de-beaugency.com/index.php?id_lang=1



La Bussière château and its "thousand flavours"

La Bussière is famous for its kitchen garden and orchard, which are certified "Outstanding Gardens", and its grounds include a 6-hectare lake and a fine example of a French park designed by Le Nôtre. Children are kept entertained by educational and fun outposts that conceal surprises and riddles, while the château itself contains the "Fisherman's Museum", with a remarkable collection of objects and artwork from the world of fishing that showcase its traditions and the different techniques used throughout the ages.

Concerts and events during summer.

www.chateau-labussiere.com



Meung-sur-Loire château, former residence of the bishops

Mystery and solemnity seem to linger in this "double-faced castle". The château's nickname comes from its dual façades, one classical and one medieval, that stand testament to its various renovations. Nestled away at the heart of a 7-hectare park, the château has around 20 fully furnished rooms open to visitors (from the spirits pantry to the bishops' bathroom). This former priestly residence was also used as a prison. The atmosphere in the cellars is more relaxed today, and better lit, with the interrogation chamber newly refurbished!

The castle hosts a number of events throughout the year: the mischievous Walter and the knights' encampment will delight younger visitors, while summer sees medieval culinary workshops, and the 3D spectacular in August.

www.chateau-de-meung.com



The Château de La Ferté-Saint-Aubin, on the threshold of Sologne

This private château, inhabited for over 350 years, is an extraordinary architectural ensemble that you can roam through freely from cellar to attic, via 15 furnished rooms. On the second floor, reopened in 2013, the two historical bedrooms and the old guard room with its board games appeal to young and old alike. There are also the Château's many collections to visit: old tools and a school room recreated in the attic, harnesses in the saddlery and antique dolls and toys in the Orangerie. You can have fun with the family in the court of honour and the park, where there are no less than 40 skill and coordination activities to try, from a life-size game of the goose (an old French game that resembles snakes and ladders) to a round of mini-golf.

www.chateau-ferte-st-aubin.com



The Musée des Deux marines et du Pont-canal de Briare, Briare

This museum recounts the history of two different, and sometimes competing, fleets. At one of France's most important boating crossroads, the Loire fleet – the "lords of the river" – sailed alongside the canal fleet, sharing the beliefs, pastimes, and traditions of these hardy river men. Throughout seven rooms, the museum covers all aspects of their professional and home lives through their connections to the river.

Visitors learn some basic navigation techniques, solve the puzzle of the lock mechanisms, and admire the genius of the aqueduct designers before learning about the river professions. Fleet carpenters rub shoulders with fishermen and washer-women, and it is easy to imagine the scenes of yesteryear in all their colour and hubbub! Finally, homage is paid to the Loire itself through several films, and a 17m aquarium that showcases the wildlife that lives in the waters of the Loire, and a fresco painted to show the quays of the Loire loaded with goods.

www.musee-2-marines.com



HANDY TIPS

The ports

On the Loire, Châtillon-sur-Loire and the Mantelot lock, Briare, Châteauneuf-sur-Loire, and Jargeau with its Maison de Loire dedicated to the river's natural and cultural heritage, Châlette-sur-Loing that marks the place where the Briare, Orleans and Loing canals meet, are unmissable ports rich in history. They also raise awareness of the environment.



Cast Off

For several centuries, flat-bottomed boats, with their square sail inherited from the Vikings, scoured the Loire whilst canals allowed the passage of goods along the Seine, supplying the city of Paris. Also accompanying this freight were a large number of travellers. Ports, locks, reservoirs and canal-bridges have ensured that the memory of the Loire's glorious days remains intact. At the beginning of the 20th century, no longer able to compete with the railways, the waterway disappeared.

The Loire Fleet Museum, Châteauneuf-sur-Loire

Located within the former stables of the Châteauneuf-sur-Loire château, the museum boasts a highly original design, with an entrance designed like a boarding area. Visitors are directed to board the main ship while the mezzanine is designed as a dock full of goods. Under the arches, small cells recreate the world these sailors lived in on land, and the work they did on the river. The Loire Fleet Museum invites visitors to follow in the wake of these sailors and their barges. Your own cabin boys can enjoy a fun paper chase, as well as taking part in a range of workshops.

webmuseo.com/ws/musee-marinedeloire



PACKAGE



Relive the heyday of the Loire Fleet at Châteauneuf-sur-Loire

Ref : P1

From €112/person

Make a stop along the royal river and experience the life of a sailor in the Loire Fleet! After a visit to the Loire Fleet Museum, it is time gain some firsthand experience of the river and learn the techniques used back in the day to sail traditional boats.

Length: 2 days/1 nights

Recommended period: April to October

Accommodation: 2* Hôtel

Price includes: 1 night in double room, half-board • Entry to the museum • 1h30 hour trip.

Booking: Tel: + 33 (0) 2 38 62 04 88 - www.loiret-booking.com



HANDY TIPS

Sully and Loiret Music Festival

Every spring, the Sully and Loiret Music Festival brings together groups of classical musicians: for two weeks, châteaux, churches and abbeys in several towns throughout the Loiret put on concerts.

Running from 22 May to 27 June 2015

www.festival-sully.com



Windmills

Known as France's breadbasket, the Loiret is home to many a windmill.

Visit Artenay's Moulin des Muets, a tower built in 1849 and a rare example of a stone windmill, and the Moulin de Bel Air in Guilly, which is straight out of the Middle Ages (but reconstructed in the late 70s) and one of the gems of Loiret's rural heritage. What's more, the Moulin aux Oiseaux in Bordes is a wooden mill that houses a complete internal mechanism used in milling demonstrations.

In search of lost time

Throughout this département, there are many examples of mills, ancient towers, dovecotes and mansions, which stand as a reminder of a bygone era. Allow yourself to pause and admire their remarkable architecture and enduring charm.

Towers erupting from the past

In Baccon, a strange Chappe telegraph tower stands tall in 10m of stone, topped with a 7m semaphore. The fully restored tower has been converted into a museum that explains the workings of this revolutionary 19th century communications breakthrough.

In Beaugency, the César tower is an imposing 11th century keep that stood guard over the city and is a fine example of French Roman towers.



The mills of Olivet

On the edges of Loiret fitted out in walk, very former five water mills reveal their remarkable architecture. Witnesses of the previous economic activity of this region, they were transformed into private houses and are not opened to the visit.

Discovering Loiret's museums

The *département* is certainly not lacking in museums - forty of them house an array of collections! Whether they display fine art, trade, craft, circus art, theatre, enamels, earthenware, literature, science or traditions, these museums employ a fun and educational approach that will inspire both young and old alike.

We have selected two of the most remarkable examples. Come join us.



Cirque et Illusion in Dampierre-en-Burly

Welcome to the ring! The only such museum of its kind in France, it is here where the ethereal wonders of the circus -with its clowns, acrobats, magic shows and wild beasts- are recreated. To make this dream come to life, the museum is infused with a sense of vitality using videos on giant screens, optical illusions, attractions, magic mirrors and a virtual circus. The highlight of the visit is the cage of wild animals that featured in the Franco-British film *Two Brothers*, directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud in 2004. The boldest of visitors will attempt to walk a tightrope suspended in mid-air, just like at the circus. This interactive museum is both exhilarating and educational and also offers visitors the opportunity to be the actors in their own visit, making the illusion a reality. Let the show begin!

www.museeducirqueetdelillusion.com

Maison de Jeanne d'Arc in Orléans



Joan of Arc needs no introduction - she is the maiden of Orléans, known around the world as the young woman who delivered France from English occupation aged 17 and was burned alive two years later in 1431 after a heresy trial. She is, above all, the heroine of Orléans, from which she lifted the siege, and which commemorates her every year. The city has dedicated a museum to her, situated in a large timber house, a replica of the residence of Jacques Boucher, treasurer of the Duke of Orléans, with whom she resided when she came to liberate the city. Interactive information points, a mapping of the epic saga of Joan of Arc and an illustrated timetable of events tell her remarkable story on the ground floor, in the multimedia room, as well as an animated film which recounts the lifting of the siege of Orléans on the 8th May 1429. A centre for research and documentation, which focuses on the works, studies, photographs and films dedicated to Joan of Arc, is open to all.

www.jeannedarc.com

Museums

In total, there are over 40 museums in the Loiret. Artwork, traditional and everyday objects, crafts, professions, history, circus, theatre... Directory



- ART -

MEUNG-SUR-LOIRE

• Musée de Meung sur Loire La Monnaie
www.meung-sur-loire.com

MONTARGIS

• Musée Girodet
www.musee-girodet.fr
Closed for refurbishment in 2015

NIBELLE

• Musée Barillet (religious art)
Tel: +33 (0) 238 322 366

ORLEANS

• Galerie du Lion
www.galeriedulion.com

• Musée des Beaux Arts

(Fine Art Museum)
www.orleans.fr

SAINT-DENIS-DE-L'HÔTEL

• Musée Maurice Genevoix (Writer's home)
Tel: +33 (0) 238 591 280

- PERFORMING ARTS -

ARTENAY

• Musée du Théâtre Forain
www.musee-theatre-forain.fr

DAMPIERRE-EN-BURLY

• Musée du Cirque et de l'illusion
(Museum of Circuses and Magic Shows)

www.museeducirqueetdelillusion.com

- WATERWAYS -

BRIARE

• Musée des 2 Marines et du Pont Canal
(Aqueduct and Two Fleets Museum)
www.musee-2-marines.com

CHÂTEAUNEUF-SUR-LOIRE

• Musée de la marine de Loire (Loire Fleet Museum)
webmuseo.com/ws/musee-marinedeloire

- HISTORY -

CHÂTILLON-COLIGNY

• Musée Historique à l'Ancien Hôtel Dieu
www.museedechatilloncoligny.com

CHÂTILLON-SUR-LOIRE

• Musée municipal de préhistoire et d'histoire (Municipal Natural History Museum)
www.chatillon-sur-loire.com

LORRIS

• Musée de la Résistance et de la Déportation (Resistance and Deportation Museum)
www.musee-lorris.com

ORLEANS

• Musée Historique et Archéologique de l'Orléanais (Orleans Archaeological Museum)
www.orleans.fr

• Musée Mémorial des enfants du Vel d'Hiv
www.cercil.fr

- EXPERTISE -

BRIARE

• Musée de la Mosaïque et des Émaux (Mosaic and Enamel Museum)
www.coeur-de-france.com/briare-emaux.html

CHÉCY

• Musée de la Tonnellerie (Cooperage Museum)
www.checy.fr

DORDIVES

• Musée du Verre et de ses Métiers (Glasswork Museum)
www.musee-dordives.fr

GIEN

• Musée de la Faiencerie (Earthenware Museum)
www.gien.com

MONTARGIS

• Musée des Tanneurs (Tanners Museum)
www.amisduvieuxmontargis.com

SAINT-JEAN-DE-BRAYE

• Musée Campanaire Bollée (Bell Museum)
Tel: +33 (0) 6 46 67 47 66

- SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY -

LORRIS

• Musée Horloger Georges Lemoine (Georges Lemoine Clockmaker Museum)
www.musee-horloger-lorris.fr

MEUNG-SUR-LOIRE

• Musée Van Oeveren et de l'arme blanche (Van Oeveren and Fencing Museum)
www.musee-escrime.com

ORLEANS

• Muséum des Sciences Naturelles (Natural History Museum)
Closure for renovation in fall 2015. For all information, contact the museum.
www.orleans.fr

PITHIVIERS

• Musée des Transports (Transport Museum)
www.lafrancevuedurail.fr/pithiviers

- TRADITION AND YESTERYEAR -

AMILLY

• Musée des Arts et Traditions du Gâtinais (Gâtinais Art and Culture Museum)
www.amisduvieuxmontargis.com

BOYNES

• Musée du Safran (Saffron Museum)
www.coeur-de-france.com/safran.html

CHÂLETTE-SUR-LOING

• Musée d'École Fernand Boutet
www.ville-chalette.fr

CHÂTEAU-RENARD

• Musée Vivant de l'Apiculture Gâtinaise (Gâtinais Beekeeping Living Museum)
www.museevivant.com

JARGEAU

• Musée Oscar Roty
www.oscar-rotty.fr

LA FERTÉ-SAINT-AUBIN

• Grange Rétro (Traditional Farm)
Tel: +33 (0) 2 38 64 01 82

LES BORDES

• Musée de la Ferme René Martin (René Martin Farming Museum)
Tel: +33 (0) 6 74 41 40 30

LIGNY-LE-RIBAUT

• Ecomusée
www.amis-du-vieux-ligny.asso.fr

LOURY

• Musée des Métiers et des Légendes de la Forêt (Woodland Legends and Trades Museum)

<http://musee.loury.free.fr>

MONTCORBON

• Musée des Ustensiles de Cuisine d'Autrefois (Traditional Kitchen Utensil Museum)
www.ustensiles-cuisine.net

NIBELLE

• Musée Saint Sauveur
Tel: +33 (0) 238 322 366

ORMES

• Maison de la Polyculture (Mixed Cropping Museum)
Tel: +33 (0) 630 595 228

TIGY

• Musée de l'Artisanat rural ancien (Ancient Rural Crafts Museum)
Tel: +33 (0) 238 580 042

VRIGNY

• La Maison du Père Mousset
Tel: +33 (0) 238 341 860

A treat for the taste buds

The spiced scent of Gâtinais saffron, the gentle sweetness of Cotignac, tangy taste of finely flavoured honey, gourmet vinegar, the unique taste of Jargeau andouillette - the Loiret table is simply replete with culinary delights.



Gâtinais honey

Known as "Gâtinais gold", from the Middle Ages its sweetness and finesse were familiar even to the royal court. A number of beekeepers have chosen to keep this ancient tradition alive and produce the much loved honey, the fruit of a region that has maintained great floral diversity, alongside the rape and sunflower crops that the bees love.

"Orleans method" vinegar and mustard

While home to several kings, Orleans was never the French capital. It was, however, the undisputed capital of vinegar! In the 18th century, no fewer than 300 producers used the "Orleans method" to make vinegar, a production technique that uses casks to give Orleans vinegar its unique flavour. Today, there only remains the Maison Martin-Pouret, established in 1797, which continues to use the traditional vinegar making process. They have also "reinvented" traditional Orleans mustard, made by grinding mustard seeds on a millstone. But how did Orleans end up being the vinegar capital? Well, in times of yore, the wine that travelled along the Loire from Anjou, Touraine, and Burgundy en route to Paris had often spoiled, and was perfect for making vinegar!



Poire d'Olivet Brandy

The pear in question is the William pear, use to produce the Olivet region's famous pear brandy. The Poire d'Olivet brandy has two special characteristics: for one, its unique aroma which is the result of a meticulous selection of distilled fruits. More surprising still, the bottle contains a pear that has slowly been allowed to ripen inside the bottle where it was placed in spring while still attached to the branch. This brandy is both elegant and subtle on the palate.

HANDY TIPS

Bee Story

Visit *Château-Renard* to learn all there is to know about making honey. A couple of beekeepers invite children and adults alike to learn about the life of bees and honey production at the "Musée vivant de l'apiculture". Several hives have glass walls so that visitors can safely observe the bees. Videos, photos, models and a discovery trail complete the visit and display the flowers that the bees harvest, the products of the hive and regional beekeeping traditions.

www.museevivant.com



Jargeau andouille sausage

For almost nine centuries Jargeau's butchers have been making "their" andouille, made from equal parts of tripe and minced pork, all sealed within genuine pigs' intestine. Jargeau andouille is often served with creamy mashed potato. There is even a trade show dedicated to this local favourite, as well as an annual competition and an association, "Les Chevaliers du Goûte-Andouille".

Gourmet Loiret

Launched in 2009 by the Loiret Pastry Chefs' Union, the recipe for this cake is always changing in an effort to showcase the region's different specialities.

Cotignac

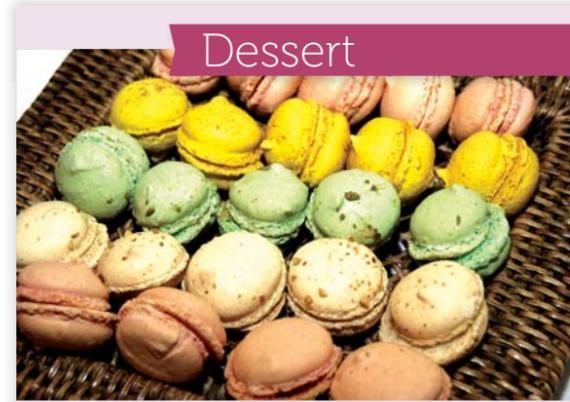


A thick quince jelly with an inimitable texture, Cotignac has been served at tables in Orleans since the Middle Ages. Such is its renown, several cases of this delicacy that delighted King François I can be seen in Paulo Veronese's immense "The Wedding at Cana", which hangs in the Louvre. Today Cotignac is packaged as it was back then, in little round wooden boxes, and it is a tradition to break the lid and use it as a spoon to scoop up the delicious red-orange paste.

HANDY TIPS

Saffron, the queen of spices

Like honey, for centuries saffron made the Gâtinais famous with its unparalleled flavour. Yet despite the fact that 10 tonnes of this prestigious spice were produced every year during the 19th century, its cultivation was abandoned. "Safraniers du Gâtinais" was established in 1987 and ever since it has been helping local producers to get back into touch with the skills of their ancestors. Producing saffron is a process that requires patience and faith, as 150,000 crocuses need to be harvested by hand to obtain 1 kilo of saffron, with saffron being none other than the flower's stigma. Be sure to visit: the saffron museum in Boynes, the historic cradle of saffron in Gâtinais. In a former wine merchant's residence, several rooms have been fitted out to display the spice's history within the region. A real journey back in time, the exhibition provides an overview of 600 years of production, from the 15th century to the 1930s



Dessert

Orleans Macarons

This speciality was created by local bakers and pastry chefs, and "Macarons aux fruits d'Orléans" have been delighting foodies since 2006 with light meringues available in four flavours: deglazed strawberries with Orleans vinegar, pear and ginger compote, hazelnut cream, and rose petal confit with lime and cinnamon.



Pithiviers

The origins of this cake date back to the Carnutes, a Gaulish tribe who appreciated this cake's ancestor. Two different kinds of Pithiviers, named after the town they come from, are available: iced Pithiviers, made using powdered almonds, caster sugar, icing sugar and kirsch; and puff pastry Pithiviers, that contain powdered almonds and are similar in appearance to the traditional 'galette des rois' cake.

Montargis Pralines

We owe this tasty treat to the head waiter to the Duke of Plessis-Praslin, a minister of Louis XIII. Pralines were first revealed in Montargis, which remains the centre for praline production to this day. Still produced using the original techniques, pralines are made from delicious grilled and caramelised almonds, and their true spiritual home is the Maison Mazet, which has been continuing this timeless tradition since 1903.

Nectar

Light and fruity, the wines of Orléans and Giennois have a particular character that will no doubt enthrall those with a discerning palate, curious to try the region's wines. They are the perfect accompaniment to the region's cuisine.



PACKAGE



Briare and the Gien Vineyards

Ref : GBP23 From €239/person

How about a romantic weekend getaway in Briare? You'll take a boat trip on the canals and visit the Enamel Museum that has put this little town on the map, and the next day, there is a visit to the Château de Saint-Brissson-sur-Loire, a 12th century fortified castle, which includes wine tasting at a Coteaux du Giennois wine cellar.

Length: 2 days/2 nights (with the possibility of extending your stay)

Recommended period: April to October

Accommodation: 4* Hôtel

Price includes: a double room for 2 nights with breakfast • Free entry to the Enamel Museum • The canal cruise • Free entry to the Château • Wine cellar visit with wine tasting and a gift bottle to take away with you

Booking: Tel: + 33 (0) 2 38 62 04 88
www.loiret-booking.com



Giennois wines

Awarded AOC status in 1998, the red, white, and rosé Giennois vineyards unfurl over fourteen towns to the east, between the Nièvre and the Loire. Sauvignon, pinot, and gamay grapes are used to produce the wines. Cultivated since the Romans arrived in Gaul, these vines produce both lighter and more robust wines that go perfectly with local specialties such as goat's cheese or fish caught in the Loire.

Orleanais wines

These wines are among the newest to achieve AOC status (in 2006), but the Orleans vineyards' history goes back further than that. These white, red, and rosé wines were once the favourites in royal courts across Europe and are currently undergoing a renaissance. The vineyards grow between Mareau-aux-Prés and Cléry-Saint-André, on the southern banks of the Loire. Light and fruity, these wines are typical of their region, and are formed using mainly pinot noir and pinot meunier grapes (for the reds). They are highly enjoyable with meat and game from the Sologne Valley.



Did you know?

Orleans has its own beer, the unfiltered "Johannique" made using the wheat and barley cultivated in Beauce, heather honey from Sologne, and not to mention the hops, spices, orange zest and oranges. All of these flavours combine to give the beer a rich blend of aromas, and a subtle balance between sweet and bitter that marks the product out as 100% local.

Accommodation

Whether you prefer boutique or chain hotels, cottages or guest houses, Loiret offers you a range of accommodation, in ideal locations throughout the département for every budget, for however long you choose to stay.



Hotels

Play lord of the manor and wake up on the banks of the Loire or in the forest in a comfortable lodge, or perhaps you prefer the hustle and bustle of the city... In the Loiret there is a hotel to suit all tastes; whether you are looking for an authentic Loiret experience, a warm welcome, or just a change of scenery, whether you succumb to the charm of old stone buildings or are swept off your feet by contemporary architecture. Family-run, chain and independent hotels are all ready to give you a warm welcome.

www.loiret-booking.com

Hôtels-Restaurant Logis de France Network

Found mostly in small villages and committed to complying with a common charter, these hotels promote comfort, quality regional dining, conviviality and an individual welcome.

www.loiret.logishotels.com

Self-catering cottages and B&Bs

Certified by Gîtes de France and Clévacances, a self-catering cottage offers you the comforts of home, while the B&Bs are a chance to enjoy the traditional hospitality of the owners who welcome you in to their home. Whichever you choose, you will find authentic, traditional accommodation in the countryside or in town.

www.loiret-booking.com



FOR ALL INFORMATION

Tourist offices (OT) welcome you and inform you about all leisure activities, museums, accommodations, restaurants...

• OT BEAUGENCY

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 44 54 42
tourisme.beaugency@wanadoo.fr
www.tourismebeaugency.com

• OT BEAULIEU-SUR-LOIRE

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 35 87 24
otsibeaul@wanadoo.fr
www.beaulieu-sur-loire.fr/tourisme.html

• OT BELLEGARDE

Tel: 02 38 90 25 37
officetourisme.bellegarde@orange.fr
www.bellegarde-45.fr

• OT BONNY-SUR-LOIRE

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 31 57 71
otsidebonny@wanadoo.fr
www.bonny-sur-loire.fr

• OT BRIARE

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 31 24 51
tourisme.briare@wanadoo.fr
www.tourisme-briare.com

• OT CHÂTEAU-RENARD

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 95 39 53
otsi.chateau-renard@wanadoo.fr
www.chateau-renard-tourisme.com

• OT CHÂTEAUNEUF-SUR-LOIRE

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 58 44 79
tourisme.chateauneufsurloire@wanadoo.fr
www.tourisme-chateauneufsurloire.fr

• OT CHÂTILLON-COLIGNY

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 96 02 33
tourisme.chatilloncoligny@wanadoo.fr

• OT CHÂTILLON-SUR-LOIRE

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 31 42 88
otsi.chatillonsurloire@wanadoo.fr
www.chatillon-sur-loire.com

• OT CLÉRY-SAINT-ANDRÉ

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 45 94 33
o-tourismedeclery@wanadoo.fr
www.ccvaldardoux.fr

• COURTENAY TOURIST INFORMATION POINT

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 97 27 87
tourisme@courtenay45.com

• OT FERRIÈRES-EN-GÂTINAIS ET DES 4 VALLÉES

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 96 58 86
info@tourisme-ferrieres-loiret.fr
www.tourisme-ferrieres-loiret.fr

• OT GIEN

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 67 25 28
ot.gien@wanadoo.fr
www.gien.fr

• OT GERMIGNY-DES-PRÉS (VAL D'OR ET FORÊT)

Tel: + 33(0)2 38 58 27 97
oti@cc-valdorefforet.com
www.tourisme-loire-foret.com

• OT JARGEAU

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 59 83 42
otsi.jargeau@wanadoo.fr
www.jargeau-tourisme.com

• OT LA FERTÉ-SAINT-AUBIN

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 64 67 93
info@otsilafertesaintaubin.com
www.otsilafertesaintaubin.com

• OT LORRIS

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 94 81 42
otsi-lorris@orange.fr
www.tourisme-lorris.com

• OT MALESHERBES

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 34 81 94
office.tourisme@cc-malesherbois.com
www.cc-malesherbois.com

• MARDIÉ TOURIST INFORMATION POINT

www.tourisme-canton-chechy.fr
Open from June to August only

• OT MEUNG-SUR-LOIRE (VAL DES MAUVES)

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 44 32 28
contact@tourismevaldesmauves.fr
www.tourisme-valdesmauves.fr

• OT MONTARGIS

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 98 00 87
contact@tourisme-montargis.fr
www.tourisme-montargis.fr

• OT NIBELLE

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 32 23 66
officetourisme.nibelle@orange.fr

• OT NOGENT-SUR-VERNISON

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 97 68 39
otsi.nogent.sv@wanadoo.fr

• OT ORLÉANS

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 24 05 05
infos@tourisme-orleans.com
www.tourisme-orleans.com

• OT PITHIVIERS

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 30 50 02
accueil@tourisme-pithiviers.fr
www.ville-pithiviers.fr

• OT SAINT-BENOÎT-SUR-LOIRE (VAL D'OR ET FORÊT)

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 35 79 00
oti@cc-valdorefforet.com
www.tourisme-loire-foret.com

• OT SULLY-SUR-LOIRE (LOIRE ET SOLOGNE)

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 36 23 70
tourisme@sully-loire-sologne.fr
www.sully-loire-sologne.fr

To welcome you and inform you during your stay, your tourist office offer you free and secure Wifi internet access.