

Loches Cité royale

GROUPS AND
PROFESSIONALS
2019

TWICE AS MANY STORIES
IN LOIRE VALLEY

— VIVA —
Leonardo
Da Vinci!
— 2019 —
500 ANS DE
RENAISSANCE(S)
EN CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE

Un site du | Conseil départemental d'Indre & Loire

TOURAINES
LE DÉPARTEMENT 





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Two monuments one unique experience

While Renaissance châteaux flourished in the Loire Valley, medieval fortresses were more rare. Due to the remarkable character of its residence and keep, Loches is home to one of the most beautiful fortified cities in France which dominates the town and the bucolic Indre valley.

The residence is an architectural gem of the end of the Middle Ages and welcomed Joan of Arc, Anne of Brittany and King Charles VII's favourite, Agnès Sorel.

An unusual figure on the Loire Valley château scene, the 37-metre high keep is a masterpiece of 11th century military architecture and one of the best-preserved in Europe. Its many painted and engraved inscriptions enable visitors to soak up the world of prison at the time.

A new experience for visitors launched in 2018 with never-before-seen scenography in an interactive tour packed with audio, videos and projections. This journey takes visitors through five centuries of history, just 40 minutes from Beauval Zoo.



One place, two monuments

As the property of Indre & Loire Council, the two monuments (residence and keep) have been pooled under the same name, the Cité Royale, relating to the place's topography (a fortified city) and history (royal if you think about all the rulers who visited or stayed in Loches at the end of the Middle Ages).

A scenographic tour

The Cité Royale de Loches launched a new interactive tour for visitors in spring 2018. Audio markers, information panels, video animation, projections, fifteen areas have been designed (six in the residence and nine in the keep) and furnished in the spirit of the site, covering almost 700m².

The myriad exciting interactive tools based on several themes - iconic figures, site functions, architectural features - are suitable for all ages.

Soak up five centuries of history

The residence tour

- The residence's first floor is the main exhibition area.
- The tour showcases the different areas by blending lighting, audio ambience, specific fixtures (bed, podium, canopy) and multimedia features (audio benches, animated projection, digital "flipper").

The keep tour

- The Round Tower and Martelet Tower are the main exhibition areas.
- Every themed area is introduced by specific lighting, a stand and audio markers.
- The tour combines multimedia features (touchscreen, audio markers) and interactive items (chessboard).

All the communication tools and audio and video content are in both French and English.



The royal residence

A key site in French history

The Loches royal residence is an architectural gem from the end of the Middle Ages (rayonnant and flamboyant Gothic) with a terraced wall overlooking a Town of Art and History. The views stretch deep into the Indre Valley as far as the vast Loches Forest.

Not only was the royal residence the Valois dynasty's favourite place to stay but it also bears the stamp of countless historical figures and influential women. It has two parts to it that were built in different periods: the Louis I of Anjou residence (14th century), extended during the reign of Charles VIII and Louis XII by the Anne of Brittany residence (15th century).

- **Joan of Arc** met Charles VII here. After forcing the English to surrender in Orléans on May 8th 1429, later on that month Joan went to meet the king, who was staying in Loches at the time, to convince him to accept "a worthy crown" in Reims. She shook him out of apathy and won him over with her charisma and powers of persuasion.
- **Anne of Brittany** stayed here several times and left her mark by building a flamboyant Gothic-style oratory here. Through her court she produced a whole series of artistic work that made their mark on her era which the design of her room pays tribute to.
- **Agnès Sorel** met Charles VII in 1443. She was from minor Picardy nobility, part of the Duchess of Anjou's court and captivated the king with her beauty and spirit. Charles VII made her lady-in-waiting to his wife, Marie of Anjou, and she became his mistress.

THE GRANDES HEURES OF ANNE OF BRITTANY

Touraine painter Jean Bourdichon (1457-1521) was the "painter and valet to the king's chamber" and Anne of Brittany commissioned him to produce this masterpiece of 476 pages and 337 marginal illuminations in 1508: The Grandes Heures of Anne of Brittany. The book of hours is a summary of the flora and fauna that Anne had a habit of seeing and admiring in the Amboise, Blois and Loches grounds every day. This publication is a spiritual book-come-nature encyclopaedia whose energetic layout brings its images to life.





The keep

Dive into the world of prison at the end of the Middle Ages

The impressive keep was built in the 11th century to defend the vulnerable side of the fortress and form an impressive ensemble, alongside the Round Tower and Martelet Tower, that led from the royal residence along the medieval town's streets. It has spectacular views from the top that visitors can enjoy.

Twists and towers...

Loches keep

Because of its impressive size, level of comfort (lighting, fireplaces, latrines etc.) and the care taken over its construction, this "palace tower" is a jewel of castle construction of its time.

It has set a benchmark because of its exceptional condition for an early 11th century building that peaked at 37m.

The main tower had a complex traffic system so it was heated by overlaid chimneys and let light in through countless curved windows.

The New Tower

The 38m high tower was built on a rock between 1443 and 1456 and was a new keep intended to replace the Roman one. The new tower had a residential function to begin with before it gradually turned into a sort of citadel then a royal prison under Louis XI. The partitioning and many rooms are examples of sophisticated architecture from the end of the Middle Ages. Its elements of comfort explain why this place was chosen to imprison high-ranking prisoners.

Martelet Tower

On the other hand, this tower seems to have been assigned to prison duties since its construction. The lower part of the tower is built straight into the side of the rocky spur which houses a network of corridors.

The cage dungeon

Upon his accession (1460), Louis XI finished - begun under Charles VII - turning the Loches keep into a royal prison. The military site became a place for imprisonment. The king's (disputed) reputation for cruelty to his enemies comes from the symbol of "iron cages". One of them has been made into a life-size reconstruction. The new scenographic tour features a quiz with 8 questions to separate fact from fiction about these cages.

The medieval garden

Hidden treasure, at the foot of the donjon, the medieval garden with its pergola, its lawn seats and wicker barriers, offers a contrast singularly serene in this mineral environment.



PROFILE OF... BEAK TOWERS

Three almond towers, known as "beak towers", were built during the decisive battle between the Plantagenets and Capetians, next to the primitive outer wall (12th century) to strengthen the keep's defensive system on the south side. These 23m tall 3-storey structures were the crown jewels of military architecture at the time. Their almond shape ricocheted artillery fire and lessened its impact.

Visitors can gaze at them from a footpath in the moats on the south-east perimeter of the rocky spur.

PROFILE OF... PRISON ART

Graffiti from the late 19th century (house, mill, lighthouse etc.) bear witness to the Round Tower's occupation when it was a county jail.

Graffiti in Martelet Tower proves that it was used as a dungeon from the 18th to the early 20th century. You can see pencil drawings and writing, engravings of crucifixes, a church, boat, faces, profiles, crosses, tools and even a long inscription in Latin.



TIMELINE

1013 – 1035

Fulk III, Count of Anjou, had a quadrangular 4-storey **keep** built dominating the southern side of the château.



1440 – 1460

Charles VII had a gate-tower and a new main tower built (the **Round Tower** or "new tower").



SECOND HALF
OF THE 15TH
CENTURY

Martelet Tower was probably built during the reign of Louis XI



New for 2019

The HistoPad® tablet unlocks the keep and opens the doors to history

Digital technology and the latest innovations in augmented reality have made exploring the age-old Loches keep a unique experience for all ages!

Recreate bygone architectural features

Areas that have disappeared or have now been converted are brought back to life for visitors to see: rampart siege and battle, construction work, medieval prisons, 11th century great hall in the keep. The space on the main tower's ground floor no longer has a floor or ceiling but was once a stateroom, courtroom and banquet hall. An 11th century cabinet scene is brought back to life here with Fulk III, Count of Anjou, surrounded by the leaders of his army.

Immerse visitors in an atmosphere

That's undoubtedly the most spectacular feature of the HistoPad©: over the course of the tour, visitors can soak up 360° experiences of the areas with reconstructed fixtures and settings. You can now be together in the heart of a medieval battlefield or take a peek in Count Fulk III's bedroom! 10 immersive sights have been designed at the Loches Keep.

A fun-filled tour

Children can take part in a treasure hunt and teenagers can pose for a historical selfie. This lively and fun tour becomes a social and interactive experience.

Highlights:

This tour feature is automatically suggested to all visitors and is included in the monument entry fee.

Available in 6 languages: French, English, Spanish, Italian, German and Dutch.



2019 Highlights

Loches Medieval Days

Friday July 19th & August 2nd 2019

Medieval events: the Cité Royale buzzes with medieval games and craft demonstrations from 11am. A must-do before venturing into town for the Medieval Nights.

Christmas in the land of châteaux

Saturday December 6th 2019

to Sunday January 5th 2020

«Winter tales at the Cité Royale» - Throughout December, the Cité Royale de Loches invites children and adults to experience this year's interactive tour devoted to the wonderful «The Nutcracker» written by Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (published in 1816).



500 Years of the Renaissance

«Sforza, a patron in prison» exhibition

April 6th > September 22nd 2019

The 5th centenary of the Renaissance in the Loire Valley is a chance to host an exhibition that restores this patron prince to his rightful place after his rise to power was shattered by the Italian wars and he died in captivity in the Loches keep.

Leonardo da Vinci's patron and commissioner of his famous The Last Supper, Ludovico Sforza «The Moor» (1451-1508) may have faded from memory but he will be put back into the spotlight by the Cité Royale de Loches. The exhibition draws on several artworks and illustrated documents reflecting his personality and role to show how the Duke of Milan helped a new art movement flourish. The exhibition will focus on the Moor's downfall and imprisonment in the Loches keep (1504-1508) where, one last time, his paintings captured the memory of Sforza Castle in Milan whose interior was designed by Leonardo.

The exhibition is the opportunity to introduce the general public to work and pieces loaned by top French museums including the Louvre, Musée de Cluny, Musée de l'Armée and Cité de la Céramique – Sèvres and Limoges.

Included in monument entry fee.

To continue: at the Château Royal d'Amboise - «The Death of Leonardo da Vinci: the construction of a myth» - May 2nd to September 2nd 2019

In partnership with the French National Library (B.N.F), the Château Royal d'Amboise is hosting an exhibition entitled «The Death of Leonardo da Vinci: the construction of a myth» based on the great painting by François-Guillaume Ménageot.

www.chateau-amboise.com

Programmation

VIVA

Leonardo
Da Vinci !

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Bring the family!

The Cité Royale, a "joyful" cultural site!

The Cité Royale de Loches is committed to a quality hospitality and service programme for visiting families: in 2018 it became part of the "joyful" cultural site community by signing the Môm'Art association charter.



A fun-filled visitor's guide

Young visitors (7-11 year olds) haven't been forgotten and can explore the Cité Royale with a fun-filled guide packed with observation games and riddles, led by two characters created especially for the new scenography, Emeline & Amaury.

Choose your tour

Tour of the Cité Royale de Loches!

Visiting a castle should be unique. It must give you the opportunity to enjoy a special experience, alone, with family, friends or as part of a group.

Unaccompanied tour



- with guide map (2 hrs) available in French/English/Spanish/Italian/German/Dutch/Russian
- New - Tour with multimedia tablet: **HistoPad**® (French/English/Spanish/Italian/German/Dutch) in the keep (augmented reality tour).
- Unaccompanied family tour with the "Émeline & Amaury" booklet (approx. 2 hrs) in F/GB

Guided tour



Included in the entry fee, 11am and 2pm at the keep and royal residence in July and August.

Opening times are subject to modification the rest of the year.

Useful information

Open all year
(exc. Christmas Day and New Year's Day).
Opening days and times:
April 1st - September 30th: 9am-7pm
October 1st - March 31st: 9.30am-5pm

Standard rate: 10,50 Euros.
Discounted rate: 8,50 Euros.
Professional rates : 7,50 Euros groups
Free for under 7s.
Groups : over 15 persons (free for driver and guide)

How to get there



FROM TOURS

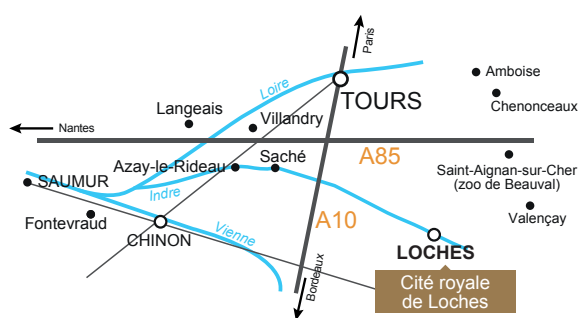
D943, towards Châteauroux
40 mins south of Tours

FROM PARIS

A10, junction 18, towards Amboise (D976)
then towards Loches (D31)

Nearby attractions:

Château de Chenonceau – 30 minutes
Beauval Zoo – 35 minutes
Le Grand-Pressigny Prehistory Museum - 35 minutes
Château Royal d'Amboise – 40 minutes



Sales contact

Muriel VARIN

mvarin@departement-touraine.fr
06 80 41 79 85

Prepare your stay

Tourist board : www.loches-valdeloire.com

Reservation

Cité royale de Loches - 37600 Loches
Reservation : + 33 (0)2 47 59 01 32
www.citeroyaleloches.fr
citeroyaleloches@departement-touraine.fr

