

ITINERARY

Vallée
du
Loir

LA CHARTRE-SUR-LE-LOIR



VILLES
& PAYS
D'ART &
D'HISTOIRE

SOME HISTORY...



THE TOWN'S ORIGINS

La Chartre-sur-le-Loir was likely to have been a barrier to control the passage on both sides of the Loir in the Middle Ages, and then a market town for trade under the Ancien Régime. Until the French Revolution, the territory belonged partly to the province of Bas-Vendômois and partly to the province of Maine. It is crossed through by two ancient roads forming a T: one running along the Loir, from East to West, and one coming from the North that meets the hillside of the old castle. The road to Tours (RD 9) surfaced at the end of the 18th century. The population settled between the arms of the Loir, whose route has changed over the centuries, and the hillside, which has also "moved" over time. Troglodyte housing was important in rue de Châtillon and outside of the village, in the hamlet of Caves.

IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The Medieval remnants which are of military or religious origin are only slightly visible. Observation reveals the existence of a double mound, ditches and embankments for defence, as well as a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary on the hill overlooking the town. It is not possible to know which other form the castle may have taken. La Chartre-sur-le-Loir

was a seigneurie, then a barony at the end of the 16th century, then a marquisate in 1697. The village was protected by three gateways and ditches, which have been mentioned in an archival record from 1581.

There were also three priory-parishes (St. Nicholas, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Vincent de Châtillon), St. Vincent parish church, a general hospital near the bridge of St. Mary Magdalen, and a leper house ('maladrerie') at the exit of La Chartre-sur-le-Loir, which gave its name to the hamlet of la Maladrerie. All these buildings have been destroyed.

UNDER THE ANCIEN RÉGIME

At the end of the Middle Ages, the town had suffered greatly from the Hundred Years' War. In 1496, King Charles VIII granted four annual fairs. The heart of the village began to revive in the 17th century. This period was when the Courtoux family settled in La Chartre-sur-le-Loir, who gave the town its barony in 1631. In the middle of the century, Jacques de Courtoux built a hall of justice in the square (Place de la République).



IN THE 19th CENTURY

New streets are laid. La Chartre-sur-le-Loir becomes more compact. The town gains the emblematic buildings of the time: town hall, schools and a savings bank. With its economic and business development, it also sees the installation of the railway station (Paris-Bordeaux line, 1879), as well as the tram (to Le Mans, 1884). The town's development can also be seen through the growing number of market places, inns and shop fronts.

IN THE 20th CENTURY

At the beginning of the century La Chartre-sur-le-Loir is a bustling village with many shops and artisans. Horse races become a social gathering. After the First World War, there is a growth in green and blue tourism, which is promoted by the railway line. From the 1960s, La Chartre-sur-le-Loir gains new land to build housing estates and community facilities in line with planning regulations and to meet the new needs of socio-economic development. In 1982, at the exit of the town going towards Lhomme, a very original brick building was built: this is the emergency centre built under the plans of the architect Guy Bisson (1932-2007).

TODAY

La Chartre-sur-le-Loir has around 1,500 inhabitants. Tourism remains an important activity. Two winemakers live in the town. The area is rich in vineyards and benefits from the protected origin labels (AOC) Jasnières and Coteaux du Loir. On the road towards Marçon, the former Petit Moulin was transformed into a cotton mill in the 19th century and became an important industrial site. It is the headquarters of the Rustin factory, taking its name from the inventor of the puncture patch (trademark since 1922) used to repair bike tyres.

1. Old tannery

2. Private washing places along the Loir





KEY

- 1 PLACE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE
- 2 FORMER HÔTEL DU CHEVAL-BLANC
- 3 HÔTEL DE FRANCE
- 4 RUE NATIONALE
- 5 RUE SAINT-NICOLAS
- 6 PLACE SAINT-NICOLAS
- 7 FORMER BOYS' SCHOOL
- 8 RUE GERVAIS CHEVALLIER
- 9 "LES TRÈFLES" HOUSE
- 10 FORMER GIRLS' SCHOOL
- 11 RUE DE LA MADELEINE
- 12 FORMER GIRLS' THEN BOYS' SCHOOL
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- 14 JEANNE D'ARC TOWER (JOAN OF ARC)
- 15 RUE DE L'HÔTEL DE VILLE
- 16 POST OFFICE, FORMER TOWN HALL
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- 19 SAINT-VINCENT PARISH CHURCH
- 20 RUE FRANÇOIS COUDREUX
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- 22 FORMER NURSERY SCHOOL
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SHORT ITINERARY

DISCOVERY

ITINERARY

THERE ARE TWO POSSIBLE ITINERARIES:

"SHORT ITINERARY": FOR A VISIT LASTING AROUND 1 HOUR TO DISCOVER THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE SMALL TOWN.

"LONG ITINERARY": FOR A VISIT OF ABOUT 2 HOURS TO RETRACE THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN WITH SUGGESTIONS OF ADDITIONAL TOURS.

1. The square prior to 1904, with the hall

2. Hôtel de France

3. Detail of the railing on rue Saint Nicolas: 1787

Starting point, place de la République.

1- PLACE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE

Previously called Place du marché or market halls, this was the most important square in La Chartre-sur-le-Loir. Markets, fairs and festivals were held here up until the 20th century.

It was built close to the communal mills (Grand Moulin, rue de Syke), where the inhabitants would grind their grain. This was adjacent to the communal oven, where the townspeople would bake their bread. In the 17th century, the baron of La Chartre-sur-le-Loir commissioned the building of a covered market in the centre of the square, above which a justice audience (hall) was located. The last hall, which was octagonal, was destroyed in 1904.

2 - FORMER HÔTEL DU CHEVAL-BLANC

At No. 7, the Hôtel du Cheval-Blanc ran for nearly three centuries. Between 1837 and 1870, it was also used as a coaching inn for horses.

3- HÔTEL DE FRANCE

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Pasteau family established the hotel in the location of the communal oven [currently No. 20]. The family then expanded its influence by buying the nearby buildings. The hotel was then enlarged with a second floor and given an “Art Deco” façade. Hôtel de France was made famous by the Aston Martin racing team, which made it its headquarters during the 24-hour Le Mans race in the 1950s. The tradition continues. The “Bistro” room is decorated with photos and autographs of famous drivers who have staid in the hotel.





OPTION: PANORAMA

Take rue Marc de Courtoux, which goes up to the cemetery. You'll see a magnificent panorama overlooking the town: in front of you, between the Loir and the hillside, you'll see the historic core of the village, and on the right, the contemporary district of la Pléiade.

OPTION: JOAN OF ARC TOWER

Before going down rue Nationale, take rue Saint-Vincent, a small ancient trail. Turn right towards the Saint-Vincent stone staircase. The trail once led to Saint-Vincent parish church, which has been destroyed. You can then continue up to the Joan of Arc Tower (20 minutes).

4- RUE NATIONALE

Formerly known as Grande rue, it is one of the town's main streets. It is a street just for shops. The road was divided into lots in the 17th century, along the hillside of the castle. In the 21st century, houses were rebuilt and the façades were restored and given wooden shop fronts. In the past, behind the houses there were outbuildings for stables, sheds or utility rooms, which have now been destroyed or redeveloped, even a well, or one or more

cellars dug into the hillside (odd numbers). The houses with even numbers had the same type of outbuildings but without cellars, often with the ability to draw water from the Loir.

LONG ITINERARY: Pass by Place de la Liberté and follow rue Saint-Nicolas.

SHORT ITINERARY: Turn right to reach rue de l'Hôtel de ville (number 15, on page 12).

5- RUE SAINT-NICOLAS

This street owes its name to a former priory-parish, which belonged to the Trinité de Vendôme abbey. This old street features constructions ranging from the 16th to the 20th centuries. At No. 19-21, you'll find a large 16th century house, whose windows were remade and given wrought iron railings in 1787, as shown by the detail on the upper floor. Another type of building altogether is the 20th century holiday home named Doux Séjour, with its colourful exterior, asymmetrical roof and glass structure sheltering the entrance (No. 41).



1. “Les Trèfles”

6- PLACE SAINT-NICOLAS

This partly corresponds to the location of the church and cemetery of the former medieval priory-parish. The church and the dwellings of the priory-parish were destroyed in the early 19th century.

Keep going and pass in front of Place Mme Mauclerc to reach the start of rue Émile Simon.

7- FORMER BOYS’ SCHOOL

At No. 1 rue Émile Simon, La Chartre-sur-le-Loir's first public school for boys was built in the mid-19th century. It ran until 1909, before being sold by the town for private ownership. The courtyard with a playground and toilets still remain at the back of this tall and wide building.

The land behind the school was formerly located in Marçon. Part of this municipality was attached to La Chartre-sur-le-Loir in 1908, and vice versa, part of La Chartre-sur-le-Loir met Marçon.

8- RUE GERVAIS CHEVALLIER

The road was built at the end of the 19th century and bears the surname of a local family, namely several Gervais Chevallier who were mayors and/or notaries at the end of the 18th and 19th centuries.

9- “LES TRÈFLES” HOUSE

Built at the beginning of the 20th century, the house features a doorway denoting clovers and brick and limestone outbuildings. It evokes a holiday style and is currently a cantonal social centre.



THE LOIR IN LA CHARTRE-SUR-LE-LOIR

Come back to Place Saint-Nicolas and head towards the bridge where you can admire the view of the Loir. The river was both an asset and a constraint for the local population, which constantly had to contend with water, the risk of flooding and mud. It has required bridges, dams, dikes and embankments to be built. The river also contributed to the town's economic, crafts and industrial development. Several mills and tanneries operated for centuries. Numerous public and especially private washing places were built along the Loir.





1

10- FORMER GIRLS' SCHOOL

The school was built and inaugurated in 1909 to replace the girls' school on rue de la Madeleine. It is a construction in the style of its time, with a two-storey house with lodgings for teachers and another building to hold classes with large windows at the back of the courtyard.

OPTION: MADELEINE DISTRICT

If you have time, at the end of rue Gervais Chevallier, turn left onto rue de la Madeleine. This area was divided into lots in the 19th century. You'll then reach the contemporary district of la Pléiade. Further on, avenue des Déportés connects the village to the hamlet of la Maladrerie, with its retirement home (EHPAD Catherine de Courtoux) built on the site of a former hospice. For a century, this has always been a bustling district-street thanks to its close proximity to the railway station of La Chartre-sur-le-Loir.

11- RUE DE LA MADELEINE

This is one of the town's main streets. It owes its name to the former Madeleine priory-parish, which operated up until the French Revolution. Until that time, the district was only built around this religious building.

12- FORMER GIRLS' THEN BOYS' SCHOOL

At No. 32, this beautiful house back from the street was completed in 1858. It had outbuildings and a washing place on the Loir. The municipality purchased the building in around 1880 to make it into a public school for girls. In 1909, it became the public school for boys, as the girl's school was moved to rue Gervais Chevallier. The town council sold it for private ownership in 2016.

Alternatively, at the end of rue Gervais Chevallier, you can also take right onto rue de la Madeleine.

1. La Madeleine in 1703
(old plans)

2. Former girls' school:
housing for teachers

3. Former presbytery

4. Joan of Arc Tower on
the hill of the castle



13- FORMER PRESBYTERY

This belongs to the town council. The site is enclosed by walls and stands in the location of the former Madeleine priory-parish, with a church, cemetery, home of the prior and outbuildings (stable, utility rooms, bakery, etc.). In the 19th century, the church was destroyed and the first town hall was built in its place. Set between the courtyard and the garden, the Presbytery was partly rebuilt and enlarged in the 19th century. All that remain are the buildings dating back to the Ancien Régime, on the right.

14- JOAN OF ARC TOWER

Look up! The large hill overlooking the town hosted La Chartre-sur-le-Loir castle.

This castle was made up of a double mound, moats and earth embankments. There was also a hexagonal tower on one of the mounds and a seigniorial chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, both of which have been destroyed. The tower that you can see, topped by a statue of Joan of Arc, was built in 1921. It contains a funerary chapel with plaques commemorating the “children of the canton” who died during the war from 1914 to 1918 and in other wars.

A SMALL TOWN OF ARTISTS

Many artists, traders and second-hand goods dealers have settled in La Chartre-sur-le-Loir and its surrounding area. The Boillot family is made up of painters, sculptors, storytellers and more. Michel Boillot created and donated to the town many paintings on ceramics, which are very useful to get your bearings. Look for them on the walls!





1. The tanning dryer
Please note, it is
forbidden to get close.

**2. St. Vincent parish
church**

**3. Stained glass window
of St. Vincent**

15- RUE DE L'HÔTEL DE VILLE

This quiet street was built in the mid-19th century, with the establishment of the town hall. It was initially named rue des Jardins (Garden Street). It runs along one arm of the Loir, where a large tannery was established, whose last brick buildings (see photo on page 2) were demolished at the start of the 21st century. The only remnant of this industry is a large dryer made from brick and wood.

16- POST OFFICE BANK, FORMER TOWN HALL

At No. 2, the building was once the first town hall, built in 1844 on the new street. It was occupied by the municipality until the end of the 20th century.

17- TOWN HALL, FORMER SAVINGS BANK

The savings bank in La Chartre-sur-le-Loir dates from 1878. This beautiful savings bank style building, as seen widely across France, was completed in 1898. Given its large size, it also housed a movie theatre in the 20th century. It was taken over by the municipality to become the town hall at the end of the 20th century.

18- WAR MEMORIAL

This memorial is topped by the crest of the commune of La Chartre-sur-le-Loir. It is the crest of the former priory-parish of St. Nicholas. It depicts a ship below two bishop's staffs, as Nicholas was the patron saint of children but also of sailors, mariners and boatmen. When coloured, these symbols are in gold on a blue background.



19- SAINT-VINCENT PARISH CHURCH

At the beginning of the 19th century, there were no churches left in La Chartre-sur-le-Loir that could welcome followers in good conditions. The medieval parish church of St. Vincent was in a very poor state. Its location, halfway up the hillside above Grande Rue, was deemed too dangerous, so the municipality decided to build a new parish church as well as a small marketplace alongside it.

Also dedicated to St. Vincent, patron of winemakers, the new church was completed in 1834 based on the plans of architect Pierre-Felix Delarue. Considered to be one of the most rare and beautiful neo-classical churches in the Sarthe department, it has been a listed Historical Monument since 2007. The church has a basilica-type layout, i.e. in straight lines with no transepts. Inside, it features an arched vaulted nave, extended with a quarter-sphere choir framed with vaulted edges on the lower sides. All arches are made from plaster. The furniture dates largely from the 19th century.

The organ was commissioned in 1869, after building a triple gallery on the western wall of the church. It is the work of organ builder Henri Thébault (1805-1892), who was buried

in La Chartre-sur-le-Loir. An association was formed to protect it and make it more widely known.

The church's stained glass windows were made between 1894 and 1901 by the painter-glassmaker from Touraine, Jean-Prosper Florence, the successor of Lobin. In addition to St. Vincent, there are several patron saints to whom the old churches of La Chartre-sur-le-Loir have been dedicated, such as those of St. Mary Magdalen and St. Nicholas, as well as St. Julien, the first bishop of le Mans, and St. Martin, one of the first bishops of Tours.



20- RUE FRANÇOIS COUDREUX

In the 18th century, this curved street was called rue de la Ratisse, taking the name of a stream that ran through it, or rue du Gravier. It then received the name of a local benefactor. It features the former post, telegraph and telephone office at No. 44, and the building of the former Treasury at No. 46.

21- SAINTE-MARIE FORMER GIRLS' SCHOOL

At No. 17, the large house with a bell at the top was built in the mid-19th century to accommodate Sainte-Marie girls' school. Like many others, this private school was run by two sisters from the Notre-Dame d'Évron community in Mayenne, and then by the sisters of Providence in Ruillé-sur-Loir. It had a courtyard, toilets, and a garden next to the square [place Jeanne Bourin]. It is now privately owned.

22- FORMER NURSERY SCHOOL

At No. 27, the building currently used as a bank was originally a nursery school in the 19th century. The nursery was founded by Jean-François Coudreux in 1856, as mentioned by the inscription over the entrance. It has Gothic Revival décor typical of the French 19th century. The complex still has a courtyard on the side of place Jeanne Bourin.

23- PLACE JEANNE BOURIN

The novelist Jeanne Bourin (1922-2003), author of best-sellers such as *La Chambre des dames*, spent her childhood holidays in her grandparents' home (later destroyed) at the head of the road to Tours. In her book *La Garenne*, she recalls her happy times in La Chartre-sur-le-Loir. The city has paid tribute to her in 2008 by naming this square after her, which was built 30 or so years ago to relieve congestion in place de la République. A market is held there every Thursday. The other market is held on Sundays in Place de la Liberté.

Go back through Place de la République and then take rue de Syke, after the Hôtel de France.

1. Garret window of a house, dated 1882

2. Former nursery and its courtyard

3. Panorama of the ancient village, with the Grand Moulin and grain silo (on the right)



24- GRAND MOULIN

At No. 8 rue de Syke, the site of the Grand Moulin on the edge of the village, is very old. It was here that the communal mills of the seigneurie of La Chartre-sur-le-Loir turned until the Revolution.

The large building, with its mill wheel, dates back to the mid-19th century. Located nearby was the former grain silo in the period between the two World Wars.

OPTION: LA PLEIADE DISTRICT

If you still have time, continue down rue de Syke to reach avenue de la Pléiade and discover the recent expansion of the town. Built up over several decades from the end of the 1960s, la Pléiade district brings together schools, colleges, sports facilities including a pool, tennis court and sports hall, as well as individual and collective housing.

You can then return to Place de la République taking rue de Châtillon, where you'll find remnants of Troglodyte housing.

« (...) LA CHARTRE GRACIOUSLY SITTING ON THE BANKS OF THE LOIR, SHELTERED BY A STEEP ROCK THAT CROWNS A FORMER ENTRENCHMENT. »

abbé Jean-Louis Denis, *Histoire de la ville et du château de La Chartre-sur-le-Loir*, 1901, republished 2007.

Pays d'art et d'histoire de la vallée du Loir

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Discover the Loir valley, land of art and history

... with a specialised guide, accredited by the Ministry for Culture and Communication. The guide greets you. Your guide is familiar with all the facets of the Loir valley and tells you everything you need to know to understand the landscape and history of the area through its villages. The guide is ready to answer your questions. Don't hesitate.

Le service animation de l'architecture et du patrimoine (architecture and heritage activities department)

organises initiatives for the Loir valley, land of art and history. They propose activities all year round for the local population, tourists, and school groups. They are available to discuss your project.

The Loir valley belongs to the national network of "Villes et Pays d'art et d'histoire" (towns and regions with art and history)

The ministry for culture and communication awards the "Villes et Pays d'art et d'histoire" accreditation to local towns which cultivate their heritage. This title guarantees the competencies of specialised guides and organisers of activities around architecture and heritage, as well as the quality of their participation. The towns and regions promote the diversity of their heritage, from antique remains to 21st century architecture. Today, the network

counts over 180 towns and regions throughout France which offer to share their know-how.

Nearby: Le Mans, Laval, Angers, Saumur, Nantes, Guérande, Fontenay-le-Comte, Tours, Blois, and Vendôme have the "Villes d'art et d'histoire" accreditation. Perche Sarthois, Coëvrons-Mayenne, and Nantes and Loire-Touraine vineyard regions have the "Pays d'art et d'histoire" accreditation.

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