

# ITINERARY

# T O U R S

A STROLL THROUGH  
THE CITY



VILLES  
& PAYS  
D'ART &  
D'HISTOIRE  
DIRE



**Touraine has always known how to enchant: Balzac lauded its harmony and its landscapes, which he thought of as the most beautiful of the country, while Anatole France described it as a land of delights.**

**Tours, the capital of this area, emerges like a rich concentration, a place where heritage takes many shapes: architectural, natural, intangible cultural, industrial and contemporary. In the urban fabric, we thus find vestiges from the origins of the city to modern day, each weaving the portrait of a dynamic and attractive city which is constantly reinventing itself. By telling its story, by presenting its remarkable buildings, its illustrious inhabitants, its traditions and know-how, the identity of the city is revealed: manifold and unexpected, able to ravish all of the senses.**

**As you read these pages, immerse yourself in the charm of our city, which opens its doors to you and reveals all of its characteristics acknowledged by UNESCO. It's now up to you to stroll through the streets and discover its hidden corners and secrets.**

**Christophe Bouchet**  
Maire de Tours

**Jacques Chevtchenko**  
Adjoint au Maire, délégué  
au patrimoine

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**Cover:**

**One of the entrances of the  
Saint-Pierre-le-Puellier Garden  
Timbered house of the Place  
Plumereau**

**1. View of the city from the  
north tower of the cathedral**

# URBAN AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Saint Martin Collegiate Church, undated coloured engraving



2. Aerial view of Tours



## THE ANTIQUE CITY (1st to 4th centuries)

*Caesardunum*, “dune of Caesar”, founded in the 1st century, was the Roman capital of the territory of the *Turones*. The city developed on the left bank of the Loire, from Vieux Tours to the cathedral district and from the Loire to the boulevards, where an ancient necropolis was set up. Archaeological digs have revealed traces of public and private buildings, including a remarkable amphitheatre, the shape of which is repeated in the circular urban fabric to the east of the cathedral. Between the end of the 3rd and the start of the 4th century, during the Migration Period in Europe, the city, like many Gallo-Roman cities, retreated behind an enclosure. In Tours, it encircled an area of 9 hectares. At its centre was a mound, corresponding to what is now the cathedral district. A new bridge was built over the Loire. Numerous vestiges of the ancient enclosure still exist around the château, the cathedral, the Musée des Beaux-Arts and the Viking gardens. Saint Lidoire (338-370) built a *prima ecclesia* in the *castrum*.

## THE MARTINOPOLE, THE CITY OF MARTIN (4th to 13th centuries)

In the 4th century, the tomb of Saint Martin was built to the west of the city, outside the enclosure. The establishment of a pilgrimage from the 5th century led to a proliferation of religious buildings. The basilica, erected in the 6th century on the saint’s tomb, was a key element. Around this, the Martinopole, or the city of Martin, developed, its reach matching today’s Vieux Tours.

With the Norman invasions in the 9th century, the town dug ditches and erected a wooden fence, which was later rebuilt in stone, and became known as Châteauneuf, *castrum novum* or Château de Saint Martin, *castrum Sancti Martini*. In the 11th century, the grand basilica of Saint Martin was built.



1. Timbered houses

2. Tomb of the children of Anne of Brittany and Charles VIII, workshop of Michel Colombe

3. Panoramic view of Tours, Pierre-Antoine Demachy

4. Neo-gothic house, Prébendes District



### THE CITY AT THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES

The Hundred Years' War enforced the construction, between 1356 and 1358, of a fortification called La Clouaison, which united the towns of La Cité and Châteauneuf from 1356 to 1368. Between these two towns, due to a low occupation density, monasteries of the Mendicant Orders were built. From 1440 onward, thanks to Louis XI settling in the castle of Plessis-lès-Tours, Tours became the capital of the kingdom for eighty years. This change in status led to most of the accommodation being reconstructed. The model of mansion houses spread. Crafts and trades grew as never before, while the local bourgeoisie took advantage of the court's presence to get richer. Tours, rivalling with the artistic centre of Paris, became the capital of the arts, where jewellery, embroidery, illuminated manuscripts and silk delighted the royal court and the lords.

### TOURS IN THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD

In Tours, the pivotal period between the Middle Ages and the start of the Modern era was a time of prosperous economic, intellectual and artistic development. Gothic tradition and Italian modernity intermingled in exceptional building projects. The Early Renaissance is visible in religious architecture, such as the Cathedral, the Psalette Cloister and Saint Martin Cloister, and in the mansion houses of the upper class of Tours, such as the Beaune-Semblançay or Goüin mansions. The Psalette Cloister has three galleries with Gothic-style architecture. The northern wing, which dates from the early 16th century, features Renaissance décor with richly decorated doors with little cherubs, or *putti*, and engravings. On the first floor, a group of pilasters give the façade a unique structure. Along with talented artists such as Michel Colombe, Martin and Bastien François or the Italian Giusti brothers, important patrons like Jacques de Beaune, lord of Semblançay, adorned the town with buildings in new shapes and with new decorations.

### THE CITY IN THE MODERN PERIOD

In the 17th century, the walled city was extended with the construction of the new fortified enclosure. This protection doubled the town's area, which now included the suburbs of La Riche and Saint-Pierre-des-Corps. In the 18th century, Tours benefited from a policy which promoted the creation of main roads to connect towns. The new Route d'Espagne which passed through Tours gave the city a north-south route perpendicular to the Loire. An urban shake-up took place as Avenue de Grammont and Rue Royale, which became Rue Nationale after the Revolution, were built over a distance of three kilometres. The urban development plan of Rue Royale presented alternately street-side buildings and courtyard dwellings. This layout is still visible in the lower part of the street. The urbanisation plan included the development of squares and a new stone bridge, now known as Wilson Bridge. The political and administrative centre was moved to the city's northern entrance, on Place Anatole France.

### THE CITY IN THE 19th CENTURY

As the rampart had no further military purpose, it was gradually taken down. It was knocked through in many places, notably to develop the semi-circular Place du Palais. Today called Place Jean Jaurès, it was home to the court house and later the city hall. The city developed southwards with the annexation of the commune of Saint-Étienne-Extra. The arrival of the railway in Tours in 1846 led to the construction of a train station, called "L'Embarcadère" (meaning jetty), a name which recalls the Loire's navigational tradition. The construction was later destroyed in favour of the current station, which is a short distance further south. The resulting activity led to development of the Fuye-Velpeau railway workers' district. The Prébendes district unfolds to the south with a network of perpendicular roads studded with narrow islands. The houses have distinctive street-side façades, each with three or four levels and two to three spans. They feature stone quoins, cast iron balconies supported by sculpted consoles and pediment roof dormers. Between 1872 and 1874, in line with residents' requests, a vast park was developed: the Prébendes d'Oé garden.



### THE 20th CENTURY AND THE THIRTY GLORIOUS YEARS

The 1930s saw a renewal in urbanism and accommodation with the construction of garden cities. The Bords de Loire development, which was built between 1926 and 1930, had 93 houses organised around a square courtyard. The Beaujardin and Jolivet developments built by Marcel Boille were part of a major social advance with the favoured model of individual houses with a garden.

A plan to rebuild Tours was already put forward by the Tours architect Camille Lefèvre in 1940, but the incessant fighting prevented this from happening. Pierre Patout, appointed chief architect of reconstruction, modified the initial project and began to implement it in 1946. Place Anatole-France and Rue Nationale were rebuilt according to the principles of modernised classicism. The public library, built by Pierre Patout, Jean and Charles Dorian between 1954 and 1957, marked the new northern entrance to the city.

In the second half of the 20th century, the lack of housing and demographic growth brought about the construction of new accommodation. The large units of the

districts of Rives du Cher and Sanitas met the needs of this post-war housing crisis.

In 1964, the city grew again thanks to the annexation of the communes of Saint-Symphorien and Sainte-Radegonde, north of Tours, thus doubling the city's area, which was now 3,000 hectares.

### RENOVATION OF VIEUX TOURS

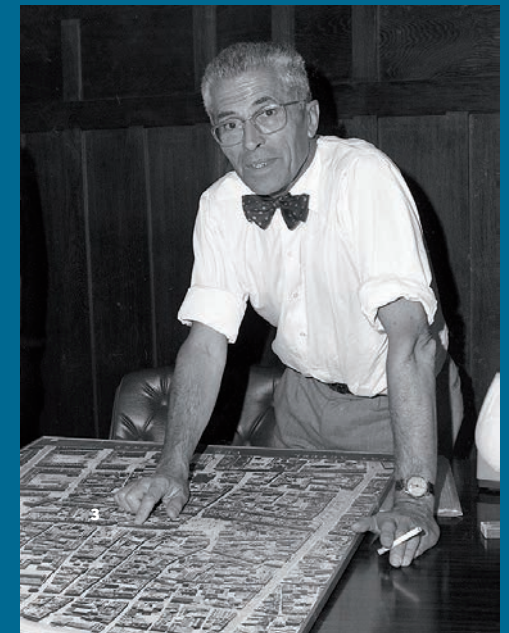
With the emergence of new post-war hygiene standards, the district of Vieux Tours was the subject of a survey. It recommended full restoration, initiated by Pierre Boille in 1960. His work inspired André Malraux, the minister for culture, to create a new law, known as the Malraux Law, in 1962, which established listed sectors. The Listed Protected Sector of Tours, created in 1973 and revised in 2013, extends from Vieux Tours to the cathedral district. Today it unfolds over 150 hectares, making it one of the largest in France. It recognises and promotes the quality of the site in terms of history, architecture, archaeology, art and landscape and justifies its preservation, rehabilitation and promotion in the interests of public good. Since the 2016 law on the freedom of creation, architecture and heritage, the Listed Sectors have been called Outstanding Heritage Sites.



1. Construction of the Rives du Cher District, Verdun crossroad

2. Former rail station of Tours: 'L'embarcadère', lithography, 1854

3. Pierre Boille, lead architect in the restoration of the Vieux Tours, c.1970





# FROM ONE SITE TO ANOTHER

## 1 PALAIS DES CONGRÈS 26 Boulevard Heurteloup 1989-1993

Right across Tours train station, the congress centre was designed by Jean Nouvel, an internationally known architect. The building was part of a project to redevelop the railway station sector. The suspended halls hanging over the boulevard were built using the cantilever principle, invented by English engineers in the 19th century. The architecture plays with shadow effects, reflections and transparency in the urban environment. The ministry for Culture awarded the “Remarkable contemporary architecture label” to the Palais des Congrès in 2016.

## 2 RAILWAY STATION Place du Général-Leclerc 1896-1898

The Embarcadère, the former train station, was on the current site of Place du Général Leclerc until the new train station was built between 1896 and 1898. It consists of two steel halls covered in glass, designed by engineers from the Compagnie du chemin de fer de Paris in Orléans. Only the façade and its decorations were made by Victor Laloux. Typical to Laloux’s architecture, there are four allegorical sculptures on the façade: Limoges, Bordeaux, Toulouse and Nantes are represented by figures of women perched on monumental columns. Inside, large ceramic pictures illustrate some of the most alluring destinations.





1. The Grand Théâtre
2. Former Archbishopric, now Fine Arts Museum
3. St Gatien cathedral
4. Psalette Cloister



**3 GRAND THÉÂTRE**  
**34 rue de la Scellerie**  
**1869-1889**

This Italian-style theatre was built by Léon Rohard in 1869. The monumental entrance is crowned with a pediment decorated with an allegorical sculpture group representing Comedy, Poetic Inspiration and Tragedy. Rich decors by Jean Hardion, a student of Charles Garnier, bedeck the walls and ceilings, thus contributing to the splendor of the Neoclassical architecture.

**4 FORMER ARCHBISHOPRIC, MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS**  
**Place François-Sicard**  
**12th - 18th centuries**

The former Archbishop's Palace was built against the Gallo-Roman enclosure, of which the tower to the west and visible foundations in the palace "basements" still exist. The current building, which succeeded earlier structures, is mainly the work of two men: Monseigneur Bertrand d'Eschaux ordered construction of the first building in the 17th century and Monseigneur Rosset de Fleury expanded the structure in the 18th century with the addition of a wing. The site has a vast garden decorated with mosaiculture and a remarkable Lebanese cedar tree. In 1910, the former archbishop's palace became the Fine Arts Museum. It is home to antique statues (1st to 3rd centuries), works of Primitive Italian art and Neoclassical masterpieces. Work by well-known artists is on display: Mantegna, Rubens, Rembrandt, Champaigne, Delacroix, Monet and Degas.

**5 TOURS CATHEDRAL**  
**Place de la Cathédrale**  
**12th - 16th centuries**

Dedicated to Saint Gatien, the first bishop of Tours, the current building is the result of over three centuries of construction. The choir is one of the most proficient examples of 13th-century architecture and its stained glass windows are absolutely exceptional. The two towers, which have become symbols of the city, combine Gothic architecture and the heights of the Early Renaissance: at the time of construction, their domes were the first of their kind. The tomb of the children of Charles VIII and Anne of Brittany, completed in 1507 and placed here in 1810, is a masterpiece of this transition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

**6 PSALETTE CLOISTER**  
**Place de la Cathédrale**  
**12th - 16th centuries**

Built between 1442 and 1524, Psalette Cloister combines Gothic architecture, with its buttresses and ribbed vaults, and Renaissance architecture with doors featuring Italian-style motifs, coffered ceilings and a spiral staircase reminiscent of the one in the Francis I wing at Blois. All of the décor was accomplished with great care and attests to the quality of work in Tours from the start of the French Renaissance.



**1. The castle of Tours, right along the river Loire**

**2. Timbered House, place Foire-le-Roi**

**3. Vestiges of a wing of the Beaune-Semblançay mansion house**

**4. Saint Julien Church**



## 7 CHÂTEAU

**Avenue André-Malraux**

**Late 13th - late 18th centuries**

Prompted by Philip III of France, the château of Tours was built to anchor royal presence in Touraine. The 13th-century building, built against the Gallo-Roman ramparts, thus took on a military purpose, as shown by the two preserved medieval defence towers. Along the Loire, the Governors' lodge features Gothic architecture typical of the 15th century. In the 19th century, the establishment of the Meusnier barrack led to the site being redeveloped, which resulted in the construction of the Mars building between the medieval towers. The château is now an exhibition venue thanks to a prestigious partnership with Musée du Jeu de Paume in Paris.

## 8 PLACE FOIRE-LE-ROI

Place Foire le Roi is situated between the former land of Saint-Julien Abbey and the Jacobins monastery, along what is now Rue Colbert. In 1545, Francis I allowed a new free fair, to be created in the city, which gave the square its name. In the Middle Ages, it already welcomed a market, which was the liveliest in the city, and it became the scene for public executions. The Babou de la Bourdaisière mansion was erected in the square and is noteworthy due to its early 16th century Renaissance décor.

## 9 PASSAGE DU CŒUR NAVRÉ

**Access from Rue Colbert and Place**

**Foire le Roi**

**15th - 16th centuries**

The narrowest covered passageway in the city links Rue Colbert to Place Foire le roi. Resulting from the joining of two houses from the 15th and 16th centuries, the Passage du cœur navré was used by convicts to get to the square where their sentence awaited them. According to tradition, it was named after a street sign which showed a pierced heart.

## 10 RUE COLBERT

Parallel to the Loire, Rue Colbert, formerly Grand-Rue, was the most important route in the city until the 18th century. Urbanised at the end of the Middle Ages, it still has many impressive timbered houses with the ochre-red colour typical of the 17th and 18th centuries in Touraine (N°. 25, No. 27). Some houses built in the 19th century copied the models of 18th-century façades, which further strengthens the architectural variety of this street.

## 11 HÔTEL DE BEAUNE-SEMBLANÇAY

**Jardin de Beaune-Semblançay**

**Early 16th century**

Jacques de Beaune, superintendent of finances of Francis I, inherited the mansion house from his father and considerably embellished it. The mansion features decorations from the early Renaissance, such as pilasters with sculpted capitals and diamond-shaped motifs encrusted with slate. The fire that resulted from the bombings in June 1940 destroyed most of this huge building. However, the façade of the gallery and the chapel still survive, attesting to the mastery of the Italian models.

## 12 SAINT JULIEN CHURCH

**20 rue Nationale**

**11th - 13th centuries**

Combining architecture from the 11th, 13th and 16th centuries, Saint Julien church was included on the first list of protected monuments in 1840 by Prosper Mérimée. Sturdy and reaching up 25 metres, the bell-tower-porch is a fine example of Romanesque architecture in Touraine. The capitals display a medieval bestiary, much of which was restored in the 19th century. The building is mainly in the Gothic style, however, and features arcades, triforium and tall windows. The recent stained glass windows were made by Max Ingrand.





1. Wilson Bridge
2. Göüin mansion house
3. Pierre-du-Puy mansion house
4. Le Monstre

**13 WILSON BRIDGE**  
**Loire**  
**1765-1779**

As part of the creation of Route d'Espagne, the Wilson Bridge was built in alignment with Rue Royale. Its construction was initiated by Mathieu de Bayeux between 1765 and 1779 and features innovative architectural characteristics, in particular a perfectly straight apron. The bridge was partly destroyed in the Second World War and its reconstruction began in 1947. Six of the arches and the southern abutment collapsed in 1978. The rebuilt and strengthened structure was inaugurated in 1982.

**14 HÔTEL GOÛIN**  
**25 rue du Commerce**  
**15th - 16th centuries**

This Renaissance-style mansion house is characterised by a façade with three projections. The one in the centre has two loggias crowned with a dormer, while the others are topped with a terrace. The exceptional sculpted décor harmoniously

incorporates Gothic motifs (canopied niches, gables with brackets featuring plant motifs) and Renaissance motifs (grooved pilasters, engravings). The architectural purpose is clearly imprinted with a desire for monumentality, demonstrated by the addition of a ten-step stairway in front of the central projection, but also the bold aesthetic choice to position the stairway in the back of the house.

**15 PLACE PLUMEREAU**  
**15th - 20th centuries**

Named to pay homage to Charles Plumereau, who donated several houses to the city, Place Plumereau is famous for its timbered houses characteristic of accommodation in Tours in medieval times. They typically have four levels with jettied upper-storeys. The Square and its surrounding area were restored in the early 1960s, at the initiative of Pierre Boille, with the desire to promote and preserve heritage. Today, the square is very lively and friendly, a perfect place to bask in the beauty of this remarkable historical setting.

**16 HÔTEL PIERRE-DU-PUY**  
**16 rue Briçonnet**  
**Ca 1480**

Built for Pierre du Puy, a trader and bourgeois established in Tours, this hotel has the characteristics of Flemish architecture: brick for the general execution and a stepped gable. The façade features sculpted décor which is typical of the end of the Middle Ages. Ogee arches, cornice brackets, statues featuring bestiary and engravings decorated with foliage thus adorn the front of the house. The rope running along the front on the ground floor level evokes the cordelière, emblem of Anne of Brittany, chosen as a sign of devotion to Saint Francis of Assisi.

**17 LE MONSTRE**  
**Place du Grand-Marché**  
**2004**

Installed since 2004 on Place du Grand-Marché, Le Monstre by Xavier Veilhan renews the identity of the Vieux Tours district. The very simple statue represents a monster

that is as fearsome as it is protective. It is a steel structure covered in polystyrene and glass fibre painted in silver. The artist completely reinterpreted medieval imagery and used new forms and materials, making this piece of work incredibly modern.

**18 PORTAIL DES TRÉSORIERS DE SAINT-MARTIN**  
**54-56 place du Grand-Marché**  
**Late 15th century**

The Treasury, a symbol of the authority of the Canons, was built at the end of the 15th century in the old Châteauneuf district. The gateway on Place du Grand-Marché is adorned with motifs that are characteristic of the flamboyant Gothic style, such as sculpted canopies which frame the windows topped with finials. The gateway is the vestige of an important residence which has now gone.



**1. The Châteauneuf square: Tour Charlemagne and Saint Martin Basilica**

**2. City Hall**

**VESTIGES OF SAINT MARTIN'S COLLEGIATE CHURCH (FORMER BASILICA):**

**19 TOUR DE L'HORLOGE**

**20 TOUR CHARLEMAGNE**

**Rue des Halles**

**11th - 12th centuries**

True symbols of the city, these two towers are the only real vestiges of the medieval collegiate church, which was destroyed between 1798 and 1802. The Tour de l'Horloge (50m) was part of the main façade, while Tour Charlemagne (56m) was the bell-tower-porch on the northern arm of the transept. The size of the former collegiate church is shown by the two towers, between which the nave stood. The marking of pillars on the ground shows the dimensions of the building, which was one of the largest pilgrimage churches of Christianity.

**21 BASILIQUE SAINT-MARTIN**

**7 rue Baleschoux**

**1887-1902**

Built on the site of the medieval basilica and the tomb of Saint Martin, rediscovered in 1860, Saint Martin's basilica was produced

by Victor Laloux, an architect from Tours. He made the most of this limited space by positioning it on a north-south axis and building upwards, culminating at 51m with the dome and its statue. It features Roman and Byzantine influences and uses noble materials: marble, bronze and Vosges sandstone. The basement still houses the saint's tomb.

**22 CITY HALL**

**Place Jean-Jaurès**

**1895-1904**

Built by Victor Laloux, an architect from Tours, the town hall is at the entrance of Rue Nationale. The magnitude of the building and its decorations make it one of the most emblematic buildings in the city. The façade, which is surmounted with allegorical statues of the values of the 3rd Republic, the Loire and the Cher, presents a balcony supported by four Atlantes sculpted by François Sicard, an artist from Tours. The interior is sumptuously decorated with paintings and sculptures evoking Touraine through its famous historical figures, castles, traditions and know-how.





# FAMOUS PEOPLE

## FROM TOURS

### **SAINT MARTIN** (316-397)

Born in Hungary, Martin was an officer in the Roman army before devoting his life to religion. He was particularly known for sharing his cloak in Amiens, an act also known as the charity of Saint Martin. Appointed bishop of Tours, he founded a hermitage which would become the very prestigious Marmoutier Abbey. He created six parishes in Touraine (Amboise, Candes, Ciran, Langeais, Saunay and Tournon). He performed numerous miracles and is venerated by pilgrims from all over the world. The crypt of the basilica of Saint Martin houses his tomb.

### **JEAN FOUQUET** (~1420~1480)

Jean Fouquet was undoubtedly the most famous painter of illuminated manuscripts of his time. He was known for the quality of his work: the Melun Diptych and the Hours of Étienne Chevalier are among his most acclaimed works. He was the appointed painter of kings Charles VII and Louis XI. Around 1455, he depicted the city and its enclosure in the miniature *La prise de Tours* de 1189.

### **JEAN BRIÇONNET** (~1420-1493)

An eminent member of the Briçonnet family, Jean Briçonnet climbed the ranks of senior management and was particularly known for his mastery of finances. In 1462, he was unanimously elected the first mayor of Tours. Close to Louis XI, he was given numerous important assignments, such as reconstruction of Château de Langeais or that of the enclosure of Plessis-lès-Tours. The Briçonnet mansion house, on the corner of Rue du Châteauneuf and Rue du Change in Tours, belonged to him.

### **JEAN DE OCKEGHEM** (~1420-1497)

Johannes Ockeghem was originally from the county of Hainaut, in modern-day Belgium. A well-known composer, he enjoyed the favour of the kings of France and became treasurer of the former abbey of Saint Martin. He was appointed “master of the King’s singing chapel”.

**1. Charity of Saint-Martin, Stained glass window from the choir of the Saint Gatien cathedral**



**LOUIS XI  
(1423-1483)**

Son of Charles VII and Marie of Anjou, Louis XI elected Tours as his main residence. As King of France, his goal was to expand the royal domain. He settled in Château des Montils, now known as Plessis-lès-Tours, of which only the east wing stands, right in the middle of a park. Raised to the rank of capital of the kingdom, Tours became a hub of the arts under his reign.

**MICHEL COLOMBE  
(~1430- ~1520)**

Michel Colombe was a remarkable character of the French Pre-Renaissance. He was a well-known sculptor and performed his art from Tours, where he made two of his most celebrated works: the tomb of the Dukes of Brittany in Nantes and the tomb of the children of Charles VIII and Anne of Brittany in Tours (visible in Tours cathedral).

**JEAN BOURDICHON  
(~1457-1521)**

Jean Bourdichon was a genuine representative of the excellence of Tours in the field of manuscript illumination. After the death of Jean Fouquet, he served kings Louis XI, Charles VIII, Louis XII and Francis I. His *magnum opus* is the *Grandes Heures d'Anne de Bretagne*, where scenes of the bible, presented as paintings, and illuminated borders with some 337 different plant species intermingle.

**KATHERINE BRIÇONNET  
(? -1526)**

Daughter born from the union of two of the most influential families in Tours, the Briçonnet and the Beaunes, Katherine married Thomas Bohier in 1494. He was a rich man who had strong ties with French royalty. An educated woman, influenced by the beautiful examples of buildings from the early Renaissance period in Tours, she supervised the construction of two remarkable monuments: her tomb (now gone) in the church of Saint Saturnin de Tours, and the famous Château de Chenonceau.



1. Portrait of Louis XI surrounded by the virtues, from the manuscript 'Défense des droits de Louis XI, roi de France'

2. Alleged self-portrait of Michel Colombe, tomb of the Dukes of Brittany, Nantes

3. Pierre-Fidèle Bretonneau, by famous photographer Nadar



**PIERRE DE RONSARD  
(1524-1585)**

A well-known royal poet, Ronsard wrote poems belonging to the literary movement known as La Pléiade in the town of La Riche. Originally from the Vendômois, he lived his final days in Saint Cosme Priory. He was the prior there and this is where he wrote his *Derniers Vers*. His final resting place is here.

**MARIE OF THE INCARNATION  
(1599-1672)**

Born in Tours in 1599, Marie Guyart had always been drawn to Catholic religion. Married to a silk manufacturer, she took over the company after his death and became a true businesswoman. Her unwavering faith was reinforced by her mystical experiences, which led her to join the Ursulines nuns of Tours. She became superior of the Ursuline Convent in Quebec and taught the indigenous people. She was beatified in 1980.

**PIERRE-FIDÈLE BRETONNEAU  
(1778-1862)**

A descendant of a line of eight generations of doctors, Bretonneau was head of Tours hospital and one of the most respected men in his discipline. Using his brilliant and passionate mind as well as his taste for experimentation, he delved into infectious diseases and therapeutics research. A district is named after him today in Tours, the city in which his students, Velpeau and Trousseau, also practised.



**ALFRED VELPEAU  
(1875-1867)**

A student of Pierre Bretonneau at Tours hospital, Alfred Velpeau was a health officer, then a surgeon and surgical clinic professor. He invented the pressure bandage for wounds, which became known as the Velpeau bandage. He focused his studies on embryology, obstetrics and anatomy. In Tours, a district, a square and a school are named after him.

**HONORÉ DE BALZAC  
(1799-1850)**

This writer, journalist and literary critic was born in Rue Nationale in Tours. Although he spent most of his life in Paris, Balzac remained largely attached to his hometown and was always happy to return to Touraine. It was an inexhaustible source of inspiration for his novels and short stories, as seen in *Le Curé de Tours*, *Maître Cornelius* and *Le Prêtre catholique* in which he describes Tours cathedral. In *Les Contes Drolatiques*, *Le Lys dans la Vallée* and *La Recherche de l'absolu*, he mentions different places that were the backdrop of his childhood.



**VICTOR LALOUX  
(1850-1937)**

Born in Tours, where he studied at Lycée Descartes, Victor Laloux received the Grand Prix de Rome in architecture in 1878. He became head of the workshop of École des Beaux-Arts de Paris and created Gare d'Orsay. In his hometown, he established the plans of three emblematic buildings: the basilica of Saint Martin, the train station and the town hall.

**ALFRED MAME  
(1811-1893)**

From the famous dynasty of Mame printers, Alfred followed in his father's footsteps, who had been the first in the family to settle in Tours. He joined the company's management team in 1833 and thus began a career that would last 60 years. Under his influence, Maison Mame developed, became "the finest printer in Europe", received awards at several universal exhibitions, and became an expert in the entire book manufacturing chain, always keeping abreast of technical progress.



**1. Velpeau teaching at the Charité Hospital, by Augustin-Feyen Perrin**

**2. Balzac in his monk's robe, by Louis-Candide Boulanger**

**3. Victor Laloux, portrait by Gabriel Ferrier**

# TRADITIONS AND KNOW-HOW



## SILK

In 1470, Louis XI founded the first “factory of golden and silk sheets” in Tours. Tours eventually lost its status of silk capital due to the wars of religion and competition from Lyon and abroad. The tradition keeps on however, as shown by Jean Roze silk products.

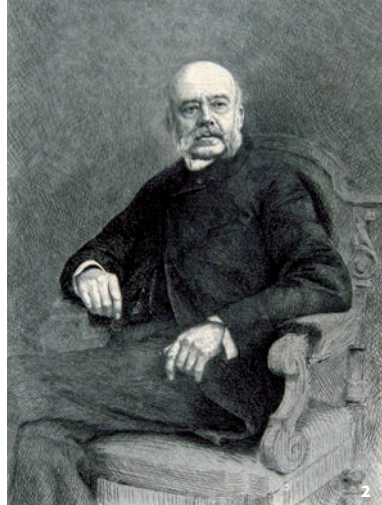
## CERAMIC

Charles-Jean Avisseau took it upon himself to uncover the secrets of the art of famous ceramist Bernard Palissy (1510-1589). As a result, ceramic from the school of Tours is purely decorative and embellished with representations of animals, rocks or caves with a rich bestiary. Rustic bowls or cups sometimes feature a fish in reference to fishing on the Loire.

## EMBROIDERY

Embroidery was the last popular art, and the know-how required to make embroidered bonnets ensured that Tours held on to its reputation until the 1920s. Outmoded with the boom of the Roaring Twenties, bonnets gave way to hats. The technical mastery of the embroiderers was then put to use to create embroidered lingerie which was shipped as far away as the United States. The *Conservatoire du patrimoine de la broderie de Touraine* and its associates take part in keeping and promoting this know-how today.

**1. Depiction of  
Touraine’s know how:  
earthenware, paint  
on canvas by Eugène  
Thirion, city hall  
wedding room**



1. Traditional fishing boat on the Loire

2. Alfred Mame

3. "Canal of the Loire and Cher, near Tours", line engraving on steel, after a drawing by J.M.W Turner

4. Overall view of the Mame printing factory before its destruction in 1940

## INLAND WATERWAYS

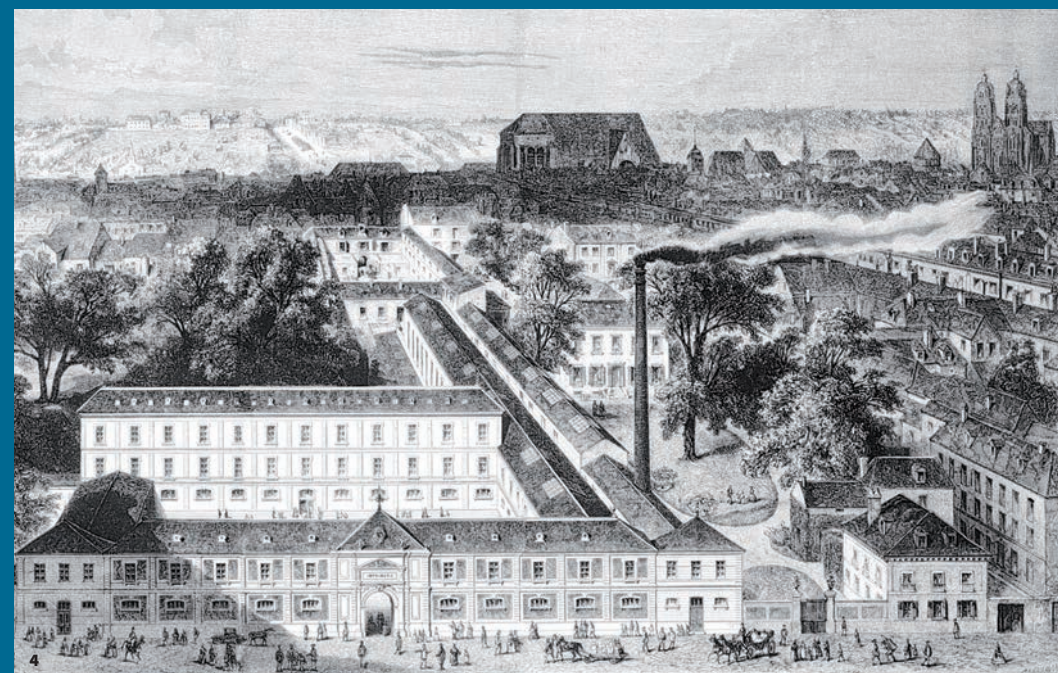
The Loire is a navigable river which allowed the transport of passengers and freight: construction materials (freestone, clay), food, wine, etc. In the 19th century, the development of the railway led to the gradual decline of the Loire maritime trade, most passengers preferring the speed of the train. The traditional techniques used to build scows, *toues* and *chalands* are experiencing a revival, motivated by a desire to preserve this heritage thanks to tourism. The Boutavant association today proposes trips down the Loire on these boats in Tours.

## PRINTING

The Mame printing house, specialised in printing religious books, made Tours famous. The company was founded in 1796 by Armand Mame, but it was his son, Alfred, who started diversifying production in 1845. The first factory, in Rue Néricault-Destouches, mastered the entire book manufacturing chain. Following the paternalistic models of the time, in 1875, Alfred Mame had a workers' neighbourhood built for his employees, with 62 individual houses featuring all the necessary comforts, including running water.

## FISHING

Eel, salmon, pike perch or pike... there are around 60 species of fish in the Loire, making up a real living heritage. Some of the street names (Rue de l'Anguille – Eel Street; Rue de la Lamproie – Lamprey Street; Rue de la Pucelle – River Herring Street) hold on to the memory of this tradition. The *fûtreau* and the *toue* are traditional fishing boats. Today, professional fishermen supply catering establishments in Touraine.





# UNESCO:

## WORLD HERITAGE

### IN TOURS

#### VAL DE LOIRE

*Inscription in 2000*

The Val de Loire section between Sully-sur-Loire and Chalonnes-sur-Loire is on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This award acknowledges the Val de Loire for its Outstanding Universal Value, based on the quality of its landscape, cultural and historical heritage. It illustrates centuries of interaction between the river – a major communication and trade route –, the lands it crosses and the populations that live near it. This confluence has given rise to a true landscape identity: the Loire is at the centre, surrounded with *levées* (embankments), constructions both on the river-front and up to the hillside, troglodyte dwellings and privileged sites on the plateau, with vineyards and prestigious buildings. Situated in the middle of this perimeter, between the Loire and the Cher, Tours presents all the characteristics of Loire towns, with emblematic buildings, bridges and vineyards.

Aware of the importance of this heritage, the City is concerned with protecting, conserving and promoting the manifold heritage of the Loire.

#### COMPAGNONNAGE

*Inscription in 2010*

Inscribed on the intangible cultural heritage of humanity list, the *compagnonnage* system is a network for conveying knowledge and know-how through trades. It is thought to have begun in the Val de Loire, at the time of the construction of the large Gothic cathedrals. These worksites required the knowledge of many trades: stone cutters, carpenters, roofers, joiners, ropemakers and blacksmiths, etc. The aim of *compagnonnage* is to train skilled workers, mastering ancestral and recent techniques and skills to create exceptional work.

The “Tour de France” of the *compagnons*, with Tours being one of the main stops, is a real quest for know-how. The Musée du Compagnonnage, in the outbuildings of the former Abbey of Saint Julien, houses some of the *compagnons*’ masterpieces.



1. A local delicacy: the Nougat de Tours

2. Grape harvesting in Marmoutier

3. Postcard promoting the rillettes de Tours



### GASTRONOMIC MEAL OF THE FRENCH

Inscription in 2010

Following the addition of the French gastronomic meal on the intangible cultural heritage of humanity list, Tours was named International City of Gastronomy in 2013, alongside Dijon, Lyon and Paris-Rungis. The purpose of this network is to promote French gastronomy and its inherent art of preparing and enjoying the meal.

In Tours, the site of Villa Rabelais at 116 Boulevard Béranger has research and training rooms as well as a library that is unique in Europe. It consists of an academic collection of nearly 7,000 publications, entirely dedicated to the culture and history of food. Gastronomy is promoted through the prism of human and social sciences, revealing French culinary refinement. In addition, this cultural and tourist centre presents an extensive programme on this subject all year round.

Here is a selection of specialities from Tours to taste:

#### Rillons, rillettes

Made since the early 16th century in Touraine, *rillons* and *rillettes* acquired national fame as soon as they were proposed to citizens and tourists in the 19th century. The artisanal rillettes from Tours are made from pieces of pork cooked in fat and shredded. The *rillettes*

*de géline* (made with chicken) is one of the most well-known varieties.

#### Nougat from Tours

If you believe the tale, this sweet (or cake) already existed at the time when Leonardo da Vinci settled in Touraine. Appreciated for its long conservation period, Tours nougat is made of a sweet paste with apricot jam and candied fruits, covered in almonds. Since 1998, the *Confrérie Gourmande du véritable nougat de Tours et autres Pourléchereries Tourangelles* looks after its promotion.

#### Marmoutier Vineyard

Legend says that Saint Martin was the first to grow vines on the Rougemont plateau, on the site of Marmoutier Abbey. The site is now home to the most recent AOC Vouvray vines. Near Tours, AOC Noble-Joué extends over the communes of Saint-Avertin, Joué-lès-Tours, Chambray-lès-Tours and Esvres. AOC Vouvray is used in the preparation for *andouillette au Vouvray*, a recipe from Tours.

#### Sweets

Stuffed prunes from Tours appeared at the end of the 19th century. They are dried prunes filled with apricot jam, crushed almonds or apricot and apple jelly. Tours barley sugar, which was very popular in the 19th century, was made with caramelised barley syrup and flavoured with vanilla or elderflower. These two specialities are hard to find nowadays.

Baisers de  
ton Alice

PHOTOTYPIC A. BERBERET & C<sup>IE</sup>, NANCY



### Spécialités de Pays

Point n'est besoin d'un long discours  
Pour vous persuader qu'à Tours  
Dans les rillettes l'on excelle,  
C'est secret de Polichinelle.

A. G.

de Lanoue



# MAP OF TOURS

- 1 Palais des Congrès**  
26 bd Heurteloup (p. 11)
- 2 Railway Station**  
Place du Général-Leclerc (p. 11)
- 3 Grand Théâtre**  
34 rue de la Scellerie (p. 12)
- 4 Former Archbishopric, musée des Beaux-Arts**  
Place François-Sicard (p. 12)
- 5 Saint Gatien Cathedral** (p. 13)
- 6 Psalette cloister**  
Place de la Cathédrale (p. 13)
- 7 Château**  
Avenue André-Malraux (p. 14)
- 8 Place Foire-le-Roi** (p. 14)
- 9 Cœur Navré passageway**  
Accès rue Colbert et place Foire-le-Roi (p. 14)
- 10 Rue Colbert** (p. 15)
- 11 Hôtel de Beaune-Semblançay**  
Jardin de Beaune-Semblançay (p. 15)
- 12 Saint Julien church**  
20 rue Nationale (p. 15)
- 13 Wilson Bridge** (p. 16)
- 14 Hôtel Goüin**  
25 rue du Commerce (p. 16)
- 15 Place Plumereau** (p. 16)
- 16 Hôtel Pierre-du-Puy**  
16 rue Briçonnet (p. 17)
- 17 Le Monstre**  
Place du Grand-Marché (p. 17)
- 18 Portail des Trésoriers de Saint-Martin**  
54-56 Place du Grand-Marché (p. 17)
- 19 Tour de l'horloge** (p. 18)  
Rue des Halles (p. 18)
- 20 Tour Charlemagne**  
Rue des Halles (p. 18)
- 21 Saint Martin Basilica**  
7 rue Baleschoux (p. 18)
- 22 City Hall**  
Place Jean-Jaurès (p. 18)

## GENERAL TOUR

This tour, in the form of a two-hour circuit, presents the major and emblematic sites of Tours, which illustrate the city's development from its origins to today.

«(.) I HAD RETAINED FROM THE EARLIEST IMPRESSIONS OF MY LIFE A STRONG FEELING OF THE BEAUTY INHERENT IN THE SCENERY ROUND TOURS, WITH WHICH I WAS FAMILIAR.»

Honoré de Balzac, *The Lily of the Valley*

**Tours is part of the national network of Towns and Lands of Art and History.**

The French ministry for culture's department for heritage awards the Towns and Lands of Art and History label to local authorities which promote their heritage.

It guarantees the aptitude of guides, architecture and heritage leaders and the quality of actions carried out. From archaeological remains to 21st century architecture, the Towns and Lands of Art and History display the full diversity of heritage.

Today, a network of 190 Towns and Lands of Art and History provides its know-how all over France.

### **Nearby:**

Other places nearby with the Towns and Lands of Art and History label: Bourges, Chinon, Loches, Vendôme,

Blois, Orléans, Pays Loire Touraine, Pays Loire Val d'Aubois, Pays de la Vallée du Cher et du Romorantinais.

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