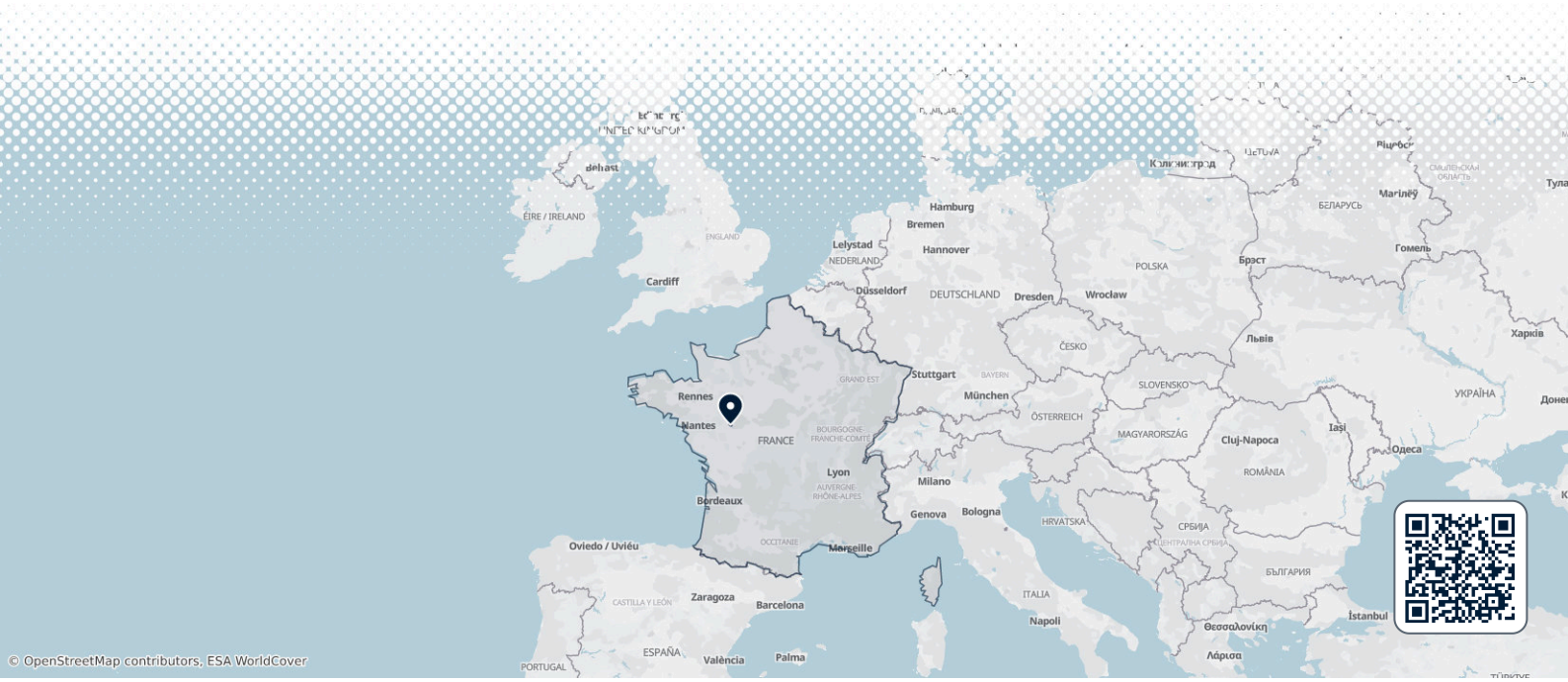


Saumur

Loire Valley · France

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Saumur is a small town on the south bank of the Loire in western France. About 26,000 people live here. A white castle stands above the river. The hills around town have wine cellars cut into soft limestone.

The town is known for three things: its castle, its horse-riding tradition and its sparkling wines. It suits a one- or two-night stay or a day trip from Angers or Tours. It is quieter and cheaper than the big château towns further upriver.

When to visit

Late spring to early autumn is the best time. Days are long and warm, and the riverside terraces are open. July and August are the warmest months, with an occasional hot spell. Winter is cool, damp and grey, and some sights and cellars shorten their hours or close.

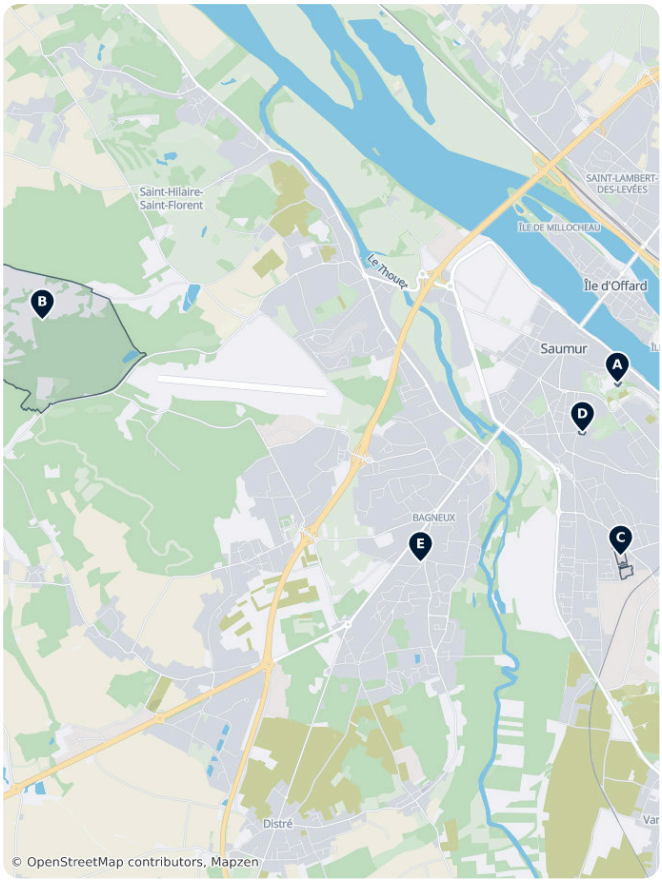
The Carrousel de Saumur, a military horse and vehicle display, is held every July. Early August brings the Grandes Tablées du Saumur-Champigny, a wine festival with long outdoor dinner tables. Check dates each year, as they change.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	8° / 14° Feels like 3°	2° / -5°	13 rainy days · Dry air
February	Fair Fair for cycling	10° / 15° Feels like 5°	2° / -4°	Dry air
March	Good Good for cycling	13° / 19° Feels like 9°	3° / -3°	Dry air
April	Great Great for cycling	16° / 23° Feels like 13°	6° / 0°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 26°	9° / 4°	12 rainy days · Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 31°	13° / 8°	
July	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 33°	14° / 10°	
August	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 34°	14° / 10°	
September	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 30°	12° / 7°	Dry air
October	Good Good for cycling	18° / 24°	9° / 3°	12 rainy days · Dry air
November	Fair Fair for cycling	12° / 18° Feels like 8°	5° / -2°	13 rainy days · Dry air
December	Poor Poor for cycling	9° / 14° Feels like 4°	2° / -4°	13 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: May, June, July, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Saumur Castle is a medieval fortress on a hill above the Loire and the Thouet rivers. It houses a museum of the horse and a collection of decorative arts. The ramparts give wide views over the town and the river.
- B École Nationale d'Équitation is home to the Cadre Noir, France's famous riding display team, west of the centre. You can book a guided visit of the stables and the riding halls, or see a show. Check the schedule in advance.
- C Musée des Blindés is one of the world's largest collections of armoured vehicles. It has hundreds of tanks and military vehicles from many countries.
- D Église Notre-Dame de Nantilly is a Romanesque church in the old town, with a nave from the early 12th century. It is the oldest church in Saumur.
- E Grand Dolmen de Bagneux is a huge prehistoric burial chamber made of giant stone slabs. It is on the western edge of town, in Bagneux.
- Wine houses such as Bouvet-Ladubay and Ackerman offer tours of their cellars cut into the rock, with tastings of sparkling wine.

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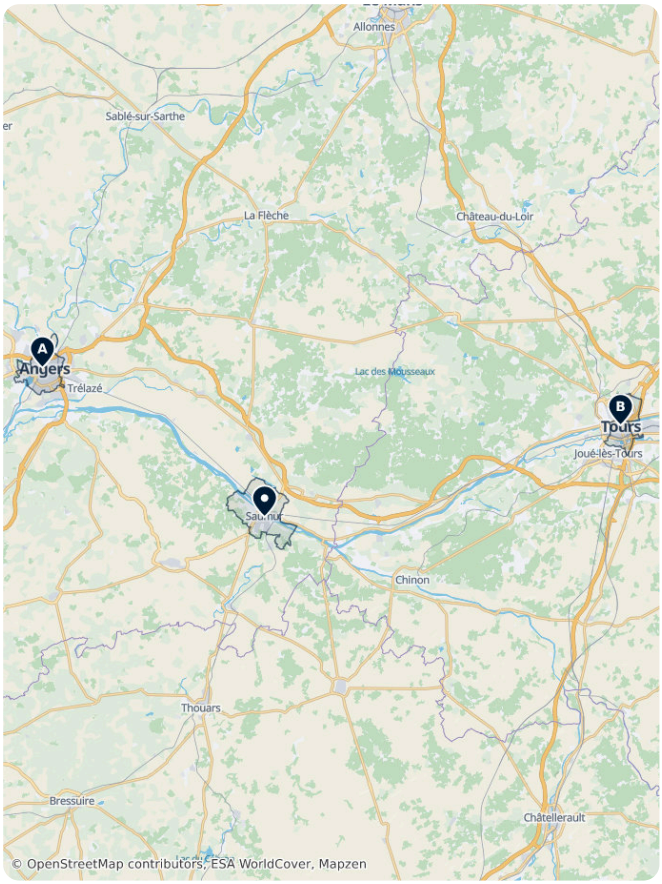
What to experience

Saumur is about horses, wine and underground places.

- **Cadre Noir shows**: The riding school holds public galas and open training sessions through the year. Book ahead for shows.
- **Cellar tastings**: Many wine houses have tours of their caves in the limestone, with tastings of sparkling wine and of Saumur-Champigny red wine.
- **Cycling the Loire**: Quiet riverside paths and vineyard lanes make for easy rides. Hire a bike in town.
- **Troglodyte sites**: Several of the old limestone quarries around town have been turned into museums, restaurants and mushroom farms.
- **River terraces**: Spend an evening on a quayside terrace along the Loire, with views of the castle.

Day trips

Saumur is a good base for the central Loire. Times are one way, by car unless stated.



- Fontevraud Abbey: about 20 minutes. This huge abbey was the burial place of English Plantagenet kings and queens, including Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine.
- Montsoreau: about 15 minutes. A château stands right on the riverbank in this village. It now holds a museum of contemporary art.
- Château de Brézé: about 20 minutes. It has deep moats and an underground fortress cut into the rock.
- Doué-la-Fontaine: about 25 minutes. The town has a zoo and underground sites carved from the rock.
- Ⓐ Angers: about 30 minutes by train. It has a huge castle with a famous medieval tapestry.
- Ⓑ Tours: about 45 minutes by train. It is a good base for many more châteaux.

Where to explore

Saumur lies in the western Loire Valley. These are the main cities and château towns up and down the river.

- For the nearest big city to the west, go to Angers.
- For a large base with many châteaux nearby, go to Tours.
- For royal châteaux, go to Blois and Chambord.
- For a bigger city on the river, go to Orléans.
- For the whole region, see Loire Valley.

Getting there

- **By air**: There is no airport in Saumur. The nearest large airports are Nantes and Paris. Tours and Angers are also useful for rail connections.
- **By train**: Saumur station is on the Loire line between Tours, Angers and Nantes, with regional TER trains. Most travelers from Paris change at Tours (Saint-Pierre-des-Corps) or Angers. Book at SNCF Connect.
- **By car**: The town is on the A85 motorway, which links Angers and Tours.
- **From the station**: The old centre and castle are a short walk from the station, about 10 to 15 minutes.

Getting around

- **On foot**: The old town and riverfront are small and easy to walk. The castle is up a steep hill and the streets near it are cobbled.
- **Cycling**: The Loire à Vélo cycle route passes through Saumur. It is a pleasant way to reach the wine villages and Montsoreau.
- **Bus and car**: The Cadre Noir, the dolmen and most wine cellars are outside the centre. Use local buses, a taxi or a car to reach them.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old town and riverfront are compact and easy to walk, though the castle is up a steep hill.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

The Loire à Vélo route passes through town, and quiet paths lead to nearby wine villages.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** Not for the town itself, which is compact. A car is useful for Fontevraud, Brézé and the villages and wine estates around Saumur.
- **Parking**: Use the car parks along the riverfront or near the centre rather than the narrow streets below the castle. The castle area has little parking.

Food & drink

Saumur sits in the Anjou-Saumur wine country. Local specialities are Saumur-Champigny, a red wine made mostly from Cabernet Franc, and sparkling Saumur and Crémant de Loire, made in rock cellars. Local white wines come from Chenin Blanc grapes.

The soft limestone caves are also used to grow mushrooms, and button mushrooms are a local product. Stuffed mushrooms, called galipettes, are a regional dish. Rillettes and goat cheese are also common on menus.

For eating, try the old streets around Place Saint-Pierre and the quays along the Loire.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Croissant
Buttery, flaky laminated pastry and a classic French breakfast staple.

LUNCH

Ratatouille
A Provençal stewed vegetable dish of eggplant, zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes.

DINNER

Coq au Vin
Chicken braised slowly in red wine with mushrooms, onions, and lardons.

Beef Bourguignon · Bœuf Bourguignon
Beef stewed in red Burgundy wine with carrots, onions, and mushrooms.

Escargot · Escargots de Bourgogne
Snails cooked in garlic and parsley butter, a classic starter.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Baguette
Long, crusty white bread loaf bought fresh daily from the local boulangerie.

Cheese · Fromage
France produces hundreds of cheese varieties, often served as a course before dessert.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Crepes · Crêpes
Thin pancakes served sweet with sugar or jam, or savory as galettes.

Macarons
Delicate almond meringue sandwich cookies in a range of flavors and colors.

DRINKS

Wine · Vin
France's wine regions, including Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne, are among the world's most renowned.

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Safety & health

Saumur is a safe, quiet town. Petty theft is uncommon but can happen in crowded places, so keep bags closed. Tap water is safe to drink, as in the rest of France.

History

Saumur grew around its castle, built to guard a crossing of the Loire. The castle changed hands several times between the counts of Anjou, the English kings and the French crown. In the 1400s it appeared in a famous illuminated manuscript, the Très Riches Heures. In 1621 it became an army barracks and later a state prison.

The town became a Protestant stronghold in the 1500s and 1600s. A cavalry school was founded here in the 1700s, and the military riding tradition grew into the Cadre Noir. The town bought the castle in 1906 and turned it into a museum.

The tuffeau limestone dug from the hills built many Loire châteaux. The empty quarries became cellars for sparkling wine and mushroom farms.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

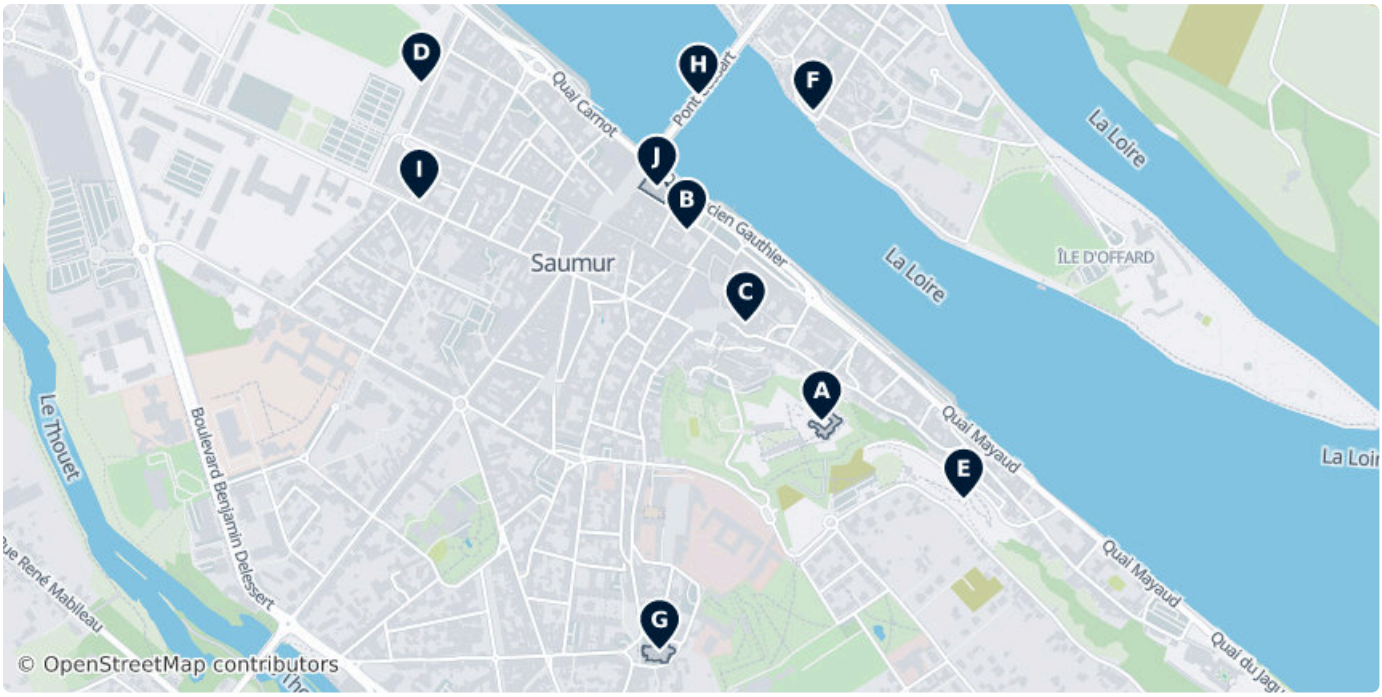
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Saumur Essentials

Saumur, known as the 'Pearl of Anjou,' is defined by its white tuffeau stone architecture and deep-rooted military traditions. This selection features the 10th-century castle overlooking the Loire, the historic cavalry museum, and the oldest active distillery in the region. Visitors can explore Romanesque churches like Notre-Dame de Nantilly, 15th-century residences, and panoramic viewpoints. The town's layout is anchored by the 18th-century Pont Cessart and the historic Saint-Pierre district, reflecting centuries of strategic importance on the river.





A Saumur Castle

Historic former royal residence dating back to the 10th century, situated on a rocky plateau overlooking a river confluence. The site has served as a prison, armory, and Protestant stronghold, housing diverse collections of art and science.

49400 (47.25700, -0.07243)

Tu–Su 10:00–13:00, 14:00–17:30

chateau-saumur.fr, +33 2 41 40 24 40

B Mairie de Saumur

16th-century fortified town hall featuring a Gothic facade and defensive towers along the Loire riverfront.

(47.26017, -0.07573)



C Église Saint-Pierre

Historic church in the central Marais district showcasing a mix of Romanesque architecture and a 17th-century classical facade.

9 Rue Haute Saint-Pierre, Saumur 49400, France
(47.25864, -0.07429)

D Musée de la Cavalerie

Housed in the historic Cadre Noir stables, this museum details French military history from the 15th century to modern armored divisions.

Place Charles de Foucauld, 49400 Saumur
(47.26261, -0.08222)

Mo–Th	10:30–17:30
Fr	Closed
Sa–Su	10:30–17:30

musee-cavalerie.fr

E Le Belvédère

Scenic viewpoint located on the castle plateau, providing panoramic views of the Loire Valley and the town's white tuffeau rooftops.

(47.25570, -0.06895)

F Maison de la Reine de Sicile

15th-century Gothic residence of Yolande of Aragon, Queen of Sicily, featuring ornate stone carvings and a historic inner courtyard.

(47.26214, -0.07264)



G Église Notre-Dame de Nantilly

The town's oldest parish church, built in the 12th century, known for its Romanesque nave and rare collection of 16th-century tapestries.

7 (47.25319, -0.07639)



H Pont Cessart

18th-century stone bridge spanning 277 meters across the Loire, designed by engineer Louis-Alexandre de Cessart with twelve arches.

Pont Cessart, 49400 Saumur, France (47.26241, -0.07544)

I Distillerie Combier

Established in 1834, this is the oldest active distillery in the Loire Valley, famous for the invention of Triple Sec.

45 Rue Beaurepaire, Saumur 49400, France
(47.26067, -0.08227)

combier.fr

J Théâtre de Saumur

19th-century Italian-style theater situated on the banks of the Loire, featuring an ornate facade and a traditional auditorium.

(47.26089, -0.07646)

DATA SOURCES

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