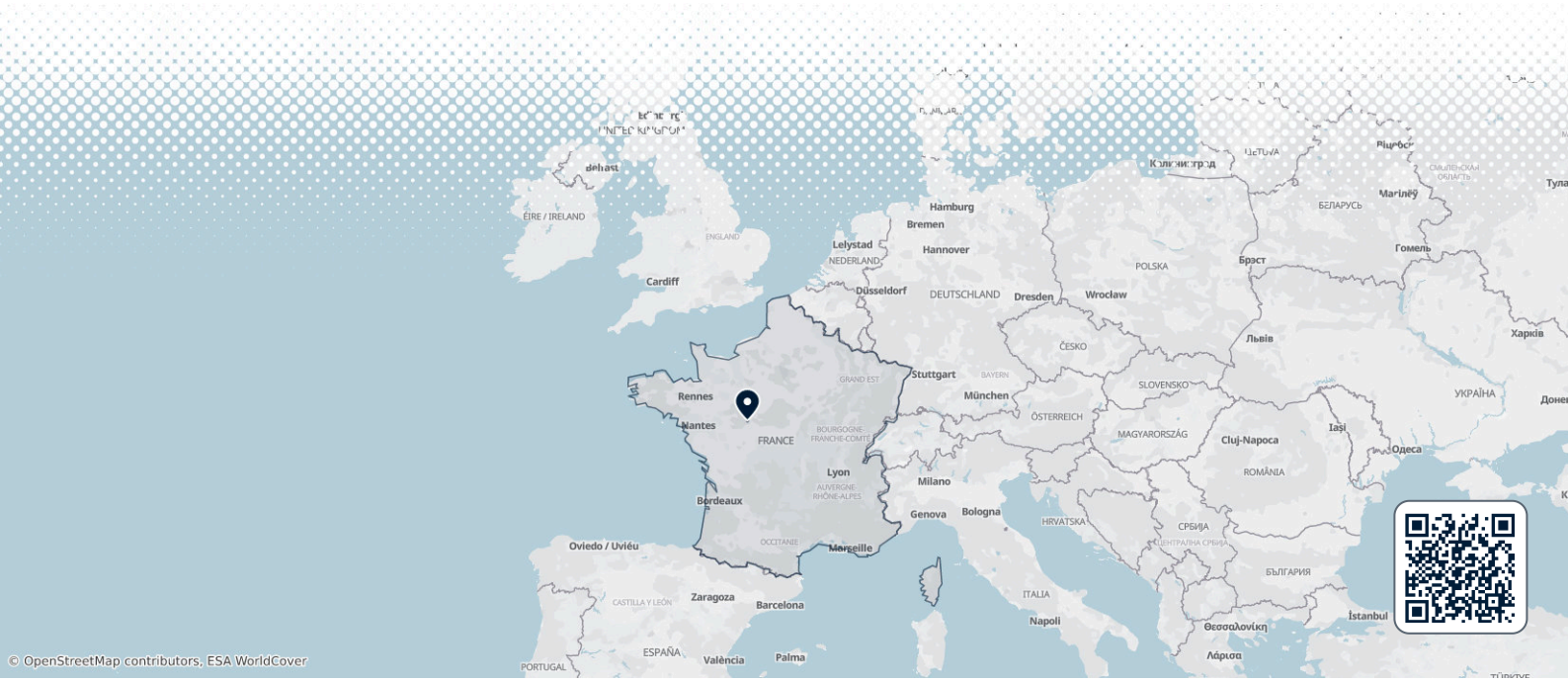


Tours

Loire Valley · France

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Tours is a university city on the Loire, about 1 hour from Paris by fast train. It has a Gothic cathedral, a compact old town of half-timbered houses, and wide river banks. Many visitors use it as a base for the Loire châteaux, because trains and roads reach most of them easily.

The city has long been a centre of Christian pilgrimage because of *Saint Martin*. Today it feels like a normal French city more than a museum, with students, markets and busy terraces. It suits 1 to 3 nights, or longer if you plan several day trips.

When to visit

May to September is the best time. Days are warm, long and mostly dry, and all the châteaux and gardens are open. Spring and early autumn are quieter. Winter is cool and grey, with short days and shorter opening hours at many sights.

The biggest regular local event is the garlic and basil fair, a market held around 26 July.

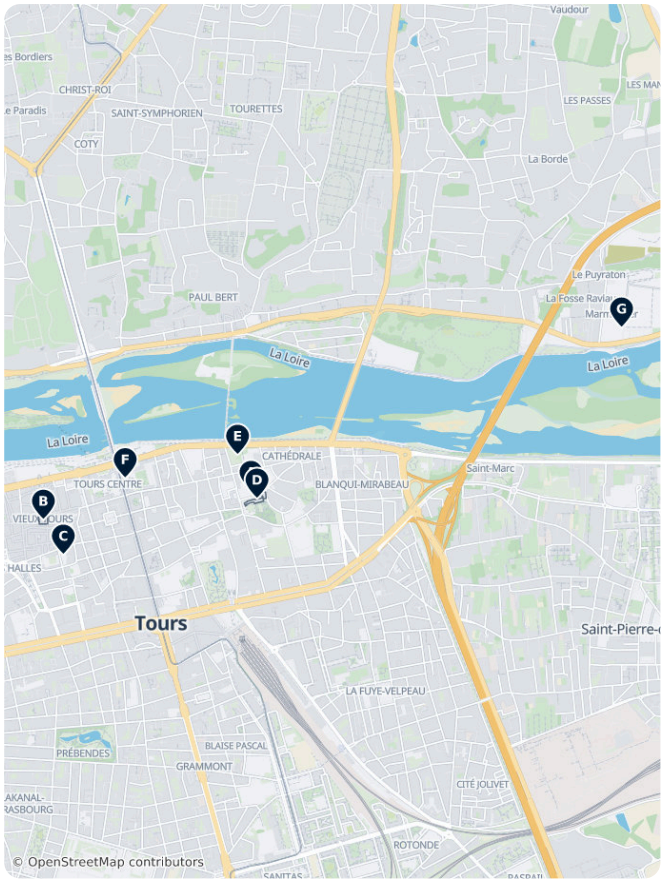
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	7° / 13° Feels like 3°	1° / -5°	13 rainy days · Dry air
February	Fair Fair for cycling	9° / 15° Feels like 4°	2° / -4°	Dry air
March	Good Good for cycling	13° / 19° Feels like 9°	3° / -3°	Dry air
April	Great Great for cycling	16° / 22° Feels like 12°	6° / 0°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 26°	9° / 4°	12 rainy days · Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 32°	13° / 8°	
July	Great Great for sightseeing	27° / 34°	14° / 10°	
August	Great Great for sightseeing	27° / 36°	15° / 10°	
September	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 31°	12° / 7°	Dry air
October	Good Good for cycling	18° / 25°	9° / 2°	13 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	8° / 14° Feels like 3°	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 Cathédrale Saint-Gatien is the city's main landmark. Its Gothic towers have Renaissance tops, and the choir keeps 13th-century stained glass. Inside, a marble tomb holds the children of *Charles VIII*.
- B Place Plumereau is the heart of the old town. Half-timbered houses surround it, and the terraces are busy from late afternoon.
- C Basilique Saint-Martin is a large church built between 1886 and 1924 over the tomb of *Saint Martin*. The old Tour Charlemagne nearby is a remnant of the earlier medieval basilica.
- D Musée des Beaux-Arts is next to the cathedral, in the former archbishop's palace. It has Italian paintings, including works by *Mantegna*, and a pleasant garden.
- E Château de Tours stands near the Loire. It is an old royal castle that now holds changing art and photography exhibitions.
- F Musée du Compagnonnage is in a former abbey. It shows masterpieces made by journeymen of the traditional craft guilds.
- G Abbaye de Marmoutier is the ruined abbey that *Saint Martin* founded outside the city. It is a quiet place by the river, away from the centre.



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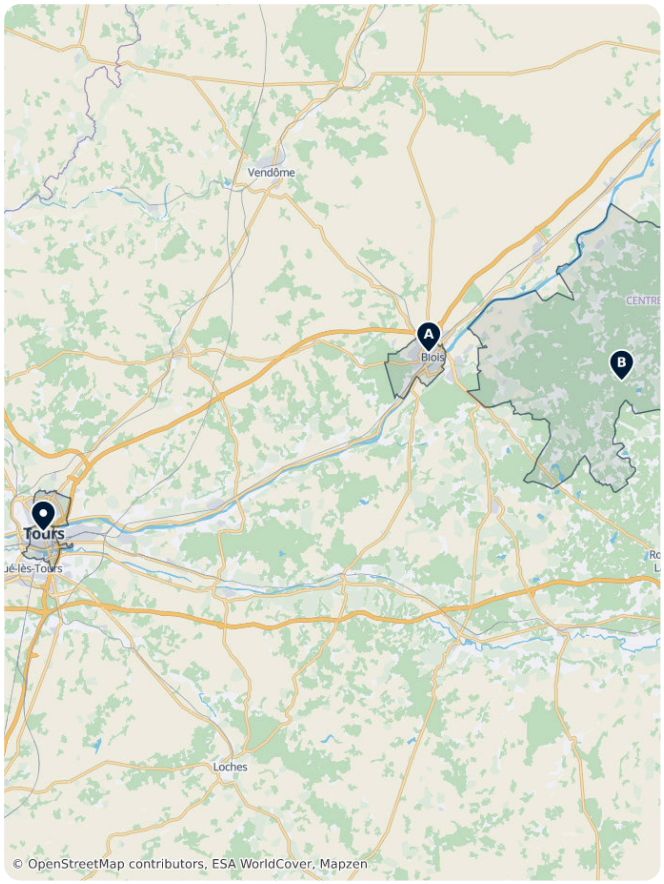
What to experience

- **Evening on the square**: Sit on a terrace on Place Plumereau when the lights come on. It is the main meeting point for students and locals.
- **Cycle the Loire à Vélo**: A signed, mostly flat route follows the river. A half-day ride out of the city is easy, and you can go as far as Villandry.
- **Garlic and basil fair**: Each year around 26 July, stalls fill part of the city with local produce.
- **Paris–Tours**: This professional cycle race finishes in the city, usually in October.

Day trips

Tours is the best base in the region for the Loire châteaux. Times below are one way from Tours.

- Château de Villandry: about 25 minutes by car, with no train. It is known for its formal Renaissance-style gardens, including a decorative vegetable garden. You can also cycle there along the Loire à Vélo route.
- Vouvray: about 15 minutes by car. This wine village has cellars cut into the rock, and many offer tastings.
- Amboise: about 20 minutes by train. A royal château overlooks the town, and *Leonardo da Vinci* lived his last years at Clos Lucé nearby.
- Azay-le-Rideau: about 30 minutes by train or car. A Renaissance château stands on an island in the Indre river.
- Chenonceaux: about 30 minutes by train or 40 minutes by car. The château spans the Cher river and is one of the most visited in France.
- Chinon: about 45 minutes by train or car. A ruined fortress above the old town is linked to *Joan of Arc*.
- Ⓐ Blois: about 40 minutes by train. Its château shows several centuries of royal building styles.
- Ⓑ Chambord: about 1 hour 15 minutes by car, with limited public transport. The huge Renaissance château sits in a walled forest park.



Where to explore

- Region: Loire Valley.
- Heading east: Blois, Chambord and Orléans.
- Heading west: Saumur and Angers.

Getting there

- **By air**: The small Tours Val de Loire airport, about 5 km north of the centre, has a few scheduled flights to European cities, mostly low-cost. Most visitors fly to Paris and continue by train.
- **By train**: TGV trains from Paris Montparnasse take about 1 hour. Bordeaux is about 1 hour 40 minutes away. Some trains stop at Tours station in the centre. Others stop at Saint-Pierre-des-Corps, a few kilometres east, where a short local train or tram ride takes you into the city. Book at SNCF Connect.

Getting around

- **On foot**: The old town and most main sights are within a 20-minute walk of each other. The ground is flat.
- **Tram and bus**: The Fil Bleu network runs one tram line (line A) and many bus routes. Check tickets, passes and disruptions on the Fil Bleu site.
- **Cycling**: Tours is flat, and the Loire à Vélo route follows the river. Fil Bleu also offers bikes.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old town is compact and flat, so most sights are a short walk apart.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

The city is flat and the Loire à Vélo route follows the river, so cycling is easy and pleasant.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for the city itself. It is useful for châteaux that have no train, such as Villandry, and for wine villages.
- **Parking**: Use underground car parks near the centre, or park-and-ride sites along the tram line and walk or ride in.
- **Restrictions**: Much of the old town is pedestrian. Follow signs and do not drive into the Place Plumereau area.

Food & drink

Touraine food is simple and local. Try *rillettes*, a potted pork spread, and *rillons*, pieces of cooked pork belly. Sainte-Maure-de-Touraine is a local goat cheese. *Nougat de Tours* is a sweet to take home. The local wines are Touraine and Vouvray, mostly white, and many cellars in the nearby villages offer tastings.

Eat around Place Plumereau, where terraces fill up in the evening, or on Rue Colbert. For fresh produce and a quick lunch, visit the Les Halles covered market. Book ahead on Friday and Saturday evenings.

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

Tours is generally safe for visitors. Pickpocketing is the main risk, especially around the station and in crowded places such as Place Plumereau at night.

The old town can be noisy late in the evening, so check the location of your hotel. The river banks are quiet and dark after dark, so keep to busier streets.

History

Tours began as a Roman town. In the 4th century *Saint Martin* became its bishop, and the city grew into a major place of pilgrimage. His tomb lies in Basilique Saint-Martin. In 732 *Charles Martel* stopped an army from the south at the Battle of Tours, and a council held here in 813 told priests to preach in the language people spoke.

From the 15th century the French kings often lived in the area. *Louis XI* made his home at Château de Plessis-lèz-Tours, and the royal castle, Château de Tours, stood by the river. The building of Cathédrale Saint-Gatien lasted from 1170 to 1547.

In the 20th century Tours twice served briefly as the seat of the French government, in 1870 and in June 1940. Fire and bombing in 1940 and 1944 destroyed parts of the centre, which was rebuilt afterwards.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



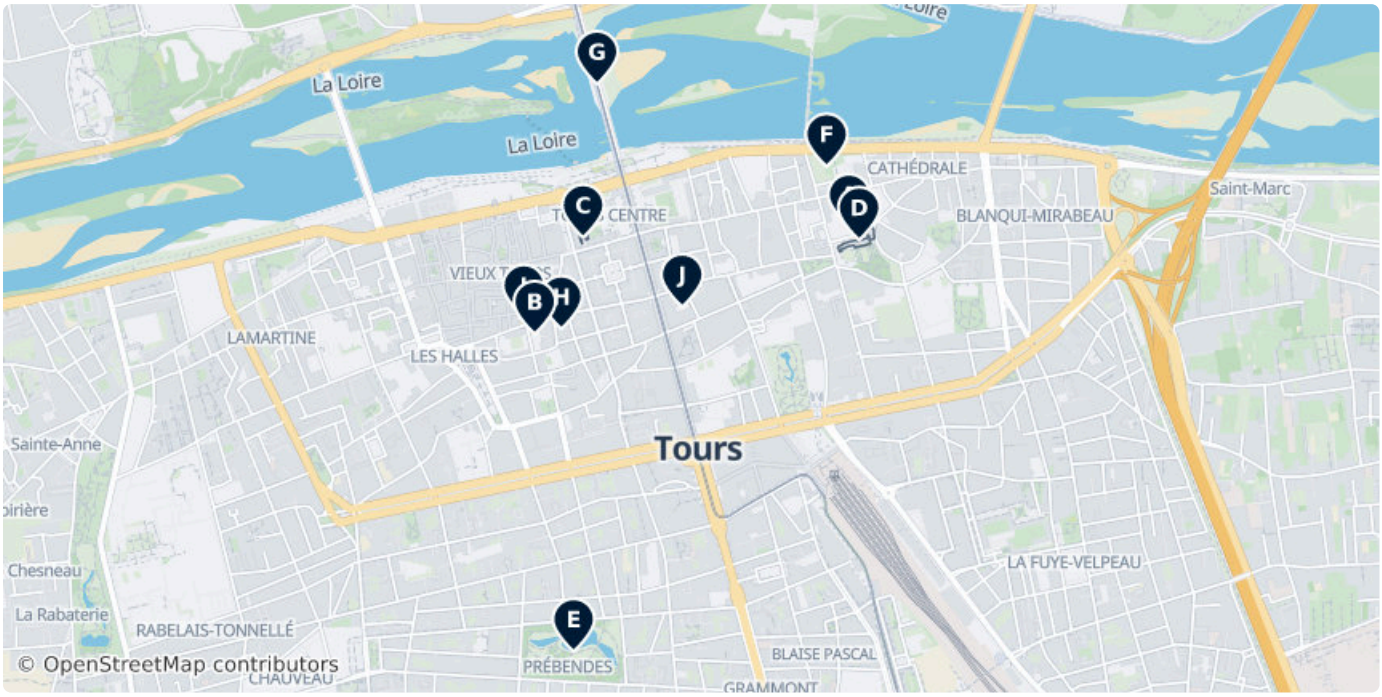
Type C / Type E
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LANGUAGES
French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Tours Must-Sees

Tours showcases a rich architectural evolution, from the flamboyant Gothic facade of the Cathédrale Saint-Gatien to the Renaissance elegance of Hôtel Goüin. The city's spiritual legacy is anchored by the Basilica of Saint Martin and the medieval remnants of the Enceinte de Martinopole. Artistic collections are housed in the former bishop's palace, while the 19th-century Jardin des Prébendes d'Oé and the historic Pont Wilson highlight the city's urban development along the Loire.





A Tours Cathedral

Tours Cathedral is a Roman Catholic church located in Tours, Indre-et-Loire, France, and dedicated to Saint Gatianus.

Place de la Cathédrale, 37000 Tours, France (47.39558, 0.69446)

paroisse-cathedrale-tours.catholique.fr..., +33 2 47 70 21 00



B Basilica of Saint Martin, Tours

The Basilica of St. Martin is a Roman Catholic basilica dedicated to Saint Martin of Tours, over whose tomb it was built.

3 Rue Descartes, Tours 37000, France (47.39293, 0.68296)



C Hôtel Goüin

The Hôtel Goüin is a hôtel particulier in Tours, France.

Jardin François 1er, 37000 Tours, France (47.39532, 0.68473)

monuments-touraine.fr, +33 2 47 31 43 27



D Musée des Beaux-Arts de Tours

The Musée des Beaux-Arts de Tours is located in the bishop's former palace, near the cathedral St. Gatien, where it has been since 1910.

Place François Sicard 18 (47.39526, 0.69483)

Mo	09:00–12:45, 14:00–18:00
Tu	Closed
We–Su	09:00–12:45, 14:00–18:00

mba.tours.fr, +33 2 47 05 68 73

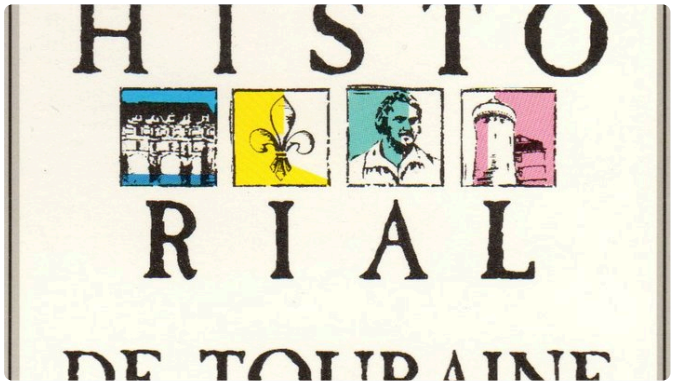


E Jardin des Prébendes d'Oé

Landscaped public garden created in 1872 by the Bühler brothers. It features a diverse collection of trees, winding paths, and a central pond, reflecting classic 19th-century French park design.

(Unnamed Road), Tours 37000, France (47.38506, 0.68438)

tours.fr/445-prebendes.htm



F Château de Tours

The Château de Tours is a castle located in Tours, Indre-et-Loire, France.

25 Avenue André Malraux, 37000, France (47.39708, 0.69364)

Tu–Su	14:00–18:00

tours.fr/culture/musees/chateau/

G Pont Wilson

The oldest bridge in Tours, constructed between 1765 and 1778. This stone arch bridge spans the Loire River, serving as a primary link between the city center and the northern districts.

Pont Wilson, 37000, France (47.39912, 0.68523)



H Enceinte de Martinopole

Remnants of the medieval defensive walls that once enclosed the Châteauneuf district. These ruins delineate the historic boundaries of the religious community established around the tomb of Saint Martin.

6 Rue Baleschoux, Tours 37000, France (47.39305, 0.68393)



I Tour Charlemagne

A prominent Romanesque tower that survived from the original medieval Basilica of Saint Martin. It stands as a significant vestige of the city's ancient pilgrimage site in the Old Tours district.

10 Place de Châteauneuf, Tours 37000, France (47.39333, 0.68256)

J Nouvel Olympia

A historic theater and cinema venue featuring early 20th-century architectural elements. It serves as a cultural landmark within the city's entertainment district.

(47.39360, 0.68836)

cdrtours.fr

Tours Heritage Trail

This trail through Tours showcases the city's evolution from a Gallo-Roman stronghold to a medieval religious center. Highlights include the Flamboyant Gothic Cathédrale Saint-Gatien, the remains of the 11th-century Basilica of Saint Martin, and the Renaissance-style Hôtel Goüin. The route connects grand ecclesiastical architecture with private mansions, such as the ruins of Hôtel de Beaune-Semblançay, and ancient fortifications like the 4th-century Roman walls and the 12th-century Chapelle Saint-Libert.

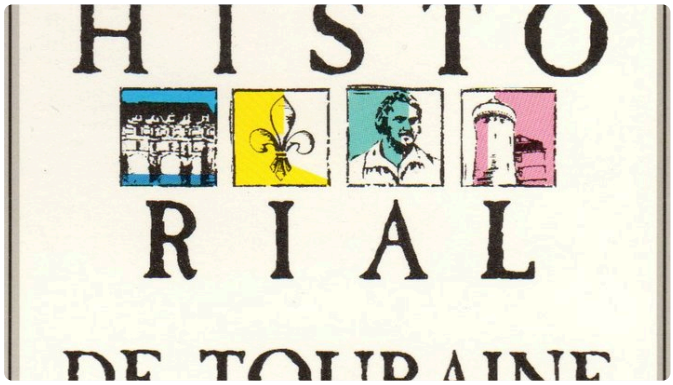




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25 Avenue André Malraux, 37000, France (47.39708, 0.69364)

Tu–Su 14:00–18:00

tours.fr/culture/musees/chateau/



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Tu	Closed
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monuments-touraine.fr, +33 2 47 31 43 27



E Jardin des Prébendes d'Oé

A landscaped public garden created in 1872 by the Bühler brothers, featuring diverse botanical species and winding paths in the heart of the city.

(Unnamed Road), Tours 37000, France (47.38506, 0.68438)

tours.fr/445-prebendes.htm



F Tour Charlemagne

A medieval tower standing as one of the last remaining vestiges of the original 11th-century Basilica of Saint Martin.

10 Place de Châteauneuf, Tours 37000, France (47.39333, 0.68256)



G Enceinte de Martinopole

The defensive walls that historically surrounded the medieval district of Châteauneuf, built to protect the religious community centered around Saint Martin's tomb.

6 Rue Baleschoux, Tours 37000, France (47.39305, 0.68393)



H Ruines de l'Hôtel de Beaune-Semblançay

The ruins of a prestigious 15th and 16th-century private mansion, featuring a Renaissance fountain and stone arches that survived wartime destruction.

14 Jardin de Beaune-Semblançais, Tours 37000, France (47.39522, 0.68739)

I Enceinte gallo-romaine

Remains of the 4th-century Roman defensive walls that once protected the ancient city of Caesarodunum.

(47.39605, 0.69806)

J Église Saint-Julien

A 13th-century former Benedictine abbey church featuring a mix of Romanesque and Gothic architectural styles and a well-preserved square bell tower.

9 Rue Colbert, Tours 37000, France (47.39586, 0.68742)



K Chapelle Saint-Libert

A restored 12th-century Romanesque chapel built upon the foundations of a 4th-century Roman wall in the city's oldest quarter.

37 Avenue André Malraux, 37000, France (47.39746, 0.69734)

societearcheotouraine.eu/807



L Tours Cathedral

Tours Cathedral is a Roman Catholic church located in Tours, Indre-et-Loire, France, and dedicated to Saint Gatianus.

Rue Fleury, 37000 Tours, France (47.39558, 0.69446)

M Église Saint-Saturnin

A historic parish church located in the Old Tours district, featuring architectural elements dating back to the Middle Ages.

1 Rue Paul-Louis Courier, Tours 37000, France
(47.39594, 0.68271)

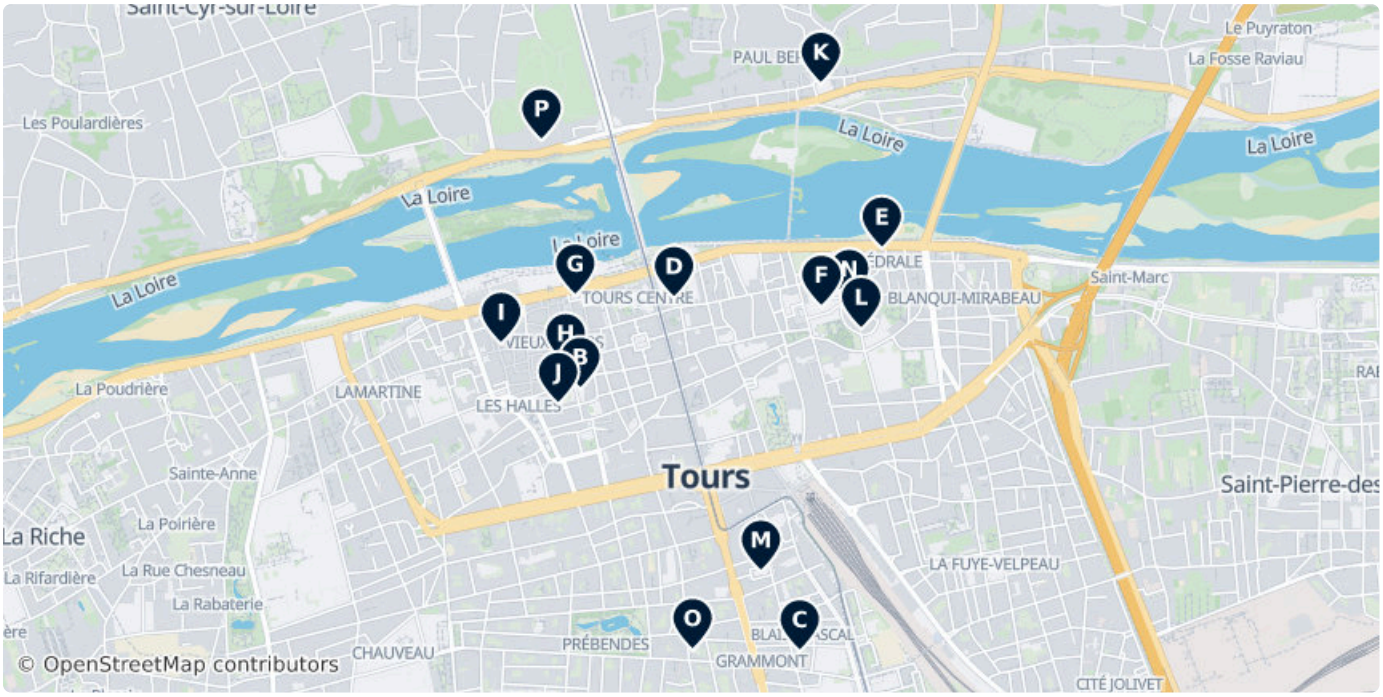
N Hôtel Binet

A historic private mansion representing the traditional urban architecture of the Tours city center.

(47.39524, 0.68348)

Religious Sites of Tours

Tours' religious landscape is anchored by the flamboyant Gothic Cathédrale Saint-Gatien and the Basilica of Saint Martin, a major pilgrimage site housing the saint's tomb. The city's heritage extends to the 12th-century Romanesque Chapelle Saint-Libert, the Benedictine abbey church of Saint-Julien, and the 1908 Synagogue de Tours. These sites reflect centuries of architectural evolution, from medieval monastic foundations to 20th-century religious structures.





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3 Rue Descartes, Tours 37000, France (47.39293, 0.68296)



C Synagogue de Tours

Built in 1908, this synagogue serves the Jewish community of the Indre-et-Loire department and features early 20th-century religious architecture.

37 Rue Parmentier, Tours 37000, France (47.38446, 0.69342)

D Église Saint-Julien

A former Benedictine abbey church in Old Tours, featuring a 12th-century bell tower and a mix of Romanesque and Gothic architectural styles.

9 Rue Colbert, Tours 37000, France (47.39586, 0.68742)



E Chapelle Saint-Libert

A 12th-century Romanesque chapel located in the city's oldest quarter, recently restored to showcase its medieval masonry and historical significance.

37 Avenue André Malraux, 37000, France (47.39746, 0.69734)

societearcheotouraine.eu/807



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Rue Fleury, 37000 Tours, France (47.39558, 0.69446)

G Église Saint-Saturnin

A historic Catholic church situated near the Loire river, traditionally serving the local parish in the historic center.

1 Rue Paul-Louis Courier, Tours 37000, France (47.39594, 0.68271)

H Ancienne Église Saint-Denis

A former church building that has been repurposed as a regional art center while retaining its historical architectural framework.

14B Rue du Change, Tours 37000, France (47.39369, 0.68226)

tours.fr/services-infos-pratiques/444-salle-jean-de-ockeg...

I Ancienne Chapelle du Petit-Saint-Martin, actuellement annexe de l'École des Beaux-Arts

A former chapel that currently serves as an annex for the Tours School of Fine Arts (École des Beaux-Arts).

(47.39438, 0.67918)



K Église Saint-Symphorien

Located on the north bank of the Loire, this church features architectural elements dating back to the 12th century and was historically part of a separate parish.

6 Rue du Nouveau Calvaire, Saint-Symphorien 37100, France (47.40277, 0.69443)

M Église Saint-Étienne

A 19th-century Catholic parish church located south of the city's main historic center.

(47.38703, 0.69158)

J Chapelle Saint-Jean

A historic chapel and former monastery site located in the central district of Tours.

10 Rue Rapin, Tours 37000, France (47.39244, 0.68189)

L Chapelle des Lazaristes

A Christian place of worship located in the historic district near the cathedral.

1 Rue du Général Meusnier, Tours 37000, France (47.39486, 0.69635)

N Presbytère (Paroisse St Maurice)

The rectory and administrative center for the Saint Maurice parish, situated near the cathedral.

(47.39577, 0.69578)

paroisse-cathedrale-tours.fr

O Église Tours Métropole

A contemporary Pentecostal church featuring modern facilities, including wheelchair accessibility and a baby feeding room.

114 Rue George Sand, Tours 37000, France (47.38450, 0.68831)

eglisetoursmetropole.fr, +33 2 47 66 56 40

P La Bretèche

A Catholic religious complex and place of worship located on the northern side of the Loire river.

17Bis Quai de Portillon, 37100, France (47.40095, 0.68110)

DATA SOURCES

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