



PRESS KIT

SIMPLY MAGNIFICENT



Cofinancé par
l'Union européenne



LOIRE VALLEÏ
FRANCE

MAP LEGEND

- Departmental capitals
- World Heritage listed area of Unesco
- == «La Loire à Vélo» cycle route

Chartres



Orléans

Blois

Tours

Bourges

Châteauroux

Loire by bike

KM 0
Cuffy

HOW TO GET HERE

- **from Paris** : TGV trains to Tours (1h), regional trains to Chartres (1h), Orléans (1h), Blois (1h30), Bourges (2h), Châteauroux (2h), Vendome (45min)

- **from Roissy-CDG airport** : direct TGV trains to Tours (2h)

- **from Tours airport** : Regular flights from Porto & London

DISTANCES

	Paris	Chartres	Blois	Orléans	Tours	Bourges	Châteauroux
Paris		91 km					
Chartres			132 km	81 km	210 km	195 km	218 km
Blois				63 km	66 km	118 km	141 km
Orléans					116 km	125 km	147 km
Tours						165 km	188 km
Bourges							
Châteauroux							

2025 : AN ANNIVERSARY SEASON IN THE LOIRE VALLEY

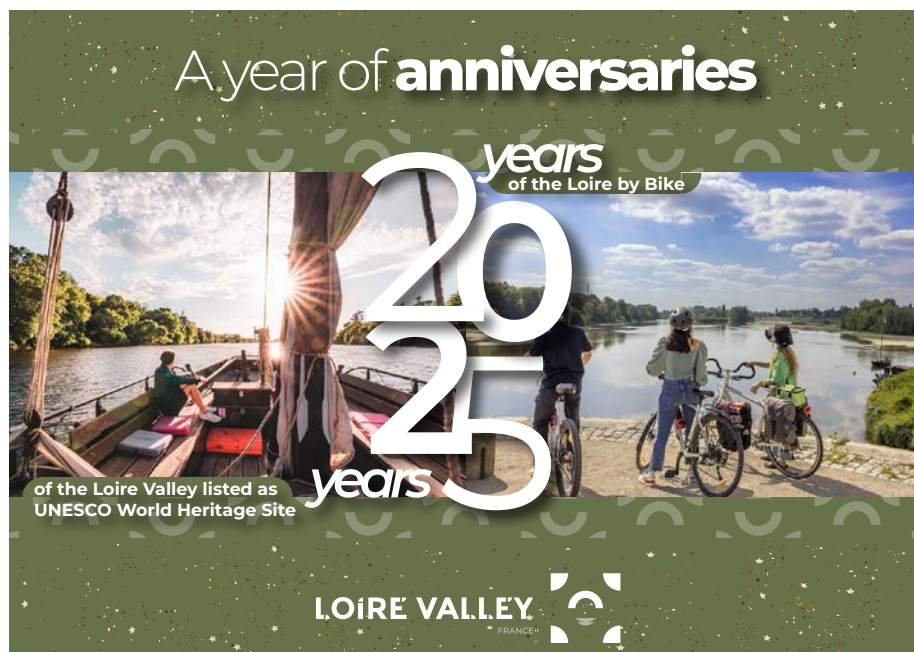
2025 promises to be an exciting year for the Loire Valley region, which is celebrating not one, not two, but three big anniversaries this year: the 25th anniversary of the Loire Valley as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the 20th anniversary of the 'La Loire à Vélo' or «Loire by bike» cycle route and the 15th anniversary of the 'Gastronomic meal of the French'.

30 November 2000 is a date engraved in the local tuffeau stone. A date that marks – at an unique time – the official classification of the Loire valley as a '**Living Cultural Landscape**'. 25 years on and **the Loire Valley** is set to celebrate the **174 kilometres stretching from Sully-sur-Loire to Chalonnes-sur-Loire**, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A Loire Valley renowned for its **exceptional Renaissance heritage**, spectacular **landscapes** and **majestic river which bear witness to the harmony and interaction between man and nature and the vineyards and winegrowers** that produce fine Loire wines. The region's special UNESCO year is also one of celebration for **two great listed cathedrals, Chartres Cathedral and Bourges Cathedral**, as well as for the **Neuvy-Saint-Sépulchre basilica**, a replica of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. So many reasons to visit and discover this remarkable region!

Spring 2005 saw the opening of the first section of **La Loire à Vélo**, linking the two regions that own and finance this cycle route, **the first of its kind in France**. Today, La Loire à Vélo is a well-known route throughout France and beyond, attracting almost two million cycle tourists every year and generating €55.6 million in economic benefits. A Loire success story that is the pride and joy of both the locals and the regions that developed it.

In 2010, UNESCO officially classified the '**Gastronomic meal of the French**' as an element of intangible cultural heritage, **as nominated by the European Institute for the History and Culture of Foods (IEHCA) in Tours**. The aim of this listing is to protect this customary social practice: togetherness, the pleasure of taste, sharing memorable moments and the pairing of wine and local produce.

These anniversaries and a programme of festivals, activities and events, organised by the Loire Valley region, serve to transmit and nurture **the Loire Valley's values of humanism** and affirm its standing as **an authentic land of Renaissance**.



25 YEARS OF THE LOIRE VALLEY AS A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE, A land of eternal Renaissance

Known affectionately as the 'Garden of France', the Loire Valley is a region rich in historical and natural heritage. A region traversed by the Loire and irrigated by its tributaries which have shaped the landscape and encouraged the movement and circulation of men and women, goods and ideas... A region synonymous with the French Renaissance and famed for its châteaux, illustrious characters and 'art de vivre'.

A little history: Medieval fortresses, royal châteaux, Renaissance residences, cathedrals, abbeys... **More than three centuries of prolific developments in art and architecture** that gave birth to the '**French art de vivre**'. Where did it all begin? With a military disaster: **the Battle of Agincourt (October 1415)**, a defeat that forced the King of France, Charles VII, driven out of Paris by the English, to take refuge on the banks of the Loire. **The Loire Valley**, with its river running through it, was the **main means of communication** between the Mediterranean, Burgundy and the Lyonnais region. The nobility forced to take refuge here liked it so much that they decided to stay, and once peace had been restored, economic prosperity and the development of the arts gave rise to an **unprecedented frenzy of building**.

TODAY, THE LOIRE VALLEY BOASTS:

- A tradition of inland waterways kept alive by nature lovers, who help locals and visitors discover the Loire, its tributaries – the Cher, Indre and Vienne – and their biodiversity of migratory birds and beavers, wild plants and sandbanks. In the regions of Sologne and Touraine and the Orléans Forest, the river, lakes and forests form a breathtaking landscape that is characteristic of the heart of France, its history and geography.
- More than 100 châteaux open to visitors – a concentration of Renaissance châteaux not found anywhere else in the world. It is here that the French court reigned for almost three centuries!
- Some 30 garden attractions, from the classic Renaissance gardens of Villandry to the avant-garde gardens of Chaumont-sur-Loire. Plus a wealth of gardens designed by gardening enthusiasts keen to share their expertise: Sasnières, Roquelin, Valmer, La Bussière, Les Grandes-Bruyères, Talcy and the garden village of Chédigny.
- A plethora of famous figures who have left their mark on the Loire Valley, including Leonardo da Vinci, Joan of Arc, Olivier Debré, Alexander Calder, Max Ernst, Balzac, Rabelais and Ronsard.
- The third largest vineyard in France, with 26 appellations, producing a range of white, red, rosé and sparkling Loire wines.

To celebrate this very special milestone year, 'Mission Val de Loire', which is responsible for retaining the Loire Valley's UNESCO label, and the Region are organising a series of events centred on the Loire's inland waterways (see agenda at the end of this press kit).

OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

On **30 November 2000**, 174 kilometres of the Loire Valley – from Sully-sur-Loire to Chalonnes-sur-Loire – was listed as a World Heritage Site in recognition of its '*living cultural landscapes*'. It is one of the largest listed sites in France.

In its approval of the Loire Valley's nomination file, UNESCO cites the region's outstanding universal value: "a *cultural landscape formed by many centuries of interaction between the river, the land that it irrigates and the populations established there throughout history*" in accordance with three criteria:

- **The quality of its architectural heritage and urban sites:** Nowhere else in Europe can you find towns and villages of such outstanding quality of architectural heritage as those along the Loire or such a density of Renaissance châteaux.
- The landscape illustrates the **ideals of the Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment** on European thought and design, with Leonardo da Vinci as the figurehead.
- The landscapes **bear witness to a harmonious development between humankind and its environment**. Although no longer the "*wild river*" that people often describe it as, the Loire remains remarkably naturally beautiful.



LA LOIRE À VÉLO, A 20-YEAR-OLD SUCCESS STORY IN THE LOIRE VALLEY!

At the end of 1994, the Centre-Val de Loire and Pays de la Loire regions signed an interregional agreement for a cycle tourism project, originally entitled 'Vélo Loire', an alien concept in the tourism landscape at the time. A group of elected representatives and engineers undertook a research trip to Germany to explore the 'Donau-Radweg' (Danube Cycle Path). And 10 years later, in 2005, the two regions opened the first section of 'La Loire à Vélo' – from Tours to Angers – establishing a link between the two and marking the start of this pioneering cycle route. Today, 'La Loire à Vélo' is a well-known route throughout France and beyond, attracting almost two million cycle tourists every year and generating €55.6 million in economic benefits. A Loire success story that is the pride and joy of both the locals and the regions that developed it.



WHY CHOSE LA LOIRE À VÉLO?

- Because it is **a safe and signposted 900-km route**: 620 km between Cuffly and the Atlantic Ocean and 280 km of loops and variants. Roads shared with traffic and dedicated cycle paths alternate along a predominately flat route, making it accessible to all.

- Because almost **the entire route is accessible by train**. And because every summer – from mid-June to mid-September – the 'Loire à Vélo' train includes in the price of your ticket free and secure transportation of your bike in specially equipped carriages. No longer any need to cycle the route there and back, instead you can choose to do it in several sections

<https://www.loirebybike.co.uk/travelling-along-the-itinerary/train-velo-loire-2>

- Because **there's always something to see along La Loire à Vélo**: historical UNESCO-listed heritage sites, towns and villages, beautiful Loire landscapes of vineyards, crop fields, gardens, troglodyte dwellings, the Loire River, renowned for its very special light, and birds nesting on the sandbanks.

- Because **900 tourism professionals with the 'Accueil Vélo' label are true experts in welcoming cycle tourists**: accommodation providers (hotels, campsites and B&Bs) and bike hire companies (luggage transfer, bike hire from A to B). This label, created in the Loire Valley region, guarantees specific services: secure bike storage, luggage transfer, a hearty breakfast, a bike wash station...

- Because **La Loire à Vélo connects with other European and regional cycle routes**: EuroVélo 6, linking La Loire à Vélo to the Black Sea, EuroVélo 3, linking Norway to Spain via the Loiret, and regional routes such as L'Indre à Vélo (between southern Touraine and Indre), Cœur de France à Vélo and Saint-Jacques à Vélo.. A total of 5,200 km of cycle routes and loops.

- Because **it's easy to plan your trip using the website, which features useful information**, suggested itineraries and contact details for local agencies specialising in bespoke cycling holidays.

- Because **La Loire à Vélo's passport**, stamped by tourist offices along the way, is a great souvenir of your trip along the route.

As a key part of the 'Les Echappées à Vélo' program, many events are organised to help you discover and explore cycle routes and loops (see agenda at the end of this press kit).



www.loirebybike.co.uk
www.echappeesavelo.fr



WINE TOURISM & GASTRONOMY

GASTRONOMIC MEAL OF THE FRENCH

UNESCO's inclusion of the '*Gastronomic meal of the French*' on its Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2010 – the fruit of the labour of the European Institute for the History and Culture of Foods (IEHCA), in co-operation with the University of Tours – protects and promotes the spirit and values of the '*Garden of France*'.

The '*Gastronomic meal of the French*' is defined as a meal that brings people together to celebrate important events, with a choice of good-quality products, preferably of local origin. It '*emphasises togetherness, the pleasure of taste and the balance between human beings and the products of nature*'. Diners practise '*the art of good eating and drinking*', with the emphasis on '*the pairing of food and wine*', '*the setting of a beautiful table*' and '*specific actions during consumption, such as smelling and tasting items at the table*'. 2025 will therefore also be the year for celebrating the wine and cuisine of Rabelais' beloved '*Garden of France*'. Many banquets and picnics will be organised as part of the '*Nouvelles Renaissance(S)*' season, and the IEHCA will be publishing a collective work on the '*Gastronomy of the Garden of France*'.

The inventory of the culinary heritage of the Centre-Val de Loire region lists 110 original products that are emblematic of our terroirs. They exemplify well the good quality of life that has long been – rightfully – associated with our region. The products and specialities listed include:

- *Galette de pomme de terre* (potato puff pastry) from Berry
- *Cognac d'Orléans* (sweet quince paste treat), the *Mentchikoff* (praline and meringue chocolate) from Chartres and the *Forestine* (smooth almond and hazelnut praline-filled sweet) from Bourges
- *Andouille* (smoked pork sausage) and *andouillettes* (andouille sausage dish) from the Loire Valley, *rillons* (pork belly dish) and *rillettes* (pork pâté) from Touraine and *pâté de Pâques* (Easter pâté) from Berry
- Goat's cheese with 5 PDOs and 26 appellations
- Fruit and vegetables from the '*Garden of France*': dried pears from Touraine, cherries from Orléans, strawberries from Sologne, asparagus and beetroot from the Loiret, winter squash from Berry
- Fish from the Loire river: pike, shad, eel, carp etc.



ANYTHING BUT SOUR!

At the end of 2024, Maison Martin-Pouret, the last remaining master vinegar maker in Orléans, opened new workshops. The aim? To offer visitors a unique immersive experience to discover the secrets behind the production of vinegar using the Orléans method, a method that has been successfully combining tradition and savoir-faire since 1797. The + ? Guided tours and cookery classes to learn how to use these delicious condiments and prepare some unusual recipes, including chocolate cake with raspberry vinegar and vinegar mocktails. Something that's sure to surprise the taste buds!

Where? Boigny-sur-Bionne, 15 minutes north of Orléans

www.martin-pouret.com/en





WINE TOURISM & GASTRONOMY



VINORIZON: VISIT THE VINEYARDS BY SCOOTER!

In the Sancerre region, Pierre Durand, a fourth-generation winegrower, is offering scooter tours of the vineyards, with stop-offs to try out the region's signature products!

The concept is simple: all-terrain electric scooter rides that allow visitors to explore the magnificent vineyard landscapes of Crézancy-en-Sancerre. The tours on offer promise a unique experience, combining effort and comfort.

The three routes devised by Pierre Durand range from 12 km (1 hour) to Crézancy and 20 km (2 hours 30 mins) to Sancerre, with gourmet stops along the way: 'La chèvrerie des Gallands' farm to sample the 'Crottins de Chavignol' (a soft, crumbly goat's cheese), tastings of Domaine Durand wines... The perfect way to visit the vineyards!

Where? Between Orléans and Bourges

www.domaine-durand.fr/en

FOOD TOURS IN TOURS: SPOTLIGHT ON TOURAINE PRODUCTS

In Tours, the capital of regional cuisine and close to Rabelais country, Sheena has launched 'Food Tours', a concept that serves as an introduction to the local cuisine.

PDO Saint-Maure de Touraine or Selles-sur-Cher cheese, Rillons de Tours or Rillettes, Poires Tapées, Bourgueil wines and the winegrower's tart made with it... These are just some of the many local delights to be discovered and savoured on a unique walking tour of Tours which will reveal all the culinary secrets of this medieval city, the former capital of France. Those wishing to try their hand at preparing a Touraine dish can do so under the expert guidance of a local chef in one of the cookery classes on offer. Each tour ends with an enjoyable group meal.

www.foodtoursintours.com



SANCERRE FOLKLORE: THE FRENCH ART OF ENTERTAINING

'FOLKLORE' in Sancerre is a boutique hotel that also houses a bistro by the name of 'Casse-Dalle Gourmand' (or gourmet snack in English). Two intriguing names that entice. The 'Casse-Dalle Gourmand' bistro offers a menu of tasty sandwiches made with ingredients sourced locally from dedicated producers and served, it goes without saying, alongside Sancerre wines. The + ? The hanging garden and its breathtaking views of the 'Tour des Fiefs' tower, part of Sancerre's historic castle. The programme of simple, yet stylish activities such as unusual vineyard tours, 'Bike escape & chic picnic' experiences and 'Ceramics & terroirs' workshops.

Where? In the centre of famous winegrowing town Sancerre

www.folklore-sancerre.fr/en



www.loirevalley-france.co.uk/organise-your-stay/where-to-eat



HERITAGE



CHÂTEAU D'AZAY-LE-RIDEAU CELEBRATES ITS 500TH ANNIVERSARY

Château d'Azay-le-Rideau is an architectural masterpiece, a monument symbolic of the French Renaissance, both in France and abroad. A subtle blend of French tradition and innovative Italian-style decorative features, Azay is an icon of the new art of building from the 16th century and romanticism in the Loire Valley. In 2025, Château d'Azay-le-Rideau will be celebrating its 500th anniversary with an extensive programme of events and festivities: exhibitions, plays, immersive shows, illuminations, concerts, family activities and talks.

www.azay-le-rideau.fr/en



A NEW EQUESTRIAN SHOW AT CHÂTEAU DE CHAMBORD

A new equestrian show created by Mario Luraschi will take visitors on a journey through Chambord's 500-year history, from Francis I to the present day. Stunts and giant screen projections will plunge visitors into an immersive show. With action and rhythm, boldness and a touch of humour that will delight young and old alike. Mario Luraschi is renowned for his expertise in stunts and action scenes, both in film (*'The Count of Monte Cristo'*, *'The Three Musketeers'* etc.) and on stage. (From April 2025)

www.chambord.org/en



ACTIVITIES FOR ALL THE FAMILY AT CHÂTEAU DE VALENÇAY

Theatre company *'Caméléon Production'* will be performing a series of short plays in the kitchens of Château de Valençay, transporting the château back in time to the days of the First and Second French Empires, when the Prince of Talleyrand resided here. These *'Prince's Culinary Delights'* will be performed every day in July and August and at weekends in June and September. The château's cultural programme will also feature a new show in the stables, brunch every first Sunday of the month, a historical re-enactment and a PDO Valençay wine and cheese evening.

www.chateau-valencay.fr

BOURGES, EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2028

The city of Bourges and the Loire Valley Region are not only aiming to host a major cultural event, but also to take advantage of this exceptional opportunity to initiate a profound transformation of its territory by and with its partners and the inhabitants. Bourges 2028 wants to be a model of cultural city committed to ecological, social and economic transitions around strong axes:

- Bourges must be the first European Capital of Culture low carbon because the climate emergency must provoke a response from all actors.
- Make medium-sized & human-sized cities, places where everyone feels its importance and feels it.
- Give all its place to youth and party, so that Bourges 2028 will be the most welcoming, festive and dynamic place.

A first immersive experience – *'La Loge des Bâisseurs de Cathédrales'* (The Lodge of Cathedral Builders) – was launched in June 2024, an initiative of Bourges Tourist Office, in partnership with heritage preservation specialists *'Art Graphique et Patrimoine'*. Since then, two new experiments have been created: with the workshops of stonemason and polychrome painter, everyone can now try the crafts of master glass-maker and master builder.



HERITAGE



TASTING UNDER THE STARS AT CHÂTEAU DE CHENONCEAU

On 19 July, Touraine-Chenonceaux wine producers will once again be hosting an unforgettable evening: As night falls, visitors will be invited to wander through the illuminated gardens of Château de Chenonceau, glass in hand, for a *'tasting under the stars'*. With lots of surprises in store again this year!

www.chenonceau.com/en/



REOPENING OF CHARTRES CATHEDRAL'S TREASURY IN SAINT-PIAT CHAPEL

Almost a quarter of a century after its closure in the early 2000s, the cathedral's treasury is once again open in the fully restored Saint-Piat Chapel. Following a lengthy process of research and restoration, some 150 objects are now on display in all their glory in the upper chapel, the chapter house and the two towers of the 14th-century building. For the first time ever, both floors of the chapel are open seven days a week, for visitors to wander at their leisure or discover on a guided tour. The + ? The light from the stained glass windows by Korean artist Bang Hai Ja in the chapter house and the provision of disabled access to the treasury.

www.cathedrale-chartres.org/en



CHRISTMAS EVENTS IN THE LOIRE VALLEY

Around twenty years ago, the biggest châteaux in the Loire Valley region joined forces to come up with a special Christmas offering for visitors to the châteaux during the festive season. The aim was to avoid going down the traditional Christmas markets route of Eastern France, and instead develop a unique concept fit for an equally unique heritage. Every year since, the Loire Valley châteaux have been brought to life with the magic of Christmas, with each château embracing its own relevant theme (flower arrangements and decorated tables, old-fashioned toys, nativity scenes, nature, light, contemporary art, sweet treats etc.). The decorations change every year and are complemented by an enchanting programme of activities and events (workshops, shows, concerts, evening events). The +? Some châteaux open at night & the Christmas pass.

www.loirevalley-france.co.uk/discover/loire-chateaux/christmas-chateaux-step-spirit

Bourges

Cher, Centre-Val de Loire

Capitale
européenne
de la Culture

2028

Territoire d'avenir



www.loirevalley-france.co.uk/discover/loire-chateaux



GARDENS

A garden is a specially created, aesthetically pleasing space for contemplation and recreation. Plants are used for their beneficial properties, the soil is preserved through valuable know-how, '*differentiated management*' is implemented, the garden is treated responsibly and enhanced through the use of eco-friendly practices. In the Loire Valley region, garden owners and managers are adopting this virtuous cycle and are committed to these practices, to rediscovering often age-old techniques, understanding and respecting nature and, above all, sharing their expertise. Energy-efficient, sensitive, biodiversity hotspots and places of beauty, these gardens welcome the public and reveal their secrets.



'POTAGERS DE FRANCE': A NETWORK OF REMARKABLE KITCHEN GARDENS OPEN TO VISITORS

Today more than ever, visitors are taking a keen interest in nutrition and well-being. The Loire Valley, also known as the '*Garden of France*', cultivates this '*art de vivre*', and nine fruit and vegetable gardens rooted in the region are members of the kitchen garden network: the châteaux of Chenonceau, La Bourdaisière, La Bussière, Chambord, Valmer, Villandry and Chaumont-sur-Loire, the Presbytère garden at Chédigny and '*Parc Floral d'Orléans*' botanical garden. These remarkable gardens all have three core values in common: the promotion of the specific plant heritage of the kitchen garden, the transmission of gardening know-how and, finally, the promotion of the fruit and vegetable garden as a place for innovation (for example, the tomato festival at Château de la Bourdaisière).

www.potagers-de-france.fr/les-jardins/centre-val-de-loire



A RELAXING INTERLUDE IN THE GARDENS OF CHÂTEAU DE MEUNG-SUR-LOIRE

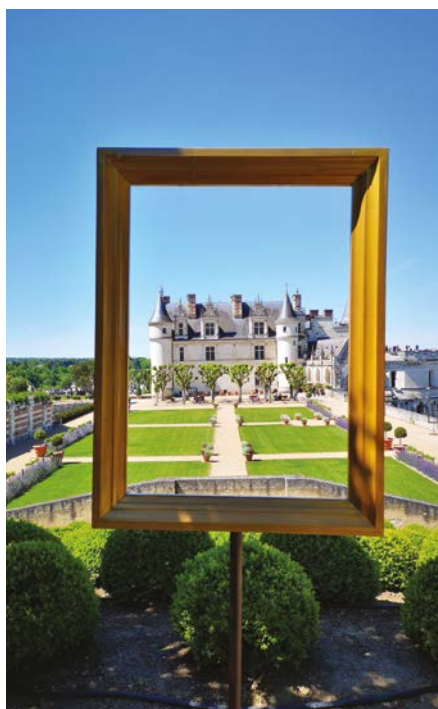
Château de Meung-sur-Loire has designed a new, unique garden walk, along which visitors are invited to stop off, sit back and relax and enjoy some music, and even read a book! In the centre of squares planted with rosebushes bearing the names of authors (Jehan de Meung ('The Romance of the Rose'), François Villon, Gaston Couté, to name but a few) are deckchairs and a box containing books by the authors in question. Ambient music and the sound of a fountain add a poetic touch to this delightful experience.

Where? 40 minutes from Orléans, along the Loire river

www.chateau-de-meung.com/en



GARDENS



ROYAL CHÂTEAU OF AMBOISE: A SEASON IN THE GARDEN

At the very end of the 15th century, King Charles VIII (1470-1498) commissioned the creation of a vast Italian-style pleasure garden at Château d'Amboise. Today, unique terraced gardens are laid out around an amphitheatre of greenery, affording exceptional views of the Loire Valley. In 2025, 'Fondation Saint-Louis', a non-profit heritage conservation organisation created in 1974, will continue to upgrade the terrace of Naples by planting Mediterranean species (lavender, sage, santolina, rosemary etc.) in the lawn flowerbeds, in the style of Renaissance gardens. A new garden is to be created on the 'Seven Virtues' terrace near the Saint-Hubert chapel, where Leonardo da Vinci's tomb can be found. The purpose of this new garden is to create a new vantage point from which visitors can admire the panoramic views.

www.chateau-amboise.com/en



PARC FLORAL D'APREMONT-SUR-ALLIER: MORE THAN JUST A BOTANICAL PARADISE

Designed in 1977 by Gilles de Brissac, this botanical garden, designated a '*Jardin Remarquable*' (Remarkable Garden), is an ode to travel. Featuring a Chinese bridge, a Turkish pavilion, a Russian-inspired belvedere and a collection of trees from all over the world, the site extends over almost five hectares and is the perfect choice for a beautiful botanical walk. Interested in history? '*Le Grand Départ*' (The Great Departure) is an immersive theatre experience that takes visitors on a journey back in time to meet Eugène and Antoinette Schneider, the owners of Château d'Apremont-sur-Allier in the early 20th century. The + ? The garden is integrated into a village awarded a coveted '*Plus Beau Village de France*' (Most Beautiful Village in France) label and located on the *La Loire à Vélo* cycle route. Where time stands still on the banks of the Allier.

Where? 1 hour south of Bourges

www.apremont-sur-allier.com/en



CHÂTEAU OF TALCY: A SUSTAINABLE ORCHARD

After a year of celebrations in honour of 16th-century French poet Ronsard, which put Château de Talcy – a little jewel in the French Renaissance crown – in the spotlight, it's time to take a closer look at the château's conservatory orchard, which has been awarded the '*Jardin Remarquable*' label. The creation of the orchard has restored this large estate to its former 18th-century agricultural role. The + ? No chemicals have been used in any of the château's gardens since 2008. A donkey and a handful of Sologne sheep graze the pastures.

Where? 15 minutes from Blois

www.chateau-talcy.fr



www.loirevalley-france.co.uk/discover/visit-garden



5,200 KM OF CYCLE ROUTES

THE LOIRE VALLEY: FRANCE'S NO. 1 CYCLE TOURISM DESTINATION

MAP LEGEND :

- - - Scandibérique
- La Loire à Vélo
- Véloscénie
- - - Vallée du Loir à Vélo
- Saint-Jacques à Vélo via Tours
- Saint-Jacques à Vélo via Vézelay
- Cyclo Bohème (Indre à vélo)
- Cœur de France à vélo
- La Loire



The Loire Valley is criss-crossed by **six national routes and two EuroVélo routes (EV3 and EV6)**, including France's oldest cycle route, **La Loire à Vélo**. This easy-to-navigate **900 km** route follows the Loire through a region listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The **Orléans-Tours-Nantes-Le Croisic train line** operates along the **La Loire à Vélo** cycle route, and from June to September, all trains on the line are equipped with **50 to 83 spaces for bikes**, making it easier for cyclists to get around the region. For even greater comfort and convenience, more than **1,000 professionals with the 'Accueil Vélo' (Bike Friendly) label** along the entire route (accommodation providers, bike hire companies, tourist sites etc.), located no more than 5 km from the route, offer special services for cycle tourists: secure premises, repair kits etc.

La Loire à Vélo connects with **other international routes and a dozen cycle route networks**, enabling visitors to discover and explore the region in a different way. These include **La Scandibérique (EV3), L'Indre à Vélo, La Vallée du Loir, Saint-Jacques à Vélo via Tours, Saint-Jacques à Vélo via Vézelay, La Véloscénie and Cœur de France à Vélo**.



Opening of the Orléans canal greenway

From Orléans to Montargis, a new cycle route along the Orléans canal has just been completed on the long Loiret loop. With its history of inland water shipping, water activities and 'guinguettes' (open-air cafés), this new route offers cyclists a gentle escape from it all in the heart of nature. The route is scheduled to be officially opened on 24 May 2025.

The Loire Valley Region is located **one to two hours from Paris**, with **regular train services** to the big towns in the Centre-Val de Loire region, including Orléans, Tours, Blois, Chartres and Bourges.



TOURS: FOR ALL OPTIONS



2 hours from Paris-Montparnasse or Paris-Austerlitz

Tours is located at **the crossroads of many regional cycle routes**. From *La Loire à Vélo* to *La Scandibérique*, *La Cyclo Bohème*, *Saint-Jacques à Vélo* and *Cœur de France à Vélo*, there are a thousand and one possibilities to get away from it all by bike and discover the region's countryside and vineyards in a different way.

Here is a sample itinerary for a few days in Touraine on La Cyclo Bohème (L'Indre à Vélo):

Day 1: Tours - Chenonceau - Loches (overnight stay in Loches) / 66 km (~ 4 hours 30 mins) of riding through the countryside to discover the region's heritage, with a detour to visit the magnificent Château de Chenonceau

Day 2: Loches - Azay-le-Rideau (overnight stay in Azay) / 60 km (~ 4 hours) on a journey through time, from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance

Day 3: Azay-le-Rideau - Tours via Bréhémont to pick up the La Loire à Vélo route / 44 km (~ 3 hours)



2 hours 30 mins by Intercités train from Paris-Austerlitz

Day 1: Argenton-sur-Creuse - La Châtre (overnight stay in La Châtre) / 50 km (~ 3 hours 15 mins) from the 'Venise of Berry', with its picturesque houses overlooking the river, to La Châtre, passing through countryside that alternates between rolling green hills and dense forests.

Day 2: La Châtre - Saint-Amand-Montrond (overnight stay in Saint-Amand-Montrond) / 59 km (~ 3 hours 30 mins) through the Brenne Regional Nature Park, with its stunning lakes, and charming little villages such as Sarzay and Neuvy-Saint-Sépulchre.

Day 3: Saint-Amand-Montrond - La Guerche-sur-l'Aubois (overnight stay in La Guerche-sur-l'Aubois) / 60 km (~ 3 hours 30 mins) along the quiet, flat Berry Canal path.

Day 4: La Guerche-sur-l'Aubois - La Charité-sur-Loire / 46 km (~ 2 hours 45 mins) along the canal running alongside the Loire.

www.en.francevelotourisme.com/cycle-route/saint-jacques-a-velo-via-vezelay



A second e-bike hire shop has opened in Montrichard: 'Station Bee's'. The Loir-et-Cher department now has two 'Station Bee's'; the other is in Chaumont-sur-Loire.

--> For more information on cycle routes in the region -->

www.loirebybike.co.uk - www.echappeesavelo.fr

CHÂTEAUX-HOPPING FROM BLOIS



2 hours from Paris-Montparnasse or Paris-Austerlitz

Les Châteaux de la Loire à Vélo is not just one route, but **several routes connected to La Loire à Vélo**. Along the 500 km route, **fifteen 10 to 45-km loops** take you on a trip around some of the biggest **Loire châteaux**, including **Chambord, Cheverny, Blois and Chaumont-sur-Loire**. Some loops also enable you to discover smaller estates such as **Beauregard, Villesavín and the Loire's smallest château, Château de Troussay**. On your way to these stunning châteaux, you will ride through the forest landscapes of Sologne, the vineyards of the Loire and some of the most beautiful villages in the Loire Valley. You're guaranteed to fall in love! !





ACCOMMODATIONS



A MODERN PERIOD RESIDENCE

'La Maleyssie' in the centre of Chartres, once the private mansion of the Marquis de Maleyssie's family, has recently been restored to its former splendour. The building, which dates from the mid-19th century, comprises eight guest apartments and a traditional French brasserie. This hotel and restaurant is the brainchild of two Chartres natives who already own gourmet restaurant 'Le Moulin de Ponceau'.

Where ? In the city center of Chartres

www.maleyssie-chartres.fr



REPÈRE SAUVAGE: A PLACE OF CURIOSITIES

'Repère Sauvage' offers 16 guestrooms in its manor house and 20 lodges across its 42-hectare estate. The bistro retains its original name – *Le Manoir de la Forêt* – but has revamped its menu to include fresh and seasonal ingredients from the estate's kitchen garden and local producers. Caroline Costagliola and Capucine Chatelier want to make 'Repère Sauvage' a place of curiosities, tranquillity and rejuvenating experiences: activities and workshops centred on nature, well-being and discovery of the region, a mini-farm and an intriguing garden for growing vegetables and aromatic herbs are all projects in the pipeline for spring 2025.

Where? La Ville-aux-Clerc, approx. 20 minutes from Vendôme, which can be reached by TGV train from Paris-Montparnasse in 45 minutes

www.repere-sauvage.com

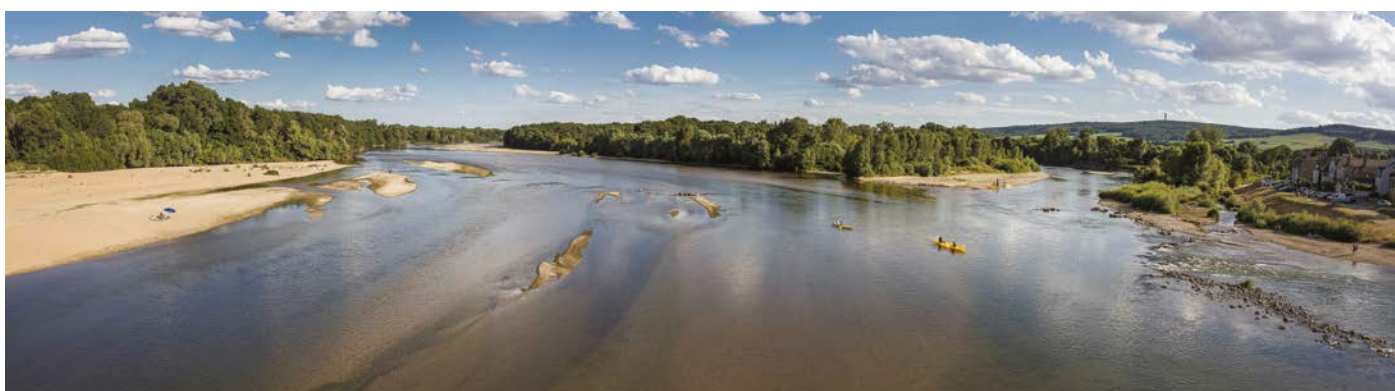


LA MAISON RABELAIS

Right in the heart of the town of Amboise, 'La Maison Rabelais' has been transformed into a modern, eco-friendly hotel (classification pending) boasting 32 accommodation units: guestrooms, apartments with kitchenettes and a lodge with private spa. The establishment comprises four buildings, each named after a historical figure who has left their mark in the Loire Valley: Leonardo da Vinci, the Medici royal family, Pacello and the writer Rabelais. The + ? Rooms with views of Château d'Amboise and equipped to welcome families and groups of friends.

Where? In the city center of Amboise.

www.maisonrabelais.com/en





ACCOMMODATIONS



HAUTES ROCHES : A DELICIOUS HAVEN OF PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY IN THE LOIRE VALLEY

Formerly a monastery, 'Les Hautes Roches' is today a 4-star Relais & Châteaux hotel, close to the vineyards of the Vouvray region. In addition to breathtaking views over the Loire, the hotel also boasts 14 troglodyte guestrooms! And as an extra special treat? Chef Hervé Lussault serves up refined French gourmet cuisine with the focus on local ingredients. Diners can enjoy a four-course tasting menu, with dishes paired with carefully selected wines from the region.

Where ? At Rochecorbon, at 15min of Tours.

www.leshautesroches.com/en



L'ECRIN DE LA BRENNE : HEALING AND WILD BEAUTY

L'Ecrin de la Brenne has been renovated to become a 3* hotel. This hotel, labeled Tourism & Handicap, is composed of a dozen rooms spread in a house of the XVth century and the old stables. The + : a «culture & Know-how» pack offers to discover the bees in spring and 'rosalies' are also available to explore this regional park in a fun way.

Where ? At Lureuil in the Indre department, in the heart of the Regional Park of Brenne

www.ecrin-brenne.fr



AN ENJOYABLE BREAK IN A NATURA 2000 PROTECTED AREA

Passionate travellers Frédéric and Virginie have drawn on their many years' of travel and exploration of the world to open a hotel of their own: 'Les Hayes en Sologne'. The hotel, which opened at the end of 2024, offers guests a choice of modern chateau living or a stay in a bohemian style room, featuring wood and cane from the Sologne region. A 180-hectare estate, an early 19th-century chateau boasting 19 unique guestrooms and suites, a swimming pool, tennis courts... 'Les Hayes en Sologne' has it all! The + ? Activities including meditation in the forest and open-air cinema screenings, delicious afternoon treats served in the chateau's cellar and evenings round the fire pit, complete with marshmallows, chestnuts and cosy blankets.

Where? Fontaines-en-Sologne, between Château de Chambord and Château de Cheverny

www.les-hayes.com



<https://www.loirevalley-france.co.uk/organise-your-stay/where-to-sleep>



ART



AN ARTISTIC STAY AT DOMAIN DE CHAUMONT-SUR-LOIRE

A centre for arts and nature since 2008, the regional authority-owned 'Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire' has become a must-visit for all discerning art and garden enthusiasts, thanks to an ambitious programme of exhibitions and events. Its plural identity – heritage, art, gardens and centre for contemplation – makes it a unique venue on the Loire Valley châteaux circuit. Several events are held throughout the year, including two main events: the 'Art Season', from March to November, featuring upcoming and emerging artists, and the 'International Garden Festival' (34th edition to be held from 19 April to 2 November 2025), whose theme this year is: Once upon a time in the garden: The enchanting enchanted garden. A poetic edition based around the world of storytelling. The + ? A hotel (Le Bois des Chambres) and two restaurants (Le Grand Chaume and Le Grand Velum) to round off the experience.

www.domaine-chaumont.fr/en/chateau-historic-grounds-and-stables

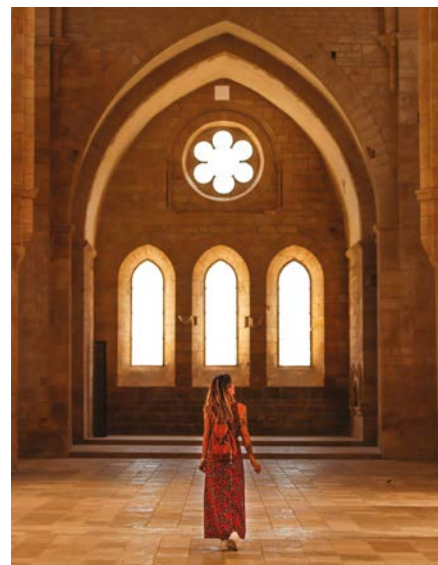


CENTRE DE CRÉATION CONTEMPORAINE OLIVIER DEBRÉ: A BEACON OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The 'Centre de Création Contemporaine Olivier Debré' (CCC OD) is a beacon in the world of regional contemporary art. Opened in 2017, the CCC OD stands out for its striking architecture, designed by Portuguese agency Aires Mateus. The design of the building incorporates four bright, modular spaces, including a nave for displaying ultra-large installations, which are also visible from the outside. The perfect showcase for Olivier Debré's monumental works, in addition to around ten temporary exhibitions a year. The + ? The local roots of this regional artist and the museum's passion for exploring the relationship between history and modernity.

Where? Tours, 1 hour by TGV train from Paris-Montparnasse.

www.cccod.fr



NOIRLAC ABBEY: SOUND IMMERSION IN THE HEART OF HISTORY

Noirlac Abbey is one of the best preserved abbeys of the Cistercian order. And now it is offering visitors a new immersive experience: 'RésoNance'. This hour-long sound trail, incorporating contemporary music and advanced broadcasting technology, immerses visitors in the history of the abbey, accompanied by works of music by eight artists. For those in search of even more music: Every summer, the abbey plays host to a programme of classical, traditional and jazz concerts. An essential stop-off on a sweet sunny summer's day.

Where? In the Berry region, 40 minutes west of Bourges, famed for its UNESCO-listed cathedral.

www.abbayedenoirlac.fr

AR(T)CHIPEL, THE LOIRE VALLEY'S FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Every year during the autumn school holidays, the AR(t)CHIPEL festival – this year in its 3rd edition – welcomes works by contemporary artists, as well as collections from the Centre Pompidou on loan to the region while it is closed in Paris. The festival features exhibitions in artists' studios and writers' and composers' homes, as well as private collections accessible to the public exclusively for the duration of the event.

www.nouvelles-renaissances.com/festival-artchipel/

FESTIVAL
AR(t)CHIPEL
CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE



ART

• From 28 March to 28 July:

Exclusive exhibition: Manet's *'The Lemon'* at the royal Château de Blois, an iconic citrus fruit taking up temporary residence in front of the kings' orangery. On special loan from the Musée d'Orsay, the royal Château de Blois will be exhibiting one of Edouard Manet's most famous paintings in Francis I's studiolo and opposite Louis XII's orangery: *The Lemon*.

• From 29 March to 31 August: *'Les couleurs de l'invisible'* (The Colours of the Invisible) exhibition by Korean artist Kim en Joong at Château de Chambord.



LIFESTYLE

• 30 march, *'Paulée des Vins de Loire'*:

20th market of the winegrowers of the appellations Loire in the Halles de Chartres, place Billard. Forty wine-makers working on the appellations of the Loire Valley and selected by Bertrand Jallerat, Olivier Poussier - best sommelier in the world in 2000 -, Nicolas Duclos, sommelier of the Grand Monarque, and the association of Paulée des Vins de Loire, will taste their latest vintages.

• End of June: A celebration of the wine and cuisine of the *'Garden of France'*, marking the 15th anniversary of the inclusion of the *'Gastronomic meal of the French'* on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list: banquets and picnics at heritage sites.



• From 20 October to 3 November:
AR(t)CHIPEL Festival

• *'Automne Gourmand'*:

Surprise tastings and gourmet meals : This event, a key feature on the region's calendar and a popular annual gathering, provides visitors with the opportunity to discover the savoir-faire of our regional restaurateurs and our authentic, responsible regional cuisine.



HERITAGE

• From 23 March to 07 December: The Capazza Galerie celebrates its 50th anniversary. Photography, sculpture, painting, ceramics, prints, goldsmithery and drawing are all works to be found in this timeless place.

• From 10 May to end of August: *The 'Le Son des Voiles'* stage boat, *'BEAT BOAT 2'*, will be setting sail on a river tour of the Loire and its tributaries. 25 stops with concerts, workshops and shows all the way to Nantes. *'Le Son des Voiles'* is an innovative low-carbon, energy self-sufficient touring concept.

• From 7 June to 10 September: *'Léonard de Vinci et le biomimétisme, s'inspirer du vivant'* (Leonardo da Vinci and biomimicry, drawing inspiration from life) exhibition at Château du Clos-Lucé.

• July and August: A large-format exhibition of Loire landscapes and cycling: never-before-seen photos of the region from the late 19th and early 20th centuries along *La Loire à Vélo* and its canals.



AGENDA



AGENDA



• **19 & 20 July:** The festival 'Au fil des siècles' returns to the royal domain of Dreux for a third edition. This year, the event celebrates the Renaissance period, with a focus on Henry IV and his role in the history of Dreux.

• **From 9 to 19 August:** DARC (dance) festival in Châteauroux will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

• **From 3 to 24 September:** 'La Remontée de la Loire' (Up the Loire River), from Nantes to Orléans, in honour of the Loire Valley's 25 years as a UNESCO World Heritage Site: Up to 80 boats will sail up the river to the Loire Festival. With 20 stopovers to celebrate the culture of the Loire region.

• **From 19 to 21 September:** 20 years of the European Renaissance Music Festival at Château du Clos-Lucé.

• **From 24 to 28 September:** 12th edition of the Loire Festival in Orléans.



SPORT

• **From April:** The regional programme of cultural, culinary and tourist events, 'Les Échappées à Vélo', will feature three exceptional cycling tours 'made in the Loire Valley'. The + ? A packed programme of events to celebrate the opening of the Cœur de France à Vélo cycle route (150 km between Tours and Bourges).



• **4 May:** Bike tour in Tours and **24 May** in Orléans. It is an opportunity to discover a city differently by visiting by bike historic monuments, sports grounds, administrative buildings, factories, musical scenes...

• **9, 10 & 11 May:** 'Les Vieilles Pédales' in Chartres brings together both bicycle enthusiasts, vintage fans, lovers of local heritage and local products. All this in a festive and musical atmosphere deliciously retro.

• **From 7 to 9 June:** 'Mad Jacques Val de Loire' for the 20th anniversary of La Loire à Vélo. A lively route with a party atmosphere, with a host of open-air cafés and events along the way, including stops at local producers and heritage sites – all by bike, of course! Two big evening events will be held in the stopover villages, where the public be invited to join in the fun with the Mad Jacques participants (free).

• **From 3 to 10 August:** The 86th 'Semaine Fédérale Cyclotouristique' (Federal Cycle Tourism Week) in Orléans, with 8,000 participants invited to discover the network of regional loops and routes (La Loire à Vélo, La Scandibérique, La Vallée du Loir à Vélo etc.).



Press Kit
to download here



CONTACTS



ISABELLE SCIPION

Head of Influencer Marketing

i.scipion@centre-valdeloire.org

+33 (0)6 87 75 21 90



AGNÈS BERTHET

Head of Media & Tour Operator Relations

a.berthet@centre-valdeloire.org

+33 (0)6 85 03 39 55



OCÉANE BAHUCHET

Media & B2B Officer

o.bahuchet@centre-valdeloire.org

+33 (0)7 86 20 41 00



MANON COCHARD

Media & B2B Officer

m.cochard@centre-valdeloire.org

+33 (0)6 38 72 95 74

Contact : presse@centre-valdeloire.org



PHOTO LIBRARY :

www.centrevaldeloire-photo.org/CRTC

Photo credits:

Cover: Château d'Azay-le-Rideau © T. Jorio_CMN

Edito : Bateau Candes Chinon © Lezbroz Teddy Verneuil, Combleux vélo © D. Darrault - CRT Centre-Val de Loire

Loire Valley : Amboise en hiver © J.C. Coutand - ADT Touraine

'La Loire à Vélo' : Chambord_vélo © Les Coflocs

Wine tourism & gastronomy : © Maison-Martin-Pouret, Tarte Tatin © D. Darrault - CRT Centre-Val de Loire, Marché Blois © D. Darrault - CRT Centre-Val de Loire, Vinorizon © Domaine-Durand, © Folklore boutique hôtel Sancerre, © Food Tour in Tours

Heritage : Château d'Azay-le-Rideau © L.de Serres_CMN, KRT_Kalender6 © C. Morello, Valencay cour d'honneur © M. Chassat, Chenonceau © Lezbroz - Teddy Verneuil, Chartres © Lezbroz Teddy Verneuil, Vilandry Noël © J.C. Coutand - ADT Touraine

Gardens : Château de la Bourdaisière © J.C. Coutand - ADT Touraine, Meung-sur-loire © Les Coflocs, Amboise Château Terrasses de Naples © A. Verger - CRT Centre-Val de Loire, Apremont-sur-Allier - Parc Floral © A. Moreau_CRT Centre-Val de Loire, Talcy-perspective © L. de Serres - CRT Centre-Val de Loire

Cycle routes : © Iostandfoundtravelling Centre-Val-de-Loire - Explore France, Vignoble Sarzay © J.J. Gelbart, © Blois - J.D. - ADT41

Accommodations : Maleyssie © Giuliano Ottaviani, Repère Sauvage, Piscine © Maison Rabelais, Sancerre - Loire © D. Darrault - CRT Centre-Val de Loire, © Les Hautes Roches - Découvrir ensemble, © Les Hayes en Sologne, Bruyère-LignyLeRib © L. Tetot - CRT Centre-Val de Loire

Agenda : Chaumont © Max Coquard - Bestjobers, CCCOD Tours © J.C. Coutand - ADT Touraine, Noirlac © SamFaitVoyager, Musée Beaux Arts Orléans © Découvrir ensemble, Château Clos-Luce - Parc Leonardo Da Vinci © Eric Sander, Festival Loire © OT Orléans, © Lezbroz - Teddy Verneuil

Back cover : Vélo à Chaumont © D. Darrault - ADT41



LOIRE VALLEY

FRANCE

WWW.LOIREVALLEY-FRANCE.CO.UK

2025

