

LES VALLÉES DE LA
Mayenne®



MAYENNE

JUBLAINS

ÉVRON

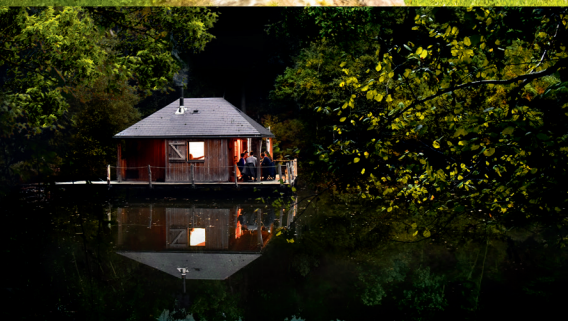
SAINTE-SUZANNE

LAVAL

SAULGES

COSSE-
LE-VIVIER

CHATEAU
GONTIER



»» WELCOME TO **MAYENNE**


LA MAYENNE
TOURISME



The beautiful countryside of Mayenne in Western France – situated south of Normandy and North of the Loire – is a perfect spot for holidaying in traditional France. Whether driving through on route to the south from the nearby ferry ports, or staying for longer in the region, a warm welcome awaits. Visitors here are greeted like long-lost friends and there is always a friendly local to explain, in approximate English, the many beautiful hidden corners to discover where you can enjoy a typically French way of life.

Discover the Valleys of Mayenne for a traditional French break.

WELCOME TO THE COUNTY OF MAYENNE

SUMMARY



MAPS

p 4-5

NATURE & COUNTRYSIDE

p 6-7

HISTORY & VISITS

p 8-13

A FRENCH WAY OF LIFE

p 14-15

SPORT & LEISURE ACTIVITIES

p 16-17

MARKETPLACE

p 18

PRACTICAL

p 19



Discover this logo !

It is intended for English-speaking people in Western France, and may be of particular use when organising your stay in Les Vallées de la Mayenne.

« C'est Beau Ici » is a campaign run by the regions of Brittany, Normandy and Pays de la Loire. The aim is to give English-speaking tourists a dedicated network of tourism services (tourist offices, accomodation, restaurants,

attractions...) where you will be extremely welcome.

Wherever you see this logo, you know that someone will be on hand to give you information in english, helping to make your holiday a real success.

For more information, go to www.mayenne-tourisme.com/en

THE VALLEYS OF MAYENNE®



KEY

- | | |
|---|--|
| Road | Caves |
| Highway | Museum |
| River | Animal refuge centre |
| Wood | Botanical garden |
| Mount | Marian town |
| Cycleway | Canoe kayak |
| Region of Art and History
«Pays d'Art et d'Histoire» | Small Town of Character
«Petites Cités de Caractère» |
| Castle | The Most Beautiful Villages of France
«Les Plus Beaux Villages de France» |
| Cathedral | La Vélo Francette® |
| Gallo-Roman city | |

GREAT BRITAIN

LONDON

PLYMOUTH

POOLE

PORTSMOUTH

CALAIS

DUNKERQUE

ENGLISH CHANNEL

Brittany Ferries

CHERBOURG

D-Day Landing Beaches

LE HAVRE

ROUEN

PARIS

OUISTREHAM

CAEN

NORMANDY

The Mont-Saint-Michel

ROSCOFF

BRITTANY

SAINT-MALO

RENNES

LES VALLÉES DE LA
Mayenne

ALENÇON

LE MANS

ANGERS

LOIRE VALLEY

NANTES

LA ROCHELLE





CLASSIC CAR CLUBS

Numbers classic car clubs, many of them English, discover the countryside while driving through Mayenne's tranquil little roads. Car rallies often meet in the numerous parks and chateaux with their beautiful gardens which pay testament to the region's love of gardening.



Nature & countryside



MAYENNE IS A HIDDEN CORNER OF FRANCE NESTLED BETWEEN NORMANDY, BRITTANY AND THE LOIRE VALLEY. HERE YOU WILL FIND UNSPOILT COUNTRYSIDE WITH SOFT, GENTLE LANDSCAPES, ROLLING HILLS, PATCHWORK QUILTED FIELDS, FORESTS AND RIVERS. IT'S THE DESTINATION OF CHOICE FOR THOSE LOOKING TO SPEND RELAXING AND ACTIVE HOLIDAYS IN THE HEART OF REAL FRANCE.

The rivers and valleys are ideal for fishing, canoeing, boating or quite simply passing time by the water's edge enjoying a picnic in natural surroundings.

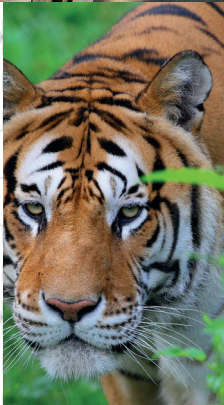
Whether you 're on foot, on a bike or on horseback, Mayenne awaits you - especially **on the 85 km of towpath alongside the river Mayenne**. Starting in Mayenne town and running south to Daon, it's one of the most beautiful public footpaths in France.



Protected wildlife areas rich in flora and fauna, pretty lock-keepers' cottages, gourmet restaurants, ancient water mills and châteaux, nearby tourist sites and numerous leisure activities on or close by water.

Sail at the Lac de la Rincerie canoe in Laval or water-ski near Château-Gontier. Or perhaps just a gentle stroll and a picnic at the water's edge. All this and more can be found around Mayenne's rivers. There's the Varenne, the Colmont, the Oudon, the Ernée and the Erve.







ANIMAL REFUGE CENTRE

Make the most of your visit to Château-Gontier by popping into 'Le Refuge Animalier de l'Arche' an animal refuge centre which champions animal rights. Lions, tigers, monkeys and other animals are treated here after being harmed by human hands.

History & visits



MAYENNE HAS MANY HISTORICAL SITES THAT ARE WELL WORTH A DETOUR. THEY ARE WELL-EQUIPPED TO WELCOME ENGLISH-SPEAKING VISITORS, MANY OFFERING ENGLISH-SPEAKING GUIDES AND LITERATURE TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH. THE OFFICIAL LABEL OF 'PAYS D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE' AWARDED TO COËVRONS-MAYENNE AND THE LABEL OF 'VILLE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE' PRESENTED TO LAVAL BY THE FRENCH MINISTER FOR CULTURE, SIGNIFIES THE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE AND THE HIGH STANDARD OF WELCOME AT THESE PLACES OF INTEREST.



Laval Castle dates from the Middle Ages and is situated on the banks of the River Mayenne, in the historic centre of Laval. The castle houses an exceptional **Museum of Naïve Art**. Master painter Rousseau, founder of the Naïve Art movement, was born in Laval. During a visit you can explore the dungeons which dominate the city and admire the ancient streets of Laval.

In the **museum of Mayenne Castle**, located in the town of Mayenne, discover the different stages of the castle's construction and its many uses, including as a prison. The castle was formerly a Carolingian Palace and is one of the oldest castles in Europe. A few kilometres away is the village of **Fontaine-Daniel**, built around an old abbey which houses one of the most ancient weavers in France '**Les Toiles de Mayenne**'.

In **Château-Gontier**, you can visit the magnificently restored 'Couvent des Ursulines' and cultural centre during a guided visit by the Tourist Office. It is best to visit this ancient site on Thursdays when you can also browse the weekly, local produce market.





History & visits



'PETITES CITÉS
DE CARACTÈRE'
WORTH A DETOUR

Sainte-Suzanne
Saulges
Saint-Pierre-sur-Erve
Parné-sur-Roc
Lassay-les-Châteaux
Chailland
Saint-Denis-d'Anjou

At **Jublains**, the **Roman period** has left a city with fortress, thermal baths, Temple and theatre that you can visit. Wonder through the Roman streets reconstructed around the current village. **The Archaeological Museum** provides the key to understanding the architecture and the life of the Roman era.

On the road heading towards **Sainte-Suzanne**, officially designated one of the most beautiful villages in France, stop off at **Evron cathedral** to admire the impressive stain glass windows and the roman and gothic architecture.

In **Saulges**, enjoy an underground adventure into the remarkable **caves** which are the only ones open to visitors in the entire west of France. At the **Museum of Prehistory**, you'll learn how man has lived here for over ten thousand years.

Nearby and still intact are **the ancient watermills of Thévalles**, **the Grand Moulin of Sainte Suzanne** and **the Mill of Gô** which are fed by the River Erve.



Sainte-Suzanne, the fortress that resisted William the Conqueror

Sainte-Suzanne is designated one of the ‘Plus Beaux Villages de France’. Situated on a rocky spur, the town overlooks the Erve valley. In 1083, William the Conqueror attempted to invade the town but after the first unsuccessful battle decided, as he often did, to lay siege to the town instead. His troops created camp at Beugy, around 800m from the fortress, and the camp of the English as it is known can still be visited today. In 1086, after several years of siege, William decides to hand back the areas he had taken to the triumphant Earl Hubert II of Beaumont.

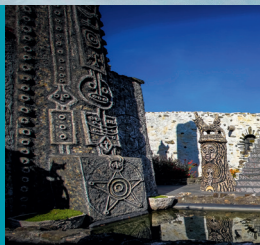
The Castle of Sainte Suzanne houses **the CIAP** (Centre d’interprétation de l’architecture et du patrimoine) which provides an interesting insight into the historical riches of **Pays d’Art et d’Histoire Coëvrons-Mayenne**.





ROBERT TATIN
MUSEUM

A unique open-air museum-garden created by the vision of artist Robert Tatin, set in the glorious countryside in Cossé-le-Vivien. Enter a world of sculptures and paintings that cannot fail to move you. It's the stand-out attraction in the entire Mayenne region.



History & visits

Mayenne has more inhabited castles than any other county in France. Wherever you are, you will see them in the hollow of a valley, at the top of a hill, alongside a river, small village or town. Many are private and you can only admire them from the distant roadside or footpath. Others are open to visitors.

CHÂTEAU DE LASSAY

A real castle-fort with defence towers, a drawbridge, watchtower. There are animations all summer from historical re-enactments, to theatre, concerts...

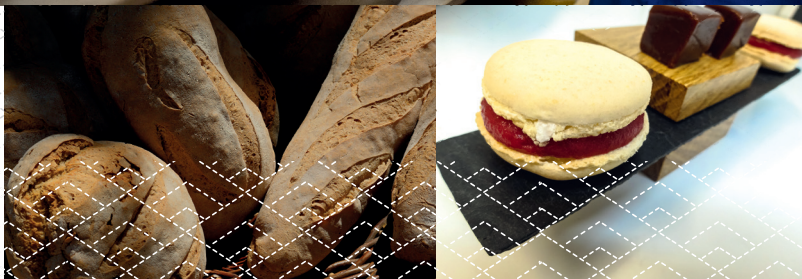
CHÂTEAU DE BOURGON-MONTOURTIER

A gem of a castle in lush green landscape that retains a genuine sense of authenticity. The owners will explain the history of the castle and organise animations.

CHÂTEAU DE CRAON

This eighteenth century castle is thought of as one of the Loire Valley Castles. It is elegant and inhabited, and built with the white stone typical of the Loire. Surrounded by parkland with centuries-old trees the outbuildings include stables, a wash-house and cold store. The owners welcome visitors and explain all about life at the castle.





A French way of life

MAYENNE IS A RURAL REGION WITH A VARIETY OF AGRICULTURE, SPECIALISING IN MILK AND BEEF PRODUCE. THERE ARE MANY BEEF AND DAIRY CATTLE GRAZING IN THE FIELDS, WITH SEVERAL HIGH-QUALITY, LARGE AND SMALL-SCALE CHEESE PRODUCERS. THE LOCALS APPRECIATE FINE QUALITY FOOD AND ARE MORE THAN WILLING TO RECOMMEND A GOOD RESTAURANT OR A STORE WHICH STOCKS REGIONAL PRODUCE.



There are plenty of **local food markets** on your doorstep, where you can browse the regional produce and pick up just-cooked delicacies prepared fresh that morning.

On the drinks front, **cider, pommeau du Maine, Perry and apple juice** can all be tasted and bought direct from the farm as well as local creperies and restaurants.

Mayenne chefs are delighted to create dishes to tease your taste buds and numerous gastronomic restaurants incorporate regional produce from local beef and poultry farmers to seasonal vegetables.

There are also plenty of specialist wine shops and cellars to help you choose a fine vintage.





GOLF

The Golf de Laval is well-known for its beautiful course on the banks of the River Mayenne. A warm welcome awaits in the club-house bar, restaurant and shop.



Sport & leisure activities

Numerous sport and leisure activities can be enjoyed in Mayenne.

WALKING

The Mayennaise countryside is ideal to explore on foot. There are plenty of hiking trails on your doorstep which cross the region (ask at the local Tourist Office for a route map).

The small country roads are ideal for cycling. The 630 km **la Vélo Francette®** cycleway from Ouistreham to La Rochelle crosses the region following the River Mayenne towpath: a safe, green track for all to enjoy.

WATERSPORTS

Small motorised boats are available to hire for a day on the water, as are canoes and pedaloes. You can even try your hand at wake-boarding.

In the summer, supervised beaches on the edge of the lakes provide an opportunity to cool-off. Public swimming pools and those in hotels, B&B's and camp sites are equally inviting.



EVERYONE LOVES A BARGAIN, DON'T THEY? AND THE FUN DOESN'T HAVE TO STOP WHEN YOU'RE ON HOLIDAY. ALMOST EVERY WEEK, ESPECIALLY ON SUMMER WEEKENDS, BARGAIN-HUNTERS EVERYWHERE ARE ITCHING TO BE FIRST TO THAT HANDBAG, ORNAMENT OR PIECE OF FURNITURE.

Vide-greniers (which literally means 'empty attics' but are better known as car boot sales) are as popular here as in England.

Brocantes and braderies are similar in many ways but are usually more for secondhand household goods, bric-a-brac and collectables sold by tradespeople. Troc and puces are what the English would call flea markets.

But what many people really associate with France are **local markets** selling everything from Camemberts to caulis, furry toys to furniture. They are at the heart of every French town or little village but while vide-greniers might go on all day, markets start early in the morning and are usually over by lunchtime.

They are often held in the centre of town near the church and, generally, the bigger the town the bigger the market.



Top ten markets

Monday
Villaines-la-Juhel
Craon
Mayenne

Tuesday
Ernée

Wednesday
Gorron
Lassay-les-Châteaux

Thursday
Château-Gontier

Saturday
Laval city centre
Ambrières-les-Vallées
Mayenne



Tourist Offices

OFFICE DE TOURISME DU SUD MAYENNE

Couvent des Ursulines
Place André Counord
B.P. 20402
53204 CHÂTEAU-GONTIER cedex
02 43 70 42 74
www.sudmayenne.com

TOURISME EN PAYS DE CRAON

Place du Pilon
53400 CRAON
02 43 06 10 14
www.sudmayenne.com

OFFICE DE TOURISME DU PAYS DE MESLAY-GREZ

La Guiternière
53170 MESLAY-DU-MAINE
02 43 64 29 00
www.paysmeslaygrez.fr

OFFICE DE TOURISME DE SAINT-DENIS-D'ANJOU

2 grande rue
53290 SAINT-DENIS-D'ANJOU
02 43 70 69 09
www.saintdenisdanjou.com

OFFICE DE TOURISME DU PAYS DE LAVAL

84 avenue Robert Buron
CS 70614 53006 LAVAL cedex
02 43 49 46 46
www.laval-tourisme.com

OFFICE DE TOURISME DES COËVRONS

1 rue Jean de Bueil
53270 SAINTE-SUZANNE
02 43 01 43 60
www.coevrons-tourisme.com
■ Antennes : Evron.

OFFICE DE TOURISME VALLÉE DE HAUTE MAYENNE

Quai de Waiblingen
53100 MAYENNE
02 43 04 19 37
www.hautemayenne-tourisme.com

• Bureau de Lassay-les-Châteaux

8 rue du château
53110 LASSAY-LES-CHÂTEAUX
02 43 04 74 33

BOCAGE MAYENNAIS TOURISME

1 grande rue
53120 GORRON
02 43 11 26 55
www.hautemayenne-tourisme.com
■ Antennes : Pontmain, Ambrières-les-Vallées et Colombiers-du-Plessis.

OFFICE DE TOURISME DU MONT DES AVALOIRS

26 rue Jules Doitteau
53700 VILLAINES-LA-JUHEL
02 43 03 78 88
www.cc-montdesavaloirs.fr
■ Antennes : Pré-en-Pail et Saint-Pierre-des-Nids

SYNDICAT D'INITIATIVE D'ERNÉE

42 place R. Morlière
53500 ERNÉE
02 43 08 71 10
www.ville-ernee.fr/decouvrir-ernee/

Opening hours

It can depend on whether you're in a large town or in the country, but generally shops open 9-12 and 2-7 and are closed Sundays and often Mondays. Lunchtimes are sacrosanct so don't be surprised if places shut between 12-2pm – except for bars and restaurants of course!

Restaurants open at night from around 7-10pm.

Many large supermarkets don't close for lunch, while some bakeries open early-morning (including Sundays) but can close for a while in the afternoon. Banks are generally open 9am-5pm Monday-Friday.

Emergency numbers

Sapeurs-Pompiers : 18. Generally the first number to dial following an accident.

Police : 17.

SAMU (medical help) : 15.

European SOS : 112. Free call from mobile, landline or payphone for medical, fire and police help.

Useful phrases

- Hello/Goodbye. **Bonjour/Au revoir.**
- Thank you. **Merci.**
- Please! **S'il vous plaît!**
- My name is... **Je m'appelle...**
- Enjoy your meal. **Bon appétit.**
- We're looking for a hotel. **Nous cherchons un hôtel.**
- Can you help me? **Pouvez-vous m'aider?**
- How much is it? **C'est combien?**
- My car has broken down. **Ma voiture est en panne.**
- I don't like it. **Je n'aime pas cela.**
- I'm just looking. **Je regarde seulement.**
- I am looking for the tourist office. **Je cherche l'office de tourisme.**

Common signs

- Reception. **Accueil.**
- Welcome. **Bienvenue.**
- Library. **Bibliothèque.**
- Baker. **Boulangerie.**
- Grocery shop. **Épicerie.**
- Newsagents. **Maison de la presse.**
- Cake shop. **Pâtisserie.**
- Chemist. **Pharmacie.**

For *any*one wanting a better way to Mayenne



Brittany Ferries



Why endure a long drive through northern France when you can sail closer to this beautiful holiday region with us?

Take your pick from the widest choice of sailings - by day or overnight, cruise ferry, économie or high speed.

Once on board, enjoy high levels of service and comfort, whilst we take you closer to your destination.

- ✓ Pack your car and explore at your own pace
- ✓ Arrive closer to the France you love
- ✓ Enjoy award-winning onboard service
- ✓ Save miles of driving and gallons of fuel



Mayenne Tourisme
Agence de développement touristique
84 avenue Robert Buron
CS 30325 - 53003 LAVAL Cedex
Tél. : 02 43 53 18 18
info@mayenne-tourisme.com
www.mayenne-tourisme.com
www.mayenne-slowlydays.com