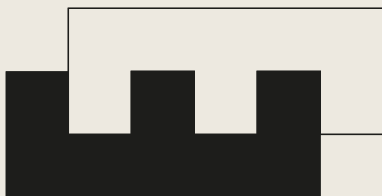


TOUR BOOKLET



FORTERESSE ROYALE DE CHINON

Un site du Département

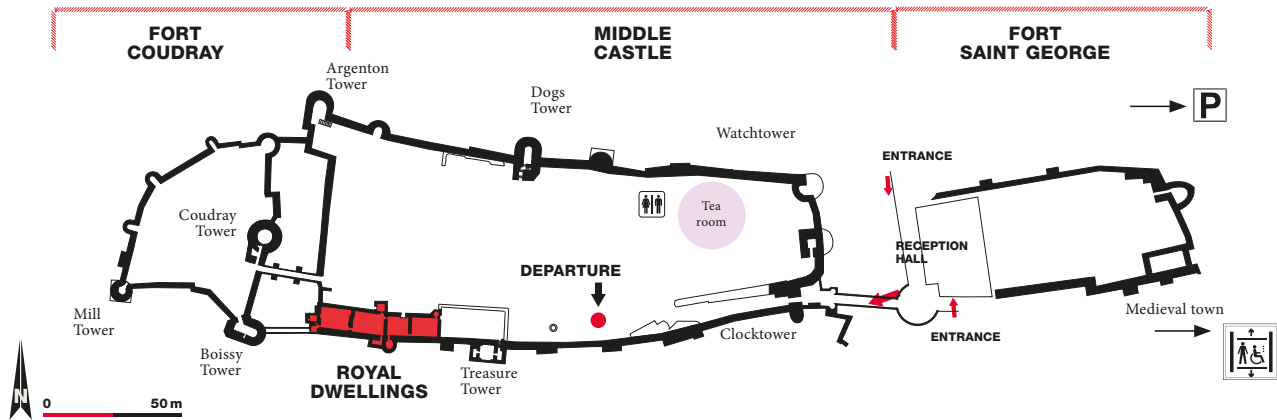
TOURAINES
LE DÉPARTEMENT 



LET US GUIDE YOU

Used throughout the tour, this guide helps you find your way around the site using a colour-coding system. In each room or in front of each tower, you will find a two-tone enameled spear whose colours correspond to a page in your booklet.

THE THREE CASTLES OF THE ROYAL FORTRESS OF CHINON



1. THE ROYAL QUARTERS

ROOM 1

Queen's kitchens	8
History and Archaeology	9

ROOM 2

Former 12th-century lower hall	10
The bedroom of Eleanor of Aquitaine	11

ROOMS 3 & 4

Queen's apartments	12
The Joan of Arc collections	13

ROOM 5

King's parent chamber	14
Hangings and tapestries	15

ROOM 6

King's private chamber	16
The reconstruction of the royal bedchamber	17

ROOM 7

King's kitchens	18
Reconstruction of Eleanor of Aquitaine's kitchen	19

ROOM 8

Did you know ?	20
Arms room	21

2. THE THREE CASTLES

THE MIDDLE CASTLE

The Treasury Tower	24
The Clock Tower	26
Bombards and Veuglaires	28
Bricole and Trebuchet	29
The Dogs Tower	30
The Argenton Tower	32

FORT COUDRAY

The Boissy Tower	34
The Mill Tower	36
The Coudray Tower	38

FORT SAINT GEORGE

Fort Saint George	40
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3. TIMELINE

The Kings' fortress	42
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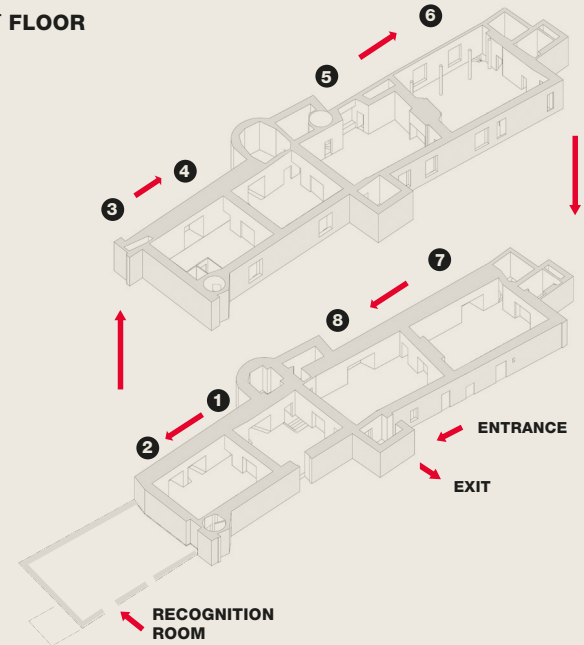
1. THE ROYAL QUARTERS

The construction of the Royal Dwellings was begun by Duke Louis 1st of Anjou around 1370. Work continued in the 15th century under Charles VII and Mary of Anjou. It consisted of three buildings forming a "U" around an inner courtyard. The northern and western buildings have been destroyed.

The preserved southern wing has been converted into museum space. The adjoining grand banquet hall that has disappeared today is also called the Recognition room in reference to the mythical episode that took place there in March 1429: the presentation of Joan of Arc to King Charles VII.

SOUTHERN WING

1ST FLOOR



GROUND



THE ROYAL QUARTERS



COLLECTIONS



ROOMS 1 & 2

QUEEN'S KITCHENS

In the Middle Ages, these two rooms located under the apartments of Queen Mary of Anjou housed her private kitchens and related storage space (cellars). They now help us learn more about the fortress through the multimedia equipment and the collections that are exposed there.

HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

The objects displayed come from recent archaeological digs on the site: the tomb of a Gallic warrior, a relief of Saint George slaying the dragon that adorned the chapel of Fort Saint George, some aspects of daily life in the Middle Ages.



IN THE MIDDLE AGES

FORMER 12TH CENTURY LOWER HALL

This room corresponds to a former ground-floor hall – beneath the roof structure – dating from the late 12th century. It would have been used for public hearings and was lit by twin windows characteristic of that period (windows grouped in pairs), of which only one example remains on the site. In the 14th century, this space was incorporated into the reconstruction of the royal quarters and converted into a kitchen.

THE ROYAL QUARTERS



IMMERSION



ROOM 2

THE BEDROOM OF ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE

In Chinon, the bedroom of King Henry II Plantagenet and his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine was located in the palace of Fort Saint-Georges now destroyed. This historic room was the obvious choice for the setting for a recreation of the royal couple's bedroom. This immersive space is preceded by an interpretative area that allows visitors to appreciate the significance of the Royal Fortress of Chinon to the Plantagenets.



QUEEN'S APARTMENTS

You are in the apartments of Mary of Anjou. Like the king, the queen had two adjoining rooms: the state bedchamber, a semi-private space to receive visitors, and the retreat chamber, an intimate space, the equivalent of a modern bedroom. Additional rooms completed the group: an oratory (private chapel) and a wardrobe.

THE ROYAL QUARTERS



COLLECTIONS



ROOMS 3 & 4

JOAN OF ARC COLLECTIONS

All the works presented in these two rooms form a collection dedicated to representations of Joan of Arc from the 16th to the 20th centuries. No artistic representations of Joan of Arc were made during her lifetime, but she inspired a number of artists in the following centuries. Among these works, a tapestry entitled *The Meeting of Joan of Arc and Charles VII* is on display in room 4. It is an Aubusson tapestry produced by Jacques Corneille's workshop in the 17th century. It originally formed part of a series of tapestries (known as a *wall hanging*) depicting the story of Joan of Arc in eight episodes. Another tapestry, entitled *The Coronation of Charles VII*, also belongs to this famous tenure. It is on display in the King's Chamber (Room 6).

KING'S PAREMENT CHAMBER

You are in Charles VII's parement chamber. This semi-private space was furnished with one or two ceremonial beds that enabled the king to receive his counsellors and conduct hearings. The first interview between Charles VII and Joan of Arc took place in this room in February 1429 in a small group.

THE ROYAL QUARTERS



COLLECTIONS



ROOM 5

HANGINGS AND TAPESTRIES

From the 15th to the 17th centuries, the tapestries adorning the walls of our castles drew inspiration from ancient heroes and myths. They tell a story in five to eight episodes. A complete series, designed to adorn a room, is known as a suite or tapestry set.

Two tapestries on display in the dressing room form part of the *History of Paris*, a series woven in Oudenaarde (Flanders) around 1630. This tapestry depicts the legendary origins of the Trojan War, of which *The Feast of the Gods* and *The Judgement of Paris* are two famous episodes. During the banquet, Discord threw a golden apple onto the table, declaring that it should go to the fairest of the three goddesses: Hera, Athena or Aphrodite. The gods charged Paris with deciding the matter. He chose Aphrodite, who had promised him the love of Helen of Sparta.



KING'S PRIVATE CHAMBER

You are in the private chamber of King Charles VII, the room where he slept and ate his meals on ordinary days. The royal accounts, which mention the purchase of precious fabrics and furniture, help us understand the luxury and refinement of this private space. The king also had a bath chamber (bathroom) and latrines nearby.

THE ROYAL QUARTERS



IMMERSION



ROOM 6

RECONSTRUCTION OF CHARLES VII'S BEDCHAMBER

This project is the result of a considerable effort combining documentary research and the contribution of craftspeople. The furniture was crafted by a cabinetmaker who reproduced designs found in museums or depicted in 15th century miniatures. The textile reproductions were entrusted to specialist craftspeople: a 'Living Heritage' company for the weaving, and an upholsterer and embroiderer for the finishing. An authentic 17th century Aubusson tapestry depicting the *Coronation of Charles VII* completes the collection. It forms part of the series dedicated to *the Life of Joan of Arc*, as does the tapestry depicting *the Meeting of Joan of Arc and Charles VII*, on display in room 4.



KING'S KITCHENS

The rooms located on the ground floor of the royal quarters, under the king's and queen's apartments, housed vast kitchens and service areas dedicated to the professions that served the royal couple and which were grouped within the king's household and/or the queen's household.

It was the domain of cupbearers, kitchen squires, chefs, soupmakers, sauce chefs, etc

THE ROYAL QUARTERS



IMMERSION



ROOM 7

RECONSTRUCTION OF ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE'S KITCHEN

The Royal Fortress of Chinon presents a historical reconstruction of Queen Eleanor's kitchen in the 12th century. We drew inspiration from accounting records dating from the mid-12th century to recreate the atmosphere of this luxurious kitchen. To bring this project to fruition, we enlisted the help of an artist who creates papier-maché food, and a potter-archaeologist who reproduces medieval ceramics.



IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Did you know?

In the Middle Ages, noble knights asserted their social status through their weapons and armour. They commissioned the finest armourers to craft these to measure. The royal armour-making industry developed in Touraine from the reign of Louis XI (the son of Charles VII) onwards, at the end of the 15th century. These Touraine-made pieces were highly renowned, just like the prestigious armour from Nuremberg (Germany) and Milan (Italy).

THE ROYAL QUARTERS



COLLECTIONS



ROOM 8

TODAY

ARMOURY

The collections on display in this room consist of military equipment used from the Hundred Years' War (14th/15th centuries) up to the 19th century. Around fifteen objects are on display, including a replica of Milanese armour, a coat of mail, a crossbow, and a series of helmets dating from the late Middle Ages to the reign of King Louis XIII (mid-17th century). Two small signal cannons, also known as 'celebratory cannons', illustrate a practice that was widespread in the 19th century in larger towns: firing cannons during festive occasions.

2. THE THREE

The Middle castle

- ◊ The Treasury Tower
- ◊ The Clock Tower
- ◊ Bombards and Veuglaires
- ◊ Bricole and Trebuchet
- ◊ The Dogs Tower
- ◊ The Argenton Tower

Fort Coudray

- ◊ The Boissy Tower
- ◊ The Mill Tower
- ◊ The Coudray Tower

Fort Saint George

CASTLES

The royal fortress of Chinon is built on a rocky outcrop overlooking the river Vienne and the town. Little by little, the space was structured into three distinct parts, that the kings called their *three castles*. Thus, from west to east, the rocky promontory is divided by ditches, separating the three castles: Fort Coudray, the Middle castle and Fort Saint George. Each of them has a separate fortified enclosure. The royal quarters stand in the Middle Castle.



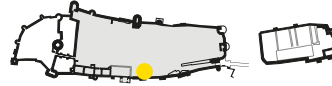
THE TREASURY TOWER

Built against the southern rampart of the Middle Castle, the Treasury Tower was constructed by Henry II Plantagenet in the second half of the 12th century to house his royal treasure. This tower consists of a central vaulted room used as an office, flanked by two small side rooms, also vaulted, where the chests were presumably stored.

THE THREE CASTLES



THE MIDDLE CASTLE



Did you know?

The Royal Treasury is the fund from which the king draws to cover his day-to-day expenses, the refurbishment of his castles, and the costs incurred in his territorial conquests. Apart from the Palace of Westminster, Chinon is the only royal residence on the continent where the Royal Treasury was kept, making it a Plantagenet stronghold of the utmost importance.



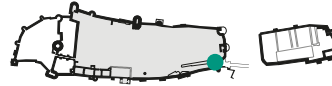
THE CLOCK TOWER

In its current lofty and slender configuration, the Clocktower dates from the late 14th century. Since the end of the 12th century, it has served as the entrance to the Middle Castle. It takes its name from the clock installed in the turret that rises above roof level.

THE THREE CASTLES



THE MIDDLE CASTLE



Did you know?

The tower takes its name from the monumental clock it contained from 1399. The clock mechanism was tied to the bell at roof level, and was moved by two stone weights that went down as far as the ditch under the ground floor of the tower. The bell was nicknamed Marie-Javelle. It is one of the four oldest bells in Touraine. Since the late 14th century, and still today, it rings on the hour for the inhabitants of Chinon!



BOMBARDS AND VEUGLAIRES

These stubby guns of wrought iron are characteristic of the beginnings of gunpowder artillery in the 15th century. Restored, the bombards (large-calibre guns) are displayed on their reconstructed wooden carriages, designed to protect the gunners. The veuglaires (small-calibre cannons) were mounted on wheeled carriages, which enabled them to keep up easily with a marching army.

THE THREE CASTLES



THE MIDDLE CASTLE



BRICOLE AND TREBUCHET

The Fortress Park is home to siege engines used in the 13th century, reproduced here at one-third of their actual size by an expert in medieval engineering. He designed them following many years of research and experimentation. They are put into action during the events organised by the Fortress throughout the year.



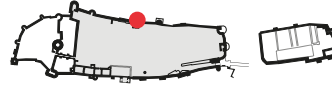
THE DOGS TOWER

The Dogs Tower is a defensive structure shaped like a horse-shoe. It was built by King Philip of France during reconstruction work on the northern walls, which were damaged during a siege in 1205. It contains three half-buried levels with arrowslits and a terrace at the top that led to the rampart walk.

THE THREE CASTLES



THE MIDDLE CASTLE



Did you know?

The Dogs Tower owes its name to nearby kennels that housed the Royal hounds in the 15th century. There were two bread ovens, one on the 1st level and a second built in the 15th century against the western tower. The ovens provided bread for the court of *Charles VII* and *Marie of Anjou*.



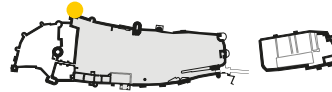
THE ARGENTON TOWER

This impressive tower with its three half-buried levels was designed to withstand the new artillery weapons using gunpowder in the late 15th century. From the terrace, you can see the reconstitution of a wooden crane dating from the end of the 12th century in the Coudray Fort.

THE THREE CASTLES



THE MIDDLE CASTLE



Did you know?

The Argenton Tower is named after *Philippe de Commines*, Lord of Argenton, who probably launched the construction work. The captain of the fortress of Chinon (from 1472 to 1477) was also a famous late 15th century diplomat and an advisor to the king of France, *Louis XI*, whose biography he wrote.



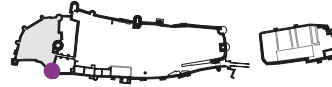
THE BOISSY TOWER

The Boissy Tower was built in the 13th century. At that period, it was known as the Belfry Tower. In the 16th century, it was renamed after Claude Gouffier de Boisy, the captain of the royal fortress of Chinon for half a century (from 1519 to 1567), after he had work carried out on it.

THE THREE CASTLES



FORT COUDRAY



Did you know?

Claude's father, *Artus de Boisy*, was one of the richest men in France during the Renaissance. He was the captain of the Chinon fortress from 1514 to 1519, *Grand Master of France* and the preceptor to King *Francis 1st*. On his death, he bequeathed the king a treasure of gold and silver coins and dishes that he had kept safe in one of the fortress towers.



THE MILL TOWER

The Mill Tower was built by order of Richard the Lionheart from 1190. Perched on the western tip of the site, like a watchman looking down on the River Vienne, it epitomises the military architecture of its times:

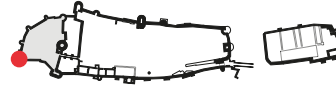
- ◊ An Anjou rampart was used to stabilise it in very steep ground,
- ◊ A Plantagenet vault and arrowslits with alcoves on the ground floor,
- ◊ Access to the wall walk from the 1st floor,
- ◊ Wide bays on the 2nd floor providing a 360° view.

Today, only the ground floor is open to visitors.

THE THREE CASTLES



FORT COUDRAY



Did you know?

Master Urri worked on the Chinon fortress on behalf of *Richard the Lionheart*, and then *King John of England*. He was a versatile engineer, specialised in weaponry, who coordinated building sites and fortifications for the king of England.



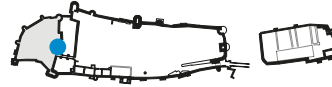
THE COUDRAY TOWER

The Coudray Tower was built by King Philip II just after the 1205 siege. It is the most impressive defensive tower on the site. The tower has arrowslits on three levels and was protected by a double drawbridge and a portcullis barring entry to the Coudray fortress. Entrance to the 1st floor was defended by a murder hole. In the Middle Ages, the wall walk led from here to the terrace of the Boissy Tower.

THE THREE CASTLES



FORT COUDRAY



Did you know?

Between May and August 1308, dignitaries from the Knights Templar, including the Grand Master, *Jacques de Molay*, were imprisoned in the fortress on the orders of *King Philip IV* during a huge trial undertaken by the king of France. *The graffiti* in the tower are thought to be their work due to the religious themes: an angel, "warrior monks", calvaries and the Instruments of the Passion.



THE THREE CASTLES



FORT SAINT GEORGE



FORT SAINT GEORGE

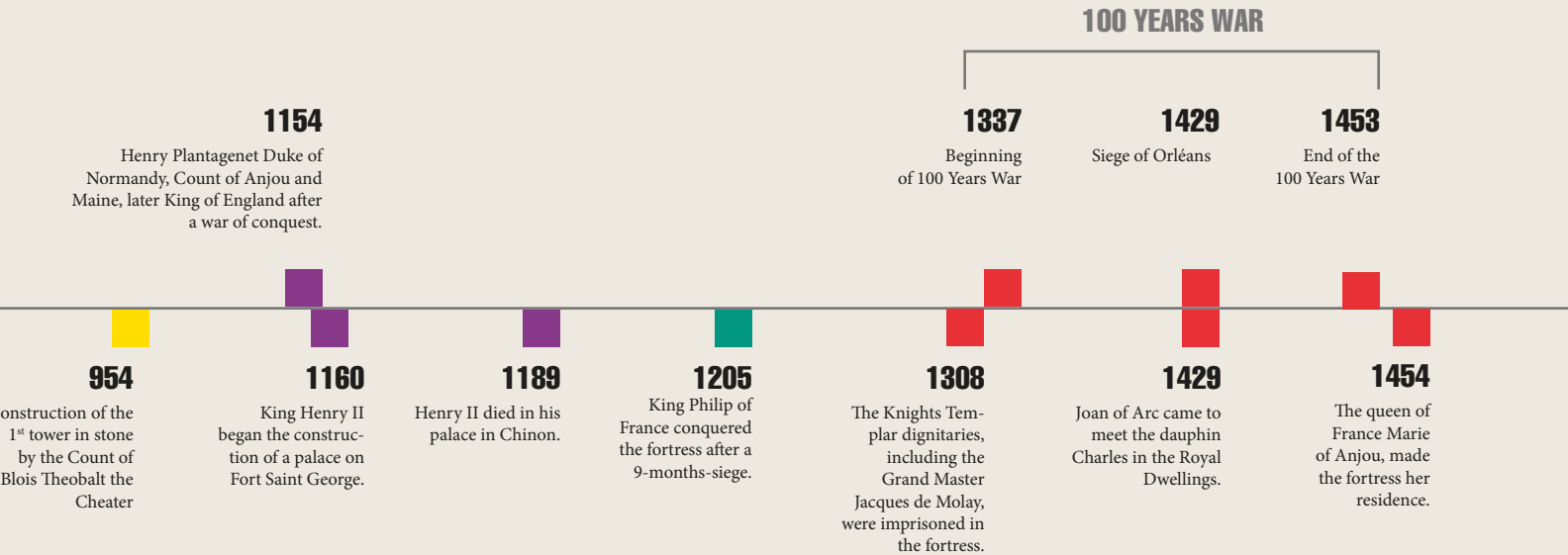
The reception building / ticket office was built in 2010 on the site of Saint George's Fort. This part of the site, where excavations were carried out between 2003 and 2010, contained a hitherto unknown Plantagenet palace dating from about 1160. This was an important discovery for the history of the fortress, since very few palaces from this period still exist.

Did you know?

Henry II of England's palace in Chinon consisted of a very large building constructed parallel with the River Vienne. On the 1st floor was the great hall used for the king's public audiences (*Aula*). Private rooms and annexes were located in the perpendicular wings. Lastly, a chapel was constructed. The rooms were built around several inner courtyards and protected by a wall that can still be seen today.

3. TIMELINE

THE KINGS FORTRESS





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The Royal Fortress of Chinon testifies to the quality of the architectural heritage of the Loire Valley World Heritage listed as cultural landscape.