



LA TRIMOUILLE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA (VIENNE)

A half-day circuit by car
to discover the heritage of the
NORTH 'CANTON'



The circuit is about **54 km**.

1. Leaving from the Office de Tourisme in La Trimouille, turn left into the rue de la Liberté and continue up to the crossroads. Go straight ahead on the D121 towards JOURNET.
2. On entering **JOURNET [7km]**, on the left you see the Priory of St Jean XI. At the fork, bear left. It is worth stopping at Journet for the Lantern of the Dead, the place de l'Eglise and the village's distinctive houses.
3. Then get back on the D121 towards Montmorillon. At the village exit, take the first turning on the left after the old lime kilns and follow Le Ry on the left to catch sight of the **Château du Ris** and its gardens (not open to visitors) [**17.7 km**].
4. Return towards JOURNET, and at the crossroads go left. After the bridge, turn left twice towards HAUT PEU and the **goat farm of Haut Peu (visit and tasting by appointment)**.
5. Coming out of Haut Peu, go left and then right towards **HAIMS**, 5km away. The church dates from the 11th and 15th centuries. Take the Béthines direction again and after 1.7km turn right towards "La Petite Ville" until you reach Thenet, 3km. To see: the **Henri IV lime tree** and **the ford** built of tombstones. Continue on the left towards St Maixent, following the river Salleron until you reach the Boissec Mill, 3km. Cross the bridge, go right and at the next crossroads, 1.7km, turn right towards "Les Mats", 700m, and at the next crossroads turn right, then continue straight ahead until VILLASALEM, 3.8 km.
6. **VILLASALEM** - 12th century listed abbey – visit takes about one hour.
7. Leaving the abbey car park, go right to get back onto the D120. At the stop sign, go left until the crossroads with the D675. Turn left towards Le Blanc. Then at the next crossroads, turn right onto the D32 towards **LIGLET**. After 4km, on your left there is a little detour for the **Chapel of Marcilly [44km]**. Then continue to LIGLET. Take time to visit the 11th century church and its 15th century fortified house.
8. Return towards LA TRIMOUILLE via a small road aside the Benaise river towards LEIGNE and LES ROCHES. At 1.5km from La Trimouille there is a detour for the **Château de la Rivière** on your right. The château cannot be visited but there is a very pretty view of the Benaise valley. You can reach the river on foot by a little path to the right of the château.

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1. Before beginning this tour, in **La Trimouille** you can discover some ancient houses as well as the ruins of the castle of the Dukes of La Trémoille.

2. **Journet:** 20 to 30,000 years before our era, people were able to settle in this region thanks to the layout and the nature of the land. A large number of sharpened and polished flintstones have been found on the hillsides of the Vairon and the Salleron rivers. Remains of a Gallo-Roman villa have been discovered, notably near Mazert. At the height of the Middle Ages the town was established in the valley around the **church of St Martin**. The very numerous merovingiens sarcophaguses are a witness to the importance of christianisation at this period. The **12th century Lantern of the Dead**, which was in the old cemetery, has been moved to the square in the centre of the village. An open door at the base of the column and notches made inside allow access to the lantern tower. The **12th century priory of St Martin** has preserved its entrance door, which is in the Limousin style.

3. **Château du Ris-Chazerat:** The château is mentioned in 1451 as being the property of Lord Louis de Chazerat. Over time, the château has lost its fortress appearance, and the moats have been converted into an ornamental pond. In the 19th century Mr de Lépinay brought back rare tree species, such as Bald Cypress and Aussages orange trees, from Central America and had them planted around the pond.

4. A visit to the **goat farm of Haut Peu** is a must. Please contact the farm to arrange a visit and tasting. Tel: **05 49 91 62 02**

5. **Haims:** The village of Haims, mentioned as Agentis in 954, is one of the oldest villages in the region; in addition, many ironworks are proof of people living there in ancient times. During the Gallo-Roman period the Gauls and Romans governed South Vienne together, and more than 1,300 sites have been discovered. Eight ironworks have been discovered in the area by aerial research. To see: the **church** (11th, 13th and 15th century); altered at different periods and referred to from 1093 as the "ecclesia Sancti-Michaelis de Aent". See also: outside the village at **Thenet**, the **Henry IV lime tree** planted during the reign of this king (1553-1610) and the **ford** across the Salleron, built with tombstones.

6. **Villesalem:** In the 11th century, believers sought communion with God in isolated places. It is in this context that the Lord of La Trémoille gave his farmhouse at Villesalem to hermits who lived at Fontgombault. The community brought together nuns and monks who lived separately under the authority of the abbess. The church of Villesalem is the only one that remains of the six fontevristes priories established in Vienne. The chevet still bears the marks of the Hundred Years' War and religious wars. Villesalem was sold at the time of the revolution and it was used as a farm building until 1914. At this time it became a listed building. The State bought Villesalem in 1961, putting an end to its slow deterioration.

7. **Liglet:** A Neolithic pendant found at Liglet suggests that there were people living there during that period. There was a very active community during the Gallo-Roman era, shown by a sculpture of the Gaul era, said to have been done "with a mallet", a villa and a well and the census of more than 40 ironworks. The village of Liglet, called "Lilec" in 1093, was developed around its church dedicated to St Hilaire. The **fortified house** near the church is a reminder that the village was situated on the borders of English Poitou and French Berry during the Hundred Years' War. It was in 1434 that Catherine de Lespinasse, Lady of Bélâbre, gave her authority to the inhabitants of Liglet to fortify the church to shelter it from the armed bands ravaging the country. This authorisation was confirmed in letters from Charles VII. See also: at **Marcilly the Priory Chapel**. Cited in documents in 1093, the chapel was renovated in 2005-06 and its garden has also been reconstructed. On the road of Les Hérolles, there is the **priory of Fontmoron XII** on the land given by the lords of La Trémoille to the Abbey of Fontgombault to create the priory there.

8. **Château de la Rivière:** an old manor house and former defensive stronghold, it nestles in the woods downstream from La Trimouille on the right bank of the Benaize river. It was part of a defensive system positioned along the Benaize, as were Courtavrault, le Poiron, Bois-Grenier, Peuco and at Liglet itself, the strongholds of La Tour and Corcheron.