



LA TRIMOUILLE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA (VIENNE)

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

Recommended itinerary – total circuit: about **50km**

Leaving **La Trimouille**, cross the bridge over the Benaize river, then go right towards St Pierre. **(1)** First stop is at **St Pierre** at the little square to discover near the château the ancient 11th century church of La Trimouille. Then continue on the D121 towards Tilly. **(2)** At **9.5km**, just after the crossroads (**300m**) turn right at the sign 'La Brosse' to see the 15th century **Château des Brosses**. Get back onto the D121, turning left, and then turn left to take the D10 towards **Thollet**. **(3)** At **14.5km** a visit to the village is a must with its 12th century church and leaning steeple. Then go left on the D10 towards Coulonges. **(4)** At **16.5km** the village of **Coulonges** is worth a stop to see its 12th century church. If your tour takes place on the 29th of the month and during the morning, a small detour to visit the big market at **Les Hérailles** is a must (D123 about 6km). From Coulonges take the D124 in direction of Brigueil. At the next crossroads, **19km**, go right to Brigueil, then at the next stop, **20km**, go left on the D10. **(5)** At **Brigueil**, park in the 11th century church square. Allow for an hour's walk to discover the hamlet of Vaux and its ford, to the left of the church, at the bottom of the village. Then get back on the road and go in the opposite direction towards Coulonges until the first crossroads, **25.2km**, go right at the hamlet of Eport the next crossroads, **26.4km**, again turn right, then the last crossroads, **28.2km**, follow the Grand'Mothe. After crossing the ford, you will see on your right **(6) Château de Mareuil** – At the stop sign, go left, then right towards Bourg Archambault, **38.2km**. Leave your car in the car park to go and admire the superb 12th century château. **(7)** Return to La Trimouille via **St Léomer**, **44.6km**, **(8)** with its Gallo-Roman site of **Masamas** **(9)** about 6km away.



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1. Saint Pierre

Situated near a château, which is more recent, the **11th century church of St Pierre** stands 1.5km above La Trimouille on the other side of the river. Sold as a national possession in 1794, the church is now in private hands. The style of the paintings, still visible inside the church, is similar to that of St Savin. Two female saints are identified in uncial letters. Saint Radegonde, the great Poitou saint, and Saint Valérie, the first Limousin martyr. Walk round the houses to see the back of the church.

2. Logis de la Brosse

The **ancient 15th century stronghold** came under the barony of Montmorillon. The two round towers on each side of the central part have kept their machicolations and a little circular path. A bartizan assures the defence of the entrance gate. Built in the late Middle Ages, this little château combines a defensive role with a residential function.

3. Thollet

The place names Camp-de-César, les Gannes Le Cluzeau, Les Châtres, Les Châtelards, La Fortillesse and La Tourelle suggest defensive systems of different eras. The raised location of the priory enabled a watch to be kept on the ford. To see: the **11th century church** and the sun dial on the south side. Do not miss the **great annual celebrations on 15 August**.

4. Coulonges

The village is the furthest east of the department on the borders of Poitou, Berry and Limousin. This location has favoured the development of a very important market, which goes back to the Middle Ages. The market at Les Hérolles is held on the 29th of each month. The keep of the **Château du Pin** and the **fortified site of Bagneau** bear witness to the need to be protected during this period. The **church (12th/15th century)** is the old church of the parish priory, coming under the authority of the St Augustin abbey of Limoges.

5. Brigueil le Chantre

Brigueil is situated between the two loops of the the Asse (a tributary of the Benaize) and occupies an elevated position overlooking the valley. The **church of St Hilaire (12th/15th century)**, built at the top of a plateau and within the fortified compound, is part of the defensive system of the village. Follow the lane on the left up to the river to discover the **Pierrat des Vaux**, its hamlet and also a pretty view of the village.

6. Château de Mareuil

Situated in Brigueil le Chantre, this ancient stronghold came under the barony of Montmorillon. **In 1494** the château is described as a **hostel and fortified house**. Dominating the Asse valley, its buildings were constructed in the late Middle Ages. There was a climate of insecurity at that time because of the frontier position of Brigueil, the Hundred Years' War and the presence of mercenaries and bandits.

7. Bourg-Archambault

Cited in 1244 under the name of "**Burgus au Chaboz**", this village has developed around its château and its church dedicated to St Laurent. The current stronghold, reconstructed from 1478 on the site of an older building, was built on the orders of Poncet de Rivière, the Chamberlain of Louis XI. Moats, drawbridge, portcullis, archer loops and a circular path make it a remarkable defensive system. It is possible to visit the château in September during '**Heritage days**'.

8. Saint-Léomer

The site has been inhabited since ancient times. The village, of about 40 houses, was developed during the Middle Ages around the parish priory. The **12th century church** has not undergone any changes since its construction, apart from the square-shaped steeple, which collapsed during the period of the religious wars. See also to the right of the church: the **12th century parish priory** and its beautiful, studded door.

9. The Site of Masamas

This Gallo-Roman site, dating from the first century BC, was discovered by Abbot Florentin Reix around 1945. It consists of a surrounding wall, an east-facing entrance door and twin temples with a hall and square inner room. More deeply buried, the foundations of a Gallic sanctuary, dating from the second half of the first century BC, are still visible. The systematic destruction of the twin temples was the work of the first Christians during the fourth century.