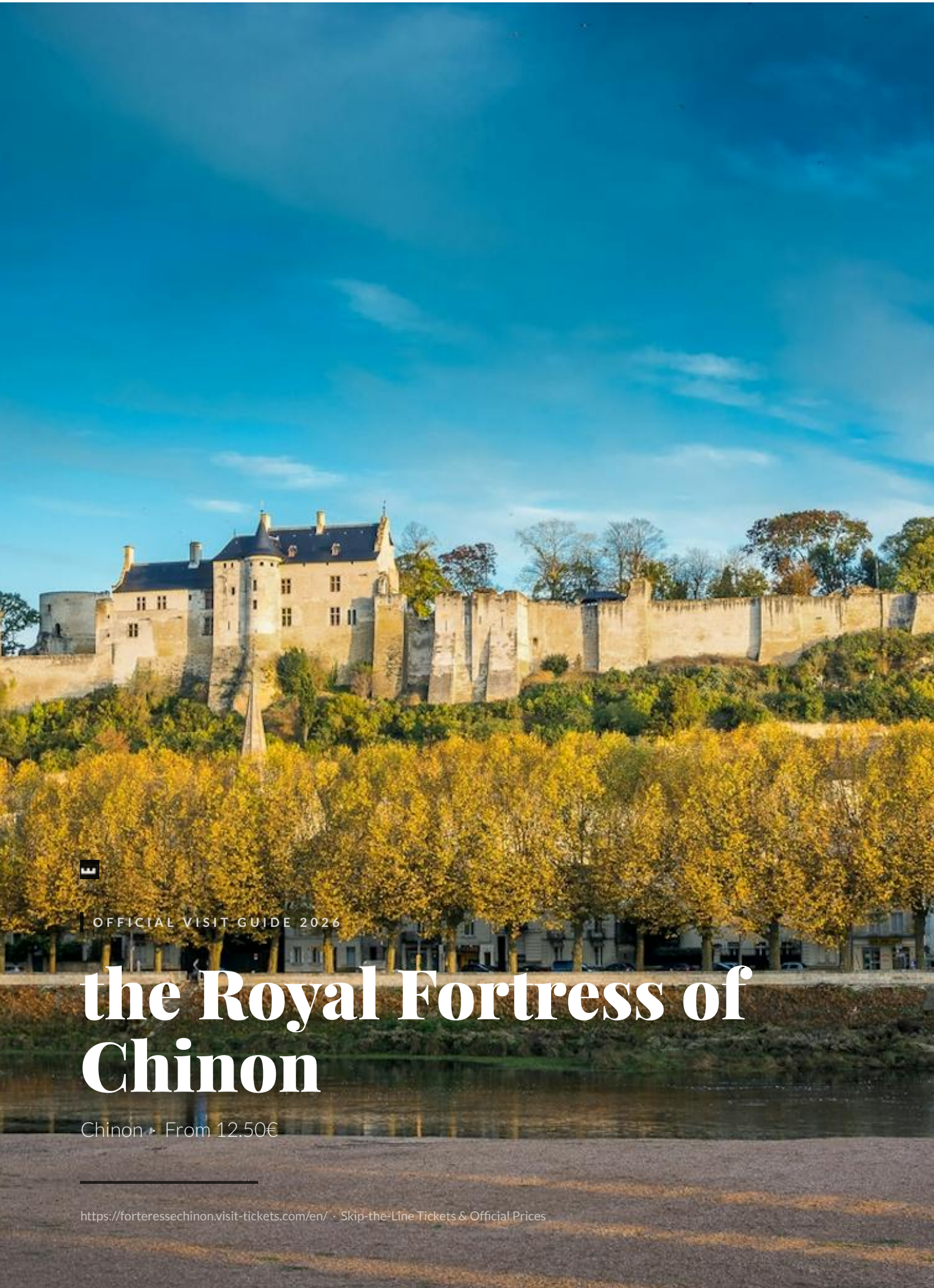


OFFICIAL VISIT GUIDE 2026

the Royal Fortress of Chinon

Chinon · From 12.50€

https://forteressechinon.visit-tickets.com/en/ · Skip-the-Line Tickets & Official Prices



ORIGIN & HISTORY

From Gallic Roots to Royal Power

GOOGLE 4.4 ★★★★☆ 8 773 reviews

TIQETS 4.5 ★★★★☆ 171 reviews

Long before it became a royal residence, the site of Chinon was a **Gallic stronghold**. Archaeological excavations revealed an aristocratic warrior buried with his sword at Fort Saint-Georges, marking the area as a prestigious settlement during the Iron Age. This early occupation laid the foundations for a strategic promontory that would witness centuries of conflict and power shifts.

By the 5th century, the promontory had evolved into a fortified **castrum**, resisting Visigothic sieges in 463. The Merovingian and Carolingian periods saw the establishment of a royal mint workshop, highlighting Chinon's economic importance. It served as a crucial hub for coin production between the 7th and 13th centuries, embedding the fortress deeply into the kingdom's financial infrastructure.

The true transformation began under the Counts of Blois, particularly Thibaut I, who built a stone tower in 954. However, it was King **Philippe Auguste** who reshaped the site into a formidable military machine. He ordered the digging of dry moats to separate the three distinct castles, isolating each enclosure to enhance defensive capabilities against siege warfare.

This unique tripartite structure—comprising the Coudray Fort, the Middle Castle, and Saint-Georges Fort—allowed the French monarchy to control the passage over the Vienne river. The fortress became a symbol of Capetian power, hosting pivotal meetings such as those between Joan of Arc and Charles VII. Its walls echo with the decisions that shaped the destiny of France during the Hundred Years' War.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping onto the rocky spur, you are immediately struck by the sheer scale of the **three distinct castles** stretching along the ridge. The air carries the weight of history, from the quiet archaeological halls of Coudray to the imposing towers of Saint-Georges. Each section offers a different atmosphere, transitioning from ancient ruins to refined royal chambers.

As you traverse the uneven cobblestones, the panoramic views of the **Vienne River** unfold beneath you. The light changes dramatically throughout the day, casting long shadows across the medieval architecture. You feel not just like a visitor, but a participant in a living narrative where every stone tells a story of defense, royalty, and resilience.



PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

Practical Information

ADDRESS

City Center · Walking access from municipal car parks (Parking de la Gare or Parking des Halles). No metro, urban bus available.

OPENING HOURS

Open every day except Tuesday during low season. Extended hours in summer (until 7 PM). Check for exceptional closures.

PRICES

Children under 7 free. {promo}. Student and group discounts with valid proof.

VISIT DURATION

Allow 1h30 to 2h to comfortably explore the three distinct castles and enjoy panoramic views without rushing.

PHOTOS

Photography is freely allowed in exterior courtyards and museum rooms. Prohibited during live performances or specific historical reenactments.

AUDIENCE

Ideal for families thanks to children's trails and interactive tablets. Accessible to seniors with caution on uneven cobblestones.

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & Transportation



Metro

: Old Market — 3 min à pied

Tours - Val de Loire Airport (117 min) · Poitiers-Biard Airport (162 min)



Bus

: Old Market — 3 min à pied

Tours - Val de Loire Airport (193 min) · Poitiers-Biard Airport (268 min)



Car

Tours - Val de Loire Airport (157 min) · Poitiers-Biard Airport (220 min)



Bike

Tours - Val de Loire Airport (216 min) · Poitiers-Biard Airport (302 min)

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve the Royal Fortress of Chinon ?



📍 37500 Chinon, France — 37500 Chinon

🌐 47°10.084′ N, 0°14.194′ E



ORGANIZATION

Navigating the Three Castles

Coudray Fort (West)

Begin your journey here with the archaeological museums. Explore the Gallic and Roman origins of the site, including the famous warrior's grave. This less crowded section provides a calm introduction to the fortress's deep historical roots.

Middle Castle (Center)

The heart of royal life, featuring the lodgings where Joan of Arc met Charles VII. Discover the Saint-Melaine Priory, a hidden gem of religious architecture. This area showcases the domestic and administrative aspects of medieval court life.

Saint-Georges Fort (East)

The highest and most isolated point, offering breathtaking panoramic views of the Vienne. Explore the military structures and enjoy the natural light in the late afternoon. This fort represents the ultimate defensive bastion of the complex.

ACCESSIBILITY

♿ **Accessibility for people with reduced mobility**

Partial access to lower areas and museums; stairs not suitable for towers.

👨‍👩‍👧 **Families**

Children's trail, interactive HistoPad, and dedicated play area.

🎧 **Audio guide**

French, English, Spanish



Must-sees

SELECTION

Unmissable Moments in Medieval Grandeur

01 Middle Castle

Joan of Arc Meeting Room

Stand in the exact room where **Joan of Arc** convinced Charles VII to reclaim his throne. The preserved architecture allows you to visualize this pivotal moment in French history. Observe the details that reflect the urgency and hope of the era.

> 💡 It is said that Joan entered this room with great determination, changing the course of the Hundred Years' War within these very walls.

02 Coudray Fort Museum

Gallic Warrior's Sword

View the prestigious weapon found during excavations at Fort Saint-Georges. This artifact highlights the **aristocratic status** of the original inhabitants. It serves as a tangible link to the site's pre-Roman heritage.

> 💡 The sword was discovered next to the burial site, suggesting it was a privilege granted by Caesar to auxiliary veterans.

03 Fort Saint-Georges

Panoramic View from Saint-Georges

Enjoy an unobstructed view of the **Vienne River** from the highest point. The strategic position explains why this location was chosen for defense. Capture photos here during the golden hour for optimal lighting.

> 💡 This vantage point allowed medieval commanders to monitor all movements towards the Loudunais region effectively.

04 Between Castles

Philippe Auguste's Dry Moats

Walk across the bridges spanning the dry moats dug by **Philippe Auguste**. These strategic enhancements isolated each castle, strengthening the overall defense. Appreciate the engineering prowess required to carve these trenches into the rock.

> 💡 These moats were designed to prevent enemy forces from easily breaching the inner sanctums of the fortress.

05

Middle Castle

Saint-Melaine Priory

Discover this small medieval jewel often ignored by visitors. The priory offers a place of reflection amidst the military architecture. Its religious significance complements the secular power displayed in the adjacent lodgings.

> 💡 The priory served as a spiritual refuge for the royal family residing in the Middle Castle.

06

Coudray Fort

Royal Mint Workshop Remains

Learn about the economic activity that once thrived here. Between the 7th and 13th centuries, Chinon hosted a vital **royal mint**. Understand how currency production supported the kingdom's expansion.

> 💡 The mint was temporarily moved to Tours due to Viking threats, only to return later.

07

Entrance/Throughout

HistoPad Interactive Experience

Engage with history through gamified tablets available for teens. This technology makes learning interactive and fun. Perfect for families wanting to deepen their understanding without academic dryness.

> 💡 Many teenagers report feeling like they are playing a video game while discovering historical secrets.

08

Special Booking

Escape Game: Guardians of Time

Immerse yourself in a realistic siege scenario set in **1205**. Solve puzzles to reconstruct historical events. Book in advance as slots fill up quickly, especially on weekends.

> 💡 Participants often describe feeling truly besieged, adding a thrilling dimension to the historical narrative.

TIPS

Essential Tips for Your Visit

TIMING

Arrive early to secure spots for 'The Guardians of Time' escape game, which fills up fast on weekends.

BILLET

Consider the annual Privilege Pass if you plan to visit multiple sites in the Loire Valley for cost savings.

PARCOURS

Start with the Coudray Fort for a calm introduction before heading to the busier Middle Castle.

PHOTO

Visit Fort Saint-Georges in the late afternoon for the best natural light on panoramic shots.

PAUSE

Combine your visit with a Chinon wine tasting at the Château Cellar after exploring the fortress.

ENFANTS

Use the HistoPad for teenagers to make history engaging and interactive through quizzes and videos.

AUDIOGUIDE

Available in French, English, and Spanish; essential for understanding the detailed historical context.

CONFORT

Wear stable walking shoes; avoid heels or slippery sneakers due to uneven cobblestones and steep terrain.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

What is the entrance fee for the Royal Fortress of Chinon?

The adult ticket costs €12.50. Reduced rates of €10.50 are available for students, groups of more than 15 people, and large families. Children under 7 enter free of charge.

Are there any promotions or annual passes available?

Yes, the annual Privilege Pass allows unlimited entries and discounts on paid activities like escape games. It is cost-effective if you visit several times a year or combined with other sites in the local cultural networ

Is it mandatory to book tickets online?

Online booking is not mandatory but highly recommended during school holidays and summer weekends to avoid queues. In the off-season, purchasing directly at the ticket office is possible without major issues.

How does payment work for escape games?

Monument Games require a specific reservation due to limited time slots. The price varies between €20 and €25 depending on the formula chosen. Payment is made online when booking.

How does the visit with the HistoPad work?

You borrow a digital tablet at the entrance that guides your route via 3D reconstructions, videos, and interactive quizzes. This technology allows you to relive the Middle Ages without a mandatory physical guide, at your

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

Visigothic Resistance

In 463, the fortified promontory resisted a siege led by Roman general Ægidius. This event underscores the site's strategic importance long before the Capetian kings arrived.

Three Castles Structure

The fortress spans 300 meters, divided into three distinct castles by dry moats. This unique layout allowed for layered defense and independent operation of each section.

Hidden Economic Hub

Beyond its military role, Chinon housed a royal mint workshop from the 7th to 13th centuries. This economic activity was crucial for funding the kingdom's operations.

Archaeological Discoveries

Excavations have revealed Gallic aristocrats buried with swords, indicating high-status settlements. These findings provide insight into the social hierarchy of early inhabitants.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

After exploring the fortress, immerse yourself in the charm of Chinon's city center. Visit the **Saint-Martin Collegiate Church**, a Gothic masterpiece housing the tomb of Joan of Arc, located just steps away. For a taste of local culture, head to the **Old Chinon Museum** housed in a Renaissance townhouse. Conclude your day with a wine tasting at the **Château Cellar**, where authentic medieval settings complement the renowned Chinonais wines. The nearby Gloriette Park offers a serene alternative viewpoint over the rooftops.

Leaving the Royal Fortress of Chinon, you carry more than memories; you hold a piece of France's soul. The interplay of light on ancient stones and the whisper of wind through the battlements create an unforgettable emotional resonance. This is not merely a museum visit, but a journey through time that leaves you profoundly connected to the past.