

GUIDED TOURS OF THE MEDIEVAL CITY

* GROUP VISIT

From March to December for organized groups, by reservation only through the Tourist Office. Tour duration: 2 hours / Prices: quote upon request +33 (0)2 54 98 12 29 / +33 (0)2 54 76 43 89

*Torchlight tour or tasting tour

In July and August - dates and prices: please contact us

*SCHOOL VISIT:

Upon request to the local heritage office: +33 (0)2 54.97.78.60

LA MAISON DES ARTISANS

The Maison des Artisans - a boutique featuring local artisans - hosts 25 professional craftspeople and local producers throughout the year, and offers gourmet baskets, postcards and souvenirs.

Opening hours:

- March: Tuesday to Saturday: 9:30am-12:30pm/2pm-6pm
- April: Tuesday to Sunday: 9:30am-12:30pm/2pm-6pm
- May - August: Tuesday to Sunday: 9:30am-12:30pm/2pm-7pm (open Mondays from July 13th to August 17th inclusive)
- September: Tuesday to Sunday: 9:30am-12:30pm/2pm-6pm
- Oct-Nov: Tuesday to Saturday: 9:30am-12:30pm/2pm-6pm (provisional)
- Dec: Tuesday to Sunday: 10am-12:30pm / 2:30pm to 6:00pm

Contact : lamaisondesartisans.mennetou@gmail.com

+33 (0)2 54 98 12 29



www.sologne-tourisme.fr

HISTORICAL

Although Mennetou retains generous traces of its medieval past, its foundation dates back to Mennetou was founded in the 6th century when Ingertrude, daughter of Clotaire I, decided to build a monastery there. At that time, Mennetou was called Monastellum, a name that evolved over the centuries into Moneto, Monesto, and Menetou, eventually arriving at its current name with two "n"s in the 17th century. Burned down by the Normans during the 9th century, no trace of this monastery remains today.

However, the Benedictine nuns of Beaumont-les-Tours, who settled there at the beginning of the 13th century, resided there until the French Revolution and contributed, in large part, to writing its history.

It was in 1212 that Hervé II, lord of Vierzon, decided to fortify Mennetou. He first had ditches dug to the north.

The fortification continued throughout the 13th century, resulting in a structure 250 m long, 150 m wide and 15 m high.

This fortress was defended by five round towers with arrow slits, three of which still remain. It was accessed through three square gates, also still in place. Thus fortified, Mennetou was not captured very often. However, in 1356 the banner of the Black Prince flew over the village before Mennetou was finally liberated from English rule in the 1370s.

During the religious wars, the city, which was Protestant for a time, served as an open-air prison for Catholics.

In addition to the construction of the defensive walls, a castle was also built, a modest three-story dwelling that was scarcely inhabited until the mid-15th century. In 1451, the De Vaudenay family, lords of Mennetou, undertook a renovation of the town and the castle. Their descendants continued their work until the end of the 17th century, at which time the castle was sold to the Benedictine nuns.

It was also in the 13th century that the Benedictine convent was built. Currently, only the Priory, the Prioress's apartment, remains. In medieval times, it included an adjoining building that housed the nuns' rooms, the refectory, the infirmary, as well as the work and prayer rooms. This complex was expanded with the addition of the castle in 1686. Despite their various sources of income, the community was very poor and could not afford the upkeep of both the religious buildings and the castle. When they were sold as national property in 1792, they were reported to be in a state of advanced disrepair.

The castle will escape destruction until... 1925, the priory, the presbytery and the church.



MENNETOU SUR CHER

The City step by step



OFFICE DE TOURISME
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Sologne
VAL DE LOIRE

Sologne
VAL DE LOIRE

1- SOUTH GATE

The South gate, along with the North gate and the Good News Gate, provided access to the city. All were square in plan, but this is the only one that retains its original height of approximately 20 meters. The pointed arch section also provides access to the city. The first floor was a guardroom used for observation and defense. The second floor, known as the "blind floor," had a gabled roof that likely housed an armory.

2- HALF-TIMBERED HOUSE

15th century house built with timber framing using St. Andrew's crosses and wattle and daub, traditional materials of the Sologne region. The lime plaster ensured the building's watertightness and insulation.

At the top left of Hell Street is the former bailliff's court (building with burgundy shutters).



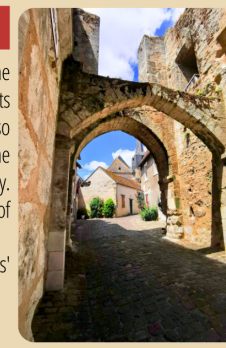
3- NORTH GATE

The North gate still retains its staircase leading to the sentry walk, the wooden gate slides and the portcullis that ensured the protection of the city. Where the street now separates it from the railway line, there once ran moats, the first works undertaken by Hervé II of Vierzon. Adjoining the north gate is a very beautiful 16th-century corbelled house, listed as a Historic Monument (MH*), combining two architectural styles: a Touraine style on the ground floor, predominantly built with tufa stone, and a Sologne style on the upper floor, with its timber framing and brickwork. (*Historic Monument)



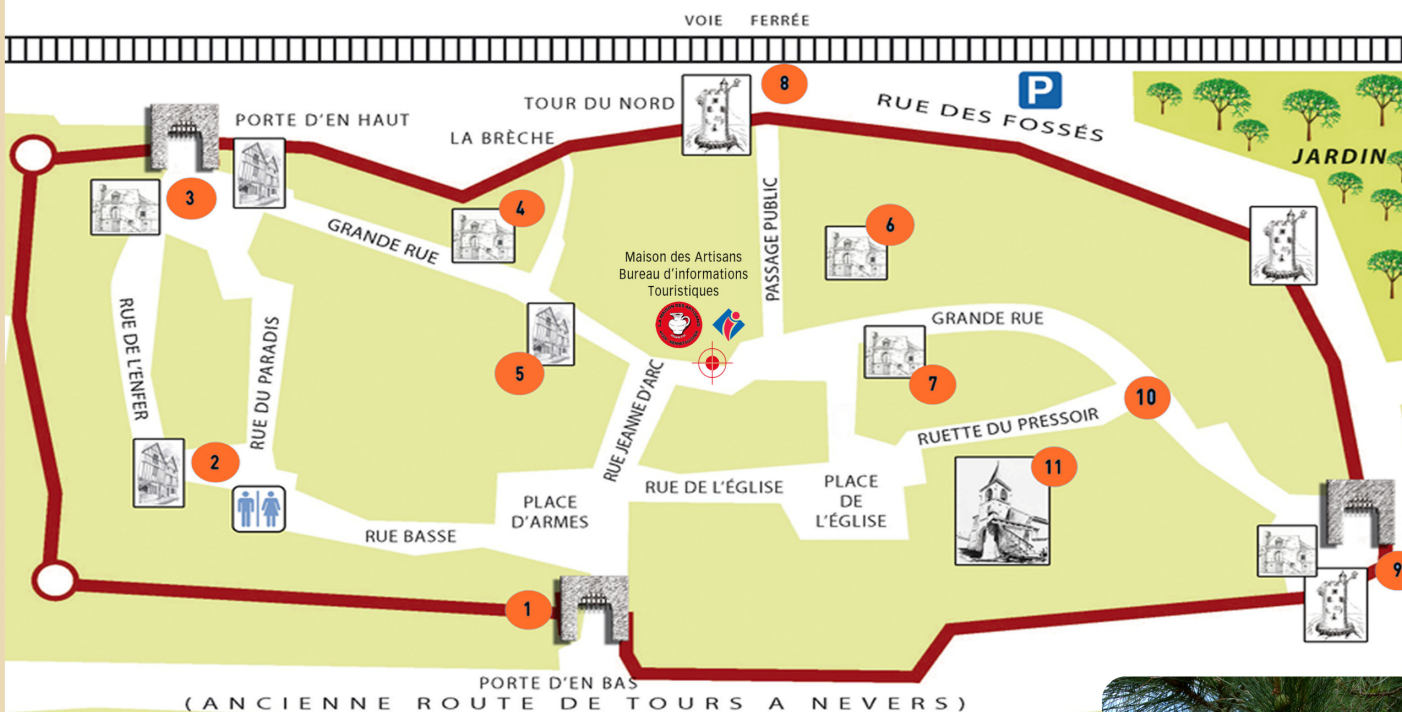
11- SAINT URBAIN'S CHURCH

Named after a pope who reigned from 222 to 230. The bell tower, the oldest part of the building, dates from the 11th century. The church to which it was attached has disappeared, its origins unknown. It was rebuilt in the 13th century in the Angevin Gothic style, which is also found in the current chancel. The south bay, now gone, housed the private chapel of the Benedictine nuns, which, due to neglect, had to be demolished at the end of the 18th century. The other parts (nave, bays, and stained-glass windows) are in the Flamboyant Gothic style of the 15th century. Worth seeing: the priory chair, baptismal font, and altarpieces. Historical information is on the left as you enter. The key can be collected from the artisans' house / tourist information office upon presentation of identification.



10 - THE WINE PRESS ALLEY

The Rue du Pressoir, a small street where the Benedictine nuns' communal wine press was located. They also held rights to the mill and the oven. The mural pays homage to the Château de Moneston. Built in the 13th century to the south on the riverbank, it adjoined the South gate (the current site of the Auberge de la Tour). Sparsely inhabited until the mid-15th century, it enjoyed a period of prosperity for two centuries before becoming the property of the Priory. Poorly maintained, it suffered significant deterioration during the French Revolution. It was purchased in 1925 and demolished the same year. Two walls with Renaissance fireplaces, doors, and windows are still visible in the church square.



9 - THE "GOOD NEWS" GATE AND THE PRIORY

The Bonne Nouvelle suburb was fortified by a triangular stone wall extending from the tower on Rue des Fossés, encroaching on the current RD976, and connecting to the Priory Tower. The Vierzon Gate provided access to this uninhabited suburb and then to the city. The founding charter of the Benedictine priory dates from the 13th century (1213 or 1206). It housed about 20 Benedictine nuns, and the buildings (cells, prayer and work rooms, infirmary, refectory, chapel) occupied approximately a quarter of the old town. They were sold as national property in 1792.



4 - THE COMPANIONS' HOUSE

16th century building with sculpted tufa facade, listed as a historical monument. In the capitals of the small columns, the plumb line, one of the symbols of stonemasons in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, can be clearly seen.

5 - THE SO-CALLED BUTCHER'S HOUSE

15th-century commercial building featuring its stone stall and original gutter embedded in the wall, designed to drain wastewater from the first floor.

To ensure your children also enjoy the visit, ask for the "Little Curious Minds" guide (suitable for children aged 4 and up).



6 - THE TITHE BARN

A 13th-century building, listed as a historical monument, resting on 11th-century foundations visible on the left side. On the first floor, two Angevin Gothic-style windows illuminate the large audience hall. As one approached the roof, the small opening allowed access to the dovecote, an outward sign of wealth in the Middle Ages.

7 - THE BENEDICTINE TITHE BARN



8 - DEFENSIVE TOWERS

Typical of 13th-century "Philipian"-style fortresses, of the original five towers, only three remain today, all listed as historical monuments. They are all similar, with two stories of arrow slits and a pepperpot roof, still present on the so-called Priory Tower. The different floors are accessed by a stone spiral staircase. The second level provides access to the wall-walk.