

VISIT CHÂTEAUPONSAC

Known as 'The Pearl of the Gartempe', this village, with its rich medieval history, is perched on a rocky outcrop overlooking the Gartempe valley and offers magnificent views.

1 HOTEL MATHIEU DE LA GORCE

This magnificent 18th-century residence was built around 1750. It is asymmetrical: the east wing, which was originally planned, was never built. This house, known locally as 'Le Château', has been listed as a Historic Monument since May 2001. (Private property; not open to the public).

2 THE TOWN HALL

Just behind the site of the Town Hall once stood St Peter's Church, and, where the Place des Tilleuls and the car park are now located was the cemetery adjoining it. As it was no longer a parish church and required too much renovation work, it was demolished in 1890, just as construction of the Town Hall was beginning. In the square stands a fountain donated to the town by a local man, François Joseph Ducoux, who pursued a career in politics in the 19th century.

3 THE PROTESTANT CHURCH

As this church shows, Châteauponsac had a sizeable Protestant community. The rise of Protestantism in the Châteauponsac area can be traced back to the arrival of a pastor in Villefavard, a neighbouring village, in the 19th century.



4 THE PEYRINE DOOR

This gate was built in 1420, during the Hundred Years' War, as part of the fortification of the Benedictine priory. Like the adjoining former priory, it is built on a section of the curtain wall of the castrum, which dates from the Gallo-Roman period.



5 RENÉ BAUBÉROT MUSEUM

This building, constructed from the 14th century onwards and subsequently fortified and extended over the centuries, is the former Benedictine priory.

It now houses the collections of the René Baubérot Museum. Inside, visitors can explore artefacts – mainly found in the vicinity of Châteauponsac and donated by private individuals – spanning various periods: Prehistory, the Gallo-Roman era, the Middle Ages and, in particular, the 19th century in the Basse-Marche region. It's well worth a visit!

6 SAINT THYRSE CHURCH

Built in the 11th and 12th centuries in the Benedictine Romanesque style, it was severely damaged during the Hundred Years' War. During its restoration, the destroyed sections were rebuilt in the Gothic style; this is why its architecture harmoniously blends Romanesque and Gothic styles. The church was designated a Historic Monument in 1910.



7 THE MOUSTIER SUBURB (FAUBOURG DU MOUSTIER)

The most picturesque neighbourhood in the town, it owes its name to the monastery built by monks in the 11th century, of which no trace remains today. This neighbourhood, whose houses were built on the crest of the rocky outcrop, was once home to small traders and craftsmen. In the 1900s, there were no fewer than seven bistros here! The most characteristic houses are those with external staircases.

8 PANORAMIC VIEW AT MOUSTIER SUBURB

From this viewpoint, you can see the hilltop village, the Gartempe valley and its terraced gardens.

9 THE ENGLISH PATH

This narrow passage served as a side entrance to the fortified town in the early 15th century. It allowed residents to enter or leave the town without having to open the main gates. It was probably topped by a machicolation. More recently, this path was used by residents of the left bank of the Gartempe who were coming into town, and by washerwomen going to rinse their laundry in the river.

10 THE SO-CALLED 'ROMAN' BRIDGE AND THE ROMAN ROAD

This bridge was built by monks in the 11th century. In danger of collapsing, it was completely restored in 1609 and again in 2011. It takes its name from the fact that, in Gallo-Roman times, there was a bridge on this site. That bridge, probably made of wood, provided access to the ancient Roman road which winds through the woods just beyond the bridge, on the right.



11 RUE DES AUBUGEAS

Along this street, you can see traditional houses built directly into the rock. The name 'Aubugeas' is thought to be a corruption of the term 'aux bujades'. In Old Occitan, 'bujade' means 'laundry'. In days gone by, washerwomen would walk along this street carrying their laundry in a basket, heading for the Chemin des Côtilles and then on to the Gartempe.



12 OUR LADY OF ALL GOODNESS CHAPEL

This chapel, built at the end of the 11th century, was a major place of pilgrimage; people would come here on Whit Monday to pray to the Virgin Mary for sick children and those suffering from nervous disorders, as well as for peace and harmony within families. It was partially burnt down during the Hundred Years' War and then burned again and desecrated during the Wars of Religion. It therefore features several architectural styles, ranging from Romanesque to Gothic and 18th-century styles. Its 18th-century bell tower is clad in chestnut shingles.

13 THE FORMER SAINT MARTIN CHURCH

This building, which has been converted into a barn, was the first parish church in Châteauponsac. Its construction is thought to date back to around the 8th century. It was a very important place of pilgrimage as it housed relics of its patron saint: Saint Martin, the great evangeliser of the Gauls. A leper colony or leprosarium must have been situated very close by. Historical records state that an altar located outside the church allowed the sick to attend Mass. This altar is now situated at the chancel end of the Chapel of Our Lady of All Goodness.

CHÂTEAUPONSAC : A FEW KEY DATES

Gallo-Roman period: A fortified camp (castrum) was built on the hills overlooking the Gartempe valley. A village grew up around it.

From the 6th to the 10th century: It was during these centuries that the province was evangelised and the first religious buildings were erected: the Chapel of Saint Peter, the parish church of Saint Martin and, probably also, the Chapel of Saint Martial.

14th century: Châteauponsac suffered the devastation of the Hundred Years' War and, whilst most of the monks were called upon to return to their mother abbey in Déols, those who remained left their monastery for a more modest conventual house: the priory (the core of the present-day René Baubérot Museum building).

19th century: Most men left the countryside during the warmer months to earn money on building sites in Charente or Paris. They returned with new ideas, particularly regarding religion : Protestantism was gaining new followers. As a result, many children received an education long before the Jules Ferry laws were introduced.

7th century: The first known name for Châteauponsac is engraved on a coin dating from this period: 'POTINCACO CAS(tro)'. This name refers to the Gallo-Roman castrum. Over the centuries, the name evolved through various forms – including Castro Ponsat, Chastiau Poinasac and Ponsat la Montagne – before finally becoming Châteauponsac.

11th century: The Lord of Rancon, who owned the lands that today make up the municipality of Châteauponsac, donated them to Déols Abbey (in the Indre department). The abbot sent monks there to build a monastery and a chapel (which would later become the Church of Saint Thyrses). During that century, they also built a bridge over the Gartempe and another chapel; the one now known as the Chapel of Our Lady of All Goodness.

Early 20th century: Châteauponsac experienced a period of growth thanks to the factories that set up there, drawn by the availability of electricity. Indeed, the first hydroelectric power station in Haute-Vienne was built not far from the town, in Etrangleloup.



- Town Hall
- Public toilets
- Bus stop
- Parking
- Hiking trail starting point
- Panoramic view
- Picnic area
- Comptoir Limousin (information point)

HISTORICAL HERITAGE

- 1 Hotel Mathieu de La Gorce
- 6 L'église Saint-Thyrses

LEISURE, CULTURE & SPORTS

- 5 René baubérot museum

All of Haute-Vienne on www.visitlimousin.com

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LE DORAT TOURIST OFFICE
Open in July and August
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AN INVITATION TO EXPLORE...

Explore the area **within a 30-minute radius of Châteauponsac**.

From museums and castles to exploring local craftsmanship, nature walks and leisure activities – the choice is yours from this extensive list of must-see attractions!

OUR MUSEUMS

RENÉ BAUBÉROT MUSEUM

Immerse yourself in the spirit and history of the Limousin region at this archaeological and ethnographic museum.

Châteauponsac

05 87 59 51 18 - www.museechateauponsac.fr

LA DIGITALE - JEAN GIRAUDOUX'S BIRTHPLACE

Be more than a spectator and discover the world of Jean Giraudoux, the writer and playwright who led many different lives. Open in July and August, and on 19 and 20 September.

Bellac

06 08 43 51 90 - www.ladigitale-giraudoux.fr

SUZANNE VALADON MUSEUM

In Suzanne Valadon's home village, the museum tells the story of the extraordinary rise of a free-spirited woman who made her way from the studios of Montmartre to the galleries of the world's greatest museums. Open on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons from April to September.

Bessines-sur-Gartempe

05 55 76 09 28

HAUT-LIMOUSIN BICYCLE MUSEUM

Discover the history and anecdotes of the bicycle, from its invention in 1817 right through to the 1980s.

Arnac-la-Poste

06 63 67 91 78 - museeuevelo.fr

MUSEUM OF MINERALOGY AND PETROGRAPHY AND THE IZIS CENTRE

Minerals, fossils and rocks from all five continents bear witness to the richness of our planet. Echoing this, the world of Izis – a photographer for *Paris Match* and a poet of the image – invites us to take a moment to step out of time.

Ambazac

05 55 56 85 76



OUR TOWNS AND VILLAGES

MONTROL-SÉNARD

The 'Rural Nostalgia' walk through the village brings back to life shops, trades and scenes from days gone by. A captivating, nostalgic experience, accessible to all.

MORTEMART

Built around the Castle of the Dukes, this medieval town is listed among "The Most Beautiful Villages of France".

BELLAC

The birthplace of Jean Giraudoux, Bellac captivates visitors with its picturesque narrow streets, its Notre-Dame church and its rich history linked to the tanners on the banks of the river Vincou.

LIMOGES

Discover its museums, porcelain workshops and historic districts...

Office de Tourisme de Limoges

05 55 34 46 87 - 12 bd de Fleurus, Limoges

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OUR ACTIVITIES

SAGNAT LAKE

Supervised swimming in summer and fishing permitted. Playground, multi-sports ground, pétanque courts, picnic area, treetop adventure course.

Bessines-sur-Gartempe

05 55 76 05 09

LE LÉOTILUS ESCAPE GAME

Three mysterious rooms to explore.

Rancon

07 57 50 62 69

L'OR DES SIMPLES BOTANICAL GARDEN

A botanical garden featuring over 300 medicinal and aromatic plants that grow naturally in the region and are often little known. Open every day from 9am to 5pm, except on Sundays when it is open from 3pm to 5pm

Rancon

06 19 94 74 34

TUNG-LAM LINH-SON INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST PAGODA

A unique and exotic visit to the heart of a large park dotted with statues, ponds and lotus flowers. The main temple is open to the public free of charge.

Rancon

06 25 48 00 32

THE VANDERLICK FAMILY'S ART GALLERY AND STUDIO

A true family of artists: Sandra paints, Christian forges medieval weapons and Léo creates steampunk-style sculptures. Having lived in Africa, they have set up a cabinet of curiosities featuring items collected from the African continent. Open by appointment.

Rancon

06 87 52 43 79

LE DORAT - MAGNAC-LAVAL CYCLE PATH

A 9.4 km route through unspoilt natural surroundings. A safe route suitable for cyclists, walkers, families, people with reduced mobility and horse riders on the European d'Artagnan Route.

VALDOR STUD FARM

Fancy a horse ride along the shores of Lake Saint-Pardoux or through the surrounding forests? Get in touch with Myriam !

Compreignac

06 66 13 28 90

CHANTOT'S MANES

For a lesson, a ride or a trek on a pony or horse.

Saint-Pardoux-le-Lac

06 08 84 34 77

AQUAPOLIS

Aqua park and leisure spa, fitness centre, wellness centre, beauty salon, restaurant.

Limoges

05 87 19 31 67 - laquapolis.fr

TÈRRA AVENTURA

Take part in a treasure hunt that takes young and old alike on a journey of discovery through historic and natural sites; an original and fun way to uncover the secrets of the Haute-Vienne.

Join the adventure with the free Terra Aventura app.



OUR FAVOURITE NATURE SPOTS



Did you know? In Haut-Limousin, there are over 1,000 kilometres of signposted trails to explore on foot, by mountain bike or on horseback !

THE MEGALITHS TRAIL

Along the way, you'll come across the wobbly stone, the Ceinturat menhir, the Fairy Rock and many other stones steeped in legend.

Cieux

THE «BUTTE DE FROCHET»

This natural site is one of the most iconic in the Haut Limousin region. An interpretive trail allows visitors to learn about the area's flora and fauna.

Bussière-Boffy, Val d'Issoire

LAKE SAINT-PARDOUX

Enjoy water-based activities all year round: 3 beaches, swimming pool, sports, water skiing, wakeboarding, treetop adventure courses, mountain biking and children's activities...

Razès - www.lacsaintpardoux.com

L'OR DES SIMPLES

A botanical garden featuring over 300 medicinal and aromatic plants that grow naturally in the area and are often little known.

Rancon - 06 19 94 74 34

THE «JARDIN DES CÔTES»

Situated on the banks of the River Vincou, this spot on the rockside offers a walk with panoramic views of the old tanneries and the Vincou valley.

Bellac

DAUGES PEAT BOG

Two trails (2 and 5 km) invite visitors to explore the exceptional peatland flora of this nature reserve.

Saint-Léger la Montagne

STORIES SET IN STONES

The Monts de Blond are a land steeped in legend. Here, ancient stones tell tales of fairies, hidden treasures and age old folk beliefs.

As you explore, try to make the Wobbling Stone of Cieux move; in days gone by, those accused of a crime who managed to do so were granted a pardon.

Discover the true fairy palace, or try to land a stone on the ledge halfway up the Ceinturat menhir if you wish to get married within the year.

Just outside Blond are the Rochers de Puychaud, which mark the symbolic boundary between the Langue d'Oc and the Langue d'Oïl. If you happen to be passing through on Christmas Eve, you might be lucky enough to see one of the rocks open up and reveal a magnificent treasure of gold and precious stones.

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