



OFFICIAL VISIT GUIDE 2026

the Royal Château of Amboise

Amboise · From 17.30€

<https://chateau-amboise.visit-tickets.com/en/> · Skip-the-Line Tickets & Official Prices



History & Experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

From Fortress to Royal Renaissance Palace

GOOGLE **4.5** ★★★★★ 30 332 reviews

TIQETS **4.7** ★★★★★ 1 886 reviews

Long before it became a royal residence, this site was a strategic **Gaulish oppidum** spanning 50 hectares, fortified by earthen ramparts that witnessed centuries of Roman settlement. The castle's destiny shifted dramatically in **1434**, when Charles VII confiscated the fortress from Louis d'Amboise following a conspiracy against his favorite. This pivotal moment ended local lordship and integrated Amboise into the royal domain, setting the stage for its transformation into a cornerstone of French power.

The true Renaissance spirit arrived with **Charles VIII**, born here in 1470, who harbored a deep affection for the place. He initiated profound modifications between 1492 and 1498, blending medieval fortifications with elegant Italian-inspired aesthetics. His vision created the Royal Lodge, introducing light and grace to the stone walls, while the construction of the Saint-Hubert Chapel showcased the flamboyant Gothic style that would define the era's architectural ambition.

Amboise became a crucible of culture under **Charlotte of Savoy**, whose rich library turned the castle into an intellectual hub for educating princes. It was here that the seeds of the French Renaissance were sown, nurtured by the proximity of Italian artists invited by the monarchy. The castle served not just as a residence but as a living workshop where art, politics, and innovation converged, influencing generations of rulers including Francis I.

The most poignant chapter involves **Leonardo da Vinci**, who spent his final years under royal protection nearby at Clos Lucé. His presumed remains rest in the Saint-Hubert Chapel, symbolizing the intimate bond between the genius of Italy and the patronage of France. Though partially destroyed during the Revolution, the surviving structures—including the unique cavalier towers—stand as enduring testaments to this golden age of creativity and royal splendor.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping through the gates, you are immediately struck by the **panoramic terraces** that overlook the winding Loire River. The soft morning light bathes the ancient stones in gold, revealing the intricate silhouette of the rampart towers against the sky. There is a palpable sense of history in the air, a quiet reverence that invites you to slow down and absorb the magnitude of this royal legacy.

Inside, the atmosphere shifts from defensive strength to **Renaissance elegance**. The Royal Lodge opens up with spacious rooms adorned with frescoes and tapestries, echoing the tastes of kings who once walked these halls. Every corner whispers stories of intrigue and artistry, culminating in the emotional weight of the chapel, where the presence of Leonardo da Vinci feels almost tangible, bridging centuries of human achievement.



PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

Practical Information

ADDRESS

Amboise City Center • Access via Montée de l'Emir Abd-El-Kader. Public parking available nearby.

OPENING HOURS

Open year-round. Hours vary by season and public holidays; check exact time slots on the official website before your visit.

PRICES

Free entry for children up to 10 years old. Combined passes available online only.

VISIT DURATION

Allow 1h30 to 2h to comfortably explore the Royal Lodge, Saint-Hubert Chapel, and enjoy views from the panoramic terraces over the Loire.

PHOTOS

Photography is allowed in the rooms and gardens without flash or tripod. It is prohibited during private guided tours and in certain specific areas indicated by

AUDIENCE

Site suitable for families, couples, and history enthusiasts. The route includes stairs and stone floors, requiring comfortable shoes.

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & Transportation

**Bus**

: Île d'Or — 4 min à pied

Amboise Station (rear) (12 min) • Tours - Val de Loire Airport (89 min)

**Car**

Amboise Train Station (rear) (6 min) • Tours - Val de Loire Airport (70 min)

**Bike**

Amboise Train Station (rear) (7 min) • Tours - Val de Loire Airport (95 min)

**On foot**

Amboise Train Station (rear) (12 min)

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve the Royal Château of Amboise ?



📍 Montée de l'Emir Abd el Kader — 37400 Amboise

🌐 47°24.819' N, 0°59.163' E



ORGANIZATION

Organization

Ground Level: Defensive Foundations

Begin your journey on the ground floor, exploring the robust medieval foundations that once protected the lords of Amboise. Here, you'll encounter the Guards' Walkway, offering unique perspectives on the castle's defensive architecture. The stone floors and steep stairs remind visitors of the fortress's original military purpose, contrasting sharply with the elegance above.

First Floor: The Royal Lodge

Ascend to the Royal Lodge, where Charles VIII transformed the space into a symbol of Renaissance luxury. Admire the frescoed ceilings, ornate fireplaces, and expansive windows that flood the rooms with natural light. This level showcases the shift from medieval austerity to artistic refinement, with detailed plaques explaining the political context of each room.

Upper Terraces & Chapel

Climb to the upper levels for the emotional climax of your visit: the Saint-Hubert Chapel and the panoramic terraces. The chapel houses the presumed tomb of Leonardo da Vinci, surrounded by intricate Gothic stonework. From the terraces, enjoy unobstructed views of the Loire Valley, capturing the castle's iconic silhouette against the river's curve.



SELECTION

Must-See Masterpieces and Hidden Gems

01

Chapel

Saint-Hubert Chapel

This Flamboyant Gothic masterpiece is the spiritual heart of the castle. Its intricate stone carvings and stained glass create a reverent atmosphere, housing the **presumed remains of Leonardo da Vinci**. Visitors often pause here to reflect on the artist's final resting place, feeling a direct connection to his genius.

💡 The chapel's design reflects the influence of Italian architects brought by Charles VIII, blending Northern European craftsmanship with **Italianate elegance**.

02

ITALIAN ARTISTS Royal Lodge

Royal Lodge Frescoes

Admire the vibrant frescoes adorning the ceilings of the Royal Lodge, depicting mythological scenes and royal symbols. These artworks exemplify the **cultural exchange** between France and Italy during the Renaissance. Each panel tells a story of power, divinity, and artistic ambition, preserved despite centuries of wear.

💡 Some pigments used in these frescoes were imported directly from Florence, highlighting the **royal investment** in authentic Italian techniques.

03

Terraces

Panoramic Terraces

Step onto the terraces for a sweeping view of the Loire River and surrounding vineyards. This vantage point captures the castle's unique silhouette, framed by the **cavalier towers**. Early mornings offer the best lighting for photography, with soft hues illuminating the landscape.

💡 The terraces were designed not just for leisure but also as a **strategic observation post**, allowing kings to monitor approaches to the castle.

04

Fortifications

Guards' Walkway

Explore the less-crowded Guards' Walkway, which winds along the castle's outer defenses. This path reveals unusual angles of the architecture and provides insight into daily life for soldiers. The stone floors echo with footsteps, transporting you back to the **medieval era**.

💡 Historical records suggest that guards patrolled this route during times of conflict, ensuring the safety of the **royal family** within.

05

Royal Lodge

Charlotte of Savoy's Library Room

Visit the room associated with Charlotte of Savoy's renowned library, a testament to Amboise's role as an intellectual center. Though the books are gone, the space evokes the **education of princes** and the spread of knowledge. Plaques detail the significance of this collection in shaping French royalty.

💡 The library included rare manuscripts copied by monks, reflecting the **monastic influence** on early Renaissance scholarship.

06

Exterior

Cavalier Towers

Observe the distinctive cavalier towers from the terraces or opposite bank. These structures define the castle's skyline, combining defensive functionality with aesthetic appeal. Their conical roofs and sturdy bases highlight the **architectural ingenuity** of the period.

💡 The towers were reinforced after the confiscation in 1434, emphasizing their role in securing the **royal domain**.

07

Access Point

Entrance Ramp

Start your ascent via the historic entrance ramp, lined with paid lockers for convenience. This approach sets the tone for the visit, leading you past the bustling ticket office into the serene courtyard. The ramp itself is part of the castle's **defensive layout**, designed to control access.

💡 During sieges, this ramp could be blocked quickly, protecting the inner sanctum from **invading forces**.

08

Outdoor Area

Gardens and Park

Relax in the castle's park, where picnics are allowed on the grass. This green space offers a peaceful retreat after exploring the interiors, with pathways winding through mature trees. The park enhances the experience, providing a natural backdrop to the **historical grandeur**.

💡 The park's layout has evolved over centuries, incorporating elements from both medieval and **Renaissance garden designs**.

TIPS

Essential Tips for an Unforgettable Visit

TIMING

Arrive early in the morning to avoid crowds and capture stunning photos on the terraces with soft sunrise light.

BILLET

Book tickets online in advance, especially during peak season, to skip queues and secure entry.

PARCOURS

Start with the Royal Lodge, then ascend to the chapel and terraces for a logical flow from interior to exterior views.

PHOTO

Photograph the castle's silhouette from the bridge or opposite bank for the best perspective of its unique towers.

PAUSE

Picnic in the park after your indoor tour to rest and enjoy the scenic surroundings.

ENFANTS

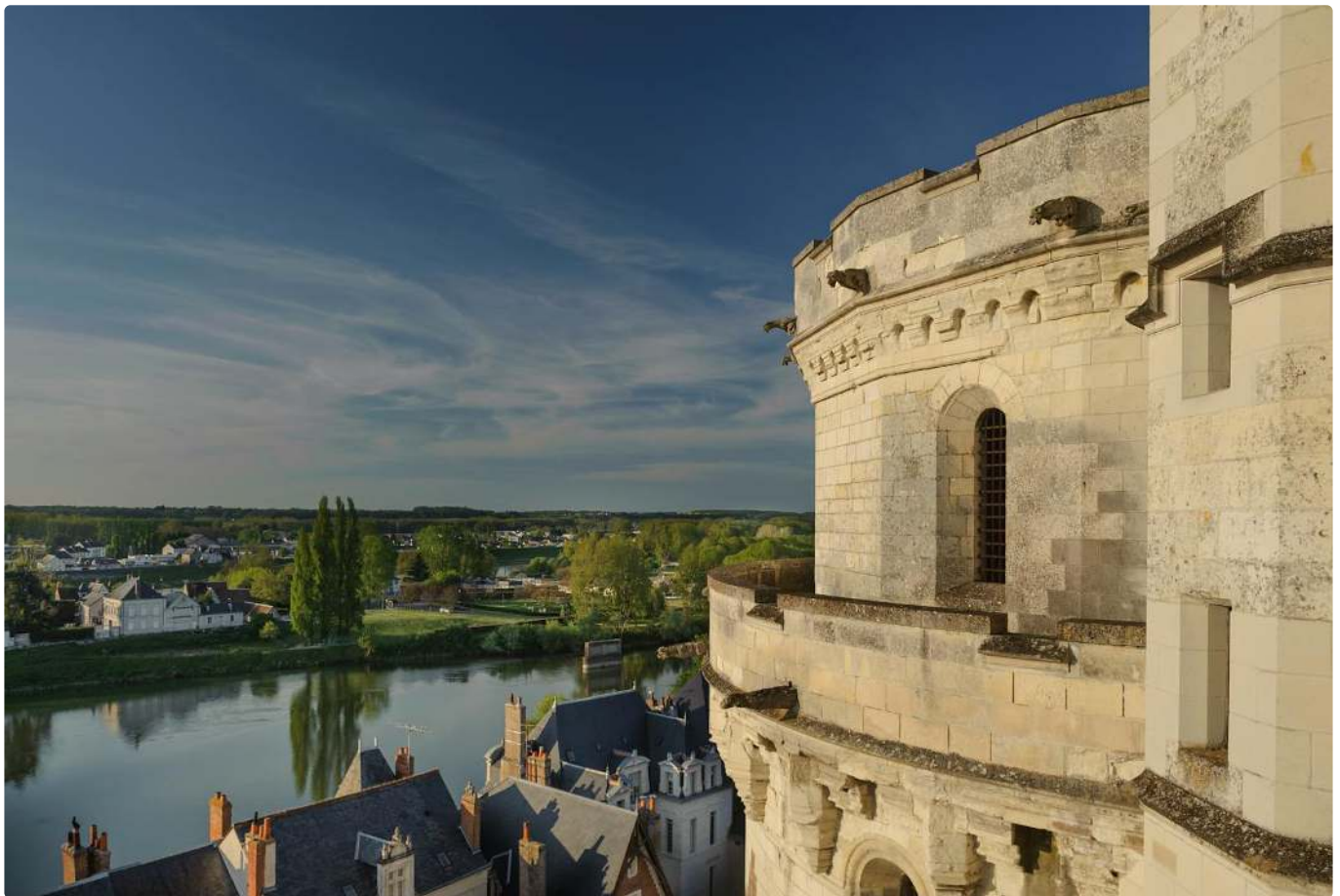
Engage children with the HistoPad tablet, included in the ticket price, for an interactive and educational experience.

AUDIOGUIDE

Use the audio guide to understand the political context behind each room, enhancing appreciation of the art and architecture.

CONFORT

Wear comfortable shoes due to steep stairs and uneven stone floors throughout the castle.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

Do I need to book tickets for the Royal Castle of Amboise?

Online booking is highly recommended, especially in high season and on weekends, to avoid queues. This guarantees your entry and saves valuable time. Moreover, some combined passes are only available on the internet.

Are there discounts for groups or families?

Yes, preferential rates exist for children, students, and organized groups. Check the exact conditions on the official website before your arrival. Group bookings often need to be made in advance via a dedicated form.

Can I buy the combined pass on-site?

No, combined passes (with Clos Lucé or Chenonceau) are not available at the physical ticket office. You must purchase them online before your visit. This administrative constraint aims to streamline on-site reception and

How long does it take to visit the castle?

Allow approximately 1h30 to 2 hours for a complete tour including the royal residence and the chapel. Add extra time if you wish to stroll through the park and enjoy the terraces. Take your time to appreciate the archite

Where is Leonardo da Vinci's tomb located?

The presumed remains of Leonardo da Vinci rest in the Saint-Hubert Chapel. This site is included in the standard castle tour circuit. It is the emotional highlight of the visit; allow yourself a moment of reflection.

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

Vinci's Final Years

Leonardo da Vinci spent his last three years under royal protection at Clos Lucé, just minutes from the castle. His burial in the **Saint-Hubert Chapel** underscores the deep respect he commanded from the French monarchy.

Royal Birthplace

Charles VIII was born at Amboise in 1470, fostering a lifelong attachment to the site. This personal connection drove his extensive renovations, transforming the fortress into a **Renaissance palace**.

Confiscation Legacy

The 1434 confiscation marked the end of local lordship, integrating Amboise into the royal domain. This event paved the way for its role as a **center of power** for subsequent kings.

Prehistoric Origins

Archaeological evidence reveals continuous occupation since prehistoric times, with a Gaulish oppidum covering 50 hectares. The site's strategic importance dates back thousands of years, long before the castle's construction.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

Beyond the castle walls, Amboise offers a charming blend of history and nature. Just steps away, the **Saint-Étienne Cathedral** provides breathtaking views of the château from its Flamboyant Gothic towers, making it a perfect photo spot. For art enthusiasts, a short walk leads to **Clos Lucé**, Leonardo da Vinci's former residence, where you can explore his inventions and workshops. After your visit, relax in the lush gardens of the **Parc de la Pagode de Chanteloup**, featuring an 18th-century Chinese pagoda and panoramic forest views. Dine at **La Table du Clos** for gourmet local cuisine, or delve deeper into history at the Museum of Resistance and Deportation, preserving the town's WWII memory.



Visiting Amboise is more than a tour; it is a pilgrimage to the heart of the **French Renaissance**. Standing before the tomb of Leonardo da Vinci, you feel the profound connection between artistic genius and royal patronage. This castle does not merely display history; it breathes it, offering a timeless glimpse into an era where beauty and power intertwined. Leave with the memory of the Loire's gentle flow and the enduring legacy of those who shaped our cultural heritage.