



# Chambord



Presentation  
Pack







# Chambord

## Presentation Pack



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The Domaine national de Chambord, which was created by Article 230 of the French law of 23 February 2005 on the development of rural areas, is a publicly owned national enterprise. It is under the threefold supervision of the Ministries of Culture, Agriculture and the Environment and under the full protection of the President of the French Republic. A Council of State decree dated 1 June 2018 incorporated management of the vast Rambouillet hunting park into the enterprise's remit.

Since July 2023, its Board has been chaired by Philippe Donnet, CEO of the Generali Group. And since January 2023, the Chambord public enterprise has been led by Pierre Dubreuil.

Its statutory decree no. 2005-703 of 24 June 2005 assigned it a number of key functions:

- Preserving, inventorying, protecting, restoring, enriching on behalf of the State, promoting and presenting to the public buildings and furnishings comprising The Domaine national de Chambord.
- Welcoming the broadest possible audience, by any appropriate means, to the château and Domain under its responsibility, increasing visitor numbers to the château and the Domain, spreading the reputation of the château, the Domain and their collections, designing and implementing educational and dissemination actions that aim to ensure equal access to culture for all.

- Contributing to the enrichment of France's national collections by acquiring cultural assets on behalf of the State, either for free or for a price.
- Performing scientific studies of the buildings' architecture, the collections, the gardens, the forest, the wildlife and the hunting at Chambord.
- Overseeing the State-owned forest Domain allocated to it, with an objective of achieving its sustainable development.
- Managing hunting on the Domain with an eye to maintaining balance between forestry and wildlife and to preserving biodiversity.
- Participating, within the scope of its purview, in national and international efforts to preserve architectural and monumental heritage, as well as forests and wildlife. In accordance with its areas of expertise as defined by Article 230 of the aforementioned French law of 23 February 2005, it may exercise any activities that are related or complementary to its main functions.

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# EDITORIAL

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## Pierre Dubreuil

CEO of the Domaine National de Chambord

The Domaine national de Chambord is a real work of art and the holder of a multitude of superlatives: a major Renaissance achievement, the flagship of the Loire Valley, Europe's biggest walled, forested park, and a first-rate tourist destination that receives more than two million visitors each year. For the past five centuries, it has been a world-renowned symbol of France's architectural heritage.

Chambord provides invaluable insight into the history of our country and its interactions with the artists who travelled all over Europe 500 years ago. The shadow cast by Leonardo da Vinci can be felt here, with all the artistic and scientific vitality of the Renaissance. He was undoubtedly the inspiration for the energetic geometry of the keep and its openings facing the four cardinal points. Chambord's history bears the stamp of multiple illustrious figures – from François I to Louis XIV, by way of Molière, Victor Hugo and so many others – who imagined, restored, brought to life and handed down this architectural utopia. Our core mission is to preserve and communicate this national heritage, particularly to the younger generations from both our country and abroad.

Chambord is an ode to nature and the scene of an extraordinary natural heritage whose overall balance is managed by humans. Here, nature has always been valued and shaped, as shown by the property's ponds and wetlands, forest tracts, coppices with standards, meadows and, more recently, its vineyard and vegetable gardens. As a breeding ground for unparalleled biodiversity, the Domain is a place for both discoveries and learning. Showcasing this nature means offering the chance to enjoy simple yet memorable experiences like listening to the roaring of the deer, hiking or cycling through the forest, or assessing natural species.





## BIOGRAPHY

Pierre Dubreuil was appointed General Manager of the Domaine National de Chambord in January 2023, stepping into the shoes of Jean d'Haussonville. With degrees in public law, international law and political philosophy, this graduate of the French National College for School Leadership (ESEN) has spent the past decade or so at the helm of national public enterprises working in the fields of ecology, culture and research.

He led, in turn, Université PSL (Paris Sciences & Lettres), the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, INRAP (French National Institute for Preventive Archaeological Research) and, most recently, the French Biodiversity Agency.

Each year, the seasons are punctuated by a rich programme of cultural and other events, bringing people to Chambord over and over again, for a guided tour, a concert, a workshop or even a tasting of the property's wines.

Our development plan, entitled “Chambord 2030: Renaissance and Revolutions”, which was unanimously adopted by the Board on 14 March 2024, can be broken down into five main focuses:

- Cultural and visitor policy
- Restoration and improvements
- Ecological transition
- Economic development
- Internal operations.

The plan's strategic documents – its scientific and cultural plan (SCP), master plan for restoration and improvements (MPRI) and targets and performance contract (TPC) – are currently being drafted. They will chart our course for the next five years.

That course will run through 2030, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the State's acquisition of Chambord. The fact that the State has held onto the Domain in its entirety since 1930, with a public management enterprise that will turn 20 in 2025, undoubtedly stems from the fact that Chambord embodies a continuity of vision between the nation and the State in our country.







## 1.1 A symbol of the Renaissance

### François I and Leonardo da Vinci

#### François I, the “builder King”

François I (1494-1547) acceded to the throne in 1515 and would become one of Europe’s most powerful rulers. As a newly crowned king, he won the Battle of Marignano, a decisive French victory in the Italian Wars. He was also the fearsome rival of Emperor Charles V, whose sister, Eleanor of Austria, he would eventually marry to put an end to the hostilities. Surrounded by a splendid and refined court, François I was a protector of the arts and letters, and an artists’ benefactor. The wars in Italy exposed the young ruler to the humanist ideas of the Renaissance.

Upon his return, the King founded the Collège de France, encouraged the creation of libraries, invited Italian artists to France and took on the identity of “builder King”. During his reign, he launched many projects to expand and modernize old royal residences (including Amboise, Blois, the Louvre, Fontainebleau, Villers-Cotterêts, Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Folembray) and construct remarkable buildings near his preferred hunting grounds (like Chambord, Madrid, La Muette and Challuau).

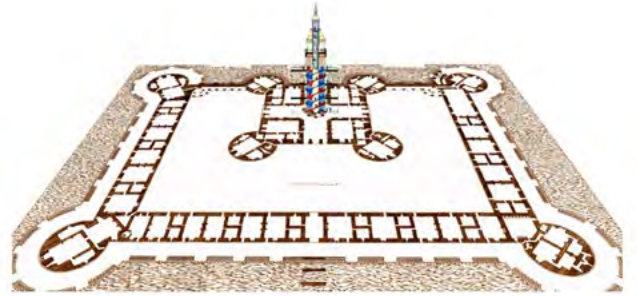
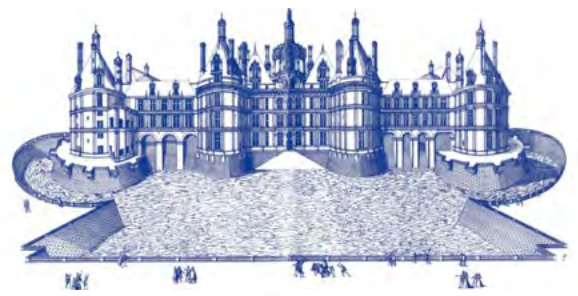


#### Leonardo da Vinci: Chambord’s architect?

After the Battle of Marignano, François I discovered the wonders of Italian architecture and the work of Leonardo da Vinci. When he returned to France in 1516, François I invited the Italian master to stay in his court as the “Premier Painter, Architect and Engineer of the King”.

A comparison of the sketches he drew in his notebooks and the architectural choices made for Chambord (like the keep’s central plan, the double helix staircase, the double ventilated pit system of latrines, the terrace waterproofing system, etc.) suggests that Leonardo da Vinci left a mark on the château’s construction. However, he was not the château’s only designer. He was an advisor alongside architects including Domenico da Cortona of Florence, who helped to create wooden models of the château, which sadly disappeared over the years.

Leonardo da Vinci passed away at the Château du Clos Lucé in Amboise on 2 May 1519, four months before ground was officially broken on Chambord. Chambord’s main architect was, first and foremost, François I (having commissioned the project) but, to this day, the exact authorship of the architectural plans continues to be a topic of debate.



## Architecture

### Mystery, aura and fascination

“The realization of a dream”: with these words, Alfred de Vigny proclaimed his admiration for Chambord in 1826. By that time, the fascination aroused by the eruption of the château’s silhouette in the middle of a plain was nothing new. From the period of its construction, its reputation extended beyond the boundaries of Europe. For example, in 1532, when the château was far from complete, it had already attained literary glory in *Gargantua*, having inspired François Rabelais’s description of *The Abbey of Thélème*.

In 1577, the Venetian Ambassador Girolamo Lippomano exclaimed that he had “seen multiple magnificent buildings in [his] lifetime, but never one so beautiful or so rich”.

Aside from the obvious architectural innovations, the mysteries that still surround the design of this monumental gem further contribute to its aura. Two known functions of this castle, raised in the midst of marshes a long way from any centres of power, were to provide accommodation for hunting parties and, above all, to signal the king’s grandeur, power, wealth and modernity, not to mention his legitimacy and continuity.

The Kings who left the biggest marks were those who erected remarkable buildings, the hallmark of an enlightened monarch.



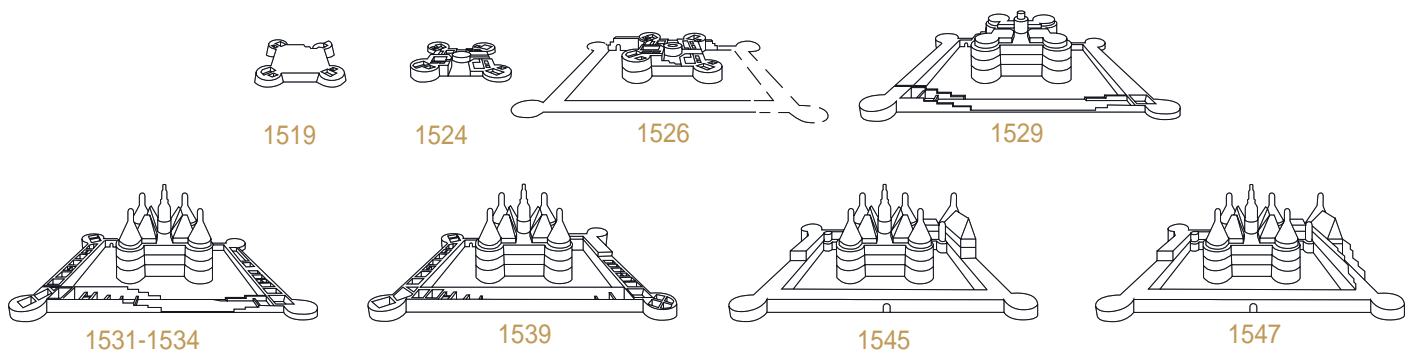
### A central plan

The central part of the château is the keep, which was a novel arrangement in France with an undeniable dash of Italianism. The four sides of the building open onto large rooms measuring nine metres wide by 18 metres long, in the shape of a Greek cross. In the middle stands the imposing double helix staircase. And the cross shape of the central room dictates the housing zones at the corners, formed of standardized bedchambers.

### An expression of the Renaissance

In the early years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, French architecture was slowly leaving the Gothic style behind. Under the Italian influence, harmonious lines, symmetry and a return to classical architectural orders were the new criteria for beauty. While intellectual life in the Middle Ages was dominated by the Church, the humanist movement of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (which focused on the importance of humanity) confirmed the power of the monarchy. Its architecture was a combination of tradition and modernity: geometric and intricate, carefully planned and fantastical, massive and airy. Chambord corresponded to idealized Renaissance notions of what a palace should be, fuelled by the popularity of chivalric romance novels like *Amadís of Gaul* (1508).





### A colossal project

1539: after 20 years of building work, Chambord's central keep was completed just in time for Emperor Charles V's arrival in France. As many as 1,800 workers were involved at peak times in the project. More than 20,000 tonnes of tufa limestone were carried up the Loire on barges from Tours to the Port of Saint-Dyé. The slate roofing materials were extracted from quarries near Angers, the wood for the framing was felled in nearby forests, and the lead used for waterproofing arrived after crossing the channel from England. These raw materials were then cut, hewn, sculpted and raised, in some cases more than 50 metres above ground, before finally being assembled.

### Double helix staircase

At the heart of the monument, where the large rooms meet, a unique masterpiece rises into the air: a double spiral staircase. It features two flights of stairs with open banisters, winding one above the other around a central core and leading to the main floors of the keep and then up to the terraces. It is lit from the side by bay windows installed in the surrounding rooms laid out in a cross.

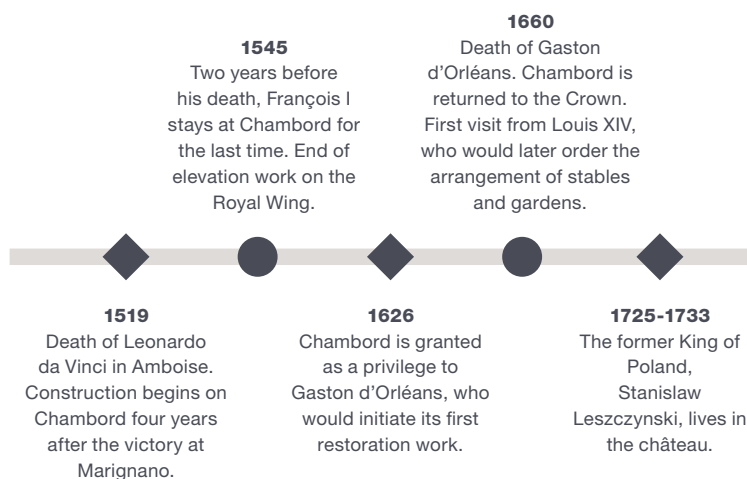
The staircase is like the château's spinal column, with the rest of the architecture revolving around it and adapting to its dimensions. At a time when spiral staircases tended to either protrude from building façades – like the external staircase at the château de Blois – or be discreetly embedded in masonry, this structure's imposing presence is the foundation underpinning Chambord's innovative nature.

As an added bonus, because the two spiralling flights of stairs never meet, this plays tricks on visitors who can hear each other without seeing one another, and disappear from sight only to re-emerge.





## 1.2 Timeline: 500 years of history



### From its initiation by François I to its completion under Louis XIV

When he was just 25 years old, François I commissioned the castle's construction in the marshland of the Sologne region. The building was monumental, establishing it in the eyes of other rulers and ambassadors as a symbol of French monarchical power inscribed in stone.

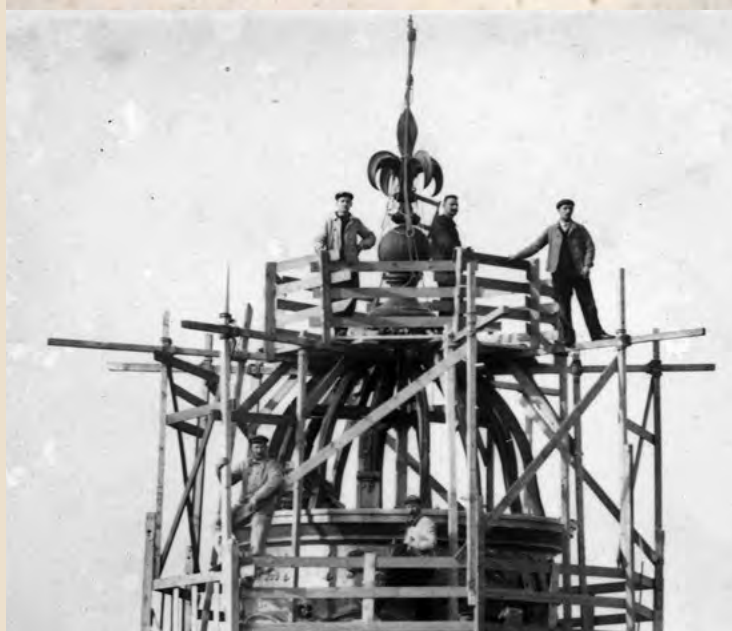
François I continued to expand his domain and surrounded it with walls. In 1523, creating a game reserve became a priority for him. The grounds would only reach their current size a century later, thanks to Gaston d'Orléans, the brother of Louis XIII.

The edifice and its gardens would not be completed until the reign of Louis XIV. Stables were built, and part of the Cosson River, which runs through the grounds, was piped to clean up the site. On several occasions, the Sun King and his court stayed in the monument. On 14 October 1670, during one of those visits, Molière even staged the first performance of his most famous comedy, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, with Lully, the play's musical composer, also in attendance.

### Addition of much-needed creature comforts in the 18<sup>th</sup> century

Beginning in 1725, work was undertaken on the château's interiors. This allowed Louis XV to house first his father-in-law Stanislaw Leszczynski, the King of Poland in exile, and then Marshal de Saxe, as a reward for his military victory at Fontenoy in 1745. The need to add warmth and comfort to the building drove its occupants to permanently furnish the château and install panelling, parquet flooring, suspended ceilings and small studies in the apartments.

During the French Revolution, the château was pillaged and its furniture auctioned off, but the monument itself managed to escape destruction.



Engraving, Jacques Rigaud, 1748 © Léonard de Serres

Archival photo: A team of craftsmen working on the roof lanterns' restoration in 1904 © J. Andrieu

Chambord in 2024 © Olivier Marchant

### 1745-1809

Use of the estate and the château passes in turn from Marshal de Saxe to the Marquis of Polignac (in 1781) and then to Marshal Louis Alexandre-Berthier, Prince of Wagram (in 1809).

### 1930

The property is purchased by the State.

### 1947

The estate becomes a national hunting and wildlife reserve.

### 1997

The entire estate is listed as a Historic Monument.

### 2017

Recreation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century formal gardens.

### 1821-1883

Henri d'Artois, Duke of Bordeaux, is given Chambord as a gift at his birth, as part of a national fundraiser. He opens Chambord for tours in 1821.

### 1939-1945

Thousands of works of art from French museums are sheltered in the château.

### 1981

Inscription of the château on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

### 2005

Creation of the public enterprise, The Domaine national de Chambord.

### 2021-2023

Project to simultaneously restore all six roof lanterns.



### In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a private castle central to French history

Chambord was abandoned until Napoleon gifted it to Marshal Berthier in 1809, as thanks for his services. The marshal only stayed there a short while, and his widow soon asked for permission to sell the grand home that was in such poor condition. A national fundraiser was then launched with the goal of gifting Chambord to the Duke of Bordeaux, the grandson of King Charles X. The duke then took the title of Count of Chambord and opened the monument up to visitors in 1821. In spite of living a life in exile, he was still able to initiate major restoration projects. Following his death in 1883, the domain was inherited by his nephews, the Princes of Bourbon-Parma.

### A safe haven for national art collections during the Second World War

In 1939, Chambord took in thousands of works of art, most of them from French public collections. The main museums in Paris, including the Louvre, received the order to evacuate their collections in order to safeguard them against Nazi bombings and greed. With 4,000 m<sup>3</sup> of crates stored there in June 1944, Chambord was the biggest of the 83 repositories of artwork during the war up until the Liberation of France. For example, iconic pieces like Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, *Liberty Leading the People* by Eugène Delacroix and the *Lady and the Unicorn* tapestries were all protected at Chambord.

### Chambord's rebirth

After the war, new functions were identified for Chambord. The château underwent major restorations and interior design work, and made new acquisitions, to enhance the visitor experience. At the same time, many events began to be held there. In 1952, Chambord hosted the first sound and light show in history!



*Arrival of the Duchess of Berry at Chambord*, anonymous, oil on canvas, 1821  
© Domaine National de Chambord – Léonard de Serres

Archival photos: © Hanns Hubmann / BPK, Berlin, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais  
© Gonzague Dreux / Dreux Collection and © Martinière / Archives Nationales





**156 metres** of grand  
façade

**400+** rooms, including 80  
open to the public

**77** staircases

**282** fireplaces

**56 metres** in height





## 1.3 Château



Through the 80 rooms open to the public and the double helix staircase, the château's architecture and history are revealed in an echo of the history of France. The tour ends on the terraces, amidst the spectacle of the rooftop and with a fabulous view of the gardens and grounds.

A tour leaflet is available in 15 languages for self-guided tours – covering the Renaissance royal residence, Louis XIV's ceremonial bedchamber, the chapel, the apartments and the 18<sup>th</sup> century kitchens. Two films on the château's history and architecture play continuously on the ground floor.

### Collections

The château de Chambord is home to more than 4,500 paintings, pieces of furniture and objets d'art, including one of the best tapestry collections in France. Following the age-old tradition of wall hangings, that collection of monumental works benefits from the château's vast dimensions, which allow for a better appreciation of the pieces. They are displayed on a rotating basis, in an effort to reconcile the need to conserve them with the duty to share them.

### Décor for a nomadic royal court

Before Louis XIV took up residence at Versailles in 1682, the royal court had no fixed home. That tradition is referenced in the creation of the King's Chamber and the experimental reproduction of the movable, textile décor used by François I on his last visit to Chambord in 1545.

The theatre that Louis XIV set up for Molière's troupe in 1669 and 1670 has been recreated on the first floor. Its staging was designed in 2019 by the decorator Jacques Garcia.

## Thematic spaces

### **Chambord, 1939-1945: *Save some of the world's beauty***

At the top of the château, two exhibition spaces bring this page of Chambord's history (during the Second World War) to life and underscores the key role it played in preserving the treasures of humanity.

### **History of a hunting estate**

A hundred or so pieces divided between four rooms retrace the history of the Domain and its longstanding tradition of hunting, from the creation of the walled park as a royal hunting captaincy by François I to the institution of presidential hunts (1965-2010). The message is enhanced by fun, educational and sensory features.

### **Museum devoted to the Count of Chambord**

The hundreds of objects contained in this museum recount the life of Prince Henri de Bourbon and tell the story of Chambord in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Children's Quarters**

On the Château's second storey, this discovery and experimentation space was specially designed for kids ages 2 and up. In a space measuring more than 100 m<sup>2</sup>, digital and audio set-ups, hands-on activities, models and fun sensory experiences are there to help children broaden their knowledge of François I and the history and architecture of the Château. The youngest ones (ages 2-5) have access to a dedicated area featuring early learning activities and a reading corner.

## 1.4 Renovation projects



**Management of Chambord's heritage as a monument is an ongoing challenge. Whether it is a one-off or a multi-year project, the work is defined in the master plan for restoration and improvements (MPRI) which is currently being developed.**

**Chambord has been supported in the oversight of this work by François Chatillon, Chief Architect of Historic Monuments, since 2019.**

### François I Wing

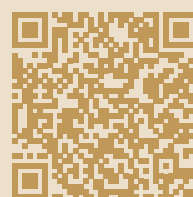
Once the keep was completed, François I decided – most likely upon his return from the Battle of Pavia – to create new apartments in the East Wing. If the graffiti on the capitals is to be believed, the work dates back to 1539-1545. With its impressive dimensions and beams measuring an amazing 10 metres long, that open space has been continually carved up and reunited over the years. The overloading caused by the walls added in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century compelled the engineers to reinforce the original wooden beams with metal bars hidden inside flooring and masonry.

The issue was compounded by the weakening of the wing's foundation due to levelling work that was carried out around the Château between 1681 and 1682 for the purpose of building moats in 1690.

The ditches, which were filled in during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were reopened around 1972, without restoring the old system of valves. As a result, the water level in the moats was dependent on the fluctuating level of the Cosson River. Aggravated by the ever faster alternation between periods of drought and flooding, structural flaws now demand substantial work to restore the shell and core.

An assessment of the flaws and a static model of the evolution of the building's movements are currently being studied in order to consolidate the whole structure while anticipating future structural, technical and functional issues.

PROGRESS MADE ON THE  
FRANÇOIS I WING PROJECT







## Fire protection

In addition to renovating the electrical system for the Château and stables, as well as the smoke detection system, Chambord has signed a framework agreement for a partnership with the Loir-et-Cher Prefecture and Fire and Rescue Service. That partnership (the first of its kind in France) is based on four key pillars: advice and support on risk management; awareness-raising about the protection of cultural assets; definition and formalization of joint intervention protocols, particularly according to a jointly designed plan for safeguarding cultural assets; and lastly, mutual sharing of experience and expertise.

## Adaptation to the energy transition

For several years now, Chambord has been following a sustainable development plan. Each phase of the future master plan will take imperatives into account as relates to the ecological transition and climate adaptation. In 2024, The Domaine national de Chambord is receiving assistance from EY & Associés in pursuing two objectives:

- ◆ performance of a greenhouse gas emissions assessment
- ◆ drafting and arrangement of an organizational social responsibility (OSR) approach to the property's operations, visitor experience and event planning.

## Outer wall

For the monument's 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019, Chambord initiated a multitude of projects to showcase its heritage, including the restoration of its surrounding wall. That wall, whose construction began in 1542 at the request of François I, encircles the Domain along a length of 32 kilometers. It is essential to understanding the history of Chambord and is a listed Historic Monument, but has suffered significant damage over the years, especially due to flooding in 2016.

The wall restoration project, which was launched in 2020, includes a number of job placement and vocational training objectives. Chambord's partner in this operation, the association Acta Vista, is a major player in inclusion through heritage and has spent the last 20 years developing a model for building projects that combines training, job placements and promotion of the region.

The goal is to help get people dealing with unstable employment back on track and to pass on specific skills relating to the restoration of historic buildings.

### KEY FIGURES

20 people trained each year

14 nationalities

65 employees placed since 2020

92.8% pass rate on the exam for professional qualifications to work on ancient buildings

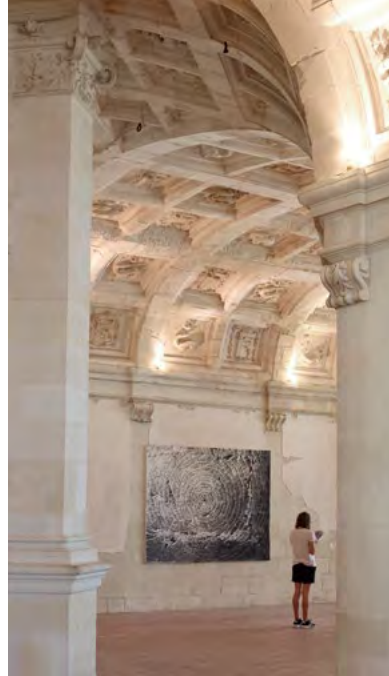
2/3 of workers have remained employed

1,054 metres of wall restored between 2020 and March 2024





## 2.1 Culture and events



### Creative support and exhibitions

The arts have shaped Chambord since it was first built. The programme of events at the château de Chambord is a reflection of its history, based on the three major cultural fields of the Renaissance – writing, music and the fine arts – plus theatre and dance.

#### Creative support and exhibitions

From the time of its construction, Chambord has been the embodiment of a utopia of human genius. In keeping with its history, the Domain has served as a creative laboratory since 2011, playing host to artists and writers in residency. The soul of the place fuels their inspiration and soaks into the pieces they create, which the public can then discover through exhibitions. As part of a long-term cultural programme, these initiatives not only provide a new perspective on Chambord and its spaces, but they also contribute to the transmission of culture in a rural area.

#### EXHIBITIONS

**Alexander Calder (2026)**

*Dining at Chambord (2025-2026)*

**Kim En Joong (2025)**

**Julien des Monstiers (2024)**

Wang Keping (2023-2024)

Lionel Sabatté (2023)

*A Tale of Two Palaces (2022-2023)*

Pablo Reinoso (2022)

Dominique Blain (2021)

Lydie Arickx (2021)

*Chambord, 1519-2019: Utopia at Work (2019)*

*Pompidou & Art: A Viewer's Adventure (2017)*

Koichi Kurita (2016-2017)

Philippe Cognée (2014)

Julien Salaud (2013)

Paul Rebeyrolle (2012)





## Events

### Chambord Festival

Launched in 2011 under the artistic direction of Vanessa Wagner, this festival has become one of the biggest music events in the Centre-Val de Loire region. Its originality stems from its programming, which is designed to be a journey through the history of music, with a dozen or so eclectic concerts ranging from mediaeval music to contemporary compositions, in some cases featuring voices, spoken word, theatre and dance.

The pricing policy was created to provide affordable access to high-quality concerts and culture in a rural setting, with discounted prices for attendees ages 25 and under and for other population segments, an unlimited Festival Pass and a Five Concerts Pass, and free entry to the Château and the current temporary exhibition.



### PAST PERFORMERS

Nicholas Angelich  
Guillaume Bellom  
Renaud Capuçon  
Natalie Dessay  
Brigitte Engerer  
Pierre Hantaï  
Patricia Petibon  
Michel Portal  
Nemanja Radulovi  
Jordi Savall  
Alexandre Tharaud  
Centre-Val de Loire Regional  
Symphony Orchestra  
Paris Mozart Orchestra, led by  
Claire Gibault

### Chambord Live

Major concerts have become focal points of Chambord's programming. After several years of electro sets (with Cercle), Chambord Live (with AZ Prod) has been transforming the Domain at the start of summer each year since 2022 into a scene of jubilation for 30,000 spectators. Sting, Imagine Dragons and David Guetta are just some of the artists who have participated in these events.

[www.chambordlive.com](http://www.chambordlive.com)

### World Music Day

Around the Château and in its courtyard, as well as in the village church, World Music Day offers a variety of swing, '70s rock, hip hop, French chanson, pop, classical music, traditional songs and more.

### Literature and lectures

Launched in 2011, Writers at Chambord is a series of lectures given by writers, philosophers and anthropologists who come to present, read and discuss one or several of their works. These encounters are free and open to everyone. Lire et Ecrire, a bookshop in Mer, sells books which purchasers can have signed by the authors after their lectures.





### Horse and Bird of Prey Shows

In the tradition of the festivities hosted by Kings back in the day, a performance in six tableaux, entitled *François I: The Knight King*, brings the chivalrous spirit of his court to life. In Marshal de Saxe's old stables, the audience is taken on a grand cavalcade set to the rhythm of the horses and the flight of the birds of prey.

- ◆ One or two daily performances, April to October and during the All Saints' school Holidays

### European Heritage Days

Each year, a rich and varied programme celebrates the practices, knowledge and expertise that form our shared heritage with amazing cultural diversity, including special, free guided tours, openings of unique areas usually closed to the public, activities for younger visitors, concerts and dance performances, encounters with craftsmen and art restorers, and the list goes on.

- ◆ Third weekend of September

### Christmas at Chambord

From the ground floor to the furnished apartments by way of the famous double helix staircase and the chapel, the entire Château is dressed up in sumptuous decorations, mostly made from materials produced on the Domain. Workshops, storytelling, Renaissance entertainment and a Christmas show all contribute to making Christmas magical for young and old alike. All of this with a continuous, eco-friendly light show using LED and solar-powered lights.

- ◆ Throughout December and the winter school Holidays



MAIN  
EVENTS



## 2.2 Visitor experience



### Guided tours

The transmission of knowledge and awareness of heritage – natural, cultural and architectural – are at the heart of Chambord's mission.

Every day, Chambord's tour guides take visitors to the monument's must-see features as well as more exclusive areas that are usually closed to the public. A wide array of tours is available to meet every expectation:

- ◆ 90 minute guided tours (daily)
- ◆ Three-hour in-depth tours (weekends, public Holidays + July and August)
- ◆ Prestige tours (exclusive access, after the Château closes or during the day, ending with a glass of champagne)
- ◆ Animated tours that introduce visitors to a historical figure dressed in period clothing (French school Holidays and long weekends).



### Digital activities

From the HistoPad tablet, which brings the Château's former interiors back to life through virtual reality, to the smart treasure hunt in nature, designed to help visitors explore Chambord, by way of a new touchscreen table in the Children's Quarters, new technologies provide multiple approaches to the monument and its estate.

These digital devices serve as companions that enhance the site's accessibility and enrich the tour experience.

#### *HistoPad*

Since 2015, these tablets have delivered an immersive tour experience that takes visitors back in time to the days of François I, from the Renaissance to the Second World War, through 3D reconstructions and virtual reality, in nine of the Château's rooms.

Added to this are interactive maps, more than an hour of audio commentary on the history and architecture of the Château, and a fun, interactive treasure hunt for kids.

- ◆ Available year round, in 12 languages

#### *Chambord 360°:*

##### *Leonardo da Vinci's dream becomes reality*

Fitted with a virtual reality headset, visitors can soar above the rooftops of Chambord on a breathtaking experience inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's dream of flying.

Featuring the voices of Lambert Wilson and Claire Chazal (Kimmel Production).

- ◆ High season





## Family activities

Each year, Chambord offers ongoing and temporary activities designed for families with kids.

### Workshops at the Château and in the forest

Multiple entertaining, educational activities are available, covering a variety of themes like an introduction to stone carving, construction of a model of the Château, identification of animal tracks in the forest, bird watching in the forest, land art, and more.

◆ During French school Holidays

### Animated tour

A costumed historical figure talks about the heyday of Chambord and leads families into a new space-time continuum.

◆ Weekends and French school Holidays

### Birthday parties at Chambord

Chambord invites children to celebrate their birthdays with a fun and educational activity supervised by an activities leader, plus a “Royal” snacktime.

◆ Saturdays in spring and summer

### Publications

*Les Contes de Chambord* is a series of three illustrated books created in partnership with Editions Faton: *Jehan et le Grand Chêne*, *Luce et La Liberté* and *Ninon et les Balbuzards*. Blending fiction with real events, these stories set the stage for young heroes from the past to relive the heyday of the Château and its estate. Each of these French-language illustrated books ends with an informational page.

◆ For sale year round at our gift shops and online

### Puzzle books

Cassandra the Salamander invites young visitors to uncover the secrets of Chambord. Over the course of 18 pages (in French), there are eight puzzles to solve, providing a unique way to explore the Château. A second book leads youngsters through the French formal gardens, teaching them how to orient themselves in space and how to design a formal garden, and introducing them to Chambord’s plantlife.

**A new book is being released in 2024**, an explorer’s book inviting visitors to set off on a quest for “the new star of Chambord” amongst the animals on the Domain: will it be the deer, the salamander, the boar, the black bee or the osprey?

◆ For kids ages 7 to 12 and their families







## School groups

The Domaine national de Chambord's Educational Department works teachers seconded by the Orléans/Tours regional education authority to offer tours, an exploratory workbook and workshops focusing on multiple themes that align with academic curricular and facilitate interdisciplinary projects.

60,000 schoolchildren visit the Château each year, 25,000 of whom take a guided tour or participate in a workshop.

At the château, students can learn about Renaissance architecture, the building project or the Royal court's lifestyle and customs in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or they can try their hand at arts and crafts (architectural photography, sculpting tufa limestone, artist encounters, etc.).

In the forest and the vegetable gardens, the emphasis is placed on observing the landscape and the flora and fauna. An understanding of the life cycles of plants, the habits of animals, the evolution of the forest, or new farming and forestry practices can raise students' awareness of the importance of protecting the environment and encourages them to question humankind's place in nature.

All our educational actions are designed to allow students to experiment, discuss and gain new knowledge through hands-on efforts that take a fun, mindful and scientific approach.

### Off-site workshops

An activities leader from The Domaine national de Chambord is available to visit classrooms within a 40-kilometers radius of Chambord. Equipped with an educational toolkit, they invite the students to recreate a model of the Château, so they can understand its arrangement and the main principles underpinning its architecture.

◆ October to March

### ***Raconte-moi Chambord: Resources designed for teachers and available to everyone***

These "stories from Chambord" are filmed like works of fiction, with actors and various specialists in Chambord and the Renaissance. They are a series of short videos that are real educational resources, available online, for free, to students, teachers and the general public.

Enhanced by activities revolving around key concepts or an interactive quiz at the end, they are a great way to explore the main subjects of classroom lessons, like Renaissance architecture, King François I, the construction of the modern state, the image of royal power, Chambord's role during the Second World War, and so on.

These videos are available for free on: [chambord.org](http://chambord.org).



## Artistic and cultural education

As a national public enterprise located in the heart of the rural Loir-et-Cher department, Chambord has been committed for many years now to spreading culture to nearby villages through an off-site cultural programme, regional cultural projects and artistic and cultural education projects run with schools, associations and nursing homes. Those projects encourage people to engage with the arts, feel a sense of ownership over our shared cultural and natural heritage, meet real-life artists, explore local expertise and take part in intergenerational discussions.

For these actions, The Domaine national de Chambord is supported by the Centre-Val de Loire DRAC (Regional Directorate for Cultural Affairs) and the Greater Chambord District Community as part of a regional artistic and cultural project supported by the Centre-Val de Loire Region.

### KEY FIGURES

Since 2018, more than 10,000 people have been involved in our artistic and cultural education actions.

This trend is on the rise: the site reached 2,650 people in 2023, 40% more than in 2022.

1/3 of students on average come from rural areas, and close to 1/4 from priority educational areas.

◆ The project “une école, un chantier, des métiers” (“a school, a building site, many jobs”), run in partnership with the Acta Vista reintegration association, gives schoolchildren the chance to meet professionals, learn about jobs in restoring our built heritage, and study the history of Chambord’s estate.

◆ The “Histoire et cinéma” (“History and cinema”) apparatus introduced lower secondary school students from the region and residents of La Bonne Eure nursing home to filmmaking professions, allowing them to participate, with VLAM Productions, in the writing, directing and post-production of the fifth episode of the series *Raconte-moi Chambord* on the history of the Château during the Second World War.

◆ The artistic and cultural education project “Métiers du livre” (“Literary careers”) invites primary school students to meet with professionals from the book world and create their own comic books in their classrooms, based on Chambord’s latest comic, *Ninon et les Balbuzards*. At the same time, the children’s awareness is raised about the need to protect biodiversity through the example of the osprey, a protected migratory bird of prey that has nested at Chambord since 1995.



## 2.3 Local partnerships



### Actions aimed at locals

#### Regional schools, front and centre

Many schools in the towns and villages around Chambord – like Crouy-sur-Cosson, Saint-Dyé-sur-Loire, Saint-Claude-de-Diray and Bracieux – take advantage of The Domaine national de Chambord’s artistic and cultural education programme. On average, one-third of the students come from rural areas.

#### Micro-Folies

Initiated by the Ministry of Culture and 12 major French cultural institutions, including the Etablissement Public du Parc et de la Grande Halle de la Villette which serves as the coordinator, the Micro-Folies provide local cultural platforms – or “digital museums” – that offer fun cultural, educational and technological content for all. Of the 400+ Micro-Folies that exist in France, 24 are located in the Centre-Val de Loire region.

At the heart of a network of more than 30 partner institutions involved in the project, The Domaine national de Chambord is the region’s biggest contributor with 43 shared resources.

Photos of the Château, artwork with commentary, plans and illustrations, not to mention videos and digital games, provide access to the monument’s exterior architecture and gardens, its rooms and interior architectural features, King François I and other illustrious figures from the Renaissance era.

#### Summer Districts

As part of the national “Summer Districts” scheme, Chambord throws open its doors each year to receive groups of children, teens and families from priority neighbourhoods. Multiple day programmes and activities are available, depending on the target audience, from the Secret Château Tour to the Horse and Bird of Prey Show and from guided forest walks to leisure activities (rowboats, bicycles, pedal-cars and golf carts). Theme days revolving around workshops are a great way to discover Renaissance music and dancing, prepare for the arrival the court of François I or learn to carve stones at Chambord. The Summer Districts operation is supported by the CIPDR (Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Crime and Radicalization).

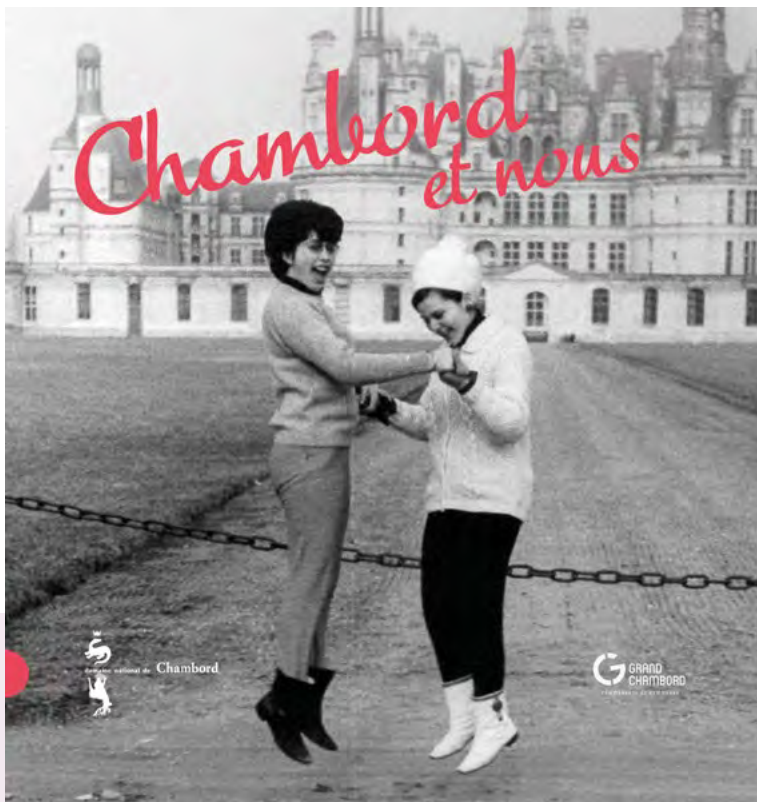
#### Key Summer Districts figures for Chambord

2021: 501 people

2022: 420 people (365 in the summer and 55 in the autumn)

2023: 150 people, with a tailored approach that gives each participant more attention





22 October 2022: Visit from François Bonneau, President of the Centre-Val de Loire Region, and Laurent Le Bon, President of the Centre Pompidou, as part of Chambord's participation in Wang Keping's exhibition *Duos* at Festival AR(t)CHIPEL

## Exhibitions and events

### Chambord and Us

In 2022-2023, across 17 towns and villages in the Greater Chambord District Community, a major action dubbed “Chambord and Us”, aimed at collecting photographs, resulted in the compilation and digitization of more than 1,000 photos from all different eras, along with dozens of testimonials about the Château.

This campaign had multiple objectives: establishing a document database for researchers, conducting a collaborative regional project, and underscoring and showcasing the close ties between Chambord and nearby residents.

The projects launched to promote this initiative include a touring photo exhibition, conferences, screenings of amateur films hosted by Ciclic, storytelling, a participatory contemporary art project and a souvenir book.

### On the other side of the wall: *The Overturned Cart*

The result of a collaboration between the Greater Chambord District Community and The Domaine national de Chambord, *La Charrette Renversée (The Overturned Cart)* is a participatory work of art conceptualized by the Quand même studio. Inspired by folk tales gathered from residents of the District Community, this piece on the outskirts of the Domain refers to the transport of stones between the Port of Saint-Dyé-sur-Loire and the Chambord building site in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Conceived to be like a rocky promontory near L'Ormetrou, the site offers a fabulous view of the Château.

### “New Renaissance(s)” in Centre-Val de Loire

Since 2020, The Domaine national de Chambord has participated in Nouvelles Renaissance(s), the name of the cultural and tourist season which, at the initiative of the Centre-Val de Loire Region, encourages the circulation of new imaginary worlds hinging on four main themes: Heritage and Nature, Creation and Culture, Lifestyle and Gastronomy, and Science and Innovation.

Our temporary exhibitions and the Chambord Festival are regularly presented under the Nouvelles Renaissance(s) banner.

## 2.4 International partnerships



### A site that is open to the world

#### Partnership with Udaipur in Rajasthan

The Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation and The Domaine national de Chambord both preserve architectural masterpieces and share the same goals in terms of conservation and preservation, education, tourism development and support for scientific research.

An initial partnership was established and formalized in 2015, and then renewed by a memorandum of understanding in 2018. The Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation, which is responsible for conserving and preserving the living heritage of Mewar and Rajasthan at the City Palace in Udaipur, and Domaine National de Chambord nurture this partnership, which aims to intensify the promotion of their respective sites, towns, regions and histories.

In 2022, the exhibition *A Tale of Two Palaces* and its catalogue inaugurated a photographic dialogue between Chambord and the palace in Udaipur. In this instance, knowledge of our monument was enriched by the convergence of perspectives with its contemporary cultural twin, Udaipur's City Palace, whose construction likewise began in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Chambord and Chinese visitors

Chambord is not only a symbol of the French way of life but also a central point for cultural diplomacy and a popular destination with Chinese tourists. Since 2005, the number of Chinese tourists welcomed each year has increased fivefold, reaching close to 30,000 visitors. Chinese visitors have gradually been returning to Chambord since the end of the pandemic and are now amongst the most numerous international visitors to come to the Domain. Chambord is working to become a model, preferred spot for Chinese tourists in France. Various documents and tools are available in Mandarin, including our tour brochure, HistoPads, website and more.

The Domaine national de Chambord is also active on Chinese social media:



WeChat



Sina Weibo

#### Three new cultural partnerships with China in 2024

Chambord has renewed two twinning agreements – one with the old Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan) and the other with the new Summer Palace (Yiheyuan) – through joint exhibitions, tourist promotion actions and experience sharing between scientific teams.

The shared foundations of these twinings are exchanges on the subject of the preservation and promotion of heritage assets, cultural cooperation and support for the development of tourism.

The next partnership with Chengde Imperial Mountain Resort will pertain to biodiversity.



## Foreign visitors

In 2023, Chambord finally bounced back to pre-COVID numbers. Of our 1,148,509 visitors – making it the best year since the Château opened to the public in 1821 – 32% were foreign nationals. Chambord's international clientele is growing faster than the domestic clientele.

The top visitor countries are the US, Germany, Spain, Italy and Belgium. Chinese tourists have at last returned after a three-year absence.



## Botticelli at Chambord

### From the Loir-et-Cher to Florence: Ties to Italy

In October 2024, a new exhibition will be showing two paintings by Botticelli in the Château's chapel.

The first, *Madonna and Child and the Young St. John the Baptist*, which was listed as a Historic Monument in June 2021 and has been restored by the Research and Restoration Centre for the Museums of France (C2RMF) under the leadership of the Centre-Val de Loire DRAC, had been in the possession of Saint-Félix Church in Champigny-en-Beauce. A partnership between that town and The Domaine national de Chambord will allow a broader audience to admire the Renaissance masterpiece, whose creation date (around 1510) was contemporaneous with the start of the Château's construction.

The simultaneous presentation of the second piece, one of its *twin*, which is on loan to Chambord from the Palatine Gallery in Florence, will give the public a glimpse into the operations of Botticelli's studio (one of the biggest during the Renaissance) and how Florentine artists produced vast quantities of depictions of the Holy Family.

◆ Beginning 19 October 2024



Top  
Studio of Sandro Botticelli  
*Madonna and Child and the Young St. John the Baptist*  
Oil on canvas  
ca. 1510  
137 x 92 cm (unframed)  
Champigny-en-Beauce Town Council

Bottom  
Alessandro Filipepi aka Sandro Botticelli and studio  
*Madonna and Child and the Young St. John the Baptist*  
Tempera and oil on canvas  
ca. 1445-1510  
134 x 92 cm (unframed)  
Uffizi Galleries (Pitti Palace, Palatine Gallery), Florence



## PART 3: CHAMBORD, A DOMAIN SURROUNDED BY NATURE



## 3.1 Natural heritage



At its own level, The Domaine national de Chambord aims to become a laboratory for environmental innovation, climate adaptation and the preservation of biodiversity.

Chambord's environmental dimension is inseparable from its identity. Its natural heritage is the fruit of a delicate balance between the preservation of environments and species, groundskeeping, forest maintenance, and the management of large wildlife. For centuries now, the Domain has been protected and managed with limited human presence. Strict and precise environmental protection rules are applied to the 54.4 km<sup>2</sup> of its Domain.

### Gardens

#### Formal gardens

Since the start of its construction in 1519, Chambord has enjoyed spacious grounds abounding in game. King Louis XIV undertook sanitation work to give the Château a landscaped setting worthy of its architecture. He had two gardens designed, to the north and the east, which can be seen on the oldest plans in our possession but which would only be implemented under the reign of Louis XV, in 1734. Those gardens were reorganized and enhanced with paths through trees, groves and flower beds laid out like embroidery patterns.

Two centuries later, they fell into disuse and were reduced to mere grassy flower gardens.

In 2016, after more than 12 years of research, the decision was made to recreate the old 18<sup>th</sup> century gardens (from Louis XV's era). Thanks to the support of American patron Stephen A. Schwarzman, Chambord recovered its 65,000 m<sup>2</sup> of formal gardens at the base of the Château. Providing a vegetative transition between the monument and the forest, these gardens restored the historical substance and the majesty of the Château's grand façade.

#### Key figures: French formal gardens

- 65,000 m<sup>2</sup>
- 44,000 m<sup>2</sup> of gravel paths
- 32,500 plants
- 18,000 m<sup>2</sup> of grass
- 800 trees planted
- €3.5 million in sponsorships for the project





### Landscaped garden

This 19<sup>th</sup> century garden had almost completely disappeared before it was entirely recreated in 2014. An 1889 survey indicates that there were groves of trees in front of the château and a shrubby border running alongside Place Saint-Louis and the town hall. Over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the groves were removed for reasons of fashion and upkeep. Today, this landscaped garden features rounded paths, a lawn sloping gently down towards the castle, flowering groves and tall, solitary trees (cedars, sequoias, etc.).

### Grand Vista

The 4.5 kilometer-long Grand Vista passes through the Château from north to south, along a line that runs right under the famous double helix staircase. Its redevelopment was made possible in 2018 thanks to the support of AXA France.

## Chambord's grounds

François I considered the château de Chambord and its forest to be an estate from the outset. With its 54.4 km<sup>2</sup> of land, Domaine National de Chambord is Europe's biggest walled park. It boasts outstanding scenery with exceptional flora and fauna.

At the start of construction on the Château in 1519, the King acquired farmland adjoining the Boulogne Forest to the north of the Cosson River, for the purpose of creating the park. As a result, more than 25 km<sup>2</sup> of farmland were annexed to the Domain. In 1645, Gaston d'Orléans, the brother of King Louis XIII, expanded the estate to its current size and completed the construction of its surrounding wall.

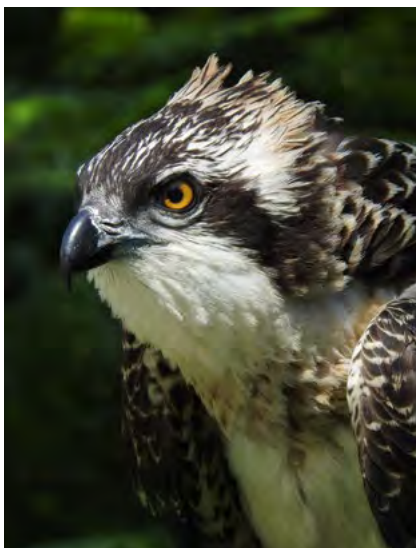
In 1947, the park officially became a National Hunting and Wildlife Reserve. The fact of placing most of the area in a reserve permitted nature to thrive in peace and allowed the boar and deer populations to quickly rebuild. Wild boar were hunted by shooting parties, particularly on the presidential hunts that were held between 1965 and 2010, while deer were captured alive to repopulate French, or even European, forests. Since then, the age-old technique of using big nets to trap animals has been employed to catch large deer, now as part of scientific population tracking programmes.

In 1997, the Domain was named a Historic Monument (the Château was already listed as such in 1840) and, in 2006-2007, it became a part of Europe's ecological network, Natura 2000. It is also listed in the French ZNIEFF inventory of natural zones of interest in terms of ecology, wildlife or plantlife. The entire Domain is covered with the main species of oaks and Scots pine. But it also features mature forests, heather moorland, ponds and wetlands, plus 2 km<sup>2</sup> of farmland, 1.6 km<sup>2</sup> of meadows and 2 km<sup>2</sup> of village.

These days, Chambord conducts conservation actions on the Domain, as well as hunting campaigns in order to keep ungulate populations (deer and boars) in line with the available resources.

Walking paths have been created and opened to the public, to encourage visitors to explore this major natural heritage site.





### Wildlife

The estate is home to a remarkable diversity of forest animals that are typical of the Sologne region: deer, boars, wildcats, ospreys, black storks, etc. Seven of its animal species are listed in Annex II to the European Habitats, Fauna and Flora Directive, including bats, newts and dragonflies. While salamanders have occasionally been observed here, the bird population is extremely rich. 150 species have been identified on the Domain, including 12 that are listed in Annex I to the European Birds Directive (ospreys, black storks, Dartford warblers, etc.).

◆ Chambord is currently the second osprey breeding site in France, with seven to nine pairs nesting here each year between March and September/October.

◆ Corsican sheep, a species that was introduced in 1950 to establish populations in various mountainous areas of France, are now kept at Chambord for scientific purposes.

◆ The Château de Chambord is the biggest wintering spot in the Centre-Val de Loire region for one species of bat: the common pipistrelle. The château is also home to populations of horseshoe bats. Each year, an inventory is taken in February during hibernation and in June during the breeding season.

### Plantlife

Chambord's clearings constitute a biotope that is very favourable to plant biodiversity. Mature forests, coppices with standards, heather or broom moorland, ponds and marshes stand alongside one another, for our viewing pleasure and for the balance of flora and fauna. Chambord's Domain counts more than 650 species of wild-growing plants, including 150 remarkable species, most of them specific to aquatic and wetlands environments.

## Rambouillet hunting park

A Council of State decree dated 1 June 2018 incorporated the vast Rambouillet hunting park into The Domaine national de Chambord's remit as a public enterprise.

Located about 50 kilometers outside Paris, Rambouillet has been a very popular destination since the Middle Ages. Its forest quickly became famous for its plentiful game. Formerly the scene of Royal, Imperial and then Presidential hunts, this Domain spanning over 10 km² is now an extraordinary site for its biological and landscape diversity.

Another unique feature is the park's population of sika deer that were a gift from the Emperor of Japan to the President of the French Republic in 1890.

As part of its environmental functions, Rambouillet devotes special attention and consideration to wild pollinators, which are food sources for a wide variety of fauna, ranging from flying mammals to tit birds for pollinating insects and from voles to bucks when it comes to pollinated fruit.

Rambouillet now needs to manage its wildlife populations in harmony with forestry and agriculture, a balance that is a remnant of a landscape that has almost completely disappeared from the Paris Basin: a genetic reservoir for insects and a hub for scientific research.



## SPOTLIGHT

### Experimentation with carbon sequestration

Chambord and Rambouillet are setting up a virtuous management method for forest ecosystems, which it is their duty to sustainably bolster in their functions as carbon sinks. The goal is to encourage companies to pay for the collective service rendered by more sustainable forest management.

The innovative character of this approach is dependent on the carbon assessment and valuation being performed across an entire forest tract, with the preservation and enrichment of biodiversity also taken into account.

Chambord and the Rambouillet hunting park rely on the expertise of the company La Belle Forêt to define the best forestry method based on proven scientific protocols for carbon capture. A monitoring committee has been formed, involving the Ministries of Ecological Transition and Agriculture, the National Forestry Office and the French Biodiversity Agency.

## Forest wildlife management

### Hunting reserve

The reserve was created in 1947 to repopulate France's big game. The implementation of a strategic scientific plan makes Chambord a benchmark for knowledge of large wild ungulates (deer and boars), the only place of its kind in France, vast enough to preserve the natural behaviour of large animals and encircled by a wall to contain them. Forestry agents who are experienced with techniques for trapping live animals have been working with the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) to collect and save data on deer for decades now.

### Forest wildlife population control

Chambord has continuously updated its hunting methods over time. Ever since presidential hunts were eliminated in 2010, The Domaine national de Chambord has been responsible for the park's wildlife management.

The necessary role model provided by the State in terms of ethics and safety has led Chambord to once again revisit its methods by significantly increasing the practice of hunting from hides. This change, Pierre Dubreuil suggested in 2023, will require considerable arrangements given the scope of the hunting grounds.

The technique of hunting from hides has the advantages of an alternative method of animal population control that is more respectful of wildlife and of forest tranquillity, and it satisfies the twofold requirement of safety and effectiveness. The possibility of establishing a short venison supply chain (including a certified big game carving workshop) is currently being developed.



## 3.2 Outdoor activities at Chambord



### Nature activities

In 1969, Domaine National de Chambord was one of the first sites in France to install observation posts open to the public on its grounds. There are eleven such public posts across the Domain. They can accommodate three to 50 people. These raised platforms allow lucky observers to catch a glimpse of some wild animals.

#### Animal population assessments

In 2023, the public was invited to take part in an assessment of the populations of natural wildlife species on the Domain. This fun and immersive activity, which is supervised by forestry agents and nature guides, gives visitors the chance to participate in the collection of vital data for studying the species of animals that are present at Chambord. This approach aligns with our aim of sharing knowledge and raising awareness about the challenges of preserving natural forest environments and the wildlife that lives there.

In 2024, 120 people joined in on the second edition of the activity, observing more than 1,200 animals: deer, boars, sheep, wildcats, foxes, badgers and more.



#### Roaring of the deer

The roar of the deer during mating season is a phenomenal auditory and visual experience that can be enjoyed on a self-guided tour or by booking a tour led by a nature guide. This is an important time for dominant males, when they defend their territories and work to attract does.

Experienced animal photographers can also hire out a ground-level deer hide.

◆ Mid-September to mid-October

#### Osprey mediation activities

In 2024, The Domaine national de Chambord initiated awareness and mediation actions relating to the osprey:

- ◆ Installation of a wildlife camera in a nest, with the images broadcast live on Chambord's website ([chambord.org](https://chambord.org))
- ◆ A new nature activity book (in French) for families touring the Château, designed like an investigation into the animals of Chambord.





### Smart treasure hunt in nature

This treasure hunt is a great way to explore Chambord and its grounds as part of an interactive orienteering race interspersed with quizzes and games featuring coded messages and challenges that lead participants to discover both the history of the Château and the nature (plants and animals) all around it.

This digital app was created by the startup Rendr, in partnership with Orange.

### La Boussole: Scientific walk in Chambord

This free app calculates personalized, geolocated itineraries and suggests fun, scientific content that provides a better understanding of Chambord's plantlife, wildlife, landscapes and history.

La Boussole: Scientific walk in Chambord is co-owned by six institutions, including the University of Tours and The Domaine national de Chambord. It was developed by the Heritage Intelligence Ambition, Research & Development Programme and funded by the Centre-Val de Loire Region.



### Trails

Chambord has created more than 30 kilometers of walking and cycling trails so visitors can explore the richness and biodiversity of the Domain. The Grande Promenade is a loop around the castle, that can be followed on foot or by bicycle, with amazing views of the monument and unique nature areas.

Six kilometers of the Loire by Bike, three Châteaux by Bike loops and the GR3 long-distance hiking trail pass directly through Chambord's grounds.

### Tours of the reserve

Our nature guides take visitors on an all-terrain vehicle to explore part of the estate that is closed to the public, where they will learn about biodiversity and get a peek behind the scenes of forest management.

◆ Year round

### Fishing spots

Four fishing spots are available to hire for one or two days. Located along the Cosson canal, a view of the château and its gardens can be enjoyed while waiting for the fish to bite.

◆ Spring, summer and certain French school Holidays





## Sustainable tourism

### Garden tours

Fun and interactive guided tours of our eco-friendly vegetable garden explain the permaculture-inspired production methods we use. Through concrete, easily understandable examples, the guide talks about different topics, like the organization of the space, the water cycle, low-tech tools, small animals in vegetable gardens, and the list goes on.

◆ Summer and All Saints' school Holidays

### Workshops in the garden

Chambord's vegetable gardens are particularly well-suited for the creation of discovery workshops that examine how natural equilibriums are being profoundly altered by climate change. New tours, workshops and activities in this educational ecosystem will be created in 2025.

◆ French school Holidays

### Route d'Artagnan: An equestrian trail

The European Route d'Artagnan runs across the continent from Belgium to Spain, commemorating the memory of the famous Musketeers.

Four paths come together at Chambord, and the Route is dotted with facilities for riders. There is even a booklet users can get stamped at each stopping points, with rewards for anyone who travels more than 100 kilometers.

### Cycling and sustainable transport

To explore the area around the Château in a different way, electric golf carts and boats are available for hire from spring to autumns (Easter to All Saints' Day) at the pier on the Cosson canal. Bicycles and pedal-cars can be used to cover the 30 kilometers of cycling trails through the area open to the public, where riders can discover the treasures of the forest. Six kilometers of the Loire by Bike and three Châteaux by Bike loops pass directly through Chambord's grounds.

Since 2017, Chambord has been creating new trails that allow visitors into parts of the grounds that were previously closed to the public. Nowadays, visitors have access to 10 km<sup>2</sup> of forest and hiking trails, meadows and moorland, and can explore nature areas that are typical of the wilderness of Sologne.



## 3.3 Chambord's agricultural function



Up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many farms operated on the estate. Chambord builds on that history to reconnect with its agricultural function, by planting organic grapevines, creating organic vegetable gardens, green grazing, planned cutting, preserving traditional spaces, etc.

Visitors become “locavores” and are the primary beneficiaries of produce from the estate’s natural resources.

### Vegetable gardens

Chambord’s vegetable gardens were re-established around the Château in 2019. One measuring 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> is set up in King Louis XIV’s old stables, which were converted into a cavalry barracks and then a stud farm in the 18<sup>th</sup> century before being transformed into open-air vegetable gardens in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The other one, spanning 50,000 m<sup>2</sup>, covers the plots of land adjoining the barracks, which were used for farming from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 1980s.

### Solognot sheep farming

This method contributes to the protection of the species, the sale of its wool and the promotion of its meat. Thanks to green grazing, the soil is enriched, there are more pollinating insects, and the use of chemical and organic soil conditioners on the estate’s land is reduced.

### Birch water

At Chambord, birch water has been enjoyed as a beverage and employed in a line of organic cosmetics since 2019. Close to 14,000 litres of the fluid is harvested each year over the course of three straight weeks in February/March.

## Vineyard

According to archives, grapevines have been growing at Chambord since at least the Middle Ages. In 1519, the year when construction of the château began, a Royal order indicates that François I was bringing in 80,000 vine trunks from Beaune, Burgundy. The variety was the one believed to be the ancestor of today’s Romorantin grapes. At l’Ormetrou, 1.5 kilometers from the castle, 140,000 m<sup>2</sup> were replanted in 2015: 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> of Romorantin, another 40,000 of Pinot Noir, 30,000 of Sauvignon, 20,000 of Arbois and 10,000 of Gamay.

### Key figures

- 2021 harvest: 128 hl / 14,000 bottles  
*The vines reach maturity*
- 2022 harvest: 534 hl / 60,000 bottles
- 2023 harvest: 646 hl / around 80,000 bottles

Chambord’s wines include:

- ◆ A red wine made of a blend of Pinot Noir and Gamay (at about 84% and 16% respectively, in accordance with the specifications for the Cheverny AOC)
- ◆ A white wine made of a blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Arbois (at about 60% Sauvignon and 40% Arbois, in accordance with the specifications for the Cheverny AOC)
- ◆ A single varietal white wine made with traditional Romorantin grapes.

Two new wines are being developed for the 2023 vintage, a sparkling rosé and a sparkling white.











# 4.1 Development



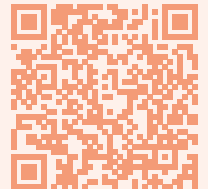
In past years, The Domaine national de Chambord has acted as a pioneer in multiple fields, especially economic development, which has led to a very high level of self-funded operations (around 90%). This strategy goes hand in hand with the industrial and commercial nature of our public enterprise.

## Sponsorships

Sponsorships play a key role in The Domaine national de Chambord's reputation and development. Donations allow many public service projects – in the fields of youth, ecological transition and climate adaptation, heritage, tourism and culture – to see the light of day. The variety of activities run by Chambord means anyone can find a project that resonates with their values and commitments. The names and images of Chambord's sponsors are linked to the chateau, an iconic monument whose image has been profoundly refreshed.

The Board adopted a new charter for sponsors and patrons on 14 March 2024. It is available (in French) on [chambord.org](http://chambord.org).

### ONLINE DONATION PLATFORM



Donors may choose to be a patron, supporting Chambord as a whole with a general gift, or a sponsor, opting to finance specific projects like:

- ◆ Cultural programming: exhibitions, artists' residencies, classical music festivals, etc.
- ◆ Educational actions: workshops for school groups, mediation activities, etc.
- ◆ Actions in support of biodiversity or sustainable development;
- ◆ Restoration and improvement projects;
- ◆ Innovative projects: metaverse, new technologies, mediation activities aimed at Gen Z, etc.

### Adoption projects

The Domaine national de Chambord has set up various adoption projects to allow as many people as possible to support Chambord, so everyone can make their own contribution. For example, people can adopt:

- ◆ A vine trunk for €1,000;
- ◆ A lime tree in the formal gardens for €1,000;
- ◆ A bench next to the Chateau for €2,000;
- ◆ A citrus tree in the formal gardens for €3,000.

The Domaine national de Chambord would like to thank its individual and corporate sponsors.





## A 500-year-old staircase shaped like DNA?

IT'S POSSIBLE AT CHAMBORD!



## Chambord: A place for innovation

Here at Chambord, the goal is to blend destination marketing, influence and new conventions in order to position the site as a place for innovation, invent new forms of sponsorships, enrich digital communities and prepare for the visitors of tomorrow.

Chambord is an inexhaustible source of inspiration for pop culture, from comic books (like the Japanese manga *One Piece*) to films and television series (*Donkey Skin*, *Beauty and the Beast* and even *The Simpsons*) by way of video games (Minecraft and Fortnite).

The evocative power of the location, combined with its digital audience (more than 5 million unique visitors to the website each year and 35% of social media followers under the age of 30), is driving the development of a strategy specifically targeting digital natives.

Multiple actions have been carried out:

- ◆ Presence of Chambord on appropriate social media (TikTok, Discord, etc.);
- ◆ Dedicated cultural programming (electro concerts, VR films, etc.);
- ◆ Partnerships with content creators (Amixem) and creative studios (Fortnite).

Several actions are under development:

- ◆ A video game and its associated legendary world;
- ◆ Collaborations with Web3 artists (especially Obvious) to create a collection of NFTs (digital collectibles) for Chambord.







## Private events

There are many events held at Chambord, including vintage car gatherings, sport rallies, gala dinners, seminars, cultural encounters, weddings, corporate anniversaries, presentations of collections, and more.

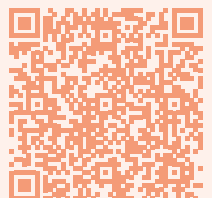
### Filming

There are many options for shooting feature films, shorts, television programmes and series, promotional films, documentaries and more at the château de Chambord and on its grounds. The latest projects include the films *Like a Prince*, *Valiant Hearts* and *Serial (Bad) Weddings 3*, an episode of the TF1 singing competition *La Chanson de l'Année*, the American series *The Serpent Queen*, the French mini-series *The King's Favorite*, the documentary *Heart of Oak*, and the list goes on.

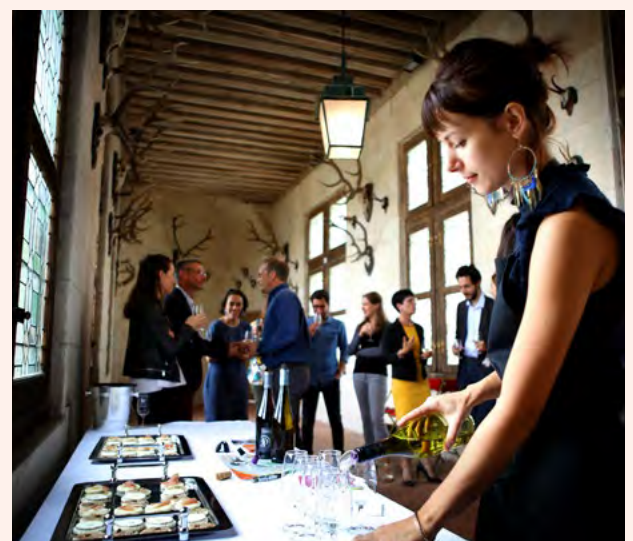
## Groups

Chambord offers group services throughout the year, available either à la carte or as a package, such as guided tours of the château, the vegetable gardens or the grounds, wine tastings, lunch at the château, educational workshops, the Horse and Bird of Prey Show, outings in electric golf carts, cycling excursions, and more. A restaurant deal at the château also makes it possible to spend the entire day on site whilst taking full advantage of the Domain and its activities.

- ◆ Groups of 20 or more
- ◆ Information available on [chambord.org](http://chambord.org)



BROCHURE  
DESTINATION CHAMBORD



## 4.2 Amenities



### Gift shops

Three gift shops are on site:

- ◆ At the Château: open year round, with more than 2,500 products including decorations and tableware, regional cuisine, Chambord wines, objets d'art, wonderful books, kids' items and more;
- ◆ In the entrance hall: open year round, with a selection of the best items from the château gift shop plus various dining options like hot and cold beverages and a few fast food and takeaway items;
- ◆ At the stables: open April to October, with two exclusive product lines, one relating to the world of the Horse and Bird of Prey Show and the other an extension of the Château's vegetable gardens.

An online shop ([boutiquedechambord.fr](http://boutiquedechambord.fr)) where users can explore more than 200 items divided between six product categories: youth (children), arts of the table (tableware and cookware), home (home goods), mode-beauty (fashion and beauty), souvenirs-bookstore (books and souvenirs) and gastronomy (food and beverages).

In addition, partner boutiques, local shops and craft studios are open year round on Chambord's village square.

### Restaurants

Both the food service venues managed directly by Chambord serve vegetables, charcuterie and organic wine from the Domain, as well as other local products.

**Autour du Puits** offers ice cream, crêpes and fast food next to the Château.

- ◆ Open April to November

**Café d'Orléans** prepares seasonal dishes and fast food in the château's inner courtyard, with both indoor and outdoor seating.

- ◆ Open year round

#### Restaurants on the village square

Partner restaurants welcome visitors on Chambord's village square, serving a variety of cuisines, local specialities and regional products (wine, pâté, etc.).

- ◆ Open year round

#### Le Grand Saint-Michel, a bistronomic restaurant at Relais de Chambord

The chef delivers a fine dining experience that showcases products that mainly come from local farmers and producers or even Chambord's vegetable garden, in the form of a seasonal menu.

- ◆ Open year round for lunch and dinner, reservations recommended







## Accommodation

### ***Gîte de la Hannetière***

This old 16<sup>th</sup> century house has been completely redone using fine materials, transforming it into a five-bedroom heritage cottage in the heart of the estate's nature reserve. Rated four stars.

- ◆ Sleeps up to ten people

### ***Gîte de la Gabillière***

This old farmhouse is located by the entrance to the Domain, at the edge of Chambord Forest, offering guests a rare proximity to nature. It features a fireplace and a private garden, three bedrooms and two bathrooms. Rated three stars.

- ◆ Sleeps up to six people

### **Relais de Chambord\*\*\*\***

Relais de Chambord is managed by Marugal, a company that designs unique destination, and is a member of the Small Luxury Hotels collection. Located 50 metres from the Château, this four-star hotel has 55 guest rooms and suites, including 15 with an extraordinary view of the Château and its formal gardens, and another 18 with a view of the Cosson river.

In 2018, the hotel was fully renovated as a luxury establishment by the famous French architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte. The décor was designed to recreate the warmth of a country house, with living areas intended to encourage discussions around a fireplace, a bookcase or a billiards table.

Its spa is a haven of peace and wellness where a team of professionals deliver Anne Semonin treatments. The finishing touches are the hotel's bar and meeting rooms.

- ◆ Open year round
- ◆ Information and reservations:  
[relaisdechambord.com/en](https://relaisdechambord.com/en)
- ◆ [info@relaisdechambord.com](mailto:info@relaisdechambord.com) / +33 (0)2 54 81 01 01



# Contacts

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For requests relating to royalty-free photos and video (drone) rushes: [communication@chambord.org](mailto:communication@chambord.org).

If you want to use a drone to capture images of Chambord, you must contact the Communication Department at least one month before your shoot. We will send you the process for obtaining the necessary prefectural authorization.



## USEFUL INFORMATION



# Hours, prices and directions



## Château calendar

The château is open daily except on New Year's Day (1 January) and Christmas Day (25 December)\*.

\* Staff appreciation day occurs annually in March. The exact date can be found on [www.chambord.org](http://www.chambord.org). On that day, the château is closed to the public.

## Opening hours

Detailed hours are available on [www.chambord.org](http://www.chambord.org).

April to October + winter school Holidays:

**9 am to 6 pm**

November to March:

**9 am to 5 pm**

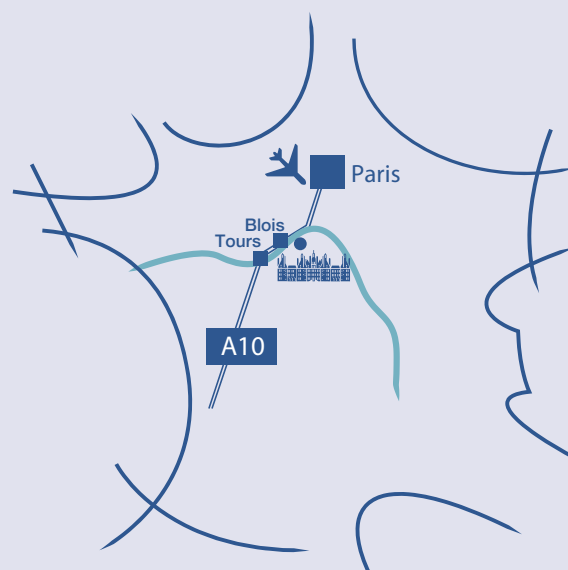
Last admissions are 30 minutes before the Château closes. The formal gardens close 30 minutes before the Château.

\* The Château closes at 4 pm on 24 and 31 December (Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve).

## Prices

All pricing is available on [www.chambord.org](http://www.chambord.org).

Admission to the Château and the French formal gardens is free for European Union nationals under the age of 26.



## Directions and parking

### From Paris (less than two hours)

Via the A10 motorway towards Bordeaux, Mer exit (no. 16) or Blois exit (no. 17)

By train from Paris Austerlitz station, Blois-Chambord or Mer stop

### Parking

P0 car park, 600 meters from the Château: €6/day for cars/motorcycles

P1 car park: €11/day for minibuses and €100/day for coaches

Free parking for groups visiting the Château (with proof of purchase of at least seven admission tickets for coaches or two tickets for minibuses, shown at the car park's till)

P2 car park: €5/day for cars and €11/24 hrs for campervans

Parking pass for cars/motorcycles: €10 for ten visits, valid for one year

Free parking for bicycles



domaine national de Chambord

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