

# The Vienne and Loire rivers' confluence

Balades et randos région de Chinon - Candes-Saint-Martin



Vue sur la confluence de la Vienne et de la Loire (Aurore Poveda)



*With its collegiate church, narrow streets and panoramic views, Candes-Saint-Martin, listed as one of the 'Most Beautiful Villages in France', remains a favourite spot for walkers.*

## Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 1 h

Length : 4.2 km

Trek ascent : 95 m

Difficulty : Very easy

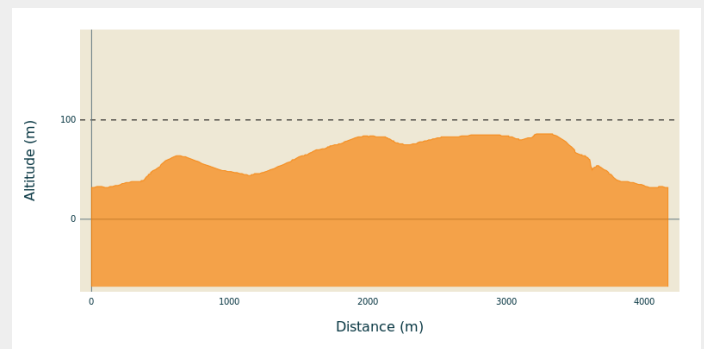
Themes : Exceptional views, River and stream

**Departure** : Candes-Saint-Martin

**Arrival** : Candes-Saint-Martin

**Cities** : 1. Candes-Saint-Martin

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 32 m Max elevation 86 m

### 1. Departure

When you arrive in Candes-St-Martin (coming from Chinon), park your car in the car park on the left just before the 'Bar-tabac-essence'. On leaving the car park, cross the road. If the Vienne is not too high, drive along it to reach the port of Candes. If not, follow the yellow signs through the narrow streets of the village. Then walk back up to the collegiate church, crossing the road again.

### 2. The Collegiate Church

Walk up the cobbled street to the right of the Collegiate Church. Walk behind this magnificent fortified church built in the 12th and 13th centuries on the site where Saint Martin died in November 397. Legend has it that when his body was brought back to Tours on a boat sailing up the Loire in glorious sunshine, the flora and fauna awoke: it was the first summer of Saint Martin. Next, drive past Château Vieux, an estate that became a castellany in the Middle Ages. Louis XI is said to have stayed here 18 times.

At the top of the road, turn right and stop in front of the Château Neuf (or new house), built in 1782 by Monseigneur Michel Amelot de Gournay.

### 3. Rue du Puits Saint-Michel

When you reach the square, turn right into Rue du Puits Saint-Michel and walk down to the left alongside the cemetery along a tarmac road framed by low walls made of tuffeau (a white stone typical of the Touraine region). You leave the village. Meadows and cultivated fields appear on either side. In front of you, the hillside is in Anjou... in the Pays de Loire region.

### 4. The Saint-Michel mill

Before turning left at the sign for La Bonnardière, look up on the right. You'll see the foundations of the Saint-Michel mill. As you go up the small tarmac path, you will notice old quarries used as sheds, dwellings or mushroom beds. At the top of the slope you come to a vast plateau bordered by vineyards (AOC Touraine appellation wines), orchards and cereal fields.

### 5. The forest of Fontevrault

Look out over the Fontevrault forest from the height of the orchard. Turn around to discover the moulin-cavier de la Tranchée (La Tranchée mill). At the top of a conical tower, this mill has a pivoting wooden cage known as a hucherolle, which

supports the wings.

6. La Carroite

When you reach the hamlet of La Carroite, turn left and follow the track to the sign for Candes-Saint-Martin. Just before this sign, turn right at the iron cross and then left onto the dirt track. Opposite you are the ruins of the Moulin-tour, which you reach after crossing the crossroads.

7. The panorama

The panoramic view is exceptional. Near the mill is an orientation and landscape interpretation table, created by the Loire-Anjou-Touraine Regional Nature Park, showing the confluence of the Loire and Vienne rivers. On this table, you can also read the information panels on the fauna, flora, crops and vineyards.... On the lawn, everything is set out for a relaxing break or a lunch break while contemplating this beautiful landscape.

Follow the grassy path along the observation benches and go down the small stone path following the yellow markings entitled paved path to the Place du Puits. Turn right and walk down the paved path, continuing across the road to the collegiate church and the harbour.

8. The confluence

Admire the confluence: the Vienne flows into the Loire. The alluvial plain widens. The Val de Loire has been on UNESCO's World Heritage list since November 2000 as a living cultural landscape.

# On your path...



# All useful information

# Environmental sensitive areas

Along your trek, you will go through sensitive areas related to the presence of a specific species or environment. In these areas, an appropriate behaviour allows to contribute to their preservation. For detailed information, specific forms are accessible for each area.

## **Site Natura 2000 de la Vallée de la Loire des Ponts-de-Cé à Montsoreau**

Sensitivity period: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, Decembre

The Loire Valley offers a rich mosaic of landscapes, including a variety of natural environments such as flood meadows interspersed with bocage and "boires", sandy shores, limestone hillsides...

These varied environments are home to numerous rare or endangered plant and animal species, including migratory fish (salmon, etc.), aquatic mammals (European beaver, European otter), terrestrial mammals (bats) and invertebrates (Rosalie des Alpes, Gomphe serpentini...).

The Natura 2000 site is also an important area for migratory avifauna, with over 30 species of heritage birds such as Common Terns and Ospreys present and dependent on the site.

## **Site Natura 2000 des basses vallées de la Vienne et de l'Indre**

Sensitivity period: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, Decembre

The site was designated in 2005 under the Birds Directive. The Park has been coordinating the site since 2010 (initially for the period 2010-2016, then renewed for 2016-2019 and 2019-2022), in conjunction with the CPIE Touraine-Val de Loire and the Indre-et-Loire Chamber of Agriculture.

The low valleys are largely covered by natural flood meadows, which are mown and/or grazed. These meadows form large complexes that are home to rare and endangered birds: corncrake, red-backed shrike, meadowlark, spotted crane, etc.

Certain sectors are characterized by a dense bocage network, with pollarded trees surrounding the meadows (Véron bocage): this is the home of the Common Fritillary, Natterjack Toad, Great Capricorn...

Finally, the banks of the Vienne and Indre rivers are occupied by alluvial woodlands and poplar plantations.

## **Information desks**

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