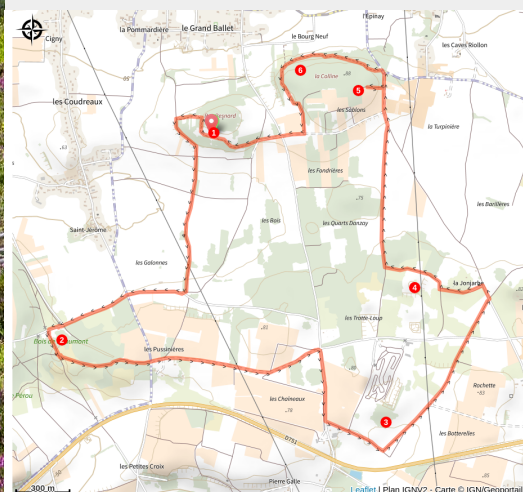


Les puys du Chinonais

Balades et randos région de Chinon - Chinon



(Pixabay)



Thanks to their exceptional microclimate, the Puits du Chinonais are home to Mediterranean-type flora. This walk begins at Puy de la Colline (from the Latin podium, meaning low-lying eminence). It's a complete change of scenery!

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 3 h

Length : 9.6 km

Trek ascent : 103 m

Difficulty : Easy

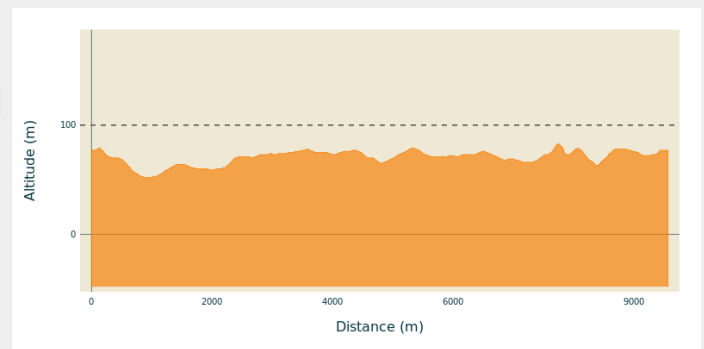
Type : Loop

Departure : Parking spots by the Puy Besnard

Arrival : Parking spots by the Puy Besnard

Cities : 1. Chinon
2. Beaumont-en-Véron

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 52 m Max elevation 83 m

1. Puy Besnard

Your walk, marked out in yellow, starts at Puy Besnard. Go through the fence and take the narrow path up through the shade of the oak trees. Follow the path through the foliage on your left. You'll then come to a beautiful clearing: a dry grassland - a natural environment that has become rare in the region - which in spring is dotted with wild orchids.

Calm reigns, giving the impression of being far removed from human activity. Why not linger a while, enjoy the birdsong, observe the insects and discover the remarkable flowers?

The walk continues along a path running due south, bordered by a hedge.

Leave the vineyard on your right, then turn right at the next crossroads.

2. Le Puy du Pérou

Welcome to Peru! At least, Le Puy du Pérou. Change of atmosphere. You're in the middle of a pine forest: pine needles and cones litter the sandy ground. At the top of the hill, on the left-hand side of the path, you discover two deep grooves in the rock, the remains of an ancient Roman road.

Many centuries later, a railroad line was built nearby, but disused after the Second World War. It linked Chinon to Bourgueil.

Go through the gate to leave Le Puy du Pérou and cross the road carefully. The path runs alongside AOC Chinon vineyards.

The landscape changes as you go: you cross the dry grasslands of the Puys du Chinonais nature reserve.

3. Grazing areas

Sheep grazing is one of the main reasons why the natural environment remains open, encouraging the development of plants that are now rare. Without the action of sheep or annual mowing, the dry grasslands would gradually be replaced by shrubs and then by forest.

Continue along the path heading due north towards the next puy.

4. Le Puy de Trotte-Loup

As the name suggests, you'll have to take it in your stride! The scenery changes a few metres after the barrier. The path opens onto a vast hillside lawn. Look all around you: insects flying, crawling, foraging. In the butterfly family, the wild blue butterfly, the peacock butterfly and the half-mourning butterfly... rub shoulders with orthopterans (crickets and grasshoppers), beetles and

millipedes.

In the woods, take the path due north towards Puy de la Colline.

5. **Le Puy de la Colline**

A puy or a hill? Both!

Fourth puy, fourth atmosphere. Here, the woods are much denser: oaks, beeches, hornbeams, dogwoods, The path runs halfway up the slope under the trees. At the end of the path, on your left, you'll see the ruins of a mill that was in operation until the 19th century. You'll pass troglodytic dwellings dug into the tufa stone around the 14th century and probably used as hiding places during the Hundred Years' War.

6. **The quarries**

A quick round trip takes you to the heart of the puy. In this quarry, man extracted the yellow tuffeau stone known as millarge, used to build rural dwellings.

After rounding the hill, turn right towards Puy Besnard, the starting and finishing point of this nature walk in the Puys du Chinonais.

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 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.

Puys du Chinonais

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

This 150-hectare protected site is made up of a series of buttes (Puy comes from the Latin "podium" meaning "eminence"), a few kilometers apart. This spacing corresponds to areas of the plateau that are less susceptible to erosion than the surrounding terrain. The sandy, chalky soils and mild climate have contributed to the planting of Mediterranean flora such as the large-flowered sandwort. Up until the 19th century, windmills produced flour on these hills, and local residents cultivated asparagus and vines to make the most of the sandy soil. Traces of these ancient practices can still be found. Cavities and former troglodyte dwellings are now used by bats as daytime resting places. As the puys have been neglected by man, they are an ideal habitat for many protected species.