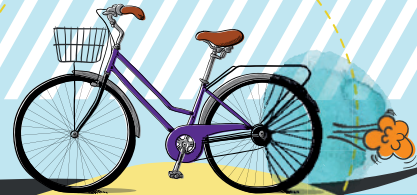


Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire Getaways





The history of Cosne is very old ... The site has been inhabited since prehistoric times but it was the Celts who - in the Vth century BC - gave it its first name, Condate. Translated by "confluence", it perfectly reflects the enviable geographical location of the city, at the corner of the Loire River and the Nohain.

In the Vth century AD, the city came under the authority of the bishop of Auxerre, he and his successors never ceased to reaffirm their power against the Counts of Nevers, owners of the castle of Cosne.

The city took the name of Cosne-sur-Loire in the XVth century, but was re-named in 1973 following its association with the village of Cours.

The scene is set, the visit can now begin!

Le Palais de la Loire

1

Undeniably, the building facing you dominates its environment! It must be said that it was built to accommodate a **court** and that its monumental architecture aims to impress in order to establish the authority of justice. Besides, many "Darts" have crept into its facade: this ornament evokes in its downward direction punitive lightning and thus sticks perfectly to the vocation of the place.



The building - inaugurated in 1864 - is also marked by a style associated with the reign of Louis XIII. It has long been accessible from a large landscaped garden now replaced by a car park. Inside, you have to imagine in place of the current hall a so-called "footstep" room

where the litigants paced until they were heard by the judges!



Join the Loire quays via the Herentals garden (along Le Palais de la Loire on the right).

Did you notice it? Once on the quays, you will see on the right the "Princesse de Loire", a "gabarre" a flat-bottomed boat built in 2013 by the association of the Gabarriers du Haut Val de Loire.

The Loire bridge

2



For centuries, smugglers and their ferries allowed men, cattle and goods to circulate on this arm of the Loire but no bridge construction project emerged between the Gallo-Roman and the XIXth century!

In 1832 a **suspension bridge** finally connected the two banks. It was replaced, in the early 1930s, by a reinforced concrete bridge more suitable for automobile traffic, but it was destroyed during the bombing of 16th June, 1940. The current bridge was not inaugurated until nineteen years later. Between us, doesn't it also remind you of the San Francisco Bridge? Though ours is much nicer!

Did you know?

Swimming in the Loire is prohibited in particular because of its lively current and its many water holes!



Go under the bridge and take the first small lane on your left (before the house with the number 4). Keep going straight on Rue des Mulets and at the end of it, turn slightly right before entering the fortified enclosure.

The remains of the castle and the old prison

3

In the XIIIth century stone walls replaced old wooden palisades and instead of a simple mound surrounded by ditches, was built the octagonal enclosure of the castle of the Counts of Nevers. From then on, they and the bishops of Auxerre - lords of the city since the Vth century - never stopped quarrelling

to defend their rights. At the same time, it couldn't have been more normal when we know that the Counts of Nevers had in their charge the guard of the city but that the city of Cosne, its fortifications and all its taxes belonged to the bishops...

But what did the site look like? A walkway used to run along the walls surrounding you and a tower stood at each corner. The dungeon and the chapel which also stood there, have unfortunately left no visible trace. Originally, the ground was much higher and you can see it by looking up at the side of the only tower-porch remaining standing (yes, look carefully: you can see the trace of an old door).



In the 1850s the surrounding wall was partially demolished to allow the construction of the new **prison**. On the side of the city, there is a facade with two towers which evokes the architecture of a castle while in front of you appears a long nave ending in an apse (on each side of which the cells were distributed). Please know that this plan, inspired by the religious architecture, was designed to contribute, symbolically, to the redemption of prisoners.



The city side

Now let's continue our way.

Exit through the other large door and cross the street on the pedestrian crossing situated on your right.



Once on the small square, you will see:

The former Augustinian convent - the current Loire museum

4

You are now in the old cloister of a convent. So yes here, it takes a little imagination!

The congregation of the reformed Augustinians settled here in 1616. The building, hosting the museum today, is constructed with various elements and reused stones; which also explains some rather surprising details of its architecture and some irregularities.



The Loire museum

A little journey through time: imagine around you, some brothers dressed in black, working busily. Some are heading for their big garden - extending almost to the current quays - while others are walking into the city to mingle with the inhabitants and carry out the missions of preaching and service to the poor, missions assigned to the Mendicant orders. Later in the day, these men of the Church would all meet in the chapel which is on your right.

Actually, let's take a closer look at it.

It's difficult to guess that the Augustinians of Cosne were buried here, isn't it? Especially, since this old place of worship had the strange characteristic of being turned towards the West. This noticeable difference vis-à-vis most of the churches of Christendom is probably explained by the fact that the Augustinians were particularly eager to spread the good word to the inhabitants, to address directly to the Cosnois (especially when we know that, on the other side of the Loire, there were the Protestants of Sancerre).

As you can imagine, the facade is not of origin: four masks were sculpted there during

its repair in 1862 to show that the place was converted and has been used for several decades as...a theater!



Psst ! Don't forget to go to the museum! The discovery of its collections on the Loire and on Fine Arts is essential for anyone who wishes to discover our territory!



Head towards the covered passage which is at the end of the square and, just before taking it, look to your left:

Did you notice it?

A window in the building has been decorated with Caryatids! The latter are female statues dressed in tunics evoking the **Ancient Greece** and used - like columns or pilasters - to support an element of an architectural construction. Their male equivalents are Atlanteans.



Take the covered passage.

The scale models of the Loire museum

5

The second scale model you can see, represents a barge. A small precision: the rudder you can see at the rear of the boat - and which must be called "piautre" for the sake of accuracy - operates at an oblique angle and thus demonstrates a desire to copy the **Vikings** ships!



Turn right and go over the bridge. Then turn right and go down to the quays through the entrance to the car park which is in front of you. Turn left.

Psst ! You can also follow the dotted path on the map.

The quays of the Loire

6

If you had come to Cosne at a very distant time, you could have seen several lines of boats parked in front of you.

The docks on which you are located now have been fitted out with forges which were in place of the car park you have just crossed (be patient, we will tell you more about them soon).

Open your eyes:

On your right, you can see two double flights of stairs. They were used to facilitate the transportation of coal from the boat up to the hall which was on the platform opposite (on one part of the current car park).



You can see several flood marks on your left. Problem: the stone placed horizontally at the bottom of the pylon was added after the marking of the different lines. Therefore, it is necessary to remove the height of it to realize what the real level reached by water was.



Finally, you cannot miss the huge anchor facing you. It was forged in Cosne in 1861 and pulled out of the port of Rochefort by the American army a century later, it weighs no less than 2,580 kg. It's impressive, isn't it?

Look even further: you can see the Paris-Orléans bridge- which you can discover by bicycle - and the hill of Sancerre!



Take the large stairs on your left and continue straight.

Psst ! You can also follow the dotted path on the map.

The Forges of the Chaussade



Today, there are few traces of the prestigious past of the Cosne forges: the beautiful gate that you will meet on your left is one of them.



Founded at the end of the XVIIth century and developed by Pierre Babaud of Chaussade, the large industrial centre formed by these forges owed its fame to the orders of the Royal Navy. The latter concerned in particular forging, welding and assembly of the constituent elements of anchors for warships

as well as the manufacturing of chains, armor plates, nails and cannonballs. By the way, the **old nail shop** - transformed into a dwelling house - is located across the street. All these productions were shipped on the Loire and transported to the arsenals of Rochefort and Brest.

By means of a letter written following her visit to the site, the well-known **Madame de Sévigné** managed to immerse ourselves in the atmosphere which reigned there in 1677... The beginning of its description appears on a commemorative plaque affixed near the gate but the rest of the story also deserves to be read:

"These are the Vulcain forges. We found eight or ten cyclops forging there, not Aeneas' weapons but ship anchors. You have never seen redoubled blows so right, nor of such admirable cadence. We were in the middle of four stoves.

"From time to time, these demons came around us, all with sweat, with pale faces, fierce eyes, raw mustaches, long black hair; that sight could frighten people less polite than us".

Well, we can still say that the marquise had probably a little tendency to exaggerate!



Go a little further to discover the next step in our journey.

Saint-Agnan church

8

Built between the XIth and XIIth centuries - on the site of a small place of worship dedicated to Saint Front - this Romanesque church depended on a priory of Benedictines. Over the centuries, it suffered a lot of damage: in 1726 a fire destroyed its Romanesque bell tower and, a few years later, the whole nave collapsed. The current bell tower-porch was built with reused stones and its frame is made of planks of wood recovered from fir trees!

Now look at its top: the weathercock represents a rooster whose tail plume is turned forward.

Strange feature, isn't it? The explanation chosen is that this representation copies the roosters which were at the top of the Loire ships. Yes, on boats the wind comes from

behind and the cock's tail swells forward. Finally, we can simply say that this rooster is disheveled!



Do not hesitate to move forward to contemplate the whole church.



Just before the roundabout, take the dead end which is on your left. Not far from the end of it, take the first very small alley on the right. Be careful not to miss it!



At the end of the lane:

Did you know?

When we speak of a half-timbered house, no reference is made to the famous bird of peace. In truth, the word dove here refers to the old French term used to speak of a wooden beam, derived from the Latin *columna*. You can admire many houses of this type while visiting the town of **Donzy**!

As for the beautiful building you have before you, know that it probably dates from the XVth century.



Once on Rue Saint-Agnan, go up a few steps to the right and look opposite.

The Post house



At the end of the XVIth century, the coaching inn was located at the entrance of the Faubourg Saint-Agnan, leading on the Paris to Lyon road. Named shortly after, "l'**Hostellerie du Lion d'Or**" - name to be understood as "in bed we sleep" -, the place ensured a peaceful rest for travellers and their horses. We can even tell you that the famous English philosopher John Locke stayed there in 1678!



Go a little further and cross the street on the pedestrian crossing. Once on the pavement opposite, go down to the left.

Did you know?

The postilions - responsible for transporting mail - crisscrossed the kingdom from post house to post house wearing heavy boots. As a rule, a distance of seven leagues separated two relay stations. So, the boots of the postilions were commonly named ... the **Seven-league Boots**.

It is clear that these were not magical: Charles Perrault did have a funny imagination!

The Route Nationale 7



You are currently on the old N7. The famous "holiday route" made the heyday of the cities and villages located on its itinerary, allowing several generations of Parisian holidaymakers to discover them before heading to the Mediterranean.

Well, taking a step back from the myth, we see that in reality two thirds of motorists opted for the Nationale 6 to Lyon... Faced with this regrettable situation, an association was created with the aim of ensuring the promotion of tourism on the Paris-Côte d'Azur route while avoiding driving through Lyon: it was a real success!

Downside, massive traffic jams quickly formed in the town centre of Cosne. In 1984 a diversion road came out of the ground before being transformed, at the turn of the year 2000, into a motorway ... Much less charming, isn't it?

Be that as it may, the Nationale 7 sung by **Charles Trénet** has passed into posterity.



After passing the large wooden terrace, continue straight ahead and stop after a few steps on the pavement opposite to admire:

The Eden cinema

11

It is impossible to remain indifferent to such a building! Before telling you about its very **singular facade**, let me tell you quickly about the story of the place.

In the XVth century, the site was occupied by the Hotel-Dieu of Cosne where the sick and the needy were welcome by nuns. There was an adjoining cemetery and a chapel dedicated to Saint Lazarus, patron saint of lepers (there is a street in Cosne still named after him). Several buildings were then successively constructed before the inauguration of the cinema in 1915!



It was in the 1920s that the Eden really established itself in the Cosnoise sociability: it then comprised a big cinema hall, a ballroom and a café. However, it was not until 1935 and the work of the local architect Roger Charton that it came to look the way it does today, which is so typical ! Yes, I'm talking about its famous Art Deco facade! The latter is rounded in shape and reminds us of a **film reel**. Also notice that the name of the cinema is inlaid with enamels, the **enamels of Briare**, a town not far from us and famous for its canal bridge!

A few words on the Art Deco now? The latter is associated with the "Roaring Twenties" and is characterized by spirals, basic geometric shapes or even by mosaics. Although very modern in the choice of its key patterns, it also appears to be traditional since it attempts to break with the Art Nouveau which wanted to be popular, accessible to all: The Art Deco is for its part quite openly addressed to the elites.

Go down the lane that runs along the river (Saint Firmin passage).

Did you notice it?

A flood mark is right next to you! Please note, 8 doesn't mean August but refers to the month of October (it is a remnant of the Julian calendar).



Now let's focus on the stream you're going by. At the beginning of the last century, the driving force of the Nohain river allowed 59 mills to operate on the 45 km of its course between its source and Cosne!

Small piece of advice from a friend: if the Nohain mills have managed to arouse your curiosity, go for the visit of Donzy after your tour of Cosne, to find out more.

The Benedictine convent mill and the Nohain river

12

In operation up to the mid XXth century, the mill said «religious» is the only convent building visible today.

The latter was founded in 1658 by the bishop of Auxerre and its religious activity ceased during the Revolution: the Benedictines were expelled and the convent sold as national property.

Did you know?

The famous writer and poet **Franc-Nohain** decided to pay tribute to this river by choosing its name for a pseudonym!



At the end of the lane, turn left and then immediately left (after the second Nohain arm). One meter before the roundabout, cross the quai Jules Moineau.

The town hall

13



The first town hall known in Cosne - in the 1750s - was the episcopal palace located on Place Pasteur. The current building only came out of the ground a little more than a century later ...

Indeed, the building in front of you was built under the **Second Empire** (without a republican motto, of course!). You can notice that its architecture seems however inspired by the town halls of the Old Regime and that it has several characteristics of the classic style like its front main body and its triangular pediment.

During the Second World War, the town hall was requisitioned by the occupier: some Cosnois people still remember the inscription "Standortkommandantur" which had been inscribed on its facade.



Continue straight on rue Saint-Jacques.

Saint-Jacques church

14

In 1885 works undertaken in the church and the happy awkwardness of a workman uncovered a crypt endowed with three walled exits ... Is it a vestige of the Romanesque church that stood there between the XIth and the XVth century, or does it date from the construction

from the 1400s you can still admire today? In all cases, one of the exits probably led to the chaplains' house not far from here. It is also said that the wife of a governor of Cosne guillotined during the Revolution, would have hidden there for a while to escape the fate reserved for her husband.



To return to the church as such, you will notice when looking up that the top of the gable ends in a square platform with openwork balustrade with access from the bell tower by the staircase. Again, two hypotheses: some see a watchtower while others think that there

was a small bell here intended to summon the canons. Finally, Cosne story is still full of small mysteries!



Continue straight for a few metres and take the first pedestrian street on your right (Rue Anatole France). Once on the boulevard de la République, turn left.

The Boulevard de la République

15

This boulevard was formerly only a large ditch outside the ramparts. Once backfilled - and the surrounding walls fallen - it was changed into a parade ground, where military parades and reviews were held until the XIXth century. Napoleon Bonaparte was even received there!

You may be wondering where this boulevard takes its current name from? It's simple: a monumental statue representing the Republic has long sat on the square. Draped in the antique style and brandishing a branch announcing peace, it was erected

as a true emblem of the city before being melted down by the German occupier in 1942.

Since 1793 the market has been held there and still attracts many locals and tourists!



At the roundabout, turn left again.



Did you know?

A few streets away, a member of the Titanic orchestra was born there!



At the end of this small street, turn right and cross the rue du Maréchal Leclerc on the pedestrian crossing. Once on the pavement opposite, turn right. Take the first street on your left (a one-way street) you arrive at Place Pasteur and go along, staying on the left.

The Episcopal Palace

16

Remember, the city of Cosne passed under the authority of **the bishop of Auxerre** at the Vth century but this episcopal takeover was imperfect since the castle remained, for its part, held in fief by the counts of Nevers.

In view of this situation, you understand well why multiple conflicts could arise between the spiritual lords of the city and these never-sois military leaders. You can also easily understand why the bishop needed to establish his domination by having this residence built in the XIth century. With the Notre-Dame de Galles chapel, a common oven and a prison, the bishop placed himself at the head of a real **estate in the heart of the city!**

Rebuilt from the XIIIth century, the palace was deserted by the prelates in the XVIIth century before being transformed successively into an auditorium for justice, a City Hall and a Protestant temple in the late XIXth century.

Until recently, the building housed all kinds of exhibitions and events, but it had to be closed for reasons of security.



At the end of the square, turn right until:

The ramparts tower

17

This tower has materialized, since the XIIIth century, the northwest corner of the city walls. At the northeast and southeast angles stood two other round towers while in the southwest the castle closed the grounds.

The remains of the Notre-Dame de Galles chapel

The first chapel was built in the IXth century at the request of Wala, bishop of Auxerre. Some Gothic tracery remains from its reconstruction from 1490 but difficult to see at first glance...



City plan, 1756 -
municipal archives of Cosne



Enclosure of the castle

You are here



Go back a bit and continue straight.



The chapel lost its religious vocation during the Revolution and became the stable of a hotel located not far from there. In 1897, the

widening of the Pasteur street led to the destruction of its west facade: it was replaced by a gable wall of no particular interest and its glass canopies were scattered in the surrounding churches.

Today, the building houses a Masonic lodge!



Continue straight ahead and take the small alley facing you (rue des Chapelains).

The house of the Chaplains

19

This is the former home of the canons of the Saint-Laurent de Cosne collegiate church (now the Saint-Jacques church).

Also, it is almost certain that an **underground gallery** connected the church and this main building! Established in 1212 by Guillaume de Seignelay - bishop of Auxerre who later became bishop of Paris -, the chapter initially counted a dozen of cannons.

In the Middle Ages, this house was surrounded by shops of artisans and merchants from

the city's Jewish community. Partially rebuilt in the Renaissance, it was largely destroyed in 1711 - the initial construction was far more extensive! - and was sold as national property during the Revolution.

One thing is certain: this picturesque building has perfectly managed to blend into the more modern architecture of the city!



Turn right (rue Duguet).

The curiosities of the Rue Duguet

20



Entrance of the ancient castle



Russian architecture



At the end of the street, turn right and join the Place Bad Ems and the Tourist Office. The tour is now finished!

Acknowledgments: Mrs. Dominique Massounie, the archives department of the town of Cosne (Mrs. Isabelle Servant), the Loire museum (Mr. Nicolas Brocq) and Mr. Robert Durand.



The Tourist Office Loire, Vignobles and Nohain

Just like you, we ♡
our planet.

Bring us back this booklet
and we will give it a
second life.

Reuse me

Tourist information point of Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire

📍 Palais de Loire,
place Bad Ems
BP 111
58200 Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire

☎ +33 (0)3 86 28 11 85

✉ contact@ot-cosnesurloire.fr

📘 Cosne Pouilly Donzy Tourisme



Did you enjoy
this guided tour ?

Two other are available
for Pouilly-sur-Loire
and Donzy !

