

Renter's Planning Guide

Chateau du Pin is located outside the village of Champtocé-sur-Loire, 18 km (30-minute drive) west of the city of Angers in the province of Anjou.

Angers is approximately 200 miles southwest of Paris (4+ hours by car and 95 minutes by TGV train) or about 60 km (hour drive) east of Nantes. Modern shopping centers, banks, hospitals, car rental agencies, and train station are in Angers. The nearest international commercial airports are located in Nantes and Paris.



How to get to Le Pin

By Car

From Paris or Charles de Gaulle airport (322 kilometers; about 200 miles or 4+ hours by car):

N104 (or sometimes A104) is the beltway that goes around Paris. Follow it around to the south until it meets with A10. Look for signs for Bordeaux/Nantes. Take the Autoroute A10 to the west. Take A11 when it divides and head toward Chartres, Le Mans, Angers, and Nantes. These are toll roads and US credit cards with a chip should work.

About 25 km (15 miles) west of Angers, take the exit marked "Chalonnnes" (Sortie 19). After the exit, pay the 1.80 €¹ toll at St. Germain des Prés. Drive to the opposite side of the roundabout, onto a small paved road, between the large industrial buildings, marked by directional signs for "Jardin du Chateau du Pin". Follow the signs to the chateau. As you enter the farm of Le Pin, follow signs for GITE (a somewhat serpentine path between the barns) to the parking area set aside for chateau guests.

If you wish to go the Angers via A11 (to visit the cathedral or castle, do some shopping, go to the train station etc,) exit at Sortie 18 and follow signs for "Centre Ville".

¹ Toll fees are subject to change. Amounts mentioned were correct in 2023

From Nantes (60 kilometers, about 40 miles):

Take A-11 towards Angers/Paris. There will be an 8.60€ toll in Ancenis. Take the exit marked "Chalonnes" (Sortie 19). After the exit, drive to the opposite side of the roundabout onto a small paved road, between the large industrial buildings, marked by directional signs for "Jardin du Chateau du Pin". Follow signs to the chateau. As you enter the farm of Le Pin, follow signs for GITE (a somewhat serpentine path between the barns) to the parking area set aside for chateau guests.

An alternative route between Angers and Nantes is D723. It is the main non-toll road that runs between Angers and Nantes, roughly paralleling the Loire. As you approach Champtocé-sur-Loire, you will start to see signs for "Jardin du Chateau du Pin" on the east side of the village, next to the ruins of "Barbe Bleu". Le Pin is approximately 3.5 km from Champtocé.

By Train

Train service on the French railway (SNCF) is available to Angers from throughout France. The TGV fast train takes about 90 minutes from the Montparnasse station in Paris to Angers and 2 ½ hours from Charles de Gaulle airport (CDG), Terminal 2F. There are hourly trains from Montparnasse and roughly four direct trains from CDG per day. TGV service requires reservations, with assigned seating, that can be procured at the station or on-line at www.tgv.com along with up-to-date timetables. The website has timetables and reservations from other cities as well. Note: the code for Angers is "Angers St Laud (49)".

There is local train service (*Ter* service) to Champtocé that runs between Angers and Nantes. There are usually 4-6 trains a day in both directions. For an on-line schedule visit: <https://www.ter.sncf.com/pays-de-la-loire>
There is no taxi service available in the village of Champtocé.

Car Rentals

All major rental car companies have offices and cars available at the train station (gare) in Angers. With the exception of airports, rental car offices are closed on Sundays in France. Taxis are always available at the station in Angers. Fares from the station to Le Pin start at 60€.

Mapping Systems

If using a navigation system or map application, enter: "Chateau du Pin Champtocé" or "Jardin du Chateau du Pin".

(The coordinates of Le Pin are: 47° 25' 40" N; 000° 50' 58" W.)

What to expect at Le Pin when you arrive:

- Renter's Manual with useful information about the chateau and surrounding area,
- Beds made and fresh towels laid out,
- A hairdryer in each bathroom,
- Small washer in nook halfway up the main staircase for personal laundry with drying racks in each bathroom,
- WiFi Internet access throughout much of the building: SSID is: Le Pin, Password is: lepin49123,
- Games and toys in the bench seats of the Main Hall and Grand Salon,
- If you have made arrangements beforehand, a 'Welcome Basket' of fresh provisions will be awaiting you in the kitchen.

What to do after you arrive

Guests at the chateau enjoy many activities in the immediate area and throughout the region. Here are a few ideas that we have enjoyed over the years:

- Visit the castle in Angers and view the famous tapestries
- Tour some of the grand chateaux of the Loire
- Explore the many local fresh-air markets
- Go on a birdwatching expedition on the trails of the property
- Go on a wine tasting tour
- Walk or bike through the magnificent Loire countryside
- Take a boat trip in the Loire
- Visit other gardens and parks in the region
- Take a side trip to Normandy and Brittany
- Spend a day at the seashore
- Dine at fine area restaurants
- Or relax and enjoy a glass of wine in the gardens

Information on all of these activities and more is available on our website: www.chateaudupinloire.com, in the chateau, and at the following websites:

- [Official Anjou tourism website](#) (in English),
- [Comité des Parcs et Jardins de France website](#), (in French & English)

Helpful Hints about Living in France for a week or two

For those of you with limited experience living in France outside of Paris, this next section might be helpful.

Credit Cards

Most stores and restaurants will accept US credit cards (Visa, MasterCard). Cards are used exclusively in automated equipment like the Autoroute tollbooths, 24/7 automated gas stations, SNCF automated ticket machines.

ATMs can be found at most bank branches, post offices and supermarkets.

Driving

Driving is a little different from in the US. Unless otherwise posted, the speed limit is 80 km/hr on the local roads and 130 km/hr on the Autoroutes. The speed limit in towns and villages is 50 km/hr, unless otherwise posted. Many hamlets have 70 km/hr posted speed limits.

The police use portable and permanent radar machines that take a picture of any offending speeder and send the ticket to the vehicle's registered owner. The rental car company will send you the bill. The permanent radar machines have warning signs, but are still a major revenue producer for the government. It is best to adhere to the posted speed limit, even if traffic around you seems to be going faster.

There are many more roundabouts on the local roads than in most of the US. Those in the roundabout have the right-of-way over those entering. Don't exit the roundabout until you know which direction you are going. It is acceptable to go around several times. If navigating from a printed map, (rather than GPS) it's best to know the name of the next town or towns as route numbers change and aren't always reliable.

The local rural roads village streets tend to be very narrow by US standards, not much more than a wide car width. Use care when traffic approaches. You often have to pull onto the grassy shoulder to pass oncoming traffic, especially if the vehicle is a large farm tractor!

Shopping

As in the US, supermarkets come in small 'family run' and large 'big box' versions. The smaller stores tend to be open from 7AM to noon and again from 2 PM to 7 PM. The larger stores (Super U's, Intermarche's, etc.) tend to be open from 9 AM to 7 PM continuously. Most (but not all) stores are closed on Sundays. Some smaller stores will be open Sunday morning but closed on Monday.

There are wonderful fresh air markets in different towns and villages throughout the week. Most purchases will be cash only.

Shopping carts and bags

French supermarkets rarely provide free shopping bags, but will sell you one. They expect you to bring your own bags and to do your own bagging. Shopping carts are available but you have to 'rent' them for a one Euro coin or token. Insert the coin, do your shopping, and when you return the cart to the cart corral you will get your coin back.

Optional Services

The following services can be arranged when making your reservation:

- *La Table du Moulin* restaurant can prepare, deliver and serve evening meals with advance notice. Please contact the Resident Manager beforehand if you would like this service. This is available for chateau guests only.
- Depending upon the time of year, fresh organic produce may be available for purchase from the Potager (vegetable garden). Contact the Resident Manager for more information.

Other Useful Information

Call 112 from any mobile phone for:

- **Fire** (Pompiers)
- **Police** (Gendarmerie)
- **Ambulance** (SAMU)

- Champtocé Pharmacy: 02 41 39 91 11
- Hospital d'Angers: 02 41 35 36 37

Other Numbers

- Resident Manager: 06 37 21 60 57 (American, bilingual)
- Reservation Manager: (617) 212-5359 (USA, -9 hours)
- Marie de Brebisson: 06 19 77 22 40 (French, bilingual)
- Garden Manager: 06 11 68 61 81 (French only)

Address : Château du Pin
1600 route du Château du Pin
49123 Champtocé-sur-Loire