

Mâcon, two thousand years of history

The urban and architectural richness of Mâcon bears witness to two thousand years of history. You will discover its secrets, bit by bit while criss-crossing the town center. To guide you, its heritage tour “tracé de la plume” (feather tour) in tribute to Alphonse de Lamartine, offers a two-hour loop between architecture, literature, gastronomy and history. Let yourself be guided by the bronze feathers on the floor. At every step of the tour, a totem informs you about the monuments you'll meet on your way.

1 Saint-Pierre church



In the 19th century, the town of Mâcon thinks of building a new church. This is how, according to the plans of the architect's Berthier, student of Viollet le Duc, the Saint-Pierre church was founded in the 1860's in the town hall neighbourhood. The neo-romanesque style building has a three-storey façade.

Three raised semicircular portals (typical of the monument and found in all the arcades, bays and openings), with tympanums decorated with stone bas-relief, provide access to the interior. Dominated by two bell towers covered with a stone spire, the whole building is outstanding. Inside don't miss 3 works listed historical monuments. Altar bas-relief in white marble from the chapel Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, sculpted by Perrache, an artist from Lyon from the end of the 18th century. Funerary marble of the grave of the “Beauderon de Senecé” family from the Renaissance period. Choir organ, work of the renowned organ builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1866). Another masterpiece not to miss in one of the chapels: a large wall fresco of the artist Mai Thu which honors the First World War Dead.

2 Montrevel Mansion

The town council of Mâcon settled in the present city hall in 1792. It was, at the time, the most magnificent private residence in town. The central building was built in 1750 and the Earl of Montrevel, owner in 1767, had two wings added. In 1880, François Martin, then mayor, added two other wings on each side of Carnot Street. Despite the various works done over the centuries, the town hall has kept many original features: antique woodwork in the wedding

hall, medallions with the portraits of the great philosophers of Antiquity in the old library, the arms of some towns of the department in the hall of honour, and the magnificent staircase with wrought iron handrails in the entrance hall.

3 Soufflot building (Ancient Charity House)

Saint-Vincent de Paul, parish priest of Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne, is at the origin of the Charity Foundation, one of the very first in France. The deplorable condition of the premises leads to the demolition of the north wing in 1750. Designed by Soufflot, who drew up the plans, the new building is built from 1752 to 1762 by the architect Minoya. Worth noting, the curious “barrel” located on the right of the front door, one of the few remaining in France. This rotating oak barrel allowed, in past times, to drop off the abandoned children.

8 Saint-Laurent Bridge



Even before Mâcon existed, the Saône could be crossed at a ford. The Roman legions built a wooden bridge during the conquest of Gaul, and it was not until the 11th century that a stone bridge was built with only six shallow arches and fortified from as early as 1221. Important work was also carried out until 1550. The extension of the bridge seems to date back to this period although the exact number of its arches in the 16th century is unknown. During the Wars of Religion, it went through tragic times with Guillaume de Saint-Point, the governor of Mâcon, throwing the Huguenots prisoners in the river. The Saint-Laurent bridge was one of the few bridges in the region not to be destroyed during the Second World War. Since then its appearance has not changed and it has now twelve arches.

9 Wooden House



Built between 1490 and 1510, the Wooden House is without doubt the oldest house in Mâcon, and certainly the most famous. Its façade, entirely built in wood, is decorated with a multitude of saucy statuettes. These are characters with masks of men and monkeys making faces, some standing, some sitting, winged, naked or only dressed with a scarf or a hat. Some of them, with their arms stretched, hold alternatively the head and the tail of a real or fantastic animal. The Wooden House was compared by the Goncourt brothers (French writers of the 19th century) with an huge container sideboard that the inhabitants of Mâcon should only look at on the slide because of the colorful sculptures on its walls.

12 Old Saint-Vincent Cathedral



In the 6th century there was in Mâcon a Cathedral church that was rebuilt several times between the 7th and the 17th century due to the relative ground instability on which it is built (alluvium and Saône River sands). Temporarily transformed into a temple of Reason after the French Revolution of 1789, the building is of serious concern to the point of being sold as a national property and largely demolished in 1799. The narthex, the bay connecting the two towers are the only preserved parts; they are the oldest parts of the church and the unique remains that can be seen nowadays. The base of the square-shaped towers seems to date back to the 11th century, while the octagonal upper part may be dated to the 13th century. The narthex pressed in front of the towers and with no connection with them dates from the mid-12th century. Don't miss the nice Ro-

manesque tympanum of the front door decorated with sculptures divided into five zones showing scenes of the Last Judgment.

15 Museum of the Ursulines

Located in the former Ursuline convent (for nuns) erected in the 17th century on the “Baille plateau” during the second half of the 17th century, the museum hosts diversify collections forming a retrospective of Art history from Antiquity to nowadays. The ground floor presents the archaeological collection and temporary exhibitions. New areas, dedicated to Lamartine's literary and political work (famous French poet born in Mâcon / 1790-1869) and to the regional landscape painters of the 19th century, opened in 2019. The Fine Arts Section contains masterpieces of the Western art history from the 16th century up to now.



Open Tuesday to Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Sunday from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Close January 1st, April 11th, May 1st, May 30th, July 14th, November 1st, December 25th and the Tuesday following Easter (22 April) and Pentecost (10 June). Open from 2p.m. to 6 p.m. on other public holidays (May 8th, August 15th, November 11th).Phone: 03 85 39 90 38

18 Saint-Vincent Cathedral



Saint Vincent church was built at Napoleon's I request. Guy de Gisors, the architect behind the Palais Bourbon (French National Assembly) and the Madeleine church in Paris, drew up the original plans. First of all called Saint-Napoleon church , it became Saint-Louis church in tribute to Louis XVIII. After Napoleon's return from Elba island, it was named Saint-Vincent church. This is where Alphonse de Lamartine's funeral held on the 4th of March 1869. Since 1994, the cathedral is listed as Historical Monument.

20 General Hospital's Ancient Pharmacy

Built according to the plans of the architect Soufflot by his disciple Melchior Munet from 1761, the General Hospital is characterised by its elliptical base dome of remarkable size and height. All the rooms of the building converge towards this space under which the chapel was located. Don't miss on the ground floor the Ancient Pharmacy, whose wood paneling date from Louis XV period and present a beautiful collection of medicine jars.

Opening on request for guided tours for groups (minimum 10 participants).
Tel.: +33 (0)385 39 90 38

22 The Senecé Residence

This magnificent private mansion of the 18th century is the seat of the Academy of Sciences, Arts and Literature in Mâcon. It prides itself on having counted the famous Lamartine (French poet born in Mâcon / 1790-1869) among its members for 58 years. He served as Chairman of the Academy four times.

27 Archaeological site of Saint Clement

At first, Saint-Clement was a small religious building built at the beginning of the 6th century to house the graves of the first bishops of the diocese of Mâcon. Thanks to archaeological excavations carried out from 1985 to 1992, the visitor can distinguish the plan and form of this first construction, with its rounded apse, its short nave, the surrounding gallery and its annexes. The sarcophagi were buried under the sanctuary tiling: one of them was carved with crosses.

Opening on request for groups of min. 10 persons

Phone: 03 85 39 90 38



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Guided tours

From mid-April to early November, you can find the programm of the guided tours on www.macon-tourisme.com

Only in

