

# URBAN TOUR

## 1 - Museum of Art and History

In the museum's vast, well-lit halls are housed all manner of treasures: sculptures, paintings, historical items awaiting discovery. The two galleries are fascinating: one tells the story of the Wars of the Vendée while the other displays the evolution of art over four centuries, from the 16th century to the 20th, from figurative to abstract. One of the great highlights is the GRAV labyrinth (GRAV is French for Visual Arts Research Group), unique in France.

## 2 - Espace St Louis

Rehabilitation work on this former hospital started in 1999, eventually transforming it into the Conservatory of Music, Dance and Dramatic Art, which opened in 2002. Meanwhile, the hospital's Chapel was converted to an auditorium. Later, in 2012, the Theatre rose up alongside, giving rise to the configuration of the new Espace Saint-Louis, a centre for training and outreach activities related to the performing arts.

## 3 - The Castle ramparts

The first fortress was erected on a feudal mound after the regions of Mauges and Cholet were conquered by Foulques Nerra, count of Anjou. Up until the 17th century, the castle kept getting destroyed and then rebuilt, before finally being burnt down to the ground in 1793 as Cholet was taken by the Vendée army.

## 4 - Jardin du Mail

This garden dates back to the pre-revolution era. In those days, it formed an integral part of the former castle and was situated on the site of the current promenade. It was after the courthouse (Palais de Justice) was built in 1865 that Jardin du Mail underwent its transformation, with work going on from 1870 to 1879. The Menhir arrived in 1885, transported from the Garde (on the Maulévrier road) by a team of sixteen oxen.

## 5 - Palais de Justice (Courthouse)

Built after the Beaupréau sub-prefecture was transferred to Cholet in 1857. Cholet was therefore assigned new administrative functions.

## 6 - Hôtel de Ville et d'Agglomération (Town Hall)

The locals call this building the "typewriter". Despite the nickname, it remains a very fine example of avant-garde 1970s architecture.

## 7 - Rue Jean Paul II - formerly Rue du Commerce

Originally built by the Marquis de Broon, this street was extended by Count de Rougé all the way to the main road (Rue Nationale) around the end of the 18th century. Several houses still retain traces of that era, featuring ornate balconies or granite arches over their doors and windows. Note the neighbourhood's characteristic half-timbered walls: these allowed passage for carts to pass by, heavily laden with cloths from the factories!

## 8 - Rue des Vieux Greniers ("old granaries")

(41 rue des Vieux Greniers)

At the corner of the "old granaries" street stands the tower commonly known as the Salt Granary, built in the 16th century.

*As you make your way through the cobbled streets, blind alleys and boulevards, Cholet's rich and varied heritage reveals itself in all its originality. Strolling past traditional weavers' houses and lordly manors, or past Haussmannian buildings in the modern neighbourhoods, you'll get a sense of the town's vitality, a pulse that, for centuries, has marked its steady beat.*



## 9 - Weathervane tree

With its 25 copper weathervanes, this tree pays homage to Roland Garros, a famous aviator who won the Anjou circuit in 1912. It was here in Cholet that he obtained his pilot's license. Each weathervane tells a chapter of his life.

## 10 - Rue Nantaise

This narrow, winding alley is one of the oldest streets in Cholet. Believe it or not, before being pedestrianised, this street constituted the shortest route into the town centre for travellers arriving on the Nantes road.

## 11 - The Church of Notre-Dame

The neo-Gothic style of this church is inspired by the great cathedrals of northern France. With its imposing size and two steeples rising to a height of 65m, this monument is certainly a breathtaking sight.

## 12 - Arcades Rougé (shopping centre)

These relatively modern shopping streets in the centre of town remain in harmony with the historical atmosphere of the neighbourhood (with its half-timbered walls, etc.).

## Place Rougé (Rougé square)

In 1750, the marquise of Cholet became the property of the Count of Rougé, who made it his personal mission to embellish the city and make it prosper. He designed this square himself. Today, Place Rougé has become a "conversation area" with its urban living room, lamp-posts and library wall.

## 13 - The Grand café (Place Travot)

Cholet's first town hall. With its monumental staircase, balcony of honour and neoclassical pediment, it's easy to see that this building once served an administrative function. No longer big enough to house the town's municipal services, it is now a brewery.

## 14 - Former municipal theatre (Place Travot)

With its neoclassical facade, this is another of Cholet's emblematic monuments. Built between 1884 and 1886, it was ravaged by fire in 1949, and then rebuilt to be almost identical. It now houses a hotel and a Leisure and Culture retail area..

## 15 - Hôtel Guilloux (180, rue Nationale)

This is a fine example of a private mansion, with distinctive turrets shaped like pepper shakers. Before the Revolution, Cholet intellectuals would meet in its salons to talk about politics and discuss the works of Voltaire and Rousseau. The private gardens inside the property are well worth a visit.

## Flowerly towns and villages

National competition, organized to promote the development of green spaces in cities. Golden flowers in 2019 for Cholet.



# OTHER PLACES TO SEE... AND THINGS TO DO...

## Weavers' houses (streets of Livet, la Dube, la Blanchisseurs, passage des Grands Jardins ...)

These humble traditional houses once held weaving looms in their cellars. People lived on the ground floor, which typically had one or two rooms.

## Textile and Fashion Museum

Housed in the former cloth bleaching factory, Cholet's Textile and Fashion Museum offers a glimpse into the region's industrial past. A walk through the gardens takes you into the heart of the factory, where the weavers' workday comes to life before your eyes. Find out the all the secrets behind the manufacture of the famous Cholet hanky...

The hankies of Cholet are renowned for their colour and incomparable quality. You'll find all different kinds on sale at the Tourist Office.

## Saint-Pierre church

What stands out about this church is the statue of Saint Peter that looks down upon it: at around 850 kg, it's a real heavyweight!

Take a moment to admire the restoration work done on the stone carvings and stained-glass windows!

## The Sacré-Coeur church and its carillon (The Sacred Heart church and its carillon)

The Roman and Byzantine style of the architecture is a sight to behold.

In July-August, you can take a guided tour and go up the bell-tower. Awaiting you at the top is one of the biggest carillons in France and a panoramic view of the city.

## Glisseo swimming and ice-skating complex

This is no ordinary leisure centre: located right in the centre of town, Glisseo features swimming pools, an ice-skating rink, and a gym. Everything you need for a bit of fun and relaxation.

## Shopping on Marques Avenue (Avenue of Brands)

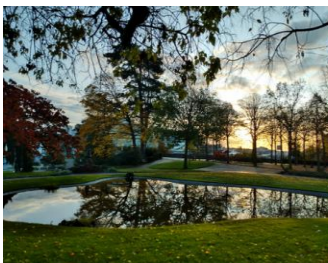
Want to go bargain-hunting and get your hands on some sweet deals?

We'll give you the best tips on what to buy.

Just 5 minutes from Cholet, you'll enter a shopping paradise where prices are unbelievably low. The Marques Avenue Centre of La Séguinière is definitely a pleasant shop-stop!

## Golf course

Set in a magnificent forest just 5 minutes from the town centre, this 18-hole course is varied and pleasantly challenging. With its relaxed and welcoming atmosphere, the "Le Chêne Landry" bar-restaurant makes a great 19th hole.



Jardin du Mail



Place Travot



Jardin du Mail



Do not throw on the public highway © Serge COUSSEAU / Rosalie LESUR / Sandy AUDOUIN-GOUGEON



DISCOVER THE

URBAN TOUR...

