

Bibracte launches its flagship hiking itinerary: the 'Tour du Morvan des Sommets'



PRESS RELEASE - 26 June 2023

images by Antoine Maillier, courtesy of Bibracte

In the heart of the Morvan Regional Nature Park, the Grand Site de France Bibracte - Morvan des Sommets is launching a new hiking route along the rural paths of the area's twelve villages. This 140 km long itinerary explores the protected landscapes of the Grand Site de France and its rich rural heritage. This new flagship itinerary has been developed within the frame of INCULTUM's participatory project involving local inhabitants and stakeholders.



image courtesy of Bibracte

140 km around the landscape of the Grand Site de France Bibracte ? Morvan des Sommets

The 140 km new hiking route offers a 7 days itinerary accessible to all good hikers, around the three main peaks of Morvan: Haut-Folin (901 m), Préneley (855 m) and Beuvray (821 m). This new route allows a gentle and in-depth exploration of the landscapes of the Grand Site de France territory and its rich rural cultural heritage.

It includes the visit of the Mont Beuvray, which was the site of the Gallic town of Bibracte in the 1st century BC and now houses a museum and archaeological site, Mont Préneley where the Yonne river rises in a peat marsh rich in biodiversity, and twelve typical rural villages. The itinerary also offers a number of variants for hikers to explore curiosities and points of interest along the way

just for a day of a week-end.

The spirit of the Grand Site de France Bibracte ? Morvan des Sommets

The Grand Site de France includes two national protected areas: Bibracte - Mont Beuvray and Mont Préneley - Sources de l'Yonne. The destination is a world of forests covering granite massifs, meadows, hedged farmland and running water, offering a mosaic of typical, unspoilt rural landscapes. "The itinerary is an invitation to discover a rich and living heritage that expresses the memory of a rural territory and the ways in which it has been inhabited and exploited by the people who have lived there for centuries", emphasises Alain Millot, in charge of outdoor activities at the Morvan Regional Nature Park.



image courtesy of Bibracte

The rural paths, a landscape in common and a heritage to be revived

More than 1,100 km of rural paths criss-cross the 42,000 hectares of the Grand Site de France. [Since 2021, the inhabitants of the territory have been involved in participatory inventories and cultural projects](#) to revitalise this heritage. Hundreds of kilometres of surveying have made it possible to identify the interesting features of the local landscape, describing them on a [dedicated application](#) or compiling them in artistic notebooks. This approach is enabling to gain a better understanding of this heritage, improve its management and prepare for its enhancement.

A sustainable, participatory cultural tourism project led in the frame of INCULTUM

Since 2021, Bibracte and its partners have been participating in INCULTUM European research-action programme dedicated to the development of cultural tourism in rural areas. [Working with representatives of the region's various economic sectors](#) - tourism, agriculture, services, culture, etc. - the aim is to develop and promote an innovative tourism offer around the new hiking route, combining outdoor leisure activities, heritage and gastronomic discoveries and cultural activities. As Sophie Mobillion, Bibracte's Grand Site de France project manager, points out, "our sectorial working groups bringing together the area's socio-professional players are important levers for the development of this initiative, which will bring the local economy together".

In 2022, [the prototype of the Tour du Morvan des Sommets route has been co-developped and tested with local inhabitants and stakeholders](#) involved in the local rural paths heritage community. The flagship itinerary has been launched during the General assembly of the twelve villages of the territory at the beginning of June and has been unveiled to media and partners on June 26th. It will be presented to the general public during the Fantastic Picnic event at Bibracte in September 2023.

In the next months Bibracte and its partners will work on the labelling of the itinerary with the French national hiking federation.

Practical information:

- 137 km, going through 12 villages, 7 days.
- Difficulty: medium
- The itinerary can be downloaded from the website <https://rando.parcumorvan.org/>, which promotes more than 3,000 km of hiking trails in the Morvan Regional Nature Park. At present, the route is not signposted; it mainly passes along already maintained and signposted footpaths.]
- Hikers can choose to follow the route in its entirety or in sections, on foot, by bike and, in some cases, on horseback.
- The varied local tourist offer includes local accommodation and (small) catering offers. Make sure you book ahead if you're doing the whole 7 days itinerary. Further information is available from local tourist offices.
- The Grand Site de France is accessible by public transport to the gateway towns of Autun, Etang-sur-Aroux, Luzy and Château-Chinon. The nearest high-speed train station is Le Creusot - Montceau - Montchanin. Choose soft mobility!
- By the A6 motorway, Bibracte is 3 hours 40 minutes from Paris and 2 hours 20 minutes from Lyon.



image courtesy of Bibracte

TOUR DU MORVAN DES SOMMETS HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit listed and protected natural sites with outstanding landscapes: Mont Beuvray, which was the birthplace of Bibracte, a major Gallic town in the 1st century BC and now houses a museum showcasing the excavations carried out as part of the European Archaeological Centre; Mont Préneley, where the Yonne river rises in a peat marsh with a rich biodiversity; the Cascade de la Dragne; the Gorges de la Canche, etc.
- Discover a living and inspiring rich rural heritage that takes many forms: ancient sites, churches, castles, mills, wash-houses, dry stone walls, timber rafting infrastructures, ancient railway lines and also Second World War maquis or art gallery, etc.
- Meet with people engaged in their territory life: along the way, you're likely to come across local people, elected representatives, farmers, tourism professionals and artists who will be keen to share with you their attachment to their landscape in common.

About the Grand Site de France Bibracte - Morvan des Sommets

In 2008, Bibracte - Morvan des Sommets was awarded the "Grand Site de France" label, which has been renewed in 2014 and 2022. This selective and demanding label is delivered by the French Ministry of Ecological transition to the manager of a remarkable site,

protected by its classification under the law of 2 May 1930. It recognises the site's great heritage value, the quality of its upkeep and the interest of the preservation, management and enhancement project. Today, the "Grand Site de France" initiative involving BIBRACTE EPCC, the Morvan Regional Nature Park and the Department of Nièvre involves the twelve rural villages of the Morvan Regional Nature Park that surround the three main peaks of the Morvan (Haut-Folin (901 m), Préneley (855 m), Beuvray (821 m)): Arleuf, Fâchin, Glux-en-Glenne, Larochemillay, Millay, Poil, Villapourçon (Nièvre), La Comelle, La Grande-Verrière, Roussillon-en-Morvan, Saint-Léger-sous-Beuvray and Saint-Prix (Saône-et-Loire). It also involves many partners: the CHEMINS association, the Maison du Patrimoine oral de Bourgogne, etc. The project has received special support from the Burgundy-Franche-Comté Region, the Regional Directorate for the Environment, Planning and Housing (DREAL) and the Regional Directorate for Cultural Affairs (DRAC), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) under the LEADER Morvan programme and the European Partnership for Innovation in Agriculture and Forestry (PEI AGRI), the Horizon 2020 programme for research and innovation as part of BIBRACTE's participation in the INCULTUM European research-action project.