



PUY-DE-DÔME

Volcanic landscapes
and wide open spaces in Auvergne - France



PUY-de-DÔME
L'Auvergne des Volcans

Puy-de-Dôme, breathe differently, every day

In the heart of France, Puy-de-Dôme invites you to slow down, lift your eyes and breathe more deeply.

Welcome to a landscape shaped by **volcanic history**. Here, wide-open skies meet lush valleys and iconic **UNESCO World Heritage sites**. It's the perfect place to explore the heart of France at your own pace.

Whether you're here for the unique **geology**, the local **culture**, or just some peace and quiet, everything feels natural.

Come and reconnect with nature—no matter the season.



Your volcanic adventure starts now



How to get to the Puy-de-Dôme



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1 Grand site de France
puy de Dôme - 1 465 m

2 UNESCO World Heritage Sites

(Chaîne des Puys -
Limagne fault & Church
"Notre-Dame-du-Port" in
Clermont-Ferrand)

80 volcanoes

**14 remarkable
villages**



5 thermal spas

7 Blue Flag beaches



**392
short hiking trails**



10 nordic areas
3 winter sports resorts

2 Regional nature parks



4 National nature reserves & 17 sensitive natural areas

Inside the volcanoes

Volcanoes are the soul of Puy-de-Dôme.



CHAINE DES PUY - LIMAGNE FAULT



Discover the first natural heritage of continental France designated as the World Heritage site.

With their diverse and striking silhouettes, the eighty dormant volcanoes of the Auvergne region and the Limagne Fault together serve as an extraordinary testament to the Earth's geological past.

Designated a **UNESCO World Heritage** Site in July 2018, this exceptional area is in the heart of the Massif Central. This outstanding landscape offers an opportunity for families to explore together, participate into outdoor activities and re-connect with nature. *"No other place on earth illustrates as clearly the geological phenomenon resulting from the split of a continent."*

THE PUY DE DÔME - GRAND SITE DE FRANCE - AND THE PANORAMIC RACK RAILWAY



The puy de Dôme: a Legend in the Heart of France

Accessible year-round, the puy de Dôme invites you to reach its summit either on foot or aboard the Panoramique des Dômes, a sustainable rack railway. As a designated "Grand Site de France," it boasts a stunning 360° panorama over the UNESCO-listed volcanoes and the Limagne Fault. This historic giant is a crossroads of heritage, home to the ancient Temple of Mercury, the scientific breakthroughs of Blaise Pascal, and a storied history of legendary sporting feats.

IN PUY-DE-DÔME, VOLCANOES ARE NOT JUST ADMIRERD THEY ARE EXPLORED.



In the Puy-de-Dôme, volcanoes are far more than a backdrop: they are an invitation to explore the very soul of the Earth.



The **Lemptégy volcano** is a unique opportunity to discover a real volcano on foot or by train. Observe volcanic chimneys, learn how to read different lava flows and distinguish their structure and their origin.

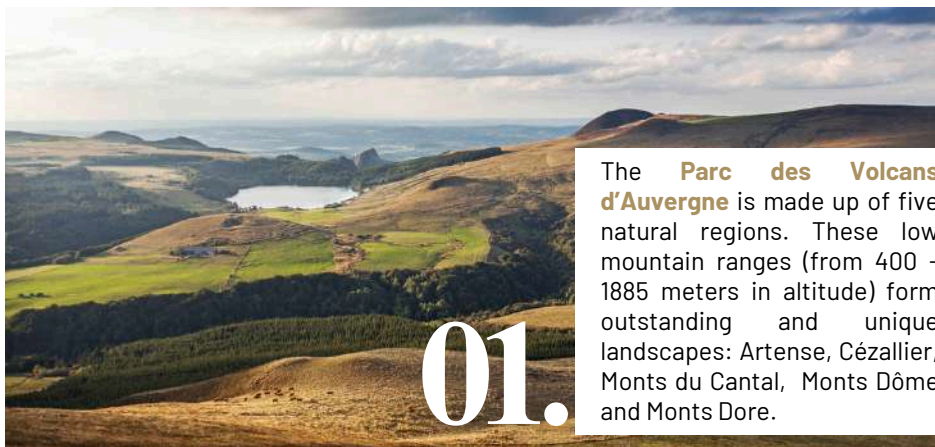
Dive into the mysteries of the Earth at **Vulcania**, Europe's only theme park dedicated to volcanoes and natural phenomena. The theme park combines thrills and discoveries for a fun day enjoyed by all!



Discover the dark, circular beauty of **lake Pavin**, a rare volcanic lake filled with legends, or walk through **lava galleries carved** from volcanic stone in Volvic and discover the secret history of Volvic stone and its famous mineral water.

Endless landscapes

In the county of Puy-de-Dôme you can find two national parks which are synonymous of conservation and endless horizons.



01.

The **Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne** is made up of five natural regions. These low mountain ranges (from 400 - 1885 meters in altitude) form outstanding and unique landscapes: Artense, Cézallier, Monts du Cantal, Monts Dôme and Monts Dore.



02.

To the east of the Puy-de-Dôme, is the **Parc naturel du Livradois-Forez** where thick forests shelter the homes and workshops of craftsmen. The Hautes-Chaumes is a high plateau, home of beautiful valleys, heather moorland and mountain pastures. There, you will also find the vestiges of lava flows and granite peaks, evidence of ancient volcanic activity.

Different faces of Puy-de-Dôme



Les Monts Dore in the Massif du Sancy

Summits, lakes and forests make up Auvergne's second largest volcanic area, which is older than the Chaîne des Puys. Dominated by puy de Sancy, which stands at 1,885m, the massif is home to the fabulous Chaudefour and Chastreix-Sancy nature reserves.



The Queuille meander in the Combrailles

The river Sioule forms a vast and spectacular loop, often referred to as the "Amazon of the Auvergne". From the viewpoint at an altitude of 250 m, you can enjoy breathtaking views of 26,000 hectares of river, forests and lush vegetation.



The Livradois-Forez : wild forests and high-altitude plateaus

Lesser known but equally captivating, this range rises to 1,631m, blending rolling crests with deep woodland. Scattered across the uplands, the iconic jasseries reveal a rich agricultural heritage set against a backdrop of serene and picturesque landscapes.

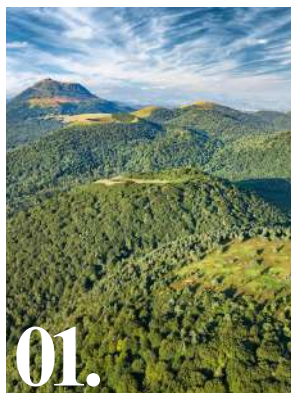


Wild plateaus of the Cézallier

Often called the "French Highlands", these silent territories are defined by their immense scale and unique ecology. From its distinctive peat bogs to its wealth of protected plant and animal life, this landscape provides a stunning backdrop for anyone in search of raw beauty and ecological richness.

Walking is travelling

Explore the Puy-de-Dôme with these three multi-day trekking loops.



01.

The Dômes loop:
Walking in the heart of
world heritage
49 or 62 km | 2 to 3 days

One of the most iconic hikes in the Puy-de-Dôme, this loop circles the UNESCO-listed Chaîne des Puy. Over two or three days, it leads through a unique volcanic landscape of rounded volcanoes, forests, pastures and ancient lava flows, with stunning views over the Limagne plain and the Sancy massif from the summit of puy de Dôme (1,465 m).



02.

**GTVA: 3 Summits for a
large-scale adventure**
210 km | 11 days

Designed for experienced hikers, the Grande Traversée des Volcans d'Auvergne (GTVA) is a 210-km north-south road through the Regional Natural Park, linking three iconic peaks: puy de Dôme, puy de Sancy and puy Mary. Along the way, enjoy volcanic ridges, high-altitude lakes, lava-stone villages and the vast pastures of Cézallier.



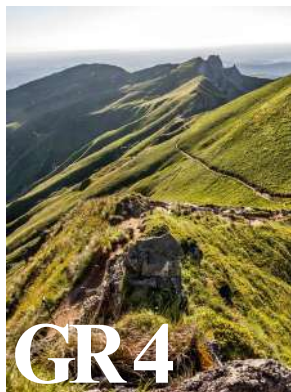
03.

**The red cow loop, great for
contemplation**
135 or 181 km | 8 to 11 days

The Tour des Vaches Rouges (Red Cow Loop) is a nice escape across the high plateaus of the Cézallier, between the Sancy massif and the Cantal mountains. Spanning 135–181 km, this road invites hikers to slow down and enjoy vast meadows, quiet rivers, mountain farms, traditional villages and herds of Salers red cows.

Iconic long-distance trails (GR®)

Hiking the Puy-de-Dôme 



| From the heart of the volcanoes to the south

The GR 4 is a legendary crossing that links the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. In the Puy-de-Dôme, it takes you through the Chaîne des Puys, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Distance: Approximately 132 km (7 days).

Highlights: Standing atop of the puy de Dôme (1,465m) for a 360° view of 80 dormant volcanoes, and crossing the granite plateaus of the Artense.

GR 30

| The Tour of the Lakes and Volcanoes

Widely considered as one of the most beautiful circular hikes in France, the GR 30 focuses on the blue and green gems of the Auvergne.

Distance: 190 km (approx. 9-10 days).

Highlights: Discovering the perfectly round crater lake of Pavin, the glacial valley of Chaudefour, and the volcanic peaks of the Sancy Massif.



GR 441

| The Tour of the Chaîne des Puys

Perfect for those who want a comprehensive volcanic experience, this loop circles the youngest volcanoes in mainland France.

Distance: Approximately 110 km (6 days).

Highlights: A geological odyssey through "scoria" cones and lush forests.

A one-day hike

Three different areas to explore the Puy-de-Dôme

Guéry Plateau – The Kingdom of Silence (Orcival)

4 km | 4h30 | Moderate

From the heights above Lac du Guéry, this hike crosses a vast plateau of forests, lakes and high pastures. With sweeping views of the Roches Tuilière and Sanadoire, the ever-changing light creates a striking landscape that has long inspired artists and photographers.



Fontaine Salée – The Mountain Challenge (Picherande)

16.5 km | 5h15 | Difficult

A demanding hike through a glacial valley of peat bogs, forests and high meadows, climbing towards the slopes of Sancy. Effort is rewarded with wild landscapes, solitude and a stunning 360° panorama over the Auvergne mountains.



The Forez Mountain Pedlar Trail (Valcivières)

9.5 km | 3 h | Moderate

This circular trail pays tribute to the historic mountain pedlars of the Puy-de-Dôme. The route winds through forests and high meadows dotted with jasseries (traditional summer farms). It is a peaceful walk through living rural heritage, characterized by wild flowers and the sound of cowbells.

Exploring by bike

Volcanoes and Waterways

Cycling in the Puy-de-Dôme

Via Allier (The River Route) | 120 km

Following the Allier river from north to south, this accessible route (250–650m altitude) mixes greenways and shared paths. It passes through Clermont-Ferrand and Issoire, linking the Limagne plains to hilltop villages like Usson and Nonette.



GTMC (The Volcano Legend)

200 km

This mountain bike challenge crosses the Chaîne des Puy's UNESCO site. The route features crater lakes, Volvic stone villages, and steppe landscapes. While demanding, it is perfectly suited for e-mountain bikers looking to explore wide-open volcanic spaces.



Top sites to visit

Enjoy our discovery sites with family or friends and create unforgettable memories.



Heritage & History

Château de Murol: Travel back to the Middle Ages in this lively fortress. With knight tournaments and costumed tours, it offers a breathtaking 360° view of the Sancy Massif.

L'Aventure Michelin: Discover the epic story of the world-famous tire manufacturer. This interactive museum traces the history of mobility, from the first rubber tires to the iconic Michelin Man.



Volcanic Experiences

Vulcania: this exploration park uses dynamic attractions and scientific displays to reveal the mysteries of the Earth and its volcanoes.

Lemptégy Volcano: Walk inside a real open-air volcano! Explore its fascinating inner geology on foot or by train to learn about its history and industrial past.

Volvic Stone Cave (Grotte de la Pierre): Step into a former quarry. This immersive tour explains how this iconic gray volcanic stone was formed and used.

Nature & Adventure

Panoramique des Dômes: Board the electric rack railway train for a 15-minute ascent to the summit of the Puy de Dôme. It is the best way to enjoy a panoramic view of the 80 dormant volcanoes.

Parc Animalier d'Auvergne: Encounter rare species in a stunning mountain setting. This wildlife park is dedicated to the conservation of endangered animals, from snow leopards to giraffes.

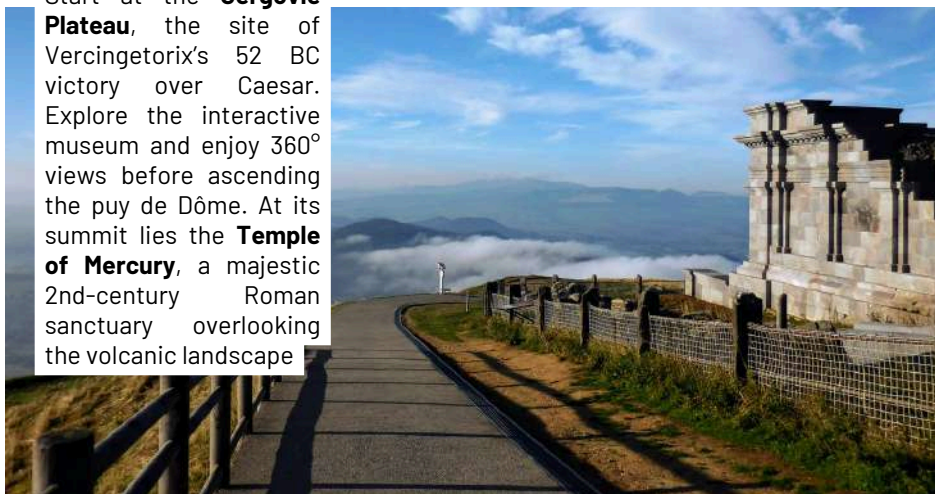
Wellness & Relaxation

Royatonic: Relax in volcanic thermal waters at the foot of the hills. This **spa center** features indoor and outdoor pools, bubble beds, and hammams, all fed by local mineral-rich springs.

The Arverni: In the footsteps of a legend

A journey through time: from gallic pride to roman splendor

Start at the **Gergovie Plateau**, the site of Vercingetorix's 52 BC victory over Caesar. Explore the interactive museum and enjoy 360° views before ascending the puy de Dôme. At its summit lies the **Temple of Mercury**, a majestic 2nd-century Roman sanctuary overlooking the volcanic landscape



Explore **Corent**, the "Pompeii of Auvergne," where an open-air trail reveals a bustling Gallic capital overlooking the Allier valley.

Then, the **Lezoux Ceramics Museum** reveals the region's remarkable industrial heritage as the largest pottery center in Roman Europe.

The museum showcases the famous red ceramics and ancient kilns that once supplied the entire Roman Empire.

Art and history through towns and villages

Explore the contrasting heritage of the Puy-de-Dôme areas recognised for their art and history.



From north to south, the Puy-de-Dôme reveals a striking architectural palette that mirrors its geological history. The journey begins with the black and grey volcanic stones of **Riom** and **Clermont-Ferrand**, eventually giving way to the golden tones of **Issoire** and **Billom's** half-timbered houses. This evolution of color, preserved by the Pays d'Art et d'Histoire, showcases a unique heritage where every stone and street tells the story of the region's rich past.



Remarkable villages

Experience the charm of "Les Plus Beaux Villages de France." Explore **Usson**, where Queen Margot was once exiled among volcanic chimneys, or **Montpeyroux**, a village of golden stone overlooking the Allier valley. Each cobblestone street, secret garden, and artisan workshop offers a glimpse into a slower rhythm of life, where heritage is preserved with passion and timeless, rustic beauty.

Churches and Castles

Join us on a journey through the architectural wonders of the Puy-de-Dôme.



Roman and Gothic art through churches

The 11th and 12th centuries were the height of **Romanesque art** in Auvergne.

The churches, Basilicas, Abbeys and Cloisters are well preserved and have a sublime presence in the centre of market towns and villages.

A UNESCO World Heritage site on the Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle route, the **Basilica of Notre-Dame-du-Port**, is one of Auvergne's five major Romanesque masterpieces. Known for its elegance, this style defines the local landscape's of many chapels.

It stands in striking contrast to **Clermont-Ferrand's Gothic Cathedral**, famously built from black Volvic stone.

Medieval fortress and country estate

Along the **Historic Route of the Auvergne Castels**, the Puy-de-Dôme is home to a wealth of architectural heritage. You will encounter formidable medieval fortresses, such as **Busséol, Loubeyrat, Pontgibaud, Montmorin, Murol, and Tournœil**, strategically positioned to overlook the horizon.

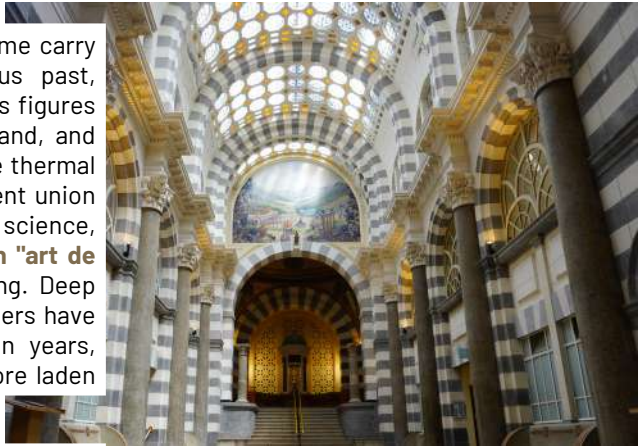
The region also features elegant manors and estates dating from the **Renaissance** through to the 18th and 19th centuries, including **Effiat, Chanonat, Randan, Sermentizon, and Parentignat**, the latter often referred to as the "Little Versailles of Auvergne."



Spa towns: the restorative art of living

Volcanic waters: a natural source of rebirth

The spa towns of Puy-de-Dôme carry the echoes of a prestigious past, having hosted such illustrious figures as Proust, Balzac, George Sand, and even Indian Maharajas. These thermal retreats, born from the ancient union of volcanic fire and human science, perfectly embody the **French "art de vivre"** dedicated to well-being. Deep beneath the surface, the waters have been bubbling for 35 million years, emerging from the earth's core laden with life-giving minerals.



Each destination reveals its own unique character and promise of rebirth:

- **Royat-Chamalières & Châtel-Guyon:** Where grand Belle Époque architecture meets modern thermal excellence, offering a journey back to the "Golden Age" of hydrotherapy.
- **La Bourboule & Le Mont-Dore:** Located in the mountains, these resorts combine the purity of alpine air with majestic volcanic backdrops, specialising in both healing and breathtaking scenery.
- **Châteauneuf-les-Bains:** A more intimate haven, providing a serene escape into nature along the banks of the river.



Today, these towns seamlessly blend their historic heritage with contemporary **spa pleasures**. Beyond the treatments, they offer a **timeless experience**—a **restorative breath** of fresh air where the clock slows down, inviting you to simply stay and savor the moment.

Cheeses and local crafts

Auvergne: A historic land of cheese and heritage with five protected designations (AOP). Our cheeses reflect a rich heritage born from unspoilt mountain pastures.



You can discover these traditions in **Saint-Nectaire**, where the majestic Romanesque church overlooks the village and its creamy cheese, or in the charming town of **Ambert**, famous for its unique circular town hall and the celebrated **Fourme d'Ambert**.

These exceptional products are the pride of our gastronomy, celebrated at events like the "**Fourmofolies**" and refined by our local chefs.

This prestigious cheese board is completed by the bold character of **Bleu d'Auvergne**, born from volcanic soils, **Cantal**, the oldest of our cheeses with its evolving flavours, and **Salers**, a seasonal treasure produced exclusively on farms.

The region also boasts unique specialities like the garlic-infused Gaperon, originally from the Limagne plain, and L'Yssoirien, a local gem from the Issoire area.



Craftsmanship

Fire, stone, and water: ancient skills born from volcanic landscapes.

From volcanic stone to polished steel, the Puy-de-Dôme is a land of makers. The region's dramatic history is reflected in its local crafts, where artisans keep ancient traditions alive through modern artistry.

Discover **Thiers**, the world's knife-making capital for over 600 years. In workshops lining the Durolle river, master bladesmiths carry on a legendary trade, crafting exceptional cutlery that balances a rich heritage with cutting-edge design.



Paper with a soul in Ambert: Journey to the Ambert Valley to discover the Moulin Richard de Bas, where the art of handmade paper is still a living tradition. Here, petals are pressed into pulp and rinsed in mountain springs to create sheets so fine they have been favored by the world's great thinkers and artists for generations.

Born of fire: Volvic Stone & Enamel: The Puy-de-Dôme's volcanic heritage finds its most tactile expression in Volvic stone. This resilient, charcoal-gray rock is meticulously carved into statues that grace the region's cathedrals. For a splash of brilliance, the rare craft of enamelled lava fuses glass with volcanic stone at extreme temperatures, resulting in vivid works of art that are as durable as the earth itself.

Snow and activities



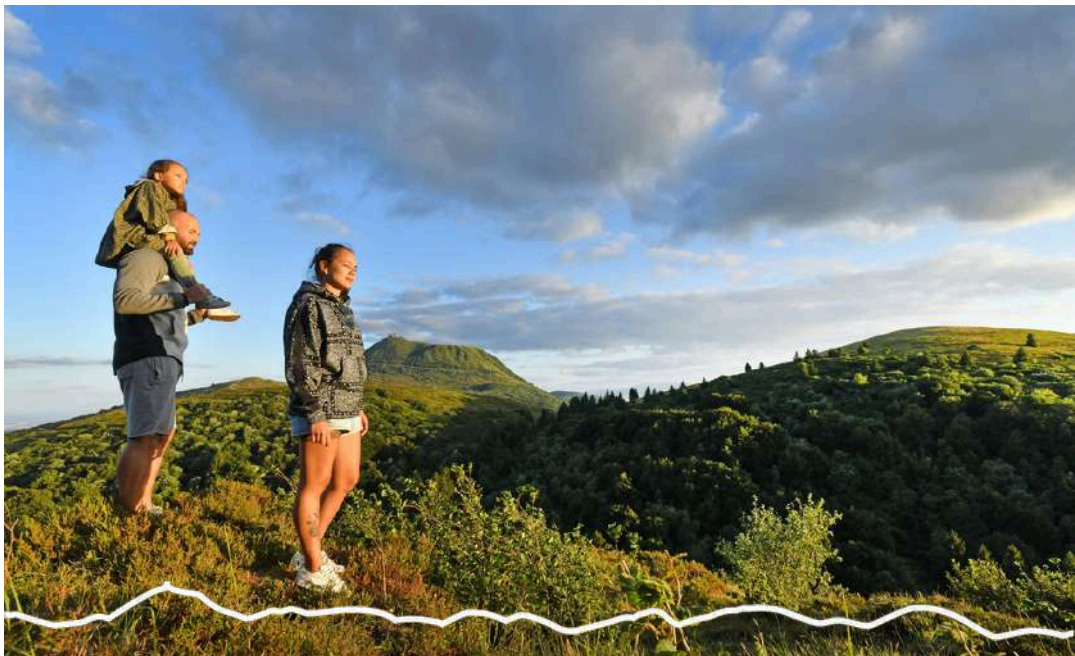
If you love Alpine Sports, the volcanoes have a huge range of activities to offer: alpine skiing, cross country skiing, dog sledding, tobogganing and lots of other fun things to do.

In the Puy-de-Dôme, the massif du Sancy (highest point: 1885 metres) is home to three ski resorts: Super-Besse, le Mont-Dore and Chastreix-Sancy. Together they offer 77 slopes and over 100km of enjoyment for all levels. www.sancy.com



Discover the Nordic sport areas of the Sancy the Cezallier and the Monts du Forez, the land of snowshoeing and nordic skiing. Prabouré station is a family friendly resort in the highlands of the Forez. It offers all the essentials of winter sports (alpine, Nordic skiing, and tobogganing) in a peaceful, unspoilt setting far from the crowds. www.auvergne-livradois-forez.com





Prepare your stay

[puydedome-tourisme.com](https://puydedome-tourisme.com/prepare-my-stay/)
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Plan your volcanic adventure!

The Puy-de-Dôme is ready to welcome you for an experience that is truly "unexpected by nature". Start planning your trip today to discover our trails, flavors, and history.




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