

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

# BESANÇON CITADEL

• PRESS PACK •

## CITADELLE BESANÇON

PATRIMOINE MONDIAL DE L'UNESCO



VAUBAN SITE



FRANCHE-  
COMTÉ  
MUSEUM



MUSEUM



MUSEUM OF  
FRENCH RESISTANCE  
AND DEPORTATION

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Besançon partie de



Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture



Fortifications de Vauban  
inscrites sur la Liste du  
patrimoine mondial en 2008





## YOUR VISIT

- V VAUBAN CENTRE**  
Visit : 20-45 min
- 1 EXCEPTIONNAL PANORAMAS ON BESANÇON**
- 2 ROUND PATHS**
- 3 HISTORICAL MULTIMEDIA SHOW**  
Visit : 15 min
- 4 FRANCHE-COMTÉ MUSEUM**  
Visit : 45 min-1h30
- 5 MUSEUM OF FRENCH RESISTANCE AND DEPORTATION**  
Visit : 1h15-2h30
- 6 NATURALIUM**  
Visit : 30-45 min
- 7 AQUARIUM**  
Visit : 20-45 min
- 8 INSECTARIUM**  
Visit : 20-45 min
- 9 ZOO AND «LIL FARM»**  
Visit : 1-2h
- 10 NOCTARIUM**  
Visit : 20-45 min

Exploring the round paths  
45 min walk

Rampart access

Panoramas



Locations accessible according to disability

Meeting points





## Besançon Citadel, the Vauban masterpiece

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# BESANÇON<sub>5</sub> CITADEL

FIRST CULTURAL AND TOURISTIC SITE OF THE  
CENTRAL-EASTERN PART OF FRANCE







**V**auban, who drew up the plans for the building in 1668, would have a profound impact on the entire town. Right at its centre, no fewer than 18 other monuments by Vauban are located around the fortifications and add to the outstanding heritage of the Franche-Comté capital. This exceptional collection of military architecture has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since July 2008. With almost 270,000 visitors a year and a wide variety of activities (heritage, history, museums, biodiversity, animals, cultural shows, etc.), Besançon Citadel is the first cultural and touristic site of the central-eastern part of France.

## A little history

### Vauban's fortifications

Louis XIV endowed Besançon with an important strategic role in the defence of the new frontier recently won from the Spanish Netherlands. From 1674 and for the next 30 years, Vauban transformed the town into a vast military project, leaving his mark over much of the town.

Having successfully managed an earlier siege of the town, Vauban was familiar with all of its weaknesses, in particular the height of the surrounding hills and the limited amount of land bordering the river.

To make it unassailable, he erected his first bastion towers along the banks of the River Doubs, from where the lower part of the town could be defended. The defensive walls he designed closely followed the relief of the land, merging into the landscape and on many occasions dissuaded the enemy from attacking.

Of the constructions still standing today, the Besançon Citadel and fortified town of Neuf-Brisach are among the best examples of his guiding principles.

The Besançon Citadel enjoys a highly strategic position. A steeply rising hill effectively walls off a wide meander of the River Doubs. It was here that Vauban decided to construct what would become one of the most outstanding strongholds in Europe.

He drew up the plans for the Citadel in 1668, but in the same year, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle returned Franche-Comté to the Spanish.

It was only in 1674 that the French army, with Vauban at its head, definitively conquered the region. He modified and completed the building of the Citadel started by the Spanish and over the next 30 years fortified the entire town.



## From military citadel to tourist attraction

Besançon is located in a particularly exceptional setting consisting of a loop formed by a meander of the River Doubs which is walled off by a high hill. This natural stronghold gave the town an exceptional strategic position whose defensive importance had been well-known since the time of Julius Caesar.

The Citadel, a formidable stronghold located on the top of a hill, saw off all invaders of the 19th and 20th centuries, and was subsequently rarely used as an offensive base by military forces, instead playing a more logistical role.

It was variously used as a barracks, state prison, camp for war prisoners and military depot.

The darkest period of its history was in the 1940s when the monument was used as a place of execution for 100 resistance fighters arrested in the surrounding area, and then as a place of internment for thousands of German soldiers captured during the Liberation of France.

Bought in 1959 by Besançon Town Council, today it is the most important tourist attraction in Franche-Comté, offering a wide range of activities spread over almost 12 hectares to around 270,000 visitors a year.



### A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE MARQUIS DE VAUBAN

Sébastien Le Prestre, the future Marquis de Vauban, was born into the Burgundian minor nobility on 15 May 1633 in Saint-Léger-de-Foucherets in the département of Yonne. In 1651, he joined the regiment of the Prince of Condé under the name Vauban. Cardinal Mazarin convinced him to enter the service of the King in 1653. Vauban would be a devoted servant of the King for the next 54 years.

He became a military engineer and in this capacity prepared drawings for fortifications and defended or laid siege to strongholds. He took part in military operations and was wounded four times during the siege of Montmédy. From this point onwards, he worked tirelessly to strengthen the kingdom's fortifications. At the age of 34, he travelled all over France, north to south from Dunkirk to the Pyrenean border, and east to west from Strasbourg to Brest, supervising all the works to fortify the kingdom, including those of the Besançon Citadel. After a lifetime successfully working to defend the territory of France, he fought against illness, a battle he lost on 30 March 1707 in Paris.







## Unesco values as a central theme

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, encourages the identification, protection and preservation of sites of outstanding cultural and natural importance to the common heritage of humanity all around the world.

Besançon, the capital of Franche-Comté, has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since July 2008. The «outstanding universal value» of the site fortified by Vauban was recognised by the World Heritage Committee. In addition to Besançon, a group of other French sites shaped by the genius of Louis XIV's military architect have been awarded this prestigious international recognition: Besançon, Bazoches, Briançon, Mont-Dauphin, Villefranche-de-Conflent, Mont-Louis, Blaye, Cussac-Fort-Médoc, Saint-Martin-de-Ré, Le Palais, Camaret-sur-Mer, Saint-Vaast-La-Hougue, Arras, Longwy and Neuf-Brisach. This series of sites is the 32nd French site to be registered on the World Heritage List, under the name «The Fortifications of Vauban».

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**Today, all of the activities offered within the Citadel reflect UNESCO values: the conservation and promotion of outstanding heritage, peace building activities, the preservation of biodiversity, education for sustainable development and intercultural dialogue.**

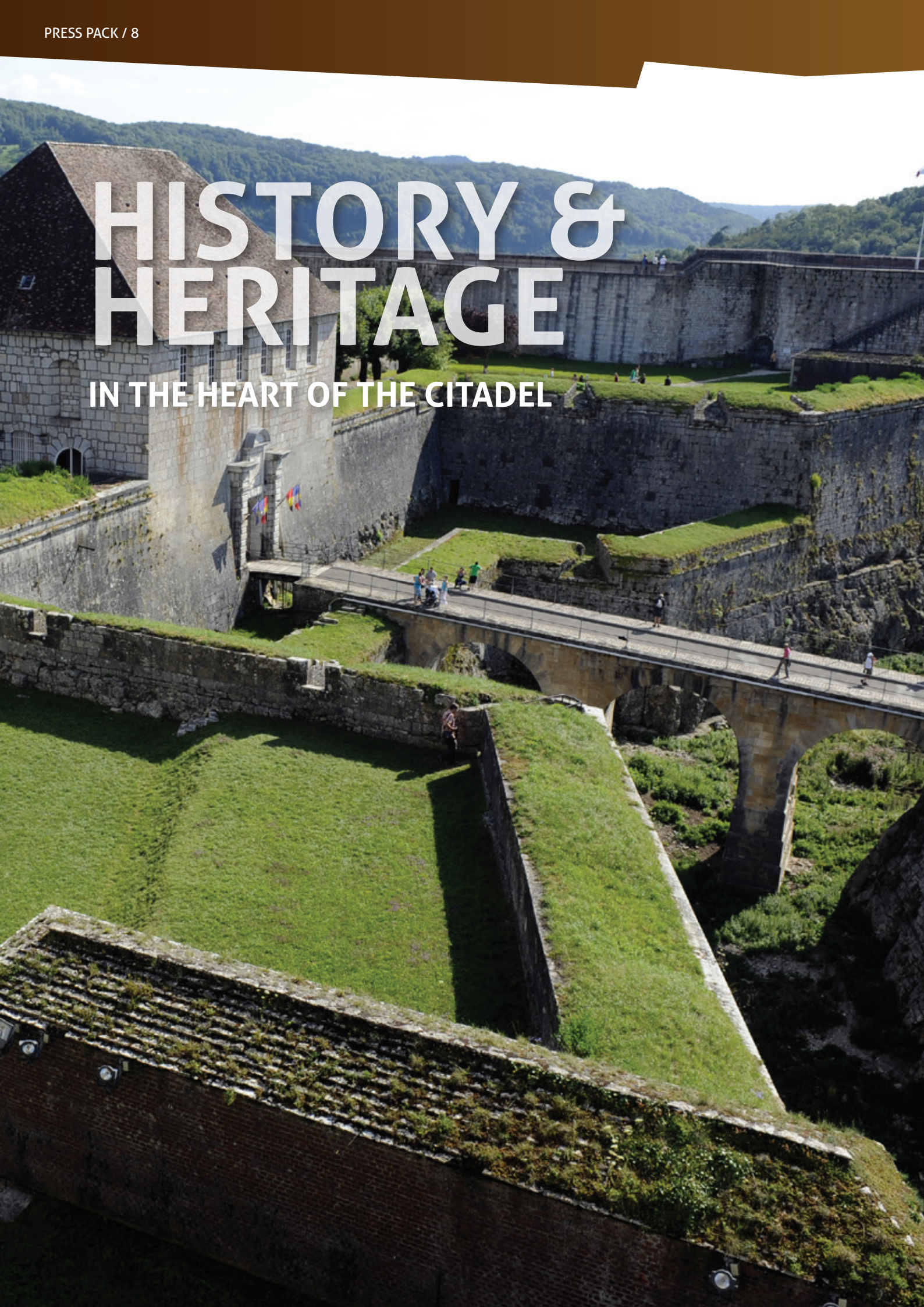
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# HISTORY & HERITAGE

IN THE HEART OF THE CITADEL





**L**isted as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Vauban's masterpiece, the Besançon Citadel, is considered to be one of the finest citadels in France. More than 100 meters above the old town of the Franche-Comté capital encircled by a loop of the River Doubs, the Citadel offers visitors spectacular views from its ramparts. A cultural and tourism show-piece, the Citadel lives up to its promise: an astonishingly varied and exciting example of living heritage perfect for fascinating days out.

## Discovering the history and architecture of the site

### Two spaces dedicated to the history of the place

#### › THE MULTIMEDIA SHOW

Through this show, the Citadel aims to share and ease the understanding of its history. The visitor who enters the Saint-Etienne Chapel is immersed in an unexpected space that envelops him, welcomes him and will transport him through time and space. Each part of the chapel (walls, vault, choir...) becomes a vast screening area where diverse image processing treatment techniques, like archive images animations and filming, are mixed up.

During 15 minutes, the visitor travels through the different episodes of the Citadel history, starting from Julius Caesar, going through Louis XIV's reign, Vauban's moment of glory, and ending up with the contemporary history of the place. With an average each year of 270,000 visitors, including a big family audience, the Citadel of Besançon imagined a show intended for all audiences.

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#### › VAUBAN CENTRE

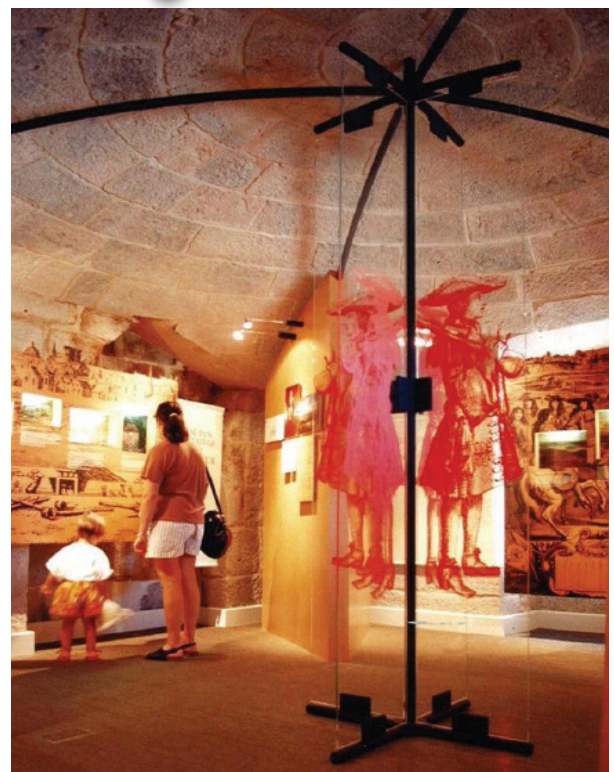
Four exhibition rooms explore the life and times of Vauban and other important figures and places including Louis XIV, Versailles, Molière, La Fontaine and Lully. Exhibits retrace the two French conquests of Franche-Comté, the construction of the Citadel and how young aristocratic soldiers in service to the King (the Cadets du Roi) lived here from 1682 to 1694. This journey through time continues with an animated film on the construction and history of the Citadel, «Au coeur d'une Citadelle» (In the Heart of a Citadel).

Broadcast repeatedly throughout the day, this 10-minute film uses computer-generated images to explain the construction and role of the different buildings in the Citadel.

An interactive model recreate the architectural elements of the Citadel wich is interesting for both visually-impaired visitors and children.

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## Visiting forms

### > ACTOR-LED TOUR "IN VAUBAN'S FOOTSTEPS"\*

A «real life» Vauban shares his knowledge of the history and architecture of the site with visitors.

> Duration: 1 hour.

### > "2000 YEARS OF HISTORY" GUIDED TOUR\*

With a heritage cultural mediator, visitors learn about the features of an outstanding defensive site, its history and the role of the Citadel from its construction to the present day.

> Duration: 1 hour.







### > "SECRET CITADEL" TOUR\*

Including the underground tunnel called «Communication 110».

With a heritage cultural mediator, visitors can explore the first gallery on the site to the public and learn about its role within the Citadel.

Measuring 127 metres in length, in Vauban's time it was the most efficient way of moving and with-drawing soldiers in the event of an attack.

> *Duration: 1 hour.*

### > SPECIAL CHILDREN DISCOVERY BOOK

7 to 12-year-old children discover the Citadel thanks to an entertaining and enriching booklet. Over the chapters, the stronghold of yesterday and the cultural and touristic site of today reveal themselves... How was the Citadel built? How lived the soldiers? What can we see inside the Citadel today? A fun tour at the end of which Vauban's masterpiece is no longer a secret for the young adventurers!

> *Duration: between 1 hour and 1 hour 30 minutes.*



\*Guided tours offered by reservation for groups, occasional tours for individuals. In addition to a Citadel ticket.

## THE APP MACITADELLE

Equipped with a smartphone or a tablet, discover the Citadel on your own and explore the site at your own pace and according to your wishes. Videos, sounds and voice-over, 2D and 3D animations, guided tour, games, inquiries or express parcours, you are deciding your visit.

How to access the app? Connect to the Wifi network «Visite Citadelle», launch web navigator and follow the instructions !

Free app. Tablets available for rental at the welcome desk.







## Two museums about history and heritage



### Museum of French Resistance and Deportation

Founded in 1971 by Besançon Town Council with the assistance of Franche-Comté resistance and deportee organisations and the persistent hard work of Denise Lorach (1916-2001), a survivor of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, today the museum is housed in the southern section of the Cadets building. The choice of the Citadel for its location was an obvious one: 100 resistance fighters were executed by firing squads here during the Occupation. Awarded Musée de France status by the French government, this municipal museum welcomes more than 55,000 visitors each year.

Twenty rooms on two levels display photographs, documents and original objects on themes related to the Second World War: Nazism and its origins, the war and the Vichy regime, Resistance activities in Franche-Comté, France and Europe, and the Liberation.

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#### / Key point /

The emphasis placed on the concentration camps and the «Final Solution» gives the museum a particularly focused theme and the presentation of the exhibits has a deep emotional resonance.

Guided tours offered by reservation for groups, occasional tours for individuals.

### Toward a new museum...

*The building's restoration and a new permanent exhibition are in preparation for 2022.*

*The Resistance and Deportation Museum is closed until the fall of 2022 for complete metamorphosis.*





## Franche-Comté Museum

The Musée comtois was inaugurated in 1960 in the prestigious setting of the Front Royal inside the Citadel. The museum tells the story of the people and landscapes that shaped Franche-Comté in the 19th and 20th centuries. It also includes cultural exhibits from around the world and contemporary societies. Its founder, Abbot Jean Garneret (1907-2002), made an important contribution to the development of regional ethnology.

For more than 50 years, assisted by local organisations keen to preserve the region's heritage, the museum has collected and analysed hundreds of objects reflecting the skills and rural and urban traditions of Franche-Comté and Besançon. Today, the museum explores cultures and societies beyond the regional remit which guided its policies until the end of the 20th century.

Several rooms over three levels explore four main cultural themes: entertainment, food, beliefs and work.

> Level 1 : **Metal working.**

> Level 2 : **The people and their environment, traditional habitat, way of life and diet in Franche-Comté, firebacks collection.**

> Level 3 : **Regional puppet theatre, popular beliefs and temporary exhibitions.**

The Franche-Comté Museum encourages visitors to understand the identity of a region and learn about its culture. It helps children make connections between traditions (both current and past) and their own daily lives. This allows effective appropriation of knowledge as they find elements they can relate to in each of the Museum's themes.

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Guided tours offered by reservation for groups, occasional tours for individuals.





# NATURAL HERITAGE







## The Museum: preserving the species and protecting biodiversity

**B**ehind its walls, the Citadel houses the Natural History Museum of Besançon, a unique and unexpected attraction in this unusual setting. Established in 1943, and located in the Citadel since 1959 at the initiative of the Mayor, Jean Minjoz, the Museum has been significantly improved over the years. It adopts an unconventional approach with mounted collections juxtaposed with a highly diverse range of living animals.

Nowhere else in France it's possible to see such a wide variety of animals in the same place, illustrating the Earth's biodiversity: insects and amphibians [Insectarium], fish, crustaceans and tortoises [Aquarium], birds and mammals from around the world [Zoo], domestic animals [Farm] and nocturnal rodents [Noctarium].

The purpose of the different collections is not only to entertain visitors to the Citadel; they also fulfil three important roles inherent to this type of scientific establishment, namely conservation, research and education.

As a modern zoo, the Natural History Museum works to conserve endangered species, a strategy underlined by its membership of the French Association of Zoos [AFdPZ], the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria [EAZA] since 1998 and the Union of Conservators of Aquariums since 2016.

*Guided tours offered by  
reservation for groups,  
occasional tours for individuals.*





# Two dedicated museographic spaces

## A committed Zoological Garden

Around 630 animals (80 species of mammals and birds) currently occupy a quarter of the Citadel. This zoological and scientific area is consistent with the activities of the Natural History Museum, an establishment already considered to be one of the most unusual in France because of the highly varied living collections presented.

With a strong focus on education, the zoo emphasises its work on the conservation of threatened animal species. The species presented are selected for their rarity but also for their interesting social behaviour and ability to adapt to the local climate.

Over the last few years, the Natural History Museum has also specialised in the reproduction of species threatened with extinction. 70% of the species in the zoo are bred in the context of European or international breeding programmes [EEP (European Endangered species Programme), ESB (European StudBook Programme), SSP (Species Survival Plan), etc.].

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## The Zoological Garden is divided into 4 main areas

### > THE PRIMATES SECTION

The primates area contains more than 20 species. It consists of a monkey house for endangered tamarins, marmosets and lemurs, and large planted enclosures containing medium-sized species presented on the basis of their geographical distribution: mantled guereza (Africa), gibbons (Asia), howler monkeys, squirrel monkeys and white-faced saki (South America). A troop of Guinea baboons is housed in a vast enclosure, allowing visitors to observe their social behaviour.

### > THE CARNIVORES SECTION

Siberian tigers and Asian lions roam in wide open spaces separated by an area inhabited by a group of yellow mongoose. Wide viewing windows allow visitors to get close to the animals in complete safety.

### > THE BIRDS SECTION

The bird area includes a huge aviary housing different species of aquatic birds (flamingo, ibis, lapwing, etc.) as well as 10 other aviaries containing exotic birds (hornbill, turaco, macaw, Rothschild's mynah, cockatoo, etc.). Visitors can enjoy their fabulous colours within a rich profusion of plants to be simply enjoyed or learnt from.

A total of 33 species and almost 160 birds are on display to the public.

### > THE 'LIL' FARM

Visitors can approach small domestic animals (pygmy goats, guinea pigs, rabbits, turkeys, chickens, etc.). An ideal setting for introducing young visitors to the animal world and basic biological concepts.





## BIRTHS TO THE CITADEL

Each year, between 100 and 150 animals are born at the Citadel. This is proof that animals feel good in their environment.

This makes all Citadel teams very proud.



## A Noctarium unique in Europe

In the former powder magazine of the Front de Secours, thanks to a reversal of the day/night cycle, visitors can observe the nocturnal habits of dozens of small mammals in cleverly recreated landscapes. After a few minutes adapting to the darkness and patiently waiting for the inhabitants of the Noctarium to appear, visitors can discover the small mammals that live in fields, orchards and forests (voles, field mice, garden dormice, dormice, European hamsters) and in our towns and cities (house mice, sewer rats and black rats). The only display of its kind in Europe, the Noctarium is an unusual addition to the living creatures presented in the Citadel.

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## And not forgetting...

Visitors can also discover a variety of herbivores from around the world (Visayan warty pigs, Visayan spotted deer, vicuna, mouflon wild sheep, etc.) as well as macropods, in particular a group of red kangaroo and rock wallabies.

The latter are very rarely seen in captivity. Besançon Natural History Museum was the first European zoo to house this threatened species in 2009.





## An Insectarium unique in France

This is one of the largest and most interesting insect collections in Europe, both for the general public and scientists. It contains red ants, termites, locusts, stick insects, rose chafers, crickets, scorpions, cockroaches, trapdoor spiders, bees, etc. Tens of thousands of insects and other arthropods, belonging to more than a hundred different species, are exhibited to visitors in the former arsenal of the Citadel.

A large viewing area overlooks the breeding laboratory. In the collection's hive, honey bees (displayed in summer only) make their honey alongside a recreated kitchen displaying the insects that populate our houses (to a greater or lesser degree!). An active anthill is shown under glass for visitors to observe.

The museum is laid out as a series of «books» measuring more than 2 metres high, whose open pages house a number of vivariums. A paradise for these insects of all shapes and sizes, some with dazzling colours, providing visitors with an extraordinarily alive and diverse lesson on the natural sciences.

Insect predators, including various species of frog, are displayed in tropical vivariums in the Insectarium. The Museum is involved in captive breeding programmes to ensure the survival of several endangered species. This is particularly important as in their natural habitat, frogs and amphibians in general are at risk of being wiped out by a fatal disease that as yet has no cure (chytrid fungus).

Species on display: Amazon milk frogs, poison frogs (Marañón, green and black, blue, yellow-banded), golden mantellas, mossy frogs, etc.





## To regional Aquarium redesigned

Located in the «Petit arsenal» since 1975, the Aquarium is an outstanding example of contemporary architecture sympathetically incorporated into a historic monument.

The Aquarium will be rethought for 2019. This space will be equipped with two large aquariums and smaller aquariums, immersive videos, and also educational modules.

The complexity and diversity of the river will be honored in this new place. The link between the land, the river and the sea, will be put forward and will raise awareness of the preservation of our rivers.

A hands-on pool in the middle of an outside courtyard allows visitors to touch magnificent carp and colourful goldfish.

The neighbouring fish farm houses endangered aquatic species where visitors can learn about the Zingel asper and observe the native and farmed crayfish which inhabit the waters of Franche-Comté.

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## THE NATURALIUM

In harmony with 3 important tasks of the Museum that are knowledge diffusion, preservation and awareness measures about scientific and natural heritage protection, this permanent exhibition covering 170 m<sup>2</sup> and divided in 6 rooms help to understand what biodiversity is, how it changes and how we protect it.

Different units placed in the spaces of the Museum dedicated to animals [zoological garden, aquarium, insectarium, noctarium] supplement the whole. The Museum make use of the richness of its collections to help you discover botanical, zoological and geological specimens that have, for the most part, never been exhibited. The Naturalium also claim to be an interactive place and a civic forum where everyone is encouraged to take a critical look at the exposure of biodiversity.

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# PRACTICAL INFORMATION





## OPENING TIMES

The Citadel is open every day of the week apart from 25 December and three weeks in January (after holidays).

**> In summer:**

July and August: 9 am to 7 pm.

**> In spring and autumn:**

From April to June and September to October inclusive, every day from 9 am to 6 pm.

**> In winter:**

From November, every day from 10 am to 5 pm.

Our site is partially handicapped accessible.  
As opening times may vary slightly, we recommend contacting us before your visit.  
Recommended duration for your visit: at least a half day.

## RESTAURATION

There are several restaurants on site:

**> LA BRASSERIE LE GRAND COUVERT:**

Traditional regional cuisine using locally sourced products from small-scale producers in Franche-Comté.

**> LA TAVERNE:**

sandwiches, salads and prepared meals.

The Citadel overlooks the old town of Besançon where a wide variety of restaurants can be accessed on foot or by car. Find out more on the Besançon Tourist Office website:

[www.besancon-tourisme.com](http://www.besancon-tourisme.com)

## ACCESS / PARKING

### / On foot /

Follow the signed routes from Rivotte or Tarragnoz (town center). Enjoy a pleasant walk to the site and take full advantage of the views over the old town and the meander of the Doubs encircling Besançon.

### / By car and coach throughout the year /

Possibility of parking near the site entrance subject to availability (pay-and-display car park).

GPS coordinates: N 47°13'55" – E 6°1'54"

#### > From Paris

By car - 4 hours: A6 direction «Sud», then A36 to Besançon, Besançon center exit.

By TGV from Paris Gare de Lyon: 2 hours 5 minutes.

### / Local buses from Besançon town center /

Servicing bus «Ginko Citadelle» from Chamars from April to October inclusive.

Bus service accessible to holders of a Ginko transport ticket (single, day or season ticket) or the Cita'bus Pass available online at [www.ginko.voyage](http://www.ginko.voyage)

Timetable information and prices can be obtained by phoning +33 3 70 27 71 (Ginko service).





# STAY IN BESANÇON



## GOOD TIP !

Visit the city with the Tourism Pass including: an entry to the Citadel, the Maison Victor Hugo, the Time Museum, the Fine Arts and Archeology Museum as well as access to the entire public transport network GINKO.

This PASS is available in three periods of validity: 24, 48 and 72 hours.

> from 9€90

> On sale on site or online on the Tourist and Congress Office website.



# Where to eat and stay in Besançon

Visiting Besançon Citadel can be combined with a long weekend or more extensive stay in the Franche-Comté capital. A wide range of accommodation is available to suit all budgets and tastes.

Find out more on the Tourist Office website:  
[www.besancon-tourisme.com](http://www.besancon-tourisme.com)

## Hotels near the Citadel:

- **LE SAUVAGE**  
[www.hotel-lesauvage.com](http://www.hotel-lesauvage.com)
- **HÔTEL VICTOR HUGO**  
[www.victorhugohotel.fr](http://www.victorhugohotel.fr)
- **L'HÔTEL DE PARIS**  
[www.besanconhoteldeparis.com](http://www.besanconhoteldeparis.com)
- **LA MAISON DE VERRE**  
[www.lamaisondeverre.com](http://www.lamaisondeverre.com)
- **LE BEST WESTERN CITADELLE**  
[www.bestwesterncitadelle.com](http://www.bestwesterncitadelle.com)
- **LE MERCURE**  
[www.accorhotels.com](http://www.accorhotels.com)







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