

Tours

Tours (pronounced "Tuurh") is an important French city (population 140,000, 360,000 with the suburbs) located on the river Loire in the Centre-Val de Loire region. **Touraine**, the region around Tours, is renowned for its wines and for the perfection of its local spoken French.

Get in

By train

TGV from Paris is the fastest way to get to Tours from the capital and it costs about 20 Euros (One way ticket) and it's approximately about 57mns from Paris-Montparnasse railway station. You could also take the normal SNCF train that passes Orleans and Blois too, it takes about 2 hours depending on which train you take.

By car

Tours is situated at the centre of a highway crossroads: the A10 to Paris or Bordeaux, the A85 towards Nantes and Bourges, and the A28 towards Le Mans and the rest of Normandy. the A10 passes between Tours and St Pierre des Corps, from where you can turn off to get to the city centre.

Get around

- The bus network in Tours is one of the best in France and many people think that Tours doesn't need Subway or Tram because of the very good bus service.
- A bus ticket costs 1.50 Euros and could be used for an hour.
- Tours isn't a very big city so walking is a beautiful experience.
- There are numerous underground car parks in the city, such as at Place de la Gare (underneath the large square outside the train station), Place des Halles (underneath the Halles market, ideal for visiting the old town), and at Place Anatole-France (easy access to the shops on Rue Nationale).

See

- **Tours Cathedral**
- **Place Plumereau** and the **Old City Le Vieux Tours**
- **Loire river banks**

- **Flower Market**
- **Tours Castle**, <http://www.evene.fr/culture/lieux/chateau-de-tours-2127.php/>

Do

Walk through the old city, which is very colorful and full of old houses in the unique Tours style.

Visit the place where Joan of Arc had her armor made, right in the heart of Tours.

- **Cathédrale St. Gatien** - An amazing sight to see.
- **Les Prébandes**, with pathways through flowerbeds and a small stream.

Learn

The **Université Francois-Rabelais** offers French courses for people of any level and from any country starting at the beginning of September and ending in May, costing between 1,000 and 1,500 euro. Classes are held at the Fromont campus west of the city centre in a quiet residential neighborhood.

Buy

The 3 major places where you can do shopping are : Rue Nationale, Rue Bordeaux and Atlantes(shopping center). Most people who work in these shops are young so there is a large possibility that they will speak English. *Never* start speaking English with someone before asking politely : "Parlez-vous anglais?" (pronunciation : par-lay voo on-glay)

Eat

- **Place Plumereau** and Rue Colbert are arguably the best 2 places to eat in Tours.
- There are many **Kebab** (Shawerma) restaurants all over and the meal(Formule : Kebab,Chips and a drink) costs 5 Euros.
- **Rue Colbert** has cuisines from all over the world(Iranian, Turkish, Arab, Japanese, French, Italian....etc).

Drink

- They have a **Beer Academy**.
- lots of pubs in the old town around **Place Plumereau**.
- **The Pale**, 18 Place Foire le Roi, is an Irish pub popular with Erasmus and American exchange students, a great place to go if you are feeling lost and don't speak any French as the clientele is about 75% Anglophone and all the staff are Irish.

- **Le Café Chaud**, 33 Rue Briconnet, is a nightclub aimed at 18-30s, cool bar area on ground level and downstairs club area with cheesy music, a dance floor and another bar. Try a cocktail, they are very large and reasonably priced, the 'Malmaison' is popular. Open every night.
- **Le G.I.**, 13 Rue Lavoisier is Tours' main **gay club**. Mostly gay men (with female friends) and lesbians, although anybody is admitted on the weekends. Expect to pay about 10-15 Euros entry but that price includes a drink ticket, which can be redeemed at the bar. You need to ring the doorbell to get in, which is an outdated safety procedure, however *don't* be put off by this as the door staff are welcoming. Nobody arrives before 1am.
- **ZooStation** - huge out of town club on the north end of Tours, free parking with a car, however to avoid getting lost on the way it is advisable to jump into a taxi and say "Zoostation s'il vous plait", the driver will know where you mean and will cost about 10 Euros each way. Drinks are pricey but the entrance fee is low, the music is mostly American and French R&B. Best enjoyed if there is a group of you as Saturday nights are busy and, like any large club, there may be some people who are out to pick a fight.
- **L'Excalibur**, 35 Rue Briconnet, just next to **Le Café Chaud** is very small but is the place to be for the "uber-cool" crowd.

Sleep

AJ du Vieux Tours 5, Rue Bretonneau, is a cheap, safe and clean hostel with no curfew. Individual, long-stay rooms are ideal for international students in Tours as the staff speak English and is a great way to make friends quickly. Has communal bathroom facilities and meals are available to buy in the cafeteria area. Great location next to a couple of internet cafés and all the bars and pubs of **Place Plumereau**, and just across the road from the main campus of the **Université Francois-Rabelais**.

Stay safe

Tours is a very safe city in comparison to other French cities. But if you don't speak French you might feel intimidated by homeless people who ask you something in French (like, asking for spare change or a cigarette if they see you smoking). Whilst making your way home after a night out you may be accosted by people of North African appearance, however they do not normally mean you any harm but they can seem to be overly friendly and chat to you (or even put their arm around you), whether you are male or female. This can be a little unnerving for travellers, but the best thing to do is be polite and maybe have a chat with them. If you pretend you can't speak French you will be left alone. The *quartiers* to the south east of the city are best avoided at night, in this area there are many high-rise low-rent apartment buildings, however any area in Tours is safe during the daytime.

Get out

You will want to go and have a drink at night around Place Plumereau, where many people go out. It is particularly cute in summer, when the square is filled with chairs and you just sit, not even knowing whose chairs they are.

For more info see: www.wikipedia.org

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