

Town Centre Walking Tour

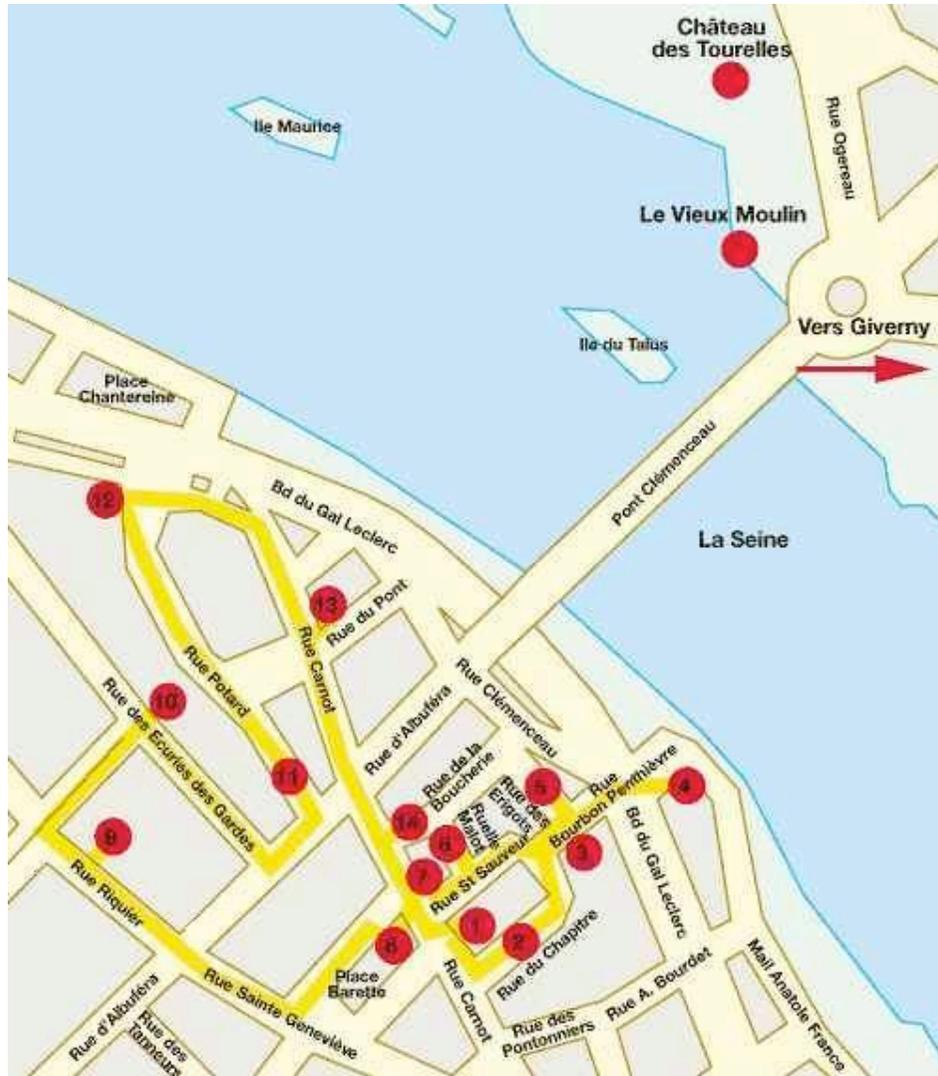
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1 : Collégiale Notre Dame (Our lady Collegiate church)

Started in the late eleventh-century, the Church was completed in the late sixteenth-century. Shaped as a cross, its characteristics remind one of the architecture of the Romanesque as well as the various Gothic periods: its façade, with a beautiful flamboyant rose window, as well as its triforium, were built in the fifteenth-century, while its Lantern Tower dates back to the thirteenth-century. Most of the original stained-glass windows were shattered during the WW2 air raids. The Church was restored on the City Council's initiative and is part of the cultural heritage of Vernon. The modern windows are by G. HERMET and M. JUTEAU, from Chartres.

Spared by the bombings of WW2, the streets around the Church have retained their picturesque half-timbered houses and rustic cobblestones.



2 : Rue du Chapitre (Chapter St)

At number 3 to 5, one can see the only remaining two-story, half-timbered house of the seventeenth-century where chapter members used to live. Note how narrow the street was. See also the railings protecting the windows of the former Treasure Room of the church.

3 : Rue Bourbon Penthièvre

It is lined with numerous old houses, some of them with their first floor jutting out and corbelled attics. Number 5, this seventeenth-century place, was once the town's Salt Store



4 : Pavillon Bourbon Penthièvre

On the banks of the River Seine, the Pavillon of Penthièvre is an eighteenth-century residence where the Duke, the last Lord of the city, used to come to listen to the grievances of his subjects. When Claude Monet came to live here, he tried buying this house but couldn't afford it and had to go to Giverny... !

5 : Rue des Erigots (Erigots St)

The original thing here is the name: « Erigot » probably comes from “ergot” (cocks’ spurs). Located near Butchers’ Street and a slaughterhouse, this might have been the place where chicken feet were stored away. (They were later used for making glue.)

6 : Ruelle Malot (Malot Alley) Rue Malot is what remains from medieval backyards and alley ways with the gutter in the middle. Nice view of the North portal of the church.

7 : Le Temps Jadis (Ye Olde Time house)

Situated at the corner of Rue Carnot and Rue Saint-Sauveur, it was built in the 15th century with two corbelled stories and an attic. On the corner post one can admire a scene representing The Annunciation, carved directly in the wood. It used to be a café, the “Ancien Café de la Ville”, and now accommodates the Tourist Office. This historic building is now officially part of France’s National Cultural Heritage



8 : Hôtel de Ville (Town Hall)

Built in 1895, this building evokes the coming of King Saint-Louis in Vernon with a stained-glass window which can be seen inside (or outside from the back). On the first floor, the Wedding Room has superb frescoes showing local festivities (Apply to the Town Hall’s reception desk for visits)

9 : Espace Philippe Auguste (Philippe Auguste cultural centre)

Walk to the back of the town hall and into Rue Sainte-Geneviève which will lead you to the Espace Culturel Philippe Auguste. Inaugurated in September 1992, it contains a reference library with multimedia collections and accommodates the local music and drama schools. Art exhibitions are also organised there.

10 : Ruins of the medieval castle and Tour des Archives (Archive Tower)

In Rue des Ecuries des Gardes, which is situated on the site of the old fortified castle of Vernon, there remains a 50-metre-long wall and a 22-meter-high tower – the keep – built by King Philippe Auguste in the late twelfth century. In the 18th century, as it was no longer needed for warring purposes, it was used to store the town’s archives, hence its name. Today a beautiful modern garden enhances the outlook of the place



11 : La rue Potard (Potard St)

Originally spelt POTART, from the name of Potart family. It was probably built before the twelfth-century. It is lined with half-timbered houses. (page 2)

12 : Hôtel du Grand Cerf (Big Stag hotel)

In the old area called Le Vieux Bourg (the Old Village), the Hôtel du Grand Cerf – the Big Stag hotel)– a fifteenth-century place whose sign used to bear the fleur-de-lis – makes it still possible to conjure up the image of what elegant 18th century inns looked like.



13 : Musée Alphonse Georges Poulain (City museum)

Back in Rue Carnot, proceed as far as Rue du Pont. A.G. POULAIN Museum consists of two buildings : an 18th century mansion and a large half-timbered, 15th century one. Open in 1983, the local history museum is one of the few French museums specialising in animal paintings, drawings and sculptures. Prehistoric, ancient and medieval objects can also be seen there, but tis the only place where you can see original paintings of the Giverny artists, Monet, Bonnard, Vuillard, Butler, MacMonnies, and many others...

14 : Rue de la Boucherie (Butchers’ St)

Finally, on the way back to the Tourist Office, Rue de la Boucherie, off Rue Carnot, is worth seeing. Together with Rue Malot and Rue Carnot, this district is gives a very good idea of medieval town planning.

Across the river : Le Château des Tourelles (Tourelles castle)

Another testimony of the medieval period (12th century). This fortress on the right bank of the river had to control ant to protect the bridge giving access to the fortified city of Vernon. This castle was later used as a steel works, and a tannery but mainly as a flour mill. (Outside visits only)



Le vieux Moulin (The old Mill)

Built on the former bridge, as many as five mills erected on the bridge have existed until the mid 19th century. The last mill that remains was restored some years ago. (No visits)