

GR®

@ccess

Comme Antoine,  
choisissez et  
organisez votre  
randonnée  
itinérante en ligne  
avec GR @ccess.

Facilitez-vous la rando !

- Plus de 22 000 km de GR® décrits,
- Cartographie 1/25<sup>ème</sup>,
- Plus de 150 suggestions de randonnée  
Itinérante de 2 à 6 jours,
- Abonnement numérique, à partir de 12€.



Abonnez-vous sur [www.MonGR.fr](http://www.MonGR.fr)

FFRandonnée

**Rando  
fiche®**

**LOIRE  
LAYON AUBANCE**  
COMMUNAUTÉ  
DE COMMUNES

**FFRandonnée**   
*les chemins, une richesse partagée*  
Maine-et-Loire

## Stage 6 - GR® de Pays<sup>1</sup> HILLSIDES and vineyards along the Layon and the Loire

**GR®  
Pays**

From SAINT-AUBIN-DE-LUIGNÉ  
to THOUARCE<sup>2</sup>

4:45 hrs

18.7 km

The GR® trail takes us through vineyards and their coteaux, or vine-covered slopes. Over the ages the fertile alluvial plains around the rivers, with their rich grass, were ideal for grazing land, and the plateaux for growing cereals. However nothing much other than vines would grow on the steep slopes, as they were difficult to cultivate. So, the sunny slopes were planted with vines, particularly along the rivers (Layon, Aubance and Loire).

### LOCATION

24 km south of Angers  
39 km north of Cholet  
55 km west of Saumur

### PARKING AT STARTING POINT

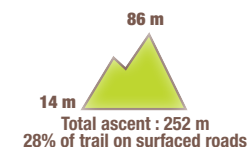
Campsite car park : Camping du Layon  
in Saint-Aubin-de-Luigné (Val-du-Layon)  
N 47.32764 °, W 0.67043 °

### PARKING AT END

Car park Place du Champ de Foire  
in Thouarcé (Bellevigne-en-Layon)  
N 47.26745 °, W 0.50084 °

### Warning

Market day on Tuesday mornings in the car park  
Place du Champ de foire in Thouarcé



### Trail Marking GRP® FFRandonnée

- Right way
- Change direction
- Wrong way

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### Tourist Office - Office de tourisme

• Loire Layon Aubance : (+33) 241 782 621  
accueil@anjou-vignoble-villages.com  
loire-layon-aubance-tourisme.com



### Local hiking committee

• Comité FFRandonnée de Maine-et-Loire :  
maine-et-loire@ffrandonnee.fr  
maine-et-loire.ffrandonnee.fr



### WHAT TO SEE ALONG THE WAY

- Saint-Aubin-de-Luigné: town hall; tour of old 16th - 18th century residences; old canal, *Canal de Monsieur*
- The river Layon
- The vineyards and wine chateaux
- Saint-Lambert-du-Lattay: historic old bridge, *Pont Barré*
- Beaulieu-sur-Layon: nature reserve at Pont Barré and old lime kilns; chapel *Notre-Dame*
- Faye d'Anjou: terraced vineyard; windmill, *Moulin de la Pinsonnerie*
- Thouarcé : distillery



### WHAT TO SEE IN THE AREA

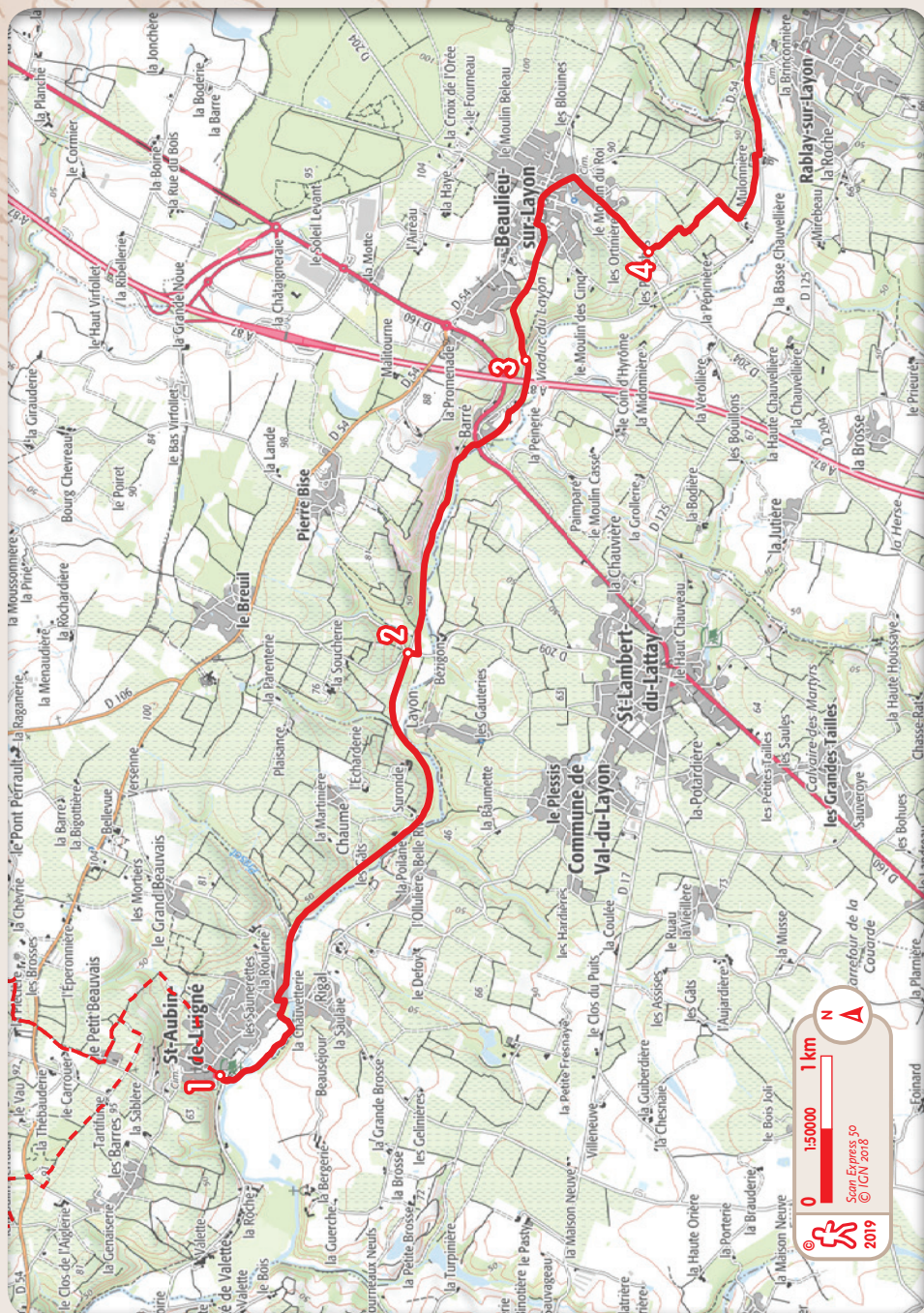
- Rochefort-sur-Loire
- Saint-Aubin-de-Luigné: windmill and viewpoint, *Moulin Guérin*
- Beaulieu-sur-Layon: Forest
- Saint-Lambert-du-Lattay: wine museum, *Musée de la vigne et du vin d'Anjou*
- Rablay-sur-Layon: arts and crafts village, *Village d'Artistes*; tithe house, *Maison de la Dîme*
- Thouarcé: vineyard of Bonnezeaux

<sup>1</sup>Translator's note : GR® de Pays (Grandes Randonnées de Pays) are regional hiking trails.

<sup>2</sup>Translator's note : place names and proper nouns in general have been left in French for easy recognition.

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## Accommodation

### Saint-Aubin-de-Luigné (49190)

Campsite du Layon: (+33) 241 783 328

Bed and Breakfast - L'Aubinoise:

(+33) 253 578 368, [www.laubinoise.com](http://www.laubinoise.com)

[laubinoise.layon@gmail.com](mailto:laubinoise.layon@gmail.com)

Bed and Breakfast - Le clos de la Haute Guerche:

(+33) 241 784 148, [marie-boisson@orange.fr](mailto:marie-boisson@orange.fr)

[www.anjouhautguerche.com](http://www.anjouhautguerche.com)

Bed and Breakfast - Château de la Fresnaye:

(+33) 241 786 178 ou (+33) 609 627 727

Holiday cottage - La Poilane :

(+33) 241 786 745, [marietta.ricou@laposte.net](mailto:marietta.ricou@laposte.net)

Holiday cottage des Forges:

(+33) 241 457 886 ou (+33) 670 476 511,  
[r.branchereau@orange.fr](mailto:r.branchereau@orange.fr), [domainedesforges.net](http://domainedesforges.net)

Holiday cottage - Logis du Layon:

(+33) 241 789 824, [achardpatrice@wanadoo.fr](mailto:achardpatrice@wanadoo.fr)  
[domainedesbarres.com](http://domainedesbarres.com)

Holiday cottage - J-P Merlet:

(+33) 241 783 770, [jpmrlet@orange.fr](mailto:jpmrlet@orange.fr)

Holiday cottage - Le Logis Solidaire:

(+33) 952 747 780, [logis-solidaire@laposte.net](mailto:logis-solidaire@laposte.net)  
[www.loc-gite49.fr](http://www.loc-gite49.fr)

### Beaulieu-sur-Layon (49750)

Holiday cottage, Bed and Breakfast -

Château La Soucherie: (+33) 241 783 118

[contact@domaine-de-la-soucherie.fr](mailto:contact@domaine-de-la-soucherie.fr)

[www.domaine-de-la-soucherie.fr](http://www.domaine-de-la-soucherie.fr)

Bed and Breakfast - Château du Breuil:

(+33) 241 783 254 ou (+33) 633 098 943

[ch.breuil@wanadoo.fr](mailto:ch.breuil@wanadoo.fr), [chateaudubreuil.eu](http://chateaudubreuil.eu)

Holiday cottage - Le Clos de la Roche:

(+33) 241 303 036, [denispiffeteau@wanadoo.fr](mailto:denispiffeteau@wanadoo.fr)

Stopover lodge: (+33) 2 41 78 65 07

[beaulieutourisme@wanadoo.fr](mailto:beaulieutourisme@wanadoo.fr)

[www.beaulieusurlayontourisme.fr](http://www.beaulieusurlayontourisme.fr)

Bed and Breakfast - June Friess:

(+33) 241 786 082, [marc.friess@wanadoo.fr](mailto:marc.friess@wanadoo.fr)

Holiday cottage - Le Logis du minotier:

(+33) 681 469 940, [jeanneau\\_herve@yahoo.fr](mailto:jeanneau_herve@yahoo.fr)

Holiday cottage - La Pépinière:

(+33) 687 162 059 ou (+33) 241 740 664

[sophie.mahe4@wanadoo.fr](mailto:sophie.mahe4@wanadoo.fr)

### Rochefort-sur-Loire (49190)

Holiday cottage - Château de la Guimonière:

(+33) 241 912 837 ou (+33) 603 944 642

[www.chateaudelaguimoniere.com/fra](http://www.chateaudelaguimoniere.com/fra)

Bed and Breakfast - Les Treilles de Chaume:

(+33) 676 081 616, [fleury\\_patrick@orange.fr](mailto:fleury_patrick@orange.fr)

[www.chambresdhoties-anjou.com](http://www.chambresdhoties-anjou.com)

### Rablay-sur-Layon (49750)

Holiday cottage - Domaine de Mirebeau:

(+33) 241 782 957

[domainedemirebeau@orange.fr](mailto:domainedemirebeau@orange.fr)

### Faye-d'Anjou (49380)

Holiday cottage - La Grange aux fleurs:

(+33) 241 784 530 ou (+33) 658 049 798

[jocelynerompillon@orange.fr](mailto:jocelynerompillon@orange.fr)

Bed and Breakfast - Andrée Oriot:

(+33) 241 543 571 ou (+33) 686 234 131

[daniel.orient49@orange.fr](mailto:daniel.orient49@orange.fr)

Holiday cottage - Logis de la Brunetière:

(+33) 607 256 041, [franbille@aci49.fr](mailto:franbille@aci49.fr)

Holiday cottage, Bed and Breakfast -

Moulin de la Placette: (+33) 635 212 826

[soleilvert70@yahoo.fr](mailto:soleilvert70@yahoo.fr)

Holiday cottage, Bed and Breakfast -

Château de Chanzé: (+33) 638 225 332

[info@chateaudechanze.com](mailto:info@chateaudechanze.com)

[www.chateaudechanze.com](http://www.chateaudechanze.com)

### Thouarcé (49380)

Holiday cottage - Anjoué: (+33) 644 757 897

[gite.anjoue@gmail.com](mailto:gite.anjoue@gmail.com), [www.gite-anjoue.fr](http://www.gite-anjoue.fr)

Holiday cottage, Bed and Breakfast -

Le clos des 3 Rois:

(+33) 699 919 520 ou (+33) 241 663 404

[infos@closdes3rois.fr](mailto:infos@closdes3rois.fr), [closdes3rois.fr](http://closdes3rois.fr)

Discover all the stages of the GR® de Pays Hillsides and vineyards along the Layon and the Loire on [maine-et-loire.ffrandonnee.fr](http://maine-et-loire.ffrandonnee.fr)



## GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, FLORA AND FAUNA

### THE LAYON, A RIVER WITH A HISTORY

The source of the Layon is in Saint-Maurice-Étisson in the department of Deux-Sèvres. However, it flows mostly through Maine-et-Loire. After 89.9 km, it meets the Loire in Chalonnes-sur-Loire.

As early as the 16th century the Dutch expanded the trade of sweet wines to northern Europe along the Loire and by sea. This trade was so flourishing that in 1774, a 63 km long canal was built along the lower part of the Layon. Shiploads of wine produced all along the river were carried in this way along the « Canal de Monsieur ». It owes its name to the protection of the king's brother, the future Louis XVIII. The Layon, thus canalized, was used for nearly fifteen years. Faulty construction, the river's irregular current, then the Vendée Wars, saw the end of the canal. It was officially decommissioned in part in 1891, then in 1957 for the last six kilometres. Some installations have stood the test of the wars and of time : the canal towpaths, locks (in Thouaré in particular), bridges, etc. There is a whole historical heritage worth visiting here.

In particular, one historic landmark not

to be missed is the Pont Barré. On 20th September 1793, the Republican forces under General Duhoux de Hauterive, left Angers and confronted the Vendean forces commanded by the Republican general's own nephew. Battle ensued and the Vendéens, although frankly outnumbered, managed to push back the blue onslaught. The Republicans were forced to retreat and withdrew to a position near Angers. The Republican side suffered 1362 casualties.

Apart from this historical event, the Pont Barré is worth a visit for its regional nature reserve, open to the public. It overlooks the Layon valley and has an outstanding view of the vineyards. The combination of a number of physical and biological factors (micro-climate: mild temperatures, rainfall; geology) have fostered a natural environment reminiscent of Mediterranean regions. 2200 species (flora and fauna), identified and studied, can be found amongst these low walls, vines, rocky outcrop and short turf. Explanatory panels guide your way through the reserve.



The Pont Barré



The Fritillaria meleagris or snake's head fritillary

#### From Saint-Aubin-de-Luigné to Beaulieu-sur-Layon

9.8 km 2.15 hrs

In Saint-Aubin-de-Luigné >

**1** At the campsite reception centre cross the open green area and follow > the Layon till you reach a stone path. At the end of this path, at the bridge, take the road left then immediately right along chemin de Girouard. Pass under > the old railway track.

**2** At the road, turn right then take the first path on the left, going along > the Layon. Pass under a bridge and reach > the Pont Barré, of historic fame during the Vendée Wars. Carry on and go under the motorway viaduct.

**3** At a stream, pass under a bridge on the left and turn right towards Beaulieu-sur-Layon. At the > calvary cross, leave the path on the left and go straight on. At the end of rue du Martinet, turn left for the town centre then first right on to rue de la Mairie. Go past the chapel > Chapelle Notre-Dame de Beaulieu, then past the townhall to reach the church. Take the road on the right of the church to Champ-sur-Layon and Rablay-sur-Layon.

Before reaching a junction turn right off rue Rabelais on to rue du Moulin du Roy.

## GEOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, GASTRONOMY

### THE LAYON FAULT LINE

The hillsides of the Layon are on the south side of the Loire. The valley marks the transition from the Saumurois to the Mauges region.

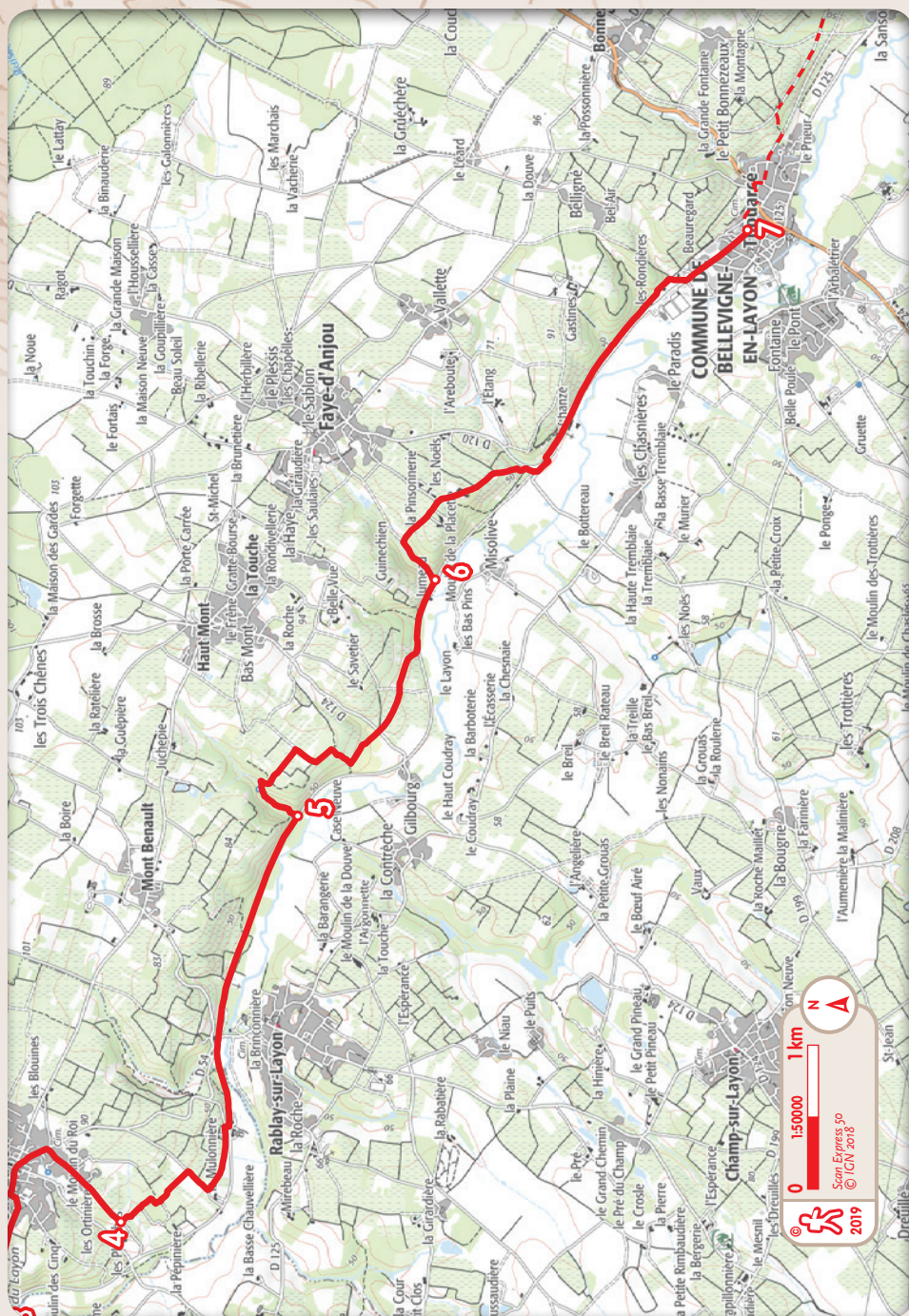
This region shows the marks of a major geological event, the Layon fault line, which stretches 120 kilometres between Blain (Loire-Atlantique) and Doué-la-Fontaine (Maine-et-Loire). It appeared following the formation of the Alps in the Mesozoic era. Therefore before being a wine appellation, the Layon hillsides display a characteristic topography. This fault line is made principally of volcanic rock and primary limestone.

All along the river Layon, the hillsides of the valley are covered with vines, lush meadows, crops and poplar plantations.

There are plenty of hedgerows and the flora is abundant. Numerous animals can also be encountered.

The Angevin climate is particularly mild, due to its location between the oceanic and continental influences. In the whole department, the Saumur and Layon regions enjoy most sunlight, which has fostered the development of the wine industry here. The Layon valley is the warmest area in the department. It enjoys a high level of sunlight and less rainfall than average. Thus, it is fortunate in having ideal conditions for the production of great sweet white wines (Coteaux-du-Layon, Bonnezeaux, Quarts-de-Chaume...).





from Beaulieu-sur-Layon to Rablay-sur-Layon

2 km 30 mins

In Beaulieu-sur-Layon >

**4** Take the path on the left going through the vineyard, then a wooded area, before reaching the road. Turn right, walk on down and take the grassy path on the left. Go past a cross. At the castle > **château de la Mulonnière**, turn right and immediately left towards Rablay-sur-Layon. At the junction, carry straight on, leaving Rablay-sur-Layon on the right ( > **terraced vineyard**). Walk past > **the old gateman's buildings and the station**.

From Rablay-sur-Layon to Thouarcé

8 km 2 hrs

In Rablay-sur-Layon >

**5** Take the path on the left going up the hillside, walk past the fountain > **fontaine Saint-Martin**. Carry on up on the right, through vineyard and wooded areas. Cross the D 124 and take the track opposite to reach the > **old railroad track**. Follow the track left.

**6** At the end of the bridge, turn left and take a small path through the undergrowth, going up the hillside, following a stream. Reach the windmill > **Moulin de la Pinsonnerie**. Carry straight on, pass the windmill > **Moulin de la Placette**, cross the D 120 and take the path to the right. Opposite the > **distillery in Thouarcé**, take the road left and reach Thouarcé village centre and the square, la place du Champ de Foire.

In Thouarcé >



Terraced vineyard - Faye d'Anjou