

# TRIP TO POITIERS

China'CF



Chin'ACF, a group of complementary high school training activity.

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« We would like to thank Mr. Alain for his help.»



**EDITORIAL :** Oh France ! So many questions unanswered about this country known of all (yes, the French is arrogant). France is a beautiful country, but there are many rules and customs that aren't always easy to follow, even if you are French. Thanks to this little sheet of paper, we will introduce you to French culture. We will tell you why and how French people do certain things... that seem weird to the rest of the world. And if with all the help this guidebook gives you, you're still stressing out... well we've just got one thing to tell you... read it again !

# CONTENTS

## **The city of Poitiers :**

- Quiz about Poitiers..... 5
- The Monuments of Poitiers..... 6
- Emblematic local products..... 8
- Practical informations :
- Activities (movie theaters, malls, skating rink)..... 10
- Useful (bus, poste office, libraries,...) ..... 11

## **French culture :**

- **Holidays :**
- October et November : Halloween and All Saints Day..... 13
- December : Christmas..... 14
- January : Epiphany and king cake..... 15
- February : Carnival, Mardi gras et Valentine's day... 16
- March and April: April Fool's day et Easter.....17
- **Meeting the french**..... 18

# QUIZ ABOUT POITIERS

**Where is Poitiers ?** Poitiers is in the west of France, between Paris and Bordeaux. It is also only an hour and a half away from La Rochelle, so access to the sea is very easy.

**Is Poitiers a big city ?** Poitiers has a population of around 80 000 people, compared to big capital cities it is considered to be a small city, but for France it is quite big.

**What can you do in Poitiers ?** In Poitiers there are movie theaters, and malls. Only a half hour away is the second most visited theme park in France, the Futuroscope. You can also go bowling, do a laser game or an escape room. The “Parc de Blossac” in the city centre is also quite big.

**Is it true that Poitiers is surrounded by the countryside ?** Yes it is true that Poitiers is mostly surrounded by countryside, it is due to the fact that it is placed in the middle of the region Nouvelle Aquitaine, which is a rural region. Shortly said, there are many small towns around Poitiers and it is not unusual to drive for kilometers without seeing any houses.

**What is the difference between Poitiers and big Chinese cities ?** First of all, one big difference : the size. Compared to Schenzhen, London, Paris, Beijing, Barcelona, ... Poitiers is a small town. Then, the number of things to do. In Poitiers there aren't many activities. In Chinese cities you usually live in high skyscrapers, while here there aren't many. But, in Poitiers, it is way more quiet and there are many old and beautiful buildings.

# THE MONUMENTS OF POITIERS

## ---> The City Hall



Being in the center point, the City Hall is placed on the biggest square (the square Maréchal Leclerc), it is the monument to not miss in Poitiers. It is big and imposing, and was built in 1869 to restore the city. It was inspired by the City

Hall of Paris and the Opera Garnier.

## ---> The Church of Notre-Dame-la-Grande

The Church of Notre-Dame-La-Grande is the biggest historical and religious monument of Poitiers. It is beautiful and is the emblematic church of Poitiers, but it hasn't always been that way. During the tenth century, it was rebuilt.



During the summer, the city of Poitiers illuminates every night the facade which allows people to imagine what it looked like in the Middle Ages with its colours.

## ---> The Cathedral Saint-Pierre



Just like the church of Notre-Dame-La-Grande, the cathedral of Poitiers is illuminated at night to show the colours there used to be on the church. It also has the oldest stalls (rows of seats) of France. It took 216 years for the Church to be built.

## ---> The Courthouse of Poitiers

The Courthouse, it is one of the most important monuments of Poitiers (gothic style). It was built in the fifteenth century by Charlemagne for his son. It was destroyed twice because of two fires, one in 1018 and one in 1346. But it was then rebuilt. It has changed a lot over the years because of its reconstructions. It was transformed



into a courthouse after the french revolution. It was classed as a historical monument in 1862. Since 2020, it belongs to the city hall, and it is actually close to the public.

# EMBLEMATIC LOCAL PRODUCTS

## ---> The broyé du Poitou

In the region, it really is THE DISH not to be missed. A lot of butter and sugar ; hard and crumbly, the broyer wants only to be eaten. Plus, we also usually break it in smaller bits so we can share it with friends.



## ---> The cheesecake



First you would think it is made of cheese. But it's actually mostly cake and just a bit of cheese. There is a salt/sugar contrast with the vanilla, the sugar and a pinch of sugar. All the better ! Then, also, for the gourmands, you can bake it at home and change it to your taste. You might fall under the charm of this dish.

## ---> The macaron du Poitou

The macaron du Poitou ! Yet another delicious specialty. It is small round cake, soft and granulated, made with peanuts. Honestly, try it out ! Perfect. Now, get your cooking book out because you can bake this cake easily and adapt it to your own taste.



For the most curious, there is even a museum of the macaron at Montmorillon, a city located about approximately 50 km southwest of Poitiers.

## ---> **The chabichou & the bûche du Poitou**

Already, there are both goat cheese. Honestly, I don't like cheese. The taste is quite special. The texture is doughy and the taste is strong. First you will taste salt and then acid. But you should still try it out. You might enjoy it !

# PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS

## **X ACTIVITIES - MOVIES THEATERS**

After a long week or simply during a wednesday afternoon with friends, the movie theater is the perfect place ! In the town center of Poitiers, there is the Castille, or the CGR in Buxerolles which is bigger but a bit off-center.

■ **ZAE du pas St Jacques, Rue des Frères Lumière, 86180 Buxerolles : Méga CGR**

■ **24 Place du Maréchal-Leclerc, 86000 Poitiers : CGR Le Castille**

## **-MALLS**

*The Cordeliers is the most famous mall in Poitiers, you can find different types of shops : zara, Mango, Devred, Nocibé, La Fnac, or snacks... It is very easy to go there by bus. But be careful because your wallet will suffer ...*

*As for the supermarkets, in Poitiers there is Auchan, Leclerc, Super U, Casino or Monoprix. They're very practical, you can find useful things in everyday life.*

■ **4 Rue Henri Oudin, 86000 Poitiers : Les Cordeliers**

## **- SKATING RINK**

Here in Poitiers we are lucky to have a big ice rink. Tip : remember to take gloves and warm socks and you will only need to rent the skates and slide.

■ **54 Avenue Jacques Cœur 86400 Poitiers : Patinoire**

## **X USEFUL - BUS**

In Poitiers the bus service is called Vitalis. You can take the bus buying a card for the month or for the year. This is in case you take the bus regularly. On the contrary, if you only take occasionally, you should buy a V-pass that you can reload on internet or at certain stops. You validate it every time you get in the bus in a connection. Like that, you only reload the number of journeys you need to take and it is cheaper. always think of your transport ticket, because the day you don't have with you, the controllers will be on the bus and you will have to pay a penalty !

→ <https://www.vitalis-poitiers.fr/>

## **- POST OFFICE**

There are many post-offices in Poitiers and its surroundings. If you need to post a letter, you need to go to the post-office, and if you already have a stamp, put it in the top right corner of your envelope, or just buy one. Write down the address where you want your card to be sent on the top of the envelope. You only need to find a mailbox that goes abroad and post your letter !

→ [laposte.fr](http://laposte.fr)

## **- LIBRAIRIES**

We can find librairies kind of everywhere in Poitiers, many of them have a partnership with the François Mitterrand library, one of the best and the most beautiful of Poitiers ; it's the most handy to study, do some research, or just come and relax or read.

PS : There's even a piano for those who like music !

■ **4 Rue de l'Université, 86000 Poitiers : Médiathèque François Mitterrand**

## - PHARMACIES

In France, you can't buy the medicines you need in a pharmacy, you need a prescription to have the strong enough and specific medicines for a precise disease. But medicines for headaches or stomach aches (for example : doliprane, spasfon) are available without prescription.

## - PARKS

Blossac, Jardin des Plantes or Bois de Saint-Pierre for an afternoon with friends, play catch, play some music, take a nap, have a picnic, do some sport... everything is possible !

- ▣ Rue Léopold - Thézard, 86000 Poitiers : *Parc de Blossac*
- ▣ Boulevard Chasseigne, 86000 Poitiers : *Jardin des Plantes*
- ▣ 86240 Smarves : *Parc zoologique de Saint-Pierre / Bois de Saint-Pierre*

## - SPORTS

In Poitiers there is a large rank of options for where to do sport, for example the public stadiums like the stadium of La Madeleine in Poitiers or La Pièce des Cards in Chasseneuil or the swimming pools of Grand Poitiers.

- ▣ Avenue de la Libération, 86000 Poitiers : *Stade de la Madeleine à Poitiers*
- ▣ 86360 Chasseneuil - du – Poitou : *Parc d'activités sportives Pièce des Cards*

**For the adresses, you must put the french name in google maps (or another !)**

# HOLIDAYS

## **OCTOBER & NOVEMBER : Halloween and All Saints Day**

Halloween, it is a party where you must get dressed up the scariest costume (you can be extravagant). Once you have your costume on, and your make-up ready, go knock on doors and say the magic sentence : Trick or treat ! (in french “Des bonbons ou un sort !”). Then people will give you candy if they have some. You can also go to the movies to see a horror movie. Halloween is also a time when you can invite your friends and have a party. This celebration happens the day before All Saints Day, which is a party, like it is said in the name, that celebrates the saints.

### **More informations:**

Careful ! Do you know that Halloween isn't traditionally a french celebration, it comes from England. Despite it all, many french people associate it with All Saints Day which has to do with dead. Relative to the american, the french celebrate Halloween in a simpler way. In fact, Halloween is more a pretext to be reunited with friends and eat lots of sweets, for the french, rather than having huge parties.

■ **Halloween : 31 of October**

■ **All Saints Day : 1<sup>st</sup> of November**

## DECEMBER : Christmas

Ohh Christmas, celebration for the children (and the grown-ups). It is a moment when the whole family to gather around a good foie gras, salmon or oysters... but the most important thing during Christmas is the PRESENTS. And why ? Because we wait all year long for this small instant : to tore off the wrapping paper that hides our gift and to be amazed.

And you can of course decorate your home, hang up lights, Christmas balls, and set a nice and big Christmas tree to put the presents under it. But most importantly don't forget to put hang up socks with your name on them under the tree, for Santa Claus to not be mistaken when placing the presents.

### More informations:

Christmas is one of the biggest celebrations for the french. The Christmas meal is usually held traditionally ; aperitif - starter - meal - cheese - dessert. This means people will be spending a long time at the table : you start at around 7:30pm or 8:00pm, and it is possible you might not be done eating by midnight ! Shortly said, the moment you sit down at the table, it will take at least three hours and a half to finish eating.

Cultural precision : Christmas is traditionally celebrated religiously, it celebrates the birth of Jesus. However, just because you aren't a believer, doesn't mean you can't enjoy it !

■ **Christmas eve dinner : 24 of December**

■ **Christmas : 25 of December**

## **JANUARY: Epiphany and king cake**

On the first Sunday of January, it is the Epiphany. It is also the day during which you eat the Galette des Rois (Feast of the Kings) !

What is La galette des rois ? :

"La galette des rois" is usually stuffed. The frangipane is the most traditional. It is made of almond powder, sugar and butter. There are also fruit made galettes des rois, or chocolate and cream. Moreover, the circular bun can be considered a galette des rois.

Splitting the galette des rois with friends and family, the French mean to share happiness. It is tradition for the youngest of the guests to hide under the table and decide of the distribution of the slices blindly. Each galette holds a fève. The one who gets the slice containing the fève will be named King or Queen of the day ! He or she will be given a crown made of cardboard.

### **More informations:**

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The fève used to be real, but from the XIXth century, it is replaced by a porcelain figurine representative of the nativity and the characters.

■ **Epiphany : 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of January**

## **FEBRUARY: Carnival, Mardi Gras y Valentine's day**

She can't stop dancing, ahoy, ahoy to dance, to dance ! The carnival ? yes, the carnival is a time during which you can dress up however you want (the more colorful, the better), sing, dance, celebrate, and when all life rules are cancelled (not all of them, don't go and kill your neighbor !). And all of this happens just before Lent. And what is Lent about ? Lent is a period of time of 40 days during which christians aren't supposed to eat certain things and mustn't celebrate. Just before Lent, you then must get your fill of good things and good humor ! That is why the Mardi-Gras was invented ! What ? A tuesday that is greasy ? No, it is named this way because it is the last day before Lent when you can eat ALL you want. So you must enjoy !

On the 14th of February, it is Valentine's day ! We celebrate love, we give symbolic presents to our soul mate, we confess our feelings anonymously, or not. It is the day for overs !

It was first a pagan celebration, then it was religious, since Saint-Valentine was decapitated on February 14th, he was then canonized for his sacrifice to love. Since the XXth century, Valentine's day became a secular celebration.

▀ **Carnival, Mardi gras & Lent : The date change all years, so go check !**

▀ **Valentine's day : 14 of February**

## **MARCH & APRIL : April Fool's Day and Easter**

Easter, finally. Easter means chocolate, bunnies, eggs, bells... Easter is also a good time to gather with your family around a nice meal of meat. Yummy ! Once your belly all filled up, the bells will place in your garden or elsewhere, depending their desires, CHOCOLATE eggs. Once their mission accomplished, the kids (and parents as well sometimes) will run out as fast as they can to get the most chocolate.

▀ **April Fool's day**

▀ **Easter : vary between the 22 of March, and the 25 of April, so go check the date of the year**

# MEETING THE FRENCH

When you first meet someone, you can say “Bonjour” (Hello). If you are meeting this person for the first time you shouldn't do “la bise” unless they are someone your age. Other than that, in general you do two “bises” to say hello when you know the person, although the number varies depending where you are.

If you continue to speak with this person, there are different ways to address them. If they are an adult, you would for example say : “Est-ce que vous allez bien ? Qu'est-ce que vous faites dans la vie ?” (How are you feeling ? What do you do in life ?), but it is different when you meet somebody your age, you can use “tu” instead of “vous”; for example : “Tu vas bien ? Tu fais quoi comme études” (How are you ? What are you studying ?).

## French Meal :

In general, it is polite to offer your help to the

### French hours :

7h - 8h : lever et petit déjeuner

12h -13h : déjeuner

16h -17h : goûter

20h : dîner et coucher

hosts during the meal. For example you might want to help set the table, place the fork on the left side of the plate and the knife on the right.

During the meal it is possible you will be offered an apéritif but not always. Next there is usually a starter, a main course and a dessert.

But the most important thing during the meal is to have a conversation, it's interesting and it can last long !