

Starting point: car park opposite the priory (Town Hall).

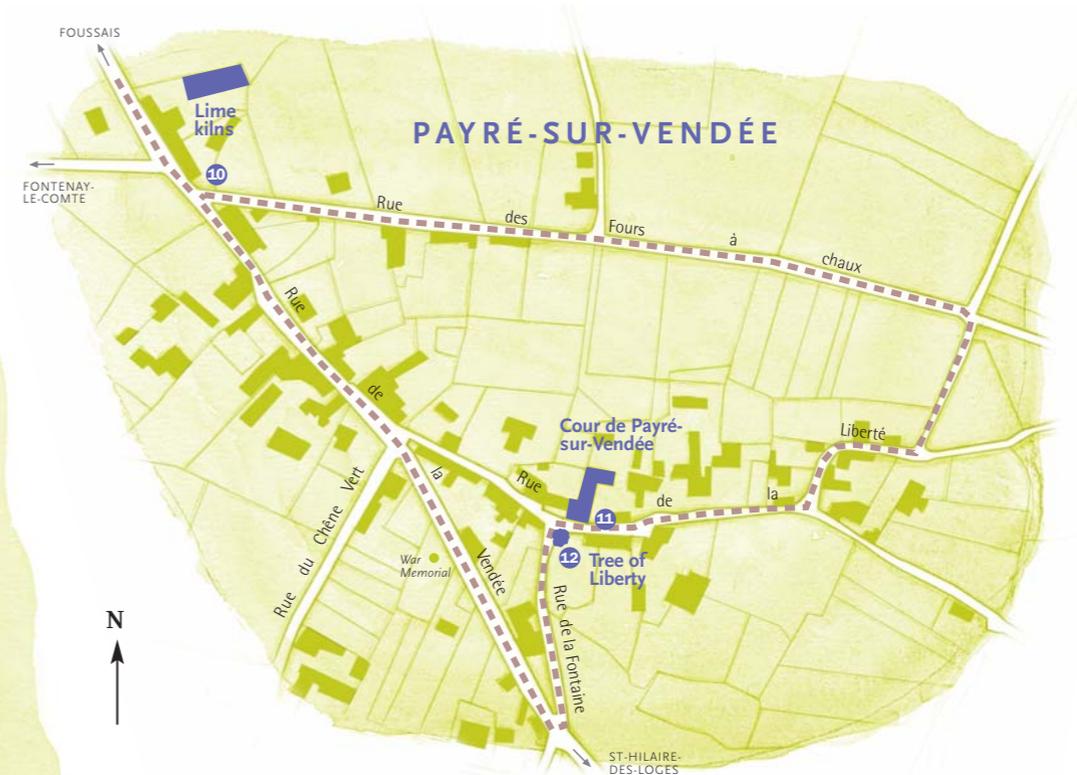
The Priory 1 which was built from the XIth C., was part of the Abbey of Bourgueil in Touraine. Rebuilt in the XVth C., it was fortified in the XVIth C., then enlarged and embellished in the XVIIth C. In the inside, two very beautiful fireplaces are decorated with the arms of the prior and some mysterious monograms. The Priory, whose perfect Romanesque vaulted arch is to be admired, has housed the Town Hall since 1982.

Via rue François Laurent, you arrive at the former **Town Hall and former Post Office 2**.

These illustrate the administrative architecture of the first half of the XXth C. Unlike the numerous houses with slate roofs, this building is roofed with tiles. Turn up rue Pousse-Penille and, at the war memorial, go left onto rue François Viète. The **Protestant Temple 3** is adorned with a Greek-style pediment. It bears the inscription “culte évangélique”



which demonstrates the tensions born between the evangelical reformers, faithful to the Calvinist tradition, and the liberal reformers, following the 1802 Concordat. It housed a Protestant school from 1855 until



1882. By way of rue de la Ventinière and rue Mélusine, you arrive at the **Espace Paul de Vendée 4** which honours the memory of a Protestant nobleman, born in 1577. He took part in the Protestant resistance after the death of Henri IV and fought during the siege of Saint-Jean-

d'Angély, then at La Rochelle where he died. He left an interesting diary. In the **village centre 5**, place de la Boule d'Or, the XVIth C. **Market Hall** was the scene of fairs and markets established by Henri IV in January 1599. Facing this opens up the famous Romanesque portal of

the **church Saint-Hilaire 6**. To the left, the northern arch depicts a “Descent from the Cross”, which is signed - a very rare event - by its creator, Giraud Audebert from Saint-Jean-d'Angély. To the right, the southern arch, divided into two parts, illustrates the appearance of Christ



resurrected to Mary-Magdelaine and a scene known under the name of "The Meal with Simon the Pharisee". To the south, the **Renaissance house of the merchant François Laurent 7** is a remarkable logis and a rare example of urban architecture in a rural setting, formerly endowed



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with a loggia and dating from 1552. The facade has retained a mullioned window, a group of three arcaded bay windows and a door with pediment. **The Sainte-Catherine inn 8**, in the street of the same name, was owned by the family of the famous mathematician François Viète (1540 - 1603), the father of modern algebra. He may have been born either in this auberge or in the village of La Bigotière where he had his residence. At the top of the rue Sainte Catherine, **the Grand Logis 9** was built, at the end of the XVIth C., by a significant person, Mathurin Bouhéreau, who had acquired the responsible post of "Elu du Roi". You can admire the very beautiful round dovecote, the external stairway and its stables. The return route, by rue Sainte Catherine, passes by the priory gardens and its porch and rejoins the car park, passing, on the left, the little dogs' courtyard.

Payré-sur-Vendée

Two kilometres from the town of Foussais, Payré-sur-Vendée is noted first of all, in the first road on the left, by its **lime kilns 10**, built around 1860. They worked until about 1914. On the right, going back down the limestone hill, the road passes in front of **the Cour de Payré-sur-Vendée 11**, a fine house which belonged to the Brunet de la Riallière family. Before dropping down towards a pleasant fountain, the road passes by **the Tree of Liberty 12**, an enormous plane tree of 5.50 m in circumference, planted just after the Revolution.



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Deriving from a Gallo-Roman villa whose owner was called Fuscus or Fuscicus, Foussais posses a jewel of Romanesque art: the great portal of its Saint-Hilaire church. During the Renaissance, the work of the cloth merchants, weavers and tanners endowed it with some remarkable fine houses, scattered in the two towns and in the surrounding countryside, like those of La Touche, La Riallière, La Fournière or Sérigny... Often benefitting from ideas of the Reformation, the craftsmen and merchants, who exported their products to Germany and Holland, rubbed shoulders with the humanistic élite of Fontenay-le-Comte. The family of François Viète, the famous mathematician, owned an inn there. Henri IV endowed this prosperous village, where Protestantism developed, with six yearly fairs and a weekly market. Foussais merged in 1968 with Payré-sur-Vendée, known for its lime kilns which worked from 1860 - 1914. Foussais-Payré is a member of the Community of Communes of the region of Fontenay-le-Comte.



Information / visits

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mairie.foussais-payre@wanadoo.fr

Foussais-Payré Information Point

Tél. 02 51 51 41 05

Fontenay-le-Comte Tourist Office

Tél. 02 51 69 44 99
www.tourisme-sudvendee.com

Festival "Nuits Musicales en Vendée Romane"

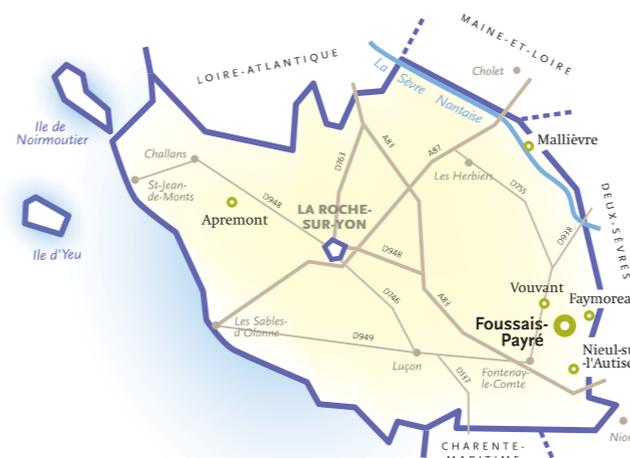
Tél. 02 51 51 48 92
www.festival-vendee.com

BE CAREFUL, RESPECTFUL OF PRIVATE PROPERTY AND TRAFFIC REGULATIONS.



The "Petites Cités de Caractère" distinction is awarded to the little towns and villages in our region that have a remarkable architectural and natural heritage, and meet the essential criteria when it comes to welcoming their visitors. As a guarantee for quality, this label urges the communes belonging to the network to keep on improving the emphasis placed on their attractions through restoration, promotion and activities. The Petites Cités de Caractère of the Pays de la Loire present a whole range of historical authenticity and are a reflection of the geographical territory to which they belong.

Petites Cités de Caractère des Pays de la Loire
Les Petites Cités de Caractère de la Vendée



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Foussais-Payré

Petite Cité de Caractère de la Vendée



FOUSSAIS-PAYRÉ HAS RETAINED FROM ITS RICH PAST THE EXTRAORDINARY ROMANESQUE PORTAL OF ITS CHURCH AND THE FINE HOUSES OF THE DRAPERS, WEAVERS AND CLOTH MERCHANTS WHO MADE THE VILLAGE A PROSPEROUS ONE DURING THE RENAISSANCE. IT WAS PERHAPS ALSO THE BIRTH PLACE OF THE INVENTOR OF MODERN ALGEBRA...