

EXHIBITIONS - WORKSHOPS - READINGS - EVENTS

GROUPS AND  
PROFESSIONALS

2024

BE INSPIRED!

NB

MUSÉE BALZAC  
Château de Saché

Un site du Conseil départemental d'Indre & Loire

TOURAINES  
LE DÉPARTEMENT









## MUSÉE BALZAC

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### Château de Saché

Located in the heart of Touraine, the Château de Saché was one of Honoré de Balzac's favourite sources of inspiration.

The Renaissance architecture bears the traces of this monument's long history, with faint marks left over from its medieval construction and subsequent renovations, up to the site's romantic ambience from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Its grounds stretch over five acres, inviting visitors to enjoy the view, from the village of Saché to the Indre Valley.

Step inside a manor that was once dear to Balzac. Furnished and decorated in the style of an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century bourgeois residence, the Château de Saché recalls the interior of the fictional Clochegourde castle from Balzac's novel *Le Lys dans la vallée* (*The Lily in the Valley*).

Visit rooms presenting the life and works of Balzac and soak in the atmosphere portrayed in the *Comédie humaine* (Human Comedy) thanks to period reconstructions (bedroom of the priest of Tours, the Fœdora boudoir, the office of the lawyer Derville).

## CONTENTS

1. **Balzac at the Château de Saché** p.04
2. **History of the Museum** p.06
3. **Museum Collections** p.08
4. **Visit the Balzac Museum** p.10
5. **Practical Information** p.13

### ATTRACTIONS

- A special place
- A peaceful refuge near the castles of the Loire Valley
- A wide range of experiences and activities (thematic tours, tours with a coffee tasting, workshops)
- Exceptional collections









MUSÉE BALZAC  
Château de Saché



## 1. BALZAC AT THE CHÂTEAU DE SACHÉ

*Born in Tours in 1799, Honoré de Balzac moved to Paris at the age of 14. The novelist visited Saché a dozen times between 1825 and 1848. This was a place to take refuge from his creditors and also to enjoy the calm of a kind of “monastery” where he could write and decompress. In the 1830s, the writer began to suffer from lung and heart problems. His doctor, Dr. Nacquart, regularly prescribed trips to his hometown, to breathe in the fresh air, away from his strenuous life in Paris. Balzac’s stays at Saché were sometimes punctuated by long walks in the estate’s centennial woods, visits with local notables, or even games of whist or trictrac with Jean Margonne, the owner of the estate.*

### Saché in the 1830s: A place for writing

Balzac released his first edition of *La Peau de chagrin* (The Magic Skin) in August 1831. Back in Tours, Jean Margonne wrote to Balzac to tell him how difficult it was to find the novel that was being touted in the press. The same year, Balzac stayed for an extended period at the Château de Saché. Letters between Balzac and his publishers and friends prove that the writer started work on *Maître Cornélius* and *Contes drolatiques* (Droll Stories) during that time.

On 8 June 1832, Balzac returned to Saché for over a month. From his small room on the second floor, he gave his mother instructions to manage his affairs in Paris, particularly those related to his financial problems. Balzac also set to writing *Louis Lambert* at a frantic pace. But he also took advantage of his stay at Saché to organize his eventual marriage with a rich widow from the area, the Baroness Deurbroucq. Balzac left Saché on 16 July 1832, making his way to Tours on foot in the scorching heat. He would recall this trip in *Le Lys dans la vallée* (The Lily in the Valley).



MUSÉE BALZAC  
Château de Saché

After *Le Recherche de l'absolu* (The Quest of the Absolute) was published in September 1834, Doctor Nacquart found Balzac to be so exhausted that he prescribed another trip for the writer to breathe in his native air. Balzac spent several weeks at Saché where he began

work on *Le Père Goriot* (Father Goriot), hoped to finish *Séraphîta*, and corrected proofs of *César Birotteau*. At the end of 1835, Balzac published the beginning of *Le Lys dans la vallée* (The Lily in the Valley) in the *Revue de Paris*. He gave the corrected proofs of the novel to Doctor Nacquart. In this novel, Balzac focuses on the Indre valley and the surroundings of Saché, drawing inspiration from real places and people.

Balzac fled to the Indre Valley in June 1836, shortly after winning his court case against Buloz regarding *Lys dans la vallée* (The Lily in the Valley). Even if Balzac took advantage of his stay at Saché to rest up, he began writing the first part of the *Illusions perdues* (Lost Illusions), working up to fifteen hours a day. After spending several months in Italy, Balzac returned to Saché for ten days in late August 1837 to fight off an inflammation of the chest. Balzac considered withdrawing to a little house on the banks of the Cher or the Loire in Touraine, as a means of evading service in the French National Guard.



The great lounge  
© STEVENS FRÉMONT

## 1840s: Saché, a holiday resort

During the summer of 1845, Balzac introduced Madame Hanska and her daughter Anna to Touraine: Jean Margonne was absent from Saché at that time, so they could not come to stay in the Indre valley. In early June 1846, Balzac used the train to travel quickly to Touraine in order to purchase a home for himself and Madame Hanska. He stayed a few days at Saché with Jean Margonne. Between two games of *trictrac*, Margonne advised him to buy the castle of Moncontour in Vouvray, a project that Balzac would renounce two months later.

Balzac spent the whole month of June 1848 at Saché, far from the political turmoil in Paris. But he did not find the inspiration to write *Les Petits Bourgeois* (The Lesser Bourgeoisie). He spent most of his time going for walks and playing whist. At the end of his stay, Balzac began to feel the first symptoms of a serious heart condition. In September, he joined Madame Hanska in Ukraine where he would stay for a year and a half. In May 1850, Balzac, very ill, returned to Paris with Madame Hanska, who had become his wife. He died on 18 August in his Parisian townhouse on Rue Fortunée [now Rue Balzac].







MUSÉE BALZAC  
Château de Saché

## 2. HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM



Balzac's bedroom  
© STEVENS FRÉMONT

### The creation of the museum

The Château de Saché became a museum dedicated to Honoré de Balzac in 1951. It was then owned by Paul Métadier (1872-1956) who bought it in 1926 as an addition to the forest estate of the Château de Valesne where he lived. At that time, the castle was abandoned and Paul Métadier's intention was to rehabilitate the place where Honoré de Balzac had lived.

On 11 May 1932, he registered the castle on the supplementary list of Historic Monuments. And during the Occupation (December 1942), he convinced the French government to add the site to a list of landmark sites as a means of protecting the castle from the sporadic stays of German troops there. Paul Métadier began to imagine the space as a writers' residence starting in the 1930s. But his son Bernard-Paul (1918-2021), having developed a real passion for Balzac, instead suggested turning the space into a museum for the illustrious author.

In 1943, Paul Métadier expressed his support for the idea of a museum, giving an overview of the concept to a journalist: "I would like to return this old house to its original luster by turning it into a museum. There are no doubt other Balzac museums; but Saché would have the particular charm of an essentially romantic setting, which has remained as it was a century ago. The old stones of this house are still so imbued with the spirit of the great writer that there is very little to do from a material point of view to bring back Saché's moving atmosphere, so familiar already to many Touraine locals."

At the time of its creation, the museum only had a few rooms, including the reception spaces and Balzac's bedroom. In 1958, the Métadier family donated the castle and the museum's first collections to the Conseil départemental d'Indre-et-Loire. Bernard-Paul Métadier



MUSÉE BALZAC  
Château de Saché

was appointed curator of the museum from 1958 to 2001. Extensive work began in 1964 and continued until the early 1970s to bring the building up to safety codes, make it accessible to the public, and adapt it to a museum space.

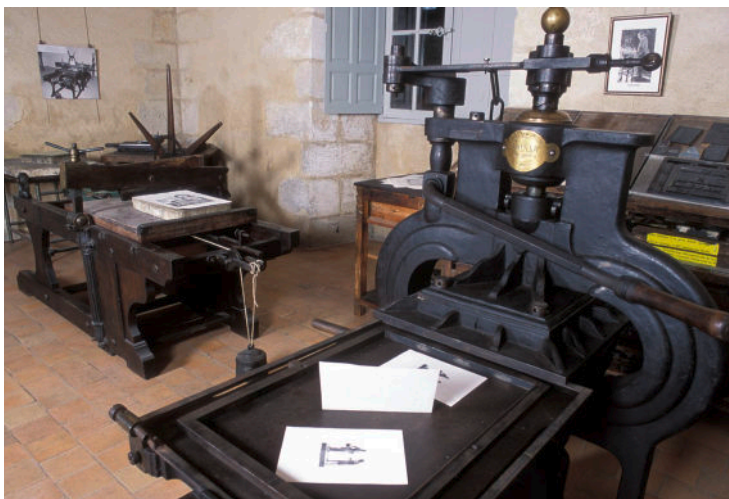


Dining room  
© STEVENS FRÉMONT

## The Museum

**1<sup>st</sup> floor** - The castle's reception rooms immerse visitors in the atmosphere of the first half of the 19th century: the living room (a registered historic monument) features an astonishing trompe l'oeil on wallpaper dating back to the nineteenth century. With this theatrical setting as a backdrop, Balzac and Jean Margonne would play whist (a card game) and *trictrac* (a dice game). In the dining room (registered historic monument), the 19th century wallpaper has been reconstituted from an original panel. The frieze features mythological scenes and may have inspired the description of the decor in the lounge of the Pension Vauquer in *Le Père Goriot* (Father Goriot). Balzac wrote the manuscript for the novel at Saché in 1834.

**2nd floor** - This floor invites visitors into the intimacy of the bedroom (registered historic monument) where Balzac worked long hours, drinking many cups of coffee to stimulate his imagination. The other rooms on this floor introduce visitors to the life and work of Balzac, through permanent collections (prints, manuscripts, engravings, paintings, and sculptures) and reconstructions of interiors from *La Comédie humaine* (The Human Comedy) (Abbé Birotteau's bedroom from *Le Curé de Tours* [The Vicar of Tours], Derville's study from *Colonel Chabert*, Foedora's boudoir from *La Peau de chagrin* [The Magic Skin]).



**On the ground floor**, there is a reconstruction of a nineteenth century printing press workshop, a nod to the trade that Balzac practiced from 1826 to 1828. The other rooms display sculptures and memorials created between 1850 and 2019 in homage to Balzac. Visitors can enjoy works by artists like Auguste Rodin and Nicolas Milhé in this panorama of tributes to Balzac.

Lithographic press from  
the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century  
© CHRISTOPHE RAIMBAULT



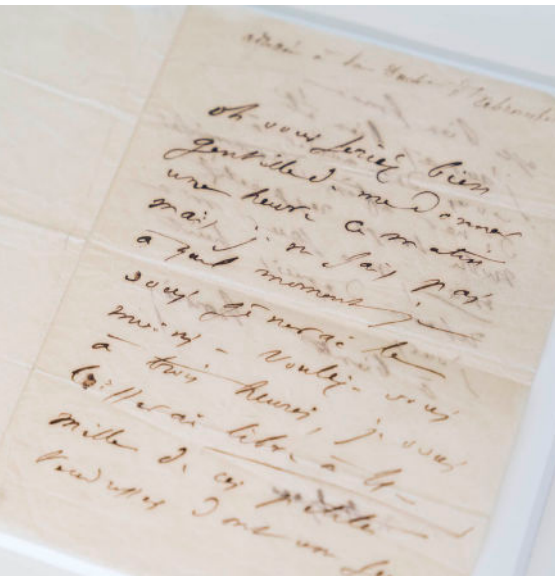


MUSÉE BALZAC  
Château de Saché

### 3. PERMANENT COLLECTIONS OF THE BALZAC MUSEUM

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*The permanent collections at the Balzac Museum include approximately 2,300 items (sculptures, paintings, prints, manuscripts, drawings, photographs, printing press materials, and furnishings). These collections were primarily constituted thanks to six donations to the Conseil départemental d'Indre-et-Loire from the Métadier family and Bernard-Paul Métadier. The Conseil départemental d'Indre-et-Loire has also made several major acquisitions. And they are supplemented by loans from other institutions.*



#### Basis of our print collection

The collection of prints at the Balzac Museum (approximately 1,000 items) is primarily made up of works donated by Bernard-Paul Métadier and the Samuéli collection.

- **Through his various donations, Bernard-Paul Métadier** has expanded the collection of prints at the Balzac Museum to reflect his personal interests. Some themes are therefore particularly well represented: Balzac's Touraine, Balzac's Paris, Balzac and science, Balzac and book printing.
- **The Samuéli collection** was acquired by the Conseil départemental d'Indre-et-Loire in 2002 with the financial support of the DRAC and the Centre region.



#### PERMANENT EXHIBITION

##### Tributes to Balzac

On the ground floor, visitors can enjoy a unique permanent exhibition made up of sculptures and other tributes to Balzac, from his death in 1850 up to a recent work by Nicolas Milhé for the city of Tours in 2019. Pieces from the Balzac Museum's collections as well as new loans from the Musée d'Orsay, the Musée Rodin, and the Maison Balzac in Paris are featured.





MUSÉE BALZAC  
Château de Saché

## Manuscripts

The collection of manuscripts at the Balzac Museum (letters by Balzac and his contemporaries) includes **three sets of corrected proofs of the novel *Le Lys dans la vallée* (The Lily in the Valley)**. These proofs (the second, third, and fourth files of proofs), along with the manuscript, plates, and other proof files (at the Institut de France in the Spoelberch de Lovenjoul collection), allow us to trace the genesis of this novel. The museum also possesses corrected sheets of *La Chine et les Chinois* (China and the Chinese) (nine corrected pages in Balzac's hand) and an annotated edition by Balzac of *Louis Lambert*.

## Paintings

A portrait of the daughter of Madame Hanska, another of her son-in-law by Jean Gigoux, and another portrait of Monsieur Hanski by Giuseppe Bezzuoli are exhibited at the Balzac Museum. These pieces are on loan from the Maison de Balzac (Paris).

## Sculptures

Balzac was represented by several sculptors, including **David d'Angers, Marquet de Vasselot, Auguste Rodin, and Alexandre Falguière**. Works by these artists are on display in the Balzac Museum. Rodin's work was commissioned by the Société des Gens de Lettres in 1891. **The genesis of this piece can be traced through the artist's numerous preparatory studies, including many plaster casts and bronzes** (Balzac Museum collections and loans).

The Balzac Museum also features a series of plaster casts and terracotta pieces by Pierre Ripert that represent characters from *La Comédie humaine* (The Human Comedy). And there are sculptures that reflect Balzac's personal taste for the arts (works by Falconet, Michelangelo, Michallon) and sources of inspiration for his novels.

## Prints

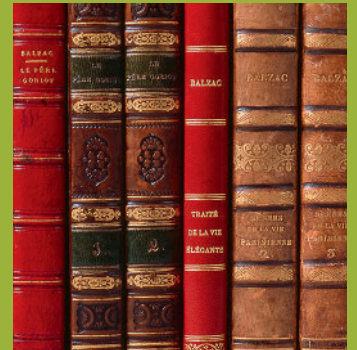
The collection of prints at the Balzac Museum includes many caricatures from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was a period during which the art of print making flourished, and prints nicely complemented Balzac's written studies of manners. It should be noted that the writer, who had close ties to the press, was often a target for caricaturists.

## Printing Equipment

In a nod to Balzac's trade as a printmaker between 1826 and 1828, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century printing press workshop has been reconstructed. It includes a Stanhope letterpress, a mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century lithographic press, a bookbinder, an antique paper cutter, and typesetter letters.

## A Balzacian Library

Thanks to a recent loan by the Mobilier National of an exquisite Restoration period bookcase, the Balzac Museum can now display the entirety of its Samueli collection. Made up of approximately six hundred volumes with high quality antique bindings, this is an exceptional collection, which took Jean-Jacques Samueli, an avid collector, decades to build. In particular, it includes all the early works that Balzac published under different pseudonyms. Today, these first works of a then little known author have become nearly impossible to find. This collection also contains almost all of the first editions of Balzac's novels and short stories, very beautiful illustrated copies, collective editions, and Belgian and Dutch pre-copies and forgeries.



Samueli Collection  
© CHRISTOPHE RAIMBAULT



## A DIFFERENT WAY TO DISCOVER THE COLLECTIONS

The Balzac Museum offers a variety of workshops and tours so everyone can have an amazing experience.





## 4. VISIT THE BALZAC MUSEUM

### OPEN TO ALL

- **Self-guided tour** with museum brochure   . Room cards available throughout the tour   .
- **Guided tour** (1 hour) **or presentation** (20 min.).  
Included in the ticket price. *Reservations are recommended for presentations and guided tours in French. Reservations are required for groups and English presentations or guided tours.*
- **Activities for groups** (children and adults), by reservation.
- **Shows, readings, workshops, demonstrations, lectures.**

### NEW

#### Sensory tour

Listen with your eyes... See with your (bare) feet...

At the edge of Saché's woods, follow a path to listen to and observe the forest, then enjoy the experience of walking barefoot. Another way to explore its sensations and emotions!



Sensory tour  
© J.C. COUTANT

### YOUTH

#### Fun tours and activities

- **Tour for ages 4-9:** "Discover the museum with Mistigris" game and riddle card

- **Tour for ages 10-14:** "BALZAC GAME" PUZZLE CARD - **NEW**

#### Tours, workshops, activities

For families during school holidays, by reservation.

### EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH OFFERING

#### Educational activities for school groups

The Balzac Museum offers a range of educational activities for primary, secondary, and university students.  
*By reservation.*

See the museum introduction and educational brochure at [www.musee-balzac.fr](http://www.musee-balzac.fr)



School group activities  
© CD37

#### Access to the library

The Balzac Museum houses an old collection of more than 900 works, as well as a collection of more than 800 documents. These collections can be consulted by researchers, students, and Balzac enthusiasts with a research project.

### PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

*The Balzac Museum offers adapted tours for disabled visitors (booking required), as well as a virtual tour available online or on site (on a tablet)*

**NEW**





**MUSÉE BALZAC**  
Château de Saché

**GROUPS**  
**BOOKING REQUIRED**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Groups of 15 people or more. If your group is smaller than 15 people, our experiences can be adjusted for an additional fee.

Please inquire for more information.









Capacity

- Guided tours: max. 25 people per group.

For groups of more than 25 people, two groups will be formed with a 20-minute interval between the start of each tour.

- Workshops: max. 20 people per workshop.

- 10 original tours, see below!

- **Self-guided tour** with museum brochure   . Room cards available throughout the tour   .
- **Guided tour** (1 hour) **or presentation** (20 min.). Learn about Balzac's relationship with Touraine and his life at the Château de Saché. Review of literary works inspired by Touraine and works written at Saché.  

**Thematic tours and workshops**

**IMMERSIVE!**

- **"The Lily in the Valley"**  
Explore the novel "The Lily in the Valley" and its ties to Saché in a presentation (20 min.) or a guided tour (1 hour).  
- Other thematic tours available:  
- Balzac and travel, Balzac, a novelist for women.
- **Writing workshop**  
Invitation to write in the spaces that inspired Honoré de Balzac.  
Time: 2.5 hours.
- **A Literary Walk, "The Lily in the Valley"** (April to October).  
Walk in the footsteps of Felix de Vandenesse to discover the plot of the novel and secrets behind how it was written by Honoré de Balzac.  
2 formats: 1.5 hours (5 km) or 5 hours (15 km).

**UNIQUE**

- **Presentation** (20 min.) **or guided tour of the museum** (1h) + **Coffee tasting** (+30 min.).  
Introduction to Balzac's ideal way of preparing coffee and coffee tasting.  
+ **Balzacian nap** (+30 min.)  
Relax in a deckchair and listen to Balzac texts read aloud by a museum worker.

**NEW**

**"Balzac and the Natural Environment" Workshop** (1+ hour)

Breathe in! Immerse yourself in the natural environment of the Château de Saché and explore your emotions through different fun and creative activities linked to Balzac's work.

**CREATIVE**

- **Thematic tour, "Balzac: From Manuscript to Print"** (duration: (1 hour), *includes operation of the printing press*  
Discover the Château de Saché as a place of writing, learn which novels were written at Saché, get introduced to the world of printing in Balzac's time through the use of a printing press.
- **or printing press workshop** (duration: 2 hours)  
Discover the world of printing as portrayed in the novel *Illusions perdues* (Lost Illusions) through the use of a printing press.  
The workshop includes a museum tour on the theme of Balzac as a printer.
- **Thematic tour, "From Balzac to Rodin: Art and The Human Comedy"** (duration: 1 hour)  
Discover the museum's sculpture collections.  
**or tour + sculpture workshop** (2 hours)  
This thematic tour includes an introduction to sculpting which aims to give visitors a new perspective on Rodin's sculptures.

**Balzacian Nap**  
© STEVENS FREMONT

Space available for private hire  
(barn) Capacity 80/120 max  
Ask us for more information.





MUSÉE BALZAC  
Château de Saché

## In the footsteps of Balzac in the Indre Valley

Other thematic tours are possible:

- **Château d'Azay-Le-Rideau**

(7 km)

[www.azay-le-rideau.fr](http://www.azay-le-rideau.fr)

Balzac may have been a regular guest at the Château de Saché, but he was also acquainted with the owners of the Château d'Azay-Le-Rideau, the Biencourts, who would lunch at Saché or invite the writer to Azay. In June 1848, just before leaving for Paris, Balzac spent two nights at the Château d'Azay-Le-Rideau. Discover the newly restored Biencourt apartments (visit and lecture upon reservation).

- **Château de l'Islette** (Rodin and Camille Claudel at the Château de l'Islette):

(9 km)

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

After receiving a commission to create a piece representing Honoré de Balzac in 1891, August Rodin, in the company of Camille Claudel, came to the Château de l'Islette to immerse himself in the novelist's native land.

*Guided tours upon reservation for groups.*



The Indre at Azay-le-Rideau  
© LÉONARD DE SERRES





MUSÉE BALZAC  
Château de Saché

## 7. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Days and hours of operation

Open all year round, closed on 01/01 and 25/12.  
1 April-30 June: 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. / 1:30 p.m.-6 p.m.  
1 July - 31 August: 10 a.m.-7 p.m.  
1 Sept.-31 Oct.: 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. / 1:30 p.m.-6 p.m.  
1 Nov.-31 March: 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.-2 p.m.-5 p.m. (closed on Tuesdays)  
*Schedules subject to change as of 1 January 2023, see our website, [www.musee-balzac.fr](http://www.musee-balzac.fr)*  
Last tickets sold 30 minutes before the site closes.

### Languages spoken at the reception

French and English

### Prices

Full price: **€6**  
Discounted price: **€5** (*students, children ages 7 to 18, groups*)  
Professional rate: **€4**  
Free for children under age 7  
Thematic tours, tours combined with an activity or demonstration, supplement of **€2.5** per person in addition to the entrance fee  
Workshops and walk: **€9** per person (**€7** for groups of 15 or more)  
School groups: from **€1.5** per student

Privilege Pass (*pass allowing free access for 1 year*): **€16**  
School workshops: **€4** per student  
Grounds: free

### Accessibility

- Adjusted tours for the visually impaired upon reservation.
- “Position T” hearing loop at the reception/ticket office and on guided tours upon reservation (*5 people max.*).
- Toilets and barn accessible to people with reduced mobility.
- Drop off in front of the park entrance

### Getting here

#### By car

10 minutes from Azay-le-Rideau (7 km)  
25 minutes southwest of Tours (27 km)  
From Tours, take the A85, exit 9 Chinon then D751, towards Saché.  
Free parking for coaches and cars.

#### By public transport

Azay-Le-Rideau train station located 7 km away.

#### By bike

Via the cycle route “L’Indre à vélo” between Azay-le-Rideau and the Royal City of Loches.



### E-ticketing for professionals

Access our platform to buy tickets in bulk at professional rates.

> Log on to [www.musee-balzac.fr](http://www.musee-balzac.fr), “ticketing” tab, “access my professional space”, then create your account by clicking on “register”.  
Payment by credit card or bank transfer.

**Plan your visit:**  
[www.azay-chinon-valde Loire.com](http://www.azay-chinon-valde Loire.com)  
[www.touraineloirevalley.com](http://www.touraineloirevalley.com)



The Balzac Museum has been awarded the Quality Tourism label in recognition of our commitment to quality over many years. We work alongside other tourist sites in the Loire Valley and in partnership with the Touraine Departmental Tourism Agency.



## Other sites owned by the Departmental Council of Indre-et-Loire:

Royal City of Loches, Royal Fortress of Chinon, Rabelais Museum–La Devinière, Priory of Saint Cosmas–Ronsard's House, Domaine de Candé, Le Grand-Pressigny Prehistory Museum

## SALES CONTACT

Local Tourism Board, Department of Conservation and Valorization of Department Monuments and Museums

**Muriel Varin**

Tel: 02 47 31 48 59

[mvarin@departement-touraine.fr](mailto:mvarin@departement-touraine.fr)

## BOOKINGS

**Balzac Museum / Château de Saché**

rue du château, 37190 Saché

Tel: 02 47 26 86 50

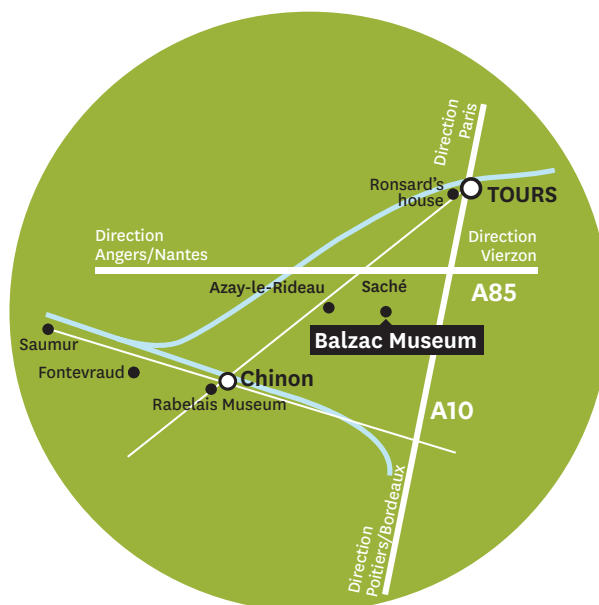
Fax: +33 (0)2 47 26 80 28

[museebalzac@departement-touraine.fr](mailto:museebalzac@departement-touraine.fr)

[www.musee-balzac.fr](http://www.musee-balzac.fr)



**MUSÉE BALZAC**  
Château de Saché



Un site du Conseil départemental d'Indre & Loire

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