15 **Pont-de-Ruan Church**
Such is the village of Pont-de-Ruan, a picturesque little hamlet leading to an old church full of character, the likes of which painters desire for their pictures.

16 **On the road to Saché**
I followed the road to Saché along the river's left bank carefully noticing the details of the hills on the opposite shore.

17 **View of Châteaux de Valesne and Château de La Chevrière**
(These castles) have also always been polite to each other but with none of the daily rapport or friendly intimacy that should have been established between Clochegourde and Frapesle, two estates separated by the Indre and where the owners could greet one another from their respective windows.

18 **View of Château de Saché**
Further on, in a hollow I saw the romantic piles of Château de Saché, a sad retreat though full of harmony; too sad for the superficial but dear to the a poet with a soul in pain. I too came to love its silence, its great gnarled trees and the nameless mysterious influence of its solitary valley !

To see, to discover

Musée Balzac – Château de Saché
Open all year. Honoré de Balzac came here for inspiration and to write as he stayed here several times between 1825 and 1848. 19th century-style furniture and decoration (lounge, dining room, Balzac's bedroom). Museum about Touraine in the life and work of Balzac. Sculptures by Auguste Rodin. 19th century printing studio.

Maison du meunier - Pont-de-Ruan
Group tours on request. Find out how a water mill works.

Espace Culturel Osier Vannerie - Villaines-Les-Rochers (6km south west of Saché)
Seasonal opening Dive into traditional wickerwork detailed by Balzac in The Lily of the Valley : *We went to Villaines, where baskets are made, in search of the prettiest.*

Château d'Azay-Le-Rideau - (7km west of Saché)
Open all year. Visit this jewel of the French Renaissance portrayed in The Lily of the Valley : *As we mounted a crest I came in sight of the Château d'Azay, like a multi-facetted diamond set into the Indre, standing on wooden piles concealed by flowers.*

Technical information

GPS DEPART N 47°14.415 - E 0°32.395
ELEVATION + 112 m

Accomodation/Catering

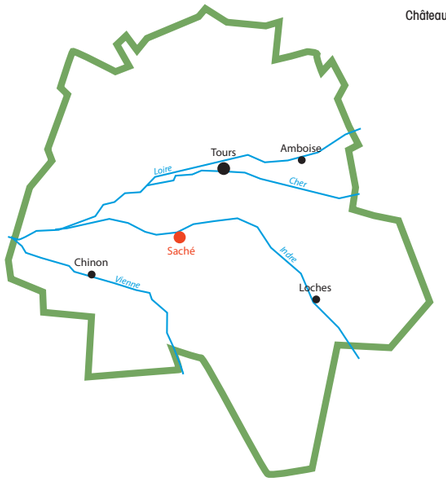
Bed and breafast, restaurant in Saché

Musée Balzac
Château de Saché - 37190 Saché
Tel : 02 47 26 86 50
www.musee-balzac.fr

Tourist office of Azay-Chinon Val de l'Indre
Tourism information of Val de l'Indre
Esplanade du Val de l'Indre - RD 910
37250 Montbazon
Tél : 02 47 26 97 87

Eglise de Saché

Château de Valesne



Walking charter

Cherish and respect nature. Listen to it, do not spoil it and do not harm it. Stay on the trail and be discreet. Do not damage plants or undergrowth. Do not smoke in the forest or do not light fires. Do not scare animals. Do not neglect human contact. Respect and get to know this rural world that welcomes you.

This material is funded by the Indre-et-Loire Council as part of the Footpath and Hiking Trail Regional Plan.

If you encounter any problem during the process of your walk, please inform us at sentinelle.sportsdenature.fr

Touraine Val de Loire — Ici, vivre est un art
FFRandonnée Indre-et-Loire
TOURAINE LE DÉPARTEMENT

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LABEL BALADE
EN TOURAINE

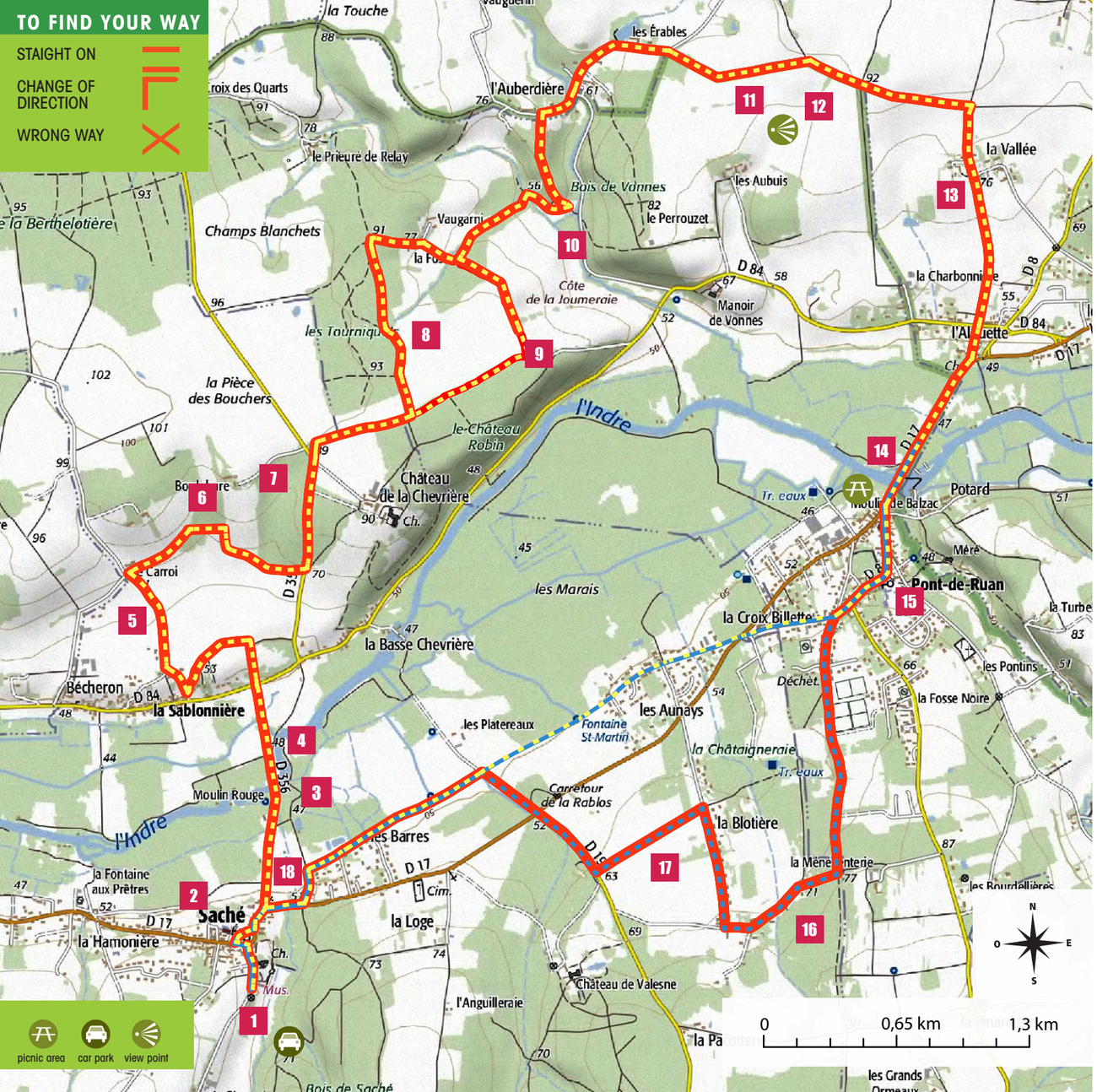
Hiking
NATURE - LITTERATURE

The lily of the valley

Saché
Pont-de-Ruan

— 3 h 45 - 14,5 km - medium
--- 3 h 15 - 13 km - easy
--- 2 h 30 - 10 km - easy

UN LABEL DU CONSEIL DÉPARTEMENTAL D'INDRE-ET-LOIRE
TOURAINE LE DÉPARTEMENT



Following his time at the Château de Saché, Honoré de Balzac set the drama of The Lily of the Valley (1836) deep in the Indre Valley between Saché and Pont-de-Ruan. Félix de Vandenesse lives here at Mr. de Chessel's home at Château de Frapesle. He often visits the Countess of Mortsauf at Château de Clochegourde and, at the end of the novel, he stays in a small room at Château de Saché. Extracts from the novel will introduce you to the landscapes and manors that inspired Balzac's story... Enjoy!

1 **Balzac Museum-Château de Saché car park or grounds**
I lived for some days in a room which looked on the tranquil, solitary valley I have mentioned to you. It is a deep recess among the hills, bordered by 200-hundred year old oaks with a stream running through it after heavy rain.

2 **Saché Church**
After church, Madame de Chessel naturally suggested her neighbours spend the intermediate time at Frapesle instead of crossing the Indre and meadows twice in the stifling heat.

3 **Saché Bridges**
I crossed the Indre at the Moulin Rouge bridge, took the ever-blessed punt and rode in front of Clochegourde where a light was streaming from a window towards Azay.

4 **Indre riverbanks**
In spite of the heat, when the meal was over I went down to the meadow for another sight of the Indre and its islands, the valley and its slopes, of which I seemed so passionate an admirer.

5 **On the way to the Carroi (Calder Workshop, residence and artistic design site). View of Château de la Chevrière**
On the way up the path by Clochegourde, I admired the well laid-out piles and inhaled the joy-laden air.

6 **Vineyard enclosure**
We would go to the vineyards in the best weather and spend half a day there. We'd fight about who had found the best bunches and who was fastest to fill their basket!

7 **Château de La Chevrière side road**
Perhaps I felt a flutter of vanity as the postilions cracked their whips along the new avenue leading from the main road to Clochegourde and through an iron gate I had never seen before, which opened into a recently built circular enclosure.

8 **Woods**
Be it a forest path like a cathedral nave, where the trees are columns and their branches arch the roof, at the end of which a distant clearing with daylight blended with shadow and tinged red by the setting sun looms through the leaves and appears like the colourful stained-glass of a choir full of singing birds.

9 **View of the Manoir de Vonnes**
This building, which looks grand in the landscape, is modest in reality. It has five windows at the front and the ones on the south-facing edges project about twelve feet, an architectural device which gives the idea of two pavilions and a sense of grace to the abode.

10 **Meadow**
The count made me admire the view of the valley which at this point is totally different to the one we'd had from the heights above. Here I might have thought myself in a corner of Switzerland.

11 **Panoramic view of the Indre Valley**
Here we come upon a valley which begins at Montbazon, ends at the Loire and seems to rise and fall between the châteaux on these double hillsides; a splendid emerald cup with the Indre coiling in the bottom of it.

12 **In the shade of a walnut tree**
If that woman, the flower of her sex, does indeed inhabit this earth, she is here, on this spot. Thus musing a leaned against a walnut tree beneath which I have rested from that day to this whenever I return to my beloved valley.

13 **On the way to Pont-de-Ruan**
Moved to the soul, I descended the slope and soon saw a village where poetry filled my heart and made me think it couldn't be equalled.

14 **Mills**
Imagine three mills placed among gracefully carved islands, crowned with tree groves rising from a field of water.