Auvergne Pays d'Issoire

Ressentez-Vibrez-Savourez

95 km

Castles and village fortress

The Issoire region boasts over 30 fortified villages. In response to the chronic insecurity of the Hundred Years' War, the villages fortified themselves. Following the rise of wine production, winemakers' houses and cellars were built.

For opening hours, producer contact information and brochures, visit our website *issoire-tourisme.com*

Step 1 : Champeix and the Marchidial

Start

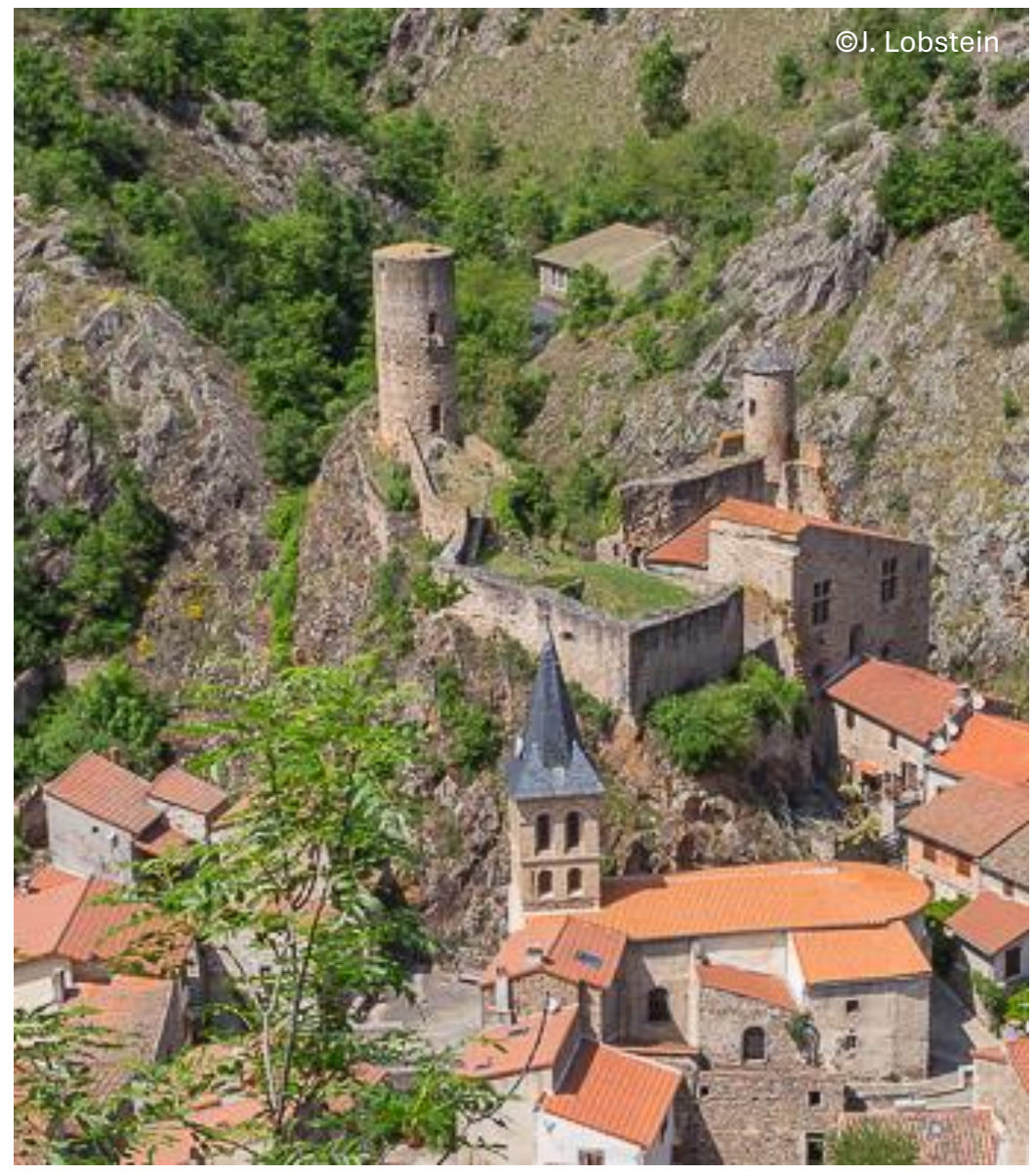
Champeix developed in the 13th century thanks to the Dauphins of Auvergne, who promoted wine production and markets. Begin your visit in the town center, then head to the castle district, "Le Marchidial," meaning "the market square." The market is held today on Friday mornings in the lower part of the village, and the remains of the castle can be seen through the castle chapel, part of the main tower, and the base of the keep. To get there, stroll through the terraced gardens.

Step 2 : Saint-Floret, its keep and the Chastel site

7 km
10 min

The village is protected by the keep of a 13th-century feudal castle perched on the rock.

It houses the Knights' Hall and its frescoes depicting the romance of Tristan and Isolde. On the other bank of the Couze River, overlooking the village, discover the Chastel site and its intriguing anthropomorphic tombs from the early Middle Ages. It can be reached on foot or by car via the D627.



Guided tours are organized from April to September departing from the tourist office to discover the interior of the castle and the Romanesque church of Chastel.

Step 3 : The fortified village of Pardines

7 km
10 min

This village was fortified in the 15th century; you'll discover ancient curtain walls and round towers integrated into the houses. Located at the foot of a cliff bordering a basalt plateau, don't miss the superb panorama it offers, especially through the heart-shaped "window onto" the Issoire region.

Step 4 : The fortified village of Mareugheol

15 km
20 min

The village of Mareugheol has a fort, built around the church during the Hundred Years' War. The very imposing village wall is a vast quadrilateral measuring 65m on each side, flanked by circular towers.

Step 5 : Villeneuve-Lembron and its castles

3 km
4 min

The Hôtel d'Aureilhe (old castle of Villeneuve) was the residence of the Aureilhe de Villeneuve family before the construction of the new castle in the 15th century.
The latter is an example of early Renaissance stately architecture. It was later decorated with superb murals.

Step 6 : Chalus and its castle

3 km
5 min

The village is marked by its link with viticulture, so you can discover the Côtes d'Auvergne AOC and the old winegrowers' houses.
The village castle is mentioned as early as the 10th century, a period when Chalus must have been an important stronghold. Today, part of this private castle (not open to the public) is a listed historical monument and features an imposing 13th-century circular arkose keep and a 15th-century main building.

Step 7 : The village of Le Broc

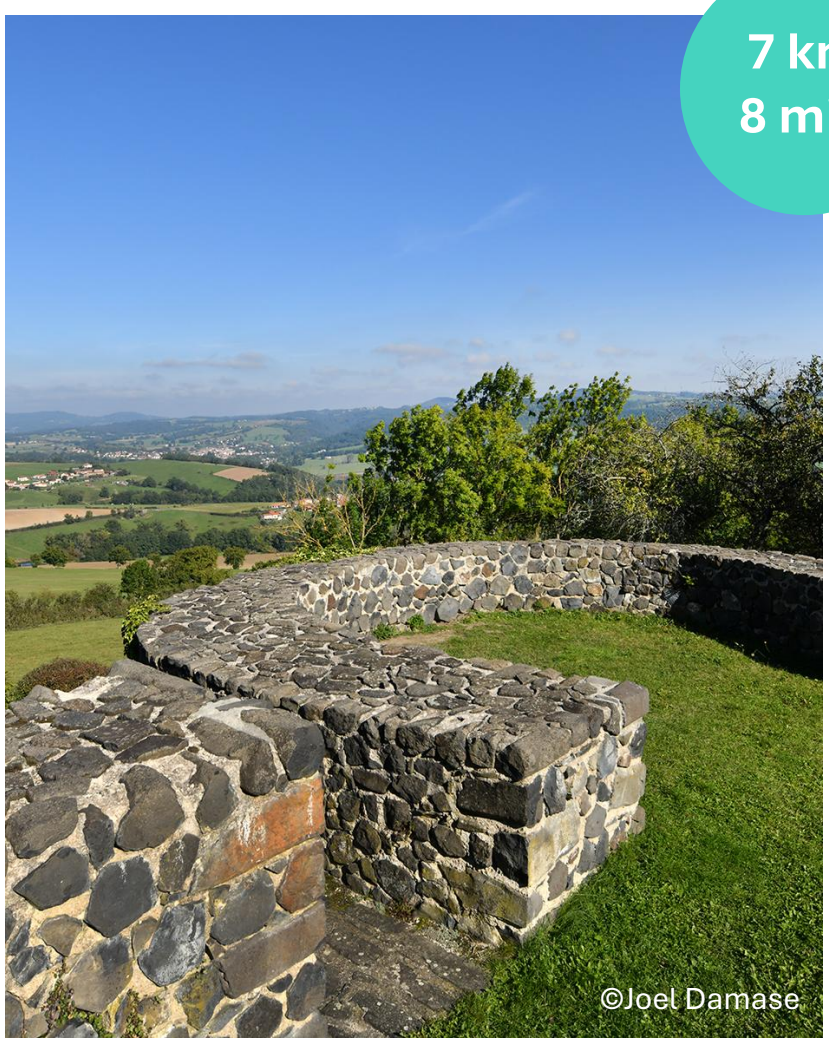
8 km
10 min

Clinging to the side of the Chaux plateau, a volcanic landscape exposed by erosion, the village of Broc, dominated by the old lord's castle, overlooks the plains and the Allier valley. From the summit, the plateau offers a superb panorama.

Step 8 : Parentignat Castle

10 km
10 min

Built between 1707 and 1720 by Anne-François de Lastic on the foundations of an **old fortified house**, the Château de Parentignat still belongs to the same family.
Already mentioned in the 18th century as one of the most richly furnished residences in the province, you can discover the castle on guided tours in the summer.



7 km
8 min

Step 9 : Usson and the Queen Margot

Perched on a volcanic hill and dominated by **a statue of the Virgin Mary**, the village of Usson offers a 360° panorama.
This village preserves the memory of Queen Margot, who spent 19 years in exile in its fortress, one of the most important in the kingdom. You will be captivated by the grandeur of the basalt columns and the imposing ancient ramparts. You will discover old houses, a reconstructed forge, and winegrowers' cottages.

23 km
21 min

Step 10 : Montpeyroux and its dungeon

This village, perched atop its hill, boasts over 1000 years of history. Its stone, a noble material that brought it wealth, is the source of its name, "Mont Pierreux" (Stone Mountain). At the entrance to the old fortified medieval village, you can discover a magnificent 14th-century **gateway**. An even older 13th-century keep overlooks the houses and offers a breathtaking panorama from its crenellated platform. Let yourself be captivated by the labyrinth of narrow streets.

6 km
10 min

Step 11 : The fortified village of Plauzat

The narrow, winding streets reveal the remains of the **old fortified village**. The town hall is housed in the former 17th-century castle, whose courtyard still incorporates some of the 14th-century fortifications. During your visit, be sure to also see the lion fountain in the church square and the Romanesque church of Saint-Pierre.

Come back to Champeix 6 km.

Free downloadable itinerary on
www.cirkwi.com et **www.issoire-tourisme.com**
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Updated by the Tourist Information Centre of Auvergne Pays d'Issoire in june 2026 - tourisme@capissoire.fr - 04.73.89.15.90