

Autour de la Cité Médiéval de Sainte-Suzanne

As its title suggests, this route takes you on a circuit around the medieval city of St. Suzanne. The route meanders back and forth from the river Erve which skirts the town, and since the river has steep banks in places, the route is fairly hilly. None the less, it takes you through some lovely scenery and shows some impressive views, so is well worth tackling.



The wicket gate

At St. Suzanne, park in the car park beside the main road at the junction of the D7 and D9. Walk into the cobbled pedestrianised town centre, and begin with a visit the ancient fortified centre of this castle town; you could also have a coffee in the bar to boost the energies, and take a look at the musée de l'auditoire as well.

To leave the town, walk downhill along the cobbled road, passing the musée de l'auditoire on your left, and the Wicket Gate on your right. Continue towards the cemetery and you will come to a junction where the route is signposted to the right. Follow this track past a collection of old mills and associated outbuildings, down to the river Erve, which you then cross by means of the road bridge. Once across the bridge, the trail climbs, and turns to the right. Keep following to the right until it becomes a farm track. (Don't go straight on to le Grand Moulin)



The road bridge over the Erve

Continue on uphill until you reach the road junction (at the retirement home or *maison de retraite*), at which point the trail is signposted off to the right. You want the footpath that diverges from the road to the left; follow this until you get to a house where a right turn will bring you back to the road a bit farther on. Turn left to follow the road as far as the farm le Gros Chêne, where again the trail is signed to the left, this time down a track that runs behind the farm. A visit to the Tertre Ganne (signposted to the right) is worth the ten minute detour, for an amazing view down onto St Suzanne through the trees.



The virgin in the woods

The trail now goes into the woods, where it loops back again almost to the farm at le Gros Chêne, via an impressive and beautiful statue of the virgin Mary. The path takes you along a wooded trail for a bit longer, and then along some fields until you come out where the river Erve crosses the main road that is the D7. Cross over the river, go 50 or so yards along the road and then turn left. (Not along the D125; take the little side turning before it.) The character of the trail changes here for a while as you follow the Erve along its Northern bank, offering a flat and open aspect and an easier walk or ride.



The bridge at le Plessis

Cross the river at le Plessis and on the other bank turn left, i.e. double back. The path will soon turn to the right and uphill to bring you within the territory of La Ferté Clairbois (marked by their sign of two ravens) where entertainments in the form of medieval re-enactments are offered during the Summer. At the junction turn right back down towards the Erve and continue down the paved road for a short way until you see the route signposted off to the left. The trail zig-zags along the edges of fields, and this is about half-way round so a grassy field can represent a good place to lay out a picnic lunch if you have one.



The Erve at Chammes

You will now be guided into the village of Chammes where your route will take you for 100 yards or so down the main road. Look for the route sign just off to the right down the turning and follow this as the road becomes a farm track uphill along the edges of fields. Your route is well-signposted taking you past a number of farms down a combination of metaled roads and tracks. You will eventually come to the D9 where you need to turn left and first right towards the farm “la Gravelle” and from there you will skirt the West and North sides of St Suzanne.



Camp des anglais or camp de Beugy

As you near the end of the walk, do not miss the Camp des Anglais, also called the camp de Beugy: it is where William the Conqueror camped his troops during their failed attempt to capture the city in 1083. It is in essence a field defended by ramparts, and it is these defenses that you can see today, surrounding what appears to be quite a small field for an army encampment.

The final stretch of the route is uphill from the camp, taking you via the Pol de Brebis to the road into the city which you can climb as far as the car park. If you have any energy left, the gift shop is worth a visit and the nearby coffee bar will refresh you.