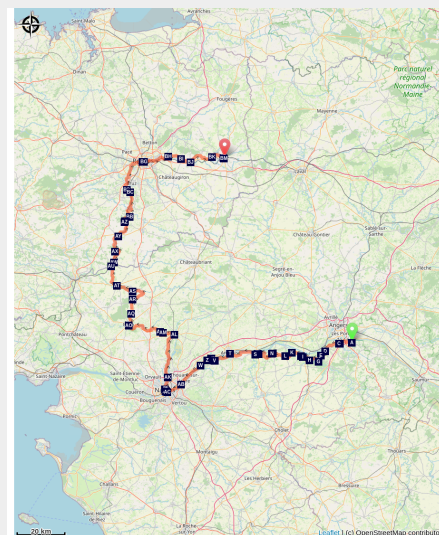


## 09. 610 France (4/8)

France - Pays de la Loire



Vitré (Amis saint Coloman)



*2720km long in France, the route of Coloman's exile in 610 is divided into 8 parts that can be followed successively or indistinctly. This fourth part of a particularly winding itinerary leaves the Loire after Nantes to head northwards to Brittany.*

Around 610, expelled from Luxeuil, Saint Coloman and the Irish monks were taken to Nantes under the guard of armed soldiers who were in charge of taking them on a ship to Ireland. But, barely on board, they managed to escape and, fearing that they would be caught, began an incredible journey through many countries. Most of the journey into exile takes place in France from East to West and then back again after Nantes. The itinerary mainly follows the great rivers and the vineyards often planted on their banks while crossing the historic cities that mark them out.

### Useful information

Practice : Pedestrian

Duration : 0 min

Length : 336.2 km

Trek ascent : 3694 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Multi-day trek

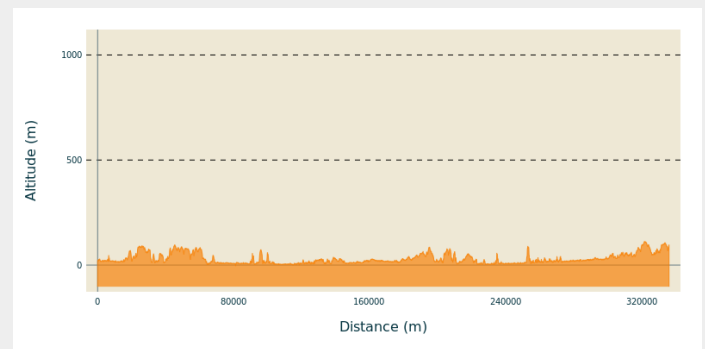
# Trek

**Departure** : 49610 Juigné-sur-Loire

**Arrival** : 35500 Vitré

**Cities** : 1. Pays de la Loire  
2. Bretagne

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation -3 m Max elevation 112 m

These two successive crossings of France are not the most direct way to reach the Swiss border to the east of Luxeuil, only 110km away. But they do reflect the strong image of a strong-willed Columban who had left Ireland for good, with no desire to return.

The fourth part (4/8) consists of 14 stages, each averaging 24km per day:

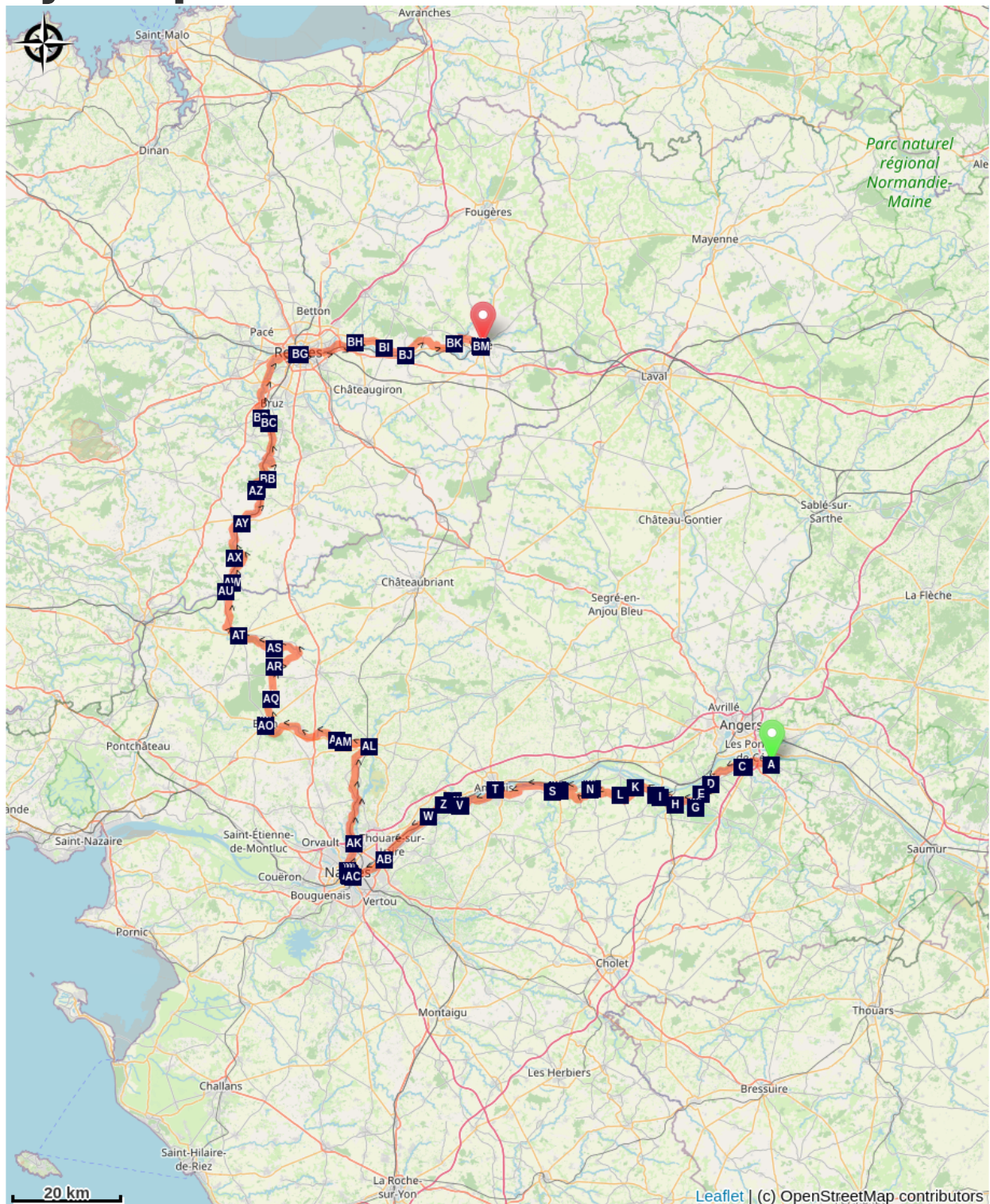
1. Juigné-sur-Loire - Rochefort-sur-Loire
2. Rochefort-sur-Loire - Mauges-sur-Loire
3. Mauges-sur-Loire - Saint-Florent-le-Vieil
4. Saint-Florent-le-Vieil - le Cellier
5. le Cellier - Nantes
6. Nantes - Nort-sur-Erdre
7. Nort-sur-Erdre - Blain
8. Blain - Marsac-sur-Don
9. Marsac-sur-Don - Langon
10. Langon - Messac
11. Messac - le Pont Réan
12. le Pont Réan - Rennes
13. Rennes - Châteaubourg
14. Châteaubourg - Vitré





## Stages :





- 1.** Juigné-sur-Loire to Rochefort-sur-Loire  
21.9 km / 222 m D+ / 5 h 30
- 2.** Rochefort-sur-Loire to La Pommeraye-Mauges-sur-Loire  
24.6 km / 407 m D+ / 6 h 30
- 3.** Mauges-sur-Loire to Saint-Florent-le-Vieil  
21.3 km / 274 m D+ / 5 h 30
- 4.** Saint-Florent-le-Vieil to Le-Cellier  
32.1 km / 375 m D+ / 8 h
- 5.** Le Cellier to Nantes  
20.9 km / 155 m D+ / 5 h 30
- 6.** Nantes to Nort-sur-Erdre  
31.5 km / 285 m D+ / 8 h
- 7.** Nort-sur-Erdre to Blain  
26.3 km / 163 m D+ / 6 h 36
- 8.** Blain to Marsac-sur-Don  
18.7 km / 166 m D+ / 4 h 48
- 9.** from Marsac-sur-Don to Langon  
29.5 km / 392 m D+ / 7 h 30
- 10.** from Langon to Messac  
16.8 km / 199 m D+ / 4 h 18
- 11.** from Messac to Le Pont Réan  
30.7 km / 459 m D+ / 7 h 30
- 12.** from Rennes to Pont-Réan  
18.4 km / 119 m D+ / 4 h 42
- 13.** Rennes to Châteaubourg  
24.6 km / 224 m D+ / 6 h 30
- 14.** Châteaubourg to Vitré  
19.6 km / 257 m D+ / 5 h




# On your path...




-  Saint-Germain Church at Juigné-sur-Loire (A)
-  Le Louet, the main branch of the Loire. (C)
-  Holy Cross Church at Rochefort-sur-Loire (E)
-  The Guérin Mill in Saint-Aubin de Luigné (G)

-  Mémorial de la bataille des Ponts de Cé in Murs-Érigné (B)
-  Matelon Castle in Denée (D)
-  Vineyard of the Layon hillsides (F)
-  The mills of Ardenay (H)


 Saint-Maurille Church in Chalonnes-sur-Loire (I)

 Chapel Saint-Aubin in Chateaupanne in Montjean-sur-Loire (K)

 Notre-Dame de la Salette Chapel at Le Mesnil-en-Vallée (M)

 Episcopal castle and the port of Saint-Pierre de Chalonnes-sur-Loire (J)

 Saint-Martin church in La Pommeraye Mauges-sur-Loire (L)

 The Provost's house in Saint-Laurent-du-Mottay, now the town hall. (N)

# All useful information

## How to come ?

### Access

Juigné-sur-Loire is accessible by bus.  
Vitré is accessible by bus and train.

### Advised parking

Luxeuil

# On your path...

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## Saint-Germain Church at Juigné-sur-Loire (A)

In the 9th century it was a barn church. From 1150 to 1250, the school of architecture created the "Plantagenêt" style and transformed the church.

In 1852, a bell tower is added and the architect Duvêtre restores the nave and the transept in neo-gothic style.

What makes this church special is that the vaults are supported by canopies and not by pillars as in other churches.

Under the canopies, statues and columns decorate the choir.

The church has an important statuary.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban

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## Mémorial de la bataille des Ponts de Cé in Murs-Érigné (B)

The Via Columbani passes at the foot of the cliff with the monument at the top which offers a very beautiful view of the Loire landscape.

The site is located on the hill at the foot of the Louet, the Via Columbani runs along the base of the cliff. You can climb to the top to admire the landscape. The access is from the Route de Nantes that you will take on the left of the Via Columbani by the Chemin des Près in the last houses. Then you will find the Via Columbani again by taking the path that goes down from the Memorial around the cliff.

This battle of 1793, is one of the main acts of the revolutionary wars of the Vendée. The Loire was a natural frontier during the religious wars and during the revolutionary period.

The Vendéans are facing a battalion from Paris, the plaque on the memorial 300 Parisians lost their lives there. Battle lost by the vendéens in front of the national guard of Angers.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban

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## Le Louet, the main branch of the Loire. (C)

Part of the 25 km of Le Louet crosses and separates the commune of Mûrs-Érigné in two. It presents changing landscapes, alternating sandbanks and wetlands. It is also an important migration axis, a stopover site and a breeding ground for certain species of birds that are rare in the region. Take the time to observe this natural area.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban





## Matelon Castle in Denée (D)

The castle is not open to the public.

18th century castle, built near an old medieval building. Many early 19th century fittings (chapel, entrance pavilions, gates, stable, dairy).

Garden transformed into a vast landscaped park after 1860, among many remarkable trees : black poplars, about thirty bald cypresses, hackberry trees ...

Continuing on the Via Columbani you will pass in front of the main entrance of the castle decorated with a pavilion of Thai architecture.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## Holy Cross Church at Rochefort-sur-Loire (E)

This church belonged to the abbey of Ronceray d'Angers by donation of the count of Anjou from the 11th century. The Romanesque church and adjoining buildings were razed to the ground around 1840 to allow the reconstruction of a large neoclassical church, then again in 1880 in eclectic style by Auguste Beignet. The unfinished Beignet's project spared the old 16th-century bell-tower.

The church is closed.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## Vineyard of the Layon hillsides (F)

The slopes of the Layon have been on the ground since the end of the 16th century under the impetus of Dutch traders. They were lovers of these wines, whose high alcohol content allowed them to keep well during their travels, and whose quality, by extension, the cost, was high enough to allow them to pay export taxes by Brittany.

In 1741, the Layon was channelled to facilitate the transport of goods such as wine or coal. The port city of Chalonnes-sur-Loire prospered with trade on the Loire.

During the Vendée wars, the region was set on fire and the infrastructure destroyed. Only the villages of Saint-Aubin-de-Luigné and Rochefort-Sur-Loire were spared.

The wines of the Coteaux-du-Layon are sweet and syrupy wines, with an aromatic richness that is endless.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban





## The Guérin Mill in Saint-Aubin de Luigné (G)

The tourist information office of Saint-Aubin has set up a belvedere with an orientation table at the top of the Moulin-Guérin. From there, you can enjoy a splendid panoramic view of the Mauges plateau and the Layon valley.

During the wars of Vendée the mills allowed to communicate, several were burned.

Before the vine occupied all the agricultural land, the cultivation of cereals was important and justified the construction of windmills and water mills.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban

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## The mills of Ardenay (H)

Built in the 18th century, the Ardenay windmills are angevin windmills located in the commune of Chaudefonds-sur-Layon. The village of Ardenay dominates the Loire and Layon valleys, in the heart of the Coteaux du Layon, at an altitude of 77 metres. The two mills in Ardenay were built at the end of the 18th century (contemporary era). The department will have 640 windmills at the beginning of the 19th century. Both mills are tower mills and will be equipped with Berton wings, an adjustable lift wing system, during the 19th century. The western mill, known as the Grand-Moulin, is a cheese mill (wheat), and the eastern mill, known as the Petit-Moulin, is a rye mill (rye). One of them has been renovated and equipped with canvas wings. You can also see a space on the life of the miller, an exhibition on the mills of Anjou.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## Saint-Maurille Church in Chalonnnes-sur-Loire (I)

Built on the site of the primitive "cella", it was built by Saint Maurille on his landing island when this disciple of Saint Martin came to convert the country, a centre of paganism. During the revolution, it was used for soldiers' bivouacs and as a fodder storage area. It was restored in 1846-1847 and since then the bell tower had to be repaired following the 1940 bombing. The choir and the northern chapel date from the 13th century. The Contemporary Stained Glass Stained Glass by Pierre Mabilie is a public state commission inaugurated in June 2014. The state public commission has made it possible to create 12 contemporary stained glass windows. They were made by the Duchemin workshops in Paris. They were inaugurated under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture in June 2014.

Saint Maurille († 453) is a bishop of Angers, considered holy by the Catholic and Orthodox Church. He is the patron saint of fishermen and gardeners. In Roman Catholic iconography he is represented as a bishop with a fish and holding a key or a spade.

he only authentic Life of Saint Maurille was written by Mainbeuf d'Angers, one of his successors, around 620. Maurille was born into a rich Milanese family. They very quickly put him under the leadership of the future Saint Martin who, coming from Hungary, had built a monastery in Milan for young people. Saint Ambrose then took Maurille as his reader. At the age of twenty, he left his family and country to take over the direction of Martin de Tours, where he had been appointed bishop. Martin ordained him a priest and sent him to Angers to work for the salvation of souls.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## Episcopal castle and the port of Saint-Pierre de Chalonnnes-sur-Loire (J)

It is difficult to get an idea of the importance of the castle at this time because the moat has been filled, the keep razed and the enclosure almost destroyed. A wall in small irregular apparatus would indicate a time before the 11th century. The Saint-Pierre tower (15th century) is the last tower still visible. This powerful episcopal castle was surrounded by moats and moats. The main dwelling included a pavilion with two large rooms and an oratory in a tower on the banks of the Loire, the base of which served as a prison.

In Chalonnnes the river activity was important. For a long time, the Loire was a strategic transport route. Ports have been built to accommodate more and more ships. After the opening of the Layon Canal in 1778, the quays became the loading point for the Layon wines that the Dutch came to buy. There was also lime and coal. In the 19th century, other ports were built which today merge with the quays and via Columban: Port Chailloux, Port Saint-Maurille and Port Garou. River transport was then abandoned in favour of the railway and the last bargemen abandoned their traffic around 1913.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## Chapel Saint-Aubin in Chateaupanne in Montjean-sur-Loire (K)

Founded in the 7th century, the parish of Chateaupanne was destroyed in the 9th century. On the south side of the priory enclosure, the Romanesque church has a single nave from the 11th century (with remains of paintings from the 13th century) and a 15th century choir (also with paintings, of which Christ judges from the middle of the 15th century).

Superbly restored, this chapel is worth a visit. An exhibition presents the work carried out.

### Saint-Aubin d'Angers

Born in the diocese of Vannes around 469, saint aubin was first abbot of Nantilly, near Saumur. He became bishop of Angers where he is the heavenly patron. Shining with charity in a barbaric and cruel world, he was one of the main promoters of the Third Council of Orleans, which reformed the Frankish Church with great firmness.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## Saint-Martin church in La Pommeraye Mauges-sur-Loire (L)

Saint-Martin church was built from 1864 to 1867, outside the old town in the presbyteral enclosure on the site of the former parish church.

In the shape of a Latin cross, in the ogival style with its three naves and two transepts, each decorated with a large rosette, built in tufa, it is difficult to resist the ravages of time.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## Notre-Dame de la Salette Chapel at Le Mesnil-en-Vallée (M)

In 1846, under the direction of Father Pineau, parish priest of Mesnil-en-Vallée, a wooden mission cross was erected. In 1880 a chapel replaced the mission cross.

In neo-gothic style, the chapel dominates the town, it was the place of pilgrimage during the feast of God.

Later a Calvary was erected next to the chapel.

The Chapel of the Angels with its canopy is leaning against the wall of the nearby cemetery.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## The Provost's house in Saint-Laurent-du-Mottay, now the town hall. (N)

The parish of Saint Laurent du Mottay depended on the territory of the Abbey of Saint Florent le Vieil and was, moreover, the seat of the Provost of the Abbey. The Provost held regular meetings in his provostal hotel. He was in charge of the administration of the fiefdoms belonging to the monks of Saint Florent. The Provost was the Lord of the parish.

Saint-Laurent-du-Mottay had General de Gaulle as its honorary citizen. The commune shares this privilege with two major French cities: Paris and Strasbourg.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban