

Les Quatre Saisons

A news-in-brief round-up through the seasons, from The French Ardennes

“A Winter’s Trail” - follow in the footsteps of Rimbaud in Charleville-Mézières

Born in Charleville in 1854, and buried in 1891 a few steps from Place Ducale in the cemetery of Avenue Boutet, the legend of the world famous poet [Arthur Rimbaud](#) – “the man with soles of wind” - still lives-on in The French Ardennes. And for the past few years, locals and visitors alike have been able to follow in the footsteps of the region’s “enfant terrible of Charleville” through a remarkable contemporary visual and historic art trail. The giant illustrations on the walls of the city cross between an illustrated book and an open-air museum, which also pass by the entrances to [a museum and a house](#) which reveal still more about the man, his life, and his work. Copies of the trail are available at the Charleville-Sedan Tourist Office and at the Musée de l'Ardenne, both located Place Ducale in Charleville-Mézières. A free audio guide to discover the route is also available via a QR code, [here](#).

The “Feast-ive” Traditions in The French Ardennes

Red turkeys, white puddings and red sugar sweets are just some of the famous festive flavours of The French Ardennes. In Rethel, there’s a festive dish available every day of the year, thanks to its white sausages. But it’s a local delicacy that also finds a very special place on the table at Christmas-time. “Boudin blanc de Rethel” enjoys protected geographical indication status (in much the same way as the UK’s Melton Mowbray pork pie, for example). The red turkey is a hardy breed. Introduced to the Ardennes, it found its way onto the table of Charles IX for the celebration of his wedding with Elisabeth of Austria, at the basilica of Mézières on 26 November 1570. One of the sweetest Christmas traditions of the whole of France, meanwhile, has been passed down from generation to generation in the Ardennes: red sugar sweets. Now a symbol of the Ardennes’ culinary heritage, the coloured and flavoured sugar is poured by hand into traditional moulds, representing animals, characters and objects. Today, one of the places that still helps to keep this tradition alive is [Maison Simon](#) in Bogny-sur-Meuse. And this artisan confectioner is this year also marking its 100th anniversary. “Joyeux Noël”!

Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds to perform at 21st ‘coming of age birthday party’

Ranked among the Top 10 music festivals across the whole of France, [Cabaret Vert](#) has been entertaining Charleville-Mézières for 20 years now. Named after Arthur Rimbaud’s poem of the same name, the Ardennes festival is already preparing to welcome festival goers to its “coming of year” 21st birthday party from 20 to 23 August in 2026 for four days of music on five separate stages. Cabaret Vert has always promoted the Ardennes region while supporting sustainable development. In 2024, it was awarded the “Greener Festival” - HIGHLY COMMENDED” certification by the European organisation A Greener Future (AGF). It attracts more than 100,000 festival-goers. The first headline act for 2026 has already been announced, with news that Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds will be performing here on 21 August.

The 2026 Sedan Medieval Festival - the Festival of Fools

Travel back in time in the heart of Europe’s greatest fortified castle, which was voted France’s “Most Loved Historic Monument” in 2023. Over the weekend of 16 and 17 May, Sedan Fort will host around 25,000 visitors as [the annual Medieval Festival](#) - featuring camps, shows, workshops, children’s play areas, re-enactments of daily life and a medieval market with over one hundred stalls - returns to this town in the French Ardennes. The castle and its surroundings will be brought to life by scores of travelling companies - from musicians and street theatre, to reenactors - all of whom will take part in the grand procession on the Saturday evening, followed by a show featuring 400 other costumed participants. Sedan Fort’s other great claim to fame is a modern day 4-star hotel, set within the structure of this magnificent monument.

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For press information, contact:

Jauko Rappel

T: +33 3 24 56 67 74

E: rappel@ardennes.com

Or, Ian Weightman T: 01782 680963

Email: ian@ianweightman.co.uk