

Les Quatre Saisons

A seasonal "news-in-brief" update, from The French Ardennes

Looking for a fresh, and 'alternative', way to explore France...?

If so, meet the destinations and initiatives from [Atout France's third 'Alternative France'](#) event which was staged in London earlier this summer. From 'alternatives' in Eastern France to an Alpine alternative for the summer, the "destination dupes" were out in force at this annual media event. And joining it for the first time was The French Ardennes: the only region of France to launch a new 'Grande Route' hiking trail in 2026; one of the beer capitals of France; the birthplace of famous poet Arthur Rimbaud; the World Capital of Puppets, with a festival once named amongst the world's 'Top 20 Events to Travel For'; and the home of the most 'alternative' music festival in the world, the Cabaret Vert.

A sweet reason to visit the Ardennes

[Ardennes slate chocolate](#) is a gourmet French specialty crafted to look like thin pieces of slate. It features a crunchy, toasted almond and hazelnut nougatine centre that is encased in a layer of distinctive blue or grey tinted white chocolate. Presented, these days, as an artisan treat, Ardennes Schists were created to pay tribute to the historic slate-mining industry of the Ardennes region - especially around the towns of Rimogne and Fumay, still known to this day as the "City of Slate". Traditionally, the bluish-grey colour was achieved using food dyes, but many modern artisans now use natural colorants derived from spirulina and apple extracts. Because these "slates" are a regional delicacy, they are most easily found in local tourist shops and chocolatiers throughout the French Ardennes.

Get ready to step-up... the Ardennes is going 'grand' in September

This is a "save the date" for an emerging story from the world of French tourism: a timely reminder that, from this autumn, it will be possible to follow in the footsteps of *French* holidaymakers to The French Ardennes - when a new Grande Randonnée de Pays (GRP) hiking trail is being launched in September. The [Ardenne Tour, in the footsteps of Arduinna](#), is a 350km loop that will straddle the French and Belgian Ardennes, taking-in the remarkable landscapes of the famous Ardennes. The route has been designed so that it can be completed in fifteen stages, of around 23km per day. The trail draws its inspiration from Ardennes mythology and focuses on Arduinna, the Celtic goddess and protector of the Ardennes forest - helping hikers to discover Sedan (and its impressive fort), pretty villages such as Signy-l'Abbaye and the fortified town of Rocroi.

Experience the Deer's Bellow

Less than two hours from Paris, The French Ardennes is one of the least-explored, greenest and wildest areas of France. Most of it was designated as a Parc Naturel Régional (PNR) in 2012. And on various dates in September and October 2026, it will be possible to join guided tours that go deep into the forest near Hargnies to hear [The Deer's Bellow](#). One of those dates, this year, is 18 September.

And finally...it's not too late to hit the right note!

Ranked among the top 10 music festivals in France, [Cabaret Vert](#) has been entertaining visitors to Charleville-Mézières for 20 years. Named after Arthur Rimbaud's poem of the same title, the Ardennes top music festival will this year welcome amongst others Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, Underworld, Sparks and Deftones along with an army of festival goers from 20 to 23 August for four days of music and other entertainment on five stages.

ENDS

Full [Media Kits](#) (in English) are available online; all press trips are arranged with the aim of reducing the impact of tourism on the environment.

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