



## History and uses

In the Western world, tapestry\*, which first developed in the Middle Ages, underwent a major revival in the 16th century, becoming an element of prestige throughout Europe. Powerful people used wall hangings\* as a way to assert their power and wealth, with series of tapestries illustrating stories from the Bible or mythology. Made from precious materials, these furnishing textiles provided lavish interior decoration for residences, while also making them more comfortable. Easy to transport and install, the flexible use of tapestries\* was a major asset for the nobles who travelled from château to château.

## The Châteaudun tapestry\* collection

As it was purchased unfurnished, the château is ideal for a permanent tapestry\* display, along the lines of an idea initiated by André Malraux. This exceptional collection, acquired by the State between 1938 and 2012, consists of wall hangings woven in French and Flemish manufactories in the 16th and 17th centuries, before the Gobelins manufactory opened in Paris.

## Glossary

**Lintel:** horizontal piece used to support the wall above a bay window, door, etc.

**Projecting staircase:** projecting outside the building.

**Recessed staircase:** built inside the main part of the building.

**Ribbed vaulting:** rib used to reinforce and support a vaulted arch.

**Sallette:** small room for private use.

**Steam room:** room used for steam baths.

**Tapestry:** textile produced manually from the regular interweaving of coloured warp and weft threads to form an image.

**Tracery work:** all the fixed elements dividing a bay.

**Wall hanging:** set of tapestries illustrating a story.

## Practical information

Average length of visit: 1 hour 30 mins.

Guided tours of the keep.

Specially-adapted tours for disabled visitors.



### Gift and book shop

The guide for this monument can be found in the *Itinéraires* collection in the gift and book shop.

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# Château de Châteaudun

A château in the Pays Dunois

## Residence of the “Bastard of Orléans”

Following the Norman invasions of 911, Thibaut le Tricheur (Thibaut the Trickster), the Count of Blois, built a fortress at Châteaudun. In the 12th century, his descendant added an imposing keep. In 1391, the Counties of Blois and Dunois were purchased



by Louis d'Orléans, brother of the King of France, Charles VI. In 1439, his son Charles of Orléans gave them to his half-brother Jean, known as

the “Bastard of Orléans”, or “Dunois”, the companion-in-arms of Joan of Arc. In 1452, he renovated the château, adding a Holy Chapel and a wing that now bears his name. His work was continued by his descendants, the Dukes of Longueville.

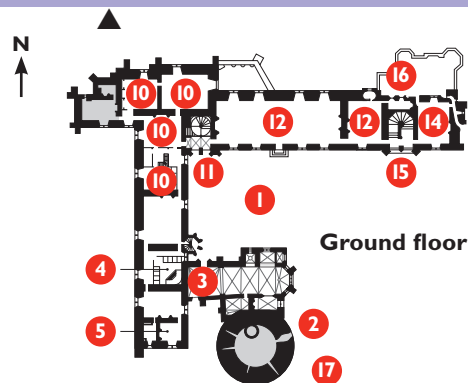
## Battered by History

When the Longueville family died out in the early 18th century, the château passed to the Dukes of Luynes. Semi-abandoned, in 1723 it provided shelter for the victims of a fire that ravaged the town. During the Revolution, the damaged château was ransacked and the main building was turned into barracks. The château received further mistreatment from the Prussians in 1870. It was purchased by the State in 1938 and restored by the architect Jean Trouvelot, who achieved a remarkable restoration.

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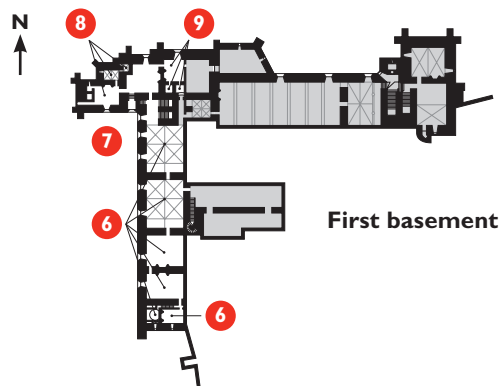
\* Explanations overleaf.



### Four centuries of architecture

Built on a rocky promontory, the château de Châteaudun occupies a strategic location in a perfect defensive position between Beauce and Perche.

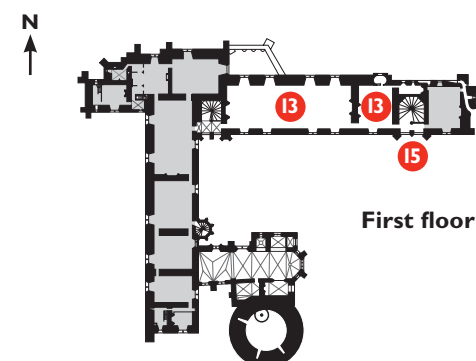
- 1 The main courtyard** has three spiral staircases that illustrate the architectural developments of the Renaissance. The first, from the 1460s, is a projecting staircase\* in a polygonal tower, in the French tradition. The other two recessed staircases\* have loggia façades. The one near the Dunois wing, from the 1470s, is a masterpiece of flamboyant Gothic architecture. The third one at the other end, from the early 16th century, is strongly Gothic in its verticality and exterior sculpted décor, but its interior décor is Italianate.
- 2 The cylindrical keep** is characteristic of 12th century military architecture and is 31 metres high with three floors. It was originally accessed via a door 10 metres above the ground, leading to the chapel.
- 3 The chapel** was built between 1451 and 1493 to house a relic of the Passion of Christ, received by Dunois from King Charles VII and placed in the Holy Chapel in 1468 by a decision of the Pope. The lower chapel consists of an openwork choir and a nave with three-quarters ribbed vaulting\*. Its bays are decorated with flamboyant tracery work. All that remains of the original décor is a set of fifteen statues from the 15th century representing the saints revered by Dunois and his family. A wall painting from 1468 depicts *The Last Judgement*.



### The Dunois wing

This wing, built between 1459 and 1468, contains five levels that accommodate the contours of the land rising from the Loir.

- 4 The hall of justice** is a rare example of an Ancien Régime courtroom that has retained its 17th century décor. It was used as a Revolutionary Tribunal in 1793.
- 5 The bedroom** features unique panelling painted with funereal motifs from the 16th century.
- 6 The kitchens** on the ground floor have ribbed vaulting\*, descending to two large fireplaces, with a bread oven and latrines at the end.
- 7 The hanging gardens**, the first to be built in France following the Italian model, were a place to relax away from prying eyes, for use by Dunois and his family.
- 8 The bath apartment**, a private area for use by Jean de Dunois, converted into cells in the 17th century, contains a dressing room and a small raised area for the bath and steam room\*.
- 9 The prisons** contain several 17th century cells featuring multiple graffiti.
- 10 The North building** on the ground floor contains several rooms, one of which is decorated with fleur de lys and crowned "L" letters commemorating Louis XIV's visit to the château in 1682 and 1685. The panelled dining room and alcove bedroom alongside it were built in the 18th century by the Dukes of Luynes.
- 11 The main Gothic staircase** is reminiscent of the large spiral staircase in the Louvre. The dormer windows at the top are decorated with fleur de lys, indicating that the owner of the château is a descendant of Charles V.



### The Longueville wing

This wing was built from 1510 by François II de Longueville, Dunois' grandson. The distribution of the apartments is identical on both floors: a large ceremonial hall followed by a bedroom and a sallette\*. It houses an exhibition dedicated to the art of tapestry\*.

- 12 The Duke's apartments** contain seven wall hangings\* depicting the Old Testament, woven in Paris between 1640 and 1650, after Simon Vouet.
- 13 The Duchess's apartments** on the first floor contain seven wall hangings\* depicting Tancredi and Clorinda, woven in Paris in the latter half of the 17th century, after Michel Corneille.
- 14 The weaving loom**, made in Aubusson in around 1960, is characteristic of the "basse-lisse" tapestry\* technique, allowing three weavers to work simultaneously on pieces that are two by three metres.
- 15 The Renaissance main staircase** is sumptuously decorated with Italianate motifs on the door lintels\*, capitals and the newel.
- 16 The terrace** marks the site of a bedroom, chapel and cabinet, which collapsed in the 18th century.
- 17 The medieval-inspired garden** is arranged into squares, surrounded by hedges planted with rose bushes and 150 species of plants known in the Middle Ages.

\* Explanations overleaf.