

## Burgundy/Central France

Canal de Bourgogne

Canal du Nivernais

Yonne river

Canal du Loing

Canal de Briare

Canal du Centre

Canal latéral à la Loire

Canal de Roanne à Digoin

Seille river

Basse Saône river

### Sample Guide:

This is an abbreviated copy of the guide.

The full guide contains 136 pages, with a detailed section on each of the above canals.



# Table of Contents

4	Using the maps and logs	45	Canal du Nivernais	95	Canal latéral à la Loire
6	Haltes and Ports de Plaisance	48	Canal du Nivernais, Seine side map	96	Canal latéral à la Loire north map
7	Waterways of Burgundy - overall map	49	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance - north	97	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance - north
8	Index map & waterway dimensions	63	Canal du Nivernais summit map	100	Embranchement de Châtillon
9	Regions of Central France	64	Canal du Nivernais, Loire side map	103	Decize area map - connecting waterways
10	Canals & Rivers of Burgundy	65	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance - south	104	Canal latéral à la Loire south map
11	Canaux du Centre	66	Connecting Waterways - Nivernais south	105	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance - south
14	River basins & summits	67	Yonne river	108	Canal de Roanne à Digoin map
15	Loop cruises in Burgundy	69	Yonne river north map	109	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance
16	Vineyards of Central France	70	Yonne river south map	110	Canal du Centre
17	Cruising Burgundy by Hotel Barge	71	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance - Yonne	111	Canal du Centre map
18	Hotel Barge Routes in Burgundy	79	Canaux du Centre	112	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance
19	Self-skippered Rental Boat Operators	81	Canaux du Centre dimensions/elevations	119	Basse Saône river map
22	Photo Slideshows	82	Canal du Loing	120	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance
23	Canal de Bourgogne	83	Canal du Loing map	124	Canal de Pont de Vaux
26	Canal de Bourgogne map/elevations	84	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance - Loing	128	Vineyards along the Saone
27	Canal de Bourgogne north map	86	Canal de Briare	129	Seille river
28	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance - north	87	Canal de Briare map	130	Seille river map
34	Canal de Bourgogne south map	88	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance - Briare	131	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance
35	Haltes & Ports de Plaisance - south	94	Briare area map - connecting waterways	135	Navigation Chartbooks
41	St-Jean-de-Losne - “The Center of the French Waterways”				



## *Cruising the Canals & Rivers of Europe*

# Waterways of Burgundy

This EuroCanals Guide is a compilation and update of several guides published from 2001 through 2011.

Slideshows supplementing the guide are available on the EuroCanals website.

The photos, maps and waterway information are intended for planning purposes only, not for navigation on the waterways. Appropriate guidebooks and charts for navigation are described elsewhere in this guide.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted or used in any form without the prior permission of the publisher, except for personal use by the purchaser. The purchaser is licensed to install copies of this document on any computer owned or used by the purchaser and to burn additional copies on CD/DVD for their own use only; not to be distributed to other persons. You are welcome to install copies in your own desktop computer, laptop and any portable reader which supports Adobe PDF files. The purchaser is entitled (and encouraged) to print such pages as may be useful for their personal use. If you need advice on printing, contact Tom Sommers by email.

If other persons are interested in using some of the maps and forms, please refer them to: [www.eurocanals.com](http://www.eurocanals.com)  
These publications can continue only with widespread support among the cruising community.

Published April 2011 by EuroCanals Publishing, 369 Montezuma St., Suite 154, Santa Fe NM 87501 USA  
Email: [tomsom@eurocanals.com](mailto:tomsom@eurocanals.com)      © Copyright Tom Sommers 2011      Updated September 2014.

# Using the maps and logs in this guide

The maps, logs and other waterway information are intended for planning purposes only, not for navigation on the waterways. Appropriate guidebooks and charts for navigation are described on the page: [Navigation Chartbooks](#)

**Maps** in this guide are intended to present an overall view of the waterway, including the connecting waterways; the latter are shown in various colors for identification. A chart of the elevation at each lock along the route depicts the closeness, or frequency, of the locks; on the flat sections the locks are less frequent and the *bief*, the pound of water held above each lock, is longer. When the chart line is steep, the locks are frequent, closer together, and more of them will be encountered during a day. Significant towns are marked on the chart, with their location in kilometers shown on the x-axis. The map and elevation chart are the first source for planning a route and selecting the stops along the way.

**About Map Index Numbers:** In the data tables which follow there is a column titled Map; that should be interpreted as Map Index Number; the full title is not shown due to space limitations. There are 90 inland waterways in France; they each have a French name, sometimes very long and complex, which are difficult to include on a map. For this reason, index numbers (0 to 90) have been assigned by the author in order to reference the maps to the detailed data tables. These EuroCanals index numbers are not used in the charts and guidebooks published by others.

There are some minor waterways which do not have an actual map of their own in this guide, even though they have an index number. A unique, matching color for each waterway is used in the tables of dimensions and on the regional maps, however the index number is also used to identify each waterway. The same index numbers are carried through to any other EuroCanals Guides which include that waterway.

**Distance** data is shown as **Pk**, Post Kilometre (kilometer post), as established by the waterway authority. Although you may see an occasional actual post or sign with this information, it is intended as an index for the charts. The direction of ascending Pk numbers, which reset at zero for each new named waterway, were established when the waterway was opened.

**Logs** of each waterway furnish more specific information; here you can determine the exact distance between towns and the number of locks in each section, and from the data you can estimate the travel time. Speed of the boat will vary with the direction and flow rate of any current, as well as any speed limit regulations and the status of other traffic; generally boat speed will be from 6 to 10 km/hour. The time in each lock will vary, with automatic locks, especially those in a linked chain, operating quickly, while manually-operated locks will require more time. A beginning point for calculations is 15 minutes per lock. Using the logs to record the arrival time at each point will provide information to adjust these general figures to more accurate, actual numbers. Logs for these waterways are continually updated; the logs are shown at [eurocanals.mobi](http://eurocanals.mobi)

## Using the maps and logs - page 2

**R/L** - Locations in the logs are sometimes labeled as to the side of the waterway on which a mooring or a lock can be expected, using the accepted method for identifying the river bank. That is, if you are looking downstream, with the river flow or down a series of locks, the banks are designated **R** for the right-hand side and **L** for the left-hand side. The English letter is used; the equivalent French terms are RD (*Rive Droite*) and RG (*Rive Gauche*).

**Lock Size** - The smallest lock size on each waterway is shown in the dimensions table on the maps, as Length X Width, in meters. In general this is the standard Freycinet-gauge lock size, although some locks on the Canal du Nivernais are shorter. None of the locks are restrictive for most pleasure boats, only the largest barges need be concerned.

**Draft** - This refers to water depth; the equivalent French term is *Tirant d'eau* (TE). The depth shown is that officially stated by the waterway authority. The actual depth may be significantly less in places, due to low water levels as a result of climate conditions or the needs of managing and maintaining the canal. Silting is a problem in some sections; boaters should be wary when approaching a mooring as there may be shallows, rocks or underwater obstructions. Lockkeepers and other boaters should be consulted regarding the status of the channel or of potential moorings.

**Height** - This refers to clearance under fixed bridges; the equivalent French term is *Tirant d'air* (TA). The height shown is that officially stated by the waterway authority. The actual clearance may be significantly less in places, due to high water levels as a result of climate conditions or the needs of managing and maintaining the canal. In some instances a surge wave can travel quickly down a canal when a lock releases its water, thus suddenly raising the water level. Some boaters utilize a flag staff on the bow, set at the highest point of the boat's superstructure, to judge the sufficiency of clearance. The skipper should be careful and vigilant when approaching all bridges. At some locations the lockkeepers may be able to lower the water level of the pound, at the request of the skipper. Many of the bridges are of very old stone-arch construction; obviously the sides of the arch will be lower than the center, another situation which requires the skipper's attention.

**Chain of Locks** - There are a few instances of locks which are grouped together and function in a chain, to speed travel and to reduce wasteful dumping of water from the locks. These chains may be automatic or there may be a traveling lockkeeper. You are expected to complete the entire chain without stopping; if you do stop, you should notify the lockkeeper or remote authority.

# Haltes and Ports de Plaisance

Mooring quays and docks are often provided by the local municipalities. Commercial marinas are usually operated by a boat service yard or as an extension of a rental-boat base. The smaller, less well-equipped moorings are called a *halte*, while those which are larger and often with full facilities are called a *port de plaisance* (pleasure-boat port). But skippers should be aware that it is legal to tie up along the bank of a canal almost anywhere; there are certain sections which are marked by signs as of limits for safety reasons, such as on a curve, and of course the skipper should be alert against creating a hazard. Rental boats are usually provided with stakes that can be driven into the ground to take mooring lines. It is illegal to tie to trees, although it is commonly done, and it is definitely prohibited to place mooring lines across the towpath, which in many places is used by hikers, runners, bicyclists and motorbikes, as well as cars and vans of the waterway employees.

Electricity (220volts 50 Hz) is not always available; when it is, it may be included in the overnight fee or it may be obtained with tokens inserted into the meter on a kiosk.

Water is commonly available, at haltes, ports and locks. However the type of connection varies widely, it may be necessary to transport water in a container or to rig some sort of adapter for a hose.

Toilets are usually available, either in a building at the dock or nearby at an office or public building; don't hesitate to ask at a bar or restaurant (but do ask first!) It is preferable to use the toilets on land, as most boats do not have wastewater tanks and pumpout facilities are still very rare. Showers are not common but are sometimes available.

Laundry facilities at the ports are rare and it is often difficult to find a commercial laundry in the towns. Handwashing onboard is often necessary.

Fuel is much less common at ports than would be expected. It is usually necessary to transport fuel in a suitable container from a service station in the towns; these stations are very often found adjacent to large stores such as LeClerc, Carrefour and Géant. A folding trolley/cart is useful to carry tanks; it may be a 1-5 km walk. (Rental boats will have adequate tanks for the entire rental period, or for longer trips the operator will advise.)

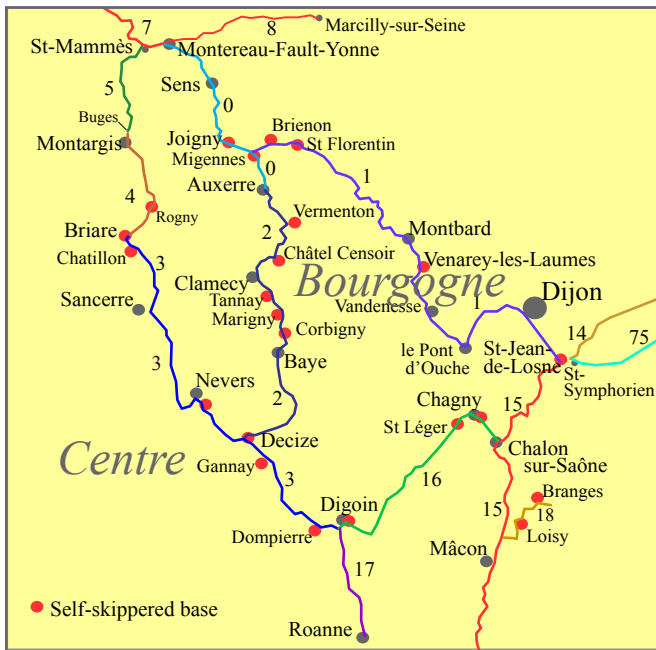
WiFi is not reported in this guide, as these services vary substantially; plan on using 3G/4G mobile telephone for internet access.

The eleven canals & rivers described in this guide are grouped under the name **Waterways of Burgundy**. They are at the heart of inland recreational boating in France, “plaisance” in French. They total 1,575 kilometers, nearly one-quarter of all waterways in the country.

These waterways are traveled by more than 25 hotel barges, holiday rental boats from 45 bases and private boats from throughout Europe. The canals were built (in the 18th & 19th centuries) to accomodate commercial barges, however there is now very little barge traffic.

The hills of Burgundy offer one of the most beautiful countrysides in Europe, as well as the home of many of the best-known vineyards in the world. Cruising on the intimate canals and rivers through wooded valleys, often with limestone cliffs on one side and green pastures spotted with the region’s white Charolais cattle on the other, is an unforgettable experience.





## ***Bourgogne — Centre***

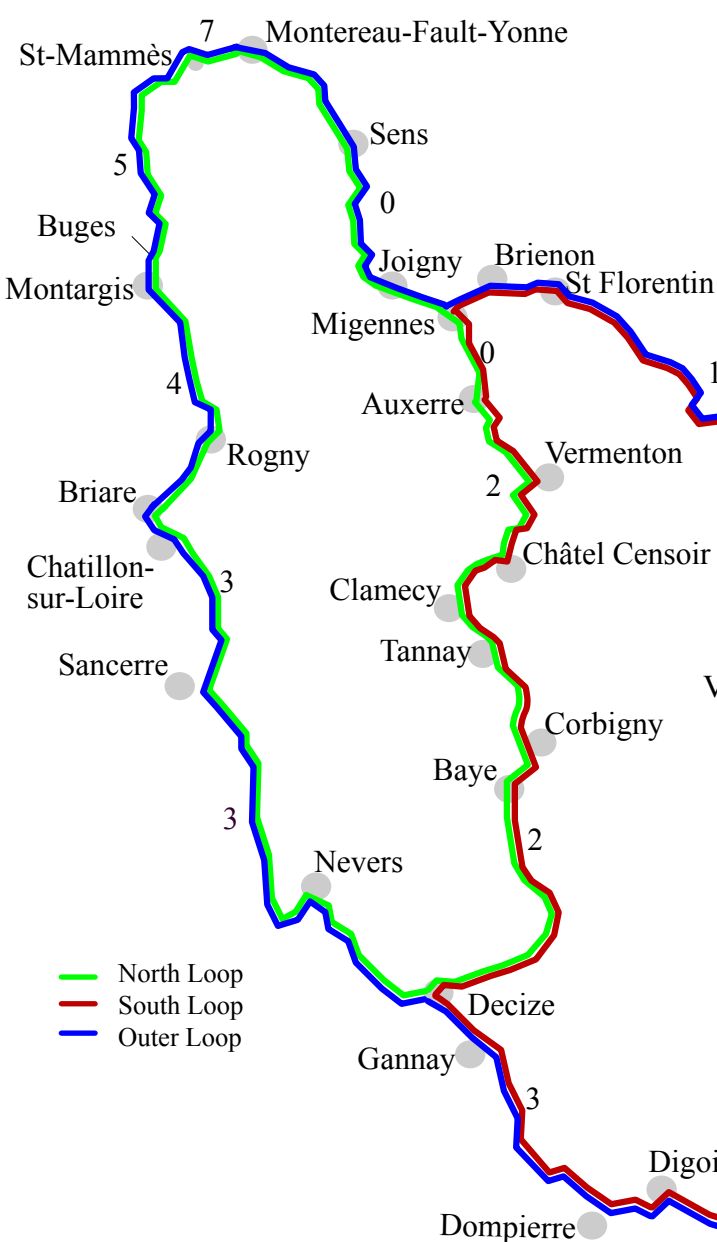
Burgundy is not only the geographical center of the French waterways, it is the most popular area for holiday cruises, encompassing 11 waterways and 3 possible circular routes. The area can be cruised for one week or more, a month or a season.

The waterways of the Centre region are frequently used for passage to/from the English Channel and the Mediterranean Sea, along the four canals of western edge of the region.

At the southeastern corner is the river Seille (#18), one of the most charming river cruises in France.

WATERWAY	MAP	FROM	TO	LENGTH	LOCKS	LOCK SIZE	DRAFT	HEIGHT	NAV
River Yonne ++	0	Auxerre	Montereau	108 km	26	90X8.0 m	1.80 m	4.40 m	B
Canal de Bourgogne + + +	1	Migennes	St-Jean-de-Losne	242	185	30.5 x 5.2	1.40	3.10	A
Canal du Nivernais + + +	2	Auxerre	Decize	174	109	30.5 x 5.2	1.20	2.70	A
Canal lateral a la Loire ++	3	Digoin	Briare	200	37	38.5 x 5.2	1.80	3.50	A
Canal de Briare +	4	Briare	Buges	57	35	30.4 x 5.2	1.80	3.50	A
Canal du Loing +	5	Buges	St-Mammès	49	18	39.1 x 5.2	1.80	3.50	A
River Seine (Amont) ++	7	Montereau	Paris	98	8	180 x 11.4	2.80	5.50	B
River Seine (Petite) ++	8	Marcilly	Montereau	67	10	38.5 x 5.05	1.10	3.10	B
River Saône (Petite) ++	14	Corre	St-Symphorien	158	19	40 x 5.2	1.80	3.50	B
River Saône (Basse) +	15	St-Symphorien	Lyon	215	5	180 x 11.4	3.00	3.70	B
Canal du Centre +	16	Chalon-sur-Saône	Digoin	112	61	38.5 x 5.2	1.80	3.50	A
Canal de Roanne a Digoin +	17	Roanne	Digoin	55.6	10	39.5 x 5.1	1.80	3.50	A
River Seille +++	18	Saône river	Louhans	39	4	30.4 x 5.0	1.80	3.50	A





## Loop Cruises in Burgundy

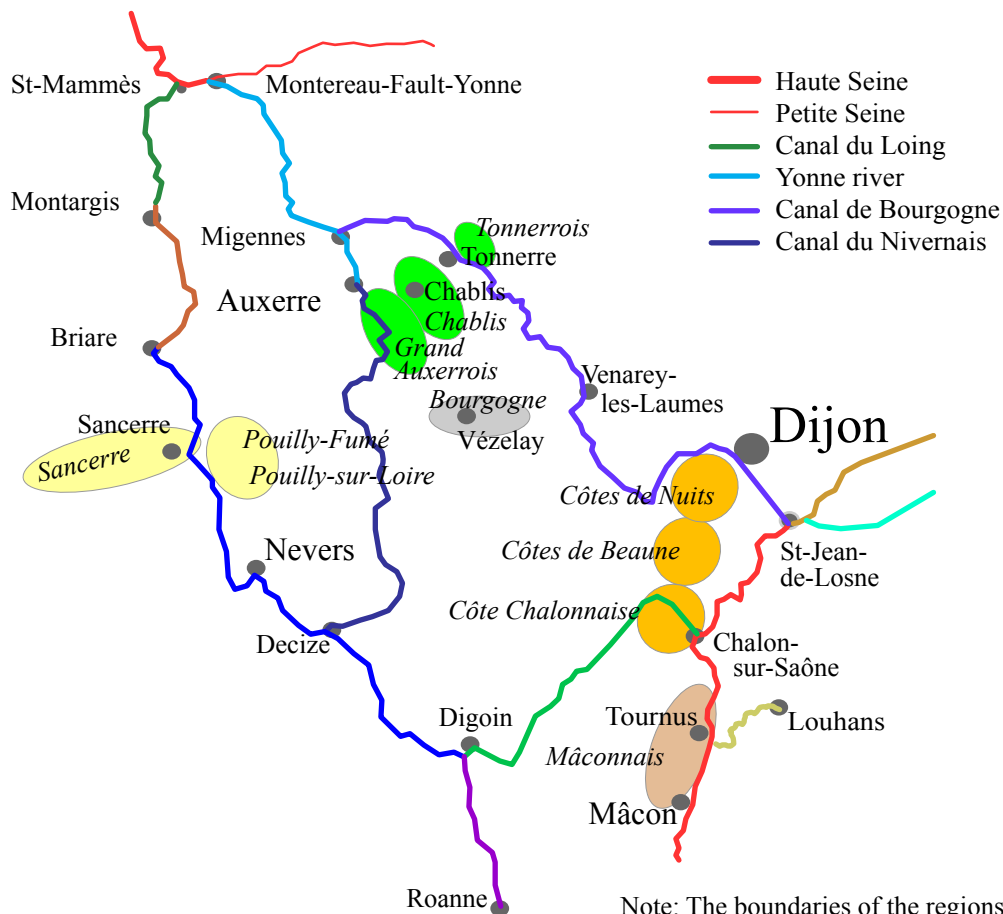
For canal cruisers who base their boat at St Jean-de-Losne, the “Center of the French waterways”, or are considering a holiday rental in the area, there are three loops available in Burgundy.

LOOP ROUTE	KM DISTANCE	HOURS TRAVEL	LOCKS	HOURS LOCKS	TOTAL HOURS	TOTAL DAYS
North Loop	534	66.75	209	52.25	119.00	15
South Loop	694	86.75	386	96.50	183.25	23
Outer Loop	830	103.75	357	89.25	193.00	24

Please note that the table above shows Travel Time only, not sightseeing stops or delays. Assumptions: Speed 8 km/hr, 8 hrs/day, 15 minutes per lock; these figures are general and will vary for each cruise; use them with care and add more time as necessary

# Vineyards of Burgundy and Central France

The waterways of central France pass through the hills of the world-famous Burgundy vineyards, as well as the respected Sancerre vineyards of the Centre region. Some of the vineyards are located close to stops on the canals and can be visited on foot or bicycle. The more distant areas can be reached by taxi or rental car. For details refer to the website: [www.burgundy-wines.fr](http://www.burgundy-wines.fr)



Popular towns with opportunities for tasting and buying wines, as well as visits to the vineyards, include:

Canal de Bourgogne -  
Tonnerre: *Tonnerrois, Épineuil*  
Dijon: *Grand Crus of the Côte d'Or*

Canal du Nivernais -  
Auxerre: *Chablisien, Auxerrois*  
Bailly: *Auxerrois*  
Chatel Censoir and Clamecy: *Vézélien*

Canal du Centre -  
Santenay: *Côtes de Beaune, Côte Chalonnaise*

Canal latéral à la Loire -  
Sancerre: *Sancerre, Pouilly Fumé, Pouilly-sur-Loire*

Saône river -  
Tournus & Mâcon: *Mâconnais*

Note: The boundaries of the regions and the locations of the various A.O.C. shown on this map are not intended to be specific nor all-inclusive (only those near waterways are shown.) This is a general guide that should be followed-up with a specialized wine map or guidebook. A great deal of vineyard information is available at the local Offices de Tourisme.

EuroCanals

*Cruising the Canals & Rivers of Europe*

Canal de Bourgogne



The ***Canal de Bourgogne*** (Burgundy Canal) crosses the hills of Burgundy to connect the Seine watershed, which flows north to the English Channel, with the Saône-Rhône river system, which flows south to the Mediterranean Sea.

The northern end of the canal is at Migennes on the river Yonne, a few kilometers north of Auxerre and the Canal du Nivernais. It passes through the major city of Dijon and ends at the river Saône in the town of St Jean-de-Losne, becoming one leg of the five waterways which make that town “the center of the French waterways”.

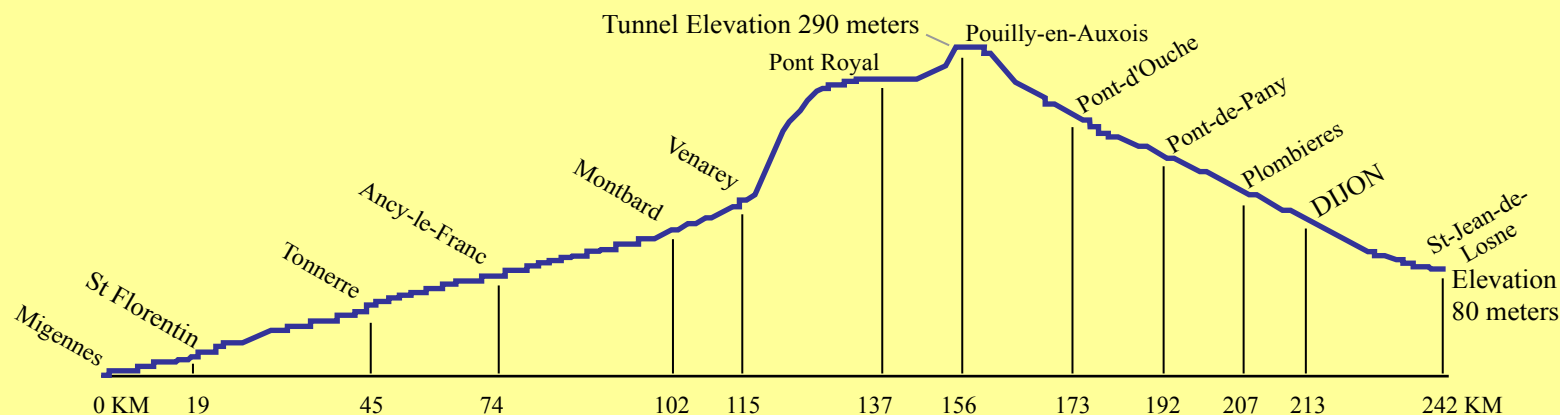
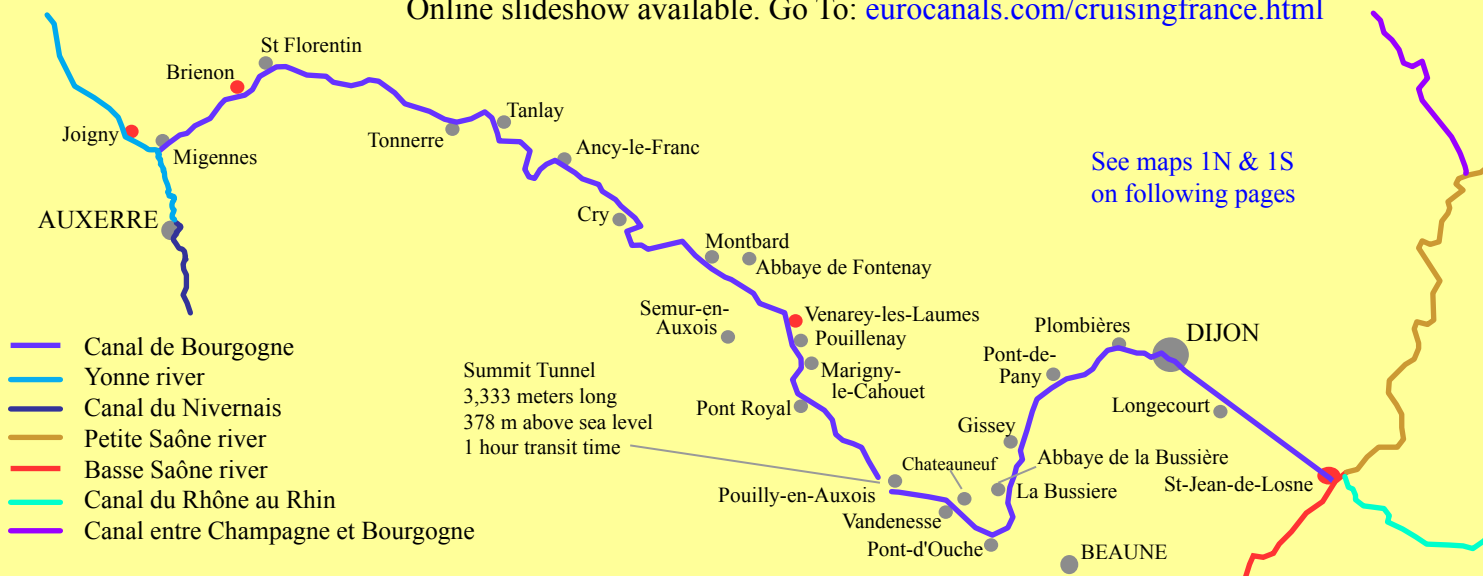
The summit is the highest in France (378 meters), a rise of 290 meters above the northern end at Migennes and 80 meters above the southern end at St Jean-de-Losne.

The canal has 189 locks in its 242 km length, the most of any French waterway and over twice as many as the Canal du Midi, which is almost exactly the same length (240 km).





Tour Rating: Pleasant, picturesque, recommended  
 Navigation Difficulty: Many locks, some sections have shallow places  
 Online slideshow available. Go To: [eurocanals.com/cruisingfrance.html](http://eurocanals.com/cruisingfrance.html)





There are three quite distinct sections of the canal: the Northern, Central and Plain. In the Northern section, starting at the Yonne river junction at Migennes, the canal follows close to the river Armançon in a broad agricultural valley, pretty but not spectacular. The stretches of canal between the towns of Migennes, Brienon, St. Florentin and Tonnerre are straight and flat; the main attractions are in the towns themselves. Each has churches and historic buildings to visit.

Not far away are the vineyards of the Chablis region and just across the canal from Tonnerre the Epineul vineyard is being revived. Nearby at lock #96 is the office of the VNF Navigation Service, where current information regarding lock operating hours and the status of the canal can be obtained. Telephone 03 86 54 82 70

The canal begins to wind and become more beautiful beyond Tonnerre. There is a good stop at Tanlay, a charming village of stone houses with a very pleasant port adjacent to the village. The slightly shabby but still impressive Château de Tanlay can be visited to view its trompe l'oeil paintings and frescoes as well as the extensive grounds, with wide moats and a small canal. The chateau has been in the same family since 1704.

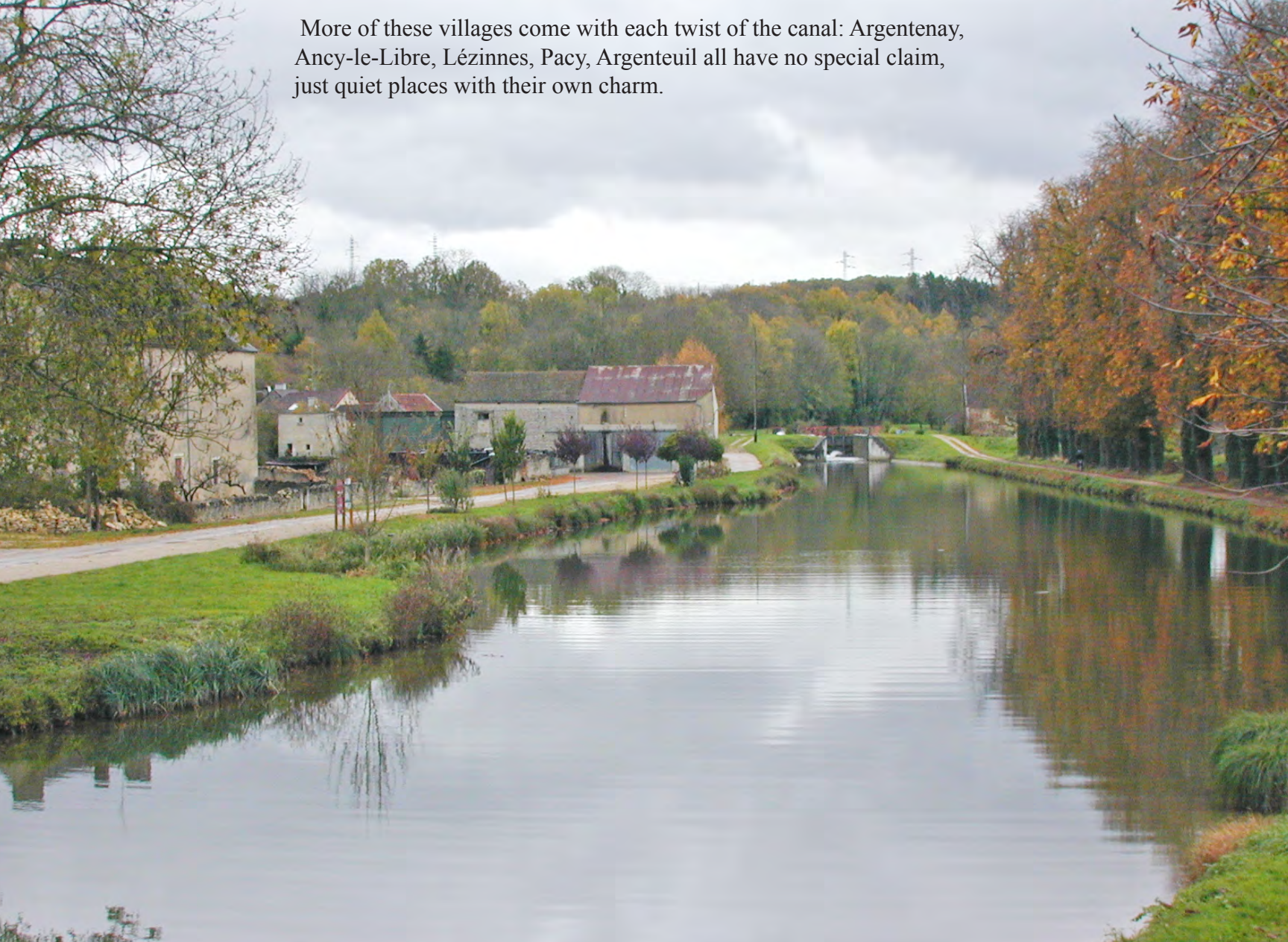


Another pleasant town lies only 2 km further on, at St. Vinnemer, a perfect Burgundian village with houses built of dry-stacked stones.





More of these villages come with each twist of the canal: Argentenay, Ancy-le-Libre, Lézennes, Pacy, Argenteuil all have no special claim, just quiet places with their own charm.





At Ancy-le-Franc visit the chateau in the village, one of the most beautiful Renaissance houses in Burgundy. It is only a short walk from the port (below); on the opposite bank is a large home now used as a chambres d'hôtes, a rural bed & breakfast. Another 1½ km south at Chassignelles is a plain but modern hotel and restaurant, the Hotel de l'Ecluse 79, part of the Logis de France network of lodgings. Around a bend after lock #79, limestone quarries can be seen on the left and also further on at Ravières; in the villages, cut blocks of limestone wait for transport by barge and truck.





A good port can be found at Montbard; nearby, the 12th century Cistercian Abbaye de Fontenay is located in a narrow wooded valley, a 3km bike or walk from lock #62 at Moulin de Nogent. Built in 1118, the abbey is open for tours of the magnificent cloisters, the water-powered forge and the beautiful gardens.

The end of the relatively flat northern section of the canal is at Venarey (below), a large port used by hotel barges and a self-skippered rental boat base.







*EuroCanals*

*Cruising the Canals & Rivers of Europe*

Canal du Nivernais

**Canal du Nivernais** has two sections: the northern part flows north in the valley of the river Yonne, toward the Seine watershed. The southern part flows south into the valley of the Loire, connecting with the five canals which make up the Canaux du Centre.

The name translates as “Canal of the Nivernais” as much of the canal is located in the département of Nièvre; the capital is the city of Nevers. The northern one-third of the canal is located in the département of Yonne. These two counties form the western half of the région of Bourgogne (Burgundy.)

Work on the Canal du Nivernais was begun in 1784 but was delayed until the early 19th century by the revolution. The original purpose of the route was to bring firewood from the Morvan forests to Paris by means of the Yonne and Seine rivers; by the time of opening in 1841 the canal extended south to the river Loire at Decize, connecting the Seine and Loire valleys.





*EuroCanals*

*Cruising the Canals & Rivers of Europe*

Yonne river



*Joigny*

**Yonne river** forms much of the northern end of the Canal du Nivernais. At Auxerre it becomes a major waterway under its own name, connecting with the Canal de Bourgogne and then flowing northwest to its junction with the river Seine. A 13 km portion of the Seine allows a connection with the Canal du Loing and a possible cruise south on the Canaux du Centre.

The Yonne rises in the Morvan, an area of forested hills, now a national park, between the Canal du Nivernais and the Côte d'Or. It joins the Petite Seine at Montereau-fault-Yonne (*fault* meaning the river “falls” although there is no actual waterfall.) From that junction to Paris the combined river is named the Seine Amont (*Amont* meaning “upstream” from Paris.)

If one stands at the sharp point between the two rivers at Montereau, it is easy to see why some French people believe that the entire river, through Paris to the sea, should have been named Yonne, as that is the larger of the two rivers. It is also more pure; the Seine carries visible silt from the sand and gravel quarries upstream.



Canal du Loing - Canal de Briare - Canal latéral à la Loire  
Canal de Roanne à Digoin - Canal du Centre





***Canaux du Centre*** are a series of four canals connected into one of the major routes from the Seine valley to the Saône/Rhône river system. This route is also called the Bourbonnais route, the western alternative when traveling south to the Mediterranean Sea.

The northern end of the route is at St Mammès on the river Seine where the **Canal du Loing** follows the river Loing southward (upstream) and connects to the **Canal de Briare**. At the town of Briare the waterway becomes the **Canal latéral à la Loire**, alongside the non-navigable river Loire. It leaves the Loire valley and turns northeast as the **Canal du Centre**, intersecting with the river Saône at Chalon-sur-Saône. The route offers convenient access from the Paris area to “The center of the French waterways” at St Jean-de-Losne and on south to the Mediterranean Sea via the Saône and Rhône rivers, bypassing the draft and height limitations of the Canal de Bourgogne and Canal du Nivernais.

**Canal de Roanne à Digoin** branches south, alongside the upper portion of the Loire river, to the popular wintering port at Roanne.



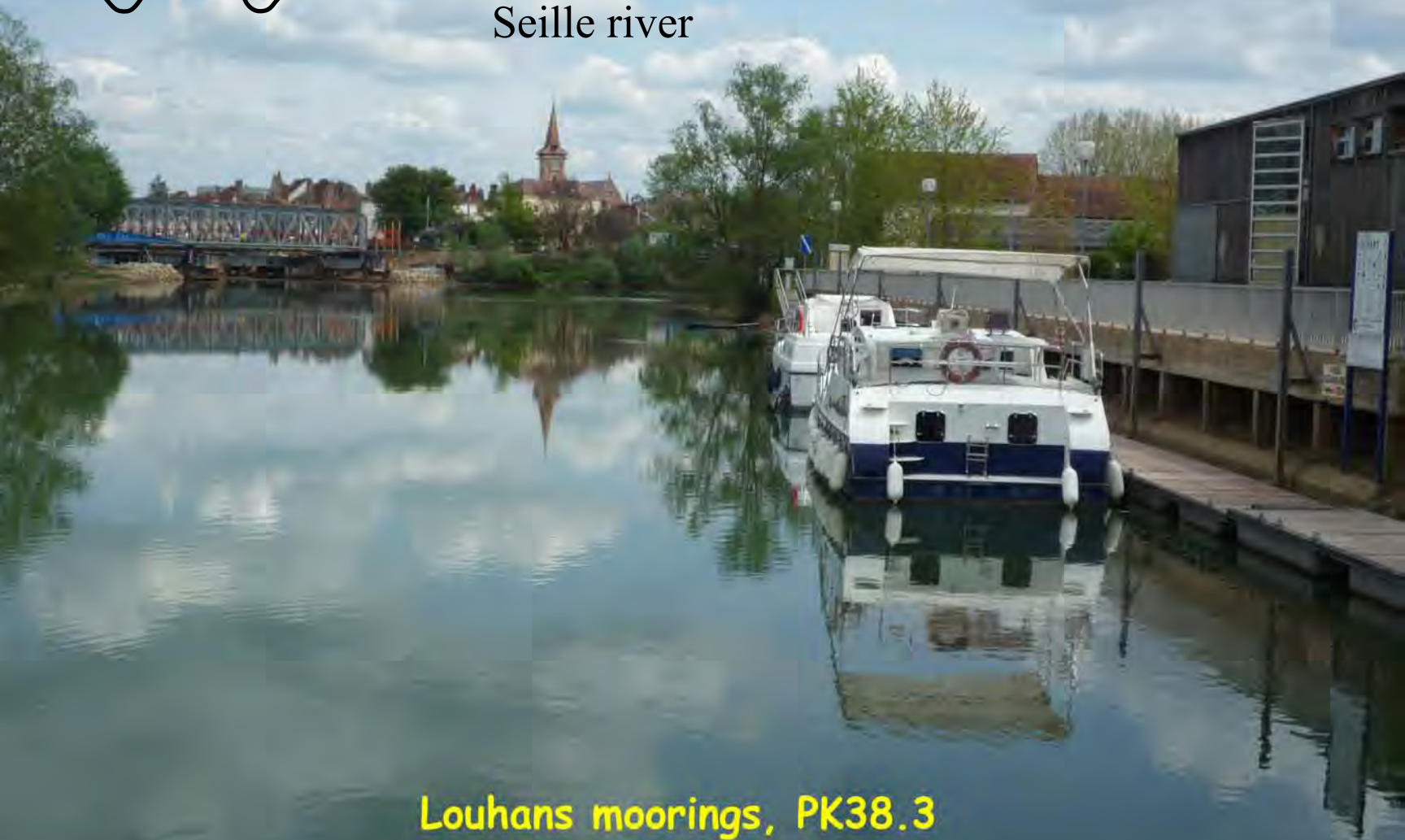


*Saône* river flows south from Corre, in the Vosges mountains, 371 km to the city of Lyon, where it joins the river Rhône. It is one of the major waterways of France. The section from the waterways junction at St Jean-de-Losne to another junction at Chalon-sur-Saône is shown on the next page.

*Seille* river is just the opposite; short, narrow, tranquil. It offers a beautiful and peaceful cruise.



Seille river



Louhans moorings, PK38.3

**Regional Guides** for France  
waterways with more photos, maps  
and details; some guides include  
kilometer-by-kilometer logs listing  
each lock, bridge, port and other  
waterway features.

