Visitors guide

Art and History Museum

City of Albertville
Welcome to the Art and History museum

The museum is divided into three levels:

- **the ground level** is dedicated to temporary exhibitions that may be showing.
- **the first level** is dedicated to history, religious art, furniture, and reconstituted interiors.
- **the second level** is dedicated to the mountainside (agropastoralism, the beginning of winter sports) and Savoyard craftsmanship.

The visit may take between 30 and 90 minutes, depending on how much time you have and what you would like to see. Audio guides are available at the welcome desk.

The museum team hopes you enjoy your visit.
Visions of Savoy

As you enter the hall on the ground floor, you will be greeted by objects such as the figurines from Bessans in Haute-Maurienne (in the below photo). They are a reminder that Savoy has many faces. Villages in the valleys perched high in Savoy dialogue with the cities in the plain.

The object of the quarter

Every three months, an object from the Museum reserve collection is shown to the public.

Information sheets are available on the website of the city of Albertville:
www.albertville.fr/culture/patrimoine/ressources-documentaires/
Local history

The Gallo-Roman period is depicted via objects collected from archaeological excavations in Gilly-sur-Isère (a village next to Albertville). This period reminds us of how important the circulation of ideas and goods have been, a phenomenon which has shaped our land.

Must-see

- balance: the largest balance from this period found in Europe
- sundial: there are only two such sundials in the Rhône-Alpes

Our favourite ♥

- mosaic: shown for the first time at the museum in June 2014
The modern and contemporary periods are told by the course of the rivers. The town of l'Hôpital-sous-Conflans is on the eastern bank of the Arly. It has been able to flourish because the rivers - the Isère and especially the Arly - have been contained. The elder sister town of l'Hôpital-sous-Conflans, Conflans, merged with its rival sibling in 1836, founding Albert-Ville. In 1860, after Savoy was annexed to France, the sub-prefecture of Albertville became a garrison town. At one point, there was one soldier for three inhabitants. Albertville played an important role in the fortification system called Séré-de-Rivières.

**Must-see**

- ceramic plaque: commemoration of the first stone that King Charles-Félix laid for the Isère dyke - 1824
- hat of the sub-prefect of Albertville - 1870

**Our favourite**

- postilion's boots made by Dussaussoy - 18th century
In this area, you can explore baroque art, a highly cherished part of Savoy heritage. Creativity flourished during this period. It was a time that still recalled the wonders of the Middle Age (reliquary arm of Saint Gratus, pietà) when everyday devotional objects stirred tangible and perceptible emotion. These holy images awakened these feelings, although they were actually mass-produced in the 19th century.

**Must-see**
- **Saint Gratus reliquary arm** - 1432

**Our favourite ❤️**
- **mould of a votive offering** to Saint Aubin
  - 17th century
As the 17th century drew to a close, colourful and thriving Baroque art reflected the rationalisation that was taking hold in interiors. Furniture became specialised. General-purpose trunks gave way to more functional furniture such as chests of drawers.

**Must-see**
- bread chest with fittings under the main tray
  18th century

**Our favourite**
- portrait of Jean-Baptiste Vercin by Chatron
  Mr Vercin was born in Mercury (a village next to Albertville). He studied medicine in Turin with Mr Chatron. In 1831, he settled down in Conflans as a doctor. - 1831

After exploring the furniture that could have been in the home of the Vercin couple in Conflans, discover the interiors of another family from Conflans.
Furniture from the mountainside

You’ll leave the Maison Rouge without realising it... going up to the second storey of a Conflans home that probably dates from the 16th century.

During your visit of the gallery, you’ll see some traditional pieces of furniture, including a cradle and a china cabinet.

**Must-see**
- an ‘escline’ case with dolphins (from Queyras) with suns, wheels, and rosettes conveying the permanence of symbols of life, beyond Savoy - 1671

**Our favourite**
- double slant-top desk from a solicitor’s office - circa 1820-1850
In the bedroom, the prayer stool reflects the importance of religion. The bed curtains conserve body heat. The twisted columns of the bed are reminiscent of the columns of Baroque altarpieces. Portraits of ancestors mingle with fashion plates clipped from 19th century press publications.

**Must-see**

- fashion plates (on the fireplace mantel) - Thierry - 1822-1865

**Our favourite ♥**

- handheld fire screen (on the table) that ladies used to shield their faces from the heat of the hearth - 19th century
The hearth was the bedrock of the family in the room. The hearth provided warmth, light, and fire for preparing meals. It was where the household went about its life. Listen to the story of this simple home ... told by the author and actor Philippe Roman (press the red button for the soundtrack).

**Must-see**

- **walnut wood seat chest** for storing salt, protected from the humidity near the hearth - last quarter of the 19th century
- **baptism cradle** - 1778

**Our favourite**

- **croeju**: small brass oil lamp that lit up the patriarch at the table
Farming in Savoy is mostly about grappling with the steep slopes, with objects such as the cassa-co and the “remonte-terre”. Everyday objects from not so long ago are a gateway to explore local food products—such as this botta-cul (see below), a shepherd’s one-legged stool, that the shepherd has patiently and meticulously carved.

**Must-see**
- **cassa-co, or casse cou**: basket carried behind the neck - 19th century

**Our favourite ❤**
- **press screw** repaired with muleshoes - Conflans - 18th century
The brass pot and the clay pot

Professional and amateur potters, metal forgers, sculptors, and lacemakers all used their brilliant talent to shape and colour everyday objects, and to make them functional.

The wooden objects could be crafted over several evenings spent in good company, or during lengthy watches in the pastures. However, pottery had to be made quickly. Pottery could not be sold for a high price due to stiff competition with pewter and other materials.

Traditional pottery from Savoy uses three colours—yellow, brown, and green. Local decor includes designs such as polka dots and jaspé (‘streaks’ that are skilfully channelled).

**Must-see**
- *distaff* with pewter inlay, from Geneva
  1st quarter of the 19th century
- *‘berre’ headdress from Le Beaufortain*
  end of the 19th century

**Our favourite ❤️**
- *ill person’s pot - Conflans* - end of the 18th century
New practices revolutionised the Savoyard economy at the beginning of the 20th century—winter sports, which took advantage of the slopes. Skis provided a way for the infantry to move around in the Alps. Regular people soon took to skiing, which became popular through competitions. As early as 1909, Albertville hosted the first winter sports week, an initiative of the French Alpine Club. Later, in 1992, the whole world held its breath as it watched the trials of the 16th Olympic Winter Games in Albertville and Savoy.

**Must-see**
- instructions for making skis, by Paulke and Rivas

**Our favourite ❤
- bobsleigh - 1st half of the 20th century**
The Maison Rouge

A showcase for the collections

The Maison Rouge (‘red house’) is the only residence in Savoy that is built of bricks, and only of bricks. It is a listed building and was constructed in 1397 for Pierre Voisin, the secretary of Count Amadeus of Savoy. It gave a new twist to the medieval city of Conflans. The bricks added a truly original touch to the openings in the architecture, are part of the decor, and set the tone ... a red tone, of course! After the Voisin, Tondu, de Rides and du Verger families lived here, the Maison Rouge became the property of the Bernardine nuns in 1714. As nuns were forced to flee during the French Revolution, various people filed in and out of the homes—soldiers, teachers, students, the Savoyard Senate, soldiers yet again, and then hospice residents... and since 1936, it has been home to the museum!

On this postcard from the 1900s, we can see Alpine infantrymen lined up in the main square of Conflans. Behind them, the Maison Rouge stands tall, with its brick arcades on the ground floor.
Musée d’art et d’histoire

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www.albertville.fr/culture/patrimoine

Open year-round
Please call us for the opening hours
+33 (0)4 79 37 86 86
On appointment for groups

Closed
on 24, 25, and 31 December,
on 1 January, and on 1 May

Rates (including audio guide)
Regular : € 3
Half price : € 1.50 (students, jobseekers, over 65s)
Free for under 18s
Free on the 1st Sunday of every month

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