



Welcome to the home of Leonardo da Vinci in Amboise



Louise de Savoie, regent of France, lived and raised her two young children here, the hot-headed Duc d'Angoulême, future François I, and Marguerite de Navarre, a lady of letters and author of the *Heptameron*. But the greatest, at least in terms of genius, of those who entered the ogival gate of Le Clos Lucé was Leonardo da Vinci. Invited to come and live in France by King François I, Leonardo da Vinci settled at Le Clos Lucé in 1516.

François I held Leonardo da Vinci in high esteem, appointed him "First painter, architect and engineer" of the King. He made this residence available to him, as well as a princely allowance of 700 gold ecus a year, and financed his works, only asking in return for the pleasure of hearing him talk, a pleasure that he enjoyed almost every day. Protected by the great affection that both the King and his sister, Marguerite de Navarre, bore for him, he was free to dream and to work.

"All our knowledge stems from our sensitivity"

Leonardo da Vinci happily lived in this residence for the last three years of his life, painting and working on his myriad passions. He worked as an engineer, architect and producer, organising wondrous celebrations for the Court. He inspired thought and fashion around him. He drew up plans for a model château for François I at Romorantin. He is thought to have inspired the spiral staircase at Chambord. He had plans to connect the Loire Valley with the Lyon region by a system of canals.

Having written that "No being ends in nothing" and considering the certainty of his death and the uncertainty of its hour, he made his will and commended his soul to God "Sovereign, Master and Lord". He died on 2nd May 1519. It is told that he wept on his deathbed for having offended the Creator and the people of this world by not working at his art as he should. So wrote Francesco Melzi, favourite disciple of Leonardo da Vinci, in his letter to da Vinci's brothers in June 1519: "he left this life conscious and well-prepared, with all the sacraments of the Church".

Mona Lisa brings her smile to Le Clos Lucé
In the autumn of 1516, Leonardo da Vinci accepted the royal invitation and at the age of 64, he crossed the Alps with several of his disciples, including Francesco Melzi and Battista de Villanis, his faithful Milanese servant.

Leonardo da Vinci brought with him from Rome three of his favourite paintings, in leather saddlebags. According to the account of the secretary of the Cardinal of Aragon on a visit to Le Clos Lucé, these included "a painting of a Florentine lady painted from life on the orders of the late Giuliano de' Medici". Painted between 1503 and 1514, Mona Lisa illustrates the famous "sfumato" (shaded transition) technique of Leonardo da Vinci. The other two canvases are the *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* and *Saint John the Baptist*, which Leonardo finished painting at Le Clos Lucé.



Château du Clos Lucé

On the 1st floor

1 The Gallery

The tour begins with a climb up the watchtower, the last surviving piece of medieval architecture, a reminder of the time when Le Clos Lucé was a fortified residence. In the Middle Ages, Estienne le Loup, baillif to Louis XI, installed a small cannon known as a 'Culverin' on the chemin de ronde, to inspire respect from the people of Amboise. But this attitude displeased the King, and le Loup fell into disgrace. During the Renaissance, the chemin de ronde was turned into a gallery, a loggia in the Italian style.

- The pink brick and tufa stone façade of Le Clos Lucé bears the stamp of the 15th century, the period when it was built.
- The elegant gothic chapel of sculpted tufa stone dates from the late 15th century.
- On the tower is a statue of Saint Sebastian, the patron of archers. Below, the Arms of France borne by two angels are surmounted by a helm with the royal crown. Lower down are the arms of the Duke of Savoy and Duke of Angoulême. Further down, the coats of arms of the Dukes of Savoie and the Counts of Angoulême.
- To the right, in the niches above the lantern, are portraits of Charles VIII and Anne de Bretagne.

2 The bedroom of Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci loved the view, from his window, of his friend François I's royal Palace. His drawing of this fine view is in the Windsor collection. Leonardo da Vinci spent the last three years of his life in this room. Here, on 23rd April 1519, Leonardo wrote his will, leaving his manuscripts and his notebooks of drawings and sketches to his beloved disciple, Francesco Melzi. And it was here that he died at the age of 67, on 2nd May 1519, after receiving the holy sacraments. The old man finally knew the fullness of the light and joined "the Creator of so many wondrous things". The legend that François I was with him when he died inspired several great painters, including Ingres (painting to the left of the bed).

- Some fragments of restored murals from the 16th century floral decor with acanthus leaves and scrolls.



Festivities at the "Palazzo del Cloux"

On 17th June 1518, Leonardo da Vinci held a party for François I and the court to thank the King for his beneficence. Galeazzo Visconti recorded in a letter that "the King feasted at an excellent banquet [...]". It was held at Le Cloux, a very fine, grand palace. The courtyard was draped in sky-blue cloth, with the major planets, the sun on one side - and the moon on the opposite side [...]. There were 400 two-branched candelabras, so lit that it seemed that night had been banished."

- A fireplace decorated with the Arms of France and the chain of the Order of St Michael.
- A Renaissance canopied bed, sculpted with chimera, cherubs, and sea creatures.
- 16th- and 17th-century cabinets, one inlaid with ivory, ebony and mother-of-pearl.
- An Aubusson tapestry depicting a scene from the life of Esther.
- A carved wooden bench decorated with a salamander.

● In the show case is a portrait of Saint Catherine of Alexandria painted on a wood panel by Bernardino Luini, pupil of Leonardo da Vinci. Several objects from everyday Renaissance life: a 16th-century Christ inlaid with mother-of-pearl and ivory which is said to have belonged to Mary Stuart, an ancient cast iron medallion, bearing the head of François I.

3 The bedroom of Marguerite de Navarre

Marguerite de Navarre (1492-1549), also known as Marguerite d'Angoulême, Marguerite d'Alençon and occasionally as Marguerite de Valois, was François I's elder sister. She and her brother, François d'Angoulême, were brought up during part of their childhood at Le Clos Lucé by their mother Louise de Savoie. Marguerite de Navarre is renowned for her grace, mind, spirituality and culture. Deeply involved in the literary, religious and learned world of her time, she was Clément Marot and Pierre de Ronsard's protector. Marguerite de Navarre, as a newlywed, started writing her famous collection of short stories, *Heptaméron*, including some naturalist tales which actually take place at Amboise and which drew inspiration from Boccaccio's *The Decameron*.

- Chamber built of brick and stone laid with stretcher and header courses. The terracotta floor tiles are stamped with the monogram of Marguerite d'Angoulême.
- The grisaille stained glass with silver yellow enhancements orate the mullion windows. In the centre of each are four 16th-century antique motifs illustrating, armour and a winged head, Love and Jealousy.
- An early Renaissance four-poster bed with "linen-fold" carvings.
- Some Renaissance furniture.
- On the left-hand wall, two copperware plates with raised centre (late 16th century).
- On the left of the bed is a Flemish 'feuille-de-chou' or cabbage-leaf tapestry from the late 15th-early 16th century, representing various hunting scenes of fabulous imaginary fauna.

- On the right side of the bed, there is a small Italian walnut chest to store personal effects.
- An historical Oudenaarde wool and silk tapestry from the 16th century illustrating the Battle of Pavia (1525) and the capture of the king of France, François I, and the death of Maréchal Jacques de la Palisse.
- In a show case: a portrait of Marguerite d'Angoulême as a child, attributed to François Clouet. Several objects from everyday Renaissance life: a leather jewellery box, an enamel diptych representing a crucifixion, a pewter pitcher and an ancient cast-iron medallion made before 1500, representing Louise of Savoy. Earthenware dishes by Bernard Palissy and rare 16th-century pewter cups, Italian and French 15th- and 16th-century glassware.
- In the second show case near the door is a portrait of Maximilian of Austria, Charles Quint's grandfather, painted on a wood panel by Albrech Dürer.

On your left go downstairs and on the ground floor, take left towards the oratory.



On the ground floor

4 The Oratory of Anne de Bretagne

Charles VIII commissioned this chapel at the end of the 15th century for his wife, Anne de Bretagne. Far from the clamour of the Court of Amboise, Commynes tells us, the Queen, whose children had died in infancy "came to shed the most painful tears a woman can weep" and to pray, with her book of hours in her hands. Admire:

- the ribbed Ro-manesque vault painted azure blue and studded with stars.
- the keystone: the three lilies on the Arms of France, surrounded by the chain of Saint Michel, the Order of Knighthood founded by Louis XI.
- four frescoes painted by artists from Leonardo da Vinci's studio, probably including Francesco Melzi: on the left *The Annunciation*; on the right *The Assumption*; above the altar, *The Last Judgement*; and above the door, the *Virgin of the Light*. The virgin's feet are resting on a crescent moon. She is called "Virgo Lucis", the virgin of light: could that be where

the word "Lucé" was derived?
● "roundels", yellow silver stained glass discs showing scenes from the New Testament and the lives of saints (early 16th century).
● disc shaped stained glass in silver yellow representing scenes from the New Testament and Saints lives (beginning of the 16th century).
● a polychrome wooden statue of St John, a 14th-century Irish alabaster, 16th-century sculpted wooden Madonna
● a 15th-century monk's face bearing an expression of purity, a wooden Annunciation from the late 15th century.
● a 16th-century Pietà, a fine illumination by the famous Jean Fouquet, protégé of princes, depicting the Coronation of the Virgin, a silver reproduction of the Virgin by Donatello, the great Florentine sculptor of the Renaissance.

5 Leonardo da Vinci's living workshops and his last laboratory



500 years after his arrival in France, the Leonardo da Vinci workshops have been rediscovered and restored in keeping with a Renaissance studio. In his workshops, Leonardo da Vinci worked tirelessly on major royal commissions as a painter, engineer, architect, sculptor, and scenographer for extraordinary festivities. He toiled until his final breath on perfecting his three masterpieces: *The Mona Lisa*; *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* and *St. John the Baptist*. Leonardo da Vinci, the greatest Renaissance creator, invites you to follow him to discover his workshops.

As his "Bottega" (studio) was, Leonardo's workshop is made up of three spaces:

- The painter's workshop
- *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* and *St. John the Baptist*

The library and cabinet of curiosities

The scientific or naturalist cabinet, with his personal library, his manuscripts and codices astrolabes, mappae mundi world maps, measuring instruments, vanitas still lifes, fossils, herbariums, etc.

The study or "studiolo"

Thanks to "Pepper Ghost" virtual reality technology, known as "optical theatre", relive the historic meeting on 10th October 1517 between Leonardo da Vinci and the Cardinal of Aragon, the illustrious ambassador travelling across Europe. Leonardo da Vinci showed him his three masterpieces, including the *Mona Lisa*, his anatomical drawings, his studies of water and flooding, and his countless designs for inventions.



6 Renaissance Great Hall

This was Leonardo da Vinci's reception room. Here he would entertain François I, important persons of the kingdom, and the artists who came to visit him. Skilled craftsmen, working in wood, stone and stained glass, using the same methods as their ancestors, have restored the 15th-century décor here. The throne chair, chests and tapestries are those the inhabitants of this house would have known. All the furnishings date from the Renaissance. To the right of the fireplace, a fragment of one of the first Tournai tapestries from the 15th century depicts the *Song of Roland*.
● On the wall, two halberds and a tincl, kind of axe used to cut down the enemy with a single blow.
● In a niche, a bust of François I in armour in the style of Vassé.
● A Flemish 16th century tapestry featuring a medieval mill, a source of wealth for its owner, in the domain of a manor.
● Spanish Renaissance chairs upholstered in Cordoba leather.
● Sculpted 16th-century wooden chests in which clothing was kept before wardrobes were introduced.
● In a double unit, earthenware pots with pewter lids.
● In the doorway leading to the kitchen, the bill of sale that made King Charles VIII the owner of Clos Lucé for 3,500 gold sovereigns.



7 The Kitchen

This was the realm of Mathurine, the vegetarian Leonardo da Vinci's cook. On his death, he bequeathed to her his coat of fine black cloth trimmed with leather. A tall stone fireplace at which the Master would warm himself on a winter evening. Under the main oak beam are two rings to hang the game that was spit-roasted and then washed down with warm wine served in pewter jugs. The bread bin, benches and copper dishes were used for preparing feasts. The furniture dates from the 16th century.

- Above the door, and also to the left of the window, are round copperware dishes, known as offertory dishes, decorated with scenes from the Old Testament or rosettes (late 16th century).
- A wooden Renaissance "gossip's chair" used for conversation.
- Another fragment of the *Song of Roland*, a 15th-century Tournai tapestry.
- A large tapestry from the royal manufactory of Amboise showing a scene from antiquity.
- Above the staircase, a tapestry fragment depicting a falconer (late 16th century).

"If you would keep healthy, follow this regimen: do not eat unless you feel inclined"



8 The Model Room

Going down the stairs, you will meet Leonardo da Vinci the engineer. The four rooms in the basement are devoted to Leonardo da Vinci's inventions. Forty fabulous machines, five centuries ahead of their time, are exhibited. These models were produced by IBM from Leonardo da Vinci's original drawings, using materials of the period. Admire Leonardo da Vinci's inventions in the field of civil and military engineering, mechanics, optics, hydraulics and even aeronautics. The first tank, the first automobile, the swing bridge, the paddle boat, the flying machine that was the forerunner of the aeroplane, the helicopter, the parachute, and more.

The 6 3D animations show how Leonardo da Vinci's inventions work.

Don't miss the entrance to the secret underground passage. According to tradition, this underground passage led to the Royal Château d'Amboise and that the King, François I, would sometimes use this to visit Leonardo.

Leaving the model room, the tour continues:

- Exhibition "Leonardo da Vinci, engineer" presents 50 wooden models created by following Leonardo da Vinci's drawings.
- The "Leonardo da Vinci, engineer" exhibition showcases 50 models in precious woods created from Leonardo da Vinci's original drawings
- Stroll through the Renaissance Garden and its Italian terrace planted with roses in a box tree setting, around a pond lined with pine, cypress and yew trees.
- In the wing of the building opposite, the Boutique Culturelle and the Épicerie Renaissance sell reference books on Leonardo da Vinci, souvenirs, and local and Italian products. On the 1st floor, you can watch a video on the "Leonardo da Vinci's visions" that runs in a continuous loop.
- Take a break at the "Terrasse Renaissance" - a Crêperie and Tearoom - and enjoy the outstanding view over the Château royal d'Amboise, before continuing your tour in the Parc Leonardo da Vinci following the landscape route.

Parc Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci devised everything by observing nature,

his creations and his main inventions are displayed in a garden setting, through the Clos Lucé park.

On an introductory stroll, you can follow Leonardo da Vinci's sources of inspiration, leading from the observation of natural phenomena to his inventions.

6 Themes help visitors understand the multidisciplinary genius of this universal man.

1 Start of the tour

Go down the path towards the great plane tree to listen to the words of Leonardo da Vinci beneath the tree of knowledge.

2 Leonardo's Garden

In Leonardo's Garden, set in the deep valley (to the right of the path going down into the park), you can discover his bond with nature (see insert).

The early works of Leonardo da Vinci are fascinating for the sureness of his line. Most of his later works included landscapes with softened contours on the horizon using the art of perspective. These imaginary landscapes were based on recollections of walks or expeditions to the glaciers of the Alps or to the heart of the Lombardy mountains. "Oh painter, when you show mountains, take care that from hill to hill the bases are always lighter than the summits; the more you accentuate their distance, the paler you must make them; and as they rise, they will reveal their true shapes and colours." Leonardo da Vinci.



14 The beauty of the body

Under the shade of three great plane trees with their muscular bark, discover Leonardo da Vinci the anatomist. The Tuscan artist studied human and animal anatomy in order to paint a truer version of reality. His originality is in his interest in veins and "soft matter" (internal organs), in both the young and the old. Far from restricting himself to the traditional theories of proportion, although these are illustrated by his emblematic "Vitruvian Man", the artist always worked his models out functionally, and from the inside. This successfully captured the movements, strength and, in his view, the souls of the creatures he was representing.



25 The Golden Horn Bridge

In 1502, Leonardo da Vinci designed for Sultan Bayezid II a great bridge over the Bosphorus, with a span of 360 metres, to unite the two banks in the city of Constantinople. This ambitious work, very modern in its conception, is a true architectural and artistic feat. The idea at Clos Lucé is therefore to pay homage to Leonardo da Vinci's ingenious mind. The Château of Clos Lucé has conceived this innovative work, built in solid oak, in partnership with the Armée de la Compagnons du Devoir, artisan craftsmen and women who specialise in ancient buildings, and under advisement from the Norwegian artist Vebjørn Sand.

3/4/5/6/7/8/9/22/25/26/28/29/32/33 Technical intuitions

Leonardo da Vinci, the civil and military engineer: the idea of the life-size interactive machines was inspired by readings of Leonardo da Vinci's work, research carried out by Siennese engineers such as Taccola and Francesco di Giorgio and by a scientific and technical tradition dating back to the Middle Ages and Antiquity. On this basis Leonardo da Vinci was able to organise this knowledge and innovate using his inventive powers. He used new materials such as steel, and invented ball bearings to reduce friction. Above all, he knew how to apply his technical intelligence in every field: civil and military engineering, industry. Try out his inventions, driving his tank or his paddle boat, trying out his gun shooting range, his Archimedes screw, a squirrel wheel and the shadoof.



18/19/20/21 The ideal city

Join Leonardo da Vinci in the poplar avenue to design the ideal city. Da Vinci, who came from the countryside, did his apprenticeship in an Italy that was prosperous but politically divided, and where every Prince endeavoured to build his own citadel on extensive sites. In the Leonardo da Vinci park, visitors can see how, in the service of Ludovico il Moro in Milan, a city affected by plague, in 1485 Leonardo da Vinci designed a project for a functional city in which the town and its buildings are likened to a living organism. The young architect concentrated on the movement of people, goods, and waste. His buildings were designed with arcades and two storeys. Below, conduits, roads and drains supported the industrial and commercial activities. Above, palaces and gardens were reserved for the richest citizens.

24 Face lights

Through the trees near the waterfall at the bottom of the park, discover Leonardo da Vinci the painter. The details of the canvases presented in the park illustrate the art and techniques of Leonardo da Vinci. The treatment of shadow and light in his paintings enabled him not only to bring out the volumes but also to dramatise the scene.

Although Leonardo da Vinci completed few paintings, he left more than 6,000 drawings and sketches, mostly gathered together in codices. We owe Leonardo da Vinci the sfumato technique which gives his portraits their sense of mystery. The artistic dimension takes pride of place in this walk, in line with the importance given to it by the creator of The Mona Lisa: "Art before science, and painting before the other arts, because it has a purpose that can be communicated to every generation in the universe".

27/35 The mechanics of life

In the small cove and the sequoia grove, discover Leonardo da Vinci the anatomist. The botanical, zoological and dissection drawings of Leonardo da Vinci express his intense desire to penetrate the mystery of life. When young, Leonardo da Vinci compared everything to the human body which, according to him, summarised the body of the earth. Through studying movement of the living being, he tried to show the existence of a mechanics of the body. However, towards the end of his life, he doubted whether he would ever be able to capture the complexity of nature. Reality appeared to him to be much more mutant and elusive than he had thought, moved as it was by souls and vital fluids.

27/35 The mechanics of life



From 10 to 12 The museographic hall - Exhibition Hall

Exhibition "Leonardo da Vinci and France" (alternating with the temporary exhibitions)

Devised by the Château du Clos Lucé, the exhibition was organised with Professor Carlo Pedretti, a world-renowned Leonardo da Vinci specialist. It displays the results of studies, work and research covering the milanese period between 1507-1513 and the french period between 1516-1519. Leonardo da Vinci's special bond with France, through three kings, Charles VIII, Louis XII and François Ier, who named him "the king's first painter, architect and engineer", was one of the key elements behind the Renaissance that sprung up in the Val de Loire.



13 The mill

Behind the room, on the banks of the river you will discover the mill with Leonardo gears, and its open air restaurant, "La Table du Moulin".

15 The pigeon house

The pigeon house was built in the 15th century by Estienne le Loup, bailiff of Amboise and owner of the estate. Unique in Touraine, square outside and octagonal inside, the dovecot is built of brick, tufa stone, and mortar. It has 1000 boulines (internal niches occupied by pairs of pigeons) arranged in an L-shape. On the outer two thirds is a flat strip with projecting stones, designed to prevent predators from getting inside. In medieval times a dovecot was a true source of wealth, not only because of the pigeons and their eggs, which could be eaten or sold, but because of the natural fertiliser that built up inside the building.



2 Leonardo's garden - Leonardo and Nature

Leonardo da Vinci's Garden is situated below the alley on the right going down into the park. ● Explore this unique space filled with natural seedbeds and vegetation which Leonardo da Vinci depicted in his drawings, sketches and paintings. ● Discover the intact native biotope, the flora and avifauna of a humid marshy and protected ecosystem, characteristic of the humid zones of the Loire region. ● Cross the big double spanned oak bridge, designed by Leonardo da Vinci with its innovative triangulation structure used widely today. ● Walk as Leonardo did in the shade of the big trees in this cool natural area with its springs coming from the rock and flowing down in cascades. ● See the turbulent eddies, the mysterious mists, as Leonardo did in the marshes, when he studied the plants here to nourish his thoughts and drawings. Leonardo da Vinci was a rigorous observer of nature when botany was not yet a science. ● Listen to Leonardo da Vinci's advice as a painter on drawing plants and his visionary discoveries on the growth and nutrition of plants. ● Look with new eyes at the details of the paintings (the Virgin of the Rocks, Ginevra de' Benci, La Gioconda) in which Leonardo reproduced all the vibrancy of light and air. The observation of plants, flowers and trees fascinated him throughout his life. Painter, definitely, botanist too, but also philosopher, he was ultimately seeking the essence of life, with enormous respect for the living.

Landscape itinerary

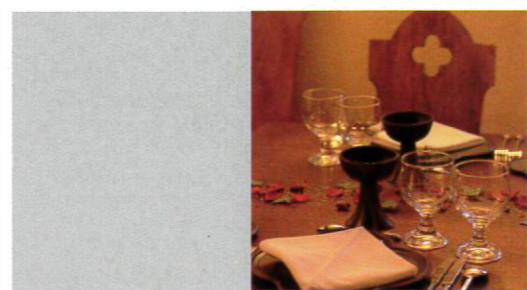
In order to get the most of your visit, we suggest you to follow the numbered stages on the orientation plan.

Parc Leonardo da Vinci : a user's guide

The Parc Leonardo da Vinci was designed and created by Jean Saint Bris.

- Activate 20 giant working mobile models
- Admire Leonardo da Vinci's drawings and paintings on 40 translucent canvases, 3 or 4 metres high.
- Using 8 sound stations, listen to the musings of Leonardo da Vinci and his disciple Francesco da Melzi - Leonardo's voice is rendered by Jean Piat, Honorary Member of the Académie Française.

- 20 The Art of Building
- 21 Polyhedron
- 22 Ornithopter
- 22 The dream of flight and the parachute
- 24 Face lights
- 25 The Golden Horn Bridge
- 26 Paddle wheel
- 27 The body as machine
- 28 Paddle boat
- Landing Stage: boat hire
- 29 The squirrel-cage rotor
- 30 Perspective
- 31 Clearing
- 32 Archimedes Screw
- 33 Shadoof (giant water wheel)
- 34 Diving suit
- 35 The Botanic
- Audio listening posts
- Orientation Plan



Where to eat?

- "La Terrasse Renaissance": Crêperie - Tearoom.
- "La Table du Moulin": snacks under the arbour, near the water mill with the Leonardo gears.
- "L'Auberge du Prieuré": with Sieur Sausin, the Renaissance style chef, discover the taste of original recipes from the time of Leonardo da Vinci. Tel.: +33 (0)2 47 57 69 01 - Fax: +33 (0)2 47 57 62 88 infos@vinci-closluce.com - www.vinci-closluce.com

The Cultural Shop

The épicerie Renaissance

The shop offers a wide range of books and souvenirs on Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance.



Château du Clos Lucé Parc Leonardo da Vinci



Parc Leonardo da Vinci Regulations

Some advice on how to enjoy your visit in complete safety A visit to the Parc Leonardo da Vinci implies acceptance by all visitors of the following contractual provisions:

1. Respect for the site and the educational and play facilities
 - Absolute respect for the lawns and educational facilities is required and no damage to these of any kind will be tolerated.
 - Any persons responsible for such damage to the site, and the institutions represented by group leaders and the parents of children responsible, will be held liable for any damage ascertained.
2. Compliance with safety instructions
 - Le Clos Lucé shall not be held liable in the event of any incident or accident that might take place during the visit.
 - Group leaders, the users themselves and the parents of children visiting the site are solely responsible for the use of the machines, games and educational equipment.
 - The safety instructions must be complied with.
3. Respect for the tour route
 - Do not walk on the lawns - Respect the places and historic objects - Use the bins provided