

Welcome



In the East, in the Aube, on the border of the Paris Basin and in the South of the Champagne region **lies a vast, mysterious land** where water, the soil and the forest have given birth to a **remarkable area**, fruit of nature and man.

The Forêt d'Orient Regional Nature Park isn't a nature reserve, **nor an open-air museum or a botanical sanctuary**, but a living space **open to all**, where preservation of the environment and **development of the area go hand in hand**.

This legendary area houses **immense lake-reservoirs** nestled in the heart of deep forests, which give joy to lovers of nature, culture, sports and leisure activities..

The Forêt d'Orient Regional Nature Park consists of **58 communes with 22 000 inhabitants**, and covers **820 km²**. **It's mission is to** protect and valorize a heritage of exceptional riches but with a fragile balance whilst contributing to the park's economic development.

There is a **mosaic of natural regions** which offer a

remarkable range of landscapes : the Champagne chalk-lands, Côtes des Bars, valley of the Aube, plain of Brienne, the Champagne wetlands with its secret charm symbol of the marriage of water and forest .

These are large, gently undulating **open spaces**, dotted with groves, woods **and small market towns**, giving way to hedged farmland and **wet meadows**, or the **Forêt d'Orient, sometimes so impressively deep**, steeped forever with the presence of the **mysterious Templars**.

There are 3 of the 4 **grands lacs de Champagne in the Park** : the Lac d'Orient (also called lake-reservoir Seine), the Lac du Temple and Lac Amance (lake-reservoir Aube). These lakes have a total area of 5,000 ha and are equipped with modern infrastructures **for all the nautical sports**.

There are many **natural milieu to protect**, and landscapes to preserve. Protection doesn't mean though keeping people out. You are naturally invited to discover **these fabulous natural treasures**.

To embellish this enriching contact, the Park and its partners have created for you a wide range of quality **amenities and offer you** many sporting or cultural activities **as well as those to help you relax**.

The **tourism portal** www.lacs-champagne.fr which we have made available to you will help you to get to know us better and above all, help you to prepare your next visit. The reception points here have all you need.

Welcome to the Forêt d'Orient Regional Nature Park and see you soon.

Origin of the name Forêt d'Orient

The "mystery" of the origin of the name Forêt d'Orient hasn't yet been completely solved . Several possibilities exist :

- this name comes from the the military orders present in this forest in the Middle Ages (Teutonic Knights, Hospitalers and above all Templars) who all had links with the Near East,
- this name means a forest belonging to these knights (Templars, Hospitalers). We know , for example, that after 1255 the name of a part of this forest changed from "Forêt du Der" to "Forêt du Temple",
- this name simply means the fact that this forest is to the east of Troyes.

It is also certain that the Forêt d'Orient was in the Middle Ages part of an immense forest that stretched from the Argonne (Ardennes) to the Forêt de Pontigny in the Yonne.

It protected the eastern frontier of the territory of the Counts of Champagne and thus indirectly the kingdom of France from the Holy Roman Empire (Alsace, Lorraine, present day Germany).

The Forêt d'Orient was thus part of a continuous forest massif that stretched from the Forêt du Der to the Seine (Der means 'Oak' in Celtic).

Commanderies, granges, first Templar then Hospitaler, were built so as to exploit the forest.

This is also the place where we find today the grands lacs de Champagne (Lac d'Orient, Lac du Temple, Lac Amance and Lac du Der), without a doubt the "real" treasure of the Templars...

See the interactive map of the park [➔](#)