

# Besançon, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, France

Wrapped in a horseshoe bend of the Doubs River and crowned by a Vauban citadel, Besançon is one of eastern France's most rewarding river stops — Roman ruins, Renaissance palaces, and a watchmaking legacy all within easy walking distance of the quay.

River port (docked) Typical call: 6-8 hrs Euro (€) French

## 👉 MY DAY IN PORT

|                  |               |                   |
|------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Ship/Date: _____ | Arrive: _____ | All aboard: _____ |
| Excursion: _____ | Notes: _____  |                   |

## GETTING ASHORE

**Docking:** Docked at Besançon river port on the Doubs, 30 berths, seasonal (Apr 15–Oct 15)

**Best For:** UNESCO Citadel, Roman history, watchmaking museums, local Comté cheese

**Walk to centre:** 5-10 min walk from river quay to La Boucle old town

**Don't Miss:** Citadelle de Besançon (UNESCO) and the underground canal boat tour

Getting around: Taxi €5–10 · Rideshare Uber, Bolt

## TOP THINGS TO DO

- **Citadelle de Besançon — UNESCO Fortress** — Vauban's 17th-century masterpiece crowns Mont Saint-Étienne with 11 hectares of ramparts, three museums (Comtois, Natural History, Resistance &...
- **La Boucle Old Town Walk** — Stroll the pedestrianised horseshoe of streets past the Porte Noire Roman arch, Saint-Jean Cathedral with its astronomical clock, Victor Hugo's...
- **Underground Canal Boat Tour** — Board 'Le Vauban' or 'Le Battant' for a scenic river loop that passes through the impressive 375-metre tunnel carved beneath the Citadel rock...
- **Royal Saltworks of Arc-et-Senans** — A second UNESCO World Heritage site 35 km southwest: Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's 18th-century 'ideal industrial city' is an architectural marvel set in...
- **Musée du Temps — Museum of Time** — Besançon was France's watchmaking capital.

## BEST WALKS

- **La Boucle Historic Loop** 2.5 km · ~1 hr · easy (flat) — From the quay follow the river past Quai Vauban, turn into the old town at Pont Battant, pass the Porte Noire Roman arch, continue to Saint-Jean Cathedral, and return...
- **Up to the Citadel** 1 km · ~20 min · steep uphill — From the old town, climb Rue de la Convention steeply uphill to the Citadel main gate.

## WEATHER · DAYLIGHT · MONEY

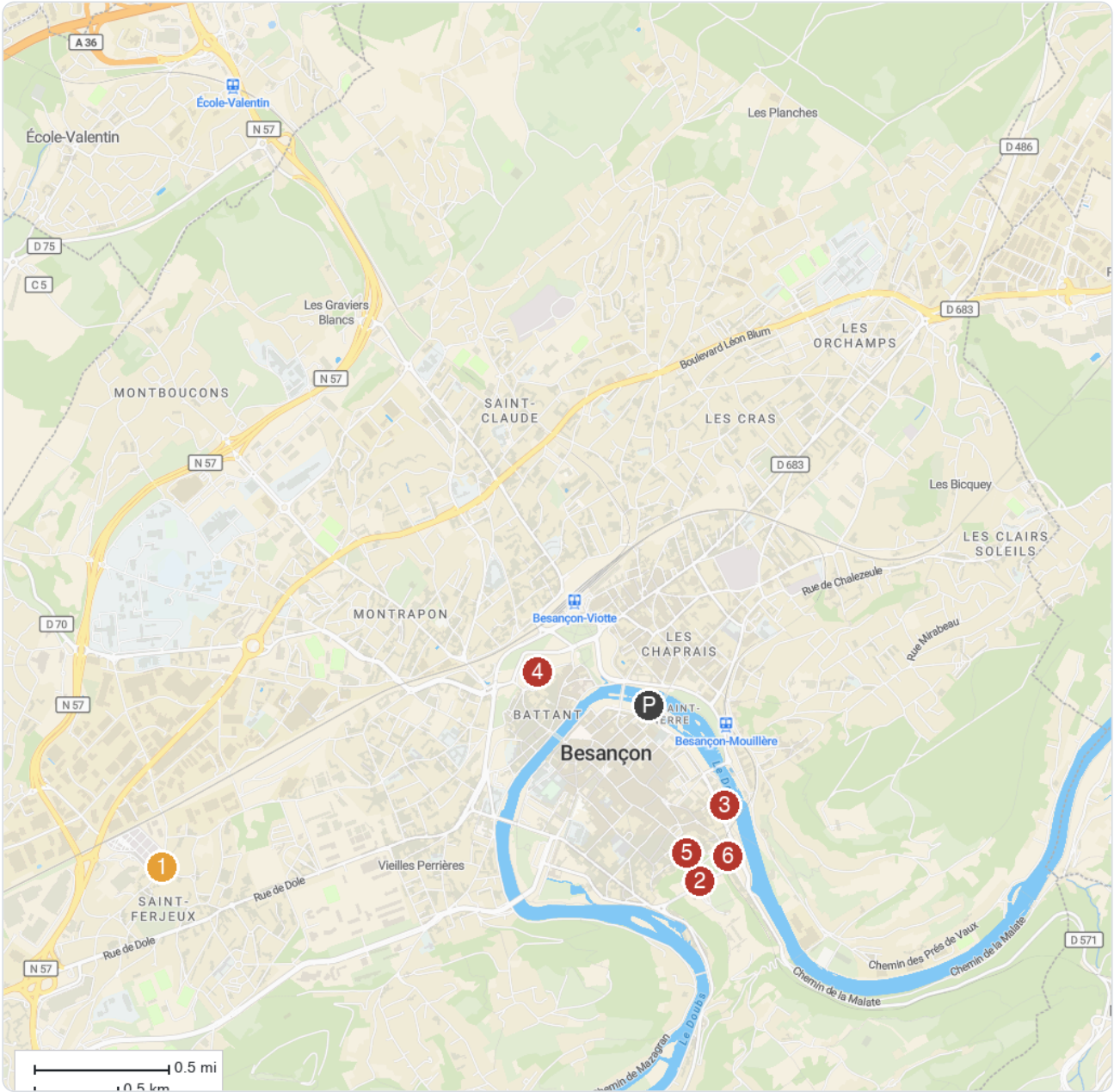
| CLIMATE (AVG °F · RAINY DAYS) |     |      |     | DAYLIGHT &  MONEY |                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|-----|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                               | Mon | High | Low | Rain              |                                                                                                   |
| Apr                           |     | 60°  | 42° | 12d               | Apr 6:47AM–8:24PM · Jun 5:39AM–9:33PM · Aug 6:32AM–8:46PM · Sep 7:13AM–7:47PM · Oct 7:54AM–6:47PM |
| Jun                           |     | 75°  | 58° | 13d               |                                                                                                   |
| Aug                           |     | 77°  | 60° | 11d               |                                                                                                   |
| Sep                           |     | 71°  | 55° | 10d               |                                                                                                   |
| Oct                           |     | 62°  | 48° | 12d               | Euro (€)                                                                                          |

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Citadel is a half-day commitment. Budget at least 2 hours — the three on-site museums alone deserve unhurried time. Combine with the underground boat tour below for the full Besançon experience.
- Book the boat tunnel tour early. The underground canal boats are popular and run on fixed schedules; check at the Pont de la République embarkation kiosk as soon as you arrive.
- Try Comté cheese at the market. Besançon is the heart of Comté country — pick up aged Comté at the covered market (Marché Couvert Victor Hugo) near the old town centre.
- Wear good shoes. The Citadel climb is steep cobblestone. Flat old-town streets are easy, but the hill will punish sandals.
- Euros only. ATMs are plentiful in the old town. Most museums and restaurants accept cards, but small market stalls may prefer cash.
- River port season is Apr 15–Oct 15. Facilities (water, electricity, harbour master) are only available in season — most river cruise itineraries visit in summer.

# Besançon, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, France — Port Map [cruiseports.org](https://cruiseports.org)

Red = walkable sights · Amber = excursions farther out · P = cruise terminal. Numbers match the order you'd typically visit.



- |                                    |                                                                      |                                       |                                                               |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Basilica of Saint-Ferjeux | A grand basilica housing the relics of Saint Ferjeux.                | <b>2</b> Besançon Citadel             | Vauban's 17th-century fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage site. |
| <b>3</b> Frac Franche-Comté        | Regional contemporary art center with diverse exhibitions.           | <b>4</b> Griffin Fort                 | Historic 19th-century military fort offering panoramic views. |
| <b>5</b> Astronomical clock        | Intricate 19th-century astronomical clock inside Besançon Cathedral. | <b>6</b> The Little Train of Besançon | A tourist train offering scenic city tours.                   |
| <b>7</b> Lama Loisir Mamirolle     | Llama farm offering walks and animal encounters.                     | <b>P</b> Cruise port / terminal       |                                                               |