

History of the Citadel

Towering above the Belfort Gap and protecting the «gates of Alsace» region, the Citadel is the result of several centuries of architectural evolution. The medieval castle built by **Renaud of Burgundy** was first mentioned in the 1226 Treaty of Grandvillars. The fortification was initially modified in the 17th century by the **Comte de la Suze** who adapted it for artillery use. **Sébastien le Prestre**, marquis de **Vauban** (1633 -1707) later turned the castle into a complete Citadel by extending its defensive walls to the city.

The 19th century was the Citadel's golden age. It survived two sieges during Napoleonic wars (one between 1813-1814 and another in 1815) and was expanded by French general and military engineer **François Nicolas Benoît de Haxo** (1774-1838).



The main courtyard after 1871. Studio Braun.

Under the command of Colonel **Pierre Philippe Marie Aristide Denfert-Rochereau** (1823 - 1878), with the fierce support of Mayor **Edouard Mény** (1818-1891), Belfort sustained a siege of 103 days (including 73 days of bombing). The French government ordered its surrender to Prussian troops in February 1871. It was then occupied by the Prussians until 1873. The citadels of Belfort and of Bitche were the last strongholds of French resistance during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Rendered militarily obsolete at the beginning of the 20th century by the first aircrafts, the Citadel was regarded as a second-class stronghold during World War I. During World War II, the Citadel played no part in the 1940 Battle of France. Later, it was the site of quick and violent combat when the city was liberated in November 1944. The Citadel of Belfort, now named a national heritage site, has been owned by the city of Belfort since the 1960s.



Liberation of Belfort (November 1944)



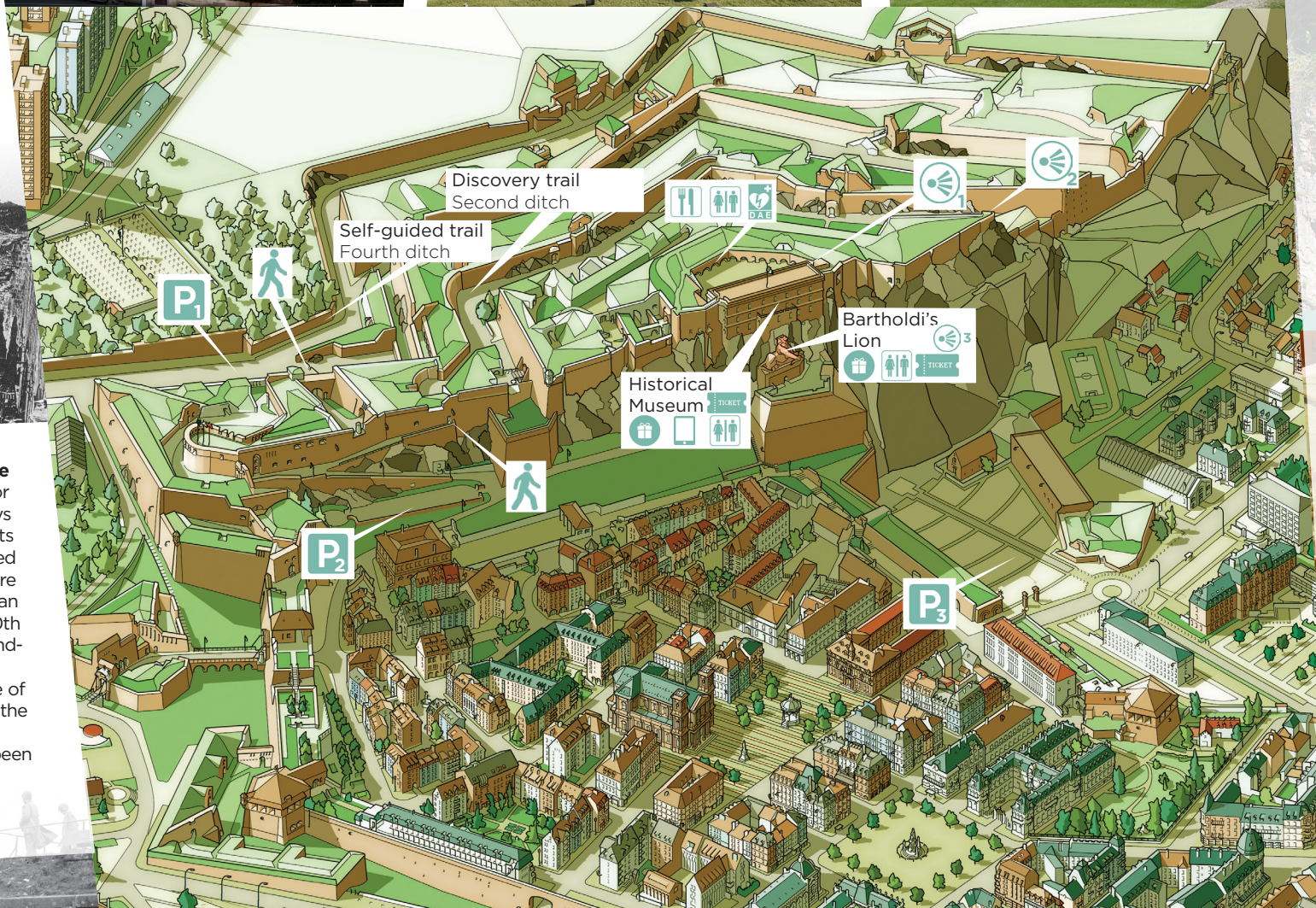
The Barracks



The ditches



The Burghers' Tower



Fortifié Est parking lot
rue Xavier Bauer
access through highway A36



Arsenal parking lot
Avenue du Général Sarraill



**Montée Emile
Géhant parking lot**
access through the old
city center



**"Terrasse
panoramique"**
viewing point



"Belvedere"
viewing point



**"Terrasse du
Lion"** viewing
platform



**Restaurant de la
Citadelle**



**Pedestrian
entrance**

**All of the fortifications are open
for no charge to the public**

Sights not to miss

BARTHOLDI'S LION

Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi (1834-1904), an artist from Colmar, sculpted this majestic pink sandstone lion to immortalize the tenacity of Belfort's citizens during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. It was installed beside the Citadel between 1875 and 1880. Standing at 11 meters high, 22 meters long, the statue is still France's largest sculpture to date. When Bartholdi created this statue, he was also working on another one of his other major works: New York City's Statue of Liberty.



HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The historical museum is located in the barracks built by Haxo in 1826. The museum's rich collections reveal the different phases of the history of Belfort and its region. In the museum, you can discover archaeological finds and hundreds of objects characteristic of both military life (weapons, headgear, uniforms) and civilian life. A trip through time, from pre-historical times to the 20th century!



AUGMENTED REALITY

Use your smartphone or borrow a tablet to travel through history! Where will you start? At the castle's courtyard as it was in 1579, or at the facade of Vauban's barracks? Would you like to see the panoramic terrace with its view on the city, or would you plunge through time into the ditches and the Great Gallery? Our new digital tour combines films, reconstitutions and testimonies. Immerse yourself in history by superposing the views, from one building or one facade to another.



Access, contact and opening times

Information, tickets and bookings :

Musée(s) de Belfort

Place d'Armes
90000 Belfort FRANCE
musees@mairie-belfort.fr
musees.belfort.fr

Citadel entrance

By car
Highway A36, exit 13
Glacis du Château
By train
- From Belfort central station: take bus 2
- From Belfort Montbéliard TGV station: take bus 3

Guided tours of the museums are available all year through booking (groups only, starting from 15 persons).

Citadel

Open every day
From September 1 to June 30 :
8.00 am - 6.00 pm
From July 1 to August 31 :
8.00 am - 8.00 pm
Closed on January 1, November 1, and July 13

Historical Museum

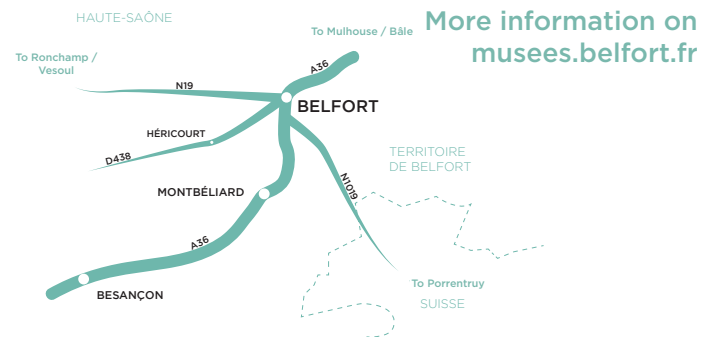
Inside the Citadel
Phone +33 3 84 54 25 51
Open all week, except Tuesdays
From October 1 to March 31 :
2.00 pm - 6.00 pm
From April 1 to June 30 and from September 1 - 30 :
10.00 am - 12.30 pm /
2.00 pm - 6.00 pm
Open every day in July and August: 10.00 am - 12.30 pm /
2.00 pm - 6.00 pm

Terrasse du Lion viewing platform

Phone +33 3 84 54 27 73
Open every day: 10.00 am - 12.30 pm /
2.00 pm - 6.00 pm

Restaurant de la Citadelle

Phone + 33 6 33 95 70 01
restau.citadellebelfort@gmail.com



More information on
musees.belfort.fr



Discover and learn

GUIDED TOURS

Every year, the City of Belfort partners with Belfort Tourisme to organize a series of tours open to all. Join us to discover the multiple facets of Belfort's heritage, its Citadel and invincible fortresses.
www.belfort-tourisme.com



WORKSHOPS

Year-round, our museums offer :

- school holidays activities, by age groups.

- tours for all audiences: performance tours, quick tours, conferences.

- learning material : buy one of our discovery booklets at the historical museum or collect your free gamebook at the Donation Maurice Jardot.



CONTACT INFORMATION DESK

From Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 12.00 pm /
2.00 pm - 5.00 pm
Phone: +33 3 84 54 56 40
mediationsmusees@mairie-belfort.fr

FOLLOW US

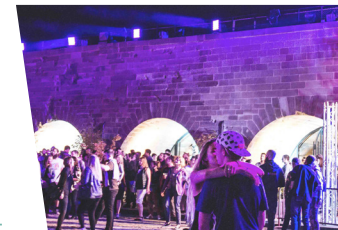
- facebook.com/museesetcitadelle
- facebook.com/belfort.tourisme.official

Save the date !

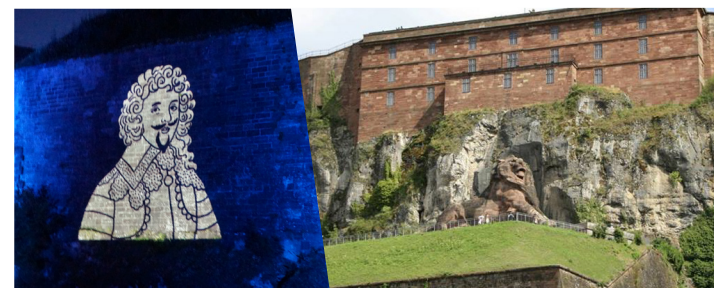


SUMMER LIVING HISTORY FESTIVAL

During four weekends in July and August, our Living History Festival is Belfort's greatest highlight of the season. Attracting over 15,000 visitors each year, it shines a new light on societies from Antiquity to the end of World War II. A meeting point for reenactors, the Festival also hosts many events: theater shows, concerts, conferences, author Q&A, and more. Save the date this summer and take advantage of the best time to discover and understand Belfort's heritage in a family-friendly atmosphere.



Discover our latest events on our website
musees.belfort.fr



EUROPEAN NIGHT OF MUSEUMS
MAY

EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS
SEPTEMBER



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MUSEES DE BELFORT

