

Did you know? Paris was originally a Roman city called Lutetia.

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5 of the best: Marvels of Millau

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Millau has vast open spaces for enjoying the fresh air and outdoor sports

The Millau area of Aveyron in Midi-Pyrénées is perhaps best known for its splendid viaduct. But there's much more to enjoy in this delightful region. Here is our pick of the area's cultural and natural highlights...

1. Luxury Leather Industry

Millau can boast ambassadors in the form of Nicole Kidman, Kylie Minogue, Madonna and Marion Cotillard. Why? Because of a trendy fashion accessory – their gloves. Of course, we don't mean any old gloves... these particular gloves are made from luxury lambskin leather produced in the factories and workshops of Millau with skills honed since the Middle Ages.

You can watch the gloves being made and get close enough to touch them at the workshops and factories open to visitors. The world of haute couture regularly calls upon the *petites mains* glove makers in Millau. One of their recent customers was none other than Daft Punk. Prestige at your fingertips!

2. UNESCO Listed Land

Packed with historical and cultural heritage, the beautiful and wild landscape surrounding Millau is enough to take your breath away.

In fact, the Causses and Cévennes agro-pastoral landscape is UNESCO listed. Man has tamed nature over the years, constructed whole villages from stone, raised sheep for their milk (used in Roquefort cheese) and turned their skin into delicate leather gloves. The meat from these animals, known as Allaiton d'Aveyron suckling lamb, is a shining star of the local gastronomy.

3. Bring Out the Explorer

With prestigious fortified sites such as those of the Larzac Templieret Hospitalier (La Cavalerie, La Couvertoirade, Sainte-Eulalie de Cernon, Le Viala du Pas de Jaux and Saint-Jean d'Alcas) and the deep Gorges du Tarn to discover, the wanderer is king. Whether you are travelling on foot or on horse-back, cycling the old shepherds' paths, navigating the River Tarn in a canoe or driving along the scenic roads of high limestone plateaux, this is an area you can really afford to explore at your leisure.



Millau's luxury glove industry has some celebrity fans



Striking rock formations of the Grands Causses

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(<http://www.linkcounter.com/go.php?linkid=345859>) Traditional, family-focused, great value ski resorts, the French Pyrenees are a breath of fresh air.

Slow Holidays to 'la France profonde'

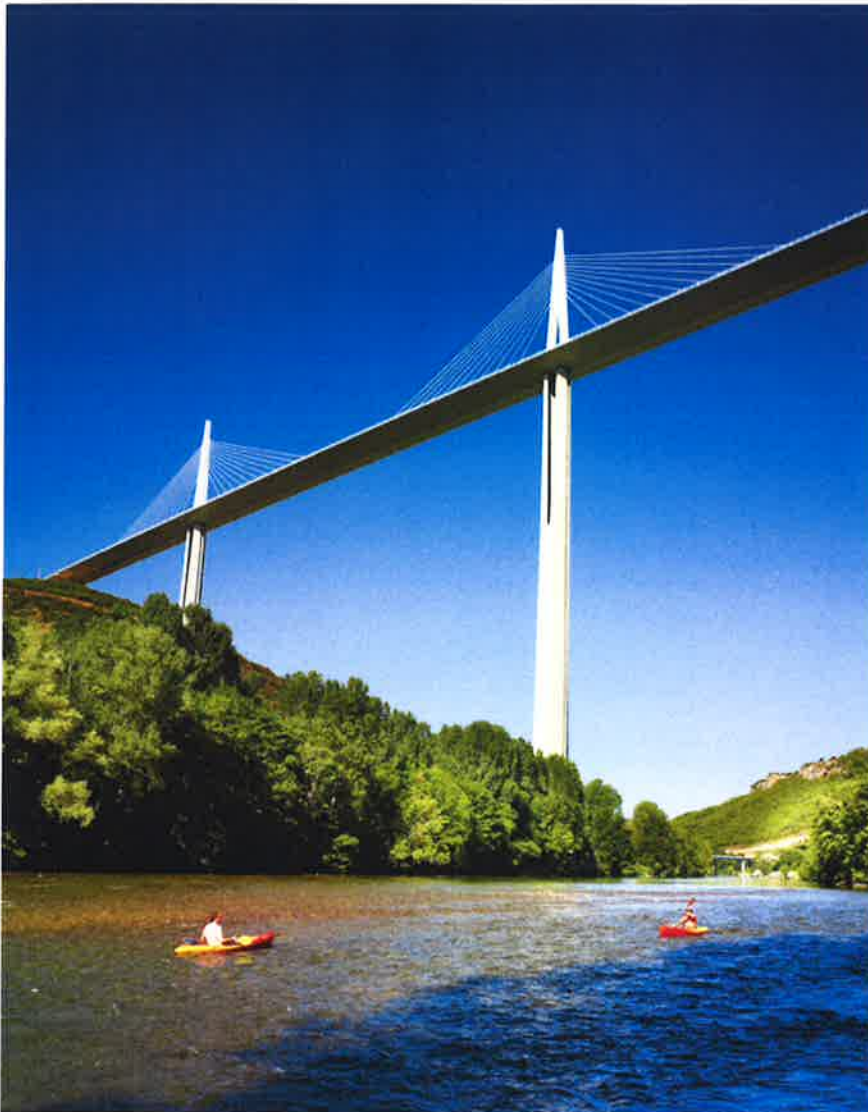


(<http://www.inntravel.co.uk/destinations/france>) Pedal the back-lanes or take the lesser-trodden paths on a self-guided walking or cycling holiday from **Inntravel**

4. Home to a Natural High

Adrenaline junkies are spoiled for choice in the Millau Grands Causses, where they can get up high

and flit about with vultures, eagles and other exceptional birds. Choose from a range of extreme sports ranging from paragliding and rock climbing to via ferrata and bungee jumping. But if raptors mean nothing to you, then why not join the beavers, otters and other residents in the water instead with a spot of rafting, stand-up-paddling or canyoning.



Millau's most famous location, perhaps: the 343m-high viaduct

5. Fêtes & Festivals for All

No matter if you are in Millau or one of the surrounding villages, take the time to really experience Millau by way of numerous events celebrating local art de vivre: festivals, farmers markets, live music, village fêtes, crafts and artisans, unusual visits, taverns on the waterside... each to their own! Big events throughout the year include Millau Jazz Festival, the Mondial de Pétanque, Natural Games (international festival of outdoor sports), the Trail International des Templiers... not forgetting La Course Eiffage du Viaduc de Millau on 18 May 2014 to mark 10 years of the viaduct being open to traffic. The 23km race from Millau is an unforgettable experience open to everyone, which offers runners a unique opportunity to feel the tarmac underfoot as they make their way across the famous Viaduc de Millau, between sky and earth, which at 343m high is the highest viaduct in the world.

• Visit the Millau tourist board (<http://www.millau-viaduc-tourisme.co.uk/>) for more on accommodation, visits, events, or general information

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