

## Travel Journal – Day 5: Discovering Beaune

A radiant sun and a perfect spring temperature welcomed us this morning as we set off to discover the historic town of Beaune, nestled in the heart of Burgundy's wine country.

We began with a walking tour, starting at the Château de Beaune, a former fortress that once guarded the town, its ramparts and ancient moat still visible as reminders of Beaune's medieval role in protecting the Duchy of Burgundy. Along the way, we learned about Beaune's brush with cinema history as the setting for the beloved French comedy *La Grande Vadrouille*.

Our path led us past the Maison Romane, one of Beaune's oldest stone houses, dating back to the 12th century. We paused at Place Monge, named after Gaspard Monge, a renowned mathematician born in Beaune and the founder of descriptive geometry.

At the foot of the Beffroi, Beaune's elegant 13th-century belfry, we took in the Gothic detailing and imagined the sound of bells that once marked both time and danger. Nearby, we stopped at the Boulangerie de Marie, where we met Marie herself—cheerful and focused, she had been up since 3:30 a.m. Her commitment to quality was evident in every bite of her blackcurrant brioche, rich and buttery, dotted with bursts of tart-sweet cassis.

We passed the Abbatale Notre-Dame, where first communion children, dressed beautifully in white, added a sense of celebration and serenity to the square outside the church.

Just a few steps away, in the courtyard of the Musée des Vins, we stood before the “press à perroquets”, an imposing traditional wine press—part of the former palace of the Dukes of Burgundy and a symbol of the region's winemaking legacy.

Beneath the city runs the La Bouzaize River, its presence hinted at in the cool courtyards and underground cellars that define Beaune's character. At Place Carnot, the bustling heart of town, we paused for a chocolate tasting at Maison Duroux:

- A velvety 69% dark chocolate,
- A glossy Palet d'Or, filled with smooth ganache,
- Local griottes—maraschino-style cherries—enrobed in dark chocolate,
- And a whimsical trompe-l'œil saucisson, made entirely of chocolate and nuts, masquerading as a sausage.

We visited the Hôtel-Dieu, the Hospices de Beaune, with its iconic polychrome roof tiles and deeply moving history as a 15th-century charity hospital. Its blend of Gothic architecture and medical heritage left a lasting impression.

Next, we boarded the petit train for a relaxed circuit of the town, giving us a broader sense of Beaune's layout, vineyards, and hidden corners beyond the center.

Lunch was an adventurous affair in a small café—we certainly shared great conversation.

The afternoon and evening were left free for personal discovery: some explored local boutiques or wine shops, others returned to favorite spots or simply lingered in the sun-drenched squares, watching the rhythm of Beaune unfold, others went to Dijon on a train adventure.

After such a rich and rewarding day, we settled in for a well-earned rest, grateful for the beauty we'd absorbed, and excited to head toward Annecy tomorrow.