

AVIGNONET-LAURAGAIS

At the Heart of the Cathar Tragedy



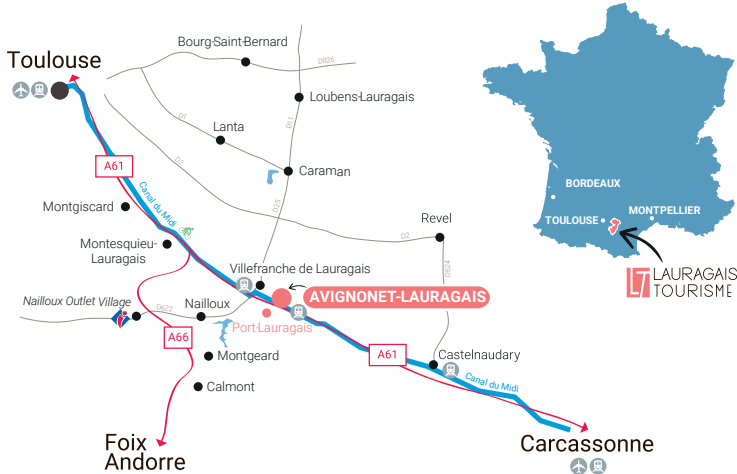
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What is Catharism?

Catharism is a Christian movement that developed strongly in Occitania between the 11th and 13th centuries in dissent from the Roman Catholic Church. The Cathars ("pure" in Greek) lead a very austere life and develop a doctrine dictated by a desire for purification.

They freed themselves from the traditional sacraments of the church to recognize only baptism: the "consolation" and one prayer: the Pater. They are then designated as "heretics" and will suffer from leaving from 1208, the "Crusade against the Albigensians" followed by the Inquisition entrusted to the Dominicans in 1233.

The fall of Montségur (Ariège) in 1244 marked the decline of the movement and ended with the death at the stake of Guillaume Belbaste in 1321, considered by the Church as the last "Perfect"



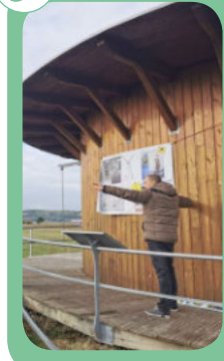
The Massacre of the Inquisitors

On May 28, 1242, "Faydits" (lords dispossessed of their property) Montségur with the complicity of the Avignonnais, assassinated by night the Inquisitors at the castle with axes.

This tragic episode will give new impetus of rebellion against the French royal authority throughout Occitania. The village will be punished and its church closed for 40 years. This episode ended in the fall of Montségur a few months later by way of reprisals.



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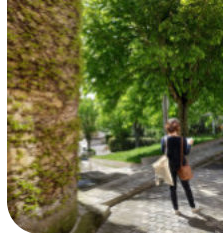




1 The Old Castle

Remains of the former 12th century castle, called "castellum", protected by an entirely disappeared wall. The village will develop under his protection, along a important trade route.

It is in this place that the tragic episode of the massacre of the Inquisitors occurred in 1242.



2 The Church of Notre-Dame des Miracles

The Church Notre-Dame des Miracles in Southern Gothic style will be built in the work stopped in 1348 because of the plague and famine and the English invasion. They will resume around 1480 to finish only in 1516 with an octagonal bell tower that peaks at more than 130 feet high!

Inside is a painting of the Inquisitor Massacre.



The Candélous Pilgrimage

Since the Middle Ages, the worship of the Virgin Mary has been very present, following the various miracles that occurred products during the reopening of the church to worship.

On Monday evening, the day before the first Tuesday in June, a procession is organized through the streets of the village, "candle" by hand (candle). The next day, a solemn mass opens the pilgrimage that lasts the whole months.

Pilgrims can ask for indulgences at the Virgin and kneel the crossing of the church from the porch under the bell tower to the altar

3 Rue de la Tour de Garde

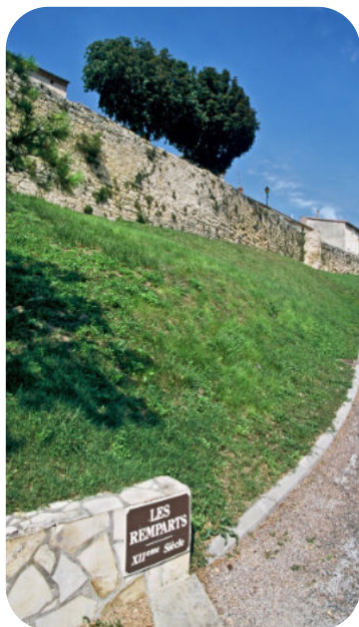
Interesting viewpoint on Port-Lauragais and the surrounding hills on the site of an ancient shift. Below, pass the famous road Roman "Via Aquitania" near the current route of the motorway, and in the distance stands the Obelisk in homage to Pierre-Paul Riquet, located at the Seuil de Naurouze.



4 The covered market

A 19th century market hall, recalling the merchants during fairs and markets organized from 1250 and renowned for its sheets.

In the Renaissance, the Pastel trade was the main source of revenue that enabled many families to enrich.



5 The old ramparts

Old ramparts surrounding the city from the middle ages made of local calcareous stone. Formerly, four doors opened during the day allowed entrance to the heart of the village. Destroyed at several times, the ramparts will not withstand the devastating passage of the Black Prince in 1355 !

We can notice the inlay in the wall of a discoidal cross discovered nearby.



6 The bartizan tower

The bartizan tower that was part of the ancient defensive system of the Cers door, then used used as a prison in 1583 to lock up Michel de Paulo, a formidable robber who terrorized the population and travelers. He will be captured, decapitated et thrown over the wall.

Note the presence of a warrior statue bearing the coat of arms of the Desazars family from Montgailhard.

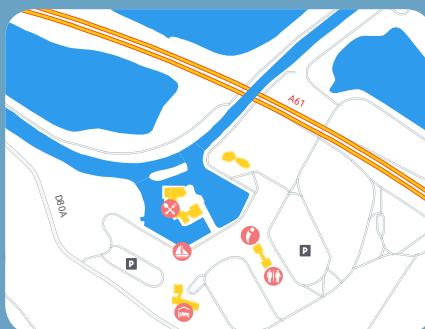
Port-Lauragais

On the edge of the Canal du Midi, Port-Lauragais is accessible by the canal, the cycle path, road and motorway.

Set around a 1.5 hectare lake, it is home of the discovery area of the Lauragais and its shop « Le comptoir du Lauragais » as well as a restaurant, a bar-caféteria and a hotel.



A yearly free and open that traces the history of th Canal du Midi, Lauragais and Pastel. You can rent bikes or electric boats for a pleasant ride along th Canal du Midi.



Discovery area of the Lauragais

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