

INSTANTS

LE MAGAZINE

DESTINATION FOIX ARIÈGE PYRÉNÉES

HERITAGE

Great historical heritage

THE HEART OF TOWN

A living city

LOCAL FLAVOURS

A land rich in flavours

VAST OPEN SPACES


Going green

ACTIVITIES & LEISURE

With the stream

SAVOIR-FAIRE

The artist's life

 L'AGGLO
Foix-Varilhes

FOIX
ARIÈGE CÔTÉ COUR, PYRÉNÉES CÔTÉ JARDIN

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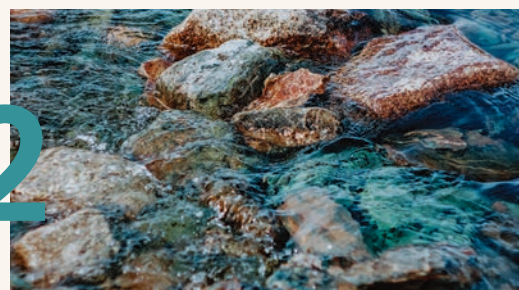
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A living city



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Practical information

Say good bye to frantic life, meals on the run and overloaded schedules: escape and take your time to ENJOY, that is your new timetable.

Slow down, savour the present moment and leave space for the unexpected: take it all in at your own pace!

Go for a walk along the Ariège river, have brunch with your family overlooking the beautiful countryside or just enjoy a nice lie-in. In this beautiful area at the foot of the Pyrenees, taking your time becomes a second nature. Try it, you might like it!

Take the chance to (re) discover our local heritage, and meet those who make it so special.

Visit the historical Foix castle or the unforgettable Forges de Pyrène village. Stop at a farm to taste some local specialities, go on an underground adventure along the Labouiche river or stroll along the paths meandering through our beautiful Bargaillère and Plantaurel valleys.

Here, taking your time, the time to live, to enjoy, to laugh, to drink, to eat, to meet and to share, is an "art de vivre" so enjoy!

*Pierre Ville
President EPIC
Vice-president in charge of tourism
Agglo-Foix-Varilhes*



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Foix Ariège-Pyrénées in a nutshell

44 km!

Length of the
multi-activity trail
(Voie Verte) from Foix
to Saint Giron.



76000 litres:

the annual wine
production of our
area.



1800 metres:

altitude at the summit of
Pic de la Lauzate, the area's
highest peak found in the Saint
Paul de Jarrat commune.



An unusual fact: 0
the village of **Cos**
has no church or even
a cemetery...

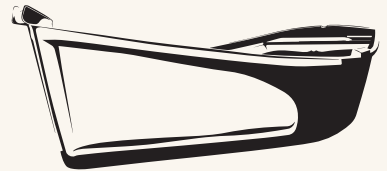
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120
the age of
the Cedar
tree of the
Church of
Saint-Volusien.



**60
metres!**

How far underground
you are on the
**subterranean
Labouiche river
during your boat
trip!**



.....

32 metres:
height of Foix castle's
round tower.

Into familiar grounds

1

VISIT THE BOISSET KNIFESMITH IN SERRES SUR ARGET

Not only will you see how a knife is made from an old piece of metal into a beautiful, polished knife, but you'll also go a hundred years back in time; the workshop hasn't changed since!



©Virginie Boisset

2

THE ENGRAVIÈS WINE ESTATE

A visit to this vineyard will take you and your tastebuds on a journey to the heart of Ariège winemaking traditions. **Guided vineyard tours every Thursday morning at 10am in July and August (free)**



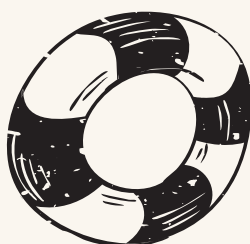
©S. Meunier - ADT Ariège Pyrénées

©ADT

3

THE AQUATIC CENTRE

There are activities here all year round: aqua-bike, monofin, aquagym, etc. Inside there's a large pool for everyone, a jacuzzi, sauna and hammam. In the summer, tan yourself next to the pool or relax under a tree in the park.



4

PARAGLIDING EXPERIENCE

Head to the Prat d'Albis with your instructor. Once you are kitted out and the debrief is done, there's just a few more steps to take until you feet are hanging in the air! Gently soar around in silence over the hamlets dotted along the Bargaillère valley.



5 THE LAURÈDE MILL

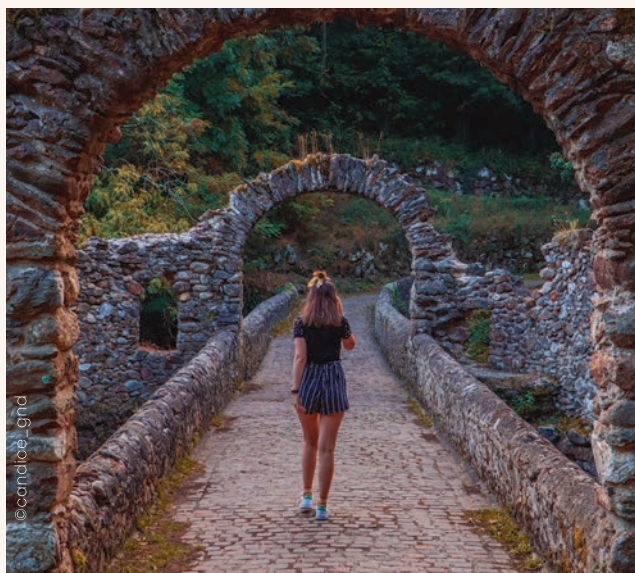
In the midst of a lush green forest sits a special little historical water mill. It springs back into life every summer thanks to a passionate group of volunteers. A little rest stop in the heart of nature. **Guided tours during summer holidays**



6 VOIE VERTE MULTI TRAIL FROM FOIX

This is where your adventure from Foix begins. Bicycles, hiking shoes and horses are champing at the bit with excitement...

Like you, they just can't wait to get into adventure mode. And so begins 44km of exploration and enjoyment!



7

THE FOIX CELEBRATION AND ITS FIREWORKS

Even though this event marks the end of the summer, it's one of the most highly expected celebration for its atmosphere and fireworks launched from the Foix castle.

8

THE DEVIL BRIDGE

Come and discover this mysterious and enchanting place; a stone bridge that straddles the Ariège River. With its two big arches, the architecture is remarkable and where the legend tells it was built through a deal with the devil. Will you dare to cross it?



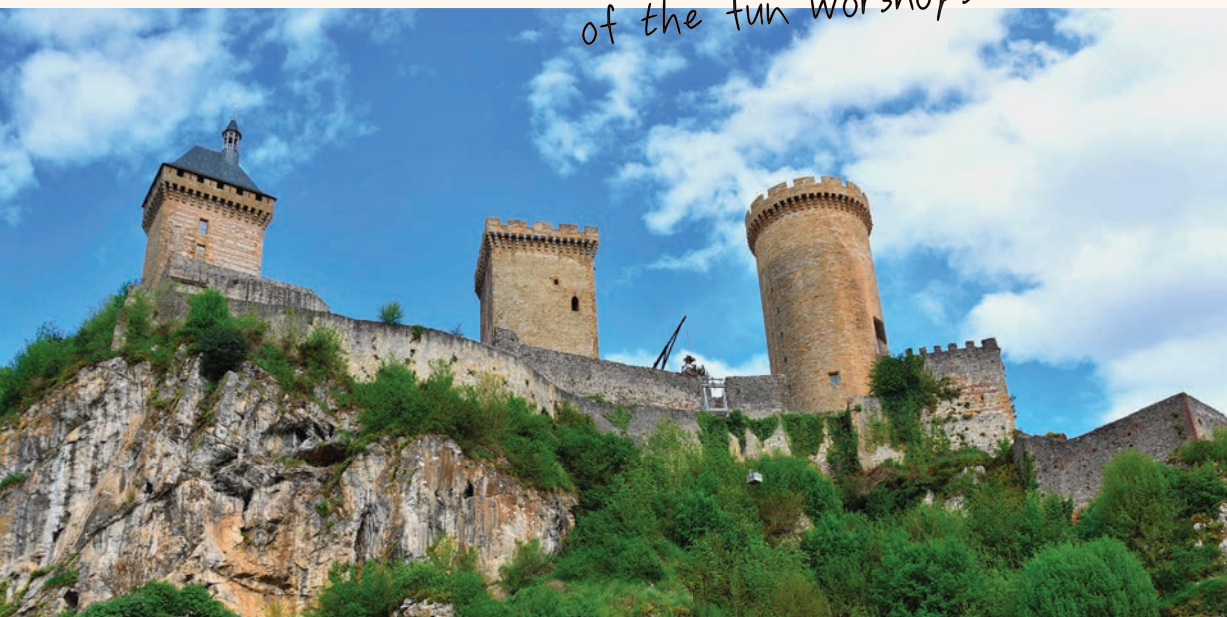


Great historical heritage

DISCOVER

Imagine for a second that while taking a stroll you become a princess or a knight, you go back in time and through old villages and take a boat 60m underground...well you can stop dreaming because it's all possible here!

"Become a knight at one of the fun workshops"



Foix castle, a lofty history

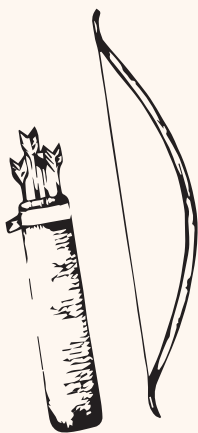
This fortress is proudly perched on the highest section of a rocky outcrop overlooking the town. Rebuilt through the ages, it was extended to take up the whole upper part of the rock and is now a symbol of the town.

Learn about the incredible story of the Counts of Foix in the museum. A 2000m² interactive scenographic space where daily life plays out, love stories unfold and wars break out.

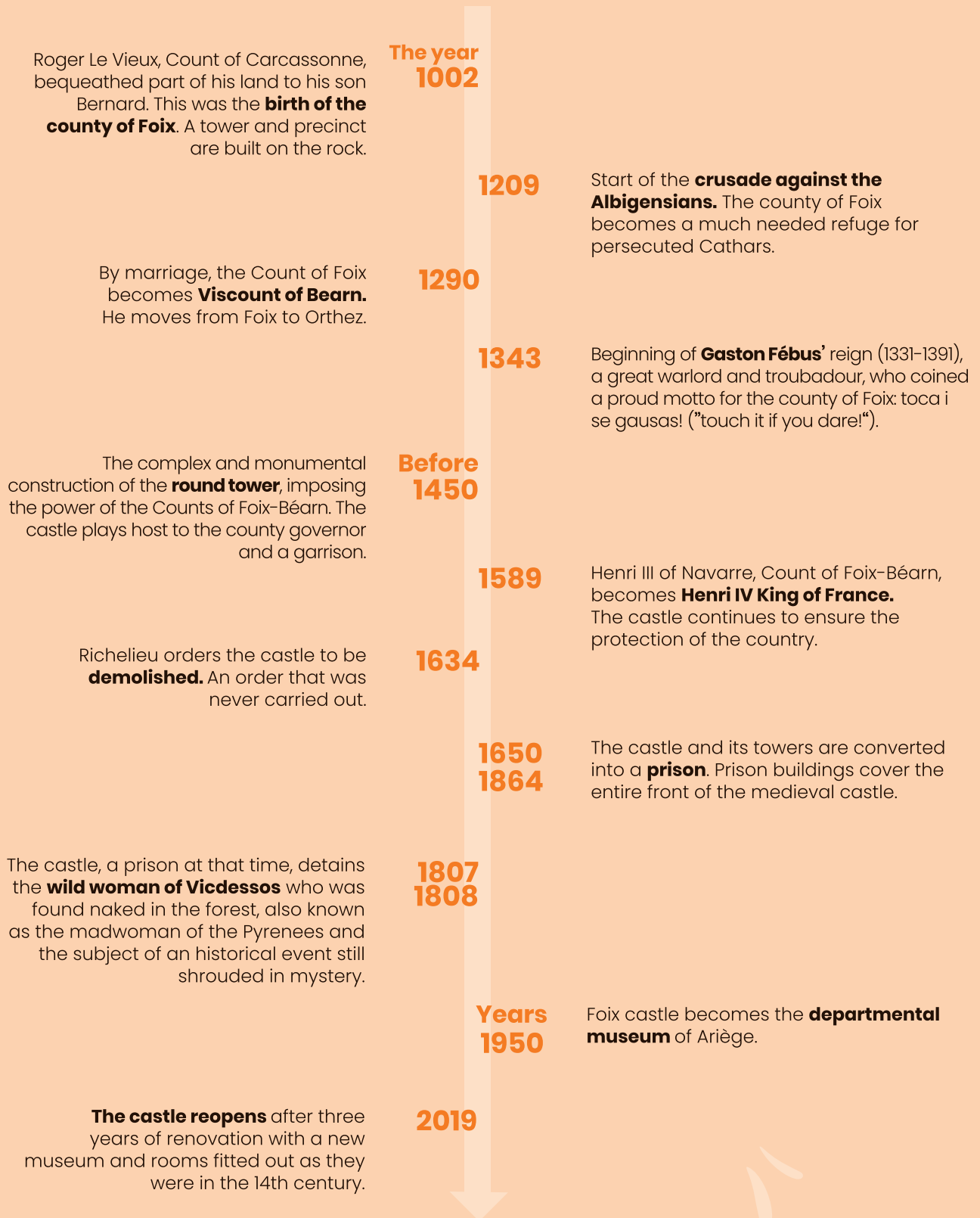
Every room in the castle is adorned with the finery of times gone by, bringing you right into the heart of the middle ages. Its furniture and various weapons sit waiting for the return of their master...and for you!

On the fortress ramparts, you can become a strategist, a knight, a stone mason or even a blacksmith at one of the fun workshops.

With family or friends, the escape game will take you in search of Cathar treasure in the underbelly of the Gaston Fébus' castle.



Going back in time



The village of Forges de Pyrène: a journey back to 1900

Listen and hear to the secrets shared by the blacksmith at the forge. One of the last original hammer forges time of that's still in use.

Closely tied to the hammer forge, delve into the region's great iron history of the 14th century through a spectacular scenography at the Musée du Fer (iron museum).

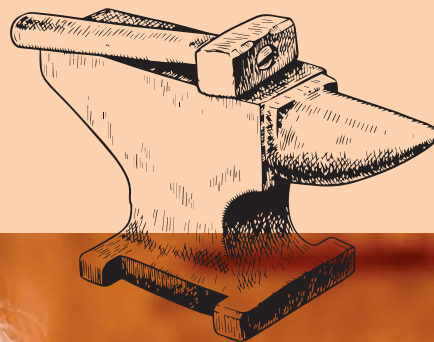
A huge collection of tools and objects assembled at the Musée de Métiers (crafts museum), showing 130 skills and techniques of the past.

Go back in time to 1900 and tap into the life of Baptistou on an interactive, time framed circuit called "Les âges de vie".

Follow the mascot, Caramel, a mischievous squirrel who will guide you through the typical Ariège way of life, from its flora and fauna to the natural resources used respectfully by people in their work.



All the unforgotten secrets of village life are revealed through workshops where you can discover the crafts and fashions of the past, a real legacy of our Pyrenean culture.



Labouiche, a subterranean escapade

Discovered by Dr. Dunac in 1908, it's been open to the public since 1938.

Rich in caves, the Ariège river provides some unique experiences like the one below 60 metres underground.

Take a trip on a boat in search of the wizard and the unicorn. Marvel at these ancient geological formations and cruise along the underground waterfalls.

Here, even if the time seems to have stopped, it continues to carry out its work on the limestone formations millimetre by millimetre.

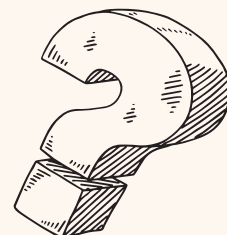
Get on board and explore the wondrous history of this 1500 metre-long river.

"A unique
experience
60 metres
underground"



Tell me who you are and I will tell you what to visit!

From the gorgeous Ariège valley to the foothills of the Pyrenees, our region is full of things to discover. If you ask us, we'd say you have to visit it all of course... But to find out what places suit you best, just take the following test!



1 A BIT OF HISTORY?

- Of course! By the way did you know that Philippe le Bel...
- No thanks, never before dinner!
- ▲ OK, but nothing too complicated...

3 A NICE WALK!

- ▲ I would never say no!
- I've studied all the walking trails and I am all set
- Leave me here, I'll just slow you down.

5 OR GASTRONOMY?

- They say that the local food and wine go well together.
- Always keen to taste some local products!
- ▲ Personally, I just love sugar loaves.

2 MAYBE A SPOT OF CRAFTS THEN...

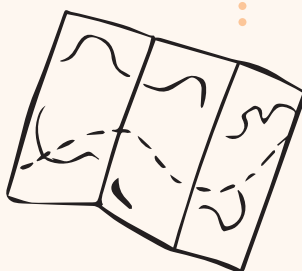
- I love uncovering local gems!
- Why not, I can take home some souvenirs
- ▲ I'm more into the outdoors...

4 MAYBE MORE METAL OR ROCKS...

- That's not really my kind of music...
- ▲ Iron, gold, quartz... I'm in!
- Another version of Roshambo?

6 IN "BI PÉTIT" VERITAS!

- ▲ Sorry, I don't speak patois.
- Ah the old Ariège wine!
- It seems like the local wines are famous.





©kayla-farmer

MOSTLY ●

YOU ARE MORE A “HISTORY AND WINE” TYPE.

For you we would combine French history and vineyard visits!

Discover the pretty little lanes of Varilhès and its Centre d'Histoire where you'll learn more about our region's history, a bastion of Resistance. Peruse at the incredible bestiary in the Château de Fiches in Verniolle and round off a perfect day with a visit to the Engraviès domaine and its winery to taste some of their wonderful organic wines.

MOSTLY ■

YOU ARE MORE A “CRAFT AND NATURE” TYPE.

The Barguillère valley is for you!

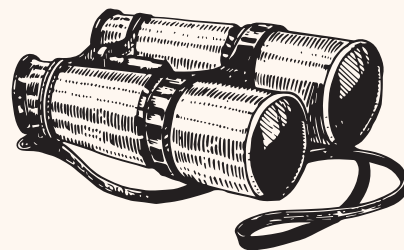
Stop by at the Abbaye Notre Dame du Pesquié in Serres sur Arget to experience some great local products before taking the road towards the village for a picnic and a walk around the lake. Discover the techniques of traditional knife making at the Coutellerie Boisset or pick your own blueberries at the Malpassadou farm. Enjoy our picturesque villages and appreciate the view from Col de Légrillou.

MOSTLY ▲

YOU ARE MORE A “MAN AND IRON” TYPE.

For people interested in geology and materials, this is for you!

Start in Ferrières sur Ariège where iron was found in the past, then onwards to the lovely little village of Montgailhard and its “sugar loaf”. Learn about quartz craft in the Prayols village or see the mines of Kaolin near Seignaux, walk on the “devil's bridge” between legend and reality and enjoy the fabulous panoramic views of Montoulieu village.



History of the Pech terraces

Just above Foix, strange strips of stone reveal themselves, crossing the landscape and time itself.

Agricultural and pastoral activity popped up here in the 10th century on the westerly slopes of the mountain range. People equipped these terraces with dry stones and cabins to secure the land and make the most of this ideal aspect for developing subsistence cereal agriculture using rainfall to water the crops. It was not always straightforward, this sort of terrain were can be difficult to cultivate.

These days the terraces are protected by the Ariège Pastoral Federation, listed as a Natura 2000 site, and have marked walking trails with information boards describing the daily life of the time and the local flora.

The terraces are also a subject of interest for a group of volunteers who are rebuilding some of the terraced areas and making stone benches to preserve this local heritage and its rich history. You may even be lucky enough to cross paths with Richard Danis, an expert on dry stones who spends long hours up there and who would be happy to tell you all about the history behind them.

What a better way to look out over our beautiful county town and the surrounding landscapes, from the foothills to the high peaks of the Pyrenees?

"Local heritage and its rich history"



© S. Meurisse ADT Ariège Pyrénées

Behind the scenes of “Foix, Terre d’Histoire”

Every summer for over 60 years, an amazing group effort brings the town of Foix to life. 150 volunteers take you through the great history of this medieval city and its surrounding territory. Dazzling sound and light shows will reveal some of its secrets to you!

“Foix, Terre d’Histoire” (Land of History) is testament to the huge enthusiasm of the volunteers who are so proud of what they achieve year after year.

“From the young Gaspard, 3 years old, to the elders at 86 years old, everyone is included whatever their role: technical, costume making, set design, performers...or all three at the same time and even more!” says Laëticia Lafon, Co-president of the volunteer association.

This creates an impressive show where the history of Ariège mixes with local legends and the fairies of

Fontestorbes. A year and a half of work, 120 participants, around 500 costumes and, more than ever before, “the joy of gathering with friends, with their “summer family” around values of solidarity and the desire to do good”, adds Laëticia.

“Foix, Terre d’Histoire” comes to life in the heights of the town, from a lush green theatre with the Château de Foix as a backdrop. Thanks to the work of the volunteers who are all so proud to share this wonderful story with the public.



A living city!

VIBRATE

Foix is reinventing itself, boosting its dynamism, and the town centre is proof of this! Multiple drives, urban regeneration and new faces all enrich the soul of the town and its businesses. The future promises to be bright!



Foix, a vibrant town

More than ever before, the town and the county are supporting local artisans and business owners who want to set up shop in the centre of our charming town. There's nothing better than a lively centre to provide a strong heartbeat to the daily life of a town.

And it doesn't stop there! Small local businesses and boutiques are constantly popping up one after another, all bursting with ideas and ingenuity, creating the right environment for social cohesion and exchange, building strong relationship with their customers.

"In November 2021 I opened the "36", a 'biblipolar-tartinerie' which is a space to read, eat, work and where you can meet friends and share thoughts"
says founder Isabelle Marty.



So it's not hard to find little eateries, craft shops, charming fashion boutiques and even a viking shop. The town has set itself the goal of encouraging and supporting these entrepreneurial and commercial efforts.

"It's true! The town, the CCI and the Communauté d'Agglomération took an interest in my project, supported me by giving advice and helping me through the right steps, providing all the keys that I didn't necessarily have. I couldn't have done it without them" adds Isabelle.

More than ever, Foix town is lending a helping hand to all the wonderful projects that enrich the heart of the town centre. Welcome to our home!



On the way to new horizons!

IN RECENT YEARS, FOIX HAS COMMITTED TO REENERGISING ITS HISTORICAL CENTRE.

First of all by renewing its habitat and urban furniture which helps to improve our residents' quality of life.

But there's also a bigger picture being addressed.

Beyond supporting new local businesses, the region has set up a collaborative youth centre in a warm and welcoming environment. This place is open to all and was designed in an eco-conscious way. It has become an epicentre for meditation and a variety of other activities such as performing arts or manual work and has a rehearsal and recording room as well as a fun space with lots of games. It's all designed for local young people to feel valued and express themselves.

In the coming years, the town's cinema is set to be enlarged.

Foix is committed to working together for the good of us all!

"The heart of town beats strong"





A land rich in flavours

TASTE

In Ariège two great gastronomic inspirations merge, the Gascon and Languedoc, giving it a special sort of atmosphere. Taste and savour, awaken your taste buds!

Christelle Record, life amongst the hills and the “calves”!

Christelle is a passionate, inspirational farmer. She fully embraced and fell in love with her new role when she took over the family farm in 2011. The least you could say is that she never gets bored!

WAS THAT A LIFESTYLE CHANGE?

Yes, a little over 10 years ago, after a completely different professional life, I started breeding Limousin and Brown Alpine cows following a ‘calf-with-mother’ veal production method (Label Rouge®) and I was quite successful! Now I’m starting another project, to make cheese matured with hay.

DO YOU HAVE AN EDUCATIONAL ROLE?

Of course! I am completely self-taught. I learned my trade by making mistakes and by getting inspired by those who knew how to do it.

When people come to me, I help them to understand that when you

do your job well, the product is good. I put a little bit of understanding and a human touch back into a profession that is sometimes misunderstood by consumers.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR LOVE OF THE REGION?

Infinite! There are always things to do or see, no matter where you are. It’s a beautiful, green region. It’s a land of regeneration, where you can settle down, recharge your batteries and feel fresh again when you leave. I discover a little more about it every day.

“I put a human touch back
into my profession”

Christelle Record
+33 (0)6 68 87 18 63





Focus on



WHITE BEER OR «WITBIER» FROM THE BRASSERIE LA FOURCHE

A fresh, delicate beer with a final note of ginger. A beer made with great passion and brewed in the centre of Foix.

RIMONTAIS CHEESE FROM THE MILLES FARM IN RIMONT

This small, particularly tasty goat's cheese keeps for a long time; making it taste even better!

SALTED BUTTER CARAMEL FROM VIRIDIANA IN MONTOLIEU

A delicious plain caramel with hazelnuts or chocolate that everyone wants to try... even our Breton friends! It really warrants the detour!

COUNTRY HAM FROM GAEC DE LA COUMES IN SAINT MARTIN DE CARALP

This seasoned raw ham matured for 7 months is a pure delight. When shredded by hand it tastes even better.



Eat well, eat locally!

THE LOCAL GROCERY SHOP

The idea first came from a volunteer/community-based story. A «Drive thru farm shop» opened at the start of lockdown when everything around was closing. Naturally, it developed into a grocery shop on top of a trailer made from scratch by Timour Roche, a wonderful cabinetmaker. Today, it plays host to 130 local producers and there are 1300 products to taste (some of which are from outside Ariège in the «épicerie d'ailleurs»). Above all, it has a functional role for the local economic fabric and is an exciting adventure!

Once upon a time in Foix... the Friday morning market

Going to the Foix market on Friday mornings means giving yourself over to sensorial pleasures and really local products. The sounds, the smells, the tastes, the buzz: an authentic market.

The "allées de Villote" and the "halle aux Grains"

Allow yourself to be transported by these long alleys in the shade of plane trees. The colours, sounds and varied stalls will guide you. Lively exchanges between people pay testament to our local culture.

At the top of the alleys, you will meet the sisters from the Abbaye du Pesquié, producers of raw milk cheeses, home-made jams and gingerbread.

Continue along Rue Bayle and Rue des Marchands taking you into the heart of the town and follow the sound of the locals' shopping caddies rolling along the cobblestones. Passers-by smile as street musicians play tunes and the bells of the abbey ring out.

Take a gourmet break at the Passe Temps, a tea room on the Place au Beurre.



Place Saint Volusien

A delightful square, this is the second place not to be missed at the market. A festival of different aromas will lead you through: fruit, vegetables, country bread, charcuterie, cheeses are all enticing invitations to meet with local producers.

You may come across Michel Fauré, restaurateur from the Saint Michel in Varilhes, who will tell you that the secrets to his flavours are all to be found here on these stalls with their high quality products.

11:30 am, the bells of Saint Volusien ring out. Don't be shy, follow the Foix locals into the heart of the abbey church. It's time for the market concert which takes place every Friday morning, a timeless musical break. End your morning with lunch in the medieval city. You really are spoilt for choice!

An authentic Azinat

MICHEL FAURÉ FROM THE SAINT MICHEL IN VARILHES

*who you already met at the Foix market this morning,
now shares his recipe for azinat, a cabbage soup,
a real local gastronomic gem.*



Ingredients for the azinat

- 1 large curly kale
- 850g firm potatoes
- 250g smoked lardons
- 2 saucissons de couenne
- 1 end of country ham (talon de jambon de pays)
- 8 legs of goose or duck confit
- 4 large carrots
- 2 large onions
- 4 cloves of garlic

Ingredients for the rouzole, a pancake-shaped stuffing

- 500g sausage meat
- 200g bread crumbs
- 25cl of milk
- 2 cloves of minced garlic
- 2 eggs
- 50g chopped parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons of duck fat

PREPARATION

- Wash the cabbage thoroughly. Blanch it for 5 minutes.
- Prepare the roux with the onions, peeled carrots and a little duck fat, add the end of the ham, the saucisson and the bay leaf.
- Cover with 3.5 litres of water. When it boils, leave to cook for 30 minutes, add the cabbage. Continue cooking for 1 hour 30 minutes.
- Prepare the rouzole, in a large bowl, put in the sausage meat, lardons, eggs, garlic, chopped parsley and the breadcrumbs soaked in milk and drained, add pepper without salt, mix everything together, shape the stuffing. Add the potatoes, the confit drained of fat and place the rouzole on top, continue cooking for 30 minutes.

Azinat is eaten hot. The broth is served with thin slices of bread. Serve the meat, vegetables and sliced rouzole.

Enjoy!

Michel Fauré
+33 (0)5 61 60 08 00

"A little slice
of paradise"



Tonight, another round at the Bon Gaillard!

The heat of the day is starting to subside, it's pleasant and everyone wants to enjoy it. Our advice: phone a few friends and meet at the summer HQ: the Bon Gaillard.

Delphine and Gilles took over the Roucateille campsite in January 2021. They have transformed it into a little slice of paradise where friendship and togetherness are the key words.

The Bon Gaillard is a wine bar on this campsite in Montgailhard, a small village just a stone's throw from the town of Foix, but not only that... In fact, it is a very friendly place, where locals and tourists meet and talk about the places not to be missed here. Sometimes 2 or 3 little secrets that are well kept by our locals slip out after a couple of glasses.

By the way, the wine list provided by our hosts is as high-quality as it is varied.

And for those of you who are not in the know (and yes, it happens!), you won't be neglected! A variety of artisanal drinks will help you discover the savoir-faire and creativity of our region.

This place is so pleasant that people always gather here. An evening at the Bon Gaillard is also a great opportunity to sample local specialities. This evening, the menu is 'from the producer to the plate', with home-made burgers from the Ferme du Vignoble.

The evening rolls on before the sunset show starts above the pool and Pic de Montgailhard.

Blueberry picking on the farm

You wake up with your family in a gîte in the heart of the Barguillère. You open the shutters onto the Picou, which acts as a lookout for the habitants of the valley. The morning sun's rays light up sleepy hamlets one by one. One of them happens to be Malpassadou in Brassac. This is the anchor point for your day.

Head for the farm of the same name where Franck is waiting to share his world with you: blueberries. A tightly woven wicker basket from the Foix market is perfect for picking this woodland berry because in this farm with its stone buildings, it is up to you to pick your own blueberries! Once your basket is full, stop at the shop for a natural fruit juice. Then continue on the road to the Col de Légrillou to enjoy the peace and quiet and the view. Be careful not to stay there too long or your fragile harvest might overheat! Back at the gîte for 3pm, it's time for a snack: you guessed it, it is blueberry tart. Just in time to preheat the oven to 180°, roll out a shortcrust pastry and top it with these small fruits (if the children haven't scoffed them all on the way). Bake for 40 minutes. It's four o'clock and it's time! Serve everyone a glass of fruit juice and a piece of pie. A delicious experience to share with the whole family.

"Pick your own blueberries"



From the basket to my suitcase



1

FLOCONS D'ARIÈGE

This sweet praline treat is the ideal thing to take away in your suitcase, for yourself or as a gift: light, crispy and delicate. Warning, contents are addictive!

2

PATÉ DE CAMPAGNE FROM THE PLANTAUREL TERROIR IN MONTÉGUT-PLANTAUREL

Finely chopped, it brings you the authenticity of our region's flavours. Eaten fresh on country bread, it's sure to awaken your taste buds!

3

THE WINE OF THE DOMAINE D'ENGRAVIÈS IN VIRA

You simply have to go and taste it straight from the producer (who is committed to organic farming) after a guided tour of the estate held every Thursday morning.

4

THE FACE CREAM FROM DOUCEURS DES NEIGES IN FOIX

Natural, perfume-free products, try out the massage balm, ideal for relaxing after a big walk.



5

THE COMIC BOOK 'IL ÉTAIT UNE FOIS' IS A WONDERFUL STORY OF THE CHÂTEAU DE FOIX

Told by two lovers of the city. This illustrated comic book tells the tale of how the castle was rebuilt through the ages!



6

PRODUCTS FROM LA MARGUE FARM IN VERNIOLLE

In Verniolle, stock up on great natural organic products like their tasty sunflower oil or soaps made using mare's milk and bring natural cosmetics to your daily routine.



7

TOMME OF THE PYRENEES

We invite you to push open the door to Abbaye Notre-Dame du Pesquié and discover Saint-Paterne cheese which is made on site by the Benedictine nuns.



8

ZOÉ MONTAGU'S HORSEHAIR EARRINGS

Much-prized for its longevity, horsethair is the medium of these highly original creations. This is a rare ancestral skill that Zoé uses to channel her creativity.



9

CHOCOLATE FROM CHEZ ROSE&CACAO IN MONTGAILHARD

Discover the story behind this artisanal pure dark chocolate made in Montgailhard with its exceptional taste and nutritional qualities.





Going green

OBSERVE

Ariège provides a journey into the heart of nature, a succession of large natural areas, a protective oasis for the rich fauna and flora. Explore them, feel them and experience a timeless interlude!



Far from the crowd, the open air

Focus on... the fauna and flora of the Parc Naturel Régional des Pyrénées Ariégeoises.

The town of Foix became the gateway to this natural park in 2019. As soon as you arrive, you are at the entrance to the Parc Naturel Régional and, more precisely, to the Barguillère valley, which is about fifteen kilometres long from east to west, including nine municipalities.

The Parc Naturel Régional is aimed at responding to the major challenges of sustainable development and in particular to the preservation of living heritage, a crucial, coordinated drive for our region.





The red kite

As soon as spring arrives it is not uncommon to see this beautiful diurnal bird of prey with its reddish-brown plumage hovering over its prey. The species is better protected than ever before. Around 700 birds have been identified in Ariège and almost forty kites take refuge in the Brassac roosting area.

The desman

Also known as the «rat-trumpet» because of the shape of its snout, the desman is a small mammal, emblematic of the Pyrenees. An endemic species, it is now threatened with extinction. The Conservatoire Régional des Espaces Naturels (CREN) is doing everything it can to prevent its disappearance.

" Gateway to the natural park "

The Col des Marrous cep



Thanks to the diversity of its trees and the favourable soils, nearly 800 species of mushroom have been identified in the forests of the Barguillère. Among them, the famous and particularly tasty Col des Marrous cep. Beware of following advice from the habitants of the valley, they'll most probably send you in the wrong direction to keep the key ingredient of their precious cep omelettes for themselves! At the beginning of autumn, the cars parked by the roadside will be a useful clue...

The blueberry

In spring, at the foot of beech trees, small purple berries are born and then fought over by gourmands. But man has some competition as this precious berry is also a favourite with animals: grouse, deer and dahu all compete for this much-loved fruit!



Van Life in Prat d'Albis

Looking for freedom? That feeling that the world belongs to you and that time stands still for a night? Sounds appealing? If so then get behind the wheel of a van and head off towards Prat d'Albis.

On the road again, windows open with "Dust in the wind" by Kansas playing. You pass cows and horses in summer pastures, but don't worry, you aren't going to bother them. After about twenty minutes, you arrive at your destination. An altitude of 1200 meters provides an unforgettable view. The colours of the sun light up a fiery sky above the valley. In the distance, the lights of the villages start to switch on. The last paragliders land and their air-filled wings fold. The first stars appear. In the van, the rear doors are left open overlooking a valley that seems never to end.

After taking in the beauty of your chosen spot for the evening, set up your dining room under the stars: two chairs and a folding table, simple but practical. An ideal chance to taste your bounty from this morning's market: sausage, cheese, bread... In all their simple splendour.

Then time stops. Let yourself drift away into the moment, free, in the midst of a world that belongs to you.

"Looking for freedom"





"Wow"



After sport comes relaxation!



Overnighting at Prat d'Albis is a memorable experience. Today, what better way to stretch your legs than to go for a hike and take a deep breath of fresh air. With the right kind of shoes, set off for a walk to the Pech de Montgailhard. You will often find the word «Pech» in our local guide books; it is an Occitan term for the top of a hill. Onwards to Montgailhard!

When you arrive in the village, take the footpath after the picnic area at the side of the road and walk along the small stream. The sound of the water guides you, awakening your senses. You pass under three jagged rocks before reaching a promontory where you can look out on the ruins of an old farmhouse called the Parisian's cabin. After a narrow passage, there's a spectacular panorama of the valley and of the Montgailhard sugar loaf. This might be a good time to have your picnic and enjoy the open air. After replenishing your strength, get ready for the descent through the woods. A few hundred metres further down, take a small path back to your starting point. After this big hike, it's time to rest! It's a good idea to relax those muscles before they cool down. For this, why not go to the aquatic centre in Foix and use its various facilities. After a refreshing swim in the pool, head for the wellness area. The jacuzzi, sauna and hammam are all there to give you a moment of relaxation. A jam packed day that's good for your mind and your body!



Follow in the slipstream of the Tour de France

"Ready?"

Ariège is a land cherished by cyclists and the Tour de France riders won't disagree. Highly-prized by enthusiasts and often feared by champions, the Ariège stage is widely renowned. Are you ready?

If you are an experienced rider, then there is no doubt about it: you must take on the Mur de Péguère. If you overcome that, you'll pass over the Col des Marrous and finish at the bottom in a pretty green valley before returning to Foix. With 1520 metres of altitude difference and 70 kilometres in this challenging loop, some sections reach a 16% gradient. It is best to be well prepared! In 2017, 2019 and again this year, the Ariège stage of the Tour will pass through here before arriving in Foix. This col has become legendary. Another circuit, and no slouch, is Les Trois Bosses (the three humps). Here, the difficulty rises in crescendo. You start with the warm-up in Montoulieu, then the Col de Traucadou with its 10.5 kilometres of climbing before rounding off with the Bout de Touron above Prat d'Albis, the stage's finish line in the 2019 Tour de France. Does all this frighten you off or are you just more into gentle rides? No problem! Head for the green route (Voie Verte) from Foix. This former railway line reserved for pedestrians, bicycles and horses takes you to all the way to Saint Giron. It is 44 kilometres long and you can turn back whenever you want... Saddle up!

For more details on these circuits:

<http://www.foix-tourism.com/home/get-moving/bicycle-tours>



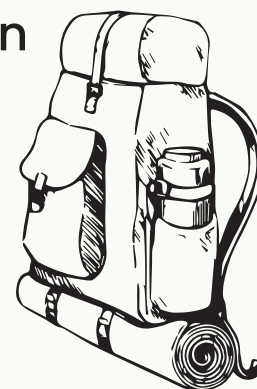


Have fun and spend some quality time together

In the mountains, at the heart of a valley or on a hilly plain with your feet in the water. With friends, family or your loved one and whatever the weather, you're bound to find something to suit you!

The stags bellowing in the late season

Listening to the stags bellowing in the late season is a must for all nature lovers. When autumn is well underway and the leaves are cracking underfoot, it's time to organise an evening hike to hear the sound of deer in the mating season.



Pedalo party at Labarre lake

Enjoy an afternoon on the shores of Lake Labarre with a pedal boat ride (or canoe for the more sporty) and a lovely ice cream with your family. In the evening, after 6pm, it's time to relax with friends. Why not spend it enjoying the music and lively atmosphere of the Foix Plage bar?



"Have fun and spend some quality time together"





With the stream

SHARE

A trip on the water: discover what the Ariège river has to offer. But before you enjoy the coolness of chilling on the riverbanks, get a move on! There are so many things to do...

In search of a gold rush!



Who would have thought? When we think of the gold rush, our minds often take us to wild, distant American lands. But panning for gold, particularly in Ariège, has been around for much longer. Portrait of a leisure activity rich in excitement.

Gold panning is one of those unusual activities to be found on the Ariège river. Indeed, its Latin name "Aurigera" speaks for itself: "which carries gold".

As soon as the days start getting longer, become an amateur gold digger for a day and enjoy the thrill of looking for the metal that makes dreams come true: gold!

"It's also about connecting with nature" says David Bruno, a passionate gold panner.

Because the Salat river, the only place open to the activity, is a protected playground.

"Gold panning in the river is done from 1 May to 31 October, to preserve the well-being of its biodiversity. This is why a permit is needed.

"I often say that we find a little bit of gold and a lot of dreams", he adds.

One thing is for sure, you'll have a great time.

"In search of a gold rush"



Meet David Bruno at
Forges de Pyrène.

Canoeing and kayaking, flagship activities

If there is one sporting activity to try in our region, it's canoeing. Our white water rivers are highly suited to this activity, so much so that our region is also popular for national and international events.

The Rébech basin!

Whether you are an amateur canoeist or kayaker or a professional, the Rébech white water is for you. The waters are controlled and of excellent quality. The investments planned between now and 2023 will make it a «spot» of choice and will play host to several national championships, an international race in 2023, the world slalom championships in 2025 and will be the training centre for the French teams ahead of the 2024 Olympics.

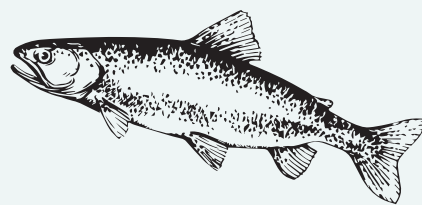
"A "spot" of choice"

Focus on

THE OLYMPICS!

The Paris Olympics are just around the corner. In 2021, we learned that the Ayroule sports complex in Foix will be used as a training centre for the canoe-kayak events. Being able to train in natural white water was what the professionals wanted. With the Rébech white water stadium, they will get their wish... and we are so proud of it!





A day of fishing along the Ariège at Varilhes

It's on! You want to go catch brown trout, the wild queen of the Ariège river? You might not know the river and its secret spots well enough so, to get the most out of this experience, contact Romain Quiles, a 100% passionate fishing guide.

The meeting place is set near the bridge of Varilhes. The day is just rising, the first of the sun's rays illuminating the river reveal a setting worthy of the most beautiful postcards. After a few minutes spent on the technical explanations it's time to choose the right bait and get into the water. The fishing party begins! Romain will advise you and also remind you to be patient. These beauties are shy... After several casts you feel a slight «twitch» at the end of your fingers and your line dives. You've caught something! Despite all the excitement, you manage to bring in your catch. Like magic: a brown trout! If its sides are golden and its back is dotted with black and red spots then there's no doubt, it's a trout! You quickly take your camera out of your bag to capture the moment. Then it's time to gently return it into the river. Putting such a beautiful fish back in the water, setting it free again, is an unforgettable experience!



"Catch brown trout"

"Taking on the
turbulent waters"



A river runs through it



If you head to the Rebech white water stadium you will be welcomed by Simon and Théo from the Foix canoe/kayak club.

After loading the rafts on the trailer, step aboard the minibus to your starting point at Ferrières-sur-Ariège. After listening to their advice and the safety debrief, you are ready for your mission: taking on the turbulent waters of the Ariège over the three-kilometre course! You will be kitted out with: a life jacket, helmet and a wetsuit. Raring to go, you give the first paddle strokes some gusto. For nearly an hour and a half, navigate rapids with your experienced guide and enjoy the sheer exhilaration, and a few surprises along the way. Take on the exciting challenge of negotiating the rapids under safe supervision. A moment of pure joy in the middle of nature with your friends. A great way to discover Ariège from the water...



The artist's life

LEARN

Art speaks even if we don't always know how to explain it. It appeals to our emotions, feelings and intuition. But most of all, it spreads... and Ariège is no exception to this!

" Knowledge can transform a material"



Generation after generation, art is the legacy of crafts which must never be forgotten. Skills that have been developed, tested, sometimes lost and then found again, and finally mastered. Specific knowledge can transform a material, giving it all different forms, whatever the way.

FOCUS ON TWO CRAFTS

Ceramics

Clay lies at the bottom of our rivers so it's no coincidence that people were inspired to work with this substance and its various virtues.

In Ariège, you will find a strong tradition of pottery and ceramics, crafts that make each work a unique piece. Decorated and then glazed using a method specific to each one, the piece is then meticulously fired to harden it. Pieces designed to stand the test of time!

Stained glass

We often imagine stained glass windows decorating churches, telling a thousand epic stories in shimmering colours but this art form can also be found in the intimacy of our own homes.

Combining tradition and modernity, anything can be depicted, far beyond the realms of religion. The glass is cut, painted, fired then set with lead and copper, the results are only limited by your own imagination...

Arts and crafts, age-old disciplines



Julie Frilley et Dimikev, vital art

Julie is a ceramist. She sculpts «clay and other things». Dimikev is a wood and metal sculptor. They now live in Montoulieu and are inviting us in to share their creativity.

WHY DID YOU SETTLE IN ARIÈGE?

Julie: My family lives in Ariège. I have always been in love with the region. It's my home, where I feel good physically and as a person. I belong here.

Dimikev: I come from Reims. I left to explore France and Ariège stopped me. It has everything I want: nature, greenery, a wild aspect... and a very human side.

WHERE DO YOU FIND YOUR INSPIRATION?

J: I let it go. It's not necessarily rational. I like the imaginary, the world of dreams, comics, POP, colour, hybrid characters, street art... that's what comes to me. I often think about it after the sculptures are created.

D: My approach is very intuitive. Whether it's wood or metal, I let the material guide to inspire me. I see things in it and then reveal them. I always try to create a dynamic that goes upwards and with lightness.

ARE THERE ANY LIMITATIONS TO YOUR ART?

J: Limitations are inherent to the material. You have to accept it. You just have to understand what happened and love an imperfect piece as it is. I am often asked why I hollow out my sculptures. Yes,

there are other methods but I like to work on something solid and then on its lightness. I like to take these constraints on board and see them in a different light.

D: I work with constraints. That's what makes my work because I don't force anything, on wood or on metal. I give them renewed value. I go along with their limitations and their forms. I listen to the material.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ANSWER A QUESTION THAT WE HAVEN'T ASKED?

J: I would like to talk about the creative process and the notion of time. Because art is about releasing control. We live in an age where everything has to go fast. Us, we live in patience, with the process of creating a sculpture.

D: When you are a sculptor, there is no difference between your personal life and your professional life. We are 100% committed. Our emotions, our feelings are transcribed into the material. It's a question of balance that must be maintained in order to create. That is vital!

Julie Frilley & Dimikev

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Le Tour de Foire

"An immersive experience"

Are you ready to dive back into the crazy, burlesque atmosphere that thrilled you at the last edition ?

Imagine wandering around on a warm summer's evening in a city transformed into a crazy place where surprises await you around every corner. Strange characters with extraordinary talents will make you dream, magical shows will enchant you, and the melodies rising from every street will transport you to a world where anything can happen !

Tour de Foire isn't just an event, it's an immersive experience where you'll be transported into an enchanting and fantastic universe. Let yourself be surprised, for one evening, by the craziest things you could have imagined !

So, are you convinced ? We'll see you all on a summer's evening, just as the sun is giving way to the stars, to convince you !

For the date of the Tour de Foire and further information :
+33 (0)5 61 65 12 12 – letourdefoire.com



©Jacques Delrieu



" Soak it up, have a drink
or dine to the music "

Foix Jazz Festival

This festival celebrated its 20th birthday last year and is brought to you by a merry band of jazz enthusiasts: the Art'Riège association. This project followed on from the previous years' events: "Nuit du Jazz" and "7 jours jazz autour de Minuit".

After mid-July, the town's large primary school comes back to life in the form of a "jazz village" in one of its courtyards, shaded by trees and decorated with art exhibitions. There you can stroll around and soak it up, have a drink or dine to the music. In the other, more intimate courtyard, the arches and brickwork echo the words of the artists.

THE IN: An open-air cabaret, 'Jazz à Foix' has seen the greatest names in world jazz pass through it, providing the hallmarks of a top festival: Richard Galliano, Claude Bolling, Didier Lockwood, Rhoda Scott, Nicolas Gardel, Ahmad Jamal, Manu Dibango or Kyle Eastwood.

THE OFF: From 6pm to 7.30pm throughout Foix town, and on the Jazz Village stage, there are free shows on café terraces and a moving band in the shopping streets.

THE JAM SESSION: After the IN concerts, total freedom is handed over to amateur and professional musicians to express themselves on the Jazz Village stage for the enjoyment of our festival-goers.

MASTERCLASS: The Jazz Workshop course is organised by the Foix's music School. Three days of training with final a performance concert on Thursday at 6pm on the Jazz Village stage.





Shhh.. don't tell anyone!

Our destination has many hidden gems, treasures lurking at street corners or in the heart of a forest. Come back and see us for more once your intrigue has been sated by these.



1

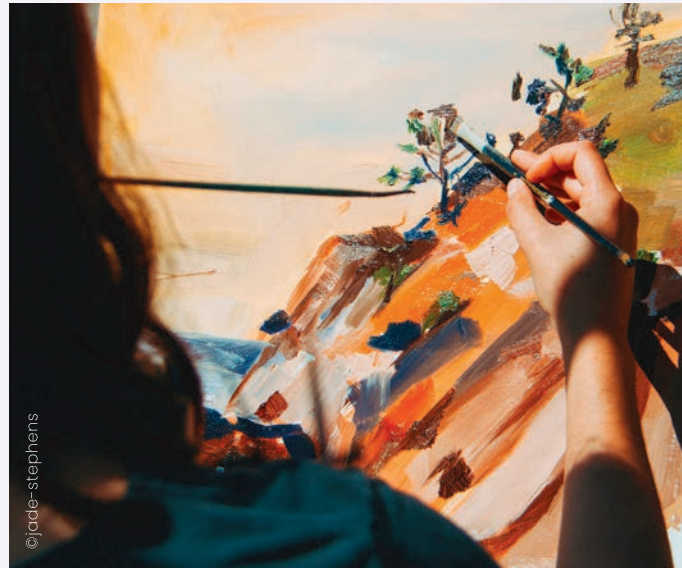
MUSHROOM PICKING IN THE FOREST

Leave the car at the car park at the top of the Col des Marrous before heading into the woods towards Col d'Uscla where you may be lucky enough to find some porcini mushrooms on the way to Cap des Trois Termes. Ideal for a picnic and to enjoy the view. Fresh air, views and nature are guaranteed.

2

ENJOY THE VIEWPOINT AT MONTOLIEU

Explore this authentic village with its stone houses and tower visible from the whole valley. A small path leads you to the base of the tower in just a few minutes for a breathtaking view of the Pyrenees.



©jade-stephens



3

LEND YOUR ATTENTION TO THE PAINTINGS ON RUE DES CHAPELIERS

Just before going up to the Château de Foix, the studios of Lou Pastou and Michel Maury give you a chance to see Ariège through our artists' eyes.



4 TAKE A STROLL THROUGH THE AWARD-WINNING "VILLAGE FLEURI" OF CAMI DES ENCANTATS

Leave your car on the square in Bénac and explore this delightful floral village with the family. Discover the history of this tranquil Ariège village through still-life scenes and their life-size characters.

5 WHY NOT GO AND SEE THE NOTRE DAME DE CELLES

For a moment of peace and quiet away from the hustle and bustle, venture onto the path on the way out of Celles and enter the chapel of Notre Dame, nestled in the middle of nature. This little "Lourdes" of Ariège was the site of many miracles through its spring water. A place of pilgrimage where hikers and pilgrims alike can congregate.

6 HEAR THE ORGAN OF THE CHURCH OF SAINT-VOLUSIEN

Few things can break the tranquillity of such a religious building. However, this impressive organ with 2,500 pipes is amazingly powerful during the performances that take place throughout the year.

7 STOP AT LES DEMOISELLES DE CARAYBAT

On the road from Roquefixade to Soula. Take this easy-access walk and enjoy spectacular views of the Pyrenees. The limestone 'demoiselles' accompany you on your hike. Don't forget your camera!



8 PICNIC AT THE CASTELLA DE LABARRE

On the way in to Foix is the small hamlet of Labarre, providing access to the remains of its castle, which are still undergoing archaeological excavations. Don't miss the view of the lake and the remarkable Vernajoul viaduct.

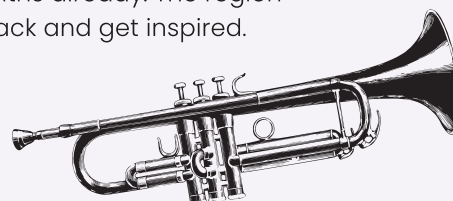


*"Touching people
with his music"*

Nicolas Gardel, a return to his roots

Nicolas Gardel is a trumpet player who needs no introduction in the jazz world. With a classical music diploma in his pocket, he discovered a whole new world at the age of 18, the music of the southern United States. An epiphany! That's what he wanted to do. To touch people with his music, to make them move, to make them dance, to make them vibe!

A Toulouse native but from Ariège on his father's side, he knows the region very well. When he was asked to become patron of the 2021 edition of the Foix Jazz Festival, he had been living in St-Pierre-de-rivière for months already. The region had been literally holding out its arms for him to come back and get inspired. Everything was set...



He takes us on a tour of his favourite things:

PRAT D'ALBIS OR COL DE LEGRILLOU

"Get up there! I love going for a walk, especially when it snows up there. It's an instant change of scenery. And the view over the valley and the Château de Foix is breathtaking!"

A CAFÉ TERRACE ON THE ALLÉES DE VILLOTE IN FOIX

"I like to sit there, drink a good beer, eat a pizza. And I love Foix, it's a small town on a manageable scale with a castle that gives it a medieval feel."

THE RESTAURANT LA CIBOULETTE

"200 metres from my house, this is a must. The chef's cuisine is refined, home-made, eco-friendly and the flavours come from all over the world."

LA MOUNJETADE

"I make this myself at home. It's the cassoulet of Ariège made with white coconut "mounje". A pure delight!"

THE FOIX JAZZ FESTIVAL

"Of course!! I was lucky enough to be the patron of this international festival in 2021. Both a showcase and defender of Jazz music. A must-see!"



Preserving our home



Good habits can make a big difference! Our destination has so much to offer: wide open spaces, heritage and nature preserved for you and for future generations.

FAVOUR LOW-IMPACT TRAVEL: carpooling, walking, cycling, hiking and public transport. The area lends itself to this, it would be a shame not to take advantage of it! Sort and recycle your waste: many sorting points are at your disposal. Eat locally and in season: short supply chains are easily maintained in our area so go directly to the producer or to the market and treat yourself.

RESPECT NATURE: when visiting or hiking, collect your rubbish and do not throw your cigarette butts on the ground. Leave the flowers and plants as they are, for the survival of their species in their natural environment. Not picking flowers or plants helps to preserve the beauty of this natural area.

RESPECT THE TRANQUILITY OF OUR LIVESTOCK IN SUMMER PASTURES: when hiking, close the gates and fences after you have gone through. Do not feed the animals, you could make them sick.

COME WITH YOUR FAITHFUL COMPANIONS: welcome our animal friends! When walking, dogs are to be kept on a lead and their waste must also be collected.

USE YOUR MOTOR HOME CORRECTLY: empty your waste water in our designated sites, not into nature.

The environment is everybody's concern, help us to take care of it!



"Our environment is everyone's concern"

**Need more information?
Come and meet our
friendly team who are on
hand to advise and help
you...**

OPENING HOURS

FROM JANUARY TO MAY

Monday to Saturday & bank holidays
10h-12h // 14h-18h

FROM MAY TO JUNE

Monday to Sunday (7days)
10h-12h // 14h-18h

FROM JULY TO AUGUST

Monday to Sunday (7days)
10h-13h // 14h-18h

FROM SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER

Monday to Saturday
10h-12h // 14h-18h

OTHER CLOSURES

01/01 - 01/05 - 01/11 - 11/11 - 25/12

Your destination is:

- 1h10 from **Toulouse**
- 1h15 from **Carcassonne**
- 1h15 from **Andorre**
- 2h15 from **Perpignan**



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In addition to this magazine, check out our other publications:

Foix poquette, accomodation guide, touristic map, town map of Foix and walking guide book with 19 trails and 3 touristic circuits to help you explore the wonders of our area.

All our publications are readable or downloadable online from our website **www.foix-tourism.com**.

Take time to enjoy
the moment

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