

In and Around Lourdes

Lourdes is just 15 minutes up the road and there is a good chance you passed through or round it on the way to the villa.

Well known across the world as a centre for Christian pilgrimage some might say it's popularity has given the place a tired look, but it's worth a visit to make up your own mind.

The area around the Sanctuary has all the trappings of a major tourist attraction but its religious significance is paramount to the millions who visit the shrine every year.

Lourdes Castle & Museum of the Pyrenees

With its imposing walls, the Musée Pyrénéen (Pyrenean Museum) presents the popular Arts and Traditions of the mountain range, in an architectural setting which is a symbol of the history of the town of Lourdes.

Created in 1921 by Louis and Margalide Le Bondidier, its 18 rooms and permanent outdoor areas present the main elements of the culture of the mountain dwellers: a typical Bigourdane room, Béarnaise kitchen, traditional costumes, models of typical houses, earthenware, furniture of the old church of St Pierre de Lourdes, etc.

Temporary exhibitions illustrate specific themes of this rich cultural heritage. Since 2002, it has been part of the Musées de France (Museums of France).

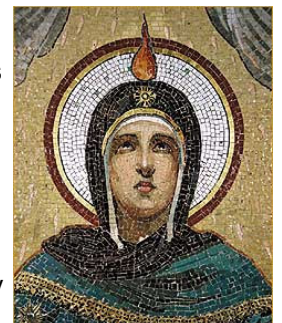


<http://www.lourdes-infotourisme.com>
<http://www.lourdes-france.org/>

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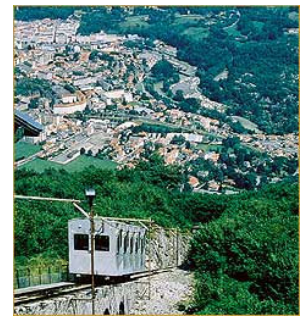
In 1858 in a cave near the town - the Grotte de Massabielle - the Virgin Mary appeared several times to a local girl. From this beginning an enormous industry has flourished, and many millions of visitors descend on the town each year. For visitors looking for a spiritual experience, then indeed, there are masses offered in over 22 languages, at all times of the day and night, and a visit up the many steps to the tourist office will give you all the information you need (if you're able to get up them).

For the curious, it's also wise to get the mass program, or like me you'll walk in at a crucial moment with children running amok and heads will turn, as you rapidly seek your excuses in any language before sneaking out tail between legs.



Le Pic du Jer

With its viaduct visible as you approach Lourdes from Argeles, the funicular railway on the town's outskirts is a wonderful introduction to the area.



Le Pic du Jer climbs through the pine trees to the 950 metre summit. At the upper station there is a small café and a number of footpaths leading to the summit of the mountain. These paths can be steep in places but worth the walk because marvellous panoramic views of Lourdes, Pau, Tarbes and the Pyrenees await you.

Turn left into Lourdes at the end of the dual carriageway on the road from Argeles and you will find the funicular immediately on the right. Open May to September 09.30 - 18.30; afternoons during the rest of the year.

The Market

There is a very nice local market in the centre of town where you can buy local produce and regional foods. (mornings only)

The Little Tourist Train

It may look like something out of the toy cupboard but this road train takes tourists on a 45 minute journey around town.

Lourdes Lake & Woods

Only three minutes from the town centre, those who enjoy fishing, water sports and nature will find their fulfilment here.

The coniferous forest is an ideal place to relax or have a picnic. There is also fishing, sailing, rowing, pedalos, mountain-biking, horse-riding, and restaurants.

Opening times and detail can change from time to time so please check before you leave. If you discover an attraction or event you would like to share with other guests, or if you find an inaccuracy, please let us know by dropping us a line or by leaving a spare brochure with the others in the villa.