

The Way of Arles in Gard
GR®653



On the Camino de Santiago

Walk. Travel. Dream

Cœur de Petite Camargue Tourist Office

The Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage

Throughout the Middle Ages, Santiago de Compostela was an important destination for countless pilgrims from across Europe. To reach Spain, the pilgrims needed to cross France. The story of Saint James the Great is somewhere between myth and reality. His tomb was discovered in Galicia around 830, and immediately attracted pilgrims to the ends of the earth, the "finis terrae", to venerate his relics.



Outstanding universal value

In 1998, UNESCO added the "Routes of Santiago de Compostela in France" to the World Heritage List. This inclusion was in addition to the "Routes of Santiago de Compostela in Spain" which were included in 1993 and 2015.

* United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

** Routes of Santiago de Compostela in France added to the World Heritage List in 1998

WALK, TRAVEL, DREAM...

The Camino de Santiago de Compostela, an ancient pilgrimage route, is now the perfect adventure for our times.

Believers, atheists, walkers and tourists travelling the path discover more about themselves, and about one another, while also discovering a rich history and landscape.

Wellbeing, connection and a search for meaning bring together people from all walks of life, believers and non-believers, some looking within themselves and some looking to connect with others, all sharing the same adventure.

On foot, bike, horseback or even by car, walkers, pilgrims and tourists find there is always more to discover along the Camino.

VIA TOLOSANA OR THE WAY OF ARLES

The Southern Way, from Arles to Puente la Reina in Spain, was taken by pilgrims from Italy and the East. Running through the South of France, it provides a window into the Pays d'Oc, with its remnants of Roman civilisation, traces of the wars of religion, and influences from cultures of both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.

From east to west, the route joins Compostela and Rome, taking the form of a waymarked route, the GR®653.

The Way of Arles crosses the south of the Gard département, starting with Saint-Gilles-du-Gard and its prestigious abbey, then pauses at Vauvert in the heart of the Petite Camargue before continuing on to Gallargues-le-Montueux, the last Gard stage.



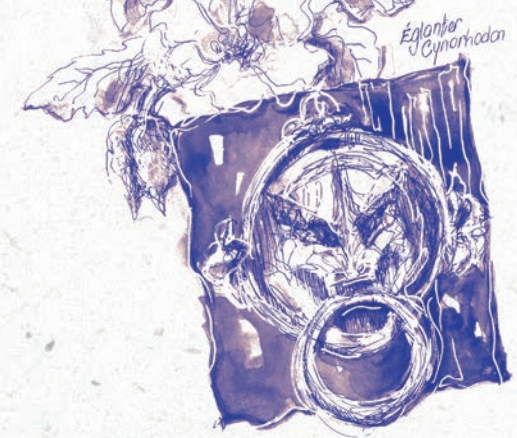
Saint-Gilles du-Gard

Built in the twelfth century, in the Middle Ages the Saint-Gilles abbey was the fourth most visited Christian pilgrimage site after Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago de Compostela.

The popularity of Saint-Gilles as a pilgrimage site was due to the excellent geographical location of this medieval city. It was at the crossroads of trading routes that took large numbers of traders and pilgrims between Rome, Compostela and the cities of Northern France. Thanks to these road networks, tales of the life and miracles of the founder of the abbey, Gilles, spread rapidly and became known throughout medieval Europe. Today, the abbey still has the monumental size that befits a site of pilgrimage. The facade of the Saint-Gilles abbey illustrates all the skills of the stonemasons of the Middle Ages through rich religious iconography. The frieze depicting the major scenes of the Passion shows their work at its finest.

The abbey is on two levels: the upper church, 98m long when built, with a spiral staircase, a masterwork of stereotomy and a lasting testament to the prowess of the stonemasons who brought the architectural designs to life. On the lower level of the abbey, the crypt holds the tomb of Saint Gilles. Also known as the "lower church", the crypt has surprisingly monumental proportions that make it one of the largest crypts in France.

The abbey was classified as a historic monument in 1840 and given UNESCO World Heritage status in 1998 as part of the French section of the Camino de Santiago.



NÎMES TOURIST OFFICE SAINT-GILLES WELCOMER CENTER

5 place de la République

☎ +33 (0) 4 66 58 38 00

info@nimes-tourisme.com

www.nimes-tourisme.com

SERVICES

- Free entry to the abbey crypt (on presentation of pilgrim's passport)
- Stamp for your pilgrim's passport
- Drinking water
- Information about other stages of the Camino de Santiago
- Free wifi
- Information about local shops, restaurants and medical professionals
- Transport (buses and taxis)

MARCEL AVIGNON PILGRIM HOSTEL

3, impasse du cloître

☎ +33 (0)6 10 39 87 07 - 33 (0)4 66 87 47 60

roland.morcillo@wanadoo.fr

www.wix.com/stgillespelerin/accueil

14 beds, kitchenette, open from 1 March until 11 November, check-in between 3pm and 7pm.





Vauvert

VAUVERT AND PILGRIMAGE... IN THE PAST

The sanctuary of Notre Dame de Vauvert was one of the oldest holy places of prayer in the diocese of Nîmes, as well as one of the most significant places of pilgrimage in France.

Its story begins in 810 and finishes during the wars of religion in the sixteenth century, as it was destroyed in the 1540s by the Protestants of Saint-Gilles.

This sanctuary, as a waypoint on the Camino de Santiago, welcomed many important figures: Louis IX (Louis the Saint), Charles IX, Francis I and Pope Clement V.

Its importance was such that imperceptibly, over the fourteenth century, this sanctuary gave its name to the village of Posquières, which became known as Vauvert.

VAUVERT AND PILGRIMAGE... TODAY

Vauvert is the third stage on the Way of Arles, after Arles and Saint-Gilles. The route passes through the commune of Beauvoisin and follows an irrigation canal for a while. It then crosses the commune of Vauvert before continuing on to the next stage of Gallargues-le-Montueux, passing over the "lands" of Le Cailar.

The GR®653 trail which crosses the village was inaugurated in 1990, and it is the last of the 4 Santiago de Compostela trails. It is continuous and well-signposted, with a variety of accommodation en route. It is possible to travel the route during most seasons.

The trail can be followed in either direction, towards Rome or towards Santiago de Compostela.

There are a growing number of pilgrims making the journey, as this originally Christian pilgrimage now attracts a wider range of people, of many different nationalities and with many different motivations. For some this is a spiritual journey, while others simply want some time for themselves, and a break from the pace and technology of the modern world.

At the point where the Way of Arles, part of the Camino de Santiago, enters Vauvert, there is now a new rest and information point.

Pilgrims and walkers, look out for the iron silhouette of a pilgrim at Le Cournier, welcoming you into a beauty shady pine forest.

Benches have been installed to welcome you and allow you to rest, and an information panel provided so you can look for whatever services you might need.



"Au diable Vauvert" (The back of beyond)

In the Middle Ages, the Notre-Dame du Val Vert sanctuary attracted many pilgrims, many of whom had come from very far away. For sins that the Church regarded as particularly serious, some penitents were instructed to complete a pilgrimage to Notre-Dame du Val Vert in order to be absolved. This pilgrimage was commonly prescribed to sinners. The distance from Val-Vert made it a hard penitence for those who had to make the journey.

Some pilgrims would have travelled over a thousand kilometres. Naturally, then, going to Val-Vert meant going very far from one's familiar surroundings and entering a whole new world. Today French speakers say they are going to "diable Vauvert" (literally "Vauvert devil") when they are going to the back of beyond.



CŒUR DE PETITE CAMARGUE TOURIST OFFICE

Place Ernest Renan - 30600 Vauvert

+33 (0)4 66 88 28 52

accueil@otpetitecamargue.fr

www.coeurdepeticamargue.fr

SERVICES

- List of accommodation for pilgrims (on presentation of your pilgrim's passport)
- Stamp for your pilgrim's passport
- Drinking water
- Route map for historical tour of the town
- Information about other stages of the Camino de Santiago
- Free WIFI and use of tablet computer
- Information about local shops, restaurants and medical professionals
- Transport (trains, buses and taxis)

MEDIA LIBRARY

Place Dr Arnoux 30600 Vauvert

+33 (0)4 66 731 730

mediatheque@vauvert.com

Opening hours:

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 3pm-6pm

Wednesday: 9.30am-1pm and 3pm-6pm

Saturday: 9.30am-1pm





Gallargues-le-Montueux

Gallargues is a staging post on the Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage route with a tradition of hospitality that continues into the present day. This can be seen in an imposing medieval residence in the heart of the town, now restored, which is thought to have been the Saint-Jacques hospital.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Gallargues was a much-loved stage of the Camino for pilgrims on the Way of Arles. This is still the case today, with the commune still keen to welcome travellers.

Saint Martin Church
Largely rebuilt and refashioned in the seventeenth century, L'église Saint Martin is in the Romanesque style and dates from the thirteenth century. It can be found in the Vièle district, in the Place Esprit Fléchier. The vaulting of the apse is reminiscent of that in the Abbey of Gélone in Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, both in its small columns and its masonry techniques.

ROYAL TOWER AND OPTICAL TELEGRAPH

The watchtower and keep of Gallargues castle is found at the highest point in the village and was used around 1830 as a relay station for the Chappe optical telegraph.

La Tour Royale de Gallargues, which has featured on the list of French historical monuments since 1840, was home to one of the 534 Chappe stations between 1832 and 1852.

After the restoration of the tower itself, the Association du Patrimoine Gallarquois, with the support of the council, HISTELPOST and FNARH, coordinated the accurate reproduction of the original mechanism. This complete working copy was unveiled on 6 November 2010.

PÈLERINS À GALLARGUES ASSOCIATION

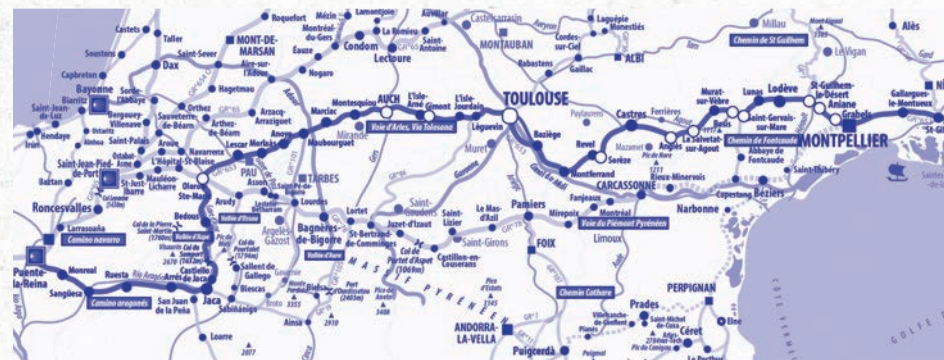
5 rue Marcel Dublet
☎ 07 82 42 81 40
pelerinsgallargues@yahoo.fr
pelerinsgallargues30@gmail.com
blog: gallarguespel.canalblog.com

SERVICES

- Community hostel with 7 beds
- Information about local shops and restaurants
- Stamp for your pilgrim's passport
- Information about other stages of the Camino de Santiago
- Transport (trains, buses and taxis)



More information



Start	Finish	Distance
Arles	Saint-Gilles	20,5 km
Saint-Gilles	Vauvert	16,5 km
Vauvert	Gallargues-le-Montueux	13,5 km

ACIR (INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY)

Camino de Santiago
☎ 33 (0)5 62 27 00 05
Email: accueil@chemins-compostelle.com
www.chemins-compostelle.com
www.cheminscompostelle-patrimoinemondial.fr

REPORT A PROBLEM ON THE GR®653 ROUTE:

sentinelles.sportsdenature.fr

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

- Fire - 18
- Ambulance - 15
- Police - 17
- European emergency number - 112

Dear pilgrims,
We hope you have a wonderful adventure on the Camino, meeting new people, discovering the real South of France, and immersing yourself in nature.

"Follow your dreams, they know the way"

Ultreia!





Tourist Office Cœur de Petite Camargue

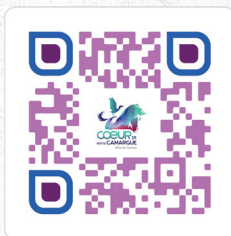
Place Ernest Renan - 30600 Vauvert

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**For the restful evening
you deserve,**

see our information on
activities, restaurants
and shops.

