



Let's go and discover

ASPÉT



**Cagire
Garonne
Salat**
OFFICE DE TOURISME



Historical circuit

- 1- The Republic Square / 2- The city hall / 3- The Great Street A. Saint-Gaudens
- 4- The church Saint Martin / 5- The Common Meadow /
- 6- The old "Hotel des écoles" / 7- Squares Ruau and Barès / 8- The Street of the ditches / 9- The Square Peyrot
- 10- The Chapel of Miège-coste / 11- The Chucaou Tower

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LE CHUCAOU

LA VILLE

Avenue du Maréchal Foch

pl. St-Martin

Rue du Carillon

Rue Madame

Grde. R. Augustus St-Gaudens

Pl. de la République

Carré de la République

Pl. du Peyrot

Rue de la Cazalère

Rue des fossés

Rue Gambetta

pl. Général Barès

pl. Joseph Ruau

pl. André Bouéry

pl. Jean Fauroux

Rue de la Résistance

Rue Armand Latour

Rue de l'École

Rue du Foyer

Place du Pré Commun

Rue André Bouéry

Rue Cardinal Sourrieu

Rue Monetuc

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Rue de la Résistance

Rue Armand Latour

A little history...

The barony of Aspet was, in the Middle Ages, the most important lordship of the region after the county of Comminges.

The first known lord, Raymond- At is attested in 1068. The barony changed hands several times, passing successively to the family of Coarraze, then to the house of Foix, finally to that of Albret, but it was attached to the Crown of France in 1607, under the reign of Henri IV, who was its last lord.

History particularly remembers the name of Dame Barrave, who gave a charter to the town, and that of Catherine de Coarraze, who died in 1492 and to whom we owe, in particular, the fountain that adorns the village's main square.

There is not unanimous agreement as... For some, the prefix -asp. would come from the root of the Latin word "asper" designating a steep place. On the same principle, "Aspeigt" in Ossau means "very steep valley" and "Aspé" near Gavarnie means a "steep valley". For others, the name "Aspet" is close to "Espet, Aspeg, Ezpel" which, in Basque, designate s the box tree.



The Republic Square

The Republic Squar is the main square of the village of Aspet.

In the centre of this square is the "Henri IV" fountain which owes its existence, to Catherine de Coarraze, lordess of Aspet a century before this king. It would seem, however, that its construction was completed during the reign of King Henry IV.

The fountain was the only water point of the agglomeration.



The town hall

2

The Town Hall was built at the beginning of the 20th century, after the demolition, in 1898, of a Merchants' Hall and on the site of another hall, called "Halle aux grains".

These halls were very useful during market days that were held in the village. Situated between the mountains and the plain, Aspet has, for centuries, an important place of exchange. The reputation of the St. Bartholomew's Day or St. Catherine's Day fairs extended far and wide.

Weekly markets were held in the various squares. The cattle trade took place at the Foirail, which became the "Pré commun" or public field.

Opposite Town Hall, there is a bust of Joseph Ruau, sculpted by André Abbal.

Joseph Ruau was the Mayor of Aspet, Deputy of Saint-Gaudens, and of particular note, Minister of Agriculture between 1903 and 1908. Aspet owes a lot to this eminent politician: new town hall, opening of the Saint-Gaudens - Aspet train line, intercanton hospital, slaughterhouse...



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The Great Street Augustus Saint Gaudens

For a long time this street was the main street of the village, formerly called rue Saint-Martin. It is a narrow street in which commerce was concentrated.

At the beginning of the street, on your left, there is an old house (with an interior tower) which was once the home of the royal judge. The main entrance of this building is surmounted by an arch key bearing the inscription 1674.

The name of Augustus Saint-Gaudens is connected to the name "Grande Rue" in memory of the famous American sculptor of the same name. Augustus Saint-Gaudens was not born in Aspet, but his family had lived here for several generations. His father moved and got married in Ireland, where Augustus was born, and after they moved to the United States. Augustus Saint-Gaudens is one of the greatest American sculptors of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Going down the Grande Rue Augustus Saint-Gaudens, a small passage on the right leads to the "rue Madame", in memory of Catherine de Coarraze.

The church Saint Martin

In its present state, the church of Saint Martin dates from the middle of the 19th century (the central nave was raised in 1900).

However, it contains older elements such as the seigniorial chapel, located behind the high altar, in Gothic style, dating from the 15th century. At the keystone, you can see the coat of arms of the Coarraze family and at the end of the ribs, four beautiful sculptures.

At the back of the apse, there is a 15th century fresco representing the Annunciation.

The bell tower, a former dungeon, served as a protection for the village, watching over the main gate of the town: St Martin's Gate. Originally, the tower was much higher than it is today. It is flanked by a turret that houses the staircase. The access door of this turret dates from the XIVth century.



The bell tower, in addition to having served as a keep, now houses an original carillon of 12 bells that are played manually. This carillon has its own repertoire composed by André Bouéry between 1850 and 1860.

André Bouéry is a Gascon musician and poet of the XIXth century, descended from an old Aspétoise family. He is known for his collection of Gascon songs "Cansous det campanè d'Aspetch".





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The Common Meadow

The Meadow (pré commun), before the construction of the road which crosses it, was arranged in a shaded walk of sycamore and chestnut trees. A brass band gave concerts there. The cattle market was traditionally held below.



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"L'Hôtel des écoles"

In 1878, Armand Latour, a notary, left to the Commune, in his will, considerable sums for the construction of public schools.

The "Hotel des écoles" was inaugurated in 1893. The municipal library now occupies part of this building.

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Squares Ruau and Barès

These squares were once one and the same: the Place Coudong. It was outside the village walls. For a long time this place was, in fact, a pond intended to supply the ditches. It constituted a fire water reserve and served as a breeding ground for leeches.



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The street of the ditches

In this street, on the site of village's old ditches, you will see the small fountain called "source aux fées". It was the first source captured in Aspet.



The Square Peyrot

The Place du Peyrot was an old marketplace of Aspet.

"Peyrot" means half litre of wine. Indeed, on this square there were many inns that sold wine by the half litre.



Chapel of Miègecoste



The chapel of Miègecoste probably owes its name to its location "halfway up the coast". We already know that in the 15th century people went there on pilgrimage from all around. The esplanade (an extension of the chapel) had been built to accommodate the crowds. For a while a small community of priests even settled next door. A black Virgin is venerated there, of the type "virgin in shirt", installed there in the XVIIth century. Fires and looting ravaged the chapel. Thanks to the generosity of Cardinal Sourrieu, the chapel acquired its present appearance at the end of the 19th century.



Chucaou Tower

The ruins of this ancient tower that dominates the village seem to be those of a signal tower incarde called, sometimes, "Saracen Tower". There are no written records about this tower, but there is every reason to believe that it served as a watchtower.

A superb view awaits you near the Tower overlooking the whole plain and the Pic de Cagire.



Let's continue the walk...

Outside the walled city there were suburbs. We cross Frontagnères when we come from Saint-Gaudens.

If you take the road to Izaut-de-l'Hôtel, you will stop near the bridge that crosses the Ger, a river that rises near the ski resort Le Mourtis and flows into the Garonne near the village of Pointis-Inard.

Before the bridge, immediately on the left, you will notice a circular wall, the only remnant of the Saint-François hospital, which ceased to function during the Revolution. The road that runs alongside the river follows the route of the old railroad which, from 1905 to 1936, linked Aspét to Saint-Gaudens. The current police station is located in the old station.

From the bridge, you can get an idea of the use of the river. On one side, there are still the remains of a water wheel. From the dike on the other side, two canals branch off, each feeding a sawmill.

In Sarradère, on the road to the Ares and Portet passes, stands a small oratory dedicated to the Virgin.



Association Catherine
de Coarraze



Offices de
Tourisme
de France



The Tourist Office
Cagire Garonne Salat
welcomes you, à Aspét
« Maison des Trois Vallées
»Armand Latour Street

Local producers' store, exhibition
room, hiking, biking/ mountain
biking tips, outdoor activities,
heritage, discoveries!

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