

Let's go and discover  
**SAINT MARTORY**





## Historical circuit

- 1 - The chapel Saint-Roch / 2- The racket cross and the fountain / 3- The gates of the city / 4- The three-arched bridge
- 5 - The grain mill and the canal / 6- The church / 7- The menhir and the stele / 8- The half-timbered house / 9- The coachman's plaque / 10- The Town Hall / 11- The Castle



# A little history...

In the south of the Haute-Garonne department, only a hundred kilometers from Toulouse, in the heart of the Comminges, lies Saint-Martory, a village of about ten square kilometers and a thousand inhabitants.

Its history begins in prehistoric times (Magdalenian and Neolithic) with the caves of La Tourasse and Montconfort.

During the Gallo-Roman period, Saint-Martory was called Calagurris (meaning red earth) and was a major stopover on the routes to Dax, Saint-Lizier, or Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, it was during this period that the first bridge must have been built.

In the Middle Ages, under the rule of the lords of Montpezat, the town was fortified. The church, which was originally named after Saint John the Baptist, made the monk Martiry its patron saint. The episcopate certainly offered the town the relics of this Saint to reduce the many pagan worships. The reputation and the pilgrimages led to the new name of the town.

In 1790, the town became a capital town and took the name of Montagne-sur-Garonne for a few months. At the end of the revolutionary period, the town regained its name of Saint-Martory.



1

## La Chapelle Saint-Roch

The Saint-Roch chapel is located on the ancient Roman road from Lugdunum Convenarum (Saint-Bertrand de Comminges) and from Toulouse to Dax (by crossing the Garonne at the Appas bridge).

Of unknown date of construction, it was destroyed during the Revolution, rebuilt and extended in 1857. It is dedicated to Saint Roch, protector of animals and pilgrims. Restored in 2005, its special feature is a fresco depicting a panoramic view of the village. In 1657, during the great plague that decimated the village, two weddings were celebrated here.

*Return to the bridge and note the fountain and snowshoe cross.*





2

## The racket cross and the fountain

The racket cross, the original of which is in the church, is raised on a real column from the Abbey of Bonnefont. It was probably used as a crossroads.

The 19th century cast iron fountain was made locally (Guichereau). It replaced the first pump that equipped Saint-Martory in this same place.



3

## The town gates

The first door at bridge level shows the Gallic cockerel, the sun and the motto "nec pluribus impar" (superior to all). The royal effigy in the half round on the other side evoked the grandeur of the town.

The second door is called Porte d'Auch, the niche was originally intended to house the bust of the Intendant d'Étigny.

As the town was walled, the gates were closed in the evening and opened in the morning, and a right of passage was collected.



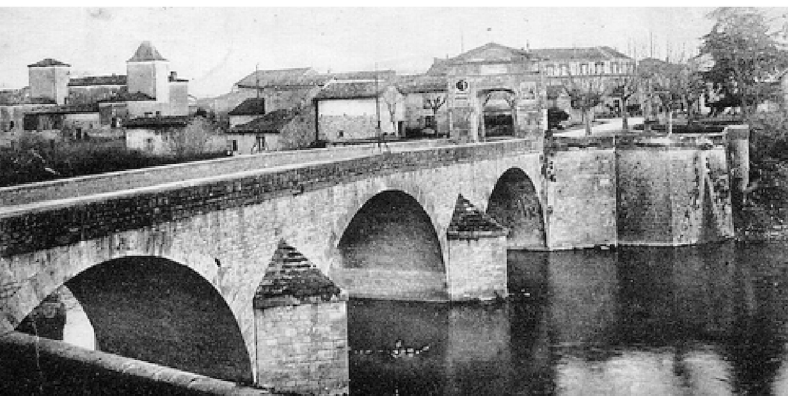


# The three-arched bridge

4

The three-arched bridge was built from 1724 under the aegis of Monseigneur Lubières du Bouchet. This construction is typical of the French classical school, with the bridge piers designed to deflect floating bodies.

Downstream, an ancient pile is the witness of several bridges from the Gallo-Roman and medieval periods. The date 1612, which can be seen on the abutment, is certainly evidence of major work carried out on the medieval bridge. Early bridges were made of wood and stood on two piles. In 1568, during the Wars of Religion, the consuls of Saint-Martory destroyed the bridge to prevent the Protestants from invading the town.



5

## The grain mill and the canal

On 4 January 1630, the commune of Saint-Martory obtained the right to build a grain mill from the King. The grain mill, built in 1773, was destroyed by floods and then rebuilt. From 1938 onwards, it supplied a sawmill, served as a fuller and produced oil.

The Saint-Martory Canal was built between 1866 and 1877.

It was intended for the irrigation of all the terraces of the Garonne as far as Toulouse where it joins the river. A second channel comes from the "Barthier" factory. On the right bank, a third canal leads the water to a former fuller (mixer), now a power station.





6

## The church

The church, a former priory, was almost built before the 12th century, and then frequently modified until the 19th century. The façade is framed by two towers from the 12th and 17th centuries. The plan is Romanesque with a chevet, apse and apsidioles. The Romanesque portal dates from the 13th century and comes from the Abbey of Bonnefont. The "Mater Dolorosa" by Hippolyte Flandrin, the original 15th-century racket cross and the 12th-century baptismal font can be seen here.

*Opposite the church, on your left, you will notice a menhir and a stele.*



7

## The menhir and the stele

The menhir Peyro-Hitto (meaning planted stone), dating from the Neolithic period, is currently located in the church on the old Roman road (original location: Peyro-Hitto district). It is a limestone slab. It is classified as a historical monument.

Adjoining the church, a Gallo-Roman commemorative stele bears the inscriptions: "Coerana, daughter of Eramus, native of this locality, died in her tenth year".

*Go up the avenue de Toulouse, then the rue du Centre, on your left there is you will see, a half-timbered house.*







8

## Half-timbered house

Typical medieval half-timbered house, the lower part called "obrador" was dedicated to work, the upper part reached by a staircase was dedicated to living. Most of these houses were built in "strips", on narrow plots of land and deep in relation to the street.

9

## The coachman's plaque

This coachman's plaque, although restored, reads "route impériale", later replaced by "route nationale".

These plaques were fixed high up to be read by the coachmen.



10

## The Town Hall

Before becoming the present town hall, this building, built at the beginning of the 19th century by the De Lorde family, was used as a mounted police station and then passed by succession to the Casteret family. The portal dates from the 19th century.

Norbert CASTERET (1897-1987) was born in this building. A pioneer of speleology, he discovered the true source of the Garonne River and more than 2000 underground and archaeological sites around the world. He published many books on his discoveries and adventures.







## The Castle

The "Chateau de la Terrasse" was built around 1515 by the Montpezat family who came down from their fortified castle (its remains can still be found on the heights of the village). The architecture is typical of the early Renaissance, with many similarities to some of the Loire castles. It was remodeled in the 19th century by the famous architect Victor Ruprich-Robert. The castle has been listed as a historical monument since 1993.

An ornamental defense gate from the time of the castle's construction is visible from the Place de Verdun.

*Head for the bridge.*

*You will see a wooden stele dedicated to the fishermen of the Commune. It is a sculpture in Douglas fir wood, showing several trout swimming. The creator of this original work is Willy Niodo. This happy initiative of the AAPPMA of Saint Martory, reminds us of the local importance of the fishing of this splendid salmonid that is the fario trout, and its high symbolic value associated with the vigor and the beauty of the living waters of Comminges.*

## Let's continue the walk...

Get some height! Head for the Vierge du Puy, its orientation table and panoramic view !



The Cagire Garonne  
Salat Tourist Office  
welcomes you,  
in Saint-Martory  
2 Avenue des Pyrénées

*Local producers shop, advice on  
hiking, biking/mountain biking,  
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discovery !*

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